

G. H. Lonsdale

1 Potomac

Pa

EROS AND ANTEROS.

Geo. W. Snyden

EROS AND ANTEROS;

OR,

The Bachelor's Ward.

BY

JUDITH CANUTE.



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DEDICATION.

TO MY FATHER:—

IN the enthusiasm of composition (when these pages seemed more worthy than they now do), I had resolved to offer them to you. But, under the cool review just given them, their merits have strangely paled—their faults grown sadly palpable; and I find myself writing a letter of deprecation, rather than dedication!

The eye of affection is quick to detect a blemish, where it desires perfection; and you, my most partial critic, may be the least merciful. If I have failed to satisfy your wishes as an author, forget that I am such, and think of me only as a daughter. I hope, that, however much I may deserve correction in the one capacity, my loyal impulses, and instincts, have preserved me from error in the other.

I can only add, if there be anything in this little book which gives you pleasure, accept it as a tribute of gratitude for care, and culture, bestowed upon

YOUR DAUGHTER.

PREFACE.

CERTAIN fanciful, and unreal, visitors having intruded upon occasional hours of solitude, with a persistence which defies all efforts for relief, I have been constrained to give them form and permanence, and send them trooping forth, commissioned to invade other sanctuaries, to importune other minds. Engaged upon a wider field of action, they return no more; and peace may have been earned, unless, indeed, a "swarm more hungry" succeeds them.

I can make no other apology for offering the public this crude result, of interludes of loneliness, and leisure. If, in the roar of more stirring scenes of the life drama

appointed me, I have sometimes lost the tones of those inner voices, and given but faint and feeble echoes to the world, my punishment must be in the knowledge that these pages will fail to afford a pleasure to the reader, as deep and pure as that which they yielded

THE AUTHOR.

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EROS AND ANTEROS.

CHAPTER I.

THE EYRIE.

"In all creation did I stand alone,
Still to the rocks my dreams a soul should find,
Mine arms should wreath themselves around the stone,
My grief should feel a listener in the wind;
My joy—its echo in the caves should be!
Fool, if ye will—Fool, for sweet sympathy!"

Translation from Schiller.

THERE is a spot in Pennsylvania's wide-spread landscape that deeply impressed my childish heart, and occasionally haunts my maturer memory with its romantic beauty. I have dwelt much upon it in thought, and drawn large draughts therefrom in hours of silence and solitude, until the contemplation has engendered a feeling of proprietorship in this domain of loveliness, which nature has bestowed upon her children. Here have I installed my Fancy, saying, "Be thou

heir. Go thou in and possess! Let thy creations multiply and people this wide domain, unchecked by mossy landmarks, uncontrolled by musty title papers, and unreprieved by ancient ownerships."

In older days and other climes, the elfin fays danced gayly on the greensward, or trooped through moonlit wood, with right to "*vert*" unquestioned by the grim Gothic owners. Perchance the modern lords of the soil may admit my Fancy to this unreal partnership, with a like courtesy, smiling indulgently, as they recognise the appropriation of their fair acres by the squattership of a vagrant mind. Fancy is a sprite that flits unseen, leaving behind no superstitious horrors to haunt the ground she visits. She is a light-footed Ariel, making no print in fairy rings, to tell where she hath held high revel! Lo! she spreadeth her wing and taketh flight to the Susquehanna.

Oh, Susquehanna, beautiful and beloved! Thou Helicon of my soul! Would that I might stand once more upon thy banks, and draw from thy fair waters their unfailing inspiration! That I might refresh my heart with one look upon thy loveliness, ere I essay to portray it. Memory looketh back upon thee through a dim mist of tears. Aerial Fancy floateth upon thy bosom, and she shall be the prompter.

Look away then to the north, oh Memory! Meet, with clearer eye, the expanse of translucent waters, calmly sweeping on its course by hill and plain, forest and town. Turn ye westward, and greet another flood in its coming, rapidly rushing, like an impetuous bridegroom to meet the bride. Look,

thou upon their union, as, with commingled tides, two mighty rivers roll their tribute to the eastern ocean. The bold bluff of the ancient mountain looks down upon them with a blessing—the sinking sun is translated in a chariot of fire, and, like the departing prophet, casts his mantle upon them, and the united floods glow with golden glory. The evening winds sing of peace, and the awakened leaves of the forest, like a thousand whispering tongues, echo *peace*. One by one, the stars step forth upon the porticoes of heaven, proclaiming, "We stand upon the threshold of eternal *peace*:" and *peace* enfolds thee with a great calm, oh turbulent world!

The mountain bluff, like an ancient sybarite, laves his luxurious feet in the bright waters. The clouds of heaven, whereon God's mystic truths are written, he binds as phylacteries upon his brow. High above the river towers his rocky head, crowned with old oaks and pines, that have rocked and roared in the winds of many winters. On the edge of the precipice, in wild companionship with hoary rocks and primeval forest trees, with its bold roof sharply defined against the sky, and a coronet of stars crowning its gable, stands a human dwelling.

Truly it is built upon a rock! Though the spirit of peace be abroad to-night, it is not always thus; memory recalls when the powers of darkness and storm seemed leagued for its destruction. When the winds blew around the presumptuous tenement and the waves beat upon the foot of its precipitous foundation, yet it fell not.

To this wild embodiment of a wild thought, I have given

the name of "The Eyrie," although it is widely known by another epithet, expressive of contempt for the building and its builder. When there is aught of the poetical, the beautiful, or the good, above the comprehension of man, he complacently recompenses himself by despising it. All things in heaven or earth, beyond the range of his self-sufficient philosophy, receive his contempt. Therefore is it that the name of that earnest soul, who made his abode in this mountain fastness, and to whom nature revealed beauties hidden from dull eyes, and insensate hearts, is coupled with *folly*.

The summer evening deepens and darkens around the Eyrie, and when lights kindle in the casements of this house built against the heavens, it seems to the fisherman's daughter, as she looks up from her cabin on the shore, that new stars are set in the firmament.

Could the child look in upon the dark sad countenance of an eagle nature brooding there, she would feel that this dwelling upon the mountain top is not, as she has believed, nearer heaven than the lowlier abodes of men.

CHAPTER II.

THE WALSINGHAMS.

"Oh my cousin, shallow hearted; oh my Amy, mine no more;
Oh the dreary, dreary moorland; oh the barren, barren shore!"

TENNYSON.

THANK the Fates, or Muses, or any other occult Power to whom acknowledgments may be due, our hero is a handsome man! Tall, well formed, and graceful in figure, he stood by the library window. Although young, his countenance, naturally dark, had grown sallow with confinement and study; but his hair, undimmed by either, clustered in thick masses of short dusky curls about his broad brow. An expression of sadness, which sometimes deepened into suffering, played about a mouth of feminine delicacy; and his deep dark serious eyes looked melancholy meditations.

Nature meant Arthur Walsingham for a poet and a scholar. Circumstances had made him a dreamy recluse; and, in dreamy mood, he stood by the library window, looking out into the peaceful summer night.

How long it might have held him in its thrall, this chronicle recordeth not. A clatter of heavy boots, and the roll of a deep bass voice, rung out, startling the Eyrrie echoes. The door swung open, and a tall man, with sailor stride, entered. Seizing the student's hands, he shook them with an affectionate energy that threatened annihilation, exclaiming—

"So, ho! Arthur! This is your roost! By George, one needs wings to reach it—wings of the wind, eh! Didn't think I was this side the sea, did you?"

"Indeed, I did not," responded Arthur Walsingham, warmly. "But you are thrice welcome, Ben. It warms a man's heart to look upon the face of kindred;" and he took the strong right hand between his own, pressing it with a fervour that brought tears of pain, or tenderness, to his visitor's eyes.

"Mrs. Grey," said Walsingham, addressing a female who hovered curiously about the open door; "Mrs. Grey, here is my brother, just returned from sea; what can we do to make him comfortable?"

"Cook him a hot supper of fresh things, I s'pose, sir," suggested Mrs. Grey, retiring to exercise her culinary accomplishments in behalf of the stranger.

This lady deemed expedition necessary in preparing a meal for one who had been so long at sea; and Captain Walsingham soon found himself discussing the dainties of his brother's board, with a sailor's relish.

After the traveller had partaken of the refreshments pro-

vided by the bountiful hand of Mrs. Grey, the brothers enjoyed one of those communings so delightful to friends long separated. Reminiscences of boyhood, narratives of experiences, and mutual inquiry, beguiled the evening.

"And why is it, Arthur," said the Captain, as he toyed with the extinguisher of his bed-room light; "why is it that you live in this crow's nest, like a hermit, without friend, or wife, chick, or child?—chained to a rock, as it were, with bachelorhood preying upon your vitals! You see, I remember the classics. Why, man! you owe me a sister-in-law by this time."

"I deny the debt!" retorted Walsingham, with a smile. "You owe me, rather."

"Alas, for the family of Walsingham!" groaned the Captain. "I fear celibacy will be the extinction of it."

"It will prove the extinction of any family, if persisted in. But you, Ben, are my senior. By your honest, broad shoulders should the honours of our family be upheld; and with you, rests the responsibility of setting a respectable Benedictine example to your junior."

"I might have done so, some years ago," quoth the Captain, with an air of amused perplexity; "but it is too late, now. What would I do with a wife, and my habits? and, oh Jupiter! what would a wife do with me and my habits together?" and, by way of illustration, he ejected the national weed upon the carpet, and deposited his booted heels beside the girandoles on the mantelpiece. "Ask Mrs. White, Brown—what's the colour of her name? She who made me wipe my boots

before I embraced my brother? Why, if I took the liberty of punching the fire upon the sacred hearth of home, the mate would feel called upon to sweep up the dear domestic ashes. We should fence with poker and broom—I know we should! Pshaw, I'm not placid! I should explode like a falconet and blow up the ship. If I ever marry, the dust-brush will haunt me like an avenging angel!"

Walsingham laughed at the Captain's warmth; and then, like a grateful and appreciative dog as he was, expatiated upon the virtues of women.

"I never affected women, you know," said Captain Walsingham; "but you, Arthur, were a true *chevalier aux dames*. I thought, of a certainty, that before I returned, you would strike colours under the fire of fine eyes, or find yourself ensnared by flowing ringlets, or some other mischievously feminine man-trap."

"My escape is miraculous, certainly, and cannot be attributed to any merit of my own," answered Walsingham, dryly.

Captain Ben delivered a significant "Umph." After some rummaging in a certain lumber-room in his cranium, pertaining to a miserly hoarder of shreds and patches of circumstances, yclept memory, he drew forth to mental vision the picture of a fair-faced cousin, with golden ringlets and dove eyes, and in the background, like a haunting shadow, flitted the boyhood of Arthur Walsingham.

"What ever became of Viola?" he asked, abruptly

Walsingham started as if some one had struck him, but answered, quietly,

"She married."

"And you got the property, and it ruined you?"

Walsingham's face grew a shade paler, and a thought more serious, as he answered—

"It did, indeed."

"I knew no good would come of it, when our queer old uncle conceived the idea of uniting the remote branches of the family in you and Viola, and left his fortune between you. He thought it a pretty plan; but, to my mind, families are better separated than united. That is a morbid pride which delights in perpetuating family failings. So, our pretty kinswoman grew weary of her boy lover, and forfeited her share of the inheritance for a bearded spouse; while you, having plenty of money, fold your talents in a napkin, and intend to doze away the energies of early manhood at your ease. That's the story, is it?"

"Not quite," said Walsingham, in his low, quiet voice. "You have omitted an important feature. I loved her, and she broke my heart."

"Pshaw!" said the Captain, with an emphasis which imparted to that innocent expletive all the force of an oath. "You were but a boy, and she a woman, you ninny!"

"With all the enthusiasm of youth I loved her; and when she was lost to me, the world held nothing worth a struggle."

Withdrawing his feet from their mantel perch, the Captain took two or three rapid turns across the room; then, pausing before his brother, exclaimed—

"And is it because her paltry doll's face looks its nothings

in another man's home, that the sun cannot shine upon yours? Is it because a boyish fancy was thwarted, that all the gifts of nature and fortune are wasted? Oh, heavens! that a piece of clay like that should mar the making of such a man!"

"What do you mean?" exclaimed Walsingham.

"I mean this," answered the Captain. "When we parted, you stood on the verge of manhood, crowned with rare gifts, and full of promise. On my return, I looked to find you filling a wide circle—honoured among men—eminent in some way—distinguished for some thing—running a race with the world, and distancing your competitors. How is it? You have lain idly by, while human tortoises have toiled their way to distinctions, you might have reached with half the effort."

"They presented allurements to the tortoises, I suppose; to me they did not."

"Look at your class-mates," continued the Captain, not heeding this reply; "Dick Jones, who was for ever snivelling over Latin exercises, is a famous poet; Tom Hawkins, whose problems were never solved, sits in the national councils; while you, the genius of the class, sit sighing your life away, because a whimsical girl did not take a fancy to your smooth chin."

All this was not precisely pleasant to Walsingham, touching, as it did, the sorest spot of a sensitive heart; but he answered, with quiet self-control,

"You speak in a tone of reproach, Ben, as though I wronged you. Why should you feel aggrieved because I consult my vagabond inclinations?"

"No man has a right to be a vagabond, to whom God has given capacities for something better! You *do* wrong me, when you rob me of my hopes in you. You wrong the world, when you withhold the services which you are qualified to render; and you wrong—"

"Spare me the enumeration of my sins, dear Ben, and listen to me. Curb your wrath, and bridle your rampant ambition. I do not quarrel with you, because you have not taken a fleet, or reproach you, if you are not a commodore. If I possess great gifts, as you say, in heaven's name love me for them, and not for any notoriety they might achieve. Be proud of my merits, though no man save yourself perceives them. Are we not alike foolish? I, because I hoped for happiness; you, because you covet distinction? Nay, I am the wiser of the two; for, my bubble having burst, I am not to be deluded into the pursuit of yours."

"Well, it's your own business," said the Captain, taking his candle; "forgive me for having meddled with it; and now, good-night."

"Good-night!"

"Hang it," muttered the Captain, as the door closed between them; "who would suppose that after half a dozen years of separation, we should fall so naturally into an old-fashioned, brotherly quarrel!"

Walsingham returned to the library, and seating himself, with head upon his hand, communed with the phantoms of the past, which this conversation had conjured from their hiding-places. His own earnest, enthusiastic boyhood, as the

Captain had depicted it, full of hope and promise. The "being beauteous," who played upon his heart as on a harp, awakening all its deepest, wildest melodies. The St. Cecilia of his soul! Ah, how the glad music of young life rang out, beneath her angelic touch, and rosy hours danced gayly to the measure that told of hope and love; then, with one rude sweep, she shivered those tremulous heartstrings, and left them silent and joyless for ever!

He thought of her beautiful face, shading its light and love in some far off home which he might never visit; of her beneficent hand, girding with blessings the only man he had ever hated. He knew him not, but was he not the foul fiend who stood between him and Paradise? He thought of her again, not with the garlands of youth upon her brow, as he had last beheld her, but in the maturity of glorious womanhood,

"Begirt with growing infancy—
Daughters and sons of beauty!"

Wife—mother—children! all should have been his! Should have filled his yearning heart and gladdened his desolate home.

He drew his hand across his brow; the vision vanished, and the gloomy midnight solitude oppressed him. Unlocking his *escritoire* he drew thence a packet of letters (*hers*), and read them for companionship. Most ghostly company! How the fond words mocked his disappointed heart! Here sat he, wronged, forsaken, reading promises of unfailing truth and never-ending devotion, warm on the page as when the fair hand first traced them.

Then came the last, confessing that another had beguiled her heart, and bidding him forget her.

Forget her! Not a day in all his after life had he forgotten to pray for her, though she had well nigh wrecked him!

"This was the last," he said with a sigh, as, refolding it, he restored the packet to its place and locked the *escritoire*. "This was the last."

But it was not the last. One more was even now travelling to his hand, destined to be a link uniting all that had passed with much that was to come.

CHAPTER III.

A LETTER.

WALSINGHAM, whose nervous excitement banished sleep that night, fell, toward morning, into an uneasy slumber; but the Captain was awake betimes, and ready to reconnoitre. Dressing himself with alacrity, he sallied forth to spy out the land.

He remembered that the night before he had approached the house by a bridle road, winding up the back of the hill, which sloped away to the south. He, therefore, upon leaving the piazza, walked in an opposite direction. A few steps brought him to the edge of the precipice, where a scene of wonderful beauty lay before him. Far beneath, laving the base of the pile of rock on which he stood, swept the Susquehanna. From low ridges of hills, rolling northward, the waters of the "North River" came dancing in the morning light, and the two blended streams spread out a mile in width toward the east. Uprose the sun from out this placid expanse of waters, and, shaking the mists from his mane, touched with

roseate glow meadow and forest, plain and hill! Far up the valley of the North River, far up the valley of the west, the heavy mists gathered in silvery wreaths, and trooped away, like shadows of the night that had outstayed their time. Beneath his feet their white wings fluttered, and he felt as one standing upon the clouds!

"Jupiter!" ejaculated the Captain, "could Olympus itself afford a finer look-out!"

The father of gods and men, thus apostrophized, seemed to assure the Captain that his conjecture was correct, for he nodded to himself as though his expressed opinion was receiving occult, as well as ocular confirmation.

The Captain was in the habit of taking great liberties with the gods of heathendom, but he excused himself, saying he had been hand and glove with them at college. It will be seen he was one of those impetuously energetic men, who find ordinary language too weak for their strong necessities.

Such men need expletives. Captain Ben had an uncomfortable horror of swearing Christian oaths (as the honest fellow called them), having been early taught by a pious mother, that "God will not hold him guiltless who taketh his name in vain." But with all his habitual reverence, he wasted none upon the gods of heathenness. The pagan deities, he averred, were only fit to swear by.

Captain Ben and his brother, as widely unlike as men with the same blood in their veins could possibly be, had been subjected to the same home training, and the same mental discipline. They had been carefully reared children, and

carefully educated youths, but nature asserted herself paramount in each. They were stocks that might be pruned and trained, but would, nevertheless, yield each its own peculiar fruit.

The Captain's motto was that of Demosthenes—"Action—*action*—ACTION!" but he used it in a more comprehensive sense than the olden orator ever dreamed of. On leaving school he threw aside his books, and took to the sea as naturally as a duckling to water. There was great consternation in the Walsingham family on this occasion; they feared their care had been wasted upon this restless scion of their quiet race. They extended, however, a helping hand, aiding the boy to rise in the pursuit he had chosen, and found, in time, that although education had failed to mould, it had greatly modified. The boisterous embracer of a rude profession, combined in his character the elements of a Christian, a gentleman, and a scholar, thanks to parents and professors. Pure in principle, honourable and intelligent, a finer fellow never floated!

If the Captain was active, Arthur was meditative. The one was an energetic thinker; the other a decisive performer. They were both men of strong natures, strong feelings, and strong passions, but the one had attained a quiet self-mastery, where the other had grown violently demonstrative. Natural results of their separate habits of thinking and acting.

Had Arthur Walsingham been happy in his early attachment, he would have been strong for the battle of life. Love

and ambition with entwined hands would have lifted him up to greatness; or had his love held him with a feeblar thrall, the allurements of the world would have consoled its disappointment. It was the power of his unsatisfied passion that had prostrated him; and, although the fire had mouldered to ashes long ago, leaving his bosom cold, no spark of ambition rekindled or revived the ruin. His energies were scathed. The world had denied him that which his heart most coveted, happiness,—and he sought not the lesser boon of distinction. Therefore was it that he turned to the seclusion and companionship of nature—

"That friend,
Who never did betray the heart that loved her."

Her truths and mysteries peopled his solitude. Knowledge and science revealed their secrets to him; and, in converse with high and hidden things, the wildly yearning heart of the recluse grew calm. Of these serene teachers he learned content.

But the appearance of his brother, associated as he was with the eventful era of his history—their conversation upon things which he had put far from him—the letters—these exhumed the past. His buried hopes arose again to haunt him.

"This is a fine country," said the Captain, as his glowing morning face confronted his brother's pale one, at the breakfast table; "but a spell of silence broods over it. I have not heard a sound save the breakfast bell. I would live upon the

seashore, where I could hear the eternal roar of ocean. Do you know, I never hear the sea without fancying it proclaiming in its ceaseless surge the words of that grand old psalm our mother used to read,—“The sea is his, and he made it.” But it is only when the old monster meets his boundaries that he rages and roars. In his great deeps he is silent.

“By George, here comes a post-bag! I would as soon expect to meet one upon Chimborazo!”

The Captain now addressed himself to the muffins, while Walsingham sipped his coffee, and looked languidly over his letters.

Why did he suddenly start? Why did his pale face mantle with ruddy glow? Why did his heart beat and his brain whirl?

’Twas a small and delicately folded letter which he held, with a few faint characters upon it. Were they traced in the same style as those over which he mused last night, or was it fancy? He tore open the envelope and read—

“I have been nerved, by great extremity, to write to you, who are the only friend Providence has left me. I call you friend, because I feel that wherever you are, and however you may be situated, you are such to me. If you have never heard of me since my marriage, you may be interested to learn that he, who tempted me to wrong you, became your avenger. Of his faults it becomes not me, who have erred so widely, to speak—of his treatment it is not my intention to complain.

We were not happy together, and separated. In efforts to sustain myself and child, health has failed, and I am dying.

“That fatal elopement estranged my kindred, as you know. My father died without according me his forgiveness, and my brothers are cruel in their wrath. You, who were most wronged, have been most forgiving. At your hands I have received kindness, and to you I appeal. If ever I was aught to you, be a friend to my poor child! I feel that I am presumptuous where I should be most humble, but maternal agony is my excuse. Oh, Arthur, you too are, perhaps, a parent, and can, in some degree, appreciate a mother’s anxiety for her soon to be doubly orphaned child. By all the love you bear your own little ones, I implore you be a friend to mine! Let her enjoy the companionship of your children; let her mind develop under your influence, and it may be that God will teach her to compensate your care, and atone for the faults of her mother.”

Another paragraph, containing her direction, and the simple signature of *Viola*, concluded the letter.

Walsingham was excessively shocked, but his accustomed self-mastery prevented the betrayal of his emotions, or else the Captain, by a special interposition of hot muffins, failed to perceive them. That jolly gentleman, having whetted his appetite upon the morning air, devoted himself to the viands before him, with an exclusiveness that forbade conversation, and afforded his brother an opportunity of marshalling his tumultuous thoughts.

Was it but last night he had pictured her loving and beloved? Beautiful and happy! Could she really be desolate and dying—she who, to the eye of love, had seemed immortal! And had she (there was a sad pleasure in the thought!) learned at last the worth of the heart she had slighted—had she turned to him again when all the world had failed her, and rested her burdens on him!

He opened the letter and re-read it, lingering over the signature *Viola*. Could that name stand sponsor for the humble heart-broken words preceding it? It was not wont to follow in such a train! Yet it was delicately traced, as it had been of yore to many a gay missive, and he pressed it reverently, as once passionately, to his lips, and vowed he would not fail her in her extremity.

His heart already yearned toward the child—a little child! What a novel phenomenon of humanity was this—what were its wants and habits, and how was he to minister to them? He would receive this legacy of care, and, perhaps, of its necessities, the child would be his teacher.

As his thoughts grew calmer he concluded that it would be better to confide the matter to the Captain, and consult him upon the course to be pursued to get possession of his little ward. Just then, the Captain, having appeased the lion of appetite, remarked—

“You’re a jolly fellow for a mess! When a brother comes to breakfast with you, after six years’ absence, one would think you would have something to say to him.”

“I have a great deal to say to him, but first let him read this;” and he handed him the letter.

The Captain read to the end without comment (a remarkable piece of self-restraint; for, with him, to think was to speak), and then struck his clenched hand violently upon the table. This act afforded him some relief, and he sat with lips resolutely closed, as though determined to say nothing which he might regret. Walsingham was likewise silent, and the Captain at length broke forth with—

“What do you mean to do?”

“That is what I wish you to advise.”

“I advise! By Gog and Magog, I should tell her she has sown the wind, and may reap the whirlwind! I would likewise send my best wishes for a plentiful harvest. Appoint you her brat’s nurse, indeed!” and the Captain discharged a volley of heathen deities.

“You would do no such thing, Ben Walsingham. You would be proud of me, if I avenged my wrongs upon a dying woman and helpless child, would you not? Viola’s sufferings have expiated her offences, and were it otherwise, ’twould shame my manhood to entertain wrath toward the woman I once regarded with tenderness. To the appeal of this unhappy lady I shall promptly respond, and you will advise with and aid me.”

The Captain was mollified, as he looked upon the earnest countenance of Viola’s generous advocate. His indignation gave a few expiring throes, as he mentally exclaimed, “What a noble nature has this woman slighted!” He thought of her,

"As one whose hand,
Like the base Judean's, threw a pearl away
Richer than all his tribe."

"God bless my mother's boy!" he cried, grasping Walsingham's hand.

"I shall go to her immediately, Ben."

"As I have no vocation for solitude, in the crow's nest, I'll e'en go with you," said the Captain, recovering from his emotion.

"Wonder if we are to bring the baby back with us?" he added, laughing. "Oh, Mahomet! what a nice nursery appendage I shall be! If it was a monkey from India, now, or an elephant from Siam, I'd be just the man for the emergency. But a miserable young human! The most stupidly helpless of all created things, don't ye see?"

Walsingham saw, but too plainly, the difficulties of the case in their most magnified aspect, poor ignorant bachelor as he was; but hoped that as they belonged to the same species, they should, by dint of sympathy, instinct, or something better, be able to understand the requirements of their mighty charge. Seeking Mrs. Grey, he briefly communicated to that important functionary that he had been summoned to attend the death-bed of a friend, and would probably return with a child, for the comfort of which he desired her to make suitable provision.

From the effect of this astounding announcement, that lady did not recover until her master had made good his retreat, thereby escaping the volley of wonders and queries that bub-

bled in delighted effervescence from her lips. "A child! goodness me! a child in this house! That *will* be like folks! Wonder if it's a boy or girl? Girl, I hope, like my poor little Petsy. How old did he say? If it's a baby, I ought to know! Sister's child, I s'pose! No, he has nary sister. Whose?" and here Mrs. Grey's tumultuous reflections went trooping pell-mell through the fog of conjecture.

CHAPTER IV.

MRS. GREY.

MRS. GREY, most courteous reader! She comes between us and the sunshine with presence as genial. May her beneficent shadow amplify, for there is warmth in it.

The capacious heart in Mrs. Grey's capacious bosom throbbed with the kindest impulses of feminine humanity, sending a warm tide of love, and sympathy, circling with the healthy life blood through her system. The good soul was ever chanting an anthem, and its burden was (although she knew it not), "Good will toward men!" Ay, and birds, and beasts, and fishes—in short, toward every created thing wherein circulated the blood or sap of life.

Loving all animated nature with her large honest heart, Mrs. Grey especially enjoyed companionship with the same. At an earlier period her social qualities had been fostered among men—good-natured, blustering, loquacious fellows, with lively gossiping wives; she was a ready gossip herself then, and

might be yet, if she could find a listener. Very dreary had seemed the Eyrie to the good woman, when first she led captive her social instincts to its appalling solitudes. But the principle of life is omnipresent. Men immured in dungeons are not (thank God!) alone! A loathsome spider in the cell of the unfortunate, may act an angel's part in awakening his dormant sympathies. Touching friendships have subsisted between mice and men through years of prison companionship. The germination of a stray seed in the crevice of his prison pavement has given the yearning heart of the captive an object of interest, sympathy, and delight. Man cannot shut his brother out from the all pervading life of nature.

In like manner, the social tendencies of Mrs. Grey sent forth instinctive tendrils amid the abounding Eyrie life. They grasped at pigs and chickens; they reached frantically after forest birds; and embraced, with tender convolutions, the dog Cuff and the cat Chloe. These last-named worthies were confidential friends, to whom she addressed various remarks, and occasionally consulted in household emergencies, as an ancient Cummer might be supposed to consult her familiar. They enjoyed, indeed, the reputation of uncanny beasts; and, as it was deemed by the simple country folks unlucky to offend them, we will give them a passing notice.

Cuff was an estray terrier, who rejoiced in the personal advantages of a coal black coat, great sulphurous eyes, and scarlet-lined jaws. No one knew from whence he came. He appeared at the Eyrie, looked upon the land that it was pleasant, curled himself upon the door mat, and invested himself

with the guardianship of the estate; announcing the same in noisy proclamation to all after comers.

Some months after his voluntary assumption of office, Monsieur Cuff returned from chase in the forest, with a miserably terrified starveling kitten in his mouth, which, to the horror of all observers, was so like himself as to suggest the idea that these mysterious brutes wore the livery of an evil master. There was the same ominously black coat, the same yellow, glaring eyes, the same fiery tongues. As the cat lay panting on the floor, and the dog stood over his strange deposit, the one yelped, and the other hissed and spat, with wide, red mouths, in such a diabolical manner, that all who witnessed were ready to aver that flames issued from those hot, cavernous jaws!

An unnatural, and (as the ignorant believed) unholy friendship grew between these children of Erebus, which filled the minds of their fellow servitors with disquiet, and occasioned vacancies in the household which Walsingham found difficult to fill.

It was about this time that John Grey died, and his excellent helpmate, deprived of her little home, was forced to earn her bitter bread under the roof of another. Very painful to this veteran housekeeper was the prospect of subordination. Those dear domestic tactics known among the craft as "*my ways*," to be subjugated by the unworthy *ways* of a mistress! Forbid it, Fate! She would suffer martyrdom for her culinary faith, and spoil pickles and confections to please no one. This spirit naturally interfered

with the domestic peace of Mrs. Tonks, to whom Grey had reluctantly proffered her assistance in household mysteries; and a series of spirited engagements took place, in which Mrs. Tonks hoped, in round, Dutch accents, that she might have her own way in her own house; and Mrs. Grey proclaimed her determination to "spile good vittles to please nobody."

While these two ladies were battling for their respective culinary creeds, Walsingham became conscious of great discomfort in his domicile. He actually went supperless to bed one night, with the prospect of breaking his fast upon the roots and herbs of his hermitage in the morning, the inmates of his kitchen having one by one deserted. The last fugitive, as she took her winding way down the mountain, paused to rest at Mrs. Tonks's, and described the state of affairs at the Eyrie:—"It was all along of them bewitched black beasts," she said.

"I never tid like black; 'tis only fit for a witch's pettermost!" remarked Dame Tonks, glancing spitefully at Grey's mourning garb.

"You left without a word of warning?" inquired that injured lady, not observing the offensive remark, in her interest for the deserted Walsingham.

He was such a solemn, gravestone sort o' man, was Walsingham, she was always afraid to say *boo!* to him, and had, consequently, dispensed with the distasteful ceremony.

"Why, you ought to be ashamed to leave the poor gentleman so!" remonstrated Grey.

"Ant vy den?" cut in the heavy Dutch tongue of the mis-

tress of the mansion. "Te pig man, and te leetle togge, all both pelong to te same Ault Nick, ant little lass petter run away ash stay!"

"Nick or no, she might have given warning," contended Grey, whose youth having been passed at service, had her principles.

"Vat nonshense! ven beoples vant to go, dey petter go."

"I want to go," said Grey.

"Vat's to hinder? dis little lass will take your ped, to your work, ant we'll have *peas* in te house. Valk out!" and Mrs. Tonks set wide the kitchen door.

The good *wrow* was obliged to postpone the enjoyment of *peas* until morning, as Mrs. Grey declined venturing forth into the darkness and solitude of the mountain.

And in the early morning, when Walsingham carried his dignity and scholarship into the kitchen, in search of a crust of bread, or a glass of milk, whereon to break his fast, he was appalled by the barrenness of that hitherto unexplored region.

He had supposed that kitchens spontaneously flowed with milk and honey; but when he got there the cupboard was bare, and so the poor dog (of a bachelor) got none!

There was a pan of milk, to be sure, but when he dipped his glass in it, the supposed liquid proved a solid, and broke in thick, jelly-like masses, that made him sick; and turning his back upon it, he walked forth upon the lawn.

A rosy-cheeked, respectable-looking woman in black approached, and saluted him—

"Good-morning, sir. Would you like to have a house-keeper?"

"I would, of all things," responded the hungry bachelor, smiling at the comfortable suggestion.

"My name is Jenny Grey, widow of John Grey, as was drowned. You knew John, sir?"

Mr. Walsingham had known, employed, and trusted the departed John, and was only too happy to know, employ, and trust his bereaved mate.

Mrs. Grey was forthwith installed in the duties of her office; and, hanging her black bonnet and shawl upon a peg, proceeded to devise a breakfast, with none to molest or make her afraid.

After sufficient time had elapsed, as he thought, for her to survey the premises, Walsingham sought this household queen, blushing boyishly, as he remembered the barrenness of her newly acquired domain.

"There seems to be nothing here, Mrs. Grey. I would like you to visit town and lay in a supply of such things as are requisite for a good housekeeper," and he smiled as he tendered his purse.

"There would be time enough for that," she said, cheerily, and in the mean time she would give him his breakfast. The coffee and omelette were ready, and she would bake the flannel cakes at once.

Breakfast? Why, the woman had hardly been in the house long enough to find the spoons, and here was the table neatly

laid! Coffee! omelette! flannel cakes! where on earth *did* she get them? The poor, ignorant, helpless fellow had seen none of these things in the pantry, and while speculating upon the probable connexion between flannel cakes and petticoats, the breakfast bell rang.

CHAPTER V.

CRUEL IS KIND.

"Oh, very, very dreary is the room
Where Love, domestic Love, no longer nestles,
But smitten by the common stroke of doom,
The corpse lies on the trestles!"

HAUNTED HOUSE.

A SICK-ROOM! You pause upon the threshold, fair lady, for sick-rooms are sad to youth and beauty. But youth and beauty, love and hope, must sometimes enter the chamber of suffering, and are oftentimes prisoners there. The mother's cheerful room will one day be darkened—the noisy, joyous nursery, perchance, become silent and sad, or your own luxurious boudoir, where you are dreaming bright dreams of Love to-day, may be entered by a sterner archer!

Be not thus startled, lady, but give a thought to that inevitable meeting with the last enemy of thy race, that when the Inexorable comes to claim his own, thou mayest arise, and meet him with a courageous heart. He is not always feared!

He is not always terrible! Oh, there is sometimes that in life which surpasses the bitterness of death! Come with me, and see Heaven's usher perform his mission.

In a dimly lighted room, a lady, pale and wasted, is stretched upon her couch. Nestling among the pillows, by her side, with her flushed cheek pressed to that of the dying one, is a little child. By the bedside stands Walsingham, holding the hand, and looking, with chastened thought, into the face of the only woman he has ever loved. Behind him, the Captain, serious and still.

These are not all. There are more, although we see them not! Heaven's angels are there ministering—seraphic faces bend around in love ineffable—the dim room brightens with their halo, and their mysterious influences enfold these mortal hearts!

Believest thou this?

And one other is there! A pale, stern shadow broods above that head, with upraised hand which falters not. Deal gently with her, thou Deliverer!

She opens her eyes, and murmurs, with a look of inquiry,

"Viola?"

"Mamma!" responds the nestler, with a kiss.

"You will be kind to her!—will care for her—Walsingham?"

"So gladly!" he answers in a tone of assurance. He would fain say more, but dares not trust himself to speak. It is as well; for the mother understands that she may repose this dear trust in him. With anxious love she continues—

"Let her not be an alien in your house, for she has been nurtured in love. Let her be a sister to your own little ones,—and—and—oh, Walsingham! will the wife of your bosom be a mother to my child?"

She fixes her large dark eyes upon him with a look of anxious inquiry.

"Viola," he answers, "my home is wifeless—childless. The vow which binds me to your little one is the only one I shall ever register."

A look of pained surprise—a moan of self-reproach, tells him she has learned at last the worth of the heart she wrecked.

But that is past—other thoughts disturb the pillow of the dying.

"Tell *him*—my husband—you may meet one day—that I forgive as I would be forgiven. I do not say he wronged me—I—who am so much in the wrong myself. Right and wrong are so confused—so intermingled—I can't unravel it now—it will soon be clearer!"

They wave their shining wings around to dissipate the glooms that have gathered so darkly; but she sees not those bright companions of her dawning future, waiting with serene expectancy the soul's birth into eternity. She sees them not, for the flesh is still strong!

"Tell him to deal wisely with our boy, of whom we were both so proud. Oh, my first born! you are not here to receive my blessing. How can I die and leave him in the wide, wicked world!"

"Though earth is wide, heaven is above all," says the

deep voice of the Captain. And the celestial band look in each other's eyes and smile with glad intelligence, for they know that "HE shall give his angels charge concerning" him.

Poor anguished spirit, the seraphs sing to thee, and their theme is, rest—peace! *rest—peace!*

The influence of their spirit voices pervades her heart, albeit unheard by the ear of flesh, and she smiles, as she utters,

"*Rest!—Peace!*"

Then an angel shouts, with triumphant voice, "*Heaven!*" but the soul, halting on heaven's verge, comprehends not the lofty music. Earthly voices drown the strain.

"Mamma!—mamma!—look at me—speak to me!—I am afraid!"

"You have called me back, darling!—I am not afraid; why should you be? Who says that Death is cruel?"

"Death is cruel! Death is cruel!" murmured the shuddering child, her vague terrors taking shape from her mother's words. And still the cold shadow broods, unmoved by the wail of sorrow.

Death is cruel!

Peace, maligner!

Softly, at the appointed time, he breathes upon the burning brow, and it grows cool. He lays a restraining hand on the tumultuous heart, and it is still.

And as those earthly faces fade from the failing vision, the seraph host brightens around the bed. In exultant gladness

the disenthralled spirit joins that glorious company, and flits forth into the vastness of eternity. And still in that death-chamber rings the distracted cry,

"Death is cruel! *Death is cruel!*"

Ah, yes! it is to the bereaved, the darkened, the blind, the circumscribed that death is cruel! To those for whom he refuses to lift the veil; and not to the favoured, who, by the power of his arm, are launched into the *illimitable bliss* of *eternal being!*

CHAPTER VI.

AN AMICABLE TRIO.

"She had a tabby of her own,
 A snappish mongrel, christened Gog;
 What do you think of that, my cat?
 What do you think of that, my dog?
 HOOD.

VERY heavily did time hang on the hands of social Grey, after the departure of her master. She was fruitful in resources, however, and devised a pretty little house-cleaning divertimento, the charming excitement of which beguiled the tedium of her solitude. The lumber-room was transformed into a nursery for the expected child; a vision of which, in white long-clothes, hovered perpetually about the good lady's head. The student's library was so thoroughly "put to rights," that he did not find his favourite authors for a twelvemonth after. A brewing of currant-wine was concocted for the delectation of supposititious guests. Mrs. Grey made it yearly; it was growing old in the cellar, all the

better for keeping, and was sure to be used some day. A few jellies and jams were compounded; after which the industrious dame, having exhausted her active amusements, was fain to take her sewing, summon her council, and proceed to stitch and chat.

This council, or, more properly speaking, kitchen cabinet, composed of Premier Cuff, and his coadjutor Chloe, was regarded by Mrs. Grey with a vague gratitude. She felt that by their occult practices she had been provided with a peaceful, albeit lonely (she could not forget that it was lonely) home; and as became the recipient of so great a benefit, she was mindful of the comfort of her swarthy friends.

Spreading a mat at her feet, upon which they curled themselves in amity, the good woman arranged her sewing. From this she frequently looked up to apostrophize her companions; for what was companionship without conversation?

Mrs. Grey had found her humble friends the best of listeners, and was in the habit of confiding to them her arrangements, opinions, and conjectures; and, to their honour be it said, they never had betrayed her confidence, which, in all probability, they would have done had they been human.

They were consulted with profit too in doubtful cases, as for instance:—

"Pussy, I've lost my gusset; I always do lose gussets: they are so little; and—*Did* you see my gusset, Chloe?"

Chloe mewed, showing her scarlet jaws, and with diabolical prescience rubbed aside her mistress's dress, revealing the lost gusset.

"Bless the cat! She knows more than most humans, don't she, Cuff?"

Cuff opened one sulphurous eye, and closed it again with a wink, which might be interpreted to mean, "We know what we know."

Standing on the table beside the eccentric needlewoman, was a friend more valued than Cuff, more sagacious than Chloe, more companionable than either. It was the kitchen clock, so called because Mrs. Grey found it on a shelf in the kitchen when she arrived; but since her advent, it had become a most ubiquitous piece of mechanism. Wherever was Mrs. Grey, there was the clock. If in the kitchen, it stood on its accustomed shelf; if in the dining-room, on a little table beside her work-basket; and if in her room, on the mantel opposite the good woman's bed. The poor little clock was carried up to bed every night; and during the day might frequently be seen in its transit from one spot to another.

"It's awful lonesome without you," said Mrs. Grey.

The clock was not only a good listener, but made valuable suggestions of its own; such as, "the ham has boiled long enough;" or, "you had better be seeing about dinner;" or again, "one mortal hour you have wasted." It was an oracle consulted hourly; a regulator who directed every move within the mansion; a companion ever present, ever prompt, ever true. Soulless and senseless, but more perfect, more infallible perhaps, because devoid of soul and sense. A wonderful emanation of the finite mind; a creation of the human hand, vigilant in the service of its maker; a spy upon fugitive time,

and a faithful reporter of his crafty theft of minutes from the unwary.

"Click, click, click," it whispered (other clocks say "tick," but this sharp little thing said "*click*," like a steel-trap). "Click, click, click, there they go—one by one!—seconds, minutes, how they run!—click, click, the day is done, and the night has just begun! Days like minutes rapid run, nights are passing one by one; time itself will soon be done. Boom, boom, boom, boom! boom! boom!" and with a succession of reports like the explosion of a six-barrelled revolver, this faithful sentinel announced that another hour had passed for ever down the rapids of time.

"Six o'clock, is it? I suppose I must put by my sewing, and see about tea. Mr. Walsingham will be here in less than an hour, eh?"

"Click, click," answered the little clock with a loud, busy, bustling voice. That clock was always in a hurry, remembering that time was ever on the wing, and might possibly get the start of her.

Placing her work-basket on its accustomed stand, Mrs. Grey tucked the clock under her arm, and proceeded to the kitchen, feeling that, on the whole, she had had a tolerably lively afternoon.

"Come, Cuff," said she, as she placed the clock on its shelf, and picked up the water-bucket; "you and I must go to the spring for water to fill the kettle. Don't you think the path is steeper than it used to be, my old fellow? But you're a sure-footed beast, and I am not. Not a beast? *no*, not sure-

footed;—yes, not a beast, too! You yelp so I don't know what I'm saying. Bless you, Cuffee, how low the spring is! I hope it won't go dry," etc., etc., ad infinitum.

Trotting along by his mistress's side, Cuff vouchsafed not to reply. It would have been a work of supererogation if he had, Mrs. Grey being more interested in the expression of her own views than in receiving those of other people. Conversation with her was rather a one-sided affair.

She observed, however, on entering the kitchen, that the clock, with warning finger, pointed to five minutes spent in the spring excursion.

"To be sure I've dallied," said she, nodding good-naturedly in the face of her monitor; "but I'll fly round, and make it up. Come, and skim the milk, puss, puss;" and down the cellar-stairs she hastened, skimmer in hand, followed by grimalkin, who mewed villanously during the skimming process, and refused to receive her mistress's communications until conciliated by her usual saucer of milk.

Talking to the cat, the dog, the clock herself, and, if the proverb be true, the Evil One, the loquacious dame proceeded briskly with her preparations for tea—her lively colloquies (can these one-sided affairs be called such?) never retarding her movements, but rather accelerating them. The faster she talked the faster she moved, as men march in time to music; and never were her movements so inefficient and spiritless as when performed in silence.

"It's almost time they were here," said Mrs. Grey, looking in the face of her friend.

"Fifteen minutes of seven," replied the clock.

"I wish they would come before you strike," observed she.

"Click, click," continued the rapid little clock, as if she would say, "They had better hurry—*tempus fugit*."

But as she was about to raise her usual hue and cry after the vanished hour, the sound of wheels attracted Grey and her coadjutors to the door.

CHAPTER VII.

ENTERTAINS ANGELS UNAWARES.

"A little child, a limber elf—
Singing, dancing, to herself!"

COLERIDGE.

A STRANGE event in the home of Arthur Walsingham was the advent of a little child. Mrs. Grey (fortunately for her master) was enraptured, as before hinted; for "the place was a dreadful out-of-the-way place, and a child was such company." The approbation of that important functionary secured, all minor embarrassments melted from the new guardian's path, by virtue of certain abstruse practices known only to housekeepers.

Mrs. Grey's baton of office was a magic wand; she touched the lumber-room, and, presto, behold! an airy, well-appointed chamber for the little guest. She waved it over the bachelor's board, and uprose beside the tea and toast, or roast and broil, dainty diet adapted to the taste of a child. What paps would

she not compound! what achievements of custards were hers! what a wonderfully endowed woman was Mrs. Grey!

The child was very beautiful; like, yet unlike her mother. A spiritual face, lighted by large mystic eyes and shaded by clustering curls of gold. She seemed shy, stunned, and bewildered, and looked with piteous eagerness in the direction of opening doors or approaching footsteps, as though she expected the appearance of the mother for ever lost. Walsingham was surprised that she did not ask for her. He did not know that an uneasy remembrance of a pale passionless face in its last repose, strangely unheeding of her childish agony, awed the inquiry that trembled on her lips. This, in time, gave place to happier memories; and the child, but faintly comprehending her bereavement, thought of her mother, not with grief and tears, but with infinite love and vague yearning. The mother was so interwoven with every hour of her young life's experiences, and so linked with all her infantile knowledge, that to *remember* at all, was to think of *her*. Mamma lived in all mamma had taught: through her precepts, she, like a living presence, pervaded the heart of her child.

The child was a reflective and imaginative little creature, whose active mind had reached up to companionship with maturity. Walsingham fancied that her mother had talked much with her, and it became a pleasure to him to listen to her prattle. He traced her mother's influence in all she said, and sometimes felt as though *she* spoke to him from the past through this novel medium. Unaccustomed as he was to

children, this one was to him a new and beautiful revelation of life. Her fair transparent face was like the face of an angel in his home; and he never contemplated its spiritual loveliness without holy thoughts. He would take her in his arms, and be reminded of that favoured child whom Jesus blessed. "Truly," he would think, in the language of the benediction, "of such is the kingdom of Heaven." He would listen to her prattle, abounding in quaint unconscious wisdom, and recall the inspiration of Samuel's childhood. Her gentle attributes won on his sterner and self-sufficient nature, until the affections which had so long run to waste were gathered up and garnered in her.

One night, soon after he had brought this new-found treasure home, before retiring to rest he stepped into her little room, which adjoined his own, to look at the sleeping child.

Sleeping he had supposed her to be; but, when he bent over her, he was startled by the large lustrous eyes that looked wonderingly into his own.

"What, my little one," he said, smiling, "are you awake yet?"

"It is not dark enough to sleep," she answered, pointing to a long path of moonlight streaming across the floor. He immediately dropped the window blind, and shut out the nocturnal brightness.

"Please don't!" plead the little voice.

"Why not? You can't sleep when the room is so light."

"But I don't want to sleep—I don't want the light shut out—it is my own light."

"Oh, ho! private property, is it?"

"Yes, sir," the little maiden answered, with a simple dignity that seemed in a manner to rebuke his levity, and doubts too, if he entertained any.

"And how is it yours?" he inquired, curious to learn what lien she would file upon moonlight.

She hesitated; but as he sat down by her bed, and taking her tiny hand in his own, caressed the pink curling fingers (a wonderful little piece of mechanism it was, he thought, and beautiful beyond compare), she grew confidential.

"Why," she began, in childish narrative, "you know I never slept alone until I came here, and—"

"True," interrupted the guardian, "I never thought of that."

"And in the dark I was afraid; and so one night when I said my prayers (mamma taught me my prayers), I asked God to let there be light."

"*Let there be light,*" repeated Walsingham, struck by the sublime expression of Holy Writ adapted to her little story.

"Yes, the Bible says that, and prayers must be like the Bible you know."

"Well?"

"Well, then, as I lay in bed, this beautiful light came creeping, creeping, along the carpet, and every night it lies upon the floor, and watches me, and I watch it, and I do not like to go to sleep, for then it will be gone when I waken."

"And you think it is sent to you especially?"

"Yes, sir; because I said my prayers, and God heard them," she answered with simple faith.

"What do you think it is?" he inquired, willing to hear a further exposition of her sweet belief.

"I don't know," she said, somewhat puzzled; and then with a bright glad look, expressive of a sudden revelation, added, "I think it is my guardian angel, don't you? Mamma told me about guardian angels; they watch by our beds, and take care of us, and all the while we don't see them."

"This, you *do* see," suggested he.

"Then it is not my guardian angel," the child replied, in a tone of disappointment. "I wonder if it is an 'an angel of light?'"

"My little Mystic is familiar with the whole hierarchy, I believe," said Walsingham; and, taking her in his arms, he bore her to the window, and bade her look abroad.

"Your 'angel of light' is not only by your little bed to-night, my sweet one. His white wings encompass the heavens, and his broad benediction covers the earth."

The young votary nestled in his arms, and looked abroad in smiling silence. Children often enjoy most when least demonstrative.

"What do you see?" he asked.

He longed to hear her resume her prattle, and was also curious to know what feature in all the moonlit beauty of earth and heaven would most engage the attention of the child.

"I see a little star, following the moon, just as I loved to

follow mamma. I wonder if the stars are the moon's little children?"

This reminded him of a poet's conceit, and he repeated—

"The young moon, like a Roman mother,
'Mid her living jewels shone."

"Then the moon *is* their mother!" exclaimed the child, who needed no better authority than a poet's verse.

"Now let me lay you in your bed, sweet child."

"Not till I bid the little star good-night! I can do it in poetry—such beautiful poetry! Listen:—"

"Good-night, little star, I will go to my bed,
And leave you to burn, while I lay down my head
On my pillow to rest, till the morning light;
Then you shall be fading, and I shall be bright."

There! mamma taught me that—but it is not a prayer;" and with an impulse of love she threw her arms about him, pressed a warmer and sweeter good-night upon his lips, and sprang lightly into her bed.

The fascinated student adjusted the counterpane with awkward tenderness, and held one hand in his, while he beguiled her mind from the themes which had excited it. Soothed by his presence, the little lids drooped softly, the dimpled hand relaxed its clasp, and the young spirit wandered in spirit-land, enjoying those glimpses of Heaven which bless our sleep in dreams.

And as the child slumbered, the man sat in meditation by her pillow. He remembered his own carefully-nurtured child-

hood; the teachings of his matchless mother; the love which had trained and guided him, and made him something better than he now was. Then he thought of the light-laughing Viola, triumphant in girlish beauty, transformed into a patient, pious mother like his own, by the wondrous power of maternal love. He pictured her alternately teaching and caressing her treasure, and by a few soft graceful touches making her impress upon the young spirit ere she went hence for ever. Then his mind came back to the little one.

He thought of the great loss sustained by the sleeping child. He thought also of her delicate organization, her poetic temperament, and her beautiful though startling speculations upon the invisible world. He thought with reverence of that realizing faith whereby the vague and scant revealings of the unseen were transformed into large and perfect realities in the heart of the undoubting child. He almost felt that to this unsullied nature God had vouchsafed revealings withheld from the world-hardened and world-encompassed, and the lisping infant seemed half endowed with a prophet's dignity.

With these reflections came the unpleasant suspicion that in the training of this peculiarly gifted child he should require something more than the aid of the hitherto all-sufficient Mrs. Grey. Grey was unequalled in her province of providing for the wants of the creature, but who was to minister to the cravings of this spiritual nature?

CHAPTER VIII.

EYRIE LIFE.

IF Walsingham in his self-sufficiency supposed that a fussy housekeeper, a rollicking sailor, and a misanthropic student composed the domestic circle at the Eyrie, he was about to receive enlightenment. With the nice discrimination of childhood Viola found more congenial companionship in Mrs. Grey's large and interesting circle of domestic animals, with whom she soon established a friendly pact. The guardian laid aside his books to learn that his solitude was extremely populous; that pigs, chickens, and the like have an individuality of their own; that childhood possesses a spirit of adaptation and buoyancy of being which it were wisdom to emulate; that Viola's death left not one stricken and faithful mourner such as had bewailed her falsehood; with various seraps of valuable knowledge such as we all arrive at, by one process or another, in our journey through life. Here was the orphan child of Viola, forgetting her great loss, and fixing her detached affections upon the fowls of the air and the beasts of the field. When his love was lost to him, he had

stifled his kindest sympathies, and ignored the minor interests of life; he felt, as he observed the happy child, that he had not done well to refuse the humble substitutes which nature offers her disappointed or bereaved children.

Viola had quite supplanted Mrs. Grey in the affections of her dumb friends. She and the cat Chloe were on most confidential terms, and kept up a mysterious whispering and purring in corners, while a matronly hen, rearing a tender brood of young, regarded her with such distinguished favour as to suffer her invasion of the sacred social circle without remonstrance. When *Madame* cried cluck, the fluttering wee biddies and toddling child emerged from their respective nooks, and hastened to the rendezvous, eager to learn the cause of the maternal summons. So far from resenting the intrusion of the diminutive lady, the amiable dame received her as one of the family, and she was welcome to share their pickings if she chose. Two mocking birds were building a nest in the apple tree, not so much for their own convenience as the child's entertainment, Walsingham thought. With gliding, serpentine movement, they flitted eternally through the shrubbery, chattering, twittering, singing in mad mimicry of all woodland voices, and carrying their wild buffoonery to the extravagant excess of mewing like the dignified Chloe herself.

The dove cote contained a busy company, whose proceedings were watched from afar with interest. There was the elegant and graceful Widow White, who, bereaved of her beloved mate, sat apart pluming her pure bosom into the most dazzling whiteness, and arching her snowy neck in the sunshine, with

melancholy coo the while, which seemed heralding her sorrows to nature's drowsy ear.

There was Bully Bluster (the Captain was his sponsor!), a portly, middle-aged bird, of choleric temper, who seemed a personage of weight and authority in the feathered community. This individual, prompt to perceive and resent the most accidental infringement of his smallest right (though what right any other fellow had to flutter a pigeon's wing he could not understand), was generally in the indignant mood. What with driving vagabond loiterers from his doorstep, chastising insolent coxcombs who fluttered about Fanny, and keeping a sharp lookout for offenders generally, he was usually in dudgeon. It was positively awful to see him, under a sense of his injuries, rushing rapidly to and fro on his paddle, or whirling round and about in fierce excitement, his body swelling, plumage ruffling, and red eye glaring, while a wrathful growl of malediction consigned the whole feathered fraternity to pot—pie: on such occasions he seemed an epitome of a bull-dog tarred and feathered. Uninfluenced by the example of constancy set him by Widow White on the next paddle, and undaunted by a trick which Walsingham had of breakfasting on his tender mates, the crested hero had selected a third mate, one Fanny Fantail, much younger than himself. A January and May sort of affair their union was. Those who picture the young thing, immured in the nest of a crusty old curmudgeon and pining under domestic tyranny, misconstrue the character of Bully Bluster. A more kind, coddling, fussy old fool of a husband never waited upon the whims of a wife.

She was the safety-valve through which he relieved himself of the compressed tenderness of his nature; and although he habitually squared himself in boxing attitude against all creation, it was his sovereign pleasure to be henpecked by Fanny. Has he not his parallel in human kind?

Fanny was usually in the straw, and he with bustling important air was hurrying to and fro, hither and thither, eyeing with an imposing air of connoisseurship, and selecting, or rejecting, bits of hay to tuck about her feet, or dainty crumbs for her regalement. Had she felt that she could relish a grain of rice, he would have flown to the fields of Georgia to pack his crop.

Numerous lesser characters flitted across the scene; enamoured birds "with livelier iris changing on their burnished breasts," pursuing some flying Daphne through the forest; or tender mothers conducting their debutant brood through the dizzy perils of first flight, kept up the busy interest of the scene. Although the little spectator could not fully understand these various manoeuvres, the tedium of hours was beguiled in watching and wondering what it all could mean. Thus, in the unmolested contemplation of the ever varying kaleidoscope of nature, was she amused, beguiled—perhaps taught.

Now, one day when Mrs. Grey, accompanied by the little Viola, had transacted certain mysterious business in the village, she called at the house of Mrs. Irving (the daughter of a former mistress) to refresh herself with the latest fashionable intelligence current in kitchen circles, and in turn enter

tain her friends with the wonderful story of Viola's advent at the Eyrie, of which it appeared in some inexplicable way Mrs. Grey herself was the heroine.

While she discoursed with the demoiselles of the household, her young charge grew very sociable with the little Irvings in the garden: enjoying, poor lonely thing, such a game of romps as she had never dreamed of before.

"Oh, Mrs. Grey, not yet! I do not want to go home yet!" she cried, when that lady came in search of her.

"Don't want to go home, and it so late! That's always the way with children," pettishly exclaimed Mrs. Grey, who had herself chatted in the kitchen beyond the proper hour for leaving. "Come, come—and be quick, child."

"It is not very late, for the sun has not gone down into the river, and the fireflies are not yet out. Let me play a little longer—do, Mrs. Grey."

"Can she not stay with the children to-night, Hannah?" interposed Mrs. Irving, who sat with her needlework in an arbour. She had already heard the history of the little guest, and had been charmed with the manner and appearance of the child. "She can sleep with Helen, and I will drive with her to the Eyrie in the morning."

"You sweet darling," exclaimed Viola, to Helen, in childish ecstasy, "how I would love to stay with you to-night!" She lowered her voice as she added, "I think it is dreadful to be alone in the cold, dark night—don't you?"

Helen laughed and said she could not tell; that it was always warm and bright, and full of children, in their nursery.

"How charming that must be!" cried Viola. "Mrs. Grey, shall I stay?"

"Look! the sun has gone down now," said the duenna, "and it will soon be dark. Then Mr. Walsingham will sit alone by the study window, and wonder why his little girl does not climb on his knee, and sing songs to him in the twilight. That's the way she does, ma'am," continued Grey, in an aside, dropping the style of expression, which she considered appropriate to Viola, and resuming her own—"That's the way she does, ma'am; it's good as a play to hear her."

"I must go," said Viola quickly, turning to her little friend; "but can't you come with me?"

"Yes," chimed Grey, "do let me take her with us, Mrs. Irving; I know all your ways with the children, and will take good care of her. Mr. Walsingham will be pleased to have her visit his little girl, I know."

Mrs. Irving would have said *no*, but the large brown eyes of Viola were upturned with such a look of anxious appeal that she hesitated.

"Please, let her go," said the child; "we will be very good, and I want to show Mr. Walsingham what a dear little thing she is!"

The mother's heart was touched by the unconscious flattery, and the mother's heart was stirred for the lonely child so sweetly pleading.

When Walsingham entered the child's room that night, to take a good-night look at his treasure, there were two fair

young heads upon the pillow—two tiny forms nestling in childish embrace.

The next day, when the somewhat anxious Mrs. Irving drove to the Eyrie to reclaim her child, she was charmed by the cordial politeness with which its proprietor thanked her for the favour of Helen's visit, and begged that she would soon permit her to return.

From that time visits were constantly interchanged by the little people. Mrs. Irving felt the liveliest interest in Viola; her beauty and peculiarity, as well as her desolate condition, appealing powerfully to the prompt sympathies of the lady.

No pleasure was ever prepared for her own children that Viola did not share; and often, in arranging some pretty garment for her daughters, she thoughtfully prepared a similar one for the child which in her heart she had adopted.

Walsingham recognised in her those qualities which he had desired to shed their influence around the life of Viola. Her delicacy, her tact, her tenderness, her acute perceptions, rendered her a valuable friend. He gradually accustomed himself to consult her womanly judgment, and rely upon her advice in all matters pertaining to the child.

The little Irvings were all fond of Viola. Their mother had told them her sad little history, contrasting it with their own happy lot. They were taught by her to thank the Good Father who had placed them in a loving home, and to show their gratitude by kindness to the little unfortunate: and of this good seed some fell upon good ground, and some fell among thorns. Viola's name was so often used in their

nursery to point a moral, that they regarded her as a heroine of romance. Mary, a blue-eyed, blue-veined, womanly little girl, delighted to play "*mother*" with the motherless one, and with sober mimicry assumed the dignity and tenderness of a young matron toward her charge. Howard, a headstrong, self-willed, beautiful boy, insisted upon her being his horse, his dog, his anything, so that he engrossed and tyrannized over her to the exclusion of others.

This flattering preference was attended with disagreeable consequences. The young gentleman, to render his illusions perfect, bestowed upon his playmates such treatment as he considered due the animals they represented. More than once, when running in harness for his amusement, did Viola receive such blows as left great welts upon her shoulders, and sent her weeping to the sympathizing arms of her little "*mamma*."

"Oh, Howard!" cried Mary upon one such an occasion, "how dare you be so cruel? Look how you have hurt her;" and she showed him the red stripe of his whip on her pretty neck.

His face flushed with shame; but it was not in embryo manhood to make an acknowledgment. On second thoughts he perceived that *he* was the aggrieved party, and made a decided demonstration of resentment.

"She sha'n't be my pony if she cries," said the young despot. "Pshaw! what a baby!"

"Because you struck her, naughty boy!"

"She was my *pony*, and I had a right to strike her! I won't let you play any more, Cross-Patch."

"Poor little thing, don't cry!" said Mary, tenderly rocking her in her arms; "there, there—Howard, she is so little and tender, how could you be so rough!"

"I was only in play, I tell you, and did not mean to hurt her. She always ends in a cry—she did the last time."

"Because you are always rude, and hurt her. You did this once before, and mamma thought it was an accident. She told you to be careful, as she would punish you if it happened again. Come, kiss her and tell her you're sorry, and we will not say anything more about it."

Viola wiped her eyes and turned her lips towards him; but the offended majesty of boyhood refused the proffered conciliation, and sulked down the garden walk decapitating the dahlias of which mamma was proud.

These children were both older than Viola. Little Helen, the pet and plaything of the household, although her own age, seemed scarcely a companion for Viola. Howard alternately attracted her girlish heart by his superb beauty, and repulsed by his inexplicable perverseness. Of gentle, loving Mary she was most fond.

CHAPTER IX.

PRATTLE.

"But through the morning gate of beauty goes
Thy pathway to the land of knowledge."

Tired with play, and tormented with prickly-heat, the child Viola sat within the shaded piazza, and wondered why the sky was so burnished, the earth so baked, and the air so still; why her own little heart beat so faintly, and desire had failed; why Widow White eschewed the too ardent sunshine, and Bully Bluster drooped his wings dozily upon his perch, in peaceful truce with pigeon kind; why the stilled fowls had betaken themselves to unknown depths of shade, and the busy Eyrie world had grown so strangely solitary.

It was very oppressive! The silence and solitude, as well as the heat, and Viola believed she should cry; no, she wouldn't, she would call the cat. Chloe came, but in no better mood than her mistress. She laid her head in Viola's lap with a ferocious purr which seemed to say "noli me tangere." Viola did not thus interpret it, and by way of inspirit-

ing herself and her feline friend, she indulged in the amiable pleasantries of tweaking her ears, and pulling her tail. Then puss drew off her gloves for a boxing match, and showing teeth and nails (the only specks of white about the black beast), assumed a look that of itself might have earned her reputation of a witch's familiar. Indignant and alarmed at this demonstration, the little maiden dismissed her favourite in disgrace, and resigned herself again to solitude and silence. But solitude and silence are obnoxious to little maidens. To our little maiden they were especially so; and, bethinking herself of her quondam playfellows, the chickens, she sallied out into the blistering sunshine in search of them.

Then, for the first time, Walsingham through the blinds of his study observed her. To a man of different mould she would have been a tired child, on a visit to certain barnyard fowls, attended by a diabolical black cat, "and nothing more."

But he was one of those contemplative and imaginative men to whom existence is twofold and doubly bounteous. For such the real and ideal blend their varied sweets; like travellers amid the profuse vegetation of the tropics, they gather from the same bough simultaneous fruits and flowers. He had a moment before looked out upon the midday hush of nature, and with a certain gorgeousness of imagery fancied her a beauteous queen, lapped in the profound quietude of an enchanted repose, when lo! to the disenthralment, dissolving the spell by a more potent charm of her own, flitted the fay-like, ethereal child.

As though to indulge his fancy at this juncture, the ubiqui-

tous mocking-birds took upon themselves the rôle of genii contending for their endangered spells. With arrowy rush and gliding flight they boldly intercepted the child, and filled the air with cries of threatening and remonstrance. Now pausing on the rose trees in her path, they peered audaciously in her face, with a meaning in their glittering eyes that seemed almost human; then circling about her like winged serpents, they screamed in wrathful clamour—chut—chut—twitter—twitter—mew—mew—mew.

Viola paused in alarm, and while she continued motionless her little adversaries were silent. Their wary, watchful eyes were fastened on her, and her first movement toward retreat was checked by a storm of wild outcries.

"Certes," quoth Walsingham, hastening to the rescue of the frightened child, "these wierd birds must have led the concert of mocking voices on the enchanted hill."

"What do they say? what do they mean?" exclaimed Viola, as she hid her face in his bosom.

"They are telling my little girl a secret," said he, soothingly, as a mother might, yet with a touch of his quaint fancy.

The child upraised her face and smiled, then looked troubled as she remembered her fright, and said: "I don't want them to talk to me that way;—but I wish I knew the secret."

A faint expression of sarcasm flitted over the fine face of Walsingham as he said—

"What a notable little woman you are, to look so closely after a secret!"

Viola's little heart swelled with pride, for she thought there was something extremely complimentary in this. Ambition was not so busy with the turbulent elements of poets, priests, warriors, and kings, but he found time to whisper to this gentle one, a promise of triumphant womanhood.

"Where is my little girl going in this heat?"

"To see the chickens."

"Call them."

Viola called as she was bidden; but her usually prompt feathered friends did not appear. A low, timid, lugubrious chuckle, was heard in response, however; and searching in the direction of the sound, Walsingham found the flock ambushed in a brush-heap.

"Your pets are frightened, as well as yourself," said Walsingham, as he returned to the house closely attended by the audacious and vigilant mocking-birds.

Viola having procured bread, scattered it in the path and called encouragingly to her chickens. A disheartened murmur of consultation was heard among them, when one adventurous spirit emerged from the brush-heap fortification, and proceeded to regale himself upon her bounty. With the flashing fierceness of enraged eagles, the uncanny birds swooped at his head, and the lubberly poltroon fled to cover, as fast as his long limbs would carry him.

Walsingham smiled at the ludicrous display of fierceness and timidity, while Viola exclaimed, with tears in her eyes, "Oh, why do they do so?"

"To guard the secret."

"What can the secret be?"

"I will tell you," said he.

"You know! oh how did you find it out? Tell me! tell me!" she cried.

"Which? the secret, or how I found it out?"

"Both—but the secret first."

"Well, first then, Mr. Mocking-bird built a nest in the apple tree, and Mrs. Mocking-bird placed two delicate eggs therein. These were their beautiful and precious treasures. She pressed them close to her warm bosom for many days, when at last the enamelled walls parted, and a tiny mocking-bird stepped forth to life from each."

"Is it a fairy story?" interrupted the child.

"What is a fairy story, little one?"

"A fairy story is something wonderful and beautiful—just like that."

"Is a fairy story a history of marvellous and impossible events, accomplished by supernatural agency?"

The child did not reply in words: perhaps she did not quite understand; but a conviction that it must be as he had said, impelled her to execute a series of sagacious nods, with the most beautifully poised head in the world.

"It must be a fairy story then," said the guardian, "for it is certainly marvellous that a bird should be packed in a ball no bigger than a hazel-nut. The mocking-birds could not have placed it there of themselves."

"Couldn't you?"

"No, I could not."

"But this story is real, and fairy stories are not!"

"Well, then, if the birds are not able to do this thing of themselves, and there are not any fairies to help them, how was it brought about, I wonder?"

"God must have helped them," said Viola, "for He can do everything, and He *is real*. Is this the secret?"

"Yes. It is for the sake of those little ones that they are jealous of every living thing that moves across their garden world. Affection is a potent agent of transformation: under the influence of a new and great love these timid birds have grown lion-hearted. Yesterday they were shy and gentle; to-day they are wrathful and bold."

"Oh, they are dreadful!" said the child, who had been thoroughly alarmed by their violent demonstrations.

"They would be," said her guardian, "if their power equalled their will. There is no fierceness so terrible in bird, beast, or man, as that which is rooted in affection."

Much of this was above the child's comprehension, as his remarks often were; but her growing mind reached forth its tendrils to grasp his meaning, and so grew upward to the light.

CHAPTER X.

CHILDISH.

"IF Death is cruel, Time is kind," said Walsingham, turning from the library window. "I thought, Mrs. Irving, when I saw the wild grief of that little child over her dying mother, that she would die of sorrow; and now look! a happier mote never sported in the sunshine of existence!"

"There is so much hope in a child's heart that grief is not very abiding," answered the lady.

"I don't know much about children," said the Captain, "but, by Saturn's self, I could devour this one! If they are all so charming, I don't understand that economy of nature which permits them to spindle up to womanhood. Beg pardon, ma'am," he added, suddenly remembering he had been guilty of an indiscretion.

"What do you say, Ben, about devouring the child? I believe you have been so much among cannibals that you would 'grind her bones to make your bread.'"

"She's a plump little thing, and would be tender picking,"

quoth the Captain grimly. "And who knows but she may come to a worse end?"

Mrs. Irving laughed—"The Captain is dispirited by the prospect of an angelic child declining, by slow degrees, into a faulty woman."

"Yes, in faith! I shall be terribly shy of Viola, if she ever reaches that dignity. How will we bachelors manage her?"

"I give myself no uneasiness on that score, expecting to be the *managed*," said Walsingham; "I advise you to resign yourself to the same prospective fate. Perhaps her womanhood will reconcile you to woman, as her childhood has overcome your horror of children. When Viola first came to the Eyrie, he was more afraid of her than a pestilence, and now he is in the most abject servitude to her whims."

"I am not surprised. Children have spells and enchantments of their own by which they work their will. In my creed they are but half human."

"Pray expound, and we will promise to be stout believers," petitioned Walsingham, who of late loved to hear about children.

"I have often thought," she answered, in a sweet earnest womanly way, that charmed one, perhaps both gentlemen, "I have often thought, when looking into the face of an infant, that though born of an earthly mother, the young spirit is born of God. It is a newly created angel that descends from heaven and becomes a little child."

There were tears in Mrs. Irving's eyes as she added, "Those to whom the Father lends his angels, should keep

them unspotted, remembering they are to be *restored* to the Hierarchy of Heaven."

Meanwhile, the Captain, who was not of a speculative turn, wandered to the window and counted the fowls. That interesting family, having outgrown the graces of early chickhood, and degenerated into a brood of tall, gaunt hobble-de-hoys, were in playful pursuit of a fat grasshopper in seven-leagued boots. Viola, too, joined the chase with great ardour, and seemed as likely to succeed in capturing the quarry as any of the party, when the Captain summoned her to the library, and presented her to their guest.

Mrs. Irving received her with motherly caresses, and announced that the object of her visit was to claim her for a few days. Howard's birth-day was to be celebrated with great festivity on the morrow, and the children would expect Viola.

"Oh," said the little lady, shaking her curls, "I would love to go, but I'm afraid I cannot leave Mr. Walsingham so long."

Mr. Walsingham looked flattered, for a man may be flattered by a child; and the Captain declared she was a conceited little puppet to suppose that her littleship was of any consequence to anybody; and, moreover, an ungrateful lump of granite never to think of him, when he should fret himself into a fever while she was away; which volley of abuse was punctuated by sundry uncouth kisses of various degrees, answering to comma, colon, period, etc.

"Why, can't you leave Mr. Walsingham, my dear? I'm sure he would like you to go."

"Would you?" she said, appealing to him with a doubtful

air. "Mrs. Grey says you *are lost* when I go away, and I thought I would stay and take care of you."

"If he does get *lost*, popinjay, one need but look between the covers of his books to find him; but what is to become of an old sea-dog like myself, I should like to know? Who'll tell Mrs. Grey what I like for dinner, or hunt me up, if I forget all about tea? Who'll take pains to teach me the comfortable usages of middle-aged gentlemen in the matters of dressing-gown and slippers? Who'll be pertinacious on the subjects of tobacco and boots, and unceasing in her efforts to make a gentleman of me like yonder model man, and failing in that, to save me from the consequences, in the shape of the wrathful Mrs. Grey? hey?"

"Never mind, uncle Captain," said the important little lady in a tone of soothing. "Never mind, uncle Captain, I'll stay with you."

"That will not be necessary," interposed the guardian, "I'll have an eye to his comfort, and superintend his reformation, while you are gone; so run and tell Mrs. Grey to equip you."

The child disappeared, but quickly came running back.

"I'll tell you, uncle Captain!" said she brightly. "Do all the time just as *he* does, and then Mrs. Grey will love you!"

"Umph!" growled the ungrateful Captain, "I should hang myself at the yard-arm if she did!"

It was not until Viola had been absent for a few days, that Walsingham found how large a place in the house she filled. No musical voice filled the air with chimes, no little footfall woke the Eyrie echoes. The flowers on his study table, sweet dewy

flowers of her gathering, grew nauseous and stale, and the dinner-table lacked a presence more piquant than sauce or condiment.

* * * *

Winter closed around that mountain home, but Walsingham was neither moody nor lonely as of yore. There was a bright presence hovering near him, smiling eyes looking into his own, challenging smiles in turn, and an atmosphere of love around him. The hitherto sad winter twilights were filled with music. The past became a "*dead past*," and was buried with the dead Viola, while the precious legacy she had left him led his thoughts, as childhood ever will, to the promise of the future. Life had now an aim—the well-being and happiness of this beloved child. He thanked God that he had not married, and that there were no claims upon him that could conflict with, or weaken hers.

And how shall I paint the love and reverence for him that filled the child's heart? In her eyes he was indeed "little lower than the angels, and crowned with glory and honour." He was the king of her young life, who could do no wrong; the omnipotent, whose arm could never fail; the munificent genie, who surrounded her life with enchantments. Oh, the faith of loving childhood, which thus invests its guardians with the attributes of gods. Alas for the judgment of mature years, before which the illusive and imagined perfections vanish as mists before the sun! and alas for those who live to see their little ones disenchant!

Upon these proemial chapters I have lingered too long for my reader—not long enough for myself. A child's prattle echoes in my heart with which I would fain fill pages, loving as I do that unconscious wisdom which proceeds from the mouths of babes. But years are passing, our Viola is hastening up to womanhood, and we must travel on with her.

CHAPTER XI.

HOYDENISH.

"The wary crow,—the pheasant from the woods—
Lull'd by the still and everlasting sameness,
Close to the mansion like domestic broods
Fed with a shocking tameness."

HAUNTED HOUSE.

AFTER a six years' cruise, Captain Ben returned to find Viola six years older, at which he stormed most terribly, calling on the heathen gods in a manner shocking to the feelings of any who maintained a decent reverence for those old divinities. The artful Viola contrived to appease his wrath, and reconcile him to the new phase in her life by showing off the graces of twelve years old, and promising she would "never grow any more as long as she lived; no, never!" Which promise she doubtless kept to the best of her ability.

"Well, well," said he, considerably, "if she has grown tall and thin, and smoothed her curls into tails like John Chinaman's, and dropped her lisp, one must love her, notwithstanding."

"Viola is very pretty," remarked Walsingham, in whose eyes she possessed the beauty of a seraph.

"Humph! a plain little nondescript, neither child nor woman! I always knew she would grow up!" retorted the dissatisfied captain.

To which his brother replied, "You were very sagacious."

The Captain, finding that Viola persisted in her upward course, despite his remonstrances, and her promises to the contrary, bethought him that it was time she should be learning something that would be useful to her in life.

Recalling with pride his own early accomplishments, he proceeded at once to initiate her in the mysteries of "hunting, fishing, and war," as the school books have it. She tramped valiantly by his side through the forests of the Bluff, where, if a squirrel leaped, or a bird fluttered, the Captain would transfer his fowling-piece to her hands, drop on one knee before her that she might rest the barrel upon his shoulder, and give the word—"make ready—take aim—*fire!*"

The little girl, excited by the novelty of her pursuit to bravery, would scatter the forest leaves with her shot—but bird and squirrel escaped unscathed. In fishing she was more successful; and often, under the Captain's supervision, brought home a basket of fish from the stream.

So thoroughly versed was she in the theory of naval tactics, that her instructor pronounced her "almost fit to command a man o' war." To increase her accomplishments he one day pitched her into the river, after having given her the most accurate and scientific verbal treatise upon the art of swim-

ming. The poor victim bobbed about in helpless terror until her oppressive protector plunged in and drew her forth half drowned.

This adventure coming to the ears of Mrs. Irving, she paid the Eyrie a visit of remonstrance; upon which occasion she conveyed to the Captain's mind a vague impression that she was incapable of appreciating his qualifications as an instructor of youth, of the softer sex.

"Do you mean to say you don't approve of Viola's learning to swim?" he cried. "Why, d— no! *bless* you, it's a most necessary bit of knowledge, and may save her life some day. Let me tell you, madam, if you don't know how to swim yourself, your early education has been very much neglected."

"I would rather die than learn."

"In the name of Mars, what would you have me do?" he broke forth. "Teach her knitting, netting, and crochet? Jupiter Ammon! I must learn myself, first. By Vulcan's self, if she expects to learn from me, she must be content with the knowledge I possess!"

"Now, in the name of all the Gods at once!" interposed Walsingham, laughing, "don't you think Vulcan's self would be as suitable for a preceptor of ladies? Yet we nowhere read of his attempting to impart to Venus (or any other female mind over which he exerted influence) the mysteries of the smithy!"

"A worthy example," quoth the culprit Captain. "Henceforth I shall keep my stupendous knowledge for individual

use, and abandon the project of making a Leander out of that squeamish pigeon's heart."

"Or a Nimrod," suggested Mrs. Irving.

"Or a Walton," added Walsingham.

"Yes, yes!" replied the ill-used sailor; "but, by George! my teachings are as useful as your own, Arthur. What earthly advantage is she to derive from your Latin conjugations, I would like to know?"

Walsingham appealed to Mrs. Irving in defence of his teaching, but that lady did not approve of Latin for Viola at present. She was very young, and had much to learn, of which Latin seemed to be the least. She was a fragile flower, and too much application, too many studies, might impair her health and spirits—therefore Latin had better be laid aside for the present.

"Ho, ho, ho!" laughed the Captain, restored to good humour by this condemnation of his brother's instruction. "Break the spirit, indeed!" and he roared again with boisterous hilarity.

"I don't think her spirit is quite spoiled yet! Did you hear how she horsewhipped young Tonks last week?"

"What *do* you mean?" inquired Mrs. Irving, nervously.

"Why, you see," replied Captain Ben, rising with the excitement of a narrator, "we drive a good deal around the country with the new grays; that is, *she* drives, and I go along to insure the safety of the concern."

"*She* drives?"

"Yes, superbly! I taught her myself! Last week we

stopped at Tonks's house on some business for Mrs. Grey. I was in a hurry to get to town before the mail closed, and finding we would be detained, I told the child I would walk on, and she should drive after, when she got through with her affairs."

"Good heavens, Ben! with those restive animals?"

"Playful, only playful, and innocent as lambs. Young Tonks officiously took them out of harness; and when Viola was ready he had the pleasure of tackling them up again. The horses capered a good deal, and they tried to detain the child until I should return; but she said she had been told to drive on, and she would do it—she knew I would wait until she did—that the horses were not dangerous, and she could manage them. 'Now, sir,' said she, in her soft way, to young Tonks, as he stood holding their heads. 'When I am in, pray don't hold the horses, for they won't bear it.' The old man lifted her in, and the moment the beasts felt her weight in the carriage, they began to plunge and struggle. 'Let go,' cried Viola, as she gathered up the reins. 'Hold on,' shouted the old man in terror. 'Let go, and there is no danger,' implored the child. 'Hold on, hold on, for mercy's sake,' roared old Tonks, and the young un held on like a lobster to a cat's paw, while the frantic beasts reared, lifting their tormentor from his feet. At this moment Viola thought of a means of delivering herself from the peril. Abandoning her unheeded beseechings, she stood up in the currie. Drawing her tiny figure to its full height, with reins gathered resolutely in one hand, and whip in the other, she laid the lash smartly

about the head and face of her stupid detainer. Startled and stung by this attack he instinctively recoiled, and the horses thundering down the road dashed into the bridge, where, feeling the planks under their feet, the noble old thoroughbreds fell into the prescribed walk, with a regard for the supremacy of the law that entitles them to the respect of all good citizens."

"This cannot be true, Captain Walsingham!" said Mrs. Irving, looking very white; "you are amusing yourself at our expense."

"Ask old Tonks! He says he never was so frightened in his life as when he saw the impatient animals leap off. He ran after to pick up the child when the concern should be dashed to pieces; but when he heard the slow tramp of the animals' hoofs in the bridge, he thought '*the gal knowed de hosses and de hosses knowed de gal*;' and so he returned, lit his pipe, and took a smoke upon it."

"I am amazed that you should have been so fool-hardy!" exclaimed Walsingham, in displeasure.

"*Me* fool-hardy? bless you! 'twas young Tonks," said the incorrigible old salt.

"Mrs. Irving," cried Walsingham, "tell me what I am to do with the poor child."

Mrs. Irving answered as though her mind had been settled upon that point long before, that she thought Viola should be sent to school.

"I have an aversion to boarding-schools, and should prefer a governess."

"I don't doubt it," said Captain Ben; "your candour is quite refreshing. Let us have a governess for ourselves immediately."

Mrs. Irving smiled, while Walsingham laughed outright. "I see," said he, "a legion of lions in the way."

"I really think," said Mrs. Irving persuasively, "that a boarding-school would be better for Viola than the best governess. She is a singularly unsophisticated and unworldly child, and needs that contact with children of her own age which will fit her for intercourse with the world."

"Those qualities in my little girl's character possess for me a wonderful charm. Why should I expose her to a discipline which will impair them?"

"They are beautiful in the child, but dangerous to the woman. Viola will be a woman soon, and it is better she should know something of the world in miniature, before she enters upon its real life. She will not lose her own beautiful individuality, nor will she grow worldly when she knows the world. Contact with evil will not harm her, because she has no affinity with it. It passes from her pure nature like water from the breast of a swan."

"By Jupiter! madam, you're a sensible woman after all!" shouted the impulsive Captain.

Mrs. Irving was one of those low-voiced, persuasive women, who pass through life for ever having their own way. They never conceive a project that they do not carry; they never advocate a measure that does not succeed. When Mrs. Irving said, "Don't you think, my dear, you had better do this? or

that?" you were sure to think so; or if you did not so think then, you did ten minutes afterward, and you did ten years after. There was an infallibility about the woman.

"I have resolved to send Viola to school," said Walsingham, on the morrow, to Mrs. Grey.

"Now look at that!" said Mrs. Grey, in turn to Chloe. "Yesterday, when I told Mrs. Irving about the Captain throwing of Miss Viola into the water, she said, 'Mrs. Grey, this will never do! that child must go to school;' and she put on her things and rode home with me, pussy; by which I knew the thing was fixed. I'll declare that woman rules affairs here just as she does at home; and, although we live with Mr. Walsingham, Mrs. Irving is our mistress. Get out, Cuff! You're Mrs. Irving's dog, too, although, like a stupid brute, you don't know it."

Poor Mrs. Grey was restive under this counter-influence in her domain. The "*thing was fixed*," as she said. Viola was to be placed under the care of one Madame De Fleury, in a distant metropolis, who was, as you might gather from her prospectus, an admirable Crichton in petticoats, able and willing to impart all the gifts of nature, and accomplishments of art, for a given amount of filthy lucre.

During the years to be spent by Viola at school, Walsingham determined to travel. The Captain would sail again ere long, and he resolved to cross the ocean with him, and afterward follow the guidance of his errant fancy. In a short time the Eyrie was deserted.

More wierd-like than ever seemed this house set upon a hill, when its doors closed upon the departing inmates, and silence and solitude divided the realm. As years passed, the bats and the owls built their nests in its porches, and the wild birds reared their young beneath its eaves, while desolation and decay filled its pleasant places. But still it reared its bold front to the sky, and spread abroad its walls to the storm, and stood defiant, like a giant in his fastness!

CHAPTER XII.

A LOAN RECALLED.

"Oh, very gloomy is the House of Woo,
Where tears are falling while the bell is knelling,
With all the dark solemnities, that show
That Death is in the dwelling."

HAUNTED HOUSE.

MARY IRVING was now a tall, fragile girl. She had always been a delicate child; but her form seemed more slender, her cheek more pale, and the blue veins more distinct upon her temples than ever. She was wearied after slight effort, and no longer cared for play.

Her father called her his sedate little girl—his Minerva; and said she grew more womanly every day. But Mrs. Irving regarded her with a troubled heart, fearing that womanhood might never dawn upon this dear child.

Very dear she was to both parents, but especially to the father. The mother's heart was equally divided among her children; but to his first-born he accorded the largest share of that sweet fountain of affection which she had opened in

his heart. She was most like her mother, and dear in proportion as that mother was dear. The delicacy of her face and figure; the softness of her movements, no less than her tender, loving nature, appealed to his manliness for love and shelter.

Helen had grown rosy and hoydenish; every body laughed at and spoiled her, except Howard, who spoiled no one but himself. He was his own especial pet. Proud, passionate, and turbulent was he, with a splendour of beauty like a rebellious angel.

He was endowed with great gifts, for good or evil, and his mother felt the serious responsibilities attaching to the possession of a child like this. She sacrificed much, and endured more for him, striving the while to cultivate his affections, sharpen his moral perceptions, and strengthen his principles; sometimes her heart glowed with a prophecy of his greatness, while at others it shrank from the contemplation of his doubtful manhood. Through all, she diligently sowed good seed, and waited the result.

Time moved on, the air filled with frost, the river congealed, and earth was winter-bound. Mrs. Irving's usually serene heart was filled with appalling apprehensions, for a deadlier frost was blighting the fairest flower that ever bloomed for her.

Mary's debility increased. She loved to lie all day upon the sofa in her mamma's room, listening to old ballads, or hymns, that her mother would repeat for her beguilement. Mrs. Irving was surprised to find how her memory was stored with these gems of poesy. Poetic legends, read and forgotten

long ago, seemed to return in her need, and pour from her lips without any mental effort of her own. It seemed as if all her mind had ever rested upon had become its own—and from its vast treasure-house she drew forth rich stores for the gratification of her sick child.

Alas, poor mother! 'twas with a breaking heart she spoke!

Disease dealt gently with his young victim. As her physical energies decayed, her mind brightened, reaching to the companionship of her elders. Conversations with this dear child became the sole pleasure of the apprehensive mother. The reflections of her pure mind were fraught with quaint and startling wisdom. Many of her expressions, simple yet wonderful, were treasured in the mother's memory, and when the time came, as come it did, that she felt herself to be the mother of an angel, she pondered these sayings in her heart, as did that Blessed Maiden who performed the office of maternity to Divinity.

Mary's bed was removed from the nursery, and placed beside her mother's. The anxious woman lay nightly with her child's small hand clasped in her own, that even in sleep she might not lose the consciousness of that fast-fleeting presence. If the child waked she knew it instantly, and awakening also, beguiled with converse,—oh, how touching and holy!—the watches of the night.

"Oh, Mary, darling, I wish I could see you sleep!" she cried one night, when for hours she had watched the unearthly gleam of the child's eye.

"Do not lie awake for me, mamma. I am not lonely now.

The air seems filled with something—I cannot tell—something peaceful and happy.”

Did her spiritual ken dimly recognise the presence of God’s invisible angels? The mother thought so, and hastily attired herself.

* * * * *

Soft as a summer twilight she faded from the earth, and through the night of grief, that darkly closed around the bereaved, the memory of her lovely life shone like a star.

* * * * *

The strong heart of the father seemed impotent in grief, but the weak mother was strong in Christian faith.

“Why was she given us,” he groaned, in rebellious anguish, “to be so soon recalled! Oh, that she had never been born!”

“Not so,” said the mother, chastened tears filling her meek eyes. “Her daily life was a blessing, for which I thank my God, and although its continuance has been withheld, I cannot feel the less grateful. We have lost our child, but to have once possessed her, to have had her in our midst for a brief space, an angel messenger, unsealing fountains of feeling in our hearts which must henceforth flow heavenward: this has been one of God’s signal blessings on our lives. He has recalled his own, leaving us bereaved; but the remembrance of her lovely life shall beautify our own, and the thought that by her brief and peaceful mission here, she has won Heaven’s eternity, is one which yearning love may feed upon in thankfulness.”

“God hath granted you a clearer faith, because you are of purer heart,” he answered.

“My faith is clear,” she said. “Heaven seems so near, since it hath become the home of my child. I humbly exult in the thought that one of its brightest angels shall meet me at the threshold of light, as I go hence, and hail me ‘mother.’”

“Teach me to feel as you do,” he cried, laying his head upon her bosom, and abandoning himself to grief. “The constant cry of my heart is, give her back, oh, give her back to me.”

“Hush!” she said, smoothing his brow with her cool fingers; and his grief *was hushed* by her soft voice and touch.

“I loved her as tenderly, I miss her precious presence more keenly than you can do, yet I dare not wish for her recall. If, like the Shunamite woman, I had influence with God to win the revocation of His decree, I should hesitate to speak the word that would recall my child. Think—think of the toil, the travail, the care, the anguish, the temptation, the besetting sins of life, that rage in vain along her earthward path, while her serene soul securely folds its wings in Heaven. The loss is ours only; can we not be comforted by the knowledge of our darling’s great gain? or is our love so selfish that it would seek to pluck her down from heaven to gild our path, or share its darkness?”

“How differently we think of our dead child!” he said, with a sigh. “To me, she died and was *buried*; to you, she died and was *beatified*. My heart follows the body mourning; your soul soars after her soul rejoicing. I picture her childish beauty, confined and delivered over to the corruption of the

chapel; you penetrate beyond things seen, and behold her an immortal. I, too, believe in the life hereafter; but my belief is an abstraction—yours a realization!"

"The immortality of the soul! *Immortality?* Men have not all believed this?"

"Those who doubt the immortality of the soul have not been blessed in the death of their beloved," she answered simply.

"What mean you?"

"I mean, they have not stood as I have done by the departing, and listened to the revealings of an unfaltering spirit, made through failing flesh. They have not witnessed those blessed transitions which, more than reason, carry convictions of immortality. If I had been a pagan mother, unconscious of immortality, a revelation of life hereafter would have dawned on my darkened mind by the death-bed of my child. I should have felt that the principle of life was not quenched, but departed. Oh, yes; Death is the most impressive teacher of immortality."

He bowed his head, musing upon her words; for on themes like these, women are often teachers. Presently he soliloquized, in broken sentences, "Who shall control his belief? Is not faith a gift of God? It cometh like the wind, one knoweth not whence; but happy the heart on which it breathes. Wise men have survived the death of their dearest, and with far-reaching intellect have scanned all space, hoping to pierce Heaven's mysteries, yet have not learned this simple creed so full of consolation. Vain—dark—"

"Mary," he continued, rousing from reverie, "God still spares my choicest blessing in you, and if he withholds from my grosser mind that faith, thrice blessed, which robs bereavement of its pangs, he, at least, vouchsafes me strength to wrestle and endure."

"Be patient, my husband, and time will bring you light."

CHAPTER XIII.

CHANGE.

VIOLA! Poor Viola! What a shipwreck of joyous childhood was her transition from a realm of affluent life, to the bald existence of a boarding-school! The secluded home upon a mountain top had teemed with companionship, but the crowded school-room was a solitude. Throughout all nature a Pentecost had reigned for this imaginative child. The leaves of the forest were whispering tongues to her, and the winds of the mountain, murmured in chorus, to the music swelling in her soul. Cunning to interpret the voices of the wilderness, she sat down in the school-room in dumb despair, as might the architect of Babel, amid the primal confusion of tongues; an unsophisticated child amid child worldlings; a quick, untrammelled intelligence, abashed in the presence of trained stupidity.

The children in Madame de Fleury's establishment (I ask pardon, there was nought savouring of childhood there, unless it might be a lingering taste for bonbons), the *young ladies*, presented the same variety of character you will meet at Mrs.

De Smyth's ball. There were vain, silly misses; pert, forward misses; haughty, arrogant misses; and humble, toad-eating misses. (Fancy a child veiling the transparency of childhood with toadyism!) There were, here and there, sensible misses, but they did not appear to any better advantage than does the excellent Mrs. Homemade, at the brilliant assemblage to which we have before alluded. Their plain gifts were unsuited to their present sphere, and they shrank in corners as if they were ashamed. Had they read Shakspeare, they would have been ready to exclaim with the melancholy Jaques, "Motley's the only wear."

There were also, enthusiastic misses, but they expended their raptures upon such articles of dry goods as are devised from time to time for the beguilement of the female mind, or the "elegant," "splendid," "glorious" opera to which mamma took them upon her birthnight. On these, and similar exciting topics, they exhausted their vocabulary of superlatives.

"The proper study of mankind is man," sang the poet. In Madame De Fleury's establishment Viola made some progress in this branch of knowledge, albeit not specified in that lady's prospectus. The deceitful, cringing, arrogant, pretentious world was before her, and first in shocked amaze, then in proud contempt she surveyed it.

Mrs. Irving was right in saying she had no affinity with evil. Her instincts revolted against—her moral culture elevated her above it; and so, uncontaminated by the examples around her, she held on her own pure path. She quietly presented her simple composition, knowing that some of the

finest paragraphs from the Spectator would be found in the lists against her. She laboured over her exercises, unsexed by the fairest copies surreptitiously obtained from the teacher's key. She did not feel the slightest movings of tenderness for Miss White, although she came to school every morning in a carriage; nor did the faded ribbons on Miss Jones's bonnet awaken a desire to make mouths at the wearer.

Oh school! Oh Pandemonium!

A faint effort, was made by the amiable young herd, to set the new-comer up as a butt. It was abandoned immediately, on the simultaneous discovery of her own excellencies, and her guardian's wealth. So surely must merit command respect, nay, worship, if placed on a golden pedestal.

In time, the bachelor's ward became accustomed to the treadmill life, and familiar with the jargon of schools. She became accomplished in music, proficient in languages, and familiar with more "ologies" than I would care to enumerate. In the attainment of these desirable perfections, "a world of happy days" and much of her beautiful individuality was sacrificed. The exuberance of the wild vine was pruned,—so skilfully that none perceived its bleeding. And, lo! a child who could eat, drink, sleep, speak, and move, like nine hundred and ninety-nine other children! So much for the *seeming*, but I doubt me, if the little heart beat quite as equally.

The happiest moments of her life were, when she received a closely-written packet from Walsingham, or a kind motherly letter from Mrs. Irving. Upon these crumbs, her affections

fed. At the end of three years, a great pleasure was promised her, in the companionship of her old playfellow, Helen. Mr. and Mrs. Irving brought her to New York, and the delighted Viola dined with them, supped with them, saw sights with them, until their stay was ended, and then she took the poor, forlorn little Helen under her protection at Madame Fleury's.

How she petted, and caressed, her new-found friend! How she listened to her sad stories of poor Mary, or anecdotes of Howard, and questioned her about the Eyrie, the river, and the town! How she comforted her home-sickness, and promised her speedy deliverance when Mr. Walsingham should come! A desirable event, that for the last two years of her life, had seemed immediately at hand. Poor little hoping heart! two, three, four years passed, and still he came not.

CHAPTER XIV.

NEWS.

GENTLE little Mrs. Irving sat in her summer-house, busied with needle-work, when she heard the quick tread of her husband on the gravel-walk. "Has anything happened?" she inquired, with some solicitude, as he entered, for he was one of those business men who rarely seek their homes in business hours.

"Yes," said he, smiling, "I am horridly jealous: look at that!" and he held up a letter, directed to Mrs. Irving, in an unfamiliar, manly hand.

"You were very good to come home on purpose to bring it," she said, holding out her hand to receive it.

"Not at all; I was too curious to wait, and came home an hour before my time to learn who has had the audacity to write to my little wife."

"What a dear, good, stupid husband, not to know that it is from Walsingham, announcing his intended return!" she said, as she surveyed the superscription.

"What a sharp-eyed, clever little wife, to read it without breaking the seal!"

"That is easily done; don't you see it is marked 'ship,' and as Mr. Walsingham is the only acquaintance I have on the other side of the water, it can only be from him. As he has never written to me before during his absence, I suppose it heralds his return."

"I had almost forgotten that such a man had ever lived; but then I never knew him as you did. By the way, it was singular that you should have formed an intimacy, with a man whom nobody knew."

Mrs. Irving heard the last sentence, although immersed in her letter, and answered quietly—

"It was the children, you know."

As Mr. Irving contemplates his wife, he affords us an opportunity of examining him closely. Standing by her, he looks like a tower of strength, in which the little lady may put her trust—a tall, sinewy man, with broad breast, ample brow, and open countenance, over which a clear, full, gray eye sheds warmth, and light. Although, neither handsome in appearance, nor elegant in manners, there is that in both appearance and manner which commands respect. He is not social, owing partly to the engrossing nature of his pursuits, and therefore is seldom seen in society where his wife is so great an ornament. Among business men he sustains a reputation for accuracy, prudence, justice, and integrity, and as a man among men is much esteemed.

As a faithful chronicler we must admit that in the bottom

of that great, strong heart, there nestles one mortal weakness. Forgive it, men and angels—it is *love*!—love for that little wife. He loved her with a true manliness when first he brought her to his home a bride, and his love has grown with every circling year since then. The ardour of youth has given place to manhood's earnestness, and all the illusions of life have faded, save this early amaranthine flower, which crowns his sober years with youthful freshness.

"Well?" said he, in his short, quick way, as she laid the letter down.

"There!" she answered, emulating his own brevity, and placing it in his hands.

It was, as she surmised, from Walsingham, who had determined to return at last, and wrote, he said, to solicit her kind offices for his young charge. He knew, that after its prolonged desertion, the Eyrie would not be habitable, and begged Mrs. Irving to find some suitable home in the village, for a few weeks, for his little girl.

"Little girl!" remarked Mr. Irving, as he folded the letter; "your friend writes as if she had been standing still. What can you do?"

"Provide suitable accommodations for the 'little girl,' of course."

"Where?"

"Not very far off, George," she answered, with her pleasant smile, and he saw that the little girl was to find a home under his own roof, and a mother in the mother of his little ones. He looked at her approvingly.

"She will be more at home here," said the wife, "and then it will be a pleasure to me to have her with me. She is a dear, good girl; how she loved our Mary! Poor Helen, will be very lonely when her friend leaves her. Indeed, I do not know why she should remain behind. She certainly is old enough to leave school, and I have long felt that it was time for me to have my daughter with me. Do we agree?"

"Always," he answered, as he imprinted a grave kiss upon her brow.

"Then she shall return with Walsingham," said Mrs. Irving, joyfully; and her husband, smiling assent, turned down the gravel-walk again.

He looked back once or twice, and thought that his wife looked very handsome, and very happy.

"Bless her!" he ejaculated, "she's sunlight."

CHAPTER XV.

RETURN.

WHEN Mr. Walsingham landed in New York, his first care was to look after the young ward, whose mental and moral culture he had for the last six years delegated to others. Having arranged all those preliminaries, so well understood by those who travel, so uninteresting in their details to those who do not, he proceeded at once to Madame de Fleury's. On his way thither a thousand pleasing thoughts and memories of the child attended him. All her graceful life flitted around him; much of her possible future seemed before him. Absorbed in his own fancies, the great tide of life coursing through the great city's artery swept by him unobserved. In his mind the moving mass was blotted from the scene to give place to the multiplied image of Viola. Little chubby-cheeked, frolicsome Violas seemed dancing on the awning-posts, peering from behind the signs, or pirouetting on the roof-combs of tall houses, like airy sprites. Pale-faced, demure Violas glided in childish solemnity through the promenade, or looked with sweet, earnest

eyes from dim and distant windows. Seraphic-faced Violas, with crowns of golden curls, smiled forth from the fleecy clouds and deep bright blue of Heaven. His thought was filled with her, and from his thought the world was peopled. Let his eye fall where it would, nought save her image filled it, and it almost seemed as if the Universe presented but the ever-varying panorama of sweet child-life.

Thus, and thus, he remembered her. Here she was arch and piquant—there she was spirituelle—and ever, ever she was endearing. He would see her again soon, sweet child, and he smiled on a pyramid of flounces, sailing past, surmounted by a bonnet of pompadour pink, as he pictured her startled eyes wild with wonder, her glad cry of recognition, her fond caress as she leaped to his arms and nestled on his bosom. The rebuking frown from the passing pyramid was lost—so was the house—he had passed it some two squares back), and, ah! did he but know it, so also was the *child*.

Retracing his steps, he soon found the ample door-plate which indicated the residence of Madame De Fleury. He pulled the bell in his imperative way. The door was opened by a very big and very black servant, familiarly known among the demoiselles as "*Sugar Plum*," in allusion to the contraband trade which he carried on in that staple for the mutual advantage of candy-loving children and sweet-toothed "*Sugar Plum*" himself.

Sugar Plum marshalled the visiter to the drawing-room with appropriate ceremonies, where he was immediately joined by Madame de Fleury.

Madame was surprised and delighted to see him—distressed to hear that he had had a disagreeable voyage—charmed to find his sojourn abroad had been so pleasant—afflicted beyond measure to learn that he proposed robbing her (yes, robbing was the word) of that dear sweet girl whom she loved as a daughter—just as she was improving so much in her music, too! After suffering these painful alternations of feeling with a praiseworthy appearance of stoicism, she despatched the grinning Sugar Plum for Miss Viola.

Madame prided herself upon her conversational talent, and upon this occasion she came out in all her strength. The presence of an intellectual and travelled gentleman was an inspiration; and her finished sentences flowed musically forth, ravishing her own ears at least. She had no reason to complain of her companion, for his countenance wore the fixed, intent expression of an interested listener. Such, indeed, he was; for his ear was strained to catch every distant sound that might prelude the child's approach. The whispers of school girls in the corridor, the distant singing in the music-room, the quickly advancing or receding footsteps, were all associated with her, and seemed to give token of her presence, as though she alone inhabited the house.

Do not think him, indulgent friends, more like a lover awaiting his mistress than a guardian his child. Remember, the guardian is an ardent enthusiast—the child the sole object of his manly tenderness. She is associated with all his plans for the future, and has beguiled him into happiness in the past: could you listen attentively to the elegant nothings of a

stranger, when watching for the coming of your long absent, darling daughter?

Can that be she?

It was a soft, measured tread that approached—unlike the bounding step of Viola—and yet he listened, and turned his curious gaze toward the door. A tall, picturesque girl, paused timidly at the threshold, and Madame's concluding remark reverberated through his brain like sounding brass—

“When we turn our backs upon our friends, we forget how time is dealing with them.”

Yes! It *was* Viola!

Her long curls hung about her face like a golden glory, as of old; her large, dark eyes wore their well-remembered expression of mystic dreaminess; and her complexion was transparently white, as that of a young child, and beautifully suggestive of purity; one could not but believe an unspotted soul dwelt in such glorious habitation.

It was Viola, but she was not “*the child*.” Madame's last words still echoed in his ears, and as though he had but just heard them, they struck upon his brain with meaning.

“We forget how time is dealing,” etc.

He had expected to find her a little grown, somewhat altered, but retaining her simple, impulsive, loving ways—in short, her individuality—but this, why this was a separate being! She had passed through the great transition, and was a woman—a stranger. He marked the calm repose of her beautiful face, the modest dignity of her attitude, and felt

that his beloved *child* was lost to him for ever. The sunny little one whose smiling life had brightened his, had floated down the tide of time beyond recall.

"Ah, my love, advance," cried Madame; "raise your eyes, and tell me if you ever saw this gentleman?"

One look, and her whole face was illuminated with the joy of recognition. With a quick, glad, girlish cry, she bounded forward to throw herself upon his bosom, as he had pictured. Poor Viola! she saw no change in *him*, she felt none in herself.

He took her hand, bent over it with stately courtesy, and led her to the sofa as if she was a duchess. And this was the long-anticipated meeting!

Poor Viola! The love which children, happy in domestic ties, lavish upon parents and sisters, she, in her lonely childhood, had concentrated upon Walsingham. The peculiar affection and reverence which she had entertained in childhood for her guardian, had strengthened with her developing energies and deepened with her maturer life. Absence, that fatal corroder of affection, had only idealized hers; and as the pictured pages of the past were opened to her youthful fancy, he was measured with the hero, sage, and saint of ancient story, only to stand forth greater, wiser, better than them all. Then, all that is charming in the memories of childhood, all that is dear in the thought of *home*, was associated with him; and she had longed for his return with the sick desire of an exile for home—a child for its mother. The thought of him permeated her life, prompted every effort, mingled with every

action. *He was all her loving nature had ever had to love.* What marvel that he was the centre round which her hopes, thoughts, and affections revolved? And now he had come! He had taken her hand in his, and bowed a formal bow, and handed her to the sofa, saying—Heaven knows what! Something that whistled through her ears with a hollowness like the wind, and she felt that the rich world in which she had hoped to revel was lost to her for ever, even while her spirit had almost

"Caught the light upon her wings,
Through the half-opened portal glowing."

As for Walsingham, he had been waiting to catch his sweet little girl to his heart, but this unlooked for and beautiful impersonation of womanhood restrained him. He swallowed his embarrassment, however, and proceeded, as best he might, to cultivate an acquaintance.

"I had not expected to find you so changed," he remarked, apologetically.

Viola could not reply.

The fluent Madame, who had never suffered from an impediment of speech, answered with her usual fertility, "Changed, indeed! I doubt if you ever saw such a change in your life. How tall she has become; and such a carriage! all my girls are remarkable for their carriage. You see I have made quite an elegant affair of her;" and she complacently surveyed Viola as the work of her own hands.

"I hope you will be glad to return to the Eyrie," said Walsingham, making a second effort.

"Very glad," she answered, in a tone many removes from gladness.

"Delighted, of course; but the young lady's interests must be consulted," interposed Madame, with a prudent regard for her own. "Although much improved, as you remarked, she is by no means finished."

"Miss Viola's will in the matter must be my law," said Walsingham, with a bow of polite deference to his ward.

"I was pleased to learn from your letters," he continued, "that your friend Helen Irving was with you. Is she here still?"

"Miss Irving is by no means as stylish as her friend," interposed Madame, with broad significance; "but then she has not been under my care as long. Would you not like to see her?"

"Certainly!"

Madame touched the bell, and despatched an attendant for Miss Irving. She came presently, looking as unlike the interesting child he remembered as possible. Walsingham thought, as she entered, that the race of fairies had departed, and the world had attained its growth.

"Miss Irving, Mr. Walsingham," announced Madame de Fleury.

"Oh, is it possible!" exclaimed Helen; "what a delightful surprise!" and as he took both her extended hands in his, she offered her lips girlishly to be kissed.

It seemed quite natural and right to receive this token of welcome from Helen, and Walsingham spoke with such cheerful cordiality as he placed her on the sofa by her friend, that Viola was ready to weep with vexation.

Madame explained to her guest with her usual elegance of diction, that imperative duties to her pupils compelled her to retire.

"How glad I am to see you!" said Helen, when she had closed the door; "and looking so like yourself! You have not changed in the least, except—"

"Except? Pray let me have the exception," petitioned Walsingham, who, in common with the wisest men, felt a little interest in the opinions of others when they concerned himself.

"Excuse me," said Helen, with reluctance; "but I think you look younger than you used to do."

"Ah, that is because you are overtaking me," said he, laughing. "I have been reposing midway in the race of life, while you have been advancing so rapidly that the distance between us has grown beautifully less. But how has time been dealing with your charming mamma?"

"Oh, she is charming mamma still," answered Helen, with loving enthusiasm, "and time dare not meddle with her! Papa will tell you she is this moment, what he has always believed her to be, the most beautiful woman in the world. In his eyes she will flourish in immortal youth, though she should see an hundred summers."

"Why not say winters, when speaking of such advanced age?"

"Because, such a life as mamma's should be measured by summers only: it is so bright, so warm, so abounding in blessed fruits."

Walsingham observed her eyes moisten as she spoke, and taking her hand in his, in his old fatherly way, said—"My sweet child, a few moments ago I would have reversed the wheels of time, and carried you and Viola back to your beautiful childhood. I now see that childhood was but a bright promise, of which your womanhood is the fulfilment;" and he took Viola's hand also, who sat with downcast eyes, mechanically tracing the figures in Madame de Fleury's carpet, and wondering why that meeting, which had been for years a millennium in her hope, should have made her so utterly miserable.

At his kind touch she burst into tears.

Meanwhile, Madame in the school-room was conferring between classes with Signor Bellini upon the events of the morning. "So handsome! so distingué!" she said, of Walsingham. "I assure you, Signor, I have seen society in my own country, and know a *gentleman* when I meet him by that freemasonry which prevails among well-bred people. You understand."

Signor Bellini made some pretensions to being a well-bred man himself, and of course understood perfectly. "Was mademoiselle pleased to meet her friend?" he inquired, as he turned over the leaves of his grammar.

"Not in the least, I assure you," replied Madame; "it is

evident she regards him with fear. Doubtless Monsieur Walsingham has been obliged to be stern with mademoiselle, who is spirited. Ah, you may believe me, she is reluctant to exchange the maternal care of Madame De Fleury for the iron rule of Monsieur Walsingham."

So satisfied was this excellent lady of the infallibility of her impressions, that she ventured to confide them to Walsingham himself at his next visit.

"If this be so," he replied, "I most assuredly shall not remove her. But permit me to consult Miss Walsingham herself."

Viola accordingly was summoned. A night's repose had restored her spirits, and she entered, smiling and happy. Walsingham thought, as he bade her good-morning, that he had never seen anything half so beautiful as her soft, brown eyes.

"I wished, Viola," said he, kindly, drawing a chair near hers, "to consult you with regard to yourself. It is my intention to spend the winter in the Eyrie, where you shall be as welcome as the sunshine" (which it struck him that moment she resembled), "if you choose to accompany me; but if you are so interested in your studies, or companions here, that you will leave them with reluctance, or if you would find this a more congenial home during the approaching winter, I will relinquish the pleasure I had promised myself, and make such arrangements with Madame De Fleury as will afford you the increased liberty suited to your years."

It was very considerate, but somewhat formal (she felt,

rather than thought), and manifested a total misunderstanding of her wishes. She answered with some restraint, but evident sincerity: "Take me home with you, if you please! I long to return to the Eyrie."

He was pleased, and inquired, "You are quite sure you would be happiest there?"

"I am very sure," she said, smiling, and then added, sadly, "I have never been happy away from there."

It sounded to him almost like a reproach, and there rose a recollection of the morning when a little child he had borne her away. He remembered how her tearful eyes were strained to catch a last glimpse of his mountain home, and how, when it faded from the landscape, she sobbed herself to sleep, and—*had never been happy since!*

He longed to take her to his heart again, and tell her she should return to the old Eden, and be his pet, his darling, his child, once more and for ever. But, lo! she was not his *child*, but a *woman*, and her womanhood awed him.

Restraining the tenderness awakened for his whilome play-fellow, he inquired if she had been *very* unhappy?

"Not exactly unhappy," she said, "and yet not happy. I felt so lonely, so unloved, and I did so hunger for affection."

"But you made friends after a time, and found yourself beloved?"

"Yes, but I was not the *best* beloved of any. I was not necessary to any. It was more tolerable, however, after Helen came, for she was a dear friend from the dear home, and I lived some part of my old happiness over again with her.

Besides, I knew I was necessary to her, for I am sure she would have folded herself within herself, like a sensitive plant, and quivered her shrinking life out if I had not encompassed her about like her native air."

Walsingham laughed.

Her animated manner gave place to a look of perplexity, and, with a quick, impatient movement, she brushed the curls back from her face, saying, as she did so, "Why do you laugh, sir?"

There was such infantile grace in the movement, such innocent naiveté in the words, that Walsingham felt that she was his child again.

"I can hardly tell why I laughed," said he, kindly, "unless it was at my little girl's circumambient friendship, or perhaps at her idea of happiness."

"To be necessary to some one?"

"Yes. Do you remember, when a little child, how it constituted your greatest happiness to believe you were more useful to me than Mrs. Grey herself? It is an old fancy to which you are faithful."

"What wisdom I displayed in my childhood!" she answered, laughing; "with the experience of sixteen summers, I am not able to find a better idea of happiness. To be so beloved by one as to be an actual necessity of life! That must be blissful!"

"But if you were so beloved and so necessary to one who was distasteful to you—" suggested he.

"Oh, Mr. Walsingham," cried Viola, quickly, "that could

not be! No one could be distasteful who regarded me with affection. I always should give love for love."

"Take care, monsieur, of the young gentlemen!" cried Madame De Fleury, who had entered unobserved by one door.

"I was not speaking of gentlemen," replied Miss Walsingham, decidedly, as she retreated, blushing, through the other.

Viola, in this interview, had presented such various phases, that Walsingham left the house with a feeling of bewilderment. She was a child, and she was not. A tone, a gesture, a flitting expression reminded him of the little Viola, and his heart yearned toward her; then her beauty, her dignity, her grace, inherited from her mother, recalled the lost Viola, and awakened bitter memories—and a third phase of her character, belonging entirely to the present and herself, was at once charming and novel. It occurred to the bachelor, as he sauntered down Broadway, that there was something embarrassing in his guardianship of this young lady, but he reconciled himself by remembering, firstly, that it was inevitable, and, secondly, that the *child* had seemed a much more formidable undertaking, but meeting the responsibility with a courageous heart all difficulties had vanished. Thus it would be in this case, he promised himself, and made the necessary arrangements for his homeward journey without any further misgivings.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE JOURNEY.

TRAVELLING dresses were purchased, trunks were packed, bills were paid, kisses interchanged, promises made, all "the pomp and circumstance of glorious" school-girl departure duly performed, and two bright young faces were turned toward the Susquehanna.

Viola's eyes danced with anticipation, and her little feet tattooed the floor of the car as though she felt within her an impulse strong enough to accelerate the locomotive.

"Viola is wild with delight," said Helen to Walsingham.

"Nay, then," retorted the wicked Viola, "if I am happiest of the two in returning, it is not because I was the most miserable while away!"

Helen blushed and was quiet: she evidently did not relish this meddling with her misery past.

Viola saw how the case stood with her sensitive friend, and added caressingly, "Because I had not half as much to regret, you know."

"No!" quoth Walsingham dryly, as he drew his cloak around him, "nothing but a musty fusty guardian in a mountain rookery."

"Oh, Viola, what a mistake you have made!" laughed Helen. "In your consideration for me you forgot Mr. Walsingham!"

But Viola was not to be vanquished by any guardian in the land, and argued him into a good humor, and herself out of the little difficulty, with a tact worthy of a daughter of Eve; and, alas! a daughter of some one else of whom he thought.

Late in the afternoon our travellers reached the river. I say *the* river, for to the young members of the party there was but one river, and their homes were on its banks. The transit from car to boat was speedily made. With feelings of quiet satisfaction they found themselves dreamily floating homeward, encompassed by the shadows of familiar mountains. They were brilliant as a bouquet, with autumnal tints, crimson and gold and green (the living green of forest pines) mingled in luxuriant masses. The gorgeous range seemed to circle the earth with a glory like the rainbow, while the haze of autumn hung its soft illusion over the hills, subduing their brilliant hues. The flowing silvery-voiced river murmured her primeval song to the mist-wreaths on her bosom, hurrying downward to the sea; and from the dreamy beauty of hazy mountain top, and misty river and picturesque landscape, arose a subtle influence which enthralled the hearts of the travellers with a remembered charm. "Thus and thus it looked when we were

children, and thus it looks to-night around our home far away."

Ay, thus it was before ye were, fair creatures; when no eye beheld its loveliness save that of the All Seeing, who filled the universe with glories—thus will it remain in its imperishable beauty, when ye, with your beloved, have passed away and are no more seen for ever.

Walsingham repeated the oft admired lines from Scott:—

"This is mine own, my native land."

And a rage for patriotic poetry ensued; from his student storehouse he drew forth treasures of poesy, and amid the mingled harmonies of lofty numbers, murmuring waters, and mysterious voices of the autumnal night, darkness settled over the idyllic land.

It was not in a sail-boat, spreading its white wings to the breeze, nor yet to the plash of oars, and the song of "Row, brothers, row," that travellers ascended the Susquehanna; neither was it by means of that slave of industry's lamp, the giant steam, who pants and roars along less favoured waters. It must be confessed, and I make the confession with humility, that it was in a simple canal-boat that tourists condescended to traverse the valley of the Susquehanna.

It is with still deeper abasement I confess that I have not a soul above canal-boats! I am constrained to acknowledge a debt of gratitude to that ignoble craft for never to be forgotten hours such as I have described, spent in the companionship of

those who have now their homes amid the stars, excelling them in glory.

There is a luxury in the sluggishness of these great mud-turtles, an aristocratic indifference to time, an appreciativeness of the "*dolce far niente*," which soothes my flurried soul in these troublous days, when the aforesaid slave of the lamp is becoming the master of the world. It is refreshing to be ensconced upon the deck of this craft, and resign oneself to the sweet influences of earth and air and sky throughout the ever changing day. Sunshine and clouds, trees and mountains, are trinkets in Nature's kaleidoscope, and Nature's child is never weary with watching their new and wonderful combinations of beauty.

Sleep, did you say? Hum—when it comes to that I have slept better on a spring-mattress; but that is not travelling, you know. I do not remember to have slept better in a stage-coach, or a railway car, or even over the boiler of the steam giant itself.

Young travellers, such as ours, to whom life is fresh, and the whole world novel, are insensible to the discomforts of travelling. Viola and Helen thought it capital fun to lie awake that night listening to the dances, songs, and witticisms of the boatmen overhead. Nay, such is the contagion of mirth, that the two girls found themselves gibing, jesting, and laughing quite as merrily, although not as boisterously as their roystering *compagnons du voyage*.

"Uprose the golden morning," and uprose those merry maidens, eager to discover what progress had been made

during the night. The morning toilet over, they sought the deck, where Walsingham was already promenading.

"Do you see that?" said he, significantly, pointing to the prospect before them.

They looked and saw the three broad rivers, the three white bridges, the two quaint villages, the beetling crag, the weather-stained turrets, in short, the Eyrie home! How beautiful was it all in the morning sunshine!

"Wal!" cried a sharp, twanging voice behind them, "if that aint a curus notion! Did ever a fellow see the beat of that are house on the hill? Say, you!—What's the name of that are place you was a pintin' at?"

"It is called by the good people in the vicinity 'Walsingham's Folly,'" replied the proprietor, courteously.

The young ladies smiled, well remembering this opprobrious name given their beloved Eyrie by the country folks.

"Folly? Blamed if it aint!" said the querist, approvingly. "Maybe you can tell me, stranger, what airthly use he meant to put it too?"

"He intended to reside there."

"And what did he follow, stranger?"

"His own fancies, I believe."

"True as preaching," exclaimed Jonathan, with a chuckle; "but what did he do for a livin'?"

"He was a gentleman of fortune."

"Was he, though? Wonder how he made it?"

"He inherited it."

"Hay, now? Born with a silver spun in his mouth! eh!

Wal, you might ha' known he wa'n't what you might call a practical man, or he'd never made that ere investment. Made a pretty considerable hole in his pocket, I guess?"

To this Walsingham assented, with an amused smile.

"Broke him dead, I'll bet a cookie! Then what could he do? He couldn't keep store up there, 'cause custom would be rayther slim—just rayther! 'Tisn't a good stand for a tavern;—and there'd be mighty small chance of his persuadin' the great central serpentine to take a turn his way. Bad investment!" And the practical man shook his head, as though he felt the full extent of the stranger's calamity.

"I'll tell ye what," he added, brightly, after a moment's cogitation; "wouldn't it be a *speculation* to advertise the view? Walsingham's Folly! Folly! Folly! Folly!"

He listened carefully as he thus rang the changes with his sharp metallic voice, looking the while as though he was testing a doubtful coin. He must have felt so, too, for he presently lifted his head, saying,

"'Twon't pass!"

"What? the name?"

"Yes; 'taint out-setting enough for the *speculation*. Folks can see follys enough to hum. What do you say neow to the North American Pagoda?"

Walsingham insinuated that this title, although very imposing, was not altogether appropriate; and, feeling disposed to prolong a conversation that afforded so much entertainment, turned on the indefatigable querist with the inquiry:—

"Can you tell me, friend, why folks see so much folly at home?"

"Because there are so many fools in the world, I guess."

"I have been pleased to observe," said Walsingham, with a mixture of philosophy and sarcasm, "the facility with which men denounce as folly whatever may be foreign to their tastes. I recognise it as a wise provision of Nature, indulgent mother! for the happiness of her children. It is comfortable, nay gratifying, to feel satisfied of the wisdom of our own views, and the consequent folly of all who dissent. Men differ in temperament and tastes, and are intolerant of those differences. The spendthrift, not satisfied with his own prodigality, despises those who do not share his fault. The miser does not confine himself to the mere pleasure of hoarding, but takes a higher delight in his superiority over those who are too short-sighted to follow his example. The bon-vivant admires himself as prince of good fellows; while the Grahamite believes himself a Solomon for wisdom. The poet,"—and he raised his eyes to the Blue Hill Bluff—"the poet revels in his ideal world, with a feeling of contemptuous pity for the practical man, against whom the fairy gates are closed; while *he*, in turn, regards his imaginative brother as a brain-sick fool, unfit for the earnest purposes of life. Each is intolerant of another's taste—each accuses his brother of folly."

"Wal," said the stranger, who had listened attentively, "isn't there folly in the whole bilin'?"

"There is, I believe. We all have follies enough of our own to answer for, Heaven knows, were they only as apparent

to us as those of our neighbours. But I fear our own faults are too near to meet the angle of vision."

"Sound as a dollar," quoth his admiring hearer, who spoke in the technicalities of trade, as a sailor interlards his speech with nautical phrases; "you've been to school, and had a right smart chance of learnin' a thing or two, I veow! You'd never be the fool to build a folly; *you* wouldn't!"

This tribute to his judgment was received by the guardian in silence, while his loquacious companion proceeded to give a short account of himself; the object of which was to show his own superior wisdom contrasted with "the folly of the fool that built the folly."

"Now, look at me!" quoth he, complacently; "me, Midas Mitten. I never had an inheritance; I was born without a birthright, and began life upon a blessing, which I invested in stocks. Never in anything so unproductive as *that*, mind! I am a self-made man, sir!"

Walsingham bowed, as the voluble Mr. Midas Mitten paused, signifying his approval of the work.

"By untiring industry and close equanimity I have piled up a leetle fortune, sir; and when, after a hard day's business, I lay me down to sleep, it is with the comfortable reflection that every mint-drop I own is working *while* I sleep;" and he brought his hand down violently upon the trunk on which he was seated, to attest his enthusiasm upon this subject.

Fool! lulling his soul to rest on that poor thought!

It was a hollow and sepulchral voice that slowly pronounced

these words; all turned in the direction of the voice, and saw a man standing within a few feet of them, whose appearance was so remarkable that it deserves a passing description.

His figure was small and thin, his face dark, haggard, and partly hidden by a crisp black beard flowing down to his bosom in patriarchal style; his head was likewise guiltless of razor, and he stood erect in the bow of the boat, with long, black, elfin locks floating backward in the morning wind, and deep, dreamy eyes fixed upon distance, as though unconscious of the presence of those around.

The little party had almost persuaded themselves that this rapt figure-head had not spoken the sentence that startled them, when his lips moved, and the hollow voice again issued from its grim portal; his eyes still fixed upon the distant mountains, as though adjuring a glorious company invisible to ordinary ken, he murmured,

"What means this arrogant creation of God's hand, when he says, 'I am a self-made man?' He means that he has heaped a little pile of shining dust together, without which the sincere idolater would not believe himself to *be* a man. Brother! my brother! does no voice of warning ever whisper to thy weary soul, 'It is in vain ye rise up early, and so late take your rest, and eat the bread of carefulness?' Does no denunciatory thunder startle the serenity of thy self-complacent nature, with 'Thou fool! thy soul shall be required of thee?' Oh, son of Adam! priding thyself in labour, remember thy progenitor was doomed to *labour* by the curse of an

offended God; and when his daily penance of toil was paid, he wiped the tears of tasked nature from his brow, and sat him down, in the awful hope that he was nearer the terrible and mysterious gate of death which was to admit him to the heaven, promised in pity, when Paradise was lost; could he have beheld, in some vision of the night, his infatuated race glorying in their inheritance of shame—exulting in their burdens, as idiot slaves might do in the adornment of their shackles—ingeniously multiplying their labours, thereby increasing their curse—forgetting, in their cares, the high story of their origin and destiny, or recalling it, only with the vague remembrance accorded to classic fable or heathen myth: then, then would he have realized with keener pang the *depth* of the *fall*—the *weight* of the *curse*."

He paused, and as he had before seemed to address an invisible and distant company, he now stood in listening attitude, as if expecting a reply. Meanwhile the rebuked Midas kept up an animated pantomime, expressive of intense amusement and contempt, and was about to venture upon "*Rich, ain't it, neow?*" when the enthusiast resumed:—

"*Labour* is honourable: it is a duty appointed by God. Let it be performed with humility, as the expiation of the sinful body.

"*Meditation* is a remnant of Eden life. It is an exercise whereby the soul grows great, and almost forgets her fall.

"Oh, Poet Heart!" and he turned his gaze upon the Eyrie, "Oh, Poet Heart, it was for this thou madest thy home amid

the clouds. Labour may pant along these teeming valleys, but thou, upon thy mountain top, mayest meditate. Lovest thou science? There canst thou win the revelation of nature's secrets, and grasp the sublimest mysteries of heaven! Art enamoured of poesy? There canst thou gather inspiration from faintly echoing spirit-voices, and chant such melodies as may entrance the world! *This* mayest thou do in thy *Folly*."

There was a sarcastic emphasis in this last sentence; and as his rapid utterance died across the waters, the pines that crowned the summit of the bluff nodded as though in answer to his adjuration.

Midas Mitten's pantomime was resumed. He stuffed his bandanna in his mouth as though to cork his cachinnations; he held his sides to indicate that his fermenting merriment thus confined might burst his ribs asunder; and favoured Walsingham with a significant punch, fraught with like peril to that courtly gentleman; he shook his head violently to intimate he could not endure it much longer; and wound up the performance by jerking his thumb over his shoulder toward the object of these elegant attentions, and tapping his forehead, as he observed, "Cracked, by hokey!"

"I think," whispered Helen to Viola, "from the specimens before us, I shall like crazy people better than sane ones."

Just then the boat struck the wharf, and Helen observed that the stranger at the bow turned slowly from the contemplation of the bluff, and fixing his regards upon the steeples

of the town, strode abstractedly across the plank to shore. He did not tumble in the water as she expected him to do, and she was speculating upon the probable care of his invisible familiars, when the sharp voice of Mr. Mitten twanged on her meditations.

"Wal, mister, you hold up here; maybe you're to hum in this village?"

A curt affirmative from Walsingham encouraged him to proceed.

"I'm in luck to have a friend in the diggins, because I mean to stop myself. There's a deal of water-power about, and I've a mind to see if it's available. A saw-mill neow over yonder, across one branch to the Island"—

Walsingham interrupted him, saying it was not in his power to afford him information at present, as the ladies required his attention.

"Never yeou mind, then," said Midas good-humouredly, "I'll be on hand. Where did you say your folks live?"

Walsingham turned once more, with Viola on his arm, and remarking, "There is my home, sir," pointed to the Bluff.

"Oh Je-rew-se-lem!" howled Mr. Midas Mitten as the little party left the wharf, "I'm sold! He is the fool that built the Folly!"

They had not proceeded many steps before they met Mr. Irving, who was on his way to the wharf to receive them. He welcomed his daughter with affection, and her friends with warmth, urging Walsingham to make his home with him

until his own house should be in readiness to receive them.

Walsingham declined, having written to engage quarters at the hotel, but Viola, of course, preferred becoming the guest of her friend, and was consigned to the care of Mrs. Irving. It was settled, however, that Mr. Walsingham should dine with them.

CHAPTER XVII.

TETE-A-TETE.

"AND now, little lady, sit down by me, and tell me what you think of these strangers. I don't feel as if I had ever seen one of the three before to-day."

The day was over—the girls had smiled good-night—the house was still, and Mrs. Irving drew her small chair to her husband's feet, prepared for a connubial chat.

"Not even Helen?" she inquired, smiling.

"Not even Helen!" he echoed dolorously. "Do you know, little lady, you have a grown-up daughter?"

"Yes, and not only that, she answered, her cheerful tones contrasting with his sad ones, "I have a grown-up son,

To stand on my right hand,
And keep the bridge with me."

"True! Howard must be nearly as tall as his father. I don't think I am quite as well pleased as you are! It seems sad, darling, that our little pets should outgrow our caresses."

"They do not outgrow our love, you know; and is it not a proud reflection that you have been permitted to give one noble man, one estimable woman to bless their kind?"

"Yes, if these children develop into such."

"There it is!" she said quickly. "Your little child is an amusing puzzle—a beautiful mystery—you long to unravel it—to know the end. Adolescence brings the solution—you see the beautiful development of feelings, intellect, and principles, and can almost read from your child's qualities its destiny. I felt all day, as I looked into Helen's heart, that I could tell her fortune. When the dying patriarch gathered his sons around him, and to each of all the listening twelve, spoke of his character, his future, and his fate, there was much of the wisdom of the discriminating parent mingled with his higher inspiration."

"Poor little thing," he said, caressingly smoothing her brown hair, "I wonder if you are growing old?"

"Not in the least!" she exclaimed; "don't be so rude as to suggest such a thing."

"I never should have thought it but for these impertinent upstart children; but now I look at you, I see you look to-night as you did twenty years ago."

He took her face between his great hands and turned it up to meet his gaze, in which there was more fondness than scrutiny. She had altered a little, notwithstanding her husband's testimony. The freshness, the bloom, the rotundity of youth, was gone; but hers was a prettiness with which time does not seriously intermeddle. The delicate features, the soft

loving eyes, and, above all, the gentle winning manner, were unaltered, and Mrs. Irving was a charming woman still. If she had been ten times as old, and altogether ugly, I doubt if good George Irving would have known it. The spells with which she had enchanted him in her lovely girlhood were on his heart still, and, to his constant blind affection, she was—as she always had been, and ever would be—his beautiful! his well beloved!

"Your daughter is not pretty, Mrs. Irving," he remarked; his perceptions as a father seemed clear enough.

"What a disagreeable communication!" she exclaimed with playful pettishness. "Do you know she is good?"

"And sensible?"

"Yes. Helen has native judgment, clear perceptions, and, alas! acute sensibilities."

Her husband smiled.

"Your own gifts," he said. "Why did you not add"—he paused with a look of admiration, as if he would say, "Why did you not add, your own beauty?"

"Pshaw, George," she exclaimed, impatiently. "Although Helen is not a showy girl, she is pretty enough. What a naughty father, to be dissatisfied with such a dear child!"

A mother's love is satisfied in her child; but a father's *pride* claims some aliment. He would have his offspring distinguished by some gift—conspicuous for some quality.

"The truth is, Mary," he said, apologetically, "I did not think she was lacking in beauty until her friend came down!"

"Viola is dazzling!" said the mother; "but I shall not be

able to love her, if she eclipses my poor child in her father's eyes."

Mrs. Irving had her womanly weaknesses. The husband smiled, and seemed pleased. I think he loved her weaknesses rather better than anything else.

"How your friend Walsingham has altered," he said, adroitly eluding the difficulty.

"Yes, has he not?"

"He used to be so moping and silent—so pale and willowy."

"And now," she answered, with vivacity, "his figure is firm, and strong as a column; his cheek brown, and his whole countenance glows with energy! His intellect, too, formerly so morbid, has grown, under the influences of active life, healthy, vigorous, and clear. I used to feel interested in him, but now I admire him!"

Little lady, little, rattling lady! do you not see your husband frown? Do you not know he is jealous of your praises?

"It's late," said he, briefly.

"Ah, yes! and you are tired—here are candles. As I was saying, he is so improved by his travels, that we shall find him more companionable than ever."

"Umph!"

"Don't you think so, George?"

"I think," said George, with an unpleasant emphasis, as he trimmed his candle, "that he will not take his place among *men* until he has some object upon which to expend his energies—until he takes some interest in the serious concerns of

life. Of a parlour fixture, prating of music, painting, poetry, and such trifles, as though they made up the sum of existence, you women are the best judges;" and he strode through the hall and up the staircase as though he crushed a swarm of irritating insects at every tread.

His wife tripped lightly after him, with a coquettish smile lighting her small features.

So be it unto all monsters who insinuate that their wives are old, or their children ugly!

CHAPTER XVIII.

"Now on some tangled ivy net—
Now in some tinkling rivulet—
On mosses thick with violet,
Her cream-white mule his pastern set."

TENNYSON.

"No dog was at the threshold, great or small,
No pigeon on the roof—no household creature—
No cat, demurely dozing on the wall—
Not one domestic feature."

HOOD.

VIOLA had seemed so eager to visit the Eyrie, that Walsingham invited her to ride thither with him on the following morning. As he led her to her horse he was again struck by the beauty of her face, refreshed as it was by rest, and bright with expectation.

He did not yet identify this lovely girl with his little lost pet. He had not associated familiarly with women for years; and, therefore, his manner, though courtly and deferential, was distant. She also was reserved; her quick affections still

suffering from their revulsion; and so they rode silently through the grass grown streets.

When on the bridge, with the calm waters beneath them, mirroring mountain and sky, as she had loved to see it long ago, she turned to him quickly, saying,

"Does not this recall the past to you?"

As he looked down upon her fair young face, almost infantile in its beauty, he answered, "The past? Yes, to me it does; but you!—*you* have no past."

She looked at him expressively, as though about to speak, and he waited to hear, feeling that her reply would be a vindication of her little past. Her courage failed, however, and she averted her face timidly.

"Viola," he said, recalling her to himself and the subject, "I would like to know how far into the past your recollections extend."

"About fourteen years," she answered, gravely.

Walsingham laughed as much at the manner as the answer. "That is nearly the whole of your short life," said he. "Can you remember since you were two years old?"

"I have not any connected remembrance of life at that age, but there are certain scenes witnessed then which are as vivid pictures in my mind; from the time I was four years old memory furnishes me with a connected history of my experiences."

"Your memory may be faithful enough, but are you not mistaken with regard to time? I can scarcely think you remember things that transpired when you were so young."

"I am not mistaken; I remember my—" She paused; then resumed in a lower tone; "my father's face, and I never saw him after I was two years old."

She had never before spoken of her father, and Walsingham had thought that her early experiences were lost in the oblivion of childhood. Curious to know what her impressions of that parent were, he inquired, "How do you remember him?"

"I see him always by a dim fire-light, his cloak and hat covered with snow, as though he had just entered from a storm; he stands erect, gesticulates violently, and wears a dark and threatening aspect."

"I would not like to be thus remembered by a daughter" said Walsingham. "Tell me, Viola, does your heart ever yearn toward your remaining parent?"

"Never! He must have terrified me when a child, for I think of him with dread."

"You need not fear him while I am your protector," said Walsingham, soothingly.

Viola resumed: "Do you know that the strange enthusiast, whom we saw yesterday, recalled to my mind its image of my father?"

"Did he resemble him?"

"No; yet he *reminded* me of him. I think my father must have been large and powerful—this man was wasted and frail. My father was fierce and wrathful—the stranger calm and contemplative; yet when I saw one, I thought of the other."

"The stranger was a mysterious-looking man, and your father has been enveloped in mystery—that was the association."

"But I would like to know if he still lives, and why he neglects his daughter, and, also—(her voice fell here)—what claim that daughter has upon Mr. Walsingham's kindness."

Walsingham answered quietly, "I never knew your father, Viola, but I fear he was not worthy of the child, Heaven gave him. Your mother was a cousin, whom I loved. She was not happy in her wedded life, and when she died I adopted her little daughter in my heart. Does she receive me in her father's stead?"

With a grateful girlish impulse she caught his hand, and pressed it to her lips.

The flush deepened on his brow. "Not so," he said, "you were to me a benefaction. I should not be the man I am to-day but for your influence."

She looked inquiringly.

"Under the influence of an early grief my mind had grown morbid and diseased; you, then a little child, were its physician."

"Oh, see!" said Viola, "there is the very hollow oak in which Uncle Captain caught my gray squirrel, and here, the honeysuckles were so abundant—oh, every step is full of remembrance!" and as they rode onward the excited girl poured out the fullness of her innocent heart to him.

"And here," said Walsingham, "is the Eyrie. The wilderness has reclaimed its own."

It had, indeed! A growth of wild underbrush filled up the garden, the very paths of which were effaced by the rankness of vegetation; the porches were green with moss and mould; the windows shattered; the walls weatherstained and foul.

"Where are Mrs. Grey, and Cuff, and Chloe, and the birds, and chickens?" cried Viola.

"The birds remain," said Walsingham.

"No, these are a wild race of savages. Where are the familiar little cat-birds who used to peer into my eyes, and tell me things? Where are the pigeons that would come at Uncle Captain's call?"

"All these we can restore, but never the years I wasted here. I was a Rip Van Winkle, sleeping away my youth."

Walsingham felt strangely impelled to confide in this companionable girl, who had opened her young heart to him.

"You said you met with a misfortune in early life which crushed your energies. Tell me more."

"I buried myself in these solitudes, and became a melancholy dreamer—an idealist—a hermit living in visions of the past, while the precious present was ever dissolving, and gone."

"It was a sad waste," said he, "but it shall be retrieved. Here, on this very spot, where I sank, entranced, shall my aroused energies redeem the past. Where I once dreamed will I now labour."

As he continued to walk amid the desolations which time had gathered around his home, he felt no longer isolated from

his kind, as formerly, but knew himself to be one of a striving, struggling, suffering race; he belonged to the great human family, and for that family he would labour in love. He thought of the travellers of yesterday—the one ignorant and vulgar, the other brainsick—and found something to imitate in both. Like the enthusiast, he would gaze through space upon the distant and intangible truths of nature, and, like Midas Mitten, he would reduce them to practical uses. He would study, he would ponder, he would compile, and the great human brotherhood should enjoy the fruit. The marvels of science should not merely excite the wonder of gaping men, but should minister to their daily necessities. His schoolcraft should teach men better handicraft. His knowledge should be a working knowledge.

He who once despised mankind had “unlearned contempt.” With the humility of enlarged wisdom he recognised in all men *brothers* and equals. Equals in their rights, their aspirations, their wants and *weaknesses*—equals in the eye of God. Of this increased respect for his race was born that desire for the esteem of men which is ambition; and he thought, with a glow of pleasure flushing his pale face, that his name might remain a beacon, to the earnest and inquiring, when he should have passed away.

“I am a man and have desires within me,”

he repeated, as with one more survey of his crazy dwelling he turned away, full of plans for the future, full of the business

of life, full of its earnest concerns as George Irving himself would desire.

“I will make it blossom like the rose,” he said to Viola, as they rode homeward. “The house shall be repaired and placed at your disposal. My study will make a charming boudoir for you. I shall build a sanctum for myself on the edge of the precipice—I like a leaning tower—to which I shall invoke “spirits from the vasty deep.” Mrs. Grey will return with a retinue of pets, and I will cultivate a dove cote, and devote myself to the taming of cat-birds: will that do?”

How reserve had melted, and what good friends they had become during that mountain ride!

“As she fled fast through sun and shade,
The happy winds upon her played,
Parting the ringlet from the braid:
She looked so lovely as she swayed
The rein with dainty finger tips.”

They visited Mrs. Grey before returning, much to that good woman's delight. They found her on a bench under an apple tree sewing, with the old kitchen clock by her side, clicking with unabated zeal.

“I told you they'd be sure to come home some day,” she remarked triumphantly to that mute friend.

“And where are my old playfellows, Cuff and Chloe?” inquired Viola.

“Dear heart! do you remember the poor creeturs? They both died for me; and then I took Jim. People *do* say Jim

will never die—I'm sure I hope not—but where is he? Jim! Jim!"

Jim, a solemn and sententious crow, as black as his predecessors, came hopping on one foot, and examined his new acquaintances with imperturbable gravity.

Viola laughed and clapped her hands like a child.

"We shall be great friends, most grave and reverend seignior."

That evening when the girls played a duet together, and the pretty mother sat sewing and listening to Walsingham, George Irving peered over his newspaper and wondered if she did not think her liege lord a dullard, compared with that brilliant gentleman.

CHAPTER XIX.

HOME.

WALSINGHAM found that the season was already too advanced to admit of building, and the projected study was reluctantly deferred until the summer. The dwelling, however, was thoroughly repaired, and by Christmas he had taken possession.

Mrs. Grey had convoyed the furniture to the top of the bluff herself; and with the clock under one arm, and the Bible under the other, was the first to enter the renovated dwelling. "They're lucky things to head a moving with, and may save you time and eternity, Jim."

Jim dropped his eyelids sanctimoniously. He had so long a lease of time that he felt rather indifferent to eternity, but it would not be decorous to show it. So the precious black hypocrite hopped after his mistress, with the air of an elder, and spent the day in watching for something upon which he could lay his pilfering claw.

Viola's delight on returning to her old home was a puzzle to Walsingham. His own associations with the place were sombre,

and he used to think with compassion of her, as a fair child whose life had been subdued and overshadowed in his joyless home. So little did he comprehend the beautiful mystery of an imaginative childhood. She had not lived in *his* sad world, but in a rich and glowing realm of her own creation. There had been an ever gushing fountain of joy in her young heart; an unextinguishable inner light which illumined all without. She had been a quiet child, not because she was a sad one, but because she was alone, and it is only in couples that children grow noisy; but she had been happier than the veriest romp that takes her daily fill of boisterous sport. Nay, her dreamy contemplative happiness possessed more substance; it could be carried into the future for memory to feast upon.

She had loved, when at her desk, to close her eyes upon wearisome books, and recall the delicious sensations of her unfettered life; through all the harsh restraints and irksome tasks of school, her fancy revelled in the freedom of the Eyrie; it was remembered as an enchanted palace, in which care or sorrow dared not intrude: this was *her* little past.

It is astonishing what a respect we all have for our childhood! We regard it with admiring pride, as a beautiful romance of which we were the hero; a fairy life from which, alas! we have been disenchanting. We reverence it as something better than ourselves—and so it is! Why is it, then, that we are so impatient toward childhood, when this beautiful, better life, which has passed from us, is transferred to the children around us? Why do we seek to make them wise, and polite, and mannish like ourselves? Why do we embitter

their little joys, and shatter their bright illusions with maxims and reproof, against which our own youth, our better self, would have rebelled?

You do not get along very well with your children, for John is so noisy, and Ben so mischievous, and Sallie so stupid! Dive through the flood of time that separates you from your own early experiences; ponder them as a book, and they may aid you to unravel this. You may find that John's noise, so harsh and hideous, was not always noise to you, as it is not to him. It is music! the music of the spheres! Poor fellow, let him enjoy it! A few years more, and it will cease to echo in his soul as it has done long since in yours! Ben does not break, and tear, and tangle with malice prepense, and is no more responsible for damage done, than a bull in a china shop, or any other young animal following its natural instincts amid the artificial restraints of life. Do not fill his loving, happy, awkward heart with distress for offences never intended and hardly understood. When he grows older he will appreciate at their cost the precious adornments of life.

And Sally! sweet, stupid Sally, so full of her own fancies that she will not comprehend your teachings; why should she understand you? You do not half understand her.

These vagrants have led me a chase! Where were we? Oh, in the Eyrie, expounding Viola's regard for the same. Such and such were Viola's feelings towards that peaceful home; and what were the guardian's feelings towards Viola? He did not attempt to define them himself, and we can hardly do so for him.

The difference in their respective ages caused him to regard her as somewhat of a child still. He grew well acquainted with her young ladyship in the long winter evenings, and found she concentrated in herself the qualities of two beings who had exercised a powerful influence for good or evil over his heart—her child self, and her lost mother; and he loved her for the sake of both. He loved her as world-worn men love that which is brighter, purer, better than themselves; as fathers love their gentle daughters. A daughter seemed she to him—the lost Viola's daughter and his own! The Viola who had won his early love, passed hence like a vision and left this glorious legacy to him.

There was that in the character of Viola which belonged purely to her present self, and had no connexion with her childhood, or her mother. Her intellect was stronger, and her nature more earnest. Walsingham felt that life in the Eyrie was not solitary now, for there was beautiful companionship in the quick appreciative mind ever ready to comprehend and respond to his own. Life in the Eyrie was no longer solitary for another reason. The Irvings came often to visit their fair friend, sometimes to dine, sometimes to tea, sometimes to spend a few days. The village people, too, called with country hospitality and invitations, and these civilities were reciprocated by Viola. Music, and dancing, and laughter became familiar to those old walls; and often, after a merry winter evening had passed, would a well-filled sledge glide from the door, over the smooth snow and down the moonlit mountain

road, to the music of tinkling bells and glad young voices
Oh, I remember! Such glorious visiting!

Thus passed the winter quickly, and the spring came—the snow vanished, the mountain road became impassable, and then—why then there were books to read, songs to sing, and nameless household duties to be performed, with a mysterious assumption of womanly dignity; for Viola was not

“Too bright and good
For human nature's daily food.”

CHAPTER XX.

AN ARRIVAL.

ONE misty March morning, Viola stood at the drawing-room window, gazing out upon the sea of fog that encompassed the mountain, and counting the days since she had seen Helen, when Walsingham passed the window. He was equipped for driving; seeing her bright face at the window, he threw up the sash, saying,

"The sky is leaden enough, but I can promise you sunshine before the day closes."

"I fear I shall not value it," she answered; "for I love these warm moist spring mornings; they are delicious after the winter's cold."

"Come out and enjoy this—it is so soft and mild—the very birds are rejoicing."

She smiled assent, and quickly joined him on the piazza. A soft south wind played with her flowing curls, while in the naked tree-tops the blue-birds twittered to each other, announcing the spring.

"Hark," said she, as she listened; "the time of the singing of birds is come!"

"You can enjoy these voices of spring, while I must essay the execrable spring roads. Pity me, for I must drive down the mountain this morning."

"I pity you so much," she answered, with her merry laugh, "that I shall share the discomfort with you."

"You will find the drive villanous!"

"N'importe! it is short, and I would like so much to go."

"For my sake, or for Helen's?" he inquired.

"What an inquisitive guardian!" she said. "I must examine my heart and confess: I want to go partly for the sake of a tête-à-tête with you, partly for the sake of surprising Helen, and partly to feel the fresh south wind, and hear the singing blue-birds."

"Honestly confessed; and because I have been included in the category, you shall come."

And jolting, splashing, down the mountain road they came, to Mrs. Irving's door, where they met with a surprised welcome, the family believing the road to be impassable.

"I am so glad you are come," said Helen, embracing her friend; "for I have such news! What do you think of seeing Howard?"

"I think I should not know him without an introduction."

"Oh, true; you have not seen him since he was a boy," said Helen, looking a little disappointed by the cool reception her friend gave to "such news."

"Well, he will be home this summer to spend his vacation,

and will bring with him his friend, of whom you have heard me speak. Cola is his name—Cola Conway—do you think it pretty? Howard fills his letters with its euphonious syllables. If he were to write half as much about a lady, I should set my heart in order to receive a sister before long."

"Perhaps he expects you to set your heart in order to receive a lover in this Cola Conway."

Helen flushed slightly, while her friend continued:

"How delighted I shall be to see Howard again! I remember him as a very vehement boy, with black eyes and sunbrowned face, of whom I was half fond, half afraid. When Howard played with us I felt as though we stood on a volcano."

"Poor fellow! He used to be so explosive," laughed Helen; "and you were so timid, too. No doubt his temper is still violent, but he has learned self-control; and then he has grown so handsome! Last vacation, when I was home, I admired him more than any young gentleman I had ever seen, which was unfortunate, considering he was my brother, was it not?"

"It was very natural," responded her friend, "because you love him. I think Mr. Walsingham the handsomest man I ever saw."

One bright summer morning, when Viola was among her roses, Walsingham sought her with news. The long-expected guests had arrived.

He had learned this while in the village, and immediately called at Mr. Irving's; had had half an hour's conversation

with the young gentlemen, and invited them to dine with him the following day.

"How extremely prompt you have been in your civilities!" she said, looking gratified.

"Solely on your account," he answered. "I feared lest you would call upon them also."

"I am afraid I should," she said, laughing, "and thank you for your consideration. Is Howard very handsome?"

"I do not know," said Walsingham, with a slight tincture of that dignified superciliousness, which you may have observed in men when the personal appearance of another is discussed. They are so sceptical upon the subject of manly beauty, unless, indeed—but, no matter!—"I do not know—I think not."

"Helen told me he was remarkably so."

"A partial sister must be a partial judge," he answered, with more gravity than was usual to him when addressing her. It is possible that he felt concerned to find her interested in the good looks of young gentlemen. Be this as it may, she instinctively felt that it was best to forbear further questioning.

The next day she decided this important point to her satisfaction, without his aid. Howard was certainly handsome. He was tall, well-knit, and firm in figure, like his father; and, when fully matured, would, doubtless, be a powerful man. His features were regular and well-formed, but large, partaking of the massiveness of his frame. His carriage was digni-

fied and manly, and his whole appearance noble. The repose of his manner she thought hardly natural, contrasting, as it did, with his well-remembered boyish impetuosity. This mastery over self was indeed an acquired grace; acquired by indomitable resolution, and maintained only by constant watchfulness. His dark eye was true to his strong nature, and, scorning restraint, flashed with the olden fire.

Friends often present fine contrasts, so prone are men to assimilate with their antipodes. Mr. Conway was light, elegant, and graceful, reminding one of the troubadour or page of chivalric story. A very Apollo, as his friend was a Hercules. He sparkled with bon-mots, was ready at impromptus, sketched with facility, played to his own satisfaction, with a versatility that made him the envy of less accomplished youths. There was an open, frank expression in his face, which at once prepossessed the beholder; and it is hardly necessary to add, after this enumeration of his accomplishments, that he was a favourite with the ladies.

He sat at Viola's left hand at dinner, with Helen vis-a-vis, where he shone with more than usual brilliancy, feeling quite at home with the friends of his friend. Viola thought him very amusing, while Helen rendered the highest tribute to his powers, in believing him worthy of Howard's praises.

"Look at that man, Conway," said Howard, after they had sought the drawing-room. "Look at Walsingham; for you have never looked upon his like before! All my life he has exercised an unconscious influence over me. He was the

sphinx of my meditative boyhood, solemn, silent, mysterious, and grand! The sphinx speaks now, and its revelations are sublime."

"He's a glorious old fellow!—may he outlive his stony prototype. And did you reverence the young lady, too?"

"The young lady was a timid child, over whom I tyrannized most royally!"

"May she never forgive you for the same!"

"Spoken with the malice of a friend!"

"I intend making a favourable impression," said Conway, with arch coxcombry, "and would have such a formidable rival out of the way. How would I come out in a race with Leviathan?"

"As the antelope, when measuring speed with the elephant."

"Where do you find the fable?"

"Nowhere. I intend writing it when I see which will win."

"*Eh bien*, Mr. Elephant, I have the start of you already, for see! Mr. Walsingham comes from the piano to invite me to sing."

"More likely to reprove you for chattering like a monkey while the ladies were singing!"

Conway's surmise was correct. Walsingham was commissioned by the ladies to desire a song from him. He obeyed with cheerful alacrity, and in a full rich manly voice sang Moore's exquisite lines,

"Fly to the deserts, fly with me."

"How beautiful," whispered Viola to her guardian, "to wed the rich fancies of the poet to such melody!"

And now the music changed, and, after a prelude, solemn and sad, Conway sang an evening hymn. The song was extremely beautiful, and the hushed little party listened to its mournful cadences in silence.

Walsingham's eyes, as usual, rested on Viola's face, when suddenly she threw her hands toward the singer, with a faint cry, and bursting into tears, hid her face in Mrs. Irving's bosom.

Walsingham was by her side instantly, distressed and alarmed.

As she lay sobbing in Mrs. Irving's arms, he lifted the curls that hid her hot face from his tender scrutiny, saying, "My poor little Viola, what has befallen you?"

"Do not tease her," said Mrs. Irving, impatiently pushing him away. "You men must always probe a wound! It is only excitement and nervousness. Let her cry—it will do her good."

Walsingham had not seen Viola weep since her childhood. He had no faith in excitability or nervousness, or any of those slight excuses which females make for violent demonstrations, neither did he perceive how this agitation could be of advantage to Viola. He was convinced that something had shocked and distressed her. Sorrow had reached her in his very presence, and he must—he would—know what had moved his bright joyous darling to tears.

"If she is in grief her friends must know the cause, that they may comfort her," he remarked to Mrs. Irving.

"Do not magnify a trifle," answered that lady. "She was touched by the music, I suppose."

Viola, grateful for his anxiety, hastened to relieve it. Controlling her emotion, she lifted her flushed face, and placing a little hand in his, whispered, "I have been too foolish, but will tell you why by and by."

When the guests had departed, and Helen, who remained with her friend, retired, Viola stole to Walsingham's study. He rose with a smile of welcome as she entered, and placed a chair for her.

"I am almost ashamed to come to you after my folly of to-day," she began, blushing, "but I could not sleep until I had begged your indulgence."

"I am glad you are come. I should not have slept either, had I been left to conjecture the cause of your distress."

"You embarrass me when you apply so great a word to a trifle. I was only shocked by the operations of my own mind. The whole thing is so confused and vague I hardly know how to explain it to you."

"When Mr. Conway began to sing, the music struck some pleasant chord in memory. It seemed as if I had been often lulled to sleep by those sweet sounds, and I abandoned myself dreamily to their influence. Suddenly I began to question where I could have heard them before, and at last a vivid remembrance flashed upon me, like a picture, of a dying fire-light—a poor dark room—a lady, sad, tender, and beautiful,

with a dreamy child upon her bosom, and around all, like an atmosphere, this music floated." Here her voice trembled and failed, but, with a final effort, she added,—“Then I knew I heard again the hymn my lost mother used to sing to her poor child.”

“Poor child! poor child!” he echoed, smoothing her soft hair.

This was the second time she had named her mother. It had seemed to be a subject too sacred for words, and he was touched by her confidence as well as by her emotion.

“Do not pity me,” she said, looking up with her brightest smile, “I am very, very happy now. It was for the sorrows of the poor little bereaved one that I wept. She seems like a child that I knew and loved, and pitied, long ago. I hardly identify her with my happy self.”

“Bless you!” said Walsingham fervently.

“Viola, it is the desire of my life to see you happy, and I am almost grateful to you for being so, and now good-night, my”—

She paused, and looked him in the face, as though to inquire what he would have added, but had suppressed.

“Good-night, my little girl.”

CHAPTER XXI.

THE NONSENSE OF YOUTH.

“Where frowned the fort, pavilions gay,
And cottage windows, flower entwined,
Looked out upon the peaceful bay
And hills behind.”

WHITTIER.

HELEN remained all night with her friend, and the next morning the gentlemen called to inquire after Miss Walsingham's health, and take Miss Irving home. They found Viola quite herself again, and bewitchingly beautiful; at least so thought Howard, who, seating himself near her, endeavoured to engross her attention, while Helen obligingly entertained his friend. Viola was not sorry to have a few moments' conversation with him, as her curiosity had not been appeased by the slender opportunities of yesterday. He conversed with tact and originality, and she thought that, if not as brilliant as his friend, he was infinitely more interesting—she liked his earnestness.

Mr. Conway, meanwhile, seemed much interested in Howard's sister, and excited his multiform powers for her entertainment; while Helen, who was never ungrateful for any effort made in her behalf, looked so amiably appreciative that he could not help admiring her while he talked.

Helen, although not strictly beautiful, was an attractive girl. Her excellent understanding, and no less excellent heart, her fine feminine character so shone forth in all she did, that one felt sympathetically attracted by the subtle influence of her quiet gifts. She was extremely timid in the presence of strangers, and blushed on the slightest provocation. As she listened to the sparkling Conway her colour would come and go, flit and fade with the beautiful variability of the northern light. This was the only betrayer of her bashfulness, so thoroughly was it subjected to her breeding. Never was she so overcome by constitutional shyness as to forget what was due to society and to herself.

"I am glad you are pleased with the natural scenery around us," she said, in reply to his repeated admiration; "it is not only beautiful, but abounds in Indian legends and historical incidents. When you become familiar with its points of local interest, it will be haunted ground to you."

"The country seems hardly old enough for that," said Conway, who, like all students, had great veneration for antiquity.

"It is true," replied Helen; "its known history does not extend much farther back than the memory of the oldest inhabitant. There are men living who remember when all this cultivated country was a primeval wilderness, and the

hunting-ground of the Shawnees and Mohicans lay in the rich valley of the Susquehanna. But where it loses in antiquity it gains in interest; for the appalling facts of history are never so forcibly realized as when received from the lips of actual participators."

"But," answered Conway with animation, "should not the narrative be received with distrust because of the excited feelings and personal prejudices of the narrator? Your old inhabitant will dwell with holy horror upon the vindictiveness, the cruelty, the insatiate blood-thirst of the savage, and not think worthy of mention the red man's goads to vengeance in his outraged rights and alienated possessions."

"Prejudice, I fear," said Helen, "does not tincture tradition only: the integrity of history itself is more or less impaired by human bias. The most careful historians differ in inferences, conclusions, and estimate of facts, even when facts themselves are beyond dispute."

"Horrible! horrible!" exclaimed Howard, starting to his feet with his fingers in his ears. "Have I lived to hear my sister a pedant!"

Helen was covered with blushes, but answered in the same mock-heroic tone, "Woe is me, that I find my brother a critic!"

Conway laughed merrily, and essayed to comfort her, by assuring her it was the besetting sin of brotherhood. He had half a dozen chums, good fellows every one, and free and easy; but, to a man, oppressively hypercritical to their sisters. If John Smith's sister ventured to remark that it was cold, John,

with brotherly impertinence, would remind her that she had chosen an original subject for conversation. If Mary Jones expressed an innocent desire to walk, her brother Tom would elegantly insinuate she was always on the trot. If Sally Brown dealt in commonplaces, Bea was sure to beg her not to be silly; and if she aimed at something more than ordinary, he was equally urgent upon her not to show off. For his part, he was thankful that he had not a sister to oppress, and thought Miss Walsingham was fortunate in being free from a brother's thrall.

"Nay," said Viola, "I could be grateful for that sensitive affection which is so keenly alive to the imperfections of its object. The brother whose watchful love was jealous of my faults might make unamiable manifestations with impunity."

Helen looked fondly at her brother, as if to say she felt all that her friend had expressed; while he smiled on her proudly, as though he did not see any serious fault in her.

"Apropos of interesting localities, I would like to drive you to Fort A——" (he smiled upon Viola as a moment before he had done upon Helen: certain it is he saw no fault in *her*); "the carriage is at the door, the morning lovely, and you will feel renovated by the drive."

"Oh, by all means, come!" cried Helen: "and then you must dine with us. It will be such a pleasant surprise to mamma to see you out and looking well."

Viola consented readily, and the carriage was soon winding down the mountain road, with as merry a party as ever drove through those whispering woodlands in the leafy month of

June. And now they were upon the bridge; that fairy-like latticed structure, the airy arches of which had been the wonder of Viola's childhood. The soft blue sky of summer hung above them, the majestic river swept beneath, and far down its shining depths behold another heaven, spanned by the white bow of the graceful bridge. A few minutes' driving along the river bank brought them to the site of the provincial fort. A commodious dwelling of red brick, enclosed in a pale yard and flanked by highly cultivated acres, was all that met the eyes of Cola Conway.

"What is this?" said he; "I expected to see a fortress, or at the worst a ruin."

"Fortresses are no longer needed, and ruins cumber the ground," answered Howard. "On the contrary, quiet, happy homesteads are in demand, and this is one."

"And this trim home of thrift stands on the site of the old Provincial Fort! I cannot say that I like the facility with which my countrymen blot the remembrancers of great events from the face of the earth. The landmarks of the past are falling before the ploughshare of the present, and the associations of a spot like this grow faint when the mementos of its story have perished."

He had leaped from the carriage, and stood, hat in hand, surveying the scene. His usually animated face was thoughtful and earnest. A new phase, which gave it new interest in the eyes of Helen. She thought, as he stood on the green sward, the river breeze playing with his chestnut curls, that—that Howard was not the handsomest man she had ever seen.

By that magnetic influence which all have known, he felt her eyes were on him, and turning quickly met their admiring gaze; the thoughtful expression gave place to a bright, triumphant look, and Helen, abashed, looked out toward the farm-house.

"Do you remember," said Viola, "those stories of the fort old Aunt Jeannie used to tell us? How brave the men were, and the women, too, although they felt at the close of each day that they might never open their eyes upon another dawning. Often, in the gathering darkness of winter twilights, the dusky forms of savages were seen stealing along the crags of the Bluff—there!"

The little party turned toward the Bluff. The sunshine lay warm upon its ragged side, broken here and there by the shadow of pines. So bright, and warm, and peaceful seemed all things about them, they could not realize the perils past.

"I have often sat within that dwelling," said Helen, "marking the dull routine of daily commonplaces move along, and wondering how the pulses of life could beat so calmly on a spot consecrated in my mind to deadly perils and mortal dread."

"That may be a pretty bit of sentiment, sweet sister," said Howard, "but was it not that peaceful homes like this should brighten the land, that the hardy men of old braved those perils?"

"Doubtless you speak sound philosophy," laughed Cola, whose momentary seriousness had vanished; "but woe is my

country! her utilitarian sons have robbed her of her relics. Rome has her ruins—"

"And when America's day of prosperity is passed, she will have hers. Rome is a ruin—people as well as city! Vagrants and lazzaroni fill the city of the Caesars, and desecrate the classic ground with obscene presence. Could I, by one sweep of my hand, obliterate pillar and ruin, palace and temple, and raise upon the ground they cumber a city of such home-like homes as that, peopled by an industrious and prosperous race, why, presto!—farewell to the ruined Mecca of the student and the poet! Rome would be redeemed!"

He spoke with energy, and Cola answered in mock distress, "Oh, leveller! oh, red republican! And what shall be left for a poor fellow like myself to dream over? I had intended to sit me down, in a fine frenzy, at Fort Augusta, and indite a patriotic poem—but, alas! the scene is too bucolic."

Viola looked at him attentively as he spoke, but without the answering smile his light sally seemed to demand. Howard, who watched her face, bent his head toward her, saying—

"I would give much to know your thoughts."

"I was thinking," she said, with a blush—for his earnest manner had startled her—"I was thinking that your poetic friend should select a subject for his song from the themes of the troubadour."

"And was that all?" inquired Howard, with his penetrating gaze still fixed upon her face.

"No, that was not all," she answered, simply.

He continued to look the question he dared not press in words; but she appeared unconscious of the mute interrogative, and he felt, without knowing why, that she had had a thought of which he was the subject. This did not displease him; young gentlemen are not offended at finding themselves the subject of a fair lady's musings.

Although Viola hesitated to confide her thoughts to the subject of them, we have not a similar delicacy with regard to our confidential friend, the reader. She had thought that the energetic enthusiasm of Howard fitted him to be the chronicler of those indomitable struggles for the right, the success of which was unattended by the usual brilliant accessories of victory.

"And was that all?" says the reader to me, as Howard said to Viola.

"No, that was not all," say I to the reader ingenuously, as Viola answered her interrogator.

And then the reader looks curious, wishing to know the rest, but I am discreetly silent. For I will not betray that at this point my sweet lady felt excessively hungry.

Helen, who is a sympathetic friend, must have guessed this, for she suggested that the dinner hour was at hand, and they had better drive home.

And merrily home drove they, filling the air with laughter, and trampling the sunshine in the dust where it lay. When Nature is so bounteous, her children will be prodigal.

At dinner, a programme of enjoyments for successive days was arranged by these young votaries of pleasure. We of

the work-a-day world cannot follow them, but they are none the less happy.

It so happened in this intimacy between the two families, that Walsingham and Mrs. Irving were frequently drawn together, and thrown as it were upon each other for companionship by these thoughtless and selfish young people. It may be this was pleasant enough, as it has been seen they were two very attractive persons. About this time there was a great change in George Irving. He was moody, stern, and silent, and seemed moping over some dismal secret.

Probably stocks were falling.

CHAPTER XXII.

HINTS AT HOW THE YOUNG GENTLEMEN ENJOYED THEIR
VACATION.

HELEN and her mamma sat sewing one morning, when Cola, in hunting garb, presented himself at the door.

"Come in," said Mrs. Irving, "and tell us where you have been. Not shooting, I hope?"

"Yes; and have returned, like a faithful knight, to lay my trophies at the feet of beauty," and he glanced at Helen with an air of gallantry.

"That means mamma," she said, demurely; "she is the beauty of the family!"

A becoming blush mantled mamma's usually pale face, and her eyes beamed kindly on her daughter.

She certainly was a lovely matron, the young man thought, although he had not observed it before.

"I do homage!" he said, kissing her hand, "and wish she was *my* mother."

I do not understand why Helen grew so red at this. Probably she thought his civility to mamma impertinent.

Mamma's sense of propriety did not appear to be outraged. She not only suffered him to kiss her hand, but laid it gently on his clustering locks, while she favoured him with a maternal regard.

"Poor boy!" she said, "you have no mother."

"No! How did you know that?"

"Because, I observe you have not the habits which feminine care inculcates."

He grew very red, now, and laughed.

"Pray, give me an instance."

"Well, then, if your childhood had been beguiled by the nursery rhymes and nursery ethics which mothers have always on their tongues, you would not have been gunning in the season when every bird that falls leaves a family of little ones to starve in the nest."

"The instance does not sustain the argument," replied the saucy culprit; "Howard went gunning, too."

Mrs. Irving bit her lips.

"He was the instigator," continued the young man.

"Did he ask you to go?"

Cola laughed. "He did not invite me; I was a volunteer. He slung his shot-pouch over his shoulder, and walked forth toward the Bluff. Not knowing anything better to do, I took my accoutrements, and followed him.

"He has not been very good company, of late, madam, your son has not. This morning he seemed particularly dull.

I gave my mind to being agreeable and entertaining, but he did not appear to value my society as it deserved. He seemed studying the inscription on his fowling-piece. When we were half-way up the hill, I was rewarded by a friendly remark."

"What did he say?"

"Cola, you dog, you had better go home, or I'll shoot you."

The ladies laughed heartily.

"I was afraid he would, madam, and took his advice."

"I think," he continued, with comic gravity, "that my friend expected to find his game in the eagle's nest, on the Bluff."

I cannot tell why Helen did not consider herself a beauty. She certainly looked very pretty as she sat at her mother's feet, blushing and laughing, and in many pretty maidenly ways demonstrating her enjoyment of this young man's nonsense. A bracelet, which her mother wore, contained her miniature, and Cola thought the artist had not done her justice. If Nature does not always give to her young daughters the form and tint of beauty, she dowers each from an exhaustless treasury of nameless graces, which are not within the compass of "art's simulation."

As I have hinted, Cola thought that Helen and her mamma formed a very pretty tableau, and he made her sundry fine speeches to that effect, when an opportunity presented, seeming to be quite as much in earnest as usual.

Helen's greatest attraction was her musical talent. In this she was greatly superior to Viola, who was merely accomplished in music. Viola was mistress of the instrument, but Helen

seemed to play upon heart-chords, bearing her listener on a tide of melody through lofty, impassioned, changing emotions, as in a delicious dream. This is a talent rarely possessed by any save an artist. I knew but one (Heaven bless her!) who carried humbly in her womanly heart this wondrous gift, content to exercise it in the retirement of domestic life for her own delight, and the enjoyment of those she loved.

Cola Conway was peculiarly susceptible to the influence of music, and surrendered himself to its enthrallment with entire abandon. When Helen, of a summer's night, would improvise such tender or melancholy strains as harmonized with the hour, his heart would quiver to the notes as did the atmosphere, and tears flow over his boyish face. Nearer and nearer he would draw, like one enchanted, and crouch on a stool at her side, the abject slave of those sweet sounds—or their creator.

This young gentleman seemed in a beautiful state of bewilderment between his two charming friends; and, judging from his conduct, might be in love with either. With Viola, he was most easy, fluent, and free. Howard observed, with some resentment, that his friend enjoyed an intimacy with her, such as he who had known her from childhood had failed to establish. They frequently conversed apart in low tones, which ceased on the approach of third persons. More than once he had observed glances of intelligence and affection, he thought, interchanged. The brilliant gayety which he had admired so much in Conway, seemed levity now; and he felt

some uneasiness about having introduced his handsome and thoughtless friend to his home.

Have we not somewhere hinted that our young friend was irascible? Of course, this was highly indecorous and discreditable; the more so as it is such an unusual infirmity of youth. We feel mortified, and in a manner compromised by his weakness; but nevertheless confess it, with a candour which must appear magnanimous.

Nay, with the most entire frankness, we deprecate the indiscriminate applause of his friends, our readers, and beg their indulgence for the improper spirit in which our young gentleman met the irreverent badinage of Conway. Instead of receiving graciously, or relishing the delicate illusions of his guest, he would knit his brows and frown like the immortal Thunderer, occasionally launching some such bolt as this :—

“Excuse the suggestion, that your remarks are in bad taste.” Or,

“Sir, oblige me by refraining from innuendoes concerning my—hem—my mother’s guests!”

Or under high pressure :—

“Look you, Conway! you have guessed my secret; and now *beware how you cross my path!*”

To which Conway, looking terrified and helpless :—

“But if a lady should set her heart on me? What would you have a fellow do?”

“Don’t play the fool, sir!” responds Howard, looking as if he would like to rend his dear friend to shreds and give him to the winds.

“I won’t,” promises his dear friend, good-naturedly. “I never do. I wish my adviser was equally careful to avoid acting the ruffian!”

“Forgive me, Cola, my dear fellow! Bear with me! I deserve your reproof. My heart is full of the wildest love for her. I cannot endure that you should come between us, as I sometimes fancy you do. Nay, I am jealous of Helen—of all the world. I have felt so from a boy; for I always loved her. When playmates intruded upon our sports, I would put my arm about her, and draw her away, saying, ‘Oh, Viola! I wish there was no one in the whole world but you and I!’ Would to heaven I dared do so now!”

CHAPTER XXIII.

IN WHICH THE YOUNG PEOPLE BECOME BETTER ACQUAINTED.

"The sun in its gorgeousness, radiant and still,
Dropped down like a gem, from the brow of the hill;
One tremulous star in the glory of June,
Came out with a smile, and sat down by the moon;
And the earth, in her beauty forgetting to grieve,
Lay asleep in her bloom on the bosom of eve."

MRS. WELBY.

Now, were the moonlit nights of June!—the carnival of roses! Nature was in festive mood, and the earth was crowned and garlanded. Maidens wore roses in their hair, or on their bosoms. Matrons hung them wantonly to their girdles. Young men tricked them to their button-holes—and old men held them between their teeth; and all the world, by mute acts like these, testified its appreciation of the floral holiday. When the sun went down a great lamp was hung in the heavens to illumine a world too beautiful for the shroud of

darkness; and thus lighted and attended, she careered on her appointed path through space, rejoicing.

Viola and her friends were abroad, enjoying all that the overflowing censers of earth, air, and heaven, presented for the delight of youth.

Mrs. Irving leaned from her bay window to enjoy the beauty of the night—a night so bright and soft that it seemed a summer day veiled for masquerade. The mountains loomed up in solemn grandeur, while the river rolled between, with the shattered moonbeams sparkling on its bosom, and its murmuring lullaby sounding ceaselessly in nature's ear. The shrubbery in the garden waved to the evening wind, and filled the paths with nodding shadows; while, high in heaven, like an imperial presence, the peerless moon sailed majestically athwart the night.

How puerile, how pitiful seemed the cares of daily life in the face of that calm majesty! The anxieties which had oppressed the lady's heart were hushed, and *peace*, fit offspring of that shining presence, possessed her soul.

She thought of Mary—the dear treasure she had laid up in heaven—and wondered in what realm of light was that pure spirit's appointed home. If she was not permitted to droop from moonlit space and, with unseen presence, sow the seeds of peace in the sorrowing hearts that loved her.

She thought of her husband, whom she knew so well, admired so much, and loved so tenderly.

Among men he seemed a stern, straight-forward, resolute man, armed with a practical earnestness that enabled him to

subdue difficulties and control circumstances. *She* knew that warmth and depth, as well as strength, characterized his nature. A passionate enthusiasm burned within his bosom, like a volcanic fire; and as the secret glow within the mountain is evidenced by luxuriant growth and richest verdure, so had the hidden warmth of this man's nature beautified life around him.

She had luxuriated in it, for it was rich in love for her; her children had lived joying in its subtle influence, and all the blossoming hopes of her girlhood had found their full fruition in its vivifying glow.

But lately there had been a change in him, for which the cares of business failed to account.

Although not fond of society, he had always taken a kindly interest, nay pleasure, in the social enjoyments of home. Now he seemed to avoid the domestic circle, and, even in the presence of his wife, was silent and constrained.

What this could portend, her acute instincts, sharpened by wifely affection, had failed to divine. She had not questioned her son or daughter, fearing to attract attention to a change which she did not understand herself; but Howard had observed it, and remarked to her that his father's habits of seclusion seemed to have increased since he was last at home.

As she thought of these things a dark figure moved among the shadows of the moonlit garden, and, recognising her husband, she flew down the stairs, and along the gravelled paths, to his side.

"I did not know you had come," she said, kindly, placing

her small hand in his. "You do not seek me through the house as you used to do!"

"I thought you were out with the young people," he answered, abstractedly, submitting to her caress.

"I was waiting for you, and thinking of you, and of Mary. The moonlight always brings her image before me."

The sweet influence of the child seemed to come between them in mediation; for the manly nature of the father softened as he listened. Placing an arm about his little wife, and imprinting a kiss upon her fair upturned brow, he drew her down the walk.

She felt, from these indications, that whatever grief or perplexity oppressed his heart, his love for her was unchanged; but why did he not take her to his bosom's confidence, as he had done heretofore? She had shared the burdens of nearly twenty years, none of which had seemed so heavy as this one weight of withheld confidence. Encouraged by his kiss, she was about to importune him, as did Portia her lord, when the ringing laugh of Helen and Viola, mingled with the deep tones of Howard's voice, announced that the young friends were at hand.

Up the gravel walk they came, bearing lightly in their bosoms, hearts of youth. Hearts of youth! unchecked, unchilled, unshrinking! As they walked, the very night that had seemed so calm and sad, grew joyous around them. The moonbeams danced amid the roses, and the aspen leaves quivered on the breeze with bird-like ecstacy, as though they would mount towards heaven and sing! How changed in

the presence of youth and gladness seemed the aspect of the night!

"You walk too rapidly, Howard," cried Helen to her brother. "Cola and I can hardly keep pace with you, and Viola pants with fatigue."

"Is it possible that I have been so thoughtless?" he exclaimed, turning to the fair girl leaning on his arm. "When I am excited I always walk rapidly."

"Excited! What has excited you so much?"

"*Pleasure!*"

Conway was the querist, but the deep, low answer was poured into Viola's ear, conveying a world of meaning.

Withdrawing her hand from his arm, she stooped to gather the roses in her path, and the face which had shone so white and fair, wore their hues as she pressed them to her lips.

"Pleasure, such as I never knew till now," said the young man. "Pleasure which I will soon lose. Viola, the vacations are very short!"

She did not answer, but placed the flowers in her bosom, and stood with her dreamy eyes upturned, her gauzy garments swaying, cloud-like, to the breeze, and her golden ringlets glistening in the moonlight—a soft, angelic, half-lighted picture, which memory oft recalled in after years.

Meanwhile Cola and Helen wandered unobserved through the garden paths. His laughing face wore a more earnest expression, and his manner, usually light and free, grew serious and subdued. Helen listened to his words with an

expression of enjoyment on her young face, as though music filled the air.

Ah, his were fluent lips! Had they charmed her heart away?

Have a care, young Helen! Sweet, guileless, tender girl. Beware, how the passing homage of a versatile and inconstant nature is repaid by that treasure of youth, which true and earnest hearts can but once bestow.

Garden of roses! rolling green waves of foliage before the wind, and pouring richest incense to the moon! Youth, and hope, and love, dwell in thy bowers to-night. Fleeting and perishable guests, succeeded, perchance, by age, disappointment, and bitterness; while your insensate beauty will bloom on, and year after year smile in the face of heaven with primal freshness!

CHAPTER XXIV.

IN WHICH THE READER BECOMES BETTER ACQUAINTED WITH
WALSINGHAM.

"Love took up the harp of life, and turned it in his glowing hands,
Every moment lightly shaken ran itself in golden sands.
Love took up the harp of life, and smote on all the chords with
might—

Smote the chord of *self*, that, trembling, passed in music out of sight."

TENNYSON.

"I MUST, I must, I must!" said Viola, placing her fingers
on her ears to shut out the solicitations of her friends.

"I must return to the Eyrie."

"I must, *he* must, you must, go to the Eyrie likewise,"
said Cola to Helen, "for neither he nor you will be able to live
without her; and I—"

"And *you* will not be able to live without her either!"
laughed Helen, in reply.

"Not exactly that, but I—what should I do if you followed
her?"

Howard, who had continued to urge Viola's stay in vain,
now rang for the carriage.

"The large carriage—the family carriage," added Conway,
as the servant retired.

"Cola, have done your nonsense!" said Howard, with an
impatience which was lost upon that young gentleman,
absorbed as he was in the meaning melody of,

"Let's go to the woods, said Richard to Robin—

Let's go to the woods, said Robin to Bobbin—

Let's go to the woods, said John all alone—

Let's go to the woods, said every one."

The music was so inspiring, that both ladies joined in the
refrain with such merriment that "Let's go to the woods, said
every one," was still echoing when the carriage was announced.

Viola had been spending a few days with Helen, during
which time her philosophical guardian had made a discovery.

I have said but little of Walsingham of late, partly because,
in common with the young ladies, I have been occupied with
the collegians, and partly, because deterred by the difficulty
of portraying the excellence and dignity of such a character
as his. I have feared lest, on the one hand, I should not do
justice to his rare qualities; and, on the other, that their
faithful delineation might appear like the exaggerated endow-
ments of a fictitious hero.

But now the development of this simple story requires that
I should dwell upon him, even at the risk of marring the
harmony of his fine character by unskilful representation,

from which I trust the reverence and admiration I have entertained for the man may preserve me.

Walsingham has made a discovery!

Be not impatient, reader, but suffer me to impart it to you through the same gradual process by which its bitter sweet was revealed to himself.

Since his return to the Eyrie he had been a very happy man. In the congenial pursuits to which he systematically devoted his time and talents, his intellectual nature, heretofore restless and craving, reposed in calm content, while his social tastes found a novel pleasure in the constant presence and daily companionship of his cultivated ward. Her tastes assimilated with his own; his favourite themes became hers, partly through her natural love of study, partly because of her regard for him. Whatever interested Walsingham acquired a dignity and importance in her eyes, above and beyond its own, and she hastened to master its mysteries not only for the sake of the attractive knowledge, but that she might better understand *him*. Insensibly, when he came into her presence, he would speak of those subjects which had absorbed his attention during the day; and the language of the library and laboratory became the chit-chat of the tea-table. Viola possessed that womanly appreciative mind, so charming to men of intellect, capable of grasping, comprehending, and admiring, that which their stronger powers create. Her playful fancy and delicate wit would embellish the most abstruse themes, with a grace and lightness, as charming as novel to the fascinated scholar. His mind was microscopic, hers prismatic.

Viewed through the one medium the truths of science became enlarged, distinct, and clear; through the other, embellished, adorned, and beautified. Thus each borrowed from the other a new medium of vision.

Her resemblance to her mother occasionally recalled the past, but he was too profoundly happy for its memory to pain him now. It seemed a tender half-forgotten dream, and he lived only in the holy calm of this blessed era, feeling, believing, that thus their lives would flow pleasantly to the end.

But when these collegians came fluttering around her daily paths; basking in the sunshine of her beauty; engrossing her attention and time; bearing her now here, now there, in the pursuit of pleasure, while he remained in solitude at home; he pushed aside his books, and reflected seriously of her—himself—the future! She was young and beautiful. She would be wooed, probably won, by some one of these flutterers, and borne from the home she graced for ever. *She, his own!* His own no longer, but another's!

His pale face flushed indignantly with the thought of this wrong to him, for such it seemed. Had he not reared her almost from infancy, until she had grown into his heart and life, and now, when the care was past, the task performed, the flower unfolded, should another gather its bloom and rejoice in its perfume?

Ay! even thus fathers lose the daughters most dear to their hearts.

Ay, again! but he was *not* her father.

Thus it was that Walsingham made a discovery, and ere this you, dear reader, have made it too.

Neither philosophical or scientific, but natural withal, was this new revelation. He *loved!* He loved his ward. Luminous as a new-found planet, when brightening through darkness, on the vision of the rapt discoverer, was this new star set in his heaven. It beamed on his solitude, heralding to his manhood the happiness denied his youth.

He loved! *he* who had loved but once, and loved so long—so faithfully—so hopelessly. From out the very ashes of that rare passion sprang forth the new love phoenix-like. It spread its white wings around him, filling his heart with a rapture of wild surprise.

He felt that he had quaffed at some immortal fountain and renewed his youth. Life, glorious, blessed life—its hopes—its promises—were before him once more,

“With crowns of the sunshine and garlands of bloom.”

His heart was reclaimed from barrenness!—his home redeemed from desolation!—he *loved!*—he lived again!

But in this delirium of delight a baleful thought arose. Viola was very young. He—alas! *was he not old?* He had not felt so. He had not thought so, save in contrast with her. Then he composed his mind to a self-analysis, by which he might discover of what time had robbed him, and wherein the man differed from the youth. The result was satisfactory. He found his experiences were more enlarged, his judgment mellowed, and his mind matured. His enthusiasm had

deepened with deepening thought. His ardour glowed with maturer, manlier fire. In all things he felt himself to be wiser and worthier in his majestic manhood than in his undeveloped youth. Time had robbed him of nought—had bestowed much. In the fulness of his strengthened nature he felt himself superior to the freshness of untried life.

“The mind is deathless,” thought he. “Is it not also ageless? Is not its immortality an immortality of *youth?* It is in the frailer shell which the mind for a brief period inhabits, frets, rends, and abandons, that we should seek those symptoms of decay which men call age;” and he turned abruptly to the mirror. It reflected to his inquiring eyes the glory of manhood at its height of perfection. His fine-figure, his superb head, and intellectual face, were not such as ladies regard with indifference. His keenly critical gaze slowly changed to a triumphant one, and, throwing himself upon the sofa, he indulged anew in delicious hopes and golden visions.

The veriest trifles are often pivots upon which our lives turn. Had Viola returned then, he would have bared to her his full heart, bursting with its new found passionate love, and perchance have won her with the enraptured eloquence so dear to woman. But she was wandering in the moonlit garden, and a manly voice was pouring in her ear such words as gave her glimpses of another love as wild—perchance as true as his own.

Meanwhile the pertinacious self-examiner lay on his study-sofa pursuing the new theme.

“It will not be always thus,” he said. “Will not the time come

when age and discrepitude shall steal upon this strong frame, and it shall stand bowed and broken, beside her glorious womanhood, presenting the unnatural union of youth with age—scarcely less loathsome than the tie that bound the living to the dead?" The thought was agony, and hot dews started to his brow as he sprang to his feet, ejaculating,—“As I am a true man I will spare her this!”

Hitherto, he had thought only of the possibility of winning her virgin heart. Now, he felt there would be an impropriety in attempting it. Was he not her guardian? Had he not always appeared to her armed with parental authority? It is true he had not used this authority; but by virtue of his position she had always accorded to him a daughter's obedience and devotion. His lightest wish had been the law of her life, and was there not great danger, if he approached her as a lover, that she should yield to his suit from habitual obedience, or from gratitude, while all her young instincts prompted a different choice? Should he, of all men most bound to protect her from peril, lead her into this loveless—joyless doom?

But if, growing strong in such an emergency, she should, with self-reliant firmness, reject his suit, what then? The home of a rejected lover could not be the home of a spirited and delicately conscious woman; the dear relationship between them would be rudely severed, and whither could the poor friendless one turn, if she should seek to fly from him? Ah, why will fate tempt men thus!

The night passed in bitter mental conflict; but the morning

dawned upon a serene and resolute man. Over his strong passion, his stronger mind had obtained the victory. As honour and generosity dictated, he was resolved to guard the beloved one as faithfully, more tenderly than ever; to avoid disturbing, by word or look, the innocent unconsciousness with which she reposed in the shelter of his home; to protect her from himself, and to crucify his love as he had done before.

When Viola returned, escorted by her friends, his pale countenance, quiet manner, and grave welcome betrayed nought of the conflict of the night. They touched her, however, with a feeling of reproach for her desertion; and by various winning, womanly devices, she strove to make amends for her absence, thereby rendering her presence more dangerously dear.

CHAPTER XXV.

SUNDRIES.

VACATION ended, the students returned to their "*alma mater*," like rebellious step-children, bearing with them remembrances such as fed fine fancies, while study stood aside an-hungered, like the stork at the fox's feast.

However much the friends of these young men, and society at large, may have regretted the loss of such social ornaments, Walsingham was unfeignedly gratified by their absence. He could more uninterruptedly enjoy that sweet companionship which was all the aliment allowed his secret passion. The time when his darling should be borne from him by some younger, happier man, her heart's elect, seemed more distant. In their absence he felt reprieved.

Walsingham did not associate the most meagre hope with his love. He indulged in nought beyond an earnest wish that the evil day destined to separate him from his beloved might be far distant, and that he might protect, guard, and minister to her pleasures, and in return enjoy the sunshine of her

blesed presence a few years more. The feverish dream of his youth had prostrated his energies. This love of his matured heart—this calm, patient, and unselfish passion, lifted up his manhood; filled him with aspirations and resolves; elevated and refined his character. Dearer grew she day by day; and as his love deepened, so strengthened his resolve. The one, was the test and touchstone of the other. The dearer Viola, the dearer Viola's happiness. That happiness it was his privilege to guard.

He was resolved not to disqualify himself for the fulfilment of his trust by a betrayal of his secret passion; and with constant self-watchfulness and utter self-abnegation he laid his hand upon his heart and curbed its wild desires with a strong will.

Alas! that woman should inspire such love as this, and be unmindful of it! Why do not the invisible, all-seeing angels, pause on their errands of mercy to whisper to her that the sands of life beneath her dancing feet are *golden*!

In the mind of the matured man *love* did not extinguish *ambition*. From the suppression of one passion, Walsingham sought solace in the gratification of another. His study in the lonely turret witnessed many laborious vigils; and the work which was to give honour to his name, and his name to the world, progressed.

Great works are often achieved by the miserable while the happy lie supine, for *anguish is a mental goad*. The mind is most active when ill at ease: as steel is tempered by fire, so

are the faculties of man sharpened by trial. Thus it happened that the very contest with self which Walsingham feared would distract his mind, strengthened it for the effort of labour: his work was better performed, and mankind ultimately benefited by his secret pangs.

While Walsingham, ever near, was thus watchful to conceal his feelings, Viola's distant lover chafed for the time when he might bare his heart to her. Of the result of this disclosure he did not doubt. Such love as his could not be vain. Could he, he thought, for a few golden moments, speak his passion, as eloquently as it thrilled him, her womanly sympathies *must* respond. Such language must kindle in her heart a kindred feeling.

But he had left her with those potent words unspoken—with her virgin heart untouched. Young, beautiful, gifted as she was, might not another in his absence bespeak its sympathies and waken it to love?

The thought of rivals exasperated him. She was exclusively his own. Had he not singled her out among women, and sealed her his, with worship? Dare others approach and breathe upon the shrine whereon his heart was laid?

He felt himself injured when he heard of her womanly triumphs; for, as he had pictured, Viola was courted and admired. It appeared to him that the block or cord were the appropriate rewards of those who lifted their eyes to his divinity. He heartily wished she was safe in some desert island, under the guardianship of fiery dragons, like an enchanted princess. Then would he come, and with his love

and valour, subdue the monsters, break the spells, and win the reward. Or, consigned to the keeping of some convent, saying aves and dropping beads, far from the presuming admiration of men, until his love should overcome obstacles such as had deterred those who were faint of heart, and he should bear his jewel from the convent shadows, and hold it up in the sunlight, dazzling the world with its beauty.

Oh, heart of youth!

Of the emotions of Walsingham, Viola was as unconscious as a child; but with quick womanly insight, she perceived all that her younger lover burned to reveal. And while the great archer had been busy in their midst, had he no shaft for her?

Over the chaos of her heart a Great Spirit moved. That which in her young nature had been without form, and void, took shape beneath its brooding wing, and a new creation, a glad existence, sprang up within her. Love had birth in her virgin heart.

How lovely are the loving! Viola's cheek flushed, and her eyes beamed with softer, tenderer, holier light. Her whole nature seemed to glow and expand with the new life within.

Alas for Walsingham, who marked the glorious change in her, as he noted every light or shade upon her ever-varying face! He did not know the cause. He did not divine that love was beauty's inspiration! He only felt that she grew more dangerously dear with every passing day; and that to abide by his determination with this lovely temptress by his side, required a resolution strong as death.

Meanwhile, letters from the Captain were received, announce-

ing his return home. "Hang me, Arthur," quoth he, "you are foredoomed to play Sinbad to this Old Man of the Sea. Tell the little birdeen of the cro' nest, to don her best pin-afore, and prettiest monkey tricks for the delectation of her old uncle. Though, bless me! she must have outgrown both, and learned girls' tricks, by this time; from which, Jupiter deliver me, bachelor as I am!"

CHAPTER XXVI.

ISOLATED.

"Out of doors into the night!
On to the maze
Of the wild wood ways,
Not turning to left or right.
Making thro' rain and wind
O'er the broken stubs,
'Twixt the stems and stubs,
With a strong composed mind."

BROWNING.

AND so the summer, all glorious in that land, glided from out the valley. Wind and storm challenged the mountains, and howled about the Eyrie home. Did they call upon Walsingham, that he would arise and go forth as at the bidding of familiar voices? He loved the storm. It harmonized with the tone of his mind. It seemed a type of anguish, of wrestling, and of triumph. When its rage was the highest, he quaffed at its broken fountains and was refreshed. His striving soul was awed to calm by the contention of elements,

and peace followed the footsteps of the storm in nature, and in the bosom of nature's votary.

After a night spent in such communion, the morning dawned moist and gray. Viola looked from her window upon impenetrable fog. The pines that had moaned so piteously through the night were invisible. Familiar objects were shrouded in dreary blank—and throwing up the casement, she rested her cheek on her hand and gazed forth dreamily.

"Good-morrow," cried a voice beneath the window. "Where are your thoughts wandering?"

"Lost in a fog," she answered, with a smile like sunshine breaking through mist.

"Will you not come down and walk?" said Walsingham; "the morning is soft and warm."

"I am afraid I shall lose my way," she said, as a moment after she came forth.

"I will be your guide," he answered, taking her hand. "Shall we go toward the river?"

"Now we are near the precipice," he continued, and his grasp insensibly tightened. "This is the cliff that hangs above the river—now look abroad."

She peered down and strained her eyes to catch some outline of the familiar landscape, but in vain. River and vale were lost, and she saw nought but dense vapours rolling in sullen billows like a mysterious sea, while up from the impenetrable depth arose the roar of waters.

"This is strange and grand!" she said, and paused to listen.

"Does it not remind you of the primal chaos?" inquired

Walsingham. "Imagine the earth once more without form, and void! Look at those striving, struggling, writhing wreaths of mist, and think of the Spirit of God brooding upon the face of the deep, and labouring with creation."

She was for a moment thoughtful, and then exclaimed, "I cannot! I know there is a broad and beautiful world around us, although it is wrapped from vision by this cold veil."

"If you had never seen it, could you realize this?"

She turned her large eyes on him seriously, and answered, "Yes. There is another world, beautiful, illimitable, and invisible. This I have never seen, yet I believe."

"The veil that separates us therefrom is slight as that which now shrouds the material world. So slight that a breath—the parting breath—dispels it."

Walsingham looked upon her rapt face, and thought of Raphael's angels.

"How strange," she exclaimed, looking up, "that I can see nothing in the whole wide world but you!"

It was a delicious thought to him, and he thanked the mist that thus enclosed them on their isolated rock. He felt that all the world might be shrouded, darkened, lost to him, so that he might stand thus, above the chaos, with his beloved by his side, shedding around his life the brightness of her presence, which was dearer than sunlight.

The wild emotion in his heart struggled for utterance. His temptation beset him sorely, but she looked so fair, so child-like, so trusting, that he re-resolved to lay a restraining hand upon his passion. "I will," thought he, "be faithful to my

trust, and protect her from all peril—protect her from myself.” And feeling there was peril in his presence, walked abruptly away.

She looked wonderingly after his retreating figure, and feared she had offended.

He paused under the pines to look at her. She stood where he had left her, her face and figure indistinctly seen through the heavy atmosphere, but he felt that her eyes looked sadly on him. A soft south wind fluttered her garments, and drove the twining mist-wreaths about her till she seemed blended with them as something shadowy and unreal. Her sunny hair floated around her face in golden glory, and she appeared like some beautiful beatified spirit, half-revealed through the intangible veil of that spiritual world of which she had spoken. Again the divine creations of his favourite Master were remembered. Haloed seraphs gazing tenderly through cleft heavens—and she seemed no more the warm, loving, living woman who had awakened the emotions of his manhood, but that earlier idol, whom she resembled, now enshrined among the stars.

Thus the fair face of the dead mingles with the dim and distant memories of youth. Thus it looks forth from its world of shadows upon his temptation and struggle. The thought inspired him with resolution to be steadfast. The poetic mantle with which his excited imagination had draped surrounding things fell, and he saw them as they were. She, fair child, upon the rock, exposed to chilling winds and un-

wholesome vapours—he, a practical man, with duties to perform. He returned to her, saying—

“You have been here too long; let us go in.”

“I am glad you came back for me,” she said, simply. “I thought I had displeased you.”

“You never displease me, my child.”

His tone was tender, but it was not the tenderness of a lover.

The day that opened so dully was not without its brightness. Helen came, and the two friends, always so happy together, were doubly so from having been long parted.

In the evening, when shutters and curtains were closed, and lamps lighted, the skilfully-packed anthracite glowed like a wall of fire. It looked so bright, so warm, so genial, in that cosy parlour, that those young creatures might be pardoned for forgetting there was bitter suffering, and want, and cold prowling without. Walsingham looked in for a moment, ere he betook himself to his sanctum, and was so charmed with the cheerfulness which we describe, and still more with the sweetly-smiling faces to which all this was mere setting, that he ensconced himself in a corner with his book, and read, or looked, or listened, as the humour prompted.

Helen was achieving some feminine miracle with black and red silk, on the point of an ugly-looking hooked needle, like a dentist's instrument, while Viola, as though inspired by the indefatigability of her friend's performance, cut and punched great holes in muslin, and then incontinently sewed them up again.

"Helen, why do you sit so still?" she said after having achieved some unusually large punctures.

"Do I? It is because I cannot work and talk together, I suppose;" and she tortured the red silk relentlessly.

"What a pity! Now, the faster I work the faster I talk; the fingers perform a running accompaniment to the tongue. It is like playing on the piano, and singing, I think—Apropos! shall we not have music?"—and she threw her embroidery down with its last stab unhealed. Helen gave a final and fearful lunge with her suspicious-looking instrument, and grappled the black silk without compassion.

"There!" said she, holding it up to view, "I have finished that figure; does it not look pretty? By the way, Viola, you never crochet."

"No. It sets my teeth on edge to look at you. I always think of dentistry."

Helen laughed. "I never think of that. You who have so much time, might make such pretty bags and purses for yourself."

"I am not sure of that," said Viola; "you are always crocheting; how many bags and purses do you own?"

Helen blushed, and laughed again.

"Not one, of course," continued her friend; "I knew you hadn't. I should not have either. Now, my weakness is embroidery. I take especial delight in the manufacture of collars, but no sooner do I finish one than with a morbid thirst for approbation I display it to a host of admiring friends. She whose plaudits are loudest and longest usually receives the

prize as a reward for her good taste, and a token of my gratitude. But we are forgetting the music."

Helen, with her terrible little instrument, gave a series of pokes, punches, and lunges, right and left, and laid the writhing silks aside.

There was something inexpressibly sweet to Walsingham in the nonsense of these girlish chatterers. He sat with eyes intent upon the volume before him; but their voices occasionally struck his ear, causing a brighter thread to mingle with the woof of thought, as the babble of brooks or twittering of birds attune the mind of the wayfarer to music.

Helen ceased playing, and Viola exclaimed, with tears in her eyes, "How beautiful! Dear gifted Helen, I envy you!"

"Envy *me*? You mock me," said Helen, with a displeased air.

"Nay, I will not be answered thus," said her friend, embracing her. "I must envy you. It is glorious to possess a gift like yours. Do you not play upon our very heartstrings? Do you not make us weep tears so delicious that weeping seems a joy? Oh, Helen, I have seen Cola shed such tears, as I have wept to-night. Teach *me* your spell!"

She covered her face with her hands, as though to hide her emotion. Walsingham's book fell to the floor, and his pale face was flushed as he recovered it; but he did not look toward the girls.

A moment after, she dropped her hands in her lap, and turned on Helen a face radiant with smiles, although the long eyelashes were heavy with moisture.

"I believe you are in earnest, dear, partial, foolish girl," said Helen, kissing her wet eyes. "But there is no gift of mine worthy your envy."

"If you do not know it, it is time you should," said Viola, impetuously. "Helen, you are a musical *genius*. There, you need not smile, but listen. You and I, with half a dozen others, were the pupils of one common master. Except yourself, we all have the same touch, the same expression, and are known wherever we go as Givonni's pupils. *You* have an individuality of your own. *You*—you—when did ever I make one weep? Yours is not an art, but an *inspiration*."

Helen looked at the animated girl, and was so absorbed in the contemplation of her beauty that she scarcely heard her. "Strange!" she answered, with a sigh, "that you, whom I so much envy, should envy me!"

"Don't speak so earnestly, dearest. I do not envy you in reality—I admire and love you, and I love your gift in you. I would rather it belonged to you than myself, though; for I believe I can enjoy it more. Nor must you envy me."

"I can't help it; and you are so winning that I must tell you why. I know that I do possess musical genius—I have felt it within me! I have seen its effect upon those about me!" and her face, for a moment, glowed with conscious power.

"I don't think," she added, "one can possess a rare gift without being conscious of it; do you?"

Viola looked at her in amused surprise, and answered—

"No."

The momentary light faded from her face, leaving it troubled. "Don't think me vain," she resumed, appealingly, "or you will do me injustice, for I am not. I am conscious of this power, and tell you of it, as frankly as though communing with my own mind. I am also conscious" (her tone grew very humble) "that I have nothing else."

Viola smiled, and shook her head.

"I am not witty and wise, as you are; nor am I beautiful. The gift which is mine, I do not value; yours I covet."

"Wit and wisdom you have been pleased to attribute to me; they are quite at your service," said Viola, mockingly.

Helen shook her head.

"I do not want them, for they are worthless in women. I should care as little for them as for my own talent. No one loves us for them, Viola."

The tone, in which these last words were spoken, was so sad, that Viola threw her arms about her, exclaiming, "Helen!"

"Beauty is the gift most dear in women. Beauty is what my heart has longed for, and it is denied me. My love for forms of perfectness is a passion. My mind is filled with conceptions of grace and loveliness. My daily life is peopled with glorious ideals, and, with a world of beauty within and around me, I wonder that my grosser part does not take the impress of my thought, and grow to beauty also."

"Helen, your mind, upon this subject, has lost its tone. You have grown morbid."

"It may be so. Loving beauty, as I do; feeling profoundly

as I do beauty's power, how can I help lamenting that this precious gift of our sex has been denied me? Do I not see, too, that it is only beauty that wins that homage which is so dear to women? Gentleness is applauded and—*oppressed*. Genius is a flame for the multitude to marvel at and avoid—but beauty! beauty is caressed, beloved, worshipped. Beauty is nature's dower to woman, and wins her that which her heart most yearns for—*love*."

"Look, darling!"

Helen turned in the direction indicated, and saw the reflection of herself and friend in the opposite pier. Her eyes were bright, her cheeks flushed, and her whole countenance radiant with excitement. She could not but perceive that she looked pretty.

"There is a mute witness ready to contradict you on your main point," said Viola, kissing her. "Do you not see that nature has been a bountiful mother, bestowing the very gift you covet, although withholding the consciousness of possession?"

"Don't attempt to impose upon my vanity," said Helen, pettishly. "You know I am plain."

"I won't, but I will appeal to your judgment. Beauty does not consist in perfection of form and colour, little enthusiast, else why are the most regular faces so often distasteful? It is arbitrary, depending upon the taste of the beholder, and that taste itself is dependent upon a hundred minor considerations. I'll venture to say now that you and I will not agree upon the appearance of any of our friends."

"I'm sure," said Helen, with an air of triumph, "all the world agrees that Miss Ellsmere is lovely, and you will not be a heretic. It is to me a delight to gaze upon her. In her presence, I hold my breath, and cannot speak; my admiration is so profound."

Viola laughed; and Helen, again blushing, exclaimed, "Why do you laugh?"

"Because you are such a dear little simpleton of an enthusiast, in the first place, and because I am thinking how shocked you will be, by the sacrilege which I shall offer your idol in the second; now, what will you say, when I tell you the sight of Miss Ellsmere is positively disagreeable to me?"

"Impossible!"

"She has no more animation or expression than a death's head. She looks like one of those hideous waxen counterfeits of life, cast in a perfect mould, and softly coloured, at which I never could look in childhood without shuddering. I tell you, Helen, she has no more soul than one of them, and cannot be beautiful to me."

"How can you be so horrid! There is an expression in her beautiful eyes—"

"Of fatuity, yes. I have seen as good glass ones."

"This is perverseness."

"Now don't be angry, Helen; you are my beauty. I know your features are not as regular as a Greek model, but I never saw a more speaking face. When we are in company together, I listen to those about me, and watch you in the distance, as a school girl steals glances at an interesting volume. I see

the play of expression that seems to speak; the eloquent blood in its ebb and flow, at one moment flushing, and at another leaving you pale, and always think, 'she is the most charming.'"

Helen hid her face on the shoulder of her friend, exclaiming, "how can you say so, how can you think so, Viola?"

"Why, you foolish little thing," pursued that merry young lady, "it is because I love you, and that brings me to the second head of my discourse.

"You have a pretty little theory, which your own observation of facts will not sustain. You said that beauty awakened love. Not the love which such women as you and I would value. There are certain personal advantages which render the possessor conspicuous, and command the fickle regard of the multitude; but if you could follow them to their firesides, you would find them not more tenderly or fondly loved than those who pass unobserved through the thoroughfares of life. In their thousand homes, these plain ones are beautiful; for love invests its object with this charm. Therefore is it, that while to the world, and in your own esteem, you are but plain, to me you are beautiful. You are also beautiful to all who love you; let that content you, or I shall believe it is not affection for which you are athirst, but admiration."

Helen answered this dose of bitter sweet with one of her usual blushes, and a meek dropping of the eyelids, that seemed to signify she would meditate upon this consolation for the sisterhood of plain ones.

Viola watched her archly for a moment, but as she watched, the playful expression faded, giving place to seriousness.

"My friend sets an undue value upon a fleeting gift," she said softly, "when she prefers it to those endowments of mind which are imperishable. Beauty is of the earth, earthy. It fades with the breath of time, and ends in corruption; while the endowments of the soul brighten and increase in glory with passing time, and are themselves immortal."

"You talk very beautifully," said Helen, with a dash of bitterness; "perhaps because you are beautiful. Having all that the heart of woman can desire to make the present golden, your mind, uncramped by need or want now, can calmly speculate, philosophize, and wonder what new sources of delight await upon its hereafter."

"Helen, you are a naughty girl, and I shall send you to bed;" and Viola rang for lights.

CHAPTER XXVII.

A GOOSE-QUILL SHAFT DOUBLE-BARBED.

COLA had written in Helen's album, had copied verses for her, addressed her in epigrams, and in various other ways afforded her opportunities of studying his chirography; she therefore, on coming down to breakfast, recognised his dashing characters upon a letter which Walsingham gave Viola.

A letter! who can calculate the joy or grief within its folds! It is the enchanted pavilion, which one may hide in palm or pocket, but which, when unfurled, may cover the army of hopes, fears, and fancies trooping through the realm of thought.

Poor Helen had learned to love this light-hearted boy. Perhaps he had been at some pains to teach her the sweet lesson; and this evidence of familiar intercourse between her lover and her friend, filled her heart with dismay. That beautiful friend, of whom she was half envious, half proud, and who might prove so dangerous a rival. 'Twas but a letter, but he had never written to her, who would have treasured a

line of his like "letters of gold upon pictures of silver." She had found in his room, after he returned to college, a sheet of blotting paper scrawled over with her name. The delighted girl laid this treasure between the leaves of her Bible, where nightly it shared her devotions, and divided her young heart with its God. And he had written to Viola *four* pages! Her own startled eyes beheld that favoured girl smiling over them. They had been very intimate, she remembered, when together. Viola had seemed strangely in his confidence; had told to Helen many things about his family which she never would have known.

Could it be possible that he had loved Viola? He who with honeyed compliments and tender whisperings had wiled her heart away! Those words of his, over which she pondered, extracting new meaning—the hoarded sentences she had delighted to repeat to her heart daily—were these treasures of memory meaningless? Mere folly with which a heartless young man had beguiled his time? She grew livid at the thought, that she, so timidly proud, so sensitive, should have been the dupe of these.

He had appeared so earnest, plead the poor girl to herself. His heart had seemed in his words, while his bright face wore such frankness and sincerity. Was this but part of his hypocrisy?

"Oh," cried Viola, folding her letter, "what a negligent hostess I have been! Mr. Walsingham gone without his tea! and poor Helen sitting like pale patience!"—and she bustled among the china before her in housewifely style.

"What will you have, Helen, this morning?"

"I believe I—I—don't want any breakfast either."

"Nay, then you are not well, for breakfast is your favourite meal. How white you are, too! Does your head ache, darling?"

Helen put her hand helplessly to her head.

"Ah, I see! 'tis one of your nervous headaches. A cup of hot black tea, and some toast, will do you good;" and Viola placed them before her.

Helen essayed to eat, but it seemed to choke her.

"At least drink your tea," persisted Viola. "It is the very thing for a nervous headache;" and she held the cup to her lips.

"Viola, why will you tease me so!" cried the poor victim, pushing it away.

"There, there!" said Viola, smoothing her hair, and speaking soothingly, "I won't tease you, darling. You shall go back to your own room and rest quietly. I will bathe your head, and drop the curtains, and leave you to sleep."

Helen suffered herself to be led away like one walking in sleep. She lay upon her couch as Viola directed, and closed her eyes, as though to shut out misery. She felt the silken covering laid softly over her, and gentle hands passing magnetically about her brow. Then a light kiss on her cheek, and she was left alone with her first great grief.

Viola, having left her friend, as she thought, to sleep, sought Walsingham's study. The guardian had retired to his den no less perturbed than Helen. He too knew the writing on

that woful letter, and thought the hour so long dreaded was at hand. When Viola tapped at the door he nerved himself for an interview which he felt would be painful, and opened it. How reverently he held it as she passed!

"I have come to make a confession," she said, with her happy smile.

He bowed, handed her a chair, and drew one for himself near her.

"I can hardly forgive myself," she began, "for having had a secret from you,—but—I was so surprised myself, at first—and then—indeed, it all seems so strange, I hardly know how to tell you!"

How beautiful she looked, blushing at her own incoherence.

The watchful guardian hastened to relieve his darling from her embarrassment. "You need not tell me," he said, "I know all."

"Did *he* tell you?" she exclaimed quickly. "He wished to do so at first, but I—I could not bear to have you learn your little girl's secret from any lips save her own."

"No, he did not. Mine is a watchful and quick-witted love, Viola. I discovered it myself!"

"I ought to have told you at first," she said, "but had not courage. Is it not strange, he felt drawn to me from the first moment he saw me, and I to him. Oh, I have been so happy! I hope you like him, sir!"

Might he not now, at the moment when he felt she was lost to him for ever, compensate his self-denying love with one embrace? He gathered her to his breast, and held her close and

long: so close that she felt against her own the beatings of that great heart, so steadfast in endurance; and had, perhaps, a vague foreshadowing of the purest passion that ever anguished the soul of man.

"God in Heaven bless and keep my little girl!"

She did not know the emotions that struggled for mastery in the heart of Walsingham, but the evident love and suffering in his manner touched her deeply; her downcast eyes filled with tears, and when she again looked up he was gone.

Viola did not know why, but she no longer felt happy. Her loving and light-hearted confidence had been checked. The brief, confused, and constrained sentences she had uttered had been insufficient to express what she desired to say. She stood alone in the library, for some minutes, trying to recall exactly what had passed, hoping thereby to account for the change in herself. The influence had been too subtle for her to trace its operations, and with a shaking of her puzzled head she returned to Helen's chamber, and proceeded to apply remedies to the aching brow.

"Don't!" said Helen; "I can't bear it."

"Bear what, Helen?"

"Touch, sound, sensation," murmured she; "all are so intolerable. The repose of death seems sweet in contrast."

Viola was shocked, but at this moment she heard Mrs. Irving's carriage coming for her daughter. She flew to the door, and embraced the pretty mamma, saying,

"Oh, I am so glad you have come! Helen has such a dreadful headache!"

"She has earned it, by some imprudence," said that lady, coolly. "Did you lie awake all night, talking nonsense, as usual?"

"We talked all our nonsense before ten o'clock, and slept like dormice."

"Then you walked in the wet, I suppose?" said mamma, shaking a few snowflakes from her boa, and hanging it on the hat-stand.

"On the contrary, we prudently played a game of battle-dore in the hall."

"And how did you spend the evening?" pursued the quiet investigator. "Helen's headaches always have a cause. Hang up my hat, dear."

"Played, sang, and conversed."

"What was the subject of your conversation?"

"Beauty, intellect, etc. Helen seemed quite excited."

"I hope you did not quarrel?" said Mrs. Irving, with a smile, as she ascended the stairs.

Viola smiled, too—the idea seemed so absurd—"We never do that, you know."

"She was quite bright and merry, this morning, and arose first, gibing me for my indolence, and asking if I thought my cap becoming, that I was reluctant to lay it aside. Then I arose, and feeling that I had lost time, dressed quickly, and was first ready to descend, upon which we had some further jesting about the race of the hare and tortoise—when I left her. When she came to the breakfast-room, I was busy reading a letter, and did not at first observe her. When I looked up, she sat with

her elbows upon the table, holding her head with her hands, and seemed very ill. She has hardly spoken since."

"You are as minutely circumstantial as if you were giving an account of a murder," said Mrs. Irving, with a smile. "She will be better, soon, dear, so do not trouble yourself. From whom did you receive news this morning?"

"Pardon me," she continued, perceiving Viola hesitated; "the question was a careless one."

"I am quite willing to answer it," said Viola. "My letter was from Cola Conway."

Mrs. Irving turned upon the landing, and looked at her scrutinizingly. The girl did not blush, as when communicating with Walsingham upon this subject; but, in her usual self-possessed manner, reminded her companion that the passage was cold, and they had better proceed to Helen. Mrs. Irving was busy arranging her shawl, and did not take the hand offered her. She coldly answered, "Yes," and herself led the way.

For several days Helen kept her room, with that obstinate headache. Now it was intense and blinding, and now drowsy and dull. During all this time a vague sense of misery oppressed her; while her mind, paralyzed by pain, was incapable of reflecting upon or analyzing the cause. When she became able to bear the motion, Mrs. Irving removed her home. But the Helen who returned was unlike the Helen who went forth—she was languid, inert, and abstracted. She would sit with her hands folded in her lap, her eyes fixed upon vacancy, so lost in melancholy musing, that her tender

mother's heart ached when she looked at her. That watchful, thoughtful mother knew full well the operations of her child's mind: she longed to gather her to her heart, and with loving remonstrance win her back to cheerfulness; but she desisted, lest it should cause Helen an additional pang to know that her secret had been penetrated even by a mother's love. She hoped, too, that her child would of herself struggle against and conquer the melancholy that oppressed her.

In sooth it was a dreary household, for the father was still moody, silent, and cold, while the daughter continued languid and spiritless. She resumed the little household duties which were hers, with such evident effort and want of interest, as discouraged the hopeful mother. She, whose youth and joyousness had made the sunlight of the house, was now so sad and silent that those about her felt the influence of her secret sorrow.

"Why do you pause in your work, Helen? do you not understand the pattern? It is very beautiful," said Mrs. Irving one day, when engaged at needlework with her daughter.

"Is it?"

"Is it? Certainly it is. Pansies and lilies of the valley."

"I did not notice."

"I was at some pains to select something that would suit your taste, and am sorry my care has been lost upon you," said Mrs. Irving, dryly.

Helen looked up with wonder in her sad eyes. It was the first reproach that she had heard.

"I think my daughter has grown indifferent to many things she formerly thought worthy her attention," pursued the mother.

Tears now sprang to Helen's eyes.

"I am sorry to see," pursued Mrs. Irving, "that you are allowing some fancied evil to poison the enjoyment of real good. Why is it, Helen, that with youth, health, fortune, and loving friends, you permit yourself to be unhappy?"

No reply being given to this unanswerable question, she continued—

"I entreat that you will rouse yourself—cast off the melancholy that, while it oppresses you, shadows those who love you."

"Mother, spare me!"

Mrs. Irving, who had continued her embroidery while speaking, now laid it down, and looked irresolute. Resisting the impulse to caress and soothe her child, she resumed—

"It is best, darling, that I should speak. What cause have you for unhappiness, that makes it so impossible for you to recover your mental balance? If the hand of God had dealt to you affliction or bereavement, it would not justify the condition of your mind. Life is not all a holiday—happiness our inheritance and right, that we should find in sorrow an excuse for indifference to the duties, and ingratitude for the blessings of life. When our path lies in sunshine, we should be thankful; when amid storms, patience and endurance become us. Because we have been cherished in the warmth of God's smile, shall we rebel against his frown? But you, my

daughter, to whom actual sorrow has never come, cannot even plead that poor excuse for your unhappy frame of mind."

"Oh, mamma, if you had ever suffered as I, you would pity me."

"I have had my own sad experiences of life. What are my daughter's, that she thinks they surpass mine?"

Helen blushed, partly at the selfishness of sorrow, which had caused her to forget that great bereavement under which her mother had borne herself with Christian heroism; partly at the suspicion that hers might be but an ideal sorrow, since she dared not bare it to the scrutiny, nor claim the sympathy, of that calm reasoning, yet tender mother.

Mothers are said to be impatient of daughters' tender woes. Even those who, in youth, have experienced youth's tribulations, fail to sympathize with those interesting sorrows in their children. It may be, that time, and matrimony, and succeeding affections obliterate the memory of "true love's vicissitudes" in the matron's mind. Mrs. Irving's heart history was simple. She was beloved, responded truly to the affection, she inspired, and wedded; ever after, as the fairy tales have it, "living in peace." It may be, that with these limited experiences, she could not fully appreciate her daughter's suffering; and it may be well she did not. Her love for a good child taught her, in some degree, sympathy with a grief she could not fully understand; but so far from treating it with indulgent delicacy, she boldly attacked it with reasons.

"What are my daughter's griefs, that she thinks they surpass mine?" echoed in Helen's ears. She remembered when

death had entered their nursery, and removed the eldest born, and dearest. She recalled the suffering mother's face, bending over her remaining ones in agony, and tears, such as had appalled their wondering little hearts. How her great sorrow shrank into insignificance before a woe so stern and real!

"Helen, shall there not be confidence between us?"

She threw herself into her mother's arms, sobbing, "Oh, mother! Good, wise, kind mother, pity me! not my grief more than my folly and weakness. Would that you could look into my heart and read the disquiet that I cannot speak!"

"You need not, my daughter, I know all;" and folding her in her arms, she suffered her to weep unchecked.

"Helen," she said, at last, "do you remember the sorrows of childhood, over which your little heart was well nigh broken? You smile at them now! They seem so pretty, and tender, and pleasant to remember. They impart such dignity and piquancy to childhood, that 'tis oftenest through them childhood is recalled. The first grief of youth has befallen you now, and youth's energies are well nigh crushed thereby: your matured womanhood will smile at this girlish grief, as girlhood now looks back upon childish ills. As your path winds downward through the future, cares and sorrows will beset it, such as would appal these bright young years; but if I read my daughter's character aright, she will grow strong with her necessities; and hereafter bear with brave submission, burdens, compared with which the sorrow under which she is now sinking will seem light. And in the hereafter it

must be, that the soul blessed in Paradise, will look back upon the great tribulations of humanity through which she has passed, with the same serene and smiling contemplation that she, while in the flesh, accorded to sorrows above which she rose superior."

As these loving women sat together thus talking, twilight came down, and still their soft voices murmured through its tender shadow like the song of waves at night.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

DISQUIET.

HELEN'S secret grief seemed lighter, since it was shared by another, and she became once more cheerful. Her household duties were resumed; music again breathed through her home, and smiles wreathed her lip. But the smile was faint and quiet, the music sad, and the accustomed avocations performed with a calmer, graver grace.

It was the custom of this humble-hearted girl to sit in severe judgment upon herself; and, in the present instance, she bitterly reproached what she considered the arrogant vanity that had given a significance to Cola's attentions to herself which they did not merit; and had permitted her to believe that she possessed any charm sufficiently potent to attract one exposed to the counter influence of Viola's loveliness. But as she recalled all that had passed between herself and the volatile object of her regard, she could not, with all her humility, exonerate him from blame. She slowly began to fear that this *paragon*, this perfect model of man-

hood, this incarnation of adorable virtues, had, while acting the lover to herself, and the friend to her brother, been false to both. That, however handsome and brilliant he might be, he lacked those high-toned principles which she had credulously attributed to him, and without which more showy gifts are worthless.

There was an added grief in this thought to Helen. The belief that she had loved unwisely had stricken her heart, but the bolt seemed barbed by the conviction that she loved unworthily. She felt—this pure-hearted young idolater—that she could have resigned to the cold keeping of the charnel, or the warm arms of another, the man whom love had deified, if he had passed thus from her hope, with the glorious attributes with which believing love had endowed him, unshadowed. She could have exulted in having loved him then, and been happier in her desolation, with her holy memories about her, than in the full fruition of a grosser love.

In loving truth, in revering virtue, in striving after perfection, she still could have indulged her love for him who had been to her young spirit the embodiment of these. But alas, alas! The god was unshrined, and the worshipper must become an iconoclast.

In her own grief her sympathies were quick for others. For Viola, whom she loved through the dangerous test of a successful rivalry—Viola, before whose delicate perceptions of right the double lover would stand dishonoured—Viola, stronger and prouder than herself, who, when she came to know him, would

"Whistle him down the wind,
E'en though his jesses were her dear heart strings."

And for Howard! While submitting to her own bitter blight with patience, she thought of his probable disappointment with a tincture of his own rebellion. How was this imperious and unthwarted boy to bear being crossed in his master passion; and by the treachery of the friend he trusted? Her heart quaked, and, in the thought of his stormy grief, she forgot her own.

Sometimes ingenious and charitable hope beguiled her, reconciling all that was contradictory in Cola's conduct, and making his acts harmonize with friendship, honour, and good faith. What was there so hopelessly condemning in the evidence of that letter? He might merely have sent Viola a copy of some literary curiosity from the college library. This would have been natural and like him, and, above all, was acceptable to belief.

The glow of pleasure which such thought called to her cheek quickly faded, as she reflected with what ready confidence Viola would have shared a communication of that kind with her, instead of folding it in silence, as though laying a secret between its leaves, looking so triumphant in beauty and happiness the while. At the remembrance her heart bled afresh—that hapless heart, within whose silent borders hope and fear perpetually conflicted.

From the moment that Walsingham was convinced that Viola loved, there was an inner voice ever saying, "*lost! lost!*" The dim image of one who was to rob him of the joy

of life, that had so long stood threateningly in the distance, now drew near, and assumed a tangible shape. He did not inquire into, or resist the girlish will that smilingly crushed out his hope, but systematically preferred her wishes and happiness to his own.

How disciplined had the heart of this noble man become since its first trial! That early love, so far back in the past, had been but the desire of sentimental youth for its vision of beauty—this was the full-grown passion of matured and earnest manhood. Yet to the first he succumbed, sacrificing the promise and flush of youth; with the last, albeit deeper and stronger, he grappled bravely, matching passion with strong will, and high resolve for the sake of her who smiled in unconscious happiness beside his hearthstone.

Viola, as though in very mockery of the heartaches she caused, seemed childishly happy. She laughed, danced, and sang with an exuberant joy that caused Mrs. Grey to declare, for her part, she liked not such mirth, having noticed that those who laugh in the new moon must weep in the old; and Jim Crow, with his own diabolical solemnity, stalked near her like an evil portent.

Howard, in the mean time, dreamed love-dreams over his books, which always ended happily, or wrote love verses that were unhappily marred; and so the Christmas Holidays drew nigh.

CHAPTER XXIX.

A SURPRISE.

THE weather was now inclement, and Viola was often a prisoner within doors; but this was no privation to one for whom life in all its phases mantled with pleasure. The same warm fancy that in childhood filled the forest of the Bluff with enchantments was with her still, peopling the wintry solitude with its creations.

Walsingham made frequent excursions to the village. From one of these he returned with a package of books. "There," he said, handing a volume to Viola, "is a romance for you."

"Romance!" she exclaimed, examining the title, "why this is history."

"Can it not be both?" he asked, tearing the envelopes from his books, one by one.

"No," she answered quickly, "because one is a narration of facts, and the other of fiction."

He looked up suddenly, and smiled. "You are well booked

in your meanings; but cannot a skeleton of fact be draped in fiction?"

"Certainly it can; but what it gains in romance, it loses in its integrity of history."

"Not necessarily so," said he, pushing the books away, and turning toward her. "These cold remains of facts, exhumed from the dust of ages, are but the skeletons of things past. They have lost, in the decay of time, those minor circumstances that filled their outline to roundness. They have lost the busy thought that inspired, the warm passion that animated, and have become repulsive and unfaithful images of things that were. Let the imagination of the historian reproduce the semblance of what they have lost; let his fancies reanimate, his probabilities drape, and they once more grow life-like. They are not more real than before, but they are so brought within the range of our sympathies that they seem so, and conjecture wins that attention, nay, credence for truth, that truth failed to command."

"It is still conjecture, and not truth. Fiction, and not fact."

"I am not willing to admit that. Human nature is the same in all ages, and with suitable data may not its movements be calculated with mathematical accuracy by those philosophers who have made man their study? The course of comets in their orbits is conjectured with unerring certainty."

Viola laughed, and so did her guardian. "Your theory pleases me much, but it is the converse of what you have heretofore urged; I, in stoutly maintaining the distinction be-

tween fact and fiction, have only endeavoured to do justice to your previous teaching, but I shall say with Katherine—

‘It is the blessed sun,
But sun it is not, when you say it is not,
And the moon changes, even as your mind.’”

“And I have learned my later theory from you; thus, you see, we teach each other.”

“From me?”

“Yes; from reflecting upon the character of your mind, and observing its operations. You would be an imaginative historian, but not an unfaithful one. Do you remember the blind beggar that came out of Farmer Goodman’s door, as you and Mrs. Grey drove down the road?”

“Yes; but what has he to do with history?”

“He illustrates different styles of history. Mrs. Grey said that ‘the women folks came out and stared after him as far as they could see,’ which was naked fact. You told me, ‘and those two compassionate women followed him to the door, and watched him with sorrow in their hearts.’ This was fact adorned by fancy. You did but conjecture the compassion and sorrow, yet conjectured accurately, knowing what were the natural emotions of the female heart.”

“I think,” he continued, gathering up his books to depart, “that you will like the Historical Fragment I have selected for you. It is a correct chronicle of the times it purports to portray, while a certain richness of fancy gives tone to the whole.”

Viola drew an arm-chair to the fire, and nestling in its depths, abandoned herself to the enjoyment of her book. It was a glowing chronicle of the crusades—to a lively imagination, such as hers, an actual panorama of that wonderful and eventful era in the world’s history. Absorbed in the narrative, she grew oblivious to actual things, and stood in the presence of kings, warriors, knights, ladies, and troubadours. The four walls that enclosed her, faded; time’s vast vista spread before her; those who had marked the years with their deeds were again engaged in the drama of nations.

Suddenly, intruding upon the gorgeous vision, a rough, weather-beaten face peered curiously into her own.

The valor of departed heroes did not animate her heart. With a shriek of alarm and surprise, she leaped from her seat, and would have fled, but for the stout grasp that held her.

Sick with terror, her eyes closed; when Walsingham, hearing her shriek, came to the rescue. He released the frightened girl and hurled the intruder from him.

Viola clung to her guardian, half fainting, and again his heart throbbed wildly as he clasped her. She had flown to his bosom like a frightened dove, and the vain wish arose that it had been her chosen refuge from all the ills of life.

“Welcome home!” growled the gruff intruder. “I suppose that’s what all this means; but hang me at the yard-arm if I can interpret in this port. Timbuctoo is plain English along side o’ that!”

“Heavens, Ben!” exclaimed Walsingham, “is it you? Look up, Viola, and welcome your uncle Captain!”

"If this gimcrack is of any use, it will tell me why my own brother has forgotten me," continued the indignant and ill-used Captain, squaring himself before the mirror.

Viola saw that the worthy gentleman felt aggrieved; and between nervous agitation and vexation, she was about bursting into tears. Fortunately she resisted a weakness which, if indulged, would have condemned her in his estimation utterly; and taking both his brown hands in her own, she kissed his cheek, saying, "Welcome home, Uncle Captain, and pray forgive my foolish fright. No one has cared to make a brave girl of me, while you were gone."

Whether it was the look, the voice, the kiss, or the covert flattery, that thrilled the sailor's heart and charmed away his impatience, this chronicler recordeth not, but he warmly embraced her, saying,

"Why, now, you are a brave girl still in an open sea, I believe. But if you mope over such trumpery as that, you will grow as nervous as the dowager Duchess of Diddledum;" and he gave the fallen book a kick, expressive of contempt.

"So be it with them all, now that I have come, for I always hated them, and most of all in a woman's hand. Show me a book while I'm here, and I'll be tempted to burn it."

"I hope not, Uncle Captain," said Viola, laughing, "for when you are away they are my best friends."

"And I hope not, too," said Walsingham, "for they are our best friends always."

"Look at that, now!" quoth the Captain, "and see how

books pervert a fine nature. There was a time when he would have ranked us first, Viola."

"If you or Viola should be jealous of my mute companions, it will be because you do not understand how much I value you."

"Uncle Captain, those horrid wrappings disguise you so much, that I have not recognised you yet. Come to your own old room, and make yourself like yourself, and then tell us of your travels."

Uncle Captain prepared to depart, in accordance with this invitation, when, measuring with his eye the young lady's altitude, he asseverated,—“By Juno! if he had seen her looking so like Juno's self, when first he came, he should have bowed, and scraped, and made a fool of himself.

"But when I saw you," he continued, "curled up among the cushions, like a lady's lap-dog, with your sweet little face peering out from its curls, I caught you in my arms, thinking this is the blessed child again. But, alack-a-day! you are no child now, and young ladies are my aversion."

"I shall make a vow to redeem the race in your estimation, or undo all that time has done for me; and, in the mean time, pray treat me as your pet of old, if you don't intend to break my heart."

Thus talking, they left the room together, and Walsingham looked after them in surprise. In Viola's deportment to the Captain there was a familiar *enfant gaté* air that he had never observed in her before. He could not say that it did not become her, and the old tar was evidently charmed by it; but

her timid deference to himself, her modest hesitation in approaching him, was a thousand times more beautiful, he thought. She had kissed the Captain, too; but had never, since childhood, offered him that token of regard. This difference of manner toward these gentlemen was an insensible reflection of their respective characters—the Captain being hearty, cordial, and free, while his brother was fastidious and reserved.

CHAPTER XXX.

CONTINUED ARRIVALS.

Now the holidays were at hand, and every one prepared to meet them with holiday cheer. The Captain declared he had not met St. Nick on land for ten years, and he meant to have a jolly blow-out. Walsingham looked forward with a quiet pleasure to his annual excuse for lavishing gifts upon his darling. Mrs. Irving expected to welcome home her best beloved, her idol, her handsome, spirited, spoiled boy, while her husband, with a father's pride and pleasure, would mark the maturing promise of him who should fill his place, and shoulder the burdens of life when he should lay them down.

Viola's strange delirium of happiness could not well be augmented; while Helen, poor sad Helen, shrank from the approaching festivities. The ordinary requirements of daily life she had disciplined herself to meet; but to vest her thought in holiday garb, to ask a song of her heart in its sadness, was more than she was able to do.

How sad is the approach of a festival to the mourning heart! It shrinks as from an advancing foe. Nothing can

add a keener pang to grief than the unsympathizing aspect of nature. She pauses not to comfort her suffering children, but moves in her appointed sphere, and with her wonted majesty, over the griefs of a household or the graves of empires. The stars rise and set, unmoved by our joys, untouched by our sorrows. The seasons advance and retire, unmindful of one welcome less, or one grave more.

Blessed are they who can look beyond the calm, unsympathizing skies, and say, God sees! God pities!

"Cola is a splendid fellow, is he not?" wrote the unconscious Howard to his sister. "He is the most popular man in college, and the girls are all in love with him. He is called the 'king of hearts,' and a regular trump! I believe the dog has a dozen invitations for the holidays; but he prefers a slice of mamma's turkey, and a wedge of your mince pie, to the finest spread in Christendom. To confess an absurd jealousy, I did not intend to bring him home with me, for reasons which you will probably appreciate (under certain circumstances one does not like to be overshadowed); but the poor fellow asked me, in the coolest possible way, if he had not been invited; and I told him, if he would promise to be only moderately agreeable, he might pack his trunk. So bid mamma make ready to welcome us."

Upon this epistle being submitted to mamma, she wrote to her son that in consequence of other invitations for the holidays, it would be out of her power to receive his friend. This inhospitable letter passing the young gentlemen on their route, failed to interfere with their plans.

And onward the frosty Christmas came, neither hastening for the eager, or pausing for the unwilling. A deep snow had fallen the week before, and the Bluff, like a hoary Titan, reared its front above ice-bound river and drifted valley. The air was filled with the music of bells; the river covered with skaters; missiles of snow flew like sugar-plums in Carnival time, and coasting was as fashionable among the rustics of the Susquehanna as at the court of St. Petersburg.

The Captain romped and roared, like Boreas let loose, and insisted upon the minute observance of Christmas ceremonials. With his own hand he lopped the redundant branches of mountain evergreens to decorate the house. Mirrors, pictures, and brackets were hung with wreaths—boughs filled the vacant corners, and the Eyrie looked like a sylvan lodge.

In accordance with this boyish gentleman's views, the stocking ceremonial was observed. Viola's silken hose grew plethoric with corals from the Mediterranean, mosaics from Florence, cameos from Rome, and uncut gems, gathered by the Captain's hand in their native valleys, waiting for their lady's fancy and the lapidary's art to develop their latent brilliancy. Mrs. Grey's knitted stocking of home-made thread was pressed into the chimney service, albeit against the will of its respectable owner, and served to transmit to that worthy dame a watch of capacious dimensions, insidiously intended to usurp the *time*-honoured kitchen clock in her affections.

It may be remarked, in passing, that it failed of its mission; the good lady never remembering to wind it oftener than once a week. That duty being performed with exact

regularity on Saturday night at ten o'clock, the chronometer graced her girdle on Sunday, and was honoured with confidences and consultations throughout the holy day. But on Monday, being silent and dumb, and treacherously misleading its mistress when appealed to, it was consigned to limbo, and Mrs. Grey, for the rest of the week, might be seen in transit, from one haunt to another, with the clock under her arm, as usual.

Nor was Jim Crow forgotten. A glove of his own pilfering was drawn from its hiding-place, and hung up on his behalf. Viola filled it with bonbons, to which treasure of tinsel and sweets he seemed profoundly indifferent. But upon their being removed to the pantry, the nefarious little wretch took great delight in filching them upon every opportunity, believing them to be contraband.

While these Christmas Eve observances were receiving their due in the Eyrie, the Irvings were watching for the coach which was to deposit Howard at the gate. How pretty, and attractive, and fairy-like that home looked, with its luxurious appointments, its festive decorations, its genial fireside, and its sweet, loving, welcoming women! Mrs. Irving's thoughts and cares seemed to oscillate between the crowded coach, dragging along the wintry road, and the bountiful supper that bubbled and squeaked by her kitchen fire.

"Poor fellow!" she would say, "what a long, comfortless ride he is having! I wonder if Macey's cakes are light?" or—

"I fear he will be half-frozen, and the chicken overdone! Poor Howard! he was always hungry!" and she smiled such a proud smile, as though it was the happiest thing in life to

be the mother of a hungry son. Often she placed her hand against the window-pane, to shut from her sight the warmth and light of that cheerful room, and gazed down into the darkness of the winter night, hoping to catch the first glimpse of the vehicle which carried—*her Cæsar*; then disappearing from the room for a space, would return, wafting such savoury odours from her garments as caused George Irving to lay aside his book, sniff the air, and wish, with all his hungry heart, the coach would come.

"Tra-la-la—tra-la-la!" smote the sharp air, and the coach was at the gate. Mr. Irving took his hat, and went forth to welcome his son, while the mother and Helen peered from the hall-door, endeavouring to distinguish in the group around the vehicle, the form of their expected brother and son. It was clear, sparkling, and frosty without; the coachmen and passengers were closely muffled, and spoke with thick, chilled voices, yet cheerily; for were they not all going where Christmas welcome and Christmas cheer awaited them? And at the sight of those fair women, waiting in their warmed and lighted hall to embrace their clever fellow-traveller, did they not think of others as fair elsewhere, whose hearts would gladden at their coming, and whose welcome would be as sweet and warm?

Suddenly, Helen grew very pale, and grasped Mrs. Irving's arm, exclaiming, "*Mother!*"

"Don't be so excited, my love; keep calm."

"Mother, *he* has come!"

"Yes, dear; Howard."

"No! *that other!* I would know his step and voice among a thousand!"

"He dare not intrude, after what I have written."

"Hush, mother, I implore you, he is here. Welcome him, if you would not humiliate me."

"But you, my darling"—

"I will not betray myself."

"Mother, hurrah! here we are! how handsome you look! Kiss me, Helen—there, don't cling so to me, but shake hands with Cola."

* * * * *

The Christmas dinner at Mrs. Irving's was by no means a model of what such things should be. That usually hospitable lady was embarrassed by the presence of an unwelcome guest, and perturbed by the unnecessary trial imposed upon her daughter.

Helen, usually calm and quiet, was boisterously gay; while Cola, with those nice perceptions which often pierce conventional disguises, felt that his presence was unlooked for and unwelcome. Guilty fellow, did he know why? Howard, having been used to consider himself of more importance than any other member of the social circle, was, in the present instance, too much occupied with his own thoughts, and plans, to observe that there was much amiss with others. Having in view a horseback ride to the Eyrie, after dinner, he thought that meal unusually long and dull; wondered why his sister laughed so much at her own speeches, and why mother was so stiff and cold; felt glad that father entertained his chum with

a long discourse upon timber lands, to which that young gentleman did seriously incline; and, finally, when the ladies withdrew, muttered something about "engagement," and ran off to the stables, leaving the two gentlemen to their nuts and wine.

As the young man rode up the mountain, he pictured Viola to himself; fancying how she would look, what she would say, etc. In all these vagaries of the imagination she seemed so full of grace and beauty, so unlike the duller realities of flesh and blood, that at the door he stayed his hand, fearing to dissipate his visions by a reality less lovely.

Radiant and beautiful Viola! When she did appear, her lover was transfixed with enchanted surprise, so far did the warm, breathing, blushing, smiling woman outcharm his dim ideal.

The Captain, and Walsingham, welcomed him in their respective styles; and for their entertainment, it is to be presumed; inasmuch as he addressed himself to them, he discoursed most learnedly, fluently, and brilliantly upon various intellectual achievements within college precincts, the heroes of which would certainly electrify the world.

"Pshaw!" said the Captain, testily; "I've seen such things in my time, but what does it all amount to? These college bred geniuses are like hot-house plants. With a genial atmosphere and careful culture they put forth shoots and blossoms wondrously; but transplanted into the great garden of the world, they dwindle, wither, and are at last overshadowed by the rank growth of hardy and natural vegetation. If I had a son, sir, I would not shut him up with Greek and Latin for

twenty years, and then turn him loose upon the great striving world to seek his bread. I would let his youth, be an apprenticeship to the battle of life. He should struggle up to manhood as he must struggle through it, becoming stronger, with striving, and growing higher, as competitors hedged him in."

"But, Captain," argued the young man, "the world is filled with maturity, experience, and wisdom; would you bid the untried energies of youth cope with these? The discouragements of an unequal contest palsy our best energies. The college is an intellectual arena, where the athlete meet on fair and equal terms. The student's is a life of competition; and he who would triumph in the contest must put forth all his mental strength."

"Pshaw! the forest is filled with oaks, yet the indomitable vine clambers on their shoulders to the sunlight. What are your college contests on visionary battle-fields? Ye are children of the earth, and like your great elder brother can only grow strong when your feet are planted on her bosom."

"Walsingham, to the rescue!" cried the young champion, laughing, "and vindicate your *alma mater*."

"Come forward, Arthur Walsingham, that I may show this young man a living illustration of what I have said. There, is a man, who was the pride of his class, and for whom the greatest honours of the world were predicted; yet he sits by his fireside to-night, with no more reputation than those stupid citizens who never felt the glow of ambition or the throes of genius."

"Can it be possible you do not know? But I forget; you

have been long upon the seas, and Mr. Walsingham has been too modest to tell you."

"Tell me what?"

"That he is one of the most distinguished men in the country, sir."

"Who? Arthur Walsingham!"

"By George, sir, I am proud to be the first to tell you! You should hear our professors talk of him! Why, the scientific world is mad about his books. They are considered of the greatest practical value."

A slight flush mantled the silent scholar's face as he turned to look at Viola. Her eyes met his with such a kindling and exultant glance as thrilled him to the soul with a strange triumph.

She would be proud of him! She would value the fame which had crowned his nights of vigil and days of labour.

She might one day glory in the knowledge that the man whom the world honoured had laid his great heart at her feet.

"Hang your modesty!" cried the Captain, with tears in his eyes, as he wrung the hand of Walsingham; "why couldn't you tell me this?"

"How could I pronounce myself a man of reputation, brother? Fame must announce itself. When I make a noise in the world you will hear it."

"Come along, come along!" said the excited Captain, going to the door. "Come to that confounded study of yours, and get me your treatises directly, and I'll show you I have not forgotten how to read. Come, I say."

"Don't trust him with them!" cried Viola to her guardian. "You know, he said if we showed him a book he would burn it."

As the door closed upon their retreating figures, Howard congratulated himself upon the *coup de main* by which he had ended an argument, disposed of both brothers, and secured a tête-à-tête with Viola. "Let not him boast that putteth on his harness, but him that putteth it off!"

CHAPTER XXXI.

SUSPICIONS OF TREACHERY.

"*Ros.* His very hair is of the dissembling colour.

Cel. Something browner than Judas's."

AS YOU LIKE IT.

A DANGEROUS evening was that which Howard passed with the lady of his heart. She was so interesting in conversation, so beautiful when silent, that, whether she spoke or listened, her lover admired her equally. He felt, as only such natures as his can feel under the influence of youthful passion; and was momentarily on the point of revealing his feelings. Viola's manner was so kind and cordial, it almost seemed to invite the candour in which he longed to indulge.

Walsingham had ordered his horse to the stables when he arrived, and insisted upon his spending the night at the Eyrie. So, when the silvery-tongued or-molu time-piece announced that the most delicious evening of his life had ended, and it was now proper he should seek his chamber, he

bade Viola good-night, as though pronouncing a benediction, and walked from the room, as Adam might have turned from Paradise, had he been driven forth companionless. His great-coat hung in the hall, and, as he flung it over his arm, he remembered a gift in its pocket for Viola. He returned at once to her, and presented it with stammering and awkwardness.

I am not sure that Viola knew what she said in reply. She changed colour, and was as confused and incoherent as himself. The donor understood, however, that she would decline his gift as soon as she could find words sufficiently gracious for the ungracious act. He deprecated her refusal with—

“You are so associated with my mother and sister, that in making such selections as I thought would please them, I could not help including you. I hope you will not, by refusing my gift, make me feel that I have taken a liberty.”

“You are very good,” said Viola, “but—”

“Nay, listen to me first. It is a cherished wish of mine that you should possess some trifle that may speak of me when absent. Something that may stand like a sentinel by your side and guard your thoughts, bringing them back to me when they would wander.”

Viola bit her lip, as she bent over the exquisite ebony work-box inlaid with silver.

“I do not require such mementos of my friends. This is very beautiful—too beautiful for such a sad idler as I am. Give it to Helen, who will make better use of it.”

“You refuse my gift!” said he, bitterly.

“Nay, Howard,” she said, recovering her winning manner, “I will not suffer you to be offended. Give me a book that we have read together; a flower that we have mutually admired, and I will treasure it as the gift of a valued friend. It will speak more eloquently of you, than this faithless messenger, which is too beautiful to suggest anything beyond its own exquisite self. Besides, what have we in common with a work-box?”

“Viola, you mock me!” exclaimed the half mollified lover. “Why will you not treat me with candour?”

“That is precisely what I would like to do, if I dared!” she said, laughing.

More offended than ever, he walked to the window and gazed savagely at the reflection of himself in the panes.

Viola watched her sulking lover, first with a smile, then a frown, and lastly with a grave perplexed air. Finally, with a sudden resolution, she spoke:—

“The promptitude with which you take offence, discourages candour; yet I will speak frankly to you, as to a friend and brother, beseeching a patient hearing.”

Struck by the grave, kind confidence of her tones, he turned from the window to listen, and she proceeded:—

“Candidly, then, I do not accept this costly gift from you, because I fear to offend against the proprieties of life. Nay, be patient! I have never had a mother to teach me these: my own woman’s instinct, and the example of your dear mother, have been my only guides. If I am too fastidious, rejoice, as a true friend should, that ’tis on that extreme, I err.

Believe me, Howard" (and she gave him her hand, and smiled frankly in his face), "I am truly grateful for your remembrance of me, and I do not need a prompter to bring you to my mind. Now are we friends?"

It was not in adamant to resist her! He was charmed by the simplicity and apparent candour of this half explanation, half appeal. "I would not have you other than you are," he said, "yet I do not see how we can be friends, if you persist in refusing a Christmas token from me."

"I will not, but let it be this;" and she took from the table his copy of *Corinne*, which they had been reading together.

Now, of all Howard's possessions, this was the most valued, because every page breathed of Viola. Over this passage she had warmed with beautiful enthusiasm, and paused to speak such eloquent comments as thrilled her lover's heart. To that she had lent "the beauty of her voice;" and, in his mind, voice and sentiment were for ever wedded. The book was eloquent with memories of Viola, *his Corinne!*

A glad hope flashed on his heart that she, too, might remember with tenderness the hours they had spent together over those enchanting pages. He looked at her with sudden scrutiny as she stood with the book in her hand, and her face upturned to his. He felt convinced that she could not but respond to his passion; that the treasured volume must have for his beloved, associations as fond as his own.

His face kindled with this belief, as he exclaimed, "Will you indeed accept it? How proud shall I be to surrender to you one of my greatest treasures!" As he stood by her side,

flushed with pleasure, eager to say more, yet afraid to break the delicious spell, he perceived on the small fingers that clasped the book, the sparkle of a strange jewel. A basilisk's eye could not have been more terrible in its gleam, for he recognised the ring as one of Conway's recent purchases. A gift accepted from his friend, while his own offering had been rejected!

With the frantic impulse of one mad with contending passions, he snatched *Corinne* from her hand, and, flinging it in the fire, rushed to the stables for his horse.

The wildest passions possessed him as he galloped down the frozen mountain. The revulsion, from an ecstasy of hope, to jealous rage, was terrible. He muttered to the winds fierce imprecations upon the faithless Conway, who had received his confidence, only to betray it. Who, enjoying his friendship and hospitality, had insinuated himself into the heart of his beloved. And Viola's assumed candour, her affected fastidiousness, and fatal beauty! His affections were suddenly bankrupt. He had lost his beloved; lost his friend; and with them, had lost trust in his kind, belief in goodness or truth. The world was to him a moral chaos.

A storm of snow was falling, and the night was dark, but down the dangerous mountain, and through the whitened valley, galloped the impetuous rider, taking a strange comfort in whistling wind and blinding snow, and all the savage accompaniments of winter's night and storm.

Over the bridge—past his own gate—through the slumber-

ing village—clattered his horse's hoofs—on—on—no matter whither!

His fierceness became gradually soothed by the rugged sympathies of nature. The contention of elements stormed down the tempest in his soul at last; and, exhausted with his wild ride, and wilder excitement, he turned his horse toward home, now miles away. The gray of morning looked through the falling flakes as he drew his rein at his own door. Reaction is the handmaid of passion; and, when he threw his storm-beaten, storm-racked frame upon his couch, a repose came over him as absolute as death.

Howard had always loved with confidence. Never having been thwarted, the possibility of disappointment had never seriously presented itself to his mind. Love like his, he argued, must *command* a response. When he awoke with a heavy and dull consciousness of distress, these feelings again possessed him, and reasoned against his new convictions. She who had been so well beloved, *must* love in return. Nor would Cola, light, fearless, and unreflecting as he was, *dare* to tamper with the affections of Viola. *He* love her! He who was in love with every new moon, and attracted by any novel grace! Could *his* paltry, fickle, fleeting fancies defeat the fixed purpose and love of a lifetime? It was too monstrous for belief, and there must be some solution of the circumstances that had so moved him. Perhaps—oh, flattering suggestion of hope!—perhaps she had accepted Cola's gift, knowing it to be the simple offering of friendship, and hesitated to receive his own,

with a delicate and maidenly consciousness that it was the token of a deeper passion.

This hope grew into conviction when he again saw Viola. She came through all the storm with Walsingham, to dine with them that day.

"You did not expect me, did you?" she said, shaking her damp ringlets. "The gentlemen almost exercised compulsion to keep me at home; but I was sick to see you, Helen, so in spite of difficulties, here I am."

Howard glanced at the white hands wringing the moisture from her hair, and saw that the ring *was not there*. With a sudden impulse of repentance he offered her his hand, inquiring, "What greeting have you for me, Viola?"

"Such as you deserve," she answered, laying her hand in his, with a smile so bright that he felt she could not estimate his deserts as small, while bestowing such guerdon.

The storm grew furious, turning first to sleet, and afterward to rain, rendering Viola's return impossible. Her presence was acceptable to all; even Helen feeling that it destroyed the constraint of their awkward family party. To Howard she was so kind and conciliatory that he felt himself to be forgiven; and giving the most favourable interpretation to her manner, this sanguine lover abandoned himself to the intoxication of her presence.

In the mean time the placid Cola, undisturbed by Howard's monopoly of Viola's society, seemed quite content with Helen's. He told stories, recited poetry, and perpetrated waggeries for her entertainment, to all of which she did most gravely incline.

He sang songs, among which may be named, "How happy could I be with either;" and, something like "When the one we love is away."

At the conclusion of these appropriate selections he was somewhat abashed to find Miss Helen apparently absorbed in the last Annual; but he quickly rallied, and importuned her for a song. She laid aside her book, and with a cold, grave air took her seat at the instrument, while he heaped coals of fire upon her head by the devotion of his attention.

Mrs. Irving and Walsingham, while politely discoursing together, each gave an observant eye toward the movements of the young people. The partial mother saw much to modify her displeasure at Cola. She persuaded herself that whatever his offences might have been, he was at least sincere in his love for her daughter. Howard's feelings toward Viola were too apparent to admit of doubt, and it could not be possible, she thought, for that or any other young lady to regard him with indifference, so that however entangled and confused the affairs of these young people might be, she hoped they were slowly unravelling themselves to a satisfactory denouement. Walsingham's convictions were somewhat like her own, but less agreeable. He observed, with grave displeasure, the indifference of Cola to his beautiful ward, and his attentions to Helen; and he felt that this light, trifling, unstable boy was incapable of estimating the value of the pearl he had won.

In his new character of Viola's lover, Walsingham observed him with closer scrutiny, and he felt a pang as unselfish as it

was poignant, that a high-spirited nature, such as hers, should have fastened its affections upon a man like Conway.

He was brilliant, but superficial, and mentally inferior to the woman who loved him. He watched the play of bright intelligence and quick emotion upon Viola's face, and wondered if she with her gifts, her cultivation, and her devotion, was destined for nothing better than to be the toy of this boy!

He shook his head sadly, as he looked at her, and thought how men, with the attributes of gods, might refresh their great hearts in the inspiration of her presence, and go forth strengthened for titanic effort. How worthy was she to awaken a softer passion in nobler natures, enamoured with the majesty of science, whose labours in rifting new and precious truths from out the darkness of ages, might find, in affection like hers, reward. Men through whose love, her name might become immortal. Or how, enshrined amid the ever sounding music of some poet heart, her beauty, grace, and love, might glide on melodious numbers to later ages, living in human memories, when that beauty and grace were mouldering, and that love had become translated.

But, alas! far away from companionship like this, her obscure path would lead, amid the baleful solitude of an unequal union; amid human tribulations, which she must meet with such strength as God gave her; sustaining, with woman's courage, her woman's weakness, and the unstable heart of him who should have been her counsellor, guide, and comfortor.

"Oh beloved! for thy sake, not for mine, doth my soul

rebel! How dare I sit supinely watching this fate entoil thee," he thought, "nor make one effort to break the unnatural spell?" And again, "She is blinded, dazzled, by this impish boy! Be it mine to anoint her eyes with truth!"

But when he looked at her serene beauty, he wondered where he should gather courage to disturb her peace.

CHAPTER XXXII.

RAGE AND HATE.

"But this, denoted a foregone conclusion."

SHAKESPEARE.

RAIN! rain! rain! The next day, and the next, and next. "I think," said Cola, as he looked from the window one morning, "I think it will be clear at noon."

"So you have been saying for three days, Sir Hopeful!"

"So I intend to say, every day, until the result shows me a prophet."

It was not necessary to predict this again, as at noonday the rain ceased, the lowering clouds parted and rolled heavily away like scrolls of lead.

The Captain came down from the Eyrie to inquire after the delicate and consistent lady, who would not permit a storm to keep her at home, but allowed it to interfere with her returning. He reported that, in consequence of the protracted rain

and melting snows, the river was rising, and there was every appearance of a flood.

"Then I must mount, and ride to the creek timber-lands, if I would prevent some thousands from melting like the snow," said Mr. Irving, rising with energy. "Ring, Howard, for my horse to be saddled instantly. Yet stay!" He looked at his wife with a dubious countenance, and throwing himself into his chair again, muttered—

"What matter for that? let it go."

"Howard," said Mrs. Irving, "do you not see your father is unwell? Show him that he has a son to relieve him of his burdens."

"Let me go, father!" cried the young man. "I know as well as you do how to rescue timber from the freshet."

"And I'll go, too," volunteered Cola, promptly.

Mr. Irving looked dubiously from his wife to the young men.

"Well, go, and do your best," said he at length. "It is important business, youngsters; but I think I may depend on you. Start at once—ride fast—ride all night. When you approach the ground, engage all the men and teams to follow you, at any price. Upon the success of your efforts depends thousands."

"Never fear, father," cried Howard. "All that men can do, we will. I will go at once to the stable for my horse."

"And send round one for me," said Cola.

The horses were soon at the door. Howard ran up the steps

to summon Conway, when through the side light of the hall door he saw—Oh despair! what did he see?

Viola, standing on the stairway like a goddess on her pedestal, and Conway with sacrilegious arm encircling her waist, and laughing face upturned to hers. She stooped over him with a fond smile, while her heavy curls lay mingled with his! Howard, with an enraged malediction, threw open the door.

"You're ready, are you?" said Cola coolly, as Viola retreated up the stairs. "By, by, Viola!"

"Good-bye," she said, "and take good care of—each other."

"Take good care of him for *her* sake!" thought Howard, as they splashed through slush and mud, and he felt the spirit of Cain in his bosom.

He *was* false and faithless then, this laughing boy whom he had loved! *And he had won her!*

Their road lay along the river, and the facile Cola was excited, and delighted, with the grandeur and novelty of the breaking up of ice. "Hark, how the waters groan and labour; and how the ice bursts and booms, while the mountains send back a sullen reverberation! The mighty upheaving element is rending her fetters—see! Yon solid floor, over which these horses might have galloped three days ago, parts and yawns like an earthquake. Now, huge masses are heaved in the air! now, they fall over upon each other, piling like glaciers, while the waters rage and roar around them. Oh, this is sublime!" and the gay fellow laughed and clapped his hands.

"I would not like to perish in that cruel element," he resumed. "Think of the sudden, choking, gasping, death! The violent rushing of the flood in eyes, ears, and mouth, penetrating through every avenue of sense, forcing the soul out! Ugh! its awful, and chills my blood to think of."

Howard made no reply—(indeed, he had not spoken since their ride commenced) and Cola rattled on. "My horror of water amounts to hydrophobia, and has prevented my learning to swim. They say that drowning is an easy death, though! For my part I am willing to believe I am reserved for another end."

"A rope's end," growled Howard, savagely.

Cola laughed. "Your familiar has power over you to-night, my bitter-sweet! It's very well, for there is work for him. The lumbermen will be busy with hands and horses, and we will have difficulty in securing the aid we want. Set your indomitable imp to devising stratagems for the emergency, and don't let him be chary. All things are honourable in love and war."

"A sententious maxim, cloaking defective ethics, is fit for *your* golden rule," said Howard.

Conway looked inquiringly into his dark scowling face. "If I was not used to your moods I would be afraid to ride alone with you," he said. "You look as if you would like to murder me! I don't know what has disturbed you to-night, but I do know, that, if I were to repeat to you, in your lucid moments, all that you say in the madness of wrath, you would

be shocked at yourself. It's well I am a good-natured fellow, whose affectionate forbearance"—

"*Peace!*" shouted Howard, sternly.

The babbling boy ceased his gibes, and, in silence, they rode up the darkling valley.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

JEALOUSY OF YOUTH.

"Oh Lord! methought what pain it was to drown.

What dreadful noise of water in mine ears:

What sights of ugly death within mine eyes!

Methought I saw a thousand fearful wrecks."

SHAKESPEARE.

"I AM so glad I came!" said Viola, encircling her friend's waist with her arm. "This is better than sitting through these stormy holidays at home, picturing your dear parlour so bright and warm, and hospitable, and wishing I could pop in to share your merry Christmas."

"It is duller than you expected it would be, now that the boys, as mamma calls them, are gone," responded Helen, with a sickly smile.

"Yes," said Viola, quite frankly. "What a merry quartette we make! You and Howard, Cola and I; but I have been quite happy, nevertheless, and, indeed, Helen, I believe I am always happy. Of course, when surrounded by those I

love, I am most so, but who would not be happy under such influences? But when the weather is dull, and provocative of gloom, and I sit alone, engaged in some distasteful occupation, sewing, for instance (you know I hate to sew), my heart seems to sing in my breast. I sometimes fear this preternatural elation may be the harbinger of some great sorrow. Do you ever feel the gladness I describe?"

"Never," sighed poor Helen.

"I don't think you do," said Viola, "for you have seemed sad of late, darling; I thought that the coming of your brother and—and Cola would arouse you, but it has not seemed to do so. How shall I inoculate you with my joy?"

"You! you have so much to make you happy!" sobbed poor Helen, throwing herself into Viola's arms.

"Oh, my dear, naughty, ungrateful little Helen, don't say so! Have you forgotten that you are the most tenderly beloved of father, mother, and brother, while I—I am alone!—How strangely, yet justly, are the gifts of Providence divided! You, favoured child! have all that the yearning affections of humanity most prize, while I, denied the usual objects of love, and sources of pleasure, am compensated by the endowment of a contented, thankful, happy heart."

"I acknowledge your superiority," said Helen, with a dash of her brother's bitterness, as she disengaged herself from Viola's embrace, and wiped her eyes. "You have every personal and mental gift."

"Nay, Helen, I will not let you speak so to me. It is no merit of mine that I am happy, for I am not so without a

cause. My heart is overflowing with a secret, Helen; I have found one to love me."

Helen averted her face, while Viola continued—

"I have feared, lately, that you did not like him, as you used to do, and the thought distresses me. You will love him for my sake, will you not? and some day I will tell you all about it. It is a wonderful story; but here comes Uncle Captain, who hates grave looks; so clear your brow, and smile."

At the timber grounds all was commotion. Men, horses, oxen, were labouring to secure the newly-felled and valuable trees upon which the flood was steadily advancing. Howard directed their efforts, and toiled himself with a desperate energy, which doubtless received its impetus from the mental excitement under which he laboured.

Cola, to whom the scene was novel and exciting, aided with the zealous and ready activity of youth, often pausing to survey his surroundings.

The magnificent forest seemed to his lively imagination a vast fane, dedicated to solitude by former ages, and now invaded by the irreverent feet and demolishing hands of Mammon's votaries. Huge trunks rose upward around him, beyond him, and beyond each other, in interminable colonnade, until lost in arching branches and light tracery of twigs. The ground was covered by these columns, fallen and vacant pedestals, indicating where for centuries they had stood.

Cola's resentment, always short-lived, was lost in the interest and amazement awakened by this novel scene. With restored good-humour he mingled with the workmen, lending

a helping hand to one, talking cheerily with another, making piquant and amusing observations to a third, until their stolid natures warmed toward his handsome, laughing face; their secret discontent at Howard's imperiousness, melted under the influence of his frolic mood, and the forest echoed with a rude, yet hearty merriment, that seemed to give an impetus to labour

When, at last, the work was done, and their horses' bridles were untied from the trees where they had been fastened, Cola had forgotten that Howard had given him offence; or only remembered to excuse it, as one of those unaccountable glammers that occasionally possessed and perverted his nature.

As Conway rode sometimes beside, sometimes behind him, listening to the tumult of rushing waters, and the splash-splash of horses' hoofs, his genial mood chilled, and he began to reflect (a thing which the poor boy did but seldom) upon the circumstances of the last week. This distasteful mental exercise resulted in a conviction that the festivities at Mrs. Irving's would have been more complete without him. He grew sad as he thought that there was no home-welcome, no joyous domestic reunion for him, at this season of world-wide rejoicing. Then, with a flash of spirit, he resolved that his unacceptable presence should not intrude upon the festivities of others, and began to devise an ingenious fable of certain letters just received, requiring his instant presence in Kamtschatka, or Burrampooter, to be narrated to his good hostess Mrs. Irving, to account for a precipitate departure. Then, this innocent youth, unconscious of his grave offences, wondered what foul fiend

possessed his irascible friend, and why the blushing little Helen had grown pale as a mute at a funeral, and responded to his gallant speeches with demure, discouraging phraseology, and red eyes. Her eyes had grown weak, he was sure of that; for they were always red now, and he used to think them bright as Viola's own. Viola, yes; *she* was a darling, a trump! always cheerful, smiling, and pleasant. He liked your gay, jolly-hearted women, whose words might be set to merrie music and sung in a glee. Thinking of glees, there was a famous one out, which he should learn to sing at Tap-toes' suppers. The fellows would always have him sing, and his old songs were regular bores; and forgetting his momentary mortification and sadness, he began, with musical zeal, to hum the new air.

While this medley of thought passed through Cola's mercurial brain, Howard gave himself up anew to rage, and hate. The novelty, grandeur, and beauty of recent scenes appealed to a preoccupied mind, and failed to win him from himself. The activity and excitement of his late business had partially drawn him from contemplation of his wrongs; but now, the pressure being removed, his mind, like a bent sapling, sprang back to its original attitude. The presence of Cola exasperated him; he thought of him as an ungrateful viper, whom he longed to shake off, and crush beneath his heel; and so, they reached the river.

At the junction of the stream they had been following, with the river, a mass of drift-wood from the lumber grounds above had collected. Howard observed, entangled with loose branches

and logs, a small skiff, which he thought belonged to one of his father's men; and he dismounted with the intention of rescuing it if possible.

Walking out from log, to log, to where the boat lay, he essayed to draw it in, but it was too firmly wedged for him to move it.

"That is the boat poor Hawley was lamenting," said Cola, who had followed him. "It is well packed, isn't it? You'll never loosen it that way, let me show you how to manage it;" and leaping into the skiff, with a long pole he began to push away from the accumulated obstructions, and out into the stream.

"There! it rides easy now; but the current is strong here. Hawley will be glad to get his boat again.

"Peter M'Trimetry

Was a good waterman;

Fal, dal, diddle, dal de day!"

"There, now; why don't you pull at the bow, while I push; and we can take the boat around the drift, to shore."

"Curse the craft and its freight," muttered Howard, as spurning the boat with his foot, he impelled it into the stream. 'Twas but a slight, impatient movement, and the young man did not think there was *murder in it!* The riotous waters lifted up their voices, drowning his imprecation with wild acclaim.

"Howard, for Heaven's sake have a care, or your impatience will cost me dear! Don't you see I am drifting farther and

farther, into the current? Here is a rope fastened to the bow; catch it when I throw it to you, and pull me in."

The mad young man (let us hope he was mad), folded his arms and glared sullenly at his victim. The rope, which Cola threw, fell on the log at his feet, and slowly trailed into the turbid water, as the little skiff swept downward—downward—faster—faster—and whirled into the turbulent river.

Fix your cruel eyes upon your victim, Man of Wrath! Fasten on your seething brain the picture that is to haunt it ever more! He has thrown his cap aside to wipe the great drops from his brow, and stands with long curls floating in the wind, and large eyes fixed in wondering horror.

His arms are lifted toward you in supplication; and thus he drifts out upon the waste of waters, and into the thickly gathering blackness of the night, leaving his image, beautiful in agony as a young Laocöon, branded on your memory.

"Cola! good Cola! throw me the rope once more! Oh heaven, it will not reach me now! Use your pole, and push toward shore, and you will be saved! Oh, 'tis too short to sound the depths of those swollen waters! God forgive me, there is no hope, and I have murdered him!"

Ay, call on God for forgiveness, you, who could not forgive your brother. Gibber your unintelligible expressions of late repentance, and remorse without fruit, trusting they may atone for hate and murder!

But see! he lifts his stricken head, and shouts once more above the mocking exultation of hurrying waves. "Dear Cola, I'll ride for help, and you shall yet be saved! Let not

your courage fail you;" and mounting his steed, he galloped down the valley.

The mountain river, which Cola remembered, gliding like a poem through music-haunted shores, was now a vast expanse of devastating waters. He, who had floated over its placid bosom beneath the moonlit skies of June, singing soft love songs, to the plash of oars, and murmur of waters, was now borne down to terrible destruction by the aroused and angry flood.

Its breast was covered with spoil. Stacks of hay, wrecks of houses, timbers of fallen bridges, and trees uprooted from their forests, by the might of wrestling waters, rushed downward, endangering the frail boat in which his life was ventured. Huge masses of ice came crashing and grinding, threatening to crush, like an egg shell, the little craft. The waves leaped up and licked its side hungrily, then sank away, roaring like wolves impatient for prey; while the horror of darkness fast closed over all.

The weather had again changed, and the night was bitter cold. He had not felt it in the excitement of alarm; but as his blood stagnated in hopelessness, he found that if the waters forbore to engulf him, he should perish with cold ere morning.

He could no longer distinguish the shores, yet might be near them: might be drifting into some friendly eddy, where a deposit of firm ice, would offer lodgement for the skiff and bridge his way to shore. But, no; far off, through the frosty air, he distinguishes the lights of a village. It seems, oh Heaven! how distant; yet he knows it is close upon the shore.

He does not know that an anxious crowd is gathered there, striving, by the vain light of tossing flambeaux, to pierce thick darkness, and discover the fated man: that words of cheer are shouted out through hard hands, eager to lend their aid—words of kindly cheer, that die away above the cruel waters ere they reach him; yet, piercing through blackness, rise up to Heaven, and are placed on eternal record there! He does not know this, as downward, downward, sweeps the frail boat, upheld amid an hundred perils in the hollow of God's hand. But, without knowing, he watches those friendly lights fading in distance, and feels nearer his kind, while he can see them shining. He pictures calm household faces gathered around them, with books or needlework, happily unconscious of the strange tragedy transpiring within the reach of those faint taper rays. As he watches them they seem like the stars, calm and cold, and at last are quenched in distance, leaving him alone with the darkness, and his strange fate.

Another village, and again friendly lights gleam over the waters. He is nearer the shore this time, and now he knows those are no fireside tapers, but huge pine torches, hurried to and fro, pressed to the edge of the dark water, and held aloft until their glare throws a track of light athwart the abysmal blackness. He knows that eager hands carry them—that intense excitement prevails—that human sympathies are at work, and ingenious brains busy, devising schemes for his deliverance; and knowing this, tears moisten his staring eyeballs, and his chilled heart is lifted with thanksgiving. He shouts

with the energy of hope, which is stronger than despair, and the watchful, waiting throng, hear and answer. They throw their torches far out into the river; like shooting stars, they flash through the air, reveal dark hurrying objects on the rushing flood, and fall hissing and quenched, midway between the watching crowd and the poor wretch they would aid. Then the few remaining lights die away up the shore, and he is again alone, with the tears of thanksgiving frozen on his face, and his limbs numb with cold.

Life is dear, and with a determination to eke out its bitter dregs, he beat his stiffened arms athwart his breast, that the stagnant blood might pulse more freely through his veins. He does not think he will die yet! He has grown familiar with the horrors of this awful night, and begins to feel quite safe amid the raging waters, grinding ice, and bitter cold. He thinks there is great *hope*! The miracle that has preserved his life thus far may be prolonged! He may be driven out of the whirling current, and lodged among driftwood near the shore. There is a bridge below, and he may strike the pier, and clamber up in safety. There are many chances of escape; this hopeful nature believes, but the throng on shore know there is but one—that is in the bridge.

Although ominous whispers are heard, impeaching the stability of those stout piers, the bridge is crowded. There, too, those welcome lights glimmer in a long line, like lamps in a huge gallery. Ropes, hanging from its sides, sway in the wind, or trail in the flood; lanterns are suspended almost to the water's edge, that he may see, and grasp with sure hand

the thread upon which his life hangs. All that human ingenuity can do, has been done, to aid him in this strange extremity.

He nears them, and a great shout goes up as they perceive his boat, like a dark speck, on the water.

How the sound of human voices thrills him!

They are so near that he can answer, thus holding brief communion with his kind. Amid a tumult of directions he grasps at the nearest rope. A mass of ice turns his boat aside, and missing it, he is swept on.

There are ropes pendent from the other side, and he almost throws himself headlong from the boat to seize them; but his stiffened fingers fail him, and the anxious crowd see him emerge from beneath the bridge, and glide downward, on—on!—

They throw after him cloaks, overcoats, and blankets, that he may wrap himself from the cold, but say to one another that the poor fellow will not need them long, for the dam is below, where his boat must capsize, and this protracted agony end. Others answer, that the dam is "drowned out," and can do no harm, but that he must perish with cold before he reaches the next bridge, which is twelve miles away.

And, praying God to have mercy on his soul, they go in groups to get something to warm them, and talk the matter over by the light pine fires, while the handsome boy, cut off from human aid, drifts out into silence and solitude again.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

REFLECTION AND REVELATION.

"And to watch you sink by the fireside now
Back again, as you mutely sit,
Musing by fire-light, that great brow,
And the spirit-small hand propping it
Yonder, my heart knows how!"

BROWNING.

How merrily blaze the logs in the parlour chimney to-night!
How brightly burn the well-trimmed lamps! The curtains,
how rich and warm. The mirrors, how burnished and gleaming,
as they show to each other, in multiplied reflection, blaze
after blaze, and lamp upon lamp; inviting the beholder to believe
himself in some interminable hall, illuminated by endless
ranges of lights and fires!

The sofas seem more luxurious than we ever before thought
them, and the room more cosy and comfortable. Viola chatters
pleasantly and prettily, and Helen responds with a languid smile.
Walsingham discourses calm philosophics, while Mrs. Irving,

from her chair beside him, half-musing, half-listening, with head upon her hand, looks kindly in his face, in sweet content. The Captain tells the stories of a traveller, in his jolly hearty way, but does not disturb Mr. Irving, who, reposing apart in his luxurious chair, seems enjoying the most composing of winter naps.

For, is not this the Christmas time, when, centuries ago, the blackness of night was rifted by the glistening of angels' wings, stooping to earth on heavenly errands? And, in the ear of our ancient mother, slumbering heavily beneath manifold burdens, they sang, "Peace on earth, good-will toward men."

And so in this, and all Christian households, there is peace to-night. So, in every human heart, there should be good-will.

No thought of anguish, or dread, intrudes upon this calm circle, for the despairing cry, this moment, bursting from the lips of the young victim, rings, on the frosty night, miles and miles away. But the shriek of the relentless wind penetrates through barred shutter, and crystal casement, and crimson hanging, silencing the soft murmur of conversation.

A shadow crossed the mother's face, even in that brilliant room, where lights were so multiplied, there seemed no hiding-place for shadows.

"I wonder where the poor boys are, and how they fare?"

Then those merry and fanciful girls beguiled her anxiety by describing some poor woodman's cabin, now sheltering them; with unplastered walls of logs, and broken ladder, by which

they ascended to rude cots beneath the roof; where, rapt in skins, they snugly lay, watching, through crannies, the glimmer of distant stars.

Walsingham told that beautiful fable of the magic mirror, whose depths revealed the forms of the absent to the gaze of yearning love, and repeated the ballad of "Geraldine."

"Look!" exclaimed Helen, suddenly pointing to the mirror near her mother, and all eyes instantly turned upon it.

Mrs. Irving uttered an exclamation, and buried her face with her hands.

All was instant confusion! Helen's languor was lost in wild excitement; Viola's joyousness gave place to dread. Mrs. Irving's serene content was succeeded by great distress, and Walsingham's calmness was lost in surprise. The Captain, forgetting his hearty jollity, indulged in terse expressions of impatience, while Mr. Irving, disturbed in his repose, arose and turned toward the company, revealing a livid and distorted face.

All gathered around the magic mirror, and stared in its depths for the solution of the mysterious disturbance; but they saw only their own frightened faces repeated at intervals between the interminable lights, and so multiplied by reflection, and counter-reflection, as to look like a horrified mob by torchlight.

"Oh, mother! what did you see?" sobbed Helen. "I only pointed to the glass that you might see how the fire shone in it."

"You are nervous and foolish, child!" said Mrs. Irving,

sternly. I saw nothing but what you all must have seen—that my husband is very ill.”

“Papa! Where has he gone? Why he was asleep!”

“He was not asleep. Walsingham, satisfy these children that there is nothing to alarm them, while I look after my husband. Go to bed, girls, as soon as you feel composed. Good-night.”

And those cold mirrors, glistening with fires that never warmed them, and throwing reflections back and forth like shuttlecocks, had not revealed in their mystic depths the remorseful horseman, galloping madly down the frozen valley—the despairing voyager, afloat upon the watery waste!

But, if their shining surfaces had darkened to the blackness of night without, and the events transpiring, miles away, had moved in awful procession athwart the gloom, their revelations could not have been more fearful or startling, than that which burst upon Mrs. Irving, when she turned her head in obedience to her daughter’s exclamation.

She was seated near Walsingham, whom it always fell to her lot to entertain. His conversation this evening harmonized with her own thoughts, and gave her a quiet pleasure. The fable of the mirror had been a favourite with her years ago, and she lifted her eyes, sparkling with pleasure, to Walsingham, as he narrated a story which revived romantic fancies of her own youth.

At this moment Helen exclaimed, and, looking around, her attention was arrested by her husband. With his back toward her, he still reclined in the arm-chair, where she had

supposed him sleeping. But in the mirror she caught the reflection of his face, and saw that his eyes were fixed searchingly upon her own, with an expression of utter anguish that appalled her.

One moment of tender scrutiny, and the expression of that beloved face was analyzed.

She knew now what had, for months, weighed on her husband’s mind, and, with the shock of the discovered secret, her heart quaked!

CHAPTER XXXV.

JEALOUSY OF MANHOOD.

"Let's contend no more, love,
Strive nor weep;
All be as before, love,
Only sleep."

BROWNING.

MRS. IRVING sat in her chamber awaiting her husband, and recalling a thousand trifles corroborative of her sudden conviction that he was *jealous*! Jealous of Walsingham. The idea was both horrible and absurd. Amused and distressed, she laughed and wept alternately, and felt half-disposed to succumb to these conflicting emotions in hysterics. Like a sensible woman as she was, she soon subdued her excitement, and proceeded calmly to examine the circumstances which had placed her in this unpleasant position, and devise the readiest means of dissipating the illusion that obscured her husband's judgment.

She knew his strong nature, and deep affection for her,

coupled with a certain distrust of his own powers of pleasing, predisposed him to this fault. She remembered, he often listened to her praises of Walsingham with uneasy impatience, while she playfully exaggerated her admiration of that gentleman, for the purpose of teasing her lord, little thinking that the seed thus carelessly sown would bear such poison fruit. She remembered, too, that he had avoided Walsingham of late, often with positive rudeness, while she had been more in his society than was customary, considering their respective positions of matron and bachelor.

In this, however, she felt that she had been innocent. Walsingham, as a gentleman of leisure, found but little companionship among men around him. Those of his own age were too much engrossed by the active pursuits of life, to seek or care for social intercourse; while those who were younger, such as Howard and Cola, were too full of the buoyant extravagances of youth to afford congenial companionship to one of his matured experiences. The society of ordinary women he found vapid and childish, while that of Mrs. Irving he relished. She was a cultivated and sensible woman of his own age; his equal in life's experiences; of matured judgment, lively sympathies, and womanly heart. The motherly interest she had always taken in Viola was a bond of sympathy between them, and it was his custom to discuss with her everything pertaining to that young lady's welfare, and in matters of doubt or difficulty be guided by her judicious counsels.

When he brought his ward to visit her friends, it was the custom of the young people to wander off together, leaving

Mrs. Irving to entertain the elder guest. During these frequent tête-à-têtes they never were at a loss for pleasing themes; and often, when they sat apart, her sweet face glowing with eager interest, or flashing in the excitement of animated conversation, the gloomy husband would scowl grimly at the door and disappear.

Of all this she had suddenly become conscious. "How stupid," she cried, "not to have seen it sooner! and yet how could I conceive myself the object of suspicions so preposterous?" Thinking of these things, she waited for his footstep at her door, but he did not come. She flew down stairs and sought him through the house. She found him in the library, his head resting on his hand, and his whole attitude bespeaking deep dejection.

"George Irving, George Irving! how you have wronged your little wife!" was her salutation, half reproachful, half tender, as she threw herself upon his bosom.

"I never wronged you," he answered heavily, submitting to her caresses.

"Then my beloved, honoured husband wrongs himself."

"Don't, Mary! I cannot bear it," he cried. Starting up, and putting her from him, he paced the floor in strong excitement. Suddenly he paused, and regarded her with a look of profound compassion.

"My poor child, I pity, more than blame you; for if you love this man, this devil, your sufferings must be your punishment."

The accused wife made no reply, for she felt that it was not

yet time. Her jealous husband must relieve himself of all that had been festering in his heart, before she attempted her vindication.

"I have seen it," he resumed, "from the moment of his return. At your first interview, you were fascinated by him, and lavished such encomiums upon him as I had never heard applied by your lips to mortal man before. I feared then, all that has befallen since; I have observed your growing intimacy in silence; have seen you blush and smile, and be happy in his presence, until I hoped my jealous heart would burst; and yet I have forborne!"

"George, George, you frighten me!"

"I would not frighten you. As I live, I cannot entertain an emotion of wrath against you. Grief—profound, unutterable grief, is all that I can feel. I am too unmanned for anger. Oh God! Am I thus wrecked! Did all the long, bright, happy years which you have blessed to me, lead but to this?" and he covered his face with his hands.

"Yes, I have wronged you, as you say," he resumed. "In your untried girlhood, before your heart knew itself, I married you; *you*, whom I knew to be too good, too beautiful, to mate with such a clod as I. I thought, fool that I was! that love such as mine, would compensate for all else; would insure love in return.

"You have increased in experience and knowledge, since then, and now, as a refined, accomplished woman, have learned the error of your early choice; while *I*—I have lost the little grace of youth; have centred my best energies in the dull details

of a business, which was all important in my eyes, because upon its success depended the happiness of yourself and little ones; have retrograded intellectually, until I am unfit to mate with you!" and he turned aside, to hide the tears which strong emotion forced from his eyes.

"Nay, do not speak to me! Do I not know that the conversation of this intellectual and gifted man affords you the mental aliment which my society can never give? Do I not acknowledge in my heart, when I see you together, that you are fitly mated? and do I not feel that if a bolt from heaven would blot me from existence, it would be in mercy to us all?"

"George, my husband! you who have known me for a lifetime, what have you ever seen in me that can justify suspicions such as these? How can you, who are ever just to others, so misjudge me? Sinning against my love, and outraging my truth by accusations of—of—what shall I say? to what do these suspicions tend? Dishonour?"

"Dishonour! No, thank God! I know your rectitude too well for that. But there is a voice that charms your ear—a presence that refreshes your heart, and—they are not your husband's, Mary."

"My husband—"

"Your plain, dull husband, is forgotten in this dazzling presence, or remembered with vague regret. You are scarcely conscious of this yourself, because you have not watched your thoughts or analyzed your feelings, as I have done. Unwittingly it is, that your heart wavers in its allègiance.

"But why should I, who am but a satyr to this Hyperion,

expect to retain that which I feel myself unworthy to inspire. Heaven knows, I can claim nought upon my own merits, while hoping everything from long-established rights, and early vows."

He seemed so humble in his love for her, yet so proud in his humility, that she was deeply touched. With unhesitating tenderness, she drew his hands from his face, and looked into his troubled eyes with such a clear and truthful gaze, that scales seemed to fall from before them.

"Look at me, George, and learn to read me better!" she said, simply.

He looked as she bade him, and in the tender depths of her upturned eyes, saw his own image. The mists that had encompassed his judgment vanished before the sunshine of her glance; and looking still farther down through those windows of the soul, he saw his own image enshrined in her heart of hearts. He felt that she was his truthful, loving wife, while he was but a jealous fool.

"Confess that you have never known how well your wife loved you," she said, with a smile, as she saw conviction brightening on his face.

"Mary, you are an angel, and I a poor, unworthy, jealous—"

"Hush!" she said, with an effort at playfulness, which soon declined into earnestness as she proceeded: "Hush, I have listened to you too long, and now it is my turn to speak. I must make my manifesto now, that you and I may be spared a recurrence of the pain we have suffered, and then—this subject will be dropped for ever, as unworthy of us both."

The wife paused, as though to gather courage, and when she resumed, her voice faltered with emotion.

"I would say to my husband that neither the remembrance of his 'rights' or my obligations, could awaken the ardent, constant, and bounteous affection with which I have enriched his daily life. My love has been the spontaneous tribute of a heart impressed by the nobility of his nature.

"I married, as you say, in early girlhood, giving you the first freshness of a virgin heart. I have been the wife of a lifetime, the mother of your children; have been encircled by your tried affection through years of happiness, sustained by it in sorrow and trial, until my love—the love of an old wife, George—has so fed on gratitude, and grown with time, that it exceeds in fondness and fervour the freshness of its flushing, as my ripened womanhood transcends my youth.

"Nay, hear me to the end! I have associated much with this man, perhaps. Your own unclouded judgment will furnish you with reasons. He is, as you say, an intellectual man, and as such, his society has afforded me pleasure. But my husband's wisdom, his justice, his generosity, his integrity—in short, all the manly virtues I admire and value in him, are not forgotten, when I chance to enjoy the conversation of another. My heart is not thus wanton. You spoke of mental aliment! A woman requires aliment for her *heart*, and here I feed mine," and she threw herself upon his broad breast weeping.

"Forgive me," he whispered, as he clasped her closely in

the energy of remorseful love. "Forgive me, for I have been mad."

"Your affection blinds you, George, indeed it does," she said, raising her tearful eyes. "I am no longer young and beautiful, as you deem me. Our children are almost man and woman, now, and I am but an old and faded wife—one whose heart reposes calmly, as befits her years, upon the anchor in which it trusted through the storms of passionate youth."

"Ever young, ever beautiful to me!" he whispered.

"So I would be, to *you*," she answered, with an arch smile shining through her tears; "but beware how you believe me attractive to others. You see me with the eyes of love and memory—others behold me as I am. And now, love, it is late! All the world is asleep, save you and me, who have been talking like sad fools, and who—"

"Well, speak on!"

"Who are old enough to know better."

CHAPTER XXXVI.

REMORSE.

WHEN the unhappy Howard turned from the supplicating figure of his friend, it was with the purpose of saving himself, if possible, from the actual guilt of murder. The life of this poor waif upon the stream, was to him priceless, now. He would have bought it with his own. The faults of the poor boy were unremembered. The wrongs, upon which he had so fatally brooded, failed to comfort his remorse. How petty and pitiful had grown those aggravations, which a few hours since festered his heart with a sense of wrong, and poisoned the kindly current of his thought. They had changed their aspect, and no longer seemed wrongs clamorous for vengeance, but baleful phantasies that had assumed a certain shape to lure him to destruction; and, having worked their evil, threw off disguise, and, with mocking, pursued his ruin. How horror and remorse goaded him through the night! How, ever from the angry flood, a familiar face, with its bright beauty marred by agony, appealed to him! How, through thick darkness, he

could see those supplicating arms reach vainly after him, as he galloped down the valley! Night could not cover them! Time would not destroy them! and he felt that, if years of life should lengthen out before him, they would walk with him to the end. Oh, the persistent tyranny of thought, that breeds such faithful phantoms!

"Tramp! tramp! along the shore he rode," startling quiet sleepers with the ring of hasty hoofs—rousing men from their warm beds, with his fearful story—gathering crowds upon the water's edge by powerfully eloquent appeals—shouting words of encouragement across the flood, in the hope that the poor voyager might hear, and know that he was labouring for his rescue—might accord forgiveness, if they should meet no more—might tell of his late repentance, if that night he should bear record in heaven!

With a sharpened sense he had heard the faint halloo, announcing that the sufferer still lived, amid those swamping ice drifts! Had first discerned, by the light of suspended lanterns, the boat drifting toward the bridge! Had guided his rope nearest the outstretched hands! (Oh God! they were still outstretched!) Had seen, by the flickering light, the pale upturned face, with the old look of agony; and the billows of darkness swept over all!

With the failure of this hope he fainted, and was borne from the bridge by pitying, honest folks, whose hearts were touched by what they thought the faithful love of brotherhood.

When restored to consciousness, he mounted a fresh horse,

and galloped on to the next bridge, which was twelve miles below. It was the bridge of the Bluff. He and Cola, with Helen and Viola, had often loitered through its light arches, and leaned over its balustrade, watching the heavens mirrored in the placid depths below. His errand there was no summer night's saunter now! The life, or death, of the gayest of their gay party hung in the balance.

His old love for the youth revived, as remembrances of their early friendship crowded on him. Cola's affection, generosity, and gentleness; his patience with his own evil moods, passed before him. His weaknesses, too, now sacred as are the faults of a dead friend. His merry quips, and gibes, and mockeries, how they rose up amid the horrors of the night! And his love for Viola! How natural and pardonable it seemed, that in the bewilderment of passion the thoughtless youth should lose the strict path of duty.

Could *he* blame this lapse from honour, who, under the same fatal influence, had stained his soul with crime? For was he not a murderer? From the time that frenzy of hate possessed him, to the last act that launched the victim on his fearful voyage, the guilt of murder had been in his heart. And yet, forsooth, he had been shocked, outraged, and virtuously indignant with the thoughtless weakness of another! God pity him in his blindness! God pardon them both; and all who grope so helplessly 'twixt wrong and right, with glimpses of the pitfalls in a neighbour's path, while unconscious of the precipice beside their own.

The early grayness of morning threw a sullen twilight over

the village as he entered it. Inspired with new hope by the coming light, and prospect of friendly co-operation, he knocked at his father's door. To his surprise the window of his own room was thrown up, and a gruff voice hailed him.

"Captain Walsingham, are *you* there?" he exclaimed.

"Yes, my lad, and are you there? What news from the timber lands?"

"I hope—I hope Viola has gone home!"

"No, and is not likely to go. Don't you know the bridge is gone?"

With a heavy groan the poor fellow sank upon the piazza, and the alarmed Captain hastened down to open the door.

"Call my father! Call Walsingham! Alarm the town, but do not waken the ladies. Time enough for them to know by-and-by! Cola is adrift upon the river. He has been there all night!"

"All night! Then, young man, Cola is in heaven by this time!" said the Captain, solemnly.

"No, no! Any other man would have perished, but not he. Gather them all, and away to the river!"

Among the first upon the shore came Walsingham, filled with horror, by the probable fate of Conway. He had wished the tie between this man, and Viola, might be broken. Lo! the finger of fate was raised to part them, and his generous nature would, if possible, reverse the decree. If, through the conviction of her reason, or the instability of affection, Viola could relinquish him, he would rejoice. But not by the sacrifice of a bright young life, mantling with promise, or by the

violent wrenching of her constant heart, could he desire them to be parted.

She loved him. This knowledge, which had bred hate and murder in Howard's mind, made the young man's life seem doubly precious to the nobler Walsingham. It was not merely a human life at stake, but the life in which the happiness of his beloved was bound, and because of this, it was in the esteem of the self-abnegating man, of more value than his own.

Meantime the crowd increased, and great excitement prevailed. The people had all known and loved the merry, handsome fellow, now drifting downward to death, and they waited and watched, in the cold, gray dawning, to see him once more—to shout, and beckon, and wave farewells, and waste their impotent sympathies upon him. Howard frantically besought them to aid him in some mad plan of rescue.

"My poor boy," said his father, "do you not see that it is hopeless? A score, amid those ice-drifts, would be as helpless as one! Your friend is in a maelstrom, where all who venture to approach with aid, must share his fate."

"There is the only shadow of a hope left," said Walsingham, pointing to the wreck of the bridge.

On the side nearest the Bluff, where the current was strongest, the structure had been swept away like a cobweb; but from the town two or three piers still arched the turbid water.

"Not even the shadow of a hope, there," said Mr. Irving, as he looked at the splintered timbers of the ruin projecting

above the gulf. "The boldest man here will not venture his life upon those tottering piers."

"Get me ropes," said Walsingham, "I will do all that man may do, to save this youth!"

"God bless you!" cried Howard, grasping his hand; "I will go with you."

"This is madness," remonstrated Mr. Irving. "The remnant of the bridge will be swept away within an hour, and you be lost in the ruin. Besides, can you not see it does not reach the current in which he must be drifting?"

"I see," said Walsingham, like one who had weighed the chances, "I see the odds are against me, but there is a slender possibility of rescue, which I will not lose. I am alone in the world, and can afford to make this venture; but you, Howard, for the sake of mother and sister, must stay on shore."

"Just so, by Jove! We are alone, and the stake is ours! Stand back, young man!" and Captain Walsingham, with a coil of rope on his right arm, passed his left through his brother's, and arm in arm the two walked out upon the groaning piers.

"Huzza! huzza! rescue! rescue!" shouted the admiring crowd; but no one followed the devoted pair.

"God only knows how terrible is my stake in this issue," said Howard, struggling to free himself from his father's restraining hand. "If he perishes, his blood is on my head. Would you have your son live a murderer? *Let me go!*"

"Listen to reason!" answered the father, to his miserable son. "I will go in your stead. I offer the abilities of a strong,

cool man, in the place of an exhausted and excited one. Do you stay here for *their* sakes, and I will go."

"Reason? There is awful reason, father, in what I do. If Cola is lost—if you and Walsingham and the Captain should perish amid those falling timbers, and I, the monstrous cause of these calamities, should bear, day after day, the loathsome burden of my guilty life, beneath the reproachful eyes of yon poor women, the stones would cry out against me. The very sunlight, that falls in benediction upon better men, would pierce me with arrows of cursing. I should go mad! No—no! death is better! Let me go!"

He seemed mad already. His eyes were wild, his face haggard, and his voice hoarse, as though spent with raving: he struggled feebly like a weary, wilful child. His father could have held him with ease, but felt there was danger in thwarting his will.

"Be it so, poor, foolish boy," he said. "I am the most efficient man of the two. Those who venture out upon that ruin may never return; and thou and I cannot both be spared. Go, and God keep you!"

The Walsinghams having gained the extremity of the bridge, were busy examining their position and making arrangements for the rescue, when Walsingham felt a light touch on his arm. Turning, he beheld Viola. Her beautiful eyes were wildly open, and her lips parted with terror and surprise. In a low, frightened whisper, she asked—

"Is it true?"

"Yes, my poor little one, it is true—but do not despair.

We will save him, if human aid can avail in this extremity—but this is not a fit place for you."

"Let me stay with you," said she, holding both hands in hers, and looking in his face pleadingly.

"You cannot aid us or him, and there is danger here. Do not remain, Viola."

"If you should be lost, and *he*—what have I to live for? Let me stay with you."

"Poor child, do you then love him so? Trust me, rely upon me—if God permits, I will save him, even at the sacrifice of my own life; and now, as a token of your confidence, I ask you to leave us."

She walked a few steps, and, turning, paused irresolute.

"My little girl never before disobeyed me."

"You never asked me to leave you before," she answered, touchingly. "What is there upon yonder shore for me, when you are here? You, whom I love better than all the world—than life!" and winding her arms about him, she laid her head upon his breast, and closed her eyes as if to shut out sorrow.

And sorrow was shut out, for she had fainted; and so he bore her to her friends on shore.

Meanwhile, the Captain, with his telescope, swept the river from time to time, examining logs, trees, stumps, wrecks of every description. It was covered with these trophies, and the old sailor observed that very few floated near them. They were carried by the current toward the opposite shore.

"Could he have passed, in the night?" inquired Walsingham, after some time had been spent in watching.

Howard, who sat at his feet with face buried in his cloak, answered, "No! I have ridden all night in advance of him."

"Is he still afloat, think you?"

"I saw him last at the bridge above. They gave me a fresh horse there, and I must have ridden fast. He will soon be here! Yes, he will soon come!" and, repeating this promise to himself, the young man covered his face with his cloak again.

"Yes, he will soon come!" said the Captain, handing the glass to his brother. "Look up the river, beyond the large tree, at that small object—there! It is a boat with a man in it! There is but one human being afloat upon these waters, thank God! Rouse yourself, and take heart, my man, he is coming!" and the Captain began to arrange his ropes, and, breaking off the balustrade, tie a rail to the end of each.

"You see," said the good fellow, "it is not in reason to suppose he will steer at once for the pier and be fished up. Not a stick or log has done that since we've been watching. But he may come within a stone's throw, and I will heave this billet of wood up the stream, as we would throw a harpoon. Please Heaven, he'll catch the rope and be towed in."

Upon this frail, uncertain chance, did that life depend! but God saw! God heard! Pure, pious hearts, were importuning him; and so, gently, within the hollow of His hand, as I have told you, He guided the skiff toward those friendly watchers—turning aside the masses of ice that crushed and ground

against each other—warding off threatening timbers, and interposing the invisible shield of Almighty protection, between that life, and multitudinous peril. No man, not even he in whose behalf this miracle was wrought, can tell how, or why, he was vomited from out the jaws of death that night; for none may share the councils of the Almighty. But wind, and frost, and flood, were given charge concerning him, and so he floated safely through the night, as Viola in her warm curtained slumber.

On—on he came—his back toward the people, and his face toward the Bluff. Perhaps he thought Viola was there, asleep, and unconscious of his danger! Perhaps he thought of the happy hours spent beneath the roof of yon lone dwelling, and looked on it as something he ne'er might see again! Perhaps he sat there frozen—stark and stiff!

Suddenly an obstruction struck the boat, whirling it sharply round, (mark! giving it an impetus toward the friendly shore), and his face was turned to the crowd. He moved as though he would fain stand up, but could not; then leaned forward, and raised a pole with his handkerchief tied to it; and a great shout went up from the shore.

Howard had dropped his cloak and risen to his feet. In terrible excitement he watched the boat drifting towards them—yes, *towards* them—crowded out of the current, as it were, by the larger masses that choked the river. It seemed nearer, to the bewildered and unsteady vision of this young man, than in reality it was; and, with some insane reproaches to the Walsingham brothers, for their supineness at the golden

moment, he seized one of the Captain's ropes, and threw it toward the skiff. Poor Howard! weak in nerves, as in judgment! The missile fell far short of its destination.

"Young man, I'll thank you not to meddle with my tackle," said the Captain. "Amuse yourself by hauling in that line."

And now, the old seaman, with steady aim and true, hurled his billet. It whizzed sharply, cutting the air, and fell beyond the boat. Instantly, he gave out line until it dropped across the skiff. How quickly the stiffened fingers of the voyager closed upon it! How deftly he wound it around the bow; and, still floating downward, he was drawn toward the pier. A moment more, and he would be swept past; but he sat motionless, apparently helpless.

"Quick!" shouted the Captain. "Unloose the rope, and hold on!"

He did not move.

"Rouse yourself, and make one last effort for life," exhorted Walsingham.

He rose feebly, and fumbling at the rope, unloosed it. A moment, more, and the little boat was gliding on to the sea, as before, while its inmate, grasping the rope, hung over the flood. A few of the boldest men upon the shore had joined the Walsinghams, and with their united strength, rapidly drew up the rope. Not rapidly enough; for one hand, suddenly relaxing its grasp, fell by the sufferer's side; and his whole weight hung upon one stiff, numb, almost lifeless arm.

"Hold on! Hold on!" cry they all. "If you relax a

muscle, you are lost!" "Keep a stout heart for one more moment, and you are saved. Pull away, men."

He was almost up, when Walsingham, throwing himself upon the planks, leaned over and grasped, yes, grasped the arm of the almost rescued man.

Just in time, Noble Heart, for his strength is spent, and he hangs helpless in your stout arms. Over the bridge's splintered edge they lift, like a dead body, the exhausted man! He does not greet, or thank, or question them in his old, frank, ready way. He cannot answer their questionings, and congratulations; and so they give him stimulants, and wrapping him in blankets, bear him to the nearest house, where they chafe his frozen limbs, and apply the remedies usual for those who have well nigh perished with exposure.*

Viola is there, and Helen, and Mrs. Irving, for the care that would have kept this fearful peril from them, has been vain; and they, with the ready tact of women, minister to the necessities of the suffering youth. The doctor tells them that he may yet die, and writes prescriptions that no one can read, and issues orders no one can understand; while Viola almost swoons with dread, lest the grim terror that pursued him through the night should insidiously steal him from the midst of friends elate with rescue. Then she folds her arms about him protectingly, and mourns over him in broken sentences:—

"Oh, Cola! My Cola! Must I lose you? Can we now

* In a country newspaper may be found an account of an adventure resembling this.

be parted?" And he makes an effort to whisper that he will not die, for he feels the principle of life too strong within.

Then she sees Walsingham looking on them sadly, for that gentleman, although thankful that God has spared these fond ones to each other, is not philosopher enough to behold without a pang the caresses of his beloved, lavished upon another. She sees her guardian's disquiet, I say, and seizing his hands, kisses them reverently; and in her transport of gratitude, uses such language of praise as causes his face to flush, while she thanks him for saving—*her brother!*

Yes, *her brother!* He had heard aright, for she repeats it; and Howard heard, and Helen; and a great light seems to shine in the midst! The one, half stupid from the horrors through which he has lately passed, feels a thrill of thankfulness that he has been spared from being the murderer of *her* brother; the other, with a maiden's blush, feels shame that she should have been jealous of the *love of a brother.*

CHAPTER XXXVII.

UNCERTAINTY.

"I have seen the robes of Hermes glisten,
Seen him wave afar his serpent wand;
But to me, the Herald would not listen,
When the dead swept by at his command.
Not with that pale crew,
Durst I venture too—
Shut from me the quiet land."

AYTOUN.

POOR Helen! poor, happy Helen! To her young, tried heart, that struggled so bravely with its fancied sorrow, are our sympathies first due. Walsingham, with his unsuspected passion buried in the recesses of his strong heart, is sufficient unto himself; and Howard, in the profound slumber, that follows exhaustion, is insensible to all external things, even the subtle influence of sympathy.

Poor, happy Helen, then! Happy, in the conviction that her beloved was faithful, yet must we pity the self-reproach

which punished that loving nature because of its imperfect trust.

He was once more the hero of her worship, the embodiment of all the noble attributes which make man godlike! Handsome, gifted, loving—and *true*. True to all those nameless, delicious wordings that she had treasured in her maiden memory, repeated to herself in revery, and recalled in dreams, before suspicion robbed them of their spirit. Then the treasures of memory became its brands: burning, how deep and sore, the young sufferer knew only.

And now, like a sudden phantasmagoria, the evil changed again to good. The cruel, dark deceits that, spectre-like, haunted memory, smiled into light, and became reanimated with the vitality of truth. Thus had he looked, thus spoken; not in deception and beguiling, but in the earnestness of love, and with the holy power of truth, which she, in her distrust, had resisted, and by her distrust had been punished.

"Oh, mamma!" she whispered, clasping the hand of that safe confidant, "I am too, too happy!"

"Poor child! dear daughter!" responded the mother, with tender pity.

"Do not pity me, mamma, for all that I have suffered. It may be in some small degree an expiation for the wrong I have done him. And now, that it is past, I feel it to have been a valuable experience. I was incapable of bliss like this before I suffered."

The mother looked sorrowfully at her child. Helen kissed

her and smiled "Incredulous mamma! you do not yet believe that all has terminated happily."

"My child, Heaven grant that all may terminate happily, as you say."

The tone of doubt, in which this was uttered, filled Helen with dismay.

"What do you mean?" she asked quickly. "Have not mine own eyes beheld him safe? Did I not see, while Viola's kisses rained on him, how his eyes wandered, searching me? For, even in that awful hour, I did not approach, believing he was not mine: and when, under the influence of that look, I arose and came to him, he drew my head upon his bosom, whispered '*Beloved*,' and fainted with excess of bliss, as I could do, when I remember it. Oh, mother!"

"Helen, this is wild. Be calm, and nerve yourself for further trial. My child, could you part with this precious life, should God require it?"

Helen laughed. "For what purpose would God have preserved him from the thousand deaths that through the night encompassed him, if he is to die now downily? Your fears are childish, mother."

The mother folded her arms about her child, looked into her eyes, and said impressively: "Helen, I speak truly; he is in mortal peril. The physicians think he may not survive the approaching night."

Helen threw off those circling arms, as though there was suffocation in the embrace. "Oh, mother! cruel mother, to tell me this! Have all his brave struggles with multiform,

death been vain? Must I resign him in the moment that he is restored to me? I cannot weep, because I cannot believe it! Take me to him, that I may look in his eyes and read our fate. Stay, mother; you are familiar with sickness. You have watched the pulses ebb, the energies fail, and life go out. Do you think he will die?"

Mrs. Irving kissed her dry eyes, chafed her hot hands, yet answered with the sternness of truth, "Pray for strength for the worst, my poor child, for he will die."

Helen bowed her head upon her clasped hands, and sank, perhaps, beneath the weight of this blow—perhaps in prayer.

Two large tears trickled down the mother's cheek as she watched her stricken child.

Helen arose, after a space, and said, "Is it not strange, mother, that I cannot weep? that I cannot even feel sad? What is the meaning of this peace within, when he I love is trembling upon the eternal verge? Is it that he has been restored to me, and will henceforth be mine, though all space divide us? It was a beneficent goodness that created us for each other, and should that same Power part us for a season? Why, time is so very short, methinks I can live, loving, hoping, and happy, until bidden to join him in that sphere where love, purified from the fever of passion, and imperfection of earth, will be the pervading atmosphere, and life and bliss are eternal. Take me to him, mother."

Walsingham was watching, with Viola, by her brother's bedside, when Helen entered. He rose and resigned to her his seat at the sufferer's head. This acknowledgment of her

near, dear right was pleasing to her. She bent over him with a long gaze of earnest inquiry.

Love itself could scarcely recognise, in the poor victim before her, the handsome youth who had gone forth so joyously. His clustering hair, thrown back, writhed over the pillow, leaving his shrunken forehead bare; his face was scarlet, his lips cracked and parched, his eyes wild and bloodshot. She touched his swollen hands, and he shrunk from her with a cry of pain; then answering her gaze with a look of perplexed inquiry, exclaimed,

"Unstable as water!"

"Viola! Walsingham! Mother! what does he mean?"

"He has no meaning, Helen; he is delirious," answered Walsingham.

"I know the waters, and they are treacherous," he muttered, hoarsely. "They are cruel to those who trust them! They spread themselves as a floor for the unwary! They entangle their cold arms about him! They close their slimy jaws upon him!—drag him down—down—down for ever, through a sea of agony, to fires they cannot quench!"

The gasping utterance of short quick sentences ceased, and, for a moment, he lay panting. Then, looking at Helen, he again exclaimed—

"Unstable as water! Who said it of me? 'Twas you, with your cold averted eyes! You thought me like the cruel element! Did I woo treacherously to engulf in ruin? Is my heart an ocean? Ay, of love for you, Trustless! Ye had no faith, else would you have cast yourself thereon and been

borne up safely. Drowned—drowned—drowned!—enough of water! How is it? ‘Enough—enough of water hast thou?—say it for me!’

Helen’s tears fell fast upon the sufferer. He shook them from his hands, and raved—

“The black waves of Acheron are the tears of eternal grief! Lamenting Coeytus appals my soul with the howling of his surge! Pyriphlegethon rages against me! Though I be cast away upon its sea of fire, my bones consume not! Dank airs howl around me, yet refuse to lift the mirage, which veils the void empire toward which I sail! There is a shadowy ferryman upon the shore! His grim eyes pierce the gloom, and follow me, whirling—whirling through all the cycles of time upon this flood of deadly hate; yet onward—onward! Where doth Lethe await the mariner? Lethe, the blest, who hushes on her bosom the oppressions of many sorrows; who washes out, with magic waves, the remembrance of dismal woe!”

These frightful ravings dispelled the strange calm of Helen’s mind. Her mental exaltation passed away, leaving the poor enthusiast but a weak, sorrowing, suffering, timid, tender woman. Here these young creatures learned their first terrible lessons of mortality. Walsingham watched with them, partly because he could not permit his darling to wrestle with her first sorrow, unsustained by his presence, and partly because of the great interest he now felt in the poor youth toward whom he had been unjust. The various inconsistencies which had displeased him in Cola became reconciled, now

that his position was explained; and, as Viola’s brother, he became an object of especial regard and care.

“If we can calm him to sleep, there is hope,” said Walsingham. “I will administer this composing potion, and watch by him, myself; you, Helen, with Viola, must retire.”

“I will stay,” she said; and, seeing him about to refuse, added, resolutely, “Nay, I *will* stay! death itself cannot be more still, than I.”

Walsingham was not a man accustomed to be defied; but there was something so resolute and despairing in her face that he urged her no more. He compensated himself by leading Viola and Mrs. Irving to the door, forstalling all objection by saying, “It must be so. If you all remain, he will never sleep. I will come to you with news of him. Good-night.”

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

EXPLANATIONS.

To the influence of medicine the terrible excitement yielded at last, and the patient slept. The flush of fever faded from his face; cold dews stood upon his forehead, and his features seemed emaciated as though by protracted suffering. In his death-like repose he looked strangely like his dead mother. Walsingham was surprised that he had never observed the likeness before, as his resemblance to her, was greater than Viola's.

This, then, was the son whose doubtful fate had disturbed the peace of that mother in her dying hour. In whose behalf she had solicited the services of Walsingham, should he ever be in a situation to afford them. Remembering that lorn death-bed, he felt, as he sat by the couch of the young man whom he had rescued from death, that this was another ward, strangely led to him by the hand of fate.

But where had his childhood been sheltered? Who was

educating his youth? Did the father of these children live? and if so, would he claim Viola?

In the adjoining room, she sat upon a low stool, her hand grasping the arm of an easy-chair, and her head reclined against it. To Walsingham, who looked at her through the open door, she pictured her own childhood. In that attitude it had been her wont to nestle by his great chair, lost in her beautiful child reveries, listening to his reading, or waiting for his caress. Would she, the child of his heart, rejoice to find a father? Would she leave, willingly, the tenderness which had girt her life, for the parent in whose heart nature had been dumb? He grew jealous of the influence which this evil man might obtain over the youth and innocence yonder, and wondered why a gift of Heaven, so precious, had been thus misbestowed. He had schooled himself to the idea of resigning her to the husband she might choose, because he believed her happiness demanded that; but this father could only break her heart, as he had broken her mother's.

And he gazed at her in the distance with a look so deep, so earnest, so sad, that it penetrated her heart—she lifted her graceful head from its resting-place, relinquished her hold upon the chair, and made a sign to him.

He looked again upon the brother, locked in slumber profound, then upon Helen, whose eyes were fastened on his face—whispered to the young watcher a few words of comfort and hope, and obeyed the beckoning hand.

She still sat upon the low stool, and he threw himself in

the vacant chair, and laid his hand upon hers, as it grasped the arm. "Viola," he said, "have you a father?"

The question was abrupt, and unlooked for, and she answered, in some surprise, "I thought you knew all!"

"Would to Heaven I had; it would have saved me some anxiety," he said.

"There has been some misunderstanding," she whispered, "for which, I hope, I am not to blame. Do you remember, one morning, when I came to your study with a letter from *him*?"

"Yes."

"It was with the intention of telling you my newly-acquired knowledge that I came, but—"

"But I prevented your narrative by saying that I knew all."

She threw back her curls, and looked up in his face, with the old expression of childish surprise upon her own, saying, "And did you not, sir?"

"I? no! I supposed—well, no matter what! I misunderstood the facts. Have the goodness to give me them now."

"Well, then, when Cola Conway came to the Eyrie, with Howard, there was something in his presence that troubled me. I felt confused—puzzled—at fault! A half recollection haunted, yet continually eluded me. As Uncle Captain would say, he reminded me of something I could not think of. When he sang that vesper song (you remember it, don't you?) this entanglement of mind grew absolutely distressing, until at last it broke into unravelment, and the remembrance after which my mind was striving, came fully and fairly before it.

A small fire-lit room, through which floated that vesper melody, arose before me, and then, I knew it was the song my mother used to sing her child; then, I knew it was of the beautiful lost face that hovered about my earlier life, that the young stranger reminded me."

"Did you think, then, that he was your brother?"

"Oh, no! I only felt drawn toward him, because of the taste which had treasured a gem of music which had been a favourite with my mother.

"I frequently besought him to sing it, because of the associations it had for me; and one evening, when we had grown familiar, I told him how this song of his affected me, and why. Then he told me that my story was like his own; that he, too, had lost his mother early, but that he had no remembrance of her, and but few mementoes. The song he had found among his father's papers, and he had taken pleasure in singing it, because it was composed by the mother, whom he had never known.

"One day I wore a ring which, because of its quaint style, he admired. Upon examining the cipher he said, 'Viola, would it distress you very much if I should be your brother?' I laughed, and told him I would adopt him, if he liked, but that Providence had never permitted me relations.

"'I think,' said he, solemnly, 'that He is sending you a near, and dear one, now! I have a sister somewhere in this wide world, and that cipher tells me, you are she. When my father died, he left me to the care of my uncle, and also the little girl, if she could be found. There is a paper at home,

containing that which will establish her identity. When I return, I shall read it eagerly; and if it confirms my belief, I will send you a copy.'

"When the paper, and Cola's letter, came, there was no longer any doubt upon my mind, and I hastened to tell you I had found a brother. I may have been mistaken, but you seemed pained when I opened the subject, and, I fancied, unwilling to hear me speak upon it. You interrupted me, with the assurance that you knew all, and I supposed you had recognised Cola to be my brother from the beginning, and probably had never lost sight of him. Feeling a delicacy in obtruding a subject which appeared to be distasteful, I was silent."

Walsingham bit his lip, as he thought of the sharp agony which smote him upon that well remembered morning, when she came, as his jealous fears suggested, to confide to him a tale of love.

"There is one thing that puzzles me in this affair," said he. "Why, did you keep your discovered relationship secret from your other friends? It would have been natural to have proclaimed it at once."

Viola's eyes sought the ground.

"That was my impulse; but I felt it was due to you to be first consulted. Our interview was so strangely constrained, that I became embarrassed, and could neither express my own feelings, nor discover yours. I believed, however, that you were unwilling to have known, that which had so long been concealed.

"I have accustomed myself to divine your thoughts when

you are chary in expression," she added, with a smile; "but do you know, upon this occasion, I fancied there was something in your mind, which you determined I should not perceive, and therefore made our interview as brief as possible. I may have been wrong."

"You were not wrong, Viola."

What was it which he had desired to hide from her? She looked up inquiringly. She was a natural physiognomist, and in the study of his countenance was practised. Had she ever read one secret there?

As she sat in her low stool by his side, with upturned face, he looked down into the depths of her wondering eyes; in a steadfast gaze, each strove to read the heart of the other. The prolonged scrutiny brought no new knowledge to either. He saw no shadow of her inner thought upon her confiding, childlike face; she saw only the pallor of midnight study, the lines of earnest meditation, upon his calm, inscrutable countenance.

She averted her eyes at length, and he fancied a tremor thrilled the small hand which lay beneath his own. With a sudden impulse, he took it between his, saying, "Viola, you were ever truthful! answer me this. Did you never divine that one thing which I strove to conceal?"

She did not lift her eyes from the ground, and was silent.

"Answer me, as truthfully as a novice at confessional, or refuse to answer at all."

"I thought that I did," she said.

The usually calm pulses of Walsingham would not have

beaten so fast, but that he believed the hour for love's fruition had come to him, at last.

"I thought," said Viola, with her girlish candour, "that you loved me—"

"Heaven knows how well!" he cried, with fervour.

"And that you were unwilling to part with me."

"Yes, yes!"

"I thought that you knew that my uncle would claim me when he became aware of my existence, and therefore you desired to keep my identity a secret."

He threw himself back in his chair, letting her hand fall.

"Was I right?" she asked.

"That I loved you," he answered with an effort, "yes; that I was unwilling to part with you, yes! But that I would retain possession of, or influence over you, by the concealment of anything proper to be known, or by other than open, honourable means, *no!* Viola, you are as a little child!"

There was an impatience in the utterance of the last sentence, which her ear was quick to detect, and she retorted with sudden bitterness,

"I have grown to womanhood under your very eye, yet you will not see it."

And as she arose to her full height, and swept away, she looked indeed a woman. He marvelled at the change in her, who, a moment before, sat at his feet, with her young face upturned for his reading.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

INTRODUCTION TO ONE WHOM WE HAVE MET BEFORE.

"A man of mark to know next time you saw.

His very serviceable suit of black

Was courtly once, and conscientious still,

And many might have worn it, though none did."

If a momentary passion had agitated Viola, it was hushed, when she stood in the quiet room where Cola still slept, and Helen watched. She approached the bed with a feeling of self-condemnation, for having entertained in her heart, aught save love, and prayer for him.

The fearful excitement had passed away; the fever was allayed, and his pallid and profound repose seemed more like death, than sleep. There was something awful in the outstretched and motionless figure, revealed through snowy drapery, looking as though for ever beyond the reach of pain. The ashen face, the pale hands, meekly resting on the breast, seemed folded to an endless repose. Break the frightful calm that chains volition! wail, moan, cry aloud! that love

may know ye have not lost the capacity to suffer! Be not thus stark and still, as though reposing in the last terrible immunity from sorrow!

The burden of that night's nameless fears, these two young watchers bore together. Walsingham paced the adjoining room, occasionally approaching the group to assure himself that all continued well. The shadows of night dispersed at last, and joy came in the morning, for the peril was past.

When Viola had collected her scattered thoughts, she essayed to write an account of her brother's adventure to the uncle, whom she had never seen. Hers, was the pen of a ready writer; but on this occasion it seemed stupid, and utterly dumb. It is an easy thing to write to a friend whose character you understand. Avoiding all that would offend, and ministering graciously to the well known tastes, you may glide through your story to a pleasant ending, without constraint, or fear. It is comparatively easy, to give a verbal narrative to an utter stranger, because the first glance gives you some clue to his character, and the variable expressions of his face encourage you to proceed, or warn to desist. But, for a young girl, to make, by letter, an important communication to one whom she has never seen, and who she is most anxious should regard her with favour, is a most embarrassing duty. So Viola felt it, as she sat by the window, dipping her pen in ink, and patiently holding it, until the fluid evaporated into air instead of words.

This uncle had been a man of high official station, whose

gifts and eccentricities had rendered him a theme of private conversation, as well as newspaper discussion. Thus she became familiar with his fame, before she knew of the tie between herself and him. After she had discovered her relationship, Cola, in reply to her eager questions, had given her as fair an account as it was possible for him to do. Respecting his uncle profoundly, Cola did not in the least comprehend his very remarkable character; and from all which he told her, Viola conceived a vague awe for her mysterious relative, whom she now felt it her duty to address.

He was a man of stern, yet fervent nature. One who pursued the path of duty with unhesitating rectitude; taking no delight therein, yet shrinking from no sacrifice which it might demand. If roses nodded by the wayside, making it a path of pleasantness, their beauty and perfume were unseen, unfelt by him, because of the steadfastness with which his gaze was fixed upon the end. If burning ploughshares paved the pathway, his heroic soul neither shrank nor faltered. Stern, uncompromising with himself, so was he with all mankind: and from his judicial station he dealt the terrors of the law with awful justice. Human sympathy, with human weakness, he felt not. The temptations of tried nature never won compassion. The league of besetting circumstances could nought extenuate. He was clothed with authority to punish, not to pity.

Men honoured this man for his unfaltering rectitude, and lofty virtue, yet *none loved him*. Trusts were reposed in him, confidences bestowed on him, labours demanded of him, and

with energetic zeal he met the requirements of all, disappointing none. But no wife smiled in his eyes, or sweetened his labour with love; no child, on its embassy of blessing, came fresh from Heaven to his joyless home; no friend sat by his side in the twilight, and bade him revive his drooping energies in the refreshment of kindred companionship.

If his heart sometimes clamoured within him for sympathy, it was hushed with tasks: and it came to pass that the repressed instincts of his nature avenged themselves upon this tyranny. As the limb, compressed by art from infancy, and prevented its natural development in one part, will outgrow its fair proportion, and swell to the superabundance of deformity in another, so the repressed yearnings of this man, forced from their natural growth, developed themselves in an unlooked-for and monstrous manner. Steeled against the sweet influences of daily life, he grew strangely susceptible to that of unseen, and intangible things. Checked, and hedged in a narrow limit of the visible world, his soul vaulted to an ideal realm, and held high revel there. He called aloud from out his solitude, and, to his distempered thoughts, the disembodied spirits of air made answer. He summoned, with a whisper which rang through space, the souls of heroes and martyrs, and from the unbroken repose of centuries they arose and answered. He called upon the names of departed kindred, and, bending low from heaven, they made response.

Men said "much learning had made him mad," and he answered, "I am *not* mad, but speak the words of truth and soberness!" Yet, feeling that mankind, not sharing his

strange belief, must distrust his judgment, he resigned official honours and private trusts; thus laying all that had adorned his life upon the altar of his new faith.

No marvel that Viola hesitated to address this mysterious man; no marvel that she sat by the window, watching the shadow on the dial move toward the hour of noon, and the pen still dry in her hand. But it was a marvel that, as she gazed forth in perplexity, she saw a figure moving up the avenue, which her intuition told her was the man of whom she meditated.

He was small and slightly bent—not with infirmity, but with the energy of onward progress. His countenance was dark and haggard, but his deep-set eyes were keenly fixed upon some point in the distance, toward which he seemed to move. So, with his long hair, and beard, streaming backward in the wind, he pressed on, and passed beneath the window.

Viola laid down her pen, with the conviction that this new Presence absorbed her from the duty of using it, and sought the chamber of her brother.

CHAPTER XL.

REVELATIONS.

"All I believed is true.

I am able yet

All I want, to get

By a method as strange as new.

Now—now, the door is heard;

Hark! the stairs, and near—

Nearer—and here—

Now! and at call the third,

She enters without a word."

BROWNING.

ONWARD—through hall, and stairway, and passage, pressed this Presence, as though in obedience to a command recorded in high Heaven, when the foundations of the world were laid. Through the open door, past the startled inmates, across the spacious chamber, and stood beside the bed. There was some-

thing so ethereal in the apparition, that it seemed as if a spirit had glided past.

"You called me in extremity, three nights ago, and I have come!"

Cola, now restored to sense, but fearfully enfeebled, opened his eyes, smiled in recognition, and essayed to speak.

"I have been—in—"

"In many perils, you would say, but cannot. Be not troubled, for I know all, and therefore am I here. *Sleep!*"

There was an air of ghostly omniscience in his words, that almost curdled the blood of listeners.

As unmindful of all about him, as if he stood alone by the sick man, he felt his pulse, smoothed the hair from his brow, and muttered, "It is well! his hour has not come;" and vanished.

No words convey an idea of the peculiarity of his movements, so well as those which usage has consecrated to descriptions of the disembodied.

They knew within that chamber that he walked out, through the open door, as he had entered, yet a vague awe possessed them, as though an apparition had passed.

Walsingham arose and followed. He overtook him in the hall. "I presume I address Judge Conway," he said.

The stranger bowed his head with the air of one who had been interrupted in some absorbing thought, by a trivial question.

"You have travelled fast and far, and must be weary. The lady of this house commissions me to offer you refreshment."

The strange man was looking at the door; nay, through the

planks, to him transparent, away into the wintry landscape beyond. He declined the proffered refreshment with a gesture, and continued his steadfast gaze.

"Then, sir, have the goodness to enter, and be seated," continued Walsingham, throwing open the drawing-room door. "I have much to communicate concerning your nephew."

The stranger shook his head: "You can tell me nothing that I do not know."

"The intelligence has travelled with unwonted rapidity to reach your home; or were you met by it on your way hither?"

With his dreamy eyes still fixed upon that ever-distant point in space, he answered, with simple brevity, "I was *there*, and *saw*."

"*There, and saw?*" echoed Walsingham.

"Yes. Spiritually present; I saw the turgid waves, the drifts of ice, the wreck and spoil of waters; the boat a whirling toy of wind and wave; the despairing face lifted in agony; the arms reached forth in supplication. Saw *you* this?" and he turned, with fierce interrogation, to Walsingham.

"No."

The sudden excitement passed as quickly as it came, and with his usual cold, sepulchral tone he added, "One other witness was there, concerning whom the powers of darkness hold council. Well for you, that you are not he."

"Permit me to beg, you will explain how you became spiritually present at this scene?" inquired Walsingham, his stately courtesy contrasting with the wild abruptness of his guest.

The shadowy Presence glided through the open door, and hovered over the seat which Walsingham proffered.

"It was very simple," he said; "I was alone, in the twilight, thinking earnestly of him, when the cry of his despair smote my ear."

"In your own home, two hundred miles away?"

"Why not? When such a sound falls upon the atmosphere it surges in circumambient waves, which, growing finer and less, by small degrees, still ripple to the remotest verge of space. Gross ears are filled with the shock of common sound, but there is a finer sense, which when attentive, thrills to the whispers which fill the universe."

"When I heard that call, I bent the whole energies of my nature to answer with my presence; and *I was there!*"

The glow of enthusiasm faded, and with some bitterness, he continued—

"I have answered you, because it is part of my creed to impart truth to the searcher after knowledge, but you cannot understand, and will not believe. Your faith, like that of your race, is prisoned within the limits of a finite comprehension, and is *dead* to the vast infinitude beyond."

As Walsingham listened he inquired of himself, "Is this mad enthusiast the man selected by her father, to dispute with me the guardianship of Viola?" He had followed him from the sick-room with the intention of unfolding to him the history of his niece, and rendering an account of his stewardship, but he now hesitated; the man seemed brain-sick, bereft of judgment, and hardly to be approached with concerns like

these. Reflecting, however, that despite his mental vagaries, he had been always a good and just man, fulfilling worthily the trusts reposed in him, Walsingham resolved to deal with him as with any other man, and at once approached the subject.

"With information, as thorough and accurate as you possess, it is unnecessary for me to tell you of your nephew's present position, with regard to a lady."

"I am not informed upon that point," said he, withdrawing his eyes from that distant focus upon which they were ever fixed, and looking in Walsingham's face with a certain kindling of human interest.

"Then you are not aware of his attachment to the daughter of the gentleman in whose house we are?" said Walsingham, reluctant to make his communication at once.

The look of interest faded, and an expression of languor and weariness passed over the haggard face. "My instincts have been at fault," he said. "I thought it was of another female I was about to hear."

"May I inquire whom?"

"The lad's sister, whom I have never seen, and whose guardian I am. Two years ago, when I first became aware of the communications between the material and immaterial world, I consulted the spirit of her father, and was directed to seek her here. I traversed this valley, but failed to meet the object of my search."

"Could the spirit have been mistaken?" suggested Walsingham.

The enthusiast smiled with ineffable pity, at the grossness of his ignorance!

"Those who dwell in the day-beams of knowledge cannot err, though their humble mediums in the fetters of flesh may. I was a novice then in knowledge."

"When the communications from the invisible world became more clear to you, why did you not renew the search?"

"Because the discouragement of the first failure oppressed me. But your question, is one that my brother will ask me in the spirit world, and I must again make the effort."

Turning away from Walsingham, with a gesture of silence, he fixed his hollow eyes once more upon some visionary and distant point in space, and gazed and meditated. His face grew ashen and blank, his eyeballs stony, and he seemed rigid, like one in a convulsion. Walsingham was about to call for aid, when the door opened, and Viola entered. He sprang between the stranger and his ward, that she might be spared the shock of seeing him in his terrible trance, saying, as he did so, "Why have you come?"

A tremor agitated the frame, while a slight convulsion passed over the face of the mysterious man, and the trance was over. His voice, low and dirge-like, answered the question:—

"Because it was my *will*."

Thinking it wisest to make no allusion to the strange affection he had witnessed, Walsingham led Viola forward, and introduced her as "Miss Walsingham."

This was her mother's maiden name, and, at her request, Viola had known no other.

"Viola Conway, welcome!" said the mystic, taking her trembling hand in his cold corpse-like clasp. "In visions of the night I have seen you, and spirits of air have heralded your approach. Behold in me, the guardian appointed you by your dead father."

To Viola, the name of her father was a spell of dread, and, it is to be feared, she regarded his agent as a fanatical madman. She said, timidly,

"This—this is my guardian, sir."

"For the care with which you have discharged duties that were mine, be thanked," he said, inclining slightly toward Walsingham. "Henceforth I shall relieve you of the charge."

Viola looked imploringly at her earliest, best friend.

When did he ever fail to respond to look, or wish of hers? He took her hand, and drew it through his arm, with an air of protection that seemed to say, "Rest on me;" and answered:—

"This young lady was given to my care by her mother. She has sat by my board, grown under my roof-tree, and been to me a daughter. If the faithful discharge of a guardian's sacred duties, in time past, give me a claim to consideration, I ask you to continue mine office. I have lived too much for her, to live without her now."

In the utterance of the last sentence his fine voice faltered, with the emotion which he had so often successfully controlled. As the accents struck Viola's ear, conveying to her quick appre-

hension a sudden conviction of all that had been so long hidden, a delicate roseate glow suffused her face, and her lips parted with a smile. Oblivious of her recent fear, she stood with her hand upon his arm, like an Empress at her coronation. For why? Her womanhood that moment received its crown. *He had lived too long for her, to live without her now!* What an acknowledgment of her supremacy was this! What unconscious words of fealty had he spoken!

"I thank you for the past," said the impassible figure, in reply, "but the future will be my care. I am pledged to the dead."

"Reflect," exclaimed Walsingham. "To you she will be a burden; to me a blessing. You, are unused to minister to delicate womanly requirements; I, for her sake, have studied them. You, have no home to offer her, while in mine, a place filled by her presence becomes void, if you rob me of her. Is it not more convenient for you, and better for me, that she should remain?"

This was a lover pleading for his mistress, albeit he knew it not.

"It is as you say," said the shadow, gloomily. "She will be to me an unaccustomed burden; but when I render an account of my stewardship in Heaven, can I say, I did not execute thy will because it was not convenient? The way is dark and thorny; the burdens are neither few nor light. Those which are heaven-appointed, the sophistry of man shall not tempt me to lay down.

"As for the daughter of Miles Conway, she must be con-

tent with such protection and comfort, as the man, selected by her father, can offer. Be she luxurious, she must conform to the life of an ascetic. Be she tender, she must grow hardy. Be she dependent, she must learn self-reliance; and become, perchance, a wiser, better woman, than those who are clad in fine linen, and dwell in kings' houses."

And while this cold, hard arbiter of her destiny thus sternly spoke, Viola still smiled her rosy, happy smile. The murmur of his voice in her ear was meaningless. She was queening it in her new-found realm! What room for care, or fear, was there in the heart which knew itself beloved?

"Is this your fixed determination?" Walsingham asked.

"It is."

"I have thus far appealed to you," he said, with resolution, "because I recognised the superior right of a father to dispose of his child. I now give you notice, that I will not relinquish her but at the mandate of the law; and if you make the issue, I shall show desertion of duty, and unworthiness on the part of the parent, and unfitness and incapacity in his agent."

A dark flush passed over the bloodless face of the claimant. "You would avail yourself of popular prejudice, and prove me mad," he said, bitterly. "To this Moloch of ignorance, I have offered up every right, every trust, and only withhold this, because I stand pledged to the dead. In proof of capacity to discharge my duties, I point to this girl's brother. He stands a living testimony, of care, as judicious, as it has been complete. I *will* make the issue, and if the law absolve

from my trust, I, who have administered the law, am law-abiding;" and with his ghost-like, noiseless movement, he faded from the room.

Oh, Viola, Viola! With the sick brother tremblingly turning from the threshold of eternity—with the agents of buried parents rudely contending for thee—why does thy bosom thrill with ecstasy? thy cheek wear the radiance of joy? Why, in the solitude of thy chamber, dost thou clasp thy joyful hands, and lift thy exultant heart, in a rapture of thanksgiving?

Oh, Viola! Oh, woman? Thou dost know thyself to be beloved! Thou, who hast been groping in the twilight of thy unconscious heart, hast had, by a lightning's flash, the glorious surroundings of youth and love revealed! That, which seemed, in the half light through which thou hast walked, duty, gratitude, filial devotion, on thy part; in this sudden illumination takes its true outline, and stands confessed, the first deep, earnest love of woman. That, which in him, wore the semblance of patience, indulgence, and faithful recognition of obligation, grows into largeness of stature, and reveals itself the great, absorbing passion of man!

She knew, now, why she trembled, and grew incoherent in his presence, when she would have told him of her new relations. She knew, too, why he had checked her speech, and misunderstood her import. She knew the cause of that serene happiness which had so long filled her heart. She knew—oh, what, in this flooding of light, did she not see, and know!

CHAPTER XLI.

LOST!

"I have but to be by thee, and thy hand
 Would never let mine go, thy heart withstand
 The beating of my heart to reach its place.
 When should I look for thee and feel thee gone?
 When cry for the old comfort and find none?
 Never, I know. Thy soul is in thy face."

BROWNING.

COLA, from day to day, improved. When health once more returned to the severely tried system of this young man, happiness came with it, hand in hand. No more coldness on the part of friends. No more misunderstandings as before. His love acknowledged, accepted, and approved, left him nothing more to ask for; and to his delicious convalescence we leave him.

Yet, stay! The position of Viola, and the difference between his uncle and Walsingham, occasioned him pain. Cola had never been wanting in affection or respect for his uncle,

but the reflections of a sick couch had brought him a better understanding of that uncle's character, and a greater tenderness for his eccentricities. He remembered how he had sacrificed ease, and convenience, to give to himself the care and education which his tender years, and more matured youth, required. How he had resigned position, honours, and influence, rather than be false to a conviction of his mind. However strange or monstrous his belief might be, it was the honest irresistible conviction of the man, and his fealty to it was noble. That fealty had cost him all that the earlier labours of his life had won. The *belief* was false, but the *man* was *true*. The world had not distinguished between the man and his belief; hence, he was regarded as an impostor, and exposed to contumely. Cola, while deploring his views, admired the immovable devotion with which he had maintained them; and, seeing how he had sacrificed to them all which men value, a compassionate tenderness toward him grew up in his heart, and he desired to shield him from the pitiless scorn of the world. It pained him to think that Walsingham, who had always been his model of manhood, and toward whom he felt an equal degree of gratitude on behalf of his sister; that Walsingham should be in antagonism with his relative; should lay bare his errors; should triumph over, and inflict new mortification upon the isolated and joyless man.

He talked of these things with Viola, and she, who had also been pondering them, soothed his apprehensions, and assured him they should never be realized. She promised that her

uncle and Walsingham should never contend together, but be friends, etc.

"Ah, Viola, if it depended upon Walsingham, your influence over him would justify your assurance; but you do not know the stuff our uncle is made of. He thinks it his duty to assume the authority of a guardian over his new-found ward. He will promptly resort to legal measures to establish his claim, and, in defence of his own right, Walsingham will not spare him. Our uncle will be presented to the consideration of the world as a misguided, half-crazed fanatic, while our father—he was an unnatural father to you, they say, Viola, and it will strengthen Walsingham to prove it;—but can we—can *you*, endure this exposure?"

"Dear Cola, why will you torture your sick brain with impossibilities? I tell you these things shall never be."

"You are half a sorceress, sister mine," responded he, with his old lightness of manner. "But how are you to charm away these troubles?"

"You do not see! and it so simple—so easy! What say you to my going voluntarily with my uncle and brother?"

"Viola! you do not mean it! you could not do it! you ought not, if you would!"

"And why not?" she inquired, with the coolest possible smile.

"Walsingham would as soon part with his life's blood; and you owe him everything; and—well—no matter! Go with us? why our cold, gloomy, ascetic home would be no home for such a summer bird. Don't think of that, Viola."

"My home shall be wherever I choose to make it," she said. "Mr. Walsingham will be influenced by my wish rather than his own; and, for the sake of our uncle, who has been the only and true friend of my brother's childhood; who would have been the protector of mine; and to preserve from comment or reproach the name of the father whom we knew not; and, for other reasons, which I need not mention now (her colour rose, and she spoke rapidly here), I will accept the protection which his last thoughts bespoke."

"Are these not motives sufficiently strong to lead me from a luxurious home, to a hard one? Then remember, Cola, when I come it will be changed. Containing a woman, it can no longer be gloomy and joyless. We are treasures of domestic life, you must understand. We do not go through life selecting sunny spots upon which to pitch our tents, but we fill with the light, and love, of our presence, the waste places which may be appointed us."

"A precious pair of bachelors I shall have in you and our uncle; but if I fail in teaching you to appreciate my sex, why, Helen shall be added to our household, and it may be, she will succeed where I fail. Then you, and she, shall coo together in one corner of the chimney, while I shall darn my uncle's hose in the other, and he shall be sleek, and fat, and shave his beard, and trim his hair, and grow benevolent in aspect, as well-cared for middle-aged gentlemen do, and—and—;" and Viola's emotions, at her own touching picture, prevented her saying more.

Her manner, though half playful and half sad, was reso-

lute, and Cola perceived she had reflected upon the peculiarities of her position, and decided upon her course. Those "other reasons" slightly alluded to, were perhaps the deepest, as they were the most delicate, which influenced her.

When Viola became fully aware of the change which had taken place in the relations between Walsingham, and herself; when she had had some faint glimpses of the adoration with which he regarded her, and, from the quick responses of her own heart, found that he indeed had grown into her life, as she in his—when she thus learned that they were not merely guardian and ward, but lovers—the delicate instincts of womanhood suggested it was unmeet that his house should be her home—that his protection should shelter her, as heretofore. There was no longer the calm repose of home, beneath his roof. Her pulses beat not so equally in his presence: she could not meet him in the hall, or sit with him at the board, as before: she was filled with a sweet dread of his coming, and feared to be alone with him, whose presence was most dear.

She knew that Walsingham loved her; she believed it had long been so, but that he would ever be other than he had always been to her—calm, dignified, impenetrable—she did not believe. Without understanding that secret reason, which was the foundation-stone of his reserve, her faith in him was so implicit that she acquiesced fully in the wisdom and propriety of his conduct. She did not desire to see him play the lover. It was enough, oh! too much happiness to know herself beloved by such a man.

But her tenderness, though humble and unexact, was irrepressible. Aiming, as with commendable pride she did, to emulate the example of reserve which he had set her, she feared lest the love which pervaded her being should, by some unguarded look, tone, or gesture betray itself—betray *her*. Not for worlds, upon worlds, would she have him guess it. Their intercourse had been so pure, so perfect, so happy—so beautiful to remember, that she dreaded it should be marred by mortifying weakness on her part, or embarrassing knowledge on his; and this was that "other reason" why she would accept the protection of her uncle.

She was thankful that the Providence who had watched her always, had provided a new home for her when she needed it. Thankful that the awakening had not come before the asylum was offered. Believing it to be sent by Heaven, in answer to her need, she resolved to accept it. She would go hence, bearing in her heart the conviction of his deep love for her; the delicious memory of years of intercourse; and her own reverence, trust, and love; and with these be happy. She was grateful that she had known him, and been the recipient of his tenderness so long; grateful for the impress of his mind upon her own; grateful for the influence which he would for ever exert over her life, though they should never meet more. She would write to him, and he to her. She would hear of him from the world, in which he had now become distinguished, and she would read his books. It would be very hard to learn to live away from him, but knowing her

heart, how could she trust herself with him? and so her mind was fixed.

It was with difficulty that she explained her purpose to Walsingham. A difficulty greatly increased by his surprise, and pain. As she anticipated, he submitted to her decision, although he neither concurred in its propriety, nor appreciated the reasons by which it was sustained.

"Must I," he said, looking sadly and tenderly in her face, "must I, then, resign my little girl at last? No power on earth could force me to this but her own wish. That has always been to me an irresistible fiat."

Viola, with downcast eyes, sat trembling and blushing like a culprit, as he continued—

"Bear me witness, Viola, that since I knew you, your well-being and happiness has been the aim of a life which you now leave purposeless."

She covered her face with her hands, and sobbed. He smoothed the hair from her hot brow, soothingly, saying—"I would not make my darling weep, and will therefore say little more. I must remind her that she leaves me of her own deliberate will, and, as I think, without sufficient cause. If, hereafter, she should be less happy in the home she seeks than in the one she left, or if her judgment, cooler and more matured, should repent the decision it has made, then, in justice to me, I ask her to retrace her steps. In the name of all the past, I bid her remember that she owes me that!"

"In the hope that that time will come, her tastes shall continue to regulate my household—her seat shall remain vacant

at the board—her place by the hearthstone be consecrated to her coming. Flowers of welcome shall garnish my hall by day, and hospitable fires glow therein by night. And night or day—summer or winter, expectation shall watch in my heart, and hope whisper ever, '*she is at hand!*'"

Oh, modest womanhood! I do thee reverence! thou fragile, yet strong! How the lonely, longing, loving, passionate heart, that would have cast itself upon his noble breast, and pulsed its life out, was by thy force restrained! In that hour of sweet temptation, she knew that her resolve was right. She dared not live with him on the old terms. How she could have lived with him in the beautiful bond which blends two harmonious lives in one!

Women are excellent dissemblers! Viola conquered the tumult in her heart, and hid its traces. She might not have been successful, but that Walsingham was absorbed in the same battle with himself. The silent constraint of the one, the mournful tenderness of the other, gave no indication of the strife within. Why did not some sudden flash reveal to each the struggling heart of the other? This might have been, had his love, been less self-abnegating, or hers, less modest.

She took his hand as might a daughter, and kissed it reverently (coldly, he thought, but his pulse was hot), and, fearing to speak, left him.

CHAPTER XLII.

THE LOVE OF MANHOOD.

"Bear this life, millions, bravely bear—

Bear this life, for the better one.

See ye the stars? a life is there

Where the reward is won."

SCHILLER.

"JIM," said Mrs. Grey, folding her hands on the edge of the table, where the bird was perched, and resting her chin upon them, that she might look into his wierd eyes, "Jim, they say you know more'n a Christian bird ought; for goodness' sake relieve my mind, can't you?"

His wicked little eyes gave a sardonic twinkle.

"I'll bet my knitting sheath," said his confiding mistress, gathering up her yarn, and clicking her needles, "that *you* know what has been going on, down in the town yonder, for a week past. But here you sit, and mope, when the family's away, and the bridge they was to come home by gone, and the river chock full of ice, so that no mortal can cross; and not a

way for us to hear of 'em or 'em to hear of us, unless you'd stir your stumps and go yourself, with my compliments and all's well, and hoping they is the same, and wouldn't Mr. Walsingham drop a line by the bearer, saying so; which would be no more'n natural in you, Jim."

Jim might have been dead, and stuffed, for all the response he made.

"You're an able, but not a willin', which is a bad thing to say of man, or beast, or bird either," continued the old lady, who entertained a more elevated opinion of the sagacity, than the good feeling of her precious pet.

Jim stretched his wings lazily, and shook himself into the most unseemly heap of undressed feathers imaginable. The bird was suffering ennui.

"Gracious, but I wish *I* had 'em!" said his mistress, alluding to the wings, not to the plumage. "I'd go where I wanted to go, independent of bridges.

"But no matter now," she continued, reverently, "there's a pair awaitin' for me, maybe! You'll live to Metheusalem's age, they say, and flutter and flourish, long after your poor mistress is done carin' for you; but those wings of yourn must come to dust at last, while mine—well, mine, will fly so far the wings of time hisself shall never overtake."

Exalted as this view of her superiority appeared, it filled Mrs. Grey with melancholy. She took off her spectacles and wiped her eyes, while Jim, unmoved by her touching remarks, pecked lazily at a few crumbs. His indifference was exasperating. Mrs. Grey felt it.

"You stone—you rock—you granite!" she said. "You haint human feelin's! What is it to you, whether the master and mistress, who have made so much of you, ever get home again? What is it to you, if I should be dead and gone, I'd like to know?"

Upon this suggestion there was an instantaneous change in the bird. He folded his glossy feathers smoothly upon his back, gathered his wings neatly to their place, and hopped slowly, solemnly across the table. Mrs. Grey was in the habit of giving to his actions her own interpretation. There was, to her affectionate heart, something inexpressibly touching in this movement. It signified, that when she was dead and gone, Jim would be chief mourner; and she lifted the sombre mute to her bosom, ejaculating, with poetic alliteration,

"You blessed black brute!"

At this moment the door opened, and Walsingham entered.

After a week of anxiety, loneliness, and apprehension, and in her present tender mood, the surprise was too much for Mrs. Grey, and she burst into tears.

Common as are these demonstrations, bachelors always find them embarrassing. Walsingham was fresh from his interview with Viola, and his heart was full of its own bitterness; but he could not but pause to soothe his humble friend, and listen to her account of the mental distresses, the lugubrious possibilities and probabilities which had beset her during the absence of the family.

"Indeed, sir, I said to Jim—Jim, says I, if it was not for the bow and the promise, I should look to see the waters

creeping, creeping up the rocks, and licking the Eyrie doorstep, as in Noah's time."

When Mrs. Grey had talked her fill, and informed herself upon various points of interest connected with the world from which he came, Walsingham made his escape from the excellent, albeit garrulous lady, and, locking the door of his retreat, was at last alone.

Alone! This was a luxury. Of late, he had lived in the presence of others. The cares, the courtesies, the amenities of life had claimed his attention, while the strongest feelings of his nature were at war within him. So perfect, and so practised was the self-control of this man, that he rendered to each and all their due. To Cola, almost womanly forethought and tenderness; to Helen, playful badinage; to Howard, patient and dignified hearing; and to Viola—Viola, in whose presence the conflict waged mightiest—to Viola, calm kindness, tender reserve.

In the midst of this, the time for him to lose his darling had suddenly overtaken him. Then the supremacy over self almost tottered within him, and he sought that solitude in which he had always grown strong.

He sat in Viola's boudoir. It had formerly been his study, and the scene of many a midnight vigil, many a mental conflict, in which his nobler nature never failed to triumph over the temptations which beleaguered it. Here, years ago, he had read the letters of his first love, and taken a long, sad, farewell retrospect of that era of life. Here, he sat in the golden twilights of summers long gone, with the cherub on

his knee, whose childish eloquence of prattle sunk into his heart with a strange potency, dissipating doubt, gloom, despondency, and filling him with the hopes and ambitions of his kind. Those tiny, dimpled, helpless hands! how had they lifted up his prostrate manhood in that bitter time!

Here it was, years later, that his heart announced its second passion. That constant heart which, while overflowing with tenderness toward the gentler sex, had so long cherished the memory of a dead love. Here, began that war of noble, devoted, self-sacrificing love, over the baser elements of feverish passion, which had so quietly and steadily waged in his great heart through the later period of his life; and here he came to gather strength for the last sacrifice.

The place was consecrated to her, also, for here, her beautiful maidenhood had ripened to richest bloom. Here lie the books which were late her companions and teachers. There, the work-basket, filled with little keepsakes, and implements of feminine industry. He looked over its contents with a feeling of tender reverence. The taper thimble seemed part of the slender finger it fitted. The box of tapes, with its French painting of flowers upon the lid—; its neatly arranged, untangled contents, told him of that taste, which associated with elegance, and beauty, the humblest concerns of life; of the neatness, harmony, and order that waited upon her footsteps.

She was going to leave him; and all these, her possessions, would be gone also. He looked around the adorned chamber, in his mind's eye shutting out all that pertained to her. It looked so barren, so bare, so desolate, that his heart chilled.

Again, his thoughts grew retrospective, and he saw in that survey of the past, that his life had not been vain. All that he had proposed to himself had been achieved. By patient effort he had won from nature such revelations, as lifted the burdens from many a bowed back, and thus, he had been a benefactor of his kind.

He had won reputation. Not the ephemeral fame which fills the public eye and ear, and perishes with its generation; but that larger renown which one age pronounces to another, and which echoes to distant times.

Dearer than all this, he had filled one young life with happiness. He had drawn around his beloved an invisible circle, over which sorrow had never passed. From out this circle, and from his protection, she was about to step, and *his work was done*.

The teeming future had suddenly grown blank—aimless. Life worthless, and inexpressibly burdensome.

To the brain, which had late been busy with grand schemes, the heart which had pulsed with high resolves, there had come a great pause!

Hopes, aims, aspirations which had filled the citadel of life with the music of prophetic voices, were stricken mute. Reason, investigation, thought—the intellectual athlete—were palsied. Over all the nameless attributes of man, which, from the cradle to the grave, are busy with their appointed travail, there had fallen a mighty *hush*—like that which reigned in the enchanted city, where all, from the prince on his throne to the artisan at labour, were turned to stone.

Then, amid the silence and desolation, the last hope lifted up her voice, and discoursed of *death*!

Death, the deliverer of overtasked and wearied men! The peace-angel, who gathereth clamouring cares into eternal silence, and droppeth healing from his wings.

Would not this stern benefactor come speedily, and lift from his drooping shoulders the burden of an aimless, loveless, hopeless life?

Why, now that the affluence of existence had been spent, should he endure its poverty? Why should the cup which palled, be drained to its last dregs? Did not his own hand hold the spells which death obeyed?

Oh, night of baleful extremity! Oh, false, insidious sophistry! Instinct of right, up, and prevail!

The intellectual athlete breaking from their thrall, wrestled with the temptation and subdued it.

God hath not taken you into his counsel, or told you wherefore ye were made, wherefore ye suffer. The great ends appointed you, shall ye not do them, though they be but burden and travail? If earthly happiness be no part of the plan of your creation, shall ye forfeit the eternity of hope in rank rebellion? And if life be intolerable, how say you *die*, to that which God hath bidden *live for ever*?

The hand which made all space, and the multitudinous worlds which gem it, from the centre to the illimitable verge, created you, oh, man! In the transient sunbeam of time, mote-like you float; yet when that sunbeam shall be darkened, and heaven and earth shall have passed away, and the worlds

of primal creation shall have crumbled to original chaos, ye will remain. Against a principle of life thus inaestructible, dare you lift your hand?

Shatter to dust the casket in which it is enshrined; and, ushered unbidden into peopled space, it shall flit from sphere to sphere, for ever, filling eternity with the greatness of its complaint.

Like a vision of the night, that hour of temptation and conflict passed, and the morning clothed Walsingham with endurance.

CHAPTER XLIII.

THE LOVE OF YOUTH.

"The woman yonder, there's no use of life
 But just to obtain her! Heap earth's woes in one,
 And bear them—make a pile of all earth's joys,
 And spurn them as they help or help not here;
 Only obtain her!"

IN A BALCONY.

Now, during these eventful times, the irascible Captain's temper had grown exceeding gentle. His stout hand, by the sick-bed, acquired a nurse's cunning; his mood was tamed to a woman's patience. Dividing his time between Cola and Howard, who was also ill, he meekly obeyed the whims of each, oblivious of his usual expletives. Quite cut down, was the Captain, by the suffering of his young friends!

The advent of the "second Richmond upon the field" occasioned the Captain's gentler virtues a few convulsive throes, but he contented himself with glowering fearfully upon that interloper when he crossed his path, which, to do him justice,

he did not often do. Not that he avoided the redoubtable sea-hero, or was in the least disturbed by his expressive glances. To tell the truth, his own regards were so steadfastly fixed upon the clouds of heaven, the mountain mists, or some other prospect, equally distant and intangible, that the interesting play of feature, with which the Captain favoured him, was as altogether wasted as are pearls before swine.

But when Captain Walsingham fully understood, and believed, that Viola was about to withdraw from his brother's protection, and accept the guardianship of a stranger, then—then—then what an outburst was there! Captain Walsingham, in his wrath, modelled himself after a storm at sea. Being familiar with elemental strife, he imitated its fury with complete success. It is unnecessary that I should describe it; nay, impossible! When the tumult died away, in low undergrowls, Viola was like one stranded.

"To think," muttered the Captain, like retiring thunder, "to think of the ingratitude of the child! the utter heartlessness! the cruelty, one might say!"

"Don't say it, uncle Captain!" she pleaded.

"Just like her sex!" he continued. "No more affection than a tabby cat. Pretty, smooth, domestic animals are they all, purring at your hearth one day, and at your enemy's the next; and rending, wantonly, the hand raised to caress! S-s-cat! get out of my sight, child! They say you're handsome, do they? Handsome is that handsome does; and, to me, you are not pleasant to look upon!"

"Do not—do not!" she said, deprecatingly. "Mr. Walsingham was not thus harsh."

"Arthur? no! I'll swear, he was not! He'd cut his heart out, and lay it at your feet, if you bade him! His whole life has been a sacrifice to you and yours; and now you coolly desert him as did your mother before you!"

"What is that?" said Viola, quickly. "What had my mother to do with Mr. Walsingham?"

"None of your business!" responded the Captain, promptly, as with a great bite, he thrust his tongue in his cheek.

The Captain, we are sorry to confess, was not polite.

Taking advantage of the silence that followed this slip of the tongue, Viola placed herself on the defensive, urging upon the Captain's consideration some of the motives which influenced her.

"Pshaw!" roared he, in reply. "Don't talk to me about tenderness for the memory of the man that's dead and gone! *He* never showed any for you! And then all this squeamishness and delicacy about this poor anatomy, who, I'll be bound, has no more of the feelings than the appearance of a man. You thought *he'd* feel badly, did you? It never occurred to you that Arthur Walsingham's great heart would be rent; or old Uncle Captain be left joyless; or the Eyrie be desolate as Tadmor in the wilderness! Ugh! ugh! Yet one might have hoped they would be considered first, before this miserable shadow of a man, with a shadow of a claim, who comes *spooking* about like an evil spirit condemned to walk the earth, when better ghosts are in paradise!"

The Captain paused, quite out of breath, and Viola begged for mercy at his hands.

"You'll break my heart, if you talk so to me, Uncle Captain! You know I love you, and—and Mr. Walsingham; you know I would gladly die for you, if God permitted; you know I shall never be again as happy as I have been in the dear old Eyrie, where you brought me a little child. Oh, forgive me! pity me! and believe that I am acting for the best."

"You'll not act for the best, I can tell you," responded the Captain, in a mollified tone, "if you follow that will-o'-the-wisp! A pretty tramp over the waste places of life you'll have; and be landed in quicksands and quagmires at last—you that have been carried over the rough paths so tenderly. Well, well! somebody else did it before you, and called on Walsingham in the end, as you will do."

"Dear Uncle Captain, speak kindly to me! and what is this about my mother?"

"I sha'n't tell you!"

"I wonder if Mr. Walsingham will not tell me?"

"Ask him!" exclaimed the Captain, bitterly. "'Twill comfort him to talk about it, no doubt."

Pale, sick, and gloomy, Howard Irving had reclined upon his sofa, and listened to this lively discourse. He found it quite inspiring, no doubt, for he raised his languid head, then his recumbent figure, and lastly approached Viola, to add his earnest remonstrance to the Captain's.

"Indeed, Viola, you are wrong! You have not a friend who sustains you, in the step you propose taking."

She noticed him no more than she would have noticed the buzzing of a humming bee.

"It would be headstrong and unbecoming, for a young and inexperienced girl, to take such an important step, unsustained by the judgment of older persons."

She looked at him uneasily, as though the bee was buzzing too near, and might presently sting.

"Viola," he continued, lowering his voice, "for *my* sake, stay!"

The colour mounted to her face, and she bit her lips. The sting had come.

"And why for *your* sake, if not for *his*?" she said aloud. "I owe *you* nothing!"

"Nothing!" he exclaimed, reproachfully. He thought of all the love he had given her. Was that nothing?

She thought of it too, perhaps, for she said, kindly and frankly, "Forgive me, Howard, for I know not what I say, being sore beset."

"Let her alone!" said the Captain, and gathering up his hat and stick, he shook the dust off his feet and departed.

I am sorry to record that Captain Walsingham, usually open as the day, was here, guilty of duplicity. At this moment it occurred to him that he was *de trop*. That, in his absence, his young auxiliary might present for her consideration, such arguments as are most potent with the female heart,

and therefore he retired—*thinking*, "Here's a chance for you, my boy!"—*saying*,

"Let her alone!"

Let us extol the Captain's shrewdness, if not his sincerity; for, as Viola, with a word of excuse, was following him, Howard exclaimed,

"Stay, stay, Viola! I have so much to say to you."

As though the trials she was now enduring were not enough! She put up her hands, the cowardly creature, and cried,

"Oh, Howard, *don't*!"

"Dont?" he echoed, sharply. "Of what are you afraid?"

She was again offended by his impatience (we had almost written impertinence), as before, by his assumption; and, with recovered dignity, assured him that she was afraid of nought, but was constrained to bid him "good-morning."

"No," said he, placing his back against the door, "not till you hear me." And, in his own vehement way, he told her how he had loved her. How she had been the angel of his boyhood—the star of his youth—the *all*, which his heart coveted in life; and wooed her to stay with them—to be his wife—the joy of his heart—the comfort of all who loved her. Growing warmer and wilder, he prayed her to pour the gentle influence of her love upon his turbulent nature—to lay her pure white hand upon the mane of passion, and control its raging. He conjured her, by all those years in which his heart had offered tribute—by the blent morning of their lives—by the memories they held in common, to stand between him and the swift destruction which yawned for him, should he lose

her—to save him from frenzy—from despair—to save him from his fearful self!

She had turned to listen, like one at bay, resenting the constraint which detained her. But, as the torrent of words foamed forth, she trembled, melted, and wept. She, who loved so well, could feel for him, although there was small resemblance between the humble, enduring, patient love which filled her bosom with a sweet content—which asked nought, and was sufficient unto itself; and the imperious, exacting passion which exalted itself, and clamoured for recompense.

In what did this man's love differ from Walsingham's? There was a sympathy between their strong natures, although one was deep and earnest; the other, vehement and wild. The one sought only to minister to her happiness and good; the other, to his passion.

With one she was the *end*; with the other, the means.

In the one heart, love offered up its continual prayer, "*guard her—guide her—bless her!*" In the other, it clamoured, "*give her to me!*"

The last is the type of its kind.

"These are the voices that have moaned and muttered within my bosom like summer thunder! These are the thoughts that, like electric flame, have blinded my vision, and consumed my peace! They have broken into language at last, and bespeak your soul's responsive echoes! They have flashed their quick contagion upon your heart! Your tears reveal it! Weep on—weep on! those drops are to me a dew of benediction."

"They witness that love is omnipotent!"

"No—no—no!" she cried, "dear Howard, I do—I do not love you!"

"Why then do you call me dear?" he cried, exultant. "See now, how your own words betray you! How your own tears testify against you! Yet you would hide away your heart, and coquette, and trifle, until all is lost."

Audacious lover! But for the pity which your love inspires, and which it mistakes for a responsive feeling; but for the kindly friendship which all her life had cherished, you might now receive a rude enlightenment.

"Do not misunderstand me," she implored. "You have moved me strangely, and I weep. The affection which I feel, and acknowledge for you, is not what you demand. I am sincere—I am earnest—I am above the coquettish arts of which you accuse me. I beg you to subdue these unhappy feelings, and pass on to better things."

He sank upon his sofa, hiding his face in his folded arms.

"In the future, when this storm shall have lulled and died away, and this hour be remembered as an uneasy dream; when the great pursuits of active manhood shall engross your energies, and a calmer, happier love beguile your heart, then, as a sister, I would be remembered, for, as a sister, I have loved you."

The departing rustle of her garments mingled with these accents, and he was alone.

CHAPTER XLIV.

SHOWS HOW THE DEVIL SEEKS TO ESTABLISH HIS DOMINION
IN THE HEART THAT INCLINES TO HIM A HAIR'S-BREADTH.

COLA, although making rapid strides toward health, would not be, for some time, strong enough to travel. Viola, too, needed a few weeks of preparation for the change of home upon which she had determined; and, for the present, the man-phantom disappeared.

While Cola grew strong and well, Howard, who had not been dangerously ill, still suffered from languor and dejection. His constitution, naturally recuperative, failed to recover from the shock of that fearful night.

Happiness and an untroubled conscience are powerful restoratives, but this young man possessed them not. A mind at ease is the best tonic. His was a prey to disappointment, and remorse.

He had laboured to save the life of Conway. He had rejoiced in the rescue. He saw him removed from his path as a rival, and placed by his side in the bond of a double brother-

hood, as the betrothed of his sister, and the brother of his beloved, yet he no longer loved him.

He could not forgive him the guilt, the misery, the mental abasement of which he was the innocent cause. He could not forgive him the knowledge which he must possess—which he alone could possess—of the fell passion of that night. He was impatient of the feeling of humiliation, and restraint, which possessed him in the presence of this injured friend. The world seemed too small to contain him, and the man who knew his sinful secret, and so he came to entertain a regret that he had not died.

Although he had not quenched a human life, conscience accused him of the guilt of homicide, and he bore within him the brand of Cain. Tales of horror and traditionary murders grew replete with interest. The inception of hate, the insidious progress of temptation, the allurements and incitements leading with terrible certainty to crime—all the sad history of human progress in depravity absorbed his thought. Not with the just condemnation of offended virtue, did he thus dwell upon acts of moral turpitude. An unwholesome sympathy with the criminal, usurped the place of generous indignation in his mind, and he became the apologist for crime. The fallacious sophistries with which misguided men sustain their courage to some bitter end, or palliate and justify enormities at which virtue weeps, entangled his mind in their treacherous maze.

In such a baleful atmosphere of thought, his moral character deteriorated; his judgment of right became impaired, and

the society of the good and pure ceased to charm him. Their attributes seemed to reproach—their sentiments to condemn him. The truisms of virtue, on the lips of her children, like pointed personalities, were resented, combated, argued against with the bitterness of self-justification, until the sensitive sophist, by slow degrees, convinced himself that wrong was right, and demolished the preservative land-marks between good and evil, once carefully established in his mind.

Twin-born with this sudden indulgence for the criminal, was a harshness of judgment, toward those who for virtue were eminent. Their deeds were regarded with jealous scrutiny; their motives ungraciously impugned, and their frailties probed to the quick. Thus tearing down the exalted, and elevating the debased, he played the part of a moral leveller, ignorant, the while, how much his own character deteriorated.

With the proneness of such natures to suspicion and injustice, he persuaded himself that Cola still stood between him and his love. That Cola hated him, for the suffering he had caused, and influenced his sister against his suit. That he had told her the history of that night, and warned her against giving herself to one who yielded as readily as he, to the ruinous impulses of desperation.

Meanwhile poor Cola, whose open nature furnished him with no key to the operations of Howard's mind, had never for a moment suspected him of hatred or malice. His nocturnal voyage was attributed to accident; and Howard, noble fellow, had, by superhuman exertions, saved him. Hence, with a

heart full of gratitude, he amused the hours of convalescence by weaving the brightest visions of romance, in which he uniformly gave his sister to Howard, as the reward of many virtues, receiving Helen in return, as the crown of his own. Then, with parental benedictions, and the approbation of the world, they trod o'er thornless roses, and were for ever happy, etc., etc., etc.

The current of the story bears us on. It does not fall within its scope to show, by what influences the morbid mind became healed, the wild passions tamed. The inevitable necessities of Fate subdue the most rebellious; Time, and circumstance, are mighty to chasten. Through suffering, his heart became purged—healed. The mirage was lifted from his path, and the old land-marks again guided his pilgrimage.

CHAPTER XLV.

A MAIDEN'S MUSINGS.

"Lo! the cressets of the night are waning,
 Old Orion hastens from the sky;
 Only thou of all things are remaining,
 Unrefreshed by slumber—thou and I!"

AYTOUN.

INEXPRESSIBLY sweet, beyond anything Viola had yet experienced of Eyrie life, were the weeks of reprieve. Walsingham devoted all his hours to her. There was so much to be said to this tenderly-sheltered child, who was going forth of her own will, a wanderer in the wide world. She, and Cola were so young, and inexperienced, and their protector so unfitted for the care of such as she! Thinking of the quicksands of life, he sought to inspire her with a more worldly and practical wisdom than had before seemed needful. She listened to his descriptions of life in crowds; of characters such as throng the world's highway; of attributes developed by the

wrestle of busy life, as some fair novice in her cell, hears the story of distant battles.

With her foot upon the threshold of the world, this practical knowledge charmed her more than his lore. His discourse was a proverbial philosophy. Every sentence was held by memory as a spell against some future ill.

She had feared he might condemn her resolution, as the Captain had done; and perhaps in his heart accuse her of ingratitude. That he would never use to her a word so harsh, she knew. His manner soothed that apprehension. Very sad was it, as of one pre-occupied by sorrow; reserved, but tender. The sadness she longed to comfort. To the tenderness her own gushed responsive, but the reserve defined the position he desired her to occupy, and she meekly accepted it.

Slowly, surely, steadily, inexorably, day after day faded. Step by step the hour of farewell advanced. Cola was now quite well, and but few days remained. One night, feeling too much excited for sleep, she sat by her casement, watching the light in the window of the turret study. Often, when Walsingham's work was in progress, she had watched that light far into the night, with a patient, distant sympathy such as love, offers knowledge. Wondering, the while, what great thoughts were in travail, and believing they would one day shine upon the world, as did that solitary ray in her heart.

Then she remembered how, when the morning came, he would read to her the product of nocturnal labour, and listen to her comments with respectful interest, as if they were

worthy the attention of one as great as he. But he did not seem great, then, as the world had since proclaimed him, else she would not have dared to offer so freely, her girlish thoughts.

He crossed the apartment to a case of books; took one, and seated himself by the light. She could see he was reading.

How she had always loved to hear him read! It was his custom to read aloud when alone; not with any effort of elocutionary art, but with a low murmur, like that of wind among pines, or distant waterfalls.

It was long since she had heard him. She might never hear him more!

Nay, she must, she would hear him once again—*now!*

Seizing a shawl, she hastily left her room, descended the stairs, unfastened the outer door, and stood beneath the stars. Very quietly she crossed the yard. Very quietly she ascended the study steps, seating herself upon the topmost one.

Yes, he *was* reading. Through the door came the well-remembered music, in broken snatches; now low and mournful—now lost—now rising higher and higher, like the wail of an æolian harp.

From earliest childhood she had loved this music. It came to her now, like the voice of summers gone. It was an incantation, summoning back the pageant of her early life, silent, yet affluent. One glorious June day, in childish frolic, near his window, that murmur had reached her; scarce noticed then, yet memory had kept the echo; and now, the fallen blossoms

of that distant year wafted fresh odours round her; bees drank of their nectar, birds cooed on their branches, and the summer sunshine of a day for ever faded, warmed her soul—in this winter night, so dark and cold!

Again, in winter, when he was busy with his books by the fireside, and she sat singing to her doll, weaving wild snatches of childish song, how those tones would rise and swell, mingling with her melody like the deep bass of some grand organ! 'Twas strange how their voices blended, while their thoughts were far asunder. He, student-like, absorbed in abstruse themes—she, to the insensate image in her arms carolling dreamily such fragments of poetic thought as drop, gem-like, from the lips of imaginative childhood.

Loud and more loud rolled the murmured music! More broken and fragmentary became the unstrung pearls of thought! The well-built fire danced, leaped, and roared, sending showers of sparklets upward, and filling the genial room with warmth and light.

'Twas a glorious fire, no doubt, to be so well remembered, but, alas! it had died to ashes years ago, and the night was bitter cold.

Clear and frosty was it, and the stars were abroad in heaven. The constellations which greeted her when she came forth had set; while she, with her shawl gathered round her, her head against the door—with music in her ear, and visions in her heart, had fallen asleep!—*and the night so bitter cold!*

CHAPTER XLVI.

VIOLA WON.

"For many a cheek, of paler hue,
 Hath blushed 'neath passion's kiss;
 And many an eye, of lesser light,
 Hath caught its fire from bliss."

HEMANS.

"Be a god, and hold me
 With a charm;
 Be a man, and fold me
 With thine arm."

BROWNING.

THE moon had risen when Walsingham came forth. As he opened the door, something fell heavily at his feet. His heart told him 'twas human. Frozen to death, perhaps, with but that portal, between the poor unfortunate, and warmth, and life.

He bore it beyond the shadow of the building, and turned the face up to the moon. Rigid and cold, with her long, fair

hair floating in the frosty air, and her pallid features in repose, which might be eternal, was Viola!

* * * * *

Viola's adventure perplexed the minds of her friends. Why she had been abroad that inclement night, and being abroad, why she had not returned, finding how cold it was, instead of stupidly perishing within a moment's walk of her warm chamber, was inexplicable. Good Grey, believed she had walked in her sleep, and Captain Ben adopted a theory of temporary aberration. Walsingham, while rejecting these opinions, could not invent anything more plausible or satisfactory.

He determined, however, upon obliging the young lady to give an account of herself. So, when they were alone, he asked her:—

"Viola, will you not explain to me the circumstances that have so puzzled, and distressed us all?"

She blushed violently, and seemed painfully embarrassed.

"I will tell you, certainly," she said; "but I am so mortified—so ashamed of my folly, that—"

She paused. He did not suggest the word she wanted, and so she had to begin again:—

"The foolish truth is this: I saw you from my window, reading in the study; and thinking I might never hear you again, I ran down to the door to listen."

"Was I reading aloud?"

"Yes; you always do, when you think yourself alone."

"Do I? I did not know it. Well, did you not feel cold?"

"Yes, a little; but I sat by the door, listening to the murmur from within, and thinking how from a child I had heard your voice thus, and how I should hear it no more. Then all the beautiful, happy time, that is past, rolled before me. While I heard your voice, I felt held back to the old life, and it seemed that when I walked beyond the reach of its accents, all would be over, and a blank, barren future would begin. So, dreading to take the first step, and shrinking from what is to come, I lingered a little longer and a little longer. Oh, excuse me," she exclaimed, suddenly, fearing that her simplicity and candour betrayed too much. "You know the rest."

"Poor little thing! dear child!" he said, smoothing her hair. "Do you then love me thus? and are *you* unhappy in this parting?"

She was silent, with her face hidden in her hands.

A younger, or a vainer man, or one less in love than he, might have interpreted all this. But a great, true, love is very humble; and his mind was possessed by the conviction, that the boy bloom having faded from his face, and time and thought having recorded their triumphs thereon; that being grave and care-encumbered, the heart of youth could no more warm to him. Forgetting, how manhood had ripened within him, and how his soul had grown great all those years!

So the world's great man, being humble in the presence of this young girl, counting his gifts as nought beside her youth and purity, did not indulge in presumptuous speculation upon the nature of her attachment for him. It was the affection of a warm-hearted child for its protector—nothing more.

As if girls were in the habit of loving guardians so!

But as he sat there, smoothing her soft hair, and pondering upon the touching tenderness which had well nigh betrayed her unto death, the old desire to show his heart to her seized him. He longed to show to this gentle, loving child-woman, the temptations and struggles of his inner life, and ask her sympathy and pity. Of all his outer life, she had been cognisant. She had been the confidant of his ambition, of his intellect in its throes, and its triumphs. She had seen him in his strength, and did him reverence. Should he bare his weakness, and ask compassion? The world gave reverence, and it palled; none offered pity, and for this he was athirst.

And why should he not speak? Formerly he was her guardian; but from the obligations of that office she had released him. Then, he had feared to destroy the repose of her home. Now, she was leaving that home for ever. She should understand him fully before she left him.

So, with his earnest eloquence, he told her such a story as women seldom hear. Of a love like those wondrous flowers, that, feeding upon air, cover the rocky barren with caressing tendrils and heaven-tinted bloom. So, had it sprung up without root. So, had it dressed desolation with beauty. Hope withered beside it; selfishness found no sustenance; while the flower that asked no earthly aliment, bloomed on.

He had told her this, ere she went hence, he said, that, in the future, when love shining in her heart should quicken its sympathies, she might better understand all that she had been to him. That, when the world offered its homage, and her

ear became familiar with the beseechings of passion, she would remember with wonder, and compassion, the story of a worship distant and reverential; a love ministering long in silence.

Unlike that imperious love against which she had rebelled, was the touching hopelessness of this.

While those mournful accents charmed the air, closer, closer to his side she nestled like a bewildered bird.

Suddenly he threw her from him, and leapt to his feet.

"Stand back, oh beautiful temptation!" he cried, with energy. "I will not for ever subjugate my nature. I have saved you from myself, but, by the might of manhood within me! I cannot bear your childish caress! These are a lover's arms, I warn you!" and he threw them abroad with wild emphasis.

She sprang to his bosom and hid her face; and those strong arms closed upon her, holding her close and long!

CHAPTER XLVII.

CONCLUSION.

WHEN the man-phantom, as the irreverent old Captain persisted in stigmatizing Viola's uncle—when the man-phantom came, to escort his niece and her convalescent brother to his home, Walsingham (oblivious of his former claims, and intent only upon pressing more recent ones) approached him as a suitor, and demanded his niece in marriage.

The Spiritualist looked out toward the sunset in silence, and seemed to be more absorbed in deciphering the painted puzzles of the western sky, than in giving audience to Walsingham. Perhaps, pictured in those tender tints, he saw a marriage made in Heaven; for, nodding slowly to the clouds, he pronounced, in his hollow inner voice, "So be it! so be it!"

And so it was. After a brief visit to the home of her uncle and brother (during which the interest of the former, in sub-

lunary things, became wonderfully revived), Viola returned to the Eyrie, its mistress.

Here her nature continued to expand and grow, to mate the moral and intellectual greatness of Walsingham; and here, in her womanly weakness, she kept strong the hope and faith of the heart that loved her.

Sorrows reached her, but a manhood, whose attributes were tried, shared them with her. Her path lay sometimes in shadow, but a firm hand grasped her trembling one, and strong arms lifted her to light.

The next event of importance which transpired, was the death of Judge Conway, whose health had been for some time declining. The union of Cola and Helen was postponed for a few years, until he should achieve a place among men. In his efforts toward this, Mr. Irving and Walsingham extended helping hands; and, in the mean time, having youth, love, and hope, the pair were as happy as birds in spring.

It will surprise our friends, no doubt, to learn that, before their marriage, Howard brought a bride to the valley of the mountain river. A nut-brown maid, whose swarth and glowing beauty, sometimes grew a shade darker to her husband's thought, when, amid June's roses, he recalled the waving of white garments, and the glistening of golden tresses in the light of a midsummer moon.

This matrimonial venture was thought premature, as the young husband was not qualified to provide his wife with bread. But Howard was ever impatient of slow results.

Mr. and Mrs. Irving invited the newly married pair to make their home with them, where the devoted bride incessantly addressed herself to the worship of all who were connected with that superb fellow and god-like creature, her husband. In the goodness of her heart she was in danger of contracting an intimacy with the beautiful mistress of the Eyrie, who seemed particularly kind and attentive; but the "*god-like*" intimated his disapproval, and she desisted, like a dutiful woman as she was!

The Captain spent much time in training dovelets in the eagle's nest. His views of women, and consequently of matrimony, became greatly modified, and, I am told, he did seriously incline thereto. But, by unfortunate chance, never meeting with a lady who was young enough, and good enough, and pretty enough, who would have him, the old tar sailed to the end of his voyage without a mate.

We have a husband for the faithful Mrs. Grey though, and at this moment, and on this spot, we offer the apology we owe him. Excuse us, Midas Mitten, that, absorbed in the sentimentalities of lovers, we have forgotten to chronicle how sharply you have been looking after the main chance. How you have bought lands, and cut down forests, and torn out rocks, and built mills, and laid roads, and, by various devastating devices, improved the valley, and enriched yourself.

And how, becoming enamoured of that large and fertile island which Grey lately inherited from a distant kinsman, you begged the confiding dame to bestow upon you, herself, and

her possession ; and how, Jim Crow having just then yielded up his breath, she promoted you to the post of patient listener, confidential friend, and prime pet, and addressed herself ever after to comforting and coddling you, for which you were duly grateful.

THE END.