HOME PICTURES.

BY

MRS. MARY ANDREWS DENISON.

"What is it, but a map of busy life?"

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1853.

TO

MY HUSBAND,

REV. CHARLES W. DENISON,

WHO WAS THE FIRST TO ENCOURAGE MY LITERARY EFFORTS,

I Dedicate my First Volume.

MARY ANDREWS DENISON

PREFACE.

It is certainly with pleasure that I accept the dedication of this first volume of one who is associated with me in the most intimate relations, and comply with her request to write its preface.

But a short introduction is necessary. The title of the book sufficiently indicates its character. It is a series of Pictures of Home, as supposed to be viewed by a country girl, who becomes the *wife of a merchant*, and sketched by her own hand from real life.

The most of the stories have appeared in the columns of a popular literary paper, where their writer has been engaged for several years as the assistant editor—the "*Olive Branch*," of Boston, Massachusetts. They have all been carefully revised, in some cases almost re-written, and are now submitted to the public in this permanent form.

Should these "Home Pictures" meet with a favorable reception, they will be followed by others of a more extended character.

C. W. D.

Washington, D. C., March, 1853.

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HOME PICTURES.

THE ACCIDENT.

I WAS tying the clematis to the trellis early this morning; the pink buds, shining with dew, looked like red lips pouting to kiss me. I was thinking what a sweet picture we would make: Milly standing underneath—the prettiest child in the world, I think—with our gray puss in her arms, her brown hair blown in tangled skeins over her milk-white neck and shoulders. Then skipping over the green grass was my pet lamb, fresh from the wash, and pure as snow. I had reached as far as my arms would allow, and was just considering the propriety of mounting the slender wood-work, when Milly screamed. A short, quick cry of alarm it was, and as I turned, the sight I saw almost froze me with horror.

Milly shrieked again, and so did I; for there lay a gentleman just before us, who had been violently dashed on the ground from the back of a runaway horse.

Mother ran out very much frightened, and when we pointed to the lifeless figure, she turned pale. Now our cottage stands some distance from any other—my uncle's is the nearest—and we have only two hands at work on the farm. Maben was away off in the potato patch; but, providentially, Michael was at the lower end of the garden.

"I have hardly the means or the health to care for

a sick man," I heard mother say as Michael was coming; "but if the poor creature is alive, I ought to do as I would have one of my own done by: so, Michael," she continued, as the man came up, "go into the field after Maben, and both of you take up yonder poor gentleman, who you see has been thrown from his horse. I can perceive he moves his arm; thank God! he is not dead."

Milly and I ran away to the barn and hid ourselves as they brought him to the house, for his groans were very loud. Milly cried and sobbed because there was blood on the hand that hung down, and I could not pacify her; indeed, I felt like crying and sobbing myself; but I am fifteen, and I tried to be womanly.

Mother came out with my bonnet, and bade me go straight to my uncle's, a Quaker doctor and a surgeon. So I took Milly for company, and when I got there, uncle said Milly and I had best stay with Aunt Kezzy. I *do* love Aunt Kezzy; she is so happy-looking, so quiet, and, somehow, so always good. She told poor Milly some pretty stories, that she might forget the terrible sight, and set me at domestic work.

Soon uncle came back; but at first I durst not ask him about the gentleman, because he seemed so serious; so I waited a while, trembling and anxious.

"Did thee find the stranger mortally hurt?" asked Aunt Kezzy, as she poured a cup of tea for my uncle at the table.

Uncle said no, he hoped not; but he was very grave, and then added, "I might not look for a safe termination, were he not in such good hands as thy kind sister's. If proper nursing and gentle attentions will insure his recovery, then truly he will get well."

I was so proud to hear my mother praised. My mother—oh! I wish every body knew her; every body would love her, I am sure. Her sweet pale face is so beautiful and thoughtful; her blue eyes have such a measureless depth, and yet their glances fall very softly upon one; they have calmed me many a time when I have felt unhappy or angry. Oh! how I love my mother! My mother is like an angel, so patient and winning.

Milly and I go about the house on tiptoe; we have got to be *so very* still for these many days, I expect. Sometimes Milly will begin to laugh, and then clap her chubby hand over her mouth, and look—oh, so ludicrous! Mother seems anxious. She wears that same care-worn look that she used to wear when father laid so sick. And she has given me charge of the work: so I have just got nicely done.

Milly has come and whispered that we may go down to the bridge and walk. It is a beautiful place, with flags leaning over the edges of the river, and little gold gleams, like rings, circling in the water, and the broad lily leaves floating with the great white flowers underneath them. And we have to walk through a soft grassy meadow, and then down that sweet little lane, where such oceans of primroses grow; and then Miss Susan always lets us go in the garden down at the mill, through rows of box almost as high as my head, and such rare, choice plants of nearly every kind and color in the world!

Hark! there is my tame robin; I will give the little fellow some crumbs, and then for the bridge.

ABOUT THE MINISTER.

MOTHER allowed me to carry a small bouquet into the sick chamber to-night. Miss Susan, down at the mill, when she heard of the accident, gathered some of her most beautiful roses, and then, when Milly's hands were both full, carried us into her pretty cottage, and made us sit down in the large pantry. Then she took some tumblers, and out of her glass jars filled them with her nicest preserves. What a number of jars she has! I should think as many as forty—all ranged round her wide shelves; some red, some purple, some a soft light cream color. What can she do with so many? I have heard mother say, though, that she gives a great deal away to sick folks, and even sends to the old almshouse, a mile from here. Miss Susan is a very good woman, if she *is* an old maid. I think father told me once that her lover, many, many years ago, was drowned by that very bridge where we have been walking. Ah! Susan! how hard it must be to have a lover drowned!

I am quite surprised that our invalid is so very young. He was asleep when I went in, and all I noticed was that his forehead was very white, and his lashes were black. Poor man! Uncle says he must lie there day after day, and not talk at all. I don't believe he can help talking; *I* couldn't.

There! I hear the voice of Mr. Lansden. What a very boyish-looking minister he is, to be sure! He don't

seem like a reverend. Yet he has at times a grave, solemn manner, and he preaches well. At any rate, he is very kind to me, and comes very often to have a social supper with us. How good in him to take my great bundle to-night, when he met me at the meadow—and then his helping me cross the bars; I didn't like to creep under, somehow, and he there. I know he thinks a deal of me, or he wouldn't look at me so much, and be so constantly doing me some favor. I feel just as willing to ask his help in any little thing as I would my own brother. I like him: mother likes him too.

Mr. Lansden has been talking with our sick man. I was in the room. His name is Herbert Golding, and several gentlemen have been to see him, and he is very rich. Well, that is strange; I believe I never saw a very rich man before; but he did not seem to look much different from Mr. Lansden, who, I am sure, is quite poor—only he is handsomer; oh! yes, decidedly he is finer looking.

He talks freely, and sometimes calls me his "little nurse." That pleases me very much; I don't know why it should. He tells me often about his dead mother; how good she was, and how much she thought of him; and he talks, too, about one sweet little sister that died quite young—oh! if I could be half as gentle as she must have been! He says I look some like her: *that* pleases me, too. He describes her hair as being exactly the shade of mine, only hanging in free, thick curls. I wonder if he likes that arrangement best? I have worn my hair with a comb, because it is less trouble; but I believe I will curl it—it will make him think of his sister. But, oh! he called her very beautiful; can it—can it be that *I* am in the *least* beautiful?

To-night Mr. Golding fairly started as I entered his chamber. I suppose I made him think of his sister. My hair was loose—I took a great deal of pains with it. I felt my cheeks very warm as I sat down by the window, and was frightened when he asked me to read, after the candles were lighted. I, that had never been to any sort of a fashionable school, and had scarcely any teacher, save my dear mamma. I felt awkward, and begged mamma, with my eyes, to excuse me; but just then in came Mr. Lansden, saying, "Yes, our Alice must read for you, Mr. Golding; she is quite an adept, I assure you, sir; when she was much smaller, she read beautifully." Mr. Lansden has a very disagreeable way of saying "I assure you, sir." I don't think I like him quite as well as I did.

And so I had to read, for mother handed me the Bible. I really thought just then she might have given me some other book, and the more as I observed Mr. Golding smile. But as I read on, he grew quite serious; and I am sure at the close there were tears in his eyes. How earnestly he thanked me! What a sweet way he has with him when he is pleased—very different from Mr. Lansden's careless manner.

I thought the minister looked at me with a dreadful serious expression as he went away; but I was busy chatting with Mr. Golding, so I did not mind him much. Now I think of it, I did not even bid him good-night. Well! no matter. Why! there's Mr. Golding's dear little silver bell. I am going down to read with him again.

"But a child!"—mother says I am "but a child." Mother is right in every thing; I suppose I am childish. Ah me! I wish I was eighteen—nineteen—

twenty; though mother says I need not wish to give away my years, for I shall want them all back again. I wonder how old Mr. Golding is? How long will he be sick and confined to the chamber? I want him to get well; but it is *so* pleasant to have such an agreeable companion; and I'm sure I don't let mother work very hard. I know mother likes him almost as well as she does Mr. Lansden. I wonder what's the reason I dislike Mr. Lansden now? It's strange; but I don't even wish to have him call me his "child" any more.

My invalid (I call him "*my* invalid" now, because mother has given up much of the care of the sick-chamber to me) must still keep his couch all through sunny July. What a wicked thing I was! I wouldn't let poor Mr. Golding know it for the world; but I felt more glad when I heard it than ever before in my whole life. What shall I do when he gets well, and goes away, far away to that great city where I have never been? I shall be very lonesome, and more so because Mr. Lansden isn't so clever a companion as he was; he talks to me all the time about the vanities of the world, and looks so very grave.

These long, low windows are so pleasant! I have trained this jessamine branch inside my sewing window, and across the wall a little way; how sweet it smells!

I am tired of sewing, so I believe I will write till *he* wakes up. Ah! if his blue eyes should peep at me now. But I never would let him see what I am writing—never. Here comes Mr. Lansden over the field: now for a sermon! But mother will surely tell him Mr. Golding is asleep. He looks abstracted—now he is

stooping; he has picked something from the grass—wonder of wonders! he presses it to his lips. Well, now, I *will* see what that is. He little thinks I am watching him; but I see him peering all round, and he knows nothing about it. How strangely he glances upward; and now he is passing his hand again and again over his eyes: I suppose he is studying for next Sabbath.

I have been down stairs. As soon as our minister saw me, he gave me a little knot of ribbon that I lost some three days ago. Aha! that is what he picked up; but why did he kiss it? that's what puzzles me; what he could want to kiss that ribbon for. I was on the point of asking him; but I thought, perhaps, that would be as ridiculous as it was for him to kiss it. Could it be because it was mine? How foolish I am! Mother says I am but a child—and she is right; and a very foolish one, I expect.

THE CONVALESCENCE.

He has walked to the window to-day; I helped him; he leaned upon my arm—on little me. He talked about the bridge, and the walks he meant to have when he gets quite well; so perhaps he won't go right away. I don't think he will.

Three whole days, and our minister has not been here. I hope he is well; but of course he is. My invalid wanted to know whose voice he heard this morning singing with the birds. And when I told him I sang sometimes, he expressed surprise that I should be up so early.

"Why, I am always up at five." How he laughed when I told him so!

It must be very nice, this city life; he has been telling me about it. What fine parties they give—what places to see—what rich stores and multitudes of people! Oh! I *do* hope I shall go some day to the city.

Contrary to all expectation, Mr. Golding got down to tea. The biscuits were mine—my very best; the cake was mine; the sweet golden butter I churned; *I* milked the cow.

He laughed when he found that out. "Why, how do you contrive to keep your hands so white?" he asked. I did not tell him that I always took great pains with my hands; I should have been ashamed to have told him that.

Mr. Lansden has been here all this evening; at the

close he prayed. Oh! such a beautiful prayer. Sinner as he calls me, I sometimes felt lifted upward. I loved God as I breathed its spirit. Oh! I thank him for making so sweet a prayer; I thank God that we can pray; it is a great comfort.

What a long ramble we have had! Away over to the three hills, and to the beech grove; and I showed Mr. Golding the place beneath the twin tree, where an Indian chief, almost the last of his tribe, was buried. And while the grass waved with a melancholy motion over his grave, he made me tell the whole story; how his wigwam stood in the little hollow underneath one of the three hills; and how he would go around among the pale faces with a tottering step—for he was very old—and talk, but never eat with them. How he had a favorite son, his only one, who loved one of the pale-faced maidens; but she would not speak to him; and how he wasted in health day by day, and lingered along, broken-hearted, till one night he laid down by the cottage of his lady-love and died, vainly endeavoring to see her.

Then Mr. Golding said, with a great deal of feeling, that we were very apt to speak lightly of the Indian's devotion, and treat of it as a thing entirely out of the way of sympathy, or something like that. But he thought we should feel as much interest in such a fate as if the victim were one of our own race; not place him beyond the pale of humanity; not stand afar off, and coldly say, "It is nothing—it is only an Indian!" And then looking upward, his eye shining, and his face very noble, he repeated some lines, commencing with

"Lo! the poor Indian."

They were touching lines, and touchingly repeated.

We overtook Mr. Lansden going home. He looked rather sober, and was quite silent all the way.

The house is all still and lonely. Mr. Golding is gone! He says, though, that he shall call up here quite often.

Now *he* is away, our minister tries to be more entertaining. I am glad of it, for we need something to amuse us. Little Milly often tells me I don't play with her as much as I did, and that when we take our walks I am very silent; she calls it sober. Perhaps I am; I'm not sure, though.

Oh, what beautiful gifts we have! Just before dinner, a box came, loaded with presents, and a note from dear Mr. Golding, our kind invalid. He said we—that's mother and I—must accept them all, with the purse of money—quite a full purse—at the bottom, which was mother's, for her kind attentions. And then there were the sweetest dresses for little Milly; but me he only sent a very rich gold ring—the first I have ever had—and a beautiful copy of the Bible. Oh, such binding! such engravings! How I shall love that Bible! and how—how very much I think of the giver! I showed them both to Mr. Lansden, and whether he comprehended me or not, I don't know; he stared at me, and looked rather displeased than otherwise, I thought. I wonder what makes him act so strangely?

My birth-day to-day; I am sixteen! Here's a note from Mr. Herbert—a very kind, pretty note; rather more than that. Shall I show it to mother? I suppose I ought.

Mother asked me a strange question to-night—how I liked Mr. Lansden.

"Why, indeed," I told her, "he was a very clever man, and I liked him well enough."

But did I think I could ever like him better?

"Why, no, indeed, I never could," I said, with emphasis; for then I understood fully something I have very often thought of in a kind of blind way. I know all now. Poor Mr. Lansden! All his little curious airs, and sorrowful ways, and absent moments — poor Mr. Lansden! Well, I am sure I am very sorry, but—nothing more. As to loving him, that's out of the question. I see mother feels badly about it; but I rather think she pities him, as I am sure I do. Now I suppose Mr. Lansden won't come here quite so often; though I have heard it said that man's love is not so *very* deep. He will get over it soon; but—. Well, one can not help having a little more than ordinary regard for a person that thinks more of one than all the world besides. I might, possibly, have very much admired Mr. Lansden, if—if I had never seen Mr. Golding. What a sweet note was that he sent me last! "My kind little nurse;" how prettily it begins—only I didn't like that he should call me "little." I'm sixteen now, and nearly as tall as mother. I'm sure *he's* not so *very* tall!

THE SERMON—THE VISIT.

It quite affected me to see Mr. Lansden in the pulpit this Sabbath morning. I thought of what mother asked me. I couldn't help it, if it was Sunday; and I prayed very fervently that I might not think my own thoughts. But every time I raised my eyes to his face, and saw how pale, how very pale he has grown, a sort of self-reproach came over me. But he was very calm —very impressive. He stood up with such a resigned, patient look, it brought the tears to my eyes. I never felt before that it may be possible he loves me very much, more than I can think. He never once looked toward our pew, but often raised his glances upward, and they were so full of feeling; and sometimes his voice was tremulous as he spoke. Oh! his sermon went to my soul. He has a way always of making one feel; and to-day, more than ever, I hung upon his words.

Strangely enough, his text was, "*Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth; for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.*" He said some souls were not content with merely liking and clinging to an earthly object only as they felt its influence at times; but they were so constituted as to make their treasures gods for worship, and they would bow down to them with much the same feeling with which a Christian would approach his Creator—a reverence, a giving-up of heart, an absorbing devotion that left no room for higher and holier things. He said that the

heart was a harp strung with many curious strings, all made for sublime harmony; and when rightly played, they would be in unison with the melodies of the unseen angels that flit between us and God's throne. But when we allow the fingers of an earthly passion to sweep over them, awaking wild hymns to a fallen deity, then God, who loves and would not willingly shatter those golden strings, leaves it in our power to replace them only as we conquer singly every overmastering temptation. Many, he remarked, seemed forever under a cloud; bitter disappointments were their lot, from the cradle to the grave; and some would call it fate; some, misfortune; but their own waywardness, their earthly-mindedness were the chief causes of their unhappiness.

They leaned upon the lily of the field; and when the slender stem broke, they fell prostrate to the earth. They lingered by the perfume of the rose, drawing sweetness from its breath, and forgetting all else, until they felt its dead leaves falling upon their faces. They slept upon the thick, warm heather, nor waked till the chill snow gathered about their limbs. They built their dwellings on the brink of the volcano, that they might worship its impressive grandeur, when the morn rolled through a crimson sea, and the heavens were bright with fire, and fields and hills were wrapped in a red glory; but suddenly the lava swept down, and burned up field and valley, and destroyed every earthly good that they could call their own.

I can not give his glowing language—his fine, impressive manner; his soul seemed to speak in his very words.

I see now it has been mother's hope for this long,

long while, that I might be Mr. Lansden's bride. It is hard to disappoint her; but, for all his power, and goodness, and eloquence, and fine figure, and noble face, I don't want to be a country minister's wife.

Coming home, mother asked Mr. Lansden to dine with us, as he always does on Sabbaths; but he declined, and I did not look at him. My cheeks burned very much. We passed the new cottage that is building for him. It will be small, but neat and pretty. There is room for a large garden, and I see somebody has already planted vines. What a fine home he will have if he stays in the parish! It would be foolish in him to leave it, just for—

The little room where he used to retire for meditation was lonely to-day as I passed by the door.

How shall I write? What shall I write? Yesterday Herbert was here! Oh! how surprised, how delighted I was! The services had not commenced, and I sat with my little Sunday-school class around me. Mr. Lansden talked to the school, that is, made an address. He looked calm and sad-like; but never, never did I hear him so eloquent. I had strange thoughts. I felt sorry that I could not love him; I was not quite sure but I could, for I pity him so much.

At last service began; the hymn was sung, and Mr. Lansden had just risen to make the opening prayer, when, turning my head slightly, I saw—Herbert Golding! He stood just inside the door, with his hat off, and appeared to be waiting respectfully till the prayer should be done. My heart never beat so before. I bent my head down, for my face felt flushed all over. For a moment I was very much confused; but I remembered where I was, and strove to feel solemnly before my Maker.

Then he came softly down the aisle, and though I did not dare lift my eyes, I knew he was walking directly toward our pew—our old-fashioned pew, without carpet or cushion!

Milly almost said out loud, "There's Mr. Golding, sis," just as he came in and sat down by my mother. I looked up for an instant, and though he made no sign, I could see how pleased he was to see me. He has altered so! His cheeks are just tinged with red, and his eyes are so sparkling, so large, and dark! How beautifully his hair curls, and what a rich glossy brown it is!

Well, women are apt to be pleased with a pretty face, mother tells me; but surely *his* face is more than pretty; it is every whit as intellectual as Mr. Lansden's, though mother says not.

I do not think the sermon was as good as in the morning; though the fault may be in myself. I felt as if the minister preached *at* me; that's a sign that I am conscious of my errors. Is it a good one? I was ashamed of our old dingy meeting-house, with the great high boarded pews. I felt as if Mr. Golding must have been very uncomfortable in our pine seat. I felt ashamed of the singers, for the first time. I don't believe they ever sang so badly before. He hears a fine organ, and attends one of those beautiful city churches, where the pews are all carpeted and lined with velvet, I am told.

When Mr. Golding returned home, after service, mother asked him how he had come, and he laughingly said, that he had taken a carriage with three or four young men, who had gone further on for a ride, while he stopped to church.

My mother looked much mortified, and, to my astonishment, told him "She was sorry he had broken the Sabbath to visit us;" and then she talked very seriously to him, just as she would to one of our poor farmer boys.

I thought he would be offended; but no, he seemed really sorry, and thanked her, saying, that was the way his mother would have talked to him, were she living; and he promised never to come again on the Sabbath. Mother was evidently pleased with his frankness.

He has such a way of looking over at me when he talks! I wish he would not; it makes me uncomfortable.

MR. LANSDEN'S COUNSEL.

Mr. Lansden has been very ill. He is better now, and occasionally comes over to see my mother. I wish I was hard-hearted sometimes, then I should not feel so much for him.

Attended a wedding last night—a real rustic wedding. My friend, Mary, looked very sweetly; she wore pure white, and so many roses! I was bridemaid. I, too, was dressed in white. Mr. Lansden performed the service. His voice trembled, and whenever he smiled I felt as if he were going to weep instead.

I have heretofore been very distant, but I foolishly thought I would jest a little with him last night. So, after the cake was passed round, and every body had eaten, we talked of starting a play. Little Mary Eldrich stood near, and, catching at her hand, I ran up to Mr. Lansden, who had just set down a plate of wedding cake.

"Come, Mr. Lansden," I said, laughing, "we are going to marry you and Mary here; so prepare for the ceremony, while I go and get the parson."

He turned a look upon me which thrilled me through; and he only said, "Alice!" but with so strangely impressive a manner, and his tone was low and trembling. It subdued me at once; I almost shed tears. It is singular how one look can affect me; *that* made me sad for the rest of the evening, and Mr. Lansden must have seen it.

I contrived to go from the party a little earlier than the rest; indeed, I stole away. I felt somehow oppressed, and wanted to get home. It was nearly as bright as day—the moon poured down floods of light; and with my little pet Fido, who always goes abroad with me, I did not feel in the least afraid, although I had more than a mile to walk.

I had not gone far when I heard footsteps close behind me, and Fido barked, but with pleasure. I hurried on, for I felt who it might be, and—I don't know, indeed, what I did think.

And presently that same voice said again, "Alice!" I knew it was Mr. Lansden. I was vexed that I should be followed; but I laughed back at him, and, pausing for a moment, he gained my side; and so we walked on together. I never talked so fast in my life; I rattled about every thing; every chip in the road, every post and fence—any thing that my eye could seize upon; but, finally, he conquered my loquacity; and it was in this way.

We had got to the flower dell, a sweet, solemn place, where many and many a time he has gathered me wild roses, and we have chatted together. There he paused, and said, in a startling manner, "Stop a moment, Alice!"

I could have hurried by, but he caught my hand, and said again, "Stop a moment, Alice!" His hand trembled, his voice trembled—shook; but he controlled it.

"Alice!" he said, after a pause that seemed ages to me, "I foresee all; that you will be very rich, exalted far, far above the station you now adorn. Something tells me that this will be so. Had it pleased Heaven

to have given you to me—for you know I love you, Alice—ah! too well;" he murmured, almost inaudibly, "had it pleased Heaven to give you to me, it should have been the study of my life to make you happy. God has ordered it otherwise; he saw the idolatrous tendency of my strong affections; he would have my heart all his own; therefore this great trial. I shall never love another, Alice; it may seem strange for a man to say, but I shall never love another; I would not have it otherwise. Even now, did I know a word, a thought would make you mine—but that my Maker required my whole service, undivided by a single attention to a rival—I would not say that word or think that thought; so I believe in my heart this moment. So much strength does my religion afford me.

"But I was going to speak of yourself. I say I foresee you will be courted, flattered for your beauty; you are by nature fitted for any sphere, even the highest in the more exalted walks of life. But oh! Alice, will you keep your heart fresh, and pure, and good? Will that same simplicity of soul look out from your eyes then, and betray itself in every action, as now? Will you have the same sweet affections, the same love for your humble home, the same respect for your old associations, the same regard for the dear birds and flowers, and all the lovely things of nature?

"I fear not, Alice.

"Will you go to your Maker with the same singleness of purpose? Love the house of God, and tread its courts with the same reverence? Have pity on the poor and mercy on the erring, as now?

"I fear not, dear Alice.

"Do not weep, I meant not to make you sad, but to

cause you to think. I would now stand in the relation of a brother, as I can be no nearer; I would advise—warn you."

I was half angry with him for giving me this distress, half in misery for him, because I pitied him so; but he went on, and for a long while counseled me, oh! so sweetly; and as we walked along, and neared my mother's cottage, he grew quite calm, and smiled, and talked in his old way; and almost his last words were, "Don't quite forget me, Alice! Think of the lonely country minister, when you can send a thought this way."

Why should he foresee that I shall be rich, great, and all that? I'm sure I don't know, unless—. But that is not probable; no, indeed, not possible. What! leave the beautiful, accomplished women in the great city, and take me, a poor little country girl, to live in his palace home? Yet, as Miss Susan says, "Stranger things have happened!" But I will think no more about it; it perplexes me.

Still, poor Mr. Lansden! I hope I am not provoking my fate. Fate! that's not a good word; but what then shall I say? Dear, dear; if one has to pass through such trials as this to get happily settled at last! What a sad thing it must be to love, and not be loved in return!

THE WALK.

I HAVE had a long walk. These sweet-briers, what a fragrance they throw around one! I never go out but I get my hands filled with flowers, and then I hardly know what to do with them. Still, I love them so!

I met a poor beggar; I don't know when I have seen one before. She had a little blue-eyed baby in her arms—a cherub, for a beggar. A little girl, not more than six, and barefooted, trudged on by her side. The child's hands were full of mallows, and she was eating the little cheeses that grow upon them as if she was hungry. Poor thing! The woman looked too coarse and dark to be the mother of so fair a babe. Still, she was honest, I thought. She told me a piteous story—a grievous story; and before she got half through, I made her stop, and gave her all I had, only a few pennies at the most. And then I thought of Miss Susan, and told her to go with me to the house of a good woman, who would help her.

I found Miss Susan sitting on the porch in the midst of the roses, knitting, as usual. She talked a long while with the poor creature, commended her for her neatness and the cleanliness of her children, and at last made her take off her things, saying she would give her supper, and allow her to sleep there all night. Good Miss Susan! So I'm going to ask mother for some of Milly's clothes, when she was a baby, for the little one.

Mother talked very seriously to me this forenoon

about Mr. Lansden. She said she did not wish to influence my feelings, but appeal to my judgment; she did not blame me if I could not appreciate him for his real worth, but she wished me to consider well the steps I was going to take. A simple home, and one loving, true heart, she said, were treasures that would far outweigh fashionable enjoyments, and the palaces of kings, and all the gold of Ophir.

The value of religion in the family was incalculable. A frivolous, aimless life of fashion would deaden the soul to all impressions of a serious nature. Then she pointed out the high office of a minister's wife; to stay up the hands of her husband; to help him by her smiles, her home comforts, her prayers, in his great work; and oh! much, much more she said, about duty underlying every motive, and propelling to every act of life. I knew who she was talking at. I told her just what I felt at that moment, that I would not dare go contrary to the word of God—"Honor thy father and thy mother;" and if she wished me to sacrifice what I thought was for my happiness to her commands, or her wish even, I would do it.

But to that she shook her head, and said, "No, no; she was not so selfish as to exact any thing of that kind; she only wished to advise me, as it was clearly her duty, then leave me to act upon my own impressions of right and wrong."

Dear, dear mother!

VISIT TO THE CITY.

I AM to go to the city—my first visit. Oh! joy, joy! I shall see so many new sights. My uncle will take me, and we start to-morrow. I shall be so pleased; I know I shall.

Have just returned from my journey. Oh! I have so much to write. Let me see; I went on Monday; to-day is Friday. We did not arrive there till noon. Such sights! such crowds! such shops! such beautiful people! such rich garments! Ah me! I am not as happy as I was before. I soon began to feel ashamed of my old-fashioned clothes. My little hat that I made myself, and so prided myself upon—I did not see another like it; every body seemed looking right at me and my unfortunate bonnet. Then I wore my hair in ringlets, all down upon my neck. Nobody else did: I saw little, short prim curls laid against the faces of some of the ladies; that was all. But, then, every one can't have curls like mine if they would, may-be; so I must console myself.

We stopped at a hotel—a larger house than I ever saw before. Such crowding and jostling—such servants, dressed for all the world like gentlemen. I had, before, confused notions of livery, and so forth, because I have read Sir Charles Grandison lately, and the plush breeches, and red coats, and all that—and the cue, the powdered cue. What a simple, foolish child I have hitherto been, to be sure!

I thought I must be very polite to such fine-looking folks; but saw, when I said, "Will you be kind enough, sir," or "Thank you, sir," some of the ladies laughed, and that made me uncomfortable.

But my dear, good Quaker uncle reassured me, saying, "Thou wilt never lose any thing, child, by paying respect to the humblest of God's creatures. Many servants are, in reality, masters over those they serve in point of natural talent, good sense, and sterling virtues. Let me tell thee, child, that, in treating all with courtesy, thou only enhancest thine own dignity; and a tender, affable nature is worth more than a high descent or boundless riches."

Still, say what he would, I knew that my inferiority in dress and manners was plainly perceptible. Oh! but I know I have that within me which would make me all I aspire to be. Will not those who might now regard me with disdain be proud of my notice yet? I wish Mr. Lansden had not said what he did; somehow, every time I feel such emotions of pride, his pale, pleasant face and warning words come up before my memory.

Now "fate" would have it so. There! I don't like that word "fate"—I won't use it. But I was to see Mr. Golding. It was so strange! I was walking down the street by myself. There were throngs of ladies, and most of them so very beautiful and dazzling. Uncle had left me to go alone, and I felt embarrassed, and as I had to make some little purchases, I hurried into a grand store, to get away from an impertinent gentleman, who had followed me and looked at me very hard. As I went in, the first face I saw was Herbert Golding's. He came up, so surprised and smiling, and tak-

ing me by both hands, led me to a seat. I didn't care one bit then for the glances that passed between the clerks, or my own unfashionable apparel, for he was as delicate and polite as he could have been to the greatest lady in the land. I was provoked that my face was so hot, though. I *do* blush so quickly; and there is no remedy for it that I know of.

He asked kindly after my mother; and then he went toward a pile of elegant shawls, and taking them down and spreading them upon the counter, told me to choose one for her in token of his remembrance and gratitude. I laid one aside, a very fine dark shawl, with a long, thick, silken fringe. I should not wonder if it was worth a deal of money. Then Mr. Golding asked me where I was stopping, and said, as I rose to leave, that he could not think of my going alone; he would walk with me as far as our hotel. And he did, talking all the while in such a manner, that I never once thought of the crowd or my own unfashionable clothing. At the door he left me, promising to call in the evening, when my uncle was there.

So, after supper, we—uncle and I—were sitting in the bright, wide parlor, with many other ladies, who no doubt saw something very rustic in my good uncle, for he wears a homespun suit of drab, and his hair falls squarely over his temples, like the old fashion. But, then, *such* a brow! and a more benevolent face I would never desire to see. There were, in particular, three young ladies, who had twice stared me out of countenance, and who, I suppose, were very fashionable and wealthy; for they talked of nothing but balls and routs, and the Honorable Mr. This, and the Honorable Mrs. That, all the time. Then they dressed so richly!

They had made huge sport of me, I know; and I overheard one of them say, "What a country horror!"

Well, these ladies sat quite near me, on lounges, talking loudly, and rather concealing uncle and I, as we were in the shadow of the crimson drapery.

Herbert Golding came. I saw him enter; but he did not observe me.

O! such a fluttering as there was among the three young ladies! I can see them now, primming up their features and fixing their curls; it seems he knew them all; and they smiled on him very sweetly.

As he came toward them, looking so noble, he espied me; I was watching him, I believe, without breathing, for somehow I was in a sort of flutter too; but I sank back in my seat as his eye met mine. He hardly said more than "Good evening" to the others, and bowed, before he came round and seated himself beside us; nor did he appear to know that there was another person in the room during the whole evening. It seemed so strange!

As for me, I believe I felt a little wicked pride, especially when I saw how evidently annoyed the trio were, and I exerted all my power to appear worthy of our company; and, really, I was surprised at myself. I felt as if I was removed an immense height from those fashionable creatures, and I looked down upon them. All the evening, Mr. Golding conversed with my uncle and myself. He must have forgotten entirely the presence of others.

I wonder what made him so confused as he went half away and came back again, three or four times, to say something to my uncle? And yet my silly head gives

me a little reason why. Foolish that I am! I would not even whisper it.

Mother is much pleased with the shawl, and thinks Mr. Golding very grateful.

Uncle, dear, kind uncle! bought me a new bonnet in the city, and several little articles of dress. I shall quite surprise our country people.

Mr. Lansden has just been here. He looked and acted quite comfortable, I thought. He is growing a shade thinner. I don't believe I ever *should* like him, only as a brother—I don't *think* I should. He talked well—indeed, like himself again.

He is to board with the Hart family. He told mother he would leave the parsonage till a worthier man could take it—some one with a family; and he half sighed.

Mother hoped he was not going away.

"Oh no! that is, not as long as the people want me."

He will like Mr. Hart, and, indeed, all the Harts. Louisa, and Annie, and Hatty—such bright, merry things! Maybe, now, he will marry one of them—oh! it would be so very good! Then that dear old house, with its venerable gables—and those delicious beds of strawberries!

MISS SUSAN.

What a nice time I have had! and what a treasure I have found! Mother laughs at me; but I have lugged the dear old guitar into my own little room, and now I can look at it, and think what pleasure I shall take in trying to learn it. I found it at Miss Susan's, up in her queer little garret, where there are odds and ends, and bits of every thing; and when I carried it down in its old dusty case, and came upon Miss Susan, who was frosting some cake, she looked at it, standing still for a moment, and then she turned away her head and burst into tears.

"It's a little, old-fashioned thing," she said, some moments after, as she wiped her hands on her apron, and then her eyes, "and not worth much; but it was my poor William's, that was drowned just the day before we were going to be married; that's what made me feel bad."

I felt bad, too, and sorry I had been so meddlesome; but Miss Susan, by-and-by, told me about William—how good and kind he was, and amiable—always going of his own accord to see if the water-pail was empty, or the wood to be split, and doing every thing so pleasantly.

This was his guitar; and he played well, too. Miss Susan said, "It made the blessedest music that she had never heard before nor since;" and she spread out her icing, following the knife with her eyes, as if she

was reading one of William's letters. Poor thing, how she loved him! She is a dear old maid. And such preserves as she makes!—such cake! She is teaching me to become quite an adept at cooking.

She willingly consented to let me take the guitar; and then she went to an old black walnut bureau and took a little roll out, giving it to me. I was delighted, for it was an instruction book for the guitar.

I couldn't help smiling when Miss Susan said, "There's all the tunes he used to play so heavenly in there—'Molly, put the kettle on!' and ever so many others."

But this guitar is a treasure to me, and I mean to try hard to play upon it, for I love music dearly. Miss Susan is very kind—a quiet, contented body. There are no sharp angles in her face, although she is an old maid. The faint lines upon it seem rather ornaments than blemishes. Her features are quite delicate, and her mouth is so formed that, look at it when you will, it seems to be wreathed around with smiles. She is not tall—not in the least prim. She has not worn away with her sharp sorrow, nor grown sour by her lonely life. Her arms are still round, her fingers plump, her eyes lively and kindly in expression; her form has a certain airishness in its outlines that confers on her movements a grace that many a younger person might envy. She is illiterate, and talks badly, certainly not with Websterian correctness; but a bitter word, I firmly believe, never found an outlet from her lips. Miss Susan loves every body, and spends her life in doing good. Her image is enshrined in my memory: its frame-work is the outer edge of my heart. I have only to close my eyes, and up she steps upon the threshold,

in her neat dress with tiny figures, and ample dimity apron, never a wrinkle marring its spotless surface. There she stands; her soft, dark hair parted simply and naturally, and flowing away under the dainty cap, that after all does not hide its shining.

Miss Susan owns the little cottage, with four rooms and its wide pantry. She has also some money in the bank; but I don't believe she ever uses it for herself. Let any one go wherever there is a poor family, within five miles, and speak of Miss Susan, how the wan face will light up, the dim eye sparkle, the heart flow out in gratitude!

I love Miss Susan.

I have more fondness for study lately. Mr. Lansden has lent me some books that were recently presented to him—the "Lives of the Painters," and three or four works of rare poetry.

This sweet little poem, by Robert Herrick, has so taken my fancy, that I have repeated it till I know it by heart. It will embellish my little journal more than any of my poor thoughts, it is so quaint and sweet.

A THANKSGIVING.

"Lord! Thou hast given me a cell
Wherein to dwell;
A little house, whose humble roof
Is weather-proof.
Under the spars of which I lie,
Both soft and dry.
Where Thou my chamber for to ward,
Hast set a guard
Of harmless thoughts, to watch and keep
Me while I sleep.
Low is my porch, as is my fate,
Both void of state;

And yet the threshold of my door
Is worn by the poor,
Who hither come, and freely get
Good words or meat.
Like as my parlor, so my hall,
And kitchen small;
A little buttery, and therein
A little bin,
Which keeps my little loaf of bread
Unchipt, unflead.
Some brittle sticks of thorn or brier
Make me my fire,
Close by whose living coal I sit,
And glow like it.
Lord! I confess, too, when I dine,
The pulse is Thine,
And all those other bits that be
There placed by Thee.
The worts, the parslain, and the mess
Of water-cress,
Which of Thy kindness Thou hast sent:
And my content
Makes those, and my beloved beet,
To be more sweet.
'Tis Thou that crown'st my glittering hearth
With guiltless mirth;
And giv'st me wassail bowls to drink
Spiced to the brink.
Lord! 'tis Thy plenty-dropping hand
That sows my land:
All this and better dost Thou send
Me for this end:
That I should render for my part
A thankful heart,
Which, fired with incense, I resign
As wholly Thine:
But the acceptance—that must be,
O Lord! by Thee."

I am no critic, of course, but I can tell good poetry, and that completely fills my little sense of thought, music, and rhythm. Now Mr. Lansden converses quite

learnedly about it—indeed, a vein of poesy glitters through his description, like a sunlit thread of water winding through banks of beautiful verdure.

Not so Miss Susan. Having the book in my pocket yesterday, I ran in to have a little chat with her. She was knitting very quietly with old Deb, the cat, perched on her knee. So I sat down to read, and she listened with attention to my "Thanksgiving."

"There now," she said, when I had finished, "that 'minds me powerful of poor Willy's varses. To my idee they was better than them, though *they're* very nice about beets, and vegetables, and all that; but let me git 'em for you." So she went to that inexhaustible old bureau, and dragged out a file of yellow letters tied up with a green string, and, looking them over, she handed me one, saying, "There's but a bit, read it out; my eyes are poor without specs. I can't see at sixty as I could at twenty, dear."

I tried to keep from laughing outright—indeed, I smiled broadly, and felt sorry for it. It was that time-honored poesy,

"The rose is red, the violet blue,
The pink is pretty, and so are you!"

"La!" murmured Miss Susan, shrugging her shoulders and turning half sideways, "la! it does mind me so of my young days—folks used to say I was tol'able good-looking. Do tell me if you have such things sent to you, Miss Alice? *You're* as pretty as a pink, any how."

The remembrance of a recent letter from Herbert made my cheeks tingle, and Miss Susan smiled quietly.

"But is this the poetry you speak of?" I asked.

"Oh! that's only a bit; it's pretty though, ain't it?

I like to hear of roses, and pinks, and all that—it's so nateral," she added, still fumbling over the old package. "Oh! here's another—one he writ himself; made up varses, I guess—them's beautiful."

And so I read, frowning with all my might to keep a decent face:

"When I was a walking in the field,
Thinking how finely the grass did yield,
And how the cattle would be blest
With good nice hay that they love best,
I espied a little flower
Growing in a sunny hour,
Down to my very feet,
So pretty and so sweet.

Then I picked it from my feet,
All for my true love to greet,
And held it carefully in my hand,
That I might give it to thy dear hand.

But, before I got there, I did forget,
And put it in my vest pocket;
And when I did get home, I see,
I did forget to give it to thee;
So I inclose it in this letter,
A thinking you will like it better,
As in my left pocket it did lie,
Unto my heart most nearly nigh;
Oh! please accept my little rosy,
But thou art a much prettier posy."

"La! now," said Miss Susan again, while I was nearly choked with fun, "don't you raly think them is pretty?"

Fortunately, the good creature gave me no time to reply; for she ran on more volubly about her Willy than I have ever known her to before. But she told me some most charming things.

I put up my "Thanksgiving" with a sigh, and a

vague thought that next time I came over I would bring "Mother Goose's Melodies," that Milly has at home.

Miss Susan brought out a little jar of jelly for me to carry to mother, still talking about Willy, and saying, "She'd an idee that he could have writ if he had lived; but such good young men ain't often spared," she added, with a sigh.

Kind Miss Susan! she is a real living record of true love. She reminds me of an old tombstone that still shows the name of the quiet sleeper beneath, though a century's moss has gathered around it.

LITTLE MILLY.

MILLY is very sick with fever to-day. The child has been delirious, and her calls for me, and questions why I didn't go down to the fields with her now as I used to, and play and sing with her, grieved me very much. I noticed, too, mother's reproving eye.

I have neglected them both lately, I fear; mother looks careworn. I will form a new resolution. There is no blessing for me if I forget to respond to the sweet music of a mother's heart. I have not been so happy for a long while as I used to be, even with *his* letters to read over every day. Perish my music, and moulder my books, if I do not rest thee in thy wearying labors, dear mother!

I have taken all the household cares to-day.

Up with the lark, truly, this morning. Look out with pleasure on three lines full of freshly-washed linen. I did it all myself, while mother stayed with Milly. Now the pot is singing over the fire, and the broad hearth shines red with a new coat of paint. Mother don't know it yet; she is having such a resting-time, and, after all, I have found leisure to read three pages of "Milton's Paradise Lost." This afternoon must polish the andirons.

I thank God that dear Milly is better.

If there is any thing I *do* love, it's a cheerful, blazing fire. If I was a poet, I would write a book about it. The Fireside! what a charming title! around it what

beautiful memories throng! Every crimson tile has been pressed by dear feet—every chair drawn up to it has supported dear forms. Father used to sit in that corner. I can see him now, old with disease before his time, with white locks like the fleece of lambs crimpling over his temples, and falling upon his shoulders. I've heard say that father was a remarkably handsome man once, and when with my mother he walked through the streets of his native city, there never was seen a more beautiful couple. Well, I dare say, for he was handsome till he died. My father! blessed in genius, children, every thing but wealth; always unfortunate. How often I have known him say that he was chastened because he knew his duty and did it not! For he had a notion—nay, a strong presentiment, that he was called to preach the Gospel.

And I have listened to him often, when, in the storms of winter, none but himself could attend church—as he repeated the whole sermon to us children, sitting by the fireside. He had a prodigious memory.

My proud father! He lost all through the perfidy of his partner, who decamped with every dollar he had, and a large amount of drafted bills. The last known of him was, that the ship in which he sailed was wrecked on a distant coast, and all on board perished.

Then came the consequences of failure; the fine house and handsome furniture—handsome for those days—were sold under the hammer. I can not help laughing when mamma tells me—and I often make her repeat it—how the great bluff sheriff, who was a fright, and had red hair, came, in his pompous manner, to inspect the premises. He was an ignorant, hard-hearted man, and seemed to take delight in the miseries of

others. Mother was sitting with a little babe in her arms, amid the general confusion of the parlor. An old-fashioned mirror, that reached from the ceiling to the floor—very choice, because many years before it had been brought from England—laid covered up upon the couch before which the burly sheriff stood talking, in a loud tone, to my father. Becoming tired with the heartiness of his own gesticulation, he was just saying, "Sir, you should always look before you leap!" when suddenly he bolted down, and, before father could prevent it, crash! the mirror was broken into a thousand pieces.

Mother says she clapped her hands with joy; for she especially clung to the beautiful but expensive article, and could not bear the thought that it should pass into other hands. The confusion and anger of the sheriff were very much heightened by the consideration that he was in the act of giving such sage advice. After that he always "looked" before he "sat down."

My father soon became quite broken, bodily and spiritually; and for seven long years he sat in this old fireplace, every moment of which is hallowed with remembrances of his kind words and gentle ways.

And yet it is not always that the sweet angels of peace make sacred that household spot. When discord mutters there, the charm is broken. Angry eyes and vengeful faces can not see beyond the smoke that has gathered its shroud of black over the broken stones, against which the flames dance when the logs are heaped high; only gloomy fancies wearing sepulchral forms, and flitting in and out through the crevices like spiteful fire-fiends, take hue from the dark beings that stand in the gloomiest niches of the heart.

Milly is sitting up to-day. Happy child! she is always smiling. Her white cheeks are dimpled from morning till night. *Somebody* has sent a box of grapes, large sweet-water and Isabella, for dear little Milly. *I* know who that somebody was.

Have been dusting, remuslining, and replacing my poor brother's picture to-day. I can not help wishing he had lived, sometimes, and the more when I remember that he died of a broken heart.

He had great skill with his pencil. He had genius, too, poor fellow! and the sore, sensitive spirit with which genius is, I believe, invariably accompanied.

Mother came to this village before he was born, dispirited with recent misfortune, and feeble in health. Here she would sit for hours of still moonlight evenings, gazing out upon the glowing landscape, when the trees were all outlined in silver, and the hazy swell of the hills and calm level of the meadows stretched away for miles. Beautifully they gleamed, crossed with shining sceptres, and wearing like faithful retainers the soft livery of their queen.

Our poor Henry was a romantic youth, and, alas! died for love.

ACCEPTED.

My mother has sanctioned his addresses; Herbert is accepted—and he so rich and influential! and poor little country me! Still, I am really improving. I can see it myself.

A happy New Year! So mother and Milly wished me this morning. An eventful year it promises to be; but whether it will be happy or not—would that we could know the future; and again, what a wish! thank God, rather, that it is veiled from our wavering sight, as Mr. Lansden says.

"Our little Alice! to be the wife of so rich a merchant!" exclaims Miss Susan. Yes, and with fear and trembling I whisper it to myself. Yet, what good I can do! How much for my dear mother! Ah! if she would but live with us; but no—she says here rest the bones of my father, and here my seven brothers and sisters lie; she will not leave the dust that covers them.

Herbert is good as well as wealthy, and bears a character for uprightness. He is universally respected.

It does not seem like the same old house. Dressmakers and seamstresses, and muslins and laces; and every other evening comes dear Herbert on his noble steed. Last night I rode with him. He says he is preparing our residence, and that an accomplished cousin of his will stay with me the first few months to initiate me; ha, ha! Oh! how I do dread that accomplished cousin! though Herbert tells me she is a kind

elderly lady, whom I will soon love like a mother. Doubtful—very!

I have a fine figure. I never thought of it before; but it improves under the hand of a fashionable dressmaker from the city. She incessantly flatters me; of course, I don't believe it; these kind of folks are apt to do that for the sake of custom.

Heyday! I'm getting along finely—*these kind of folks*, forsooth! What am I? Oh! I trust I shall never be heartless, never be ashamed of my present lowly condition; but Miss Arden is constantly repeating what an air I have, and what grace, and so forth! I wonder if she does really mean what she says?

My heart aches at the thought of leaving mother and Milly. Mother looks sad sometimes, but thinks it, as she does every thing, all for the best. Mr. Lansden seems very composed and thoughtful, and a great deal older-looking. Of late, I take *many* of his sermons to myself.

We are to be married in June; from this to that, my every moment is chartered.

These hot-house flowers are graceful things—dazzling, perishing things; they can not bear a breath but of summer air; their fragrance is delicious, their lives are fleeting.

"I had rather you would stay in the woods, Alice, than be like that," said my mother, this morning, pointing to a rich, but fast wilting rose in the bouquet that Herbert sent me yesterday.

"A short life and a merry one!" I said, thoughtlessly, and tears came into my mother's gentle eyes. Then flashed a feeling over my soul, of how priceless was the love I was leaving for another's, and, com-

pletely subdued, I hung around her neck and wept. It did me good—softened my heart; it will grow hard, I fear, unless mother is near me.

How prettily the grass juts over from the overhanging bank; the larch begins to show its delicate tassels; oh! how fine, and silken, and fragile they look! The little hearts'-ease blooms under my window, and the long, green patches, laced with gold, and woven with buttercups, stretch away over the fields, and nestle down in the brown valleys like so many little waif children.

In that tiny white house opposite lived poor Marion Summers. Strange that I should think of her to-night.

THE OLD CHURCH.

I WAS very young when I was first taken to church. I remember how my little hand trembled as we went up the two square stone steps—my mother and I—and how I gazed around with a vague, indistinct idea of vastness when fairly within the sacred portals. The house seemed so large, so silent, so awful to me. I wondered if the minister always lived in that square box, and if he ever went up to the great sounding-board above. I thought possibly the carved cherubs were real angels looking down from the pulpit. I wondered why every body was so silent, and clung to my mother that I might continually assure myself of her presence. If I had been suddenly thrust upon an isolated shore with beings of another race, speaking another tongue, and all possibility of rescue out of the question, I do not think I should have felt more desolate, more deserted—only my mother was there. I started at the minister's voice; and though the old gray-headed man had held me often on his knee, he seemed as far removed from me and all the earth in that holy place as the light of the gray dawn is from the darkest shade of midnight.

The first hymn oppressed me; it was a sad melody, and softly sung—I knew not then what for; and after the prayer, the silence of a moment seemed to be prolonged to an age. Undefined thoughts took tangible shapes, and I had strange visions. I can remember

them distinctly, though there is no need that I should portray my childish fancies.

Marion Summers was christened that day.

I sat on the little cricket at my mother's feet that evening, just after tea, looking with her upon the changing beauty of the sky, when a neighbor came hurriedly in, and, lifting her vail, said, with a burst of tears,

"It's all over, dear lamb!"

"You don't mean that Marion Summers is dead?" said my mother, starting, and bending forward.

"Yes, like the going out of a candle it was; nobody thought it, you know, but herself. George is well-nigh distracted. So young, and only just married! Who didn't love Marion? And there she lies—beautiful! beautiful! You wouldn't think her dead. But I must go. I am trying to get some one to watch with the corpse to-night."

And so she went out; and for an hour my mother looked steadily out into the waning twilight, and I dared not speak. A haunting question in a form intangible kept floating through my mind—"What can this death be?"

When my mother went with me to my little chamber, I begged her to stay till I slept; and, kind creature that she was, she understood me. So I fell to sleep with my fingers clasped in her hand, and dreamed of Marion Summers.

I have been watching the lake; it seems to have a pulse this morning, and the lily leaves shake upon its bosom. Beautiful lake! you will lose the wild companion whose hand has broken your crystal clearness to shower its diamonds against the slant sunbeams.

The mallows are creeping out, with little specks of blossoms; and the crimson flowers of the peach make the garden brilliant.

Herbert has just gone, repeating "next week;" and —and I believe I am rather sorrowful than otherwise.

I have not planted yet; I always have before now. Somehow I dread to bury the seeds, and leave them while the earth is black over them.

MY FLOWERS.

HERE are moss roses. I love them so! They are almost holy in my estimation. And here is the japonica; what a regal bearing! But don't hold your head too high, madam! You are to perish with the rest—perhaps all the sooner for your beauty. And you, pale lily, oh! how sweet, and slender, and drooping! You call forth my pity, gentle thing, and I could wish you a longer life; and yet you might well be content to pass away, when your name was once upon the lip of the great Master, and so made immortal. Honeysuckles! you are sweet, for the bees have never sipped honey from you—changing and drooping likewise! And these clusters of golden drops; I wish I knew their names.

It is a gentle evening. Mother has taken Milly with her to the little prayer-meeting; I can hear the low murmurs of prayer, and now the soft plaintive songs of Zion.

Well, I will pray here, in the silence of my chamber, among my flowers.

"Go with me, Father! in the untried path;" but oh! what a hollow echo answers to my soul! I don't seem to pray as I did some few years ago. Oh! why don't we keep the simplicity of childhood forever?

I could well say to-night, in the language of Titania,

> "The moon, methinks, looks with a watery eye,
> And when she weeps, weeps every little flower."

I will put my roses in fresh water: this sweet little moss-bud—beautiful flower!

For my part, I never look at a moss rose without thinking of the fairies. And though I know they are of God's workmanship alone, still those old stories that father used to tell me haunt me yet; and I feel sometimes as if the sweet fays were given particular watch and ward over the moss roses. I shook one from the dew this morning—and yet it was a pity, for the water diamonds enhanced its beauty—and could have gazed at it for hours. It seemed as if fairy fingers had been at work, tinting with the most delicate brushes the fair, silken petals. And then that wavy chain-work of moss—a richer drapery than mortals, with all their cunning craft, can weave—full of minute and beautiful branches, and flakes like stars, only soft and green, and rolling around over the shining stem, and reaching up as if to cover the modest blushes of the sweet little thing. Oh! a moss rose is the fairest and brightest of all its sisterhood—the belle among flowers, yet not vain or flaunting—the real queen of the garden, though neither proud or regal.

There is a very beautiful bush growing in our own little grave-yard. As one turns the old-fashioned cross-sticks at the entrance, and wanders to the right, stepping carefully among small mounds, over which the grass, all weed-choked, is tangled and knotted, there comes in sight a little grave, cleaner than the rest, and covered with flowers; none of them so lovely as the charming little moss rose standing in its centre. There the roses stay all through their bloom; nobody touches them, and only once in many days a poor old figure bends alone above them, and carefully clears the dead

leaves from the roots, and cleans the little grave till it looks like a garden. That poor creature lives in the alms-house; she has a very forbidding face, but she was once one of the most beautiful creatures that ever lived. How strange that loveliness should fade so entirely away!

Many years since, when my mother was a child, this woman came to our little village with an infant, and occupied a neat old cottage that has long ago fallen to the ground. Nobody knew who she was, and she baffled curiosity by her solitary mode of living. She seemed to have money enough, and her little babe was always richly dressed with the finest laces and embroidery. The child, like its mother, possessed extraordinary beauty; but if ever the villagers stopped for a moment to gaze at it in the garden or the window, the lady would take her by the hand and lead her quietly away, or shut down the curtain.

Only a very few times she appeared at church, and then by her haughty bearing repelled all advances. Mother says she well remembers the cold shiver that came over her when she once saw her great black eyes glittering down upon her.

One day, a most unusual sight afforded abundant food for gossip. The old doctor's horse stood at the gate of the proud lady, uneasily champing the little tufts of grass at the bottom of the path; and as the old man was not deficient in curiosity, he was willing to tell all he knew, though that was but little.

The child was ill—very ill; the mother was half beside herself with fear, but would have no one near her. The cottage was simply furnished; every thing belonging to the babe was splendid in the extreme. The lady

invariably called the child her moss rose. The doctor thought she was not right—possibly had not been for years; she acted like a monomaniac.

One morning the whole village was astir; the little child was dead; and the mother had sent in every direction for moss roses, willing to pay the most extravagant sums if she might but obtain them.

They poured in upon her; for many pitied, and many were tempted by cupidity.

All who wished were then allowed to look at the babe as it was laid out. It was a singular, yet beautiful sight. The coffin was literally heaped with flowers, and on them laid the lovely babe, the little crushed roses giving forth a most delightful perfume. Its robe was of white satin, embroidered with real moss roses, with which the mother seemed to have taken a melancholy and strange pleasure in adorning the fair corpse. In its hands were moss roses, intersprinkled with fresh leaves and myrtle sprays; and mixed in with its golden curls, even laying upon its fair forehead, were the delicate buds. Not a dry eye looked upon those emblems of innocence, or the waxen face of the dead child, whose little cheeks reflected faintly the crimson on the petals that kissed them.

The woman kept her secret: some supposed it was a jealous husband; some, that she was sinning, and unfortunate; some, that she was in the way of a designing heir; but nobody knew with certainty.

She went away—the bereaved mother, beautiful, supposed to be rich, envied—and years after came back a beggar. One morning they found a senseless form upon the child's tiny grave; it was the mother, and she was carried to the alms-house.

After a severe illness, she came out again, begged a moss rose, and planted it over her baby's grave. So there it grows, and, as I said before, nobody touches it through a kind of superstition. How I wish I knew that poor woman's story!

FIRST VISIT TO A WATERING-PLACE.

We are within hearing of Niagara's thunder; we have stood by the brink of the cataract. I trembled—sank away from myself, because of its awful majesty; and gazing upon its world of waters as they rushed down into the boiling abyss, I almost felt an insane desire to leap over with them. Solemnity! sublimity! my emotions were of these, and so intense that I could not command my voice; silence seemed my fittest tribute; I could only think of this passage—"*And God created the heavens and the earth.*"

I am Herbert's wife. I am quite—yes, perfectly happy! Herbert seems to delight in pleasing and surprising me. Last night I wore jewels for the first time. Herbert wished me to look on at a ball. How bright, and flashing, and bewildering it all was! I must certainly learn to dance; Herbert says I may.

Such rare silks as he has given me! It seems as if I had been suddenly transported into fairy-land. The hotel is crowded, yet we have a fine parlor to ourselves, and breakfast, oh! so charmingly, alone, while through the open windows comes the sound of ravishing music. Sometimes we promenade. I fear I am awkward; but Herbert says I walk well, and I don't believe but he is proud of me. At any rate, we attract some attention—a great deal.

Dear mother! could you be here to partake of my happiness! But, then, there are no old-looking ladies,

with mother's staid and unfashionable air. Age seems to be banished here; all is youth, loveliness, hilarity, happiness. What a beautiful world seems this world of fashion!

Have written to mother. She will think me crazy to launch forth as I have, when I could scarcely leave her a few weeks ago. How I did cling to her! and, for a day, nothing would comfort me; yet here I am thinking of her with perfectly dry eyes, and smiling to myself. Ah! well, such sorrow is fleeting—at least here.

There are some gentlemen at our hotel in uniform. Ah! me—I *say* gentlemen; I think every one is such that appears so; but I have much to learn. Herbert left me alone in the ladies' drawing-room for a moment to-day, when one of them, with gold epaulets and bright buttons, to whom I have been introduced, came up and took a seat beside me. His conversation was quite pleasing; but when Herbert came forward, I saw a look in his eye that made me uneasy. The gentleman vacated his seat. After he had strolled away, Herbert said, turning to me, "My dear, that is one of the most dissolute men living. His young wife, whom you met with him to-day, leads a wretched life. He is a husband, a gentleman, a soldier, but in name: do not seem to be too familiarly acquainted with him."

I will never speak with him again; I detest such men. Alas! the world is not all as it seems; I begin to learn that.

A month has passed, and we return to-morrow. Home! the name has a sweet, sweet sound, even if it be not the cot of my childhood. I believe I am tired of this watering-place: the rich viands have deranged

my health, and I have been *so* unaccustomed to wine; but yet I love it. Ladies drink it here at dinner, with the gentlemen. It is amusing to see how chatty and silly they sometimes grow. I have lately ventured to the public table; it embarrassed me some at first, but I am now accustomed to it.

Herbert is still the kindest, gentlest of husbands, and is glad with me that we are to return to-morrow. Still, I somewhat dread the new position in which I shall be placed.

HOME.

I HAVE been all over my stately house, and exclaimed a hundred times, "How beautiful! how superb!" Turkey and Brussels carpets of bewildering richness, furniture covered with bright damask, marble tables with the most elegant adornings, fairy-like ornaments of blue, and gold, and white; and those of my own little room, *boudoir*, as Miss Harris calls it, are extravagantly elegant—that is, according to my humble notions.

My dressing-table is of ebony, inlaid with exquisite taste, and its curtains are damask, soft as velvet to the touch, and imparting a delightful rose tint. The couches are in keeping; the delicate porcelains, and alabaster figures, and flashing candelabras in gold and bronze—ah! every thing is more than beautiful.

There is only one drawback. Miss Harris, husband's cousin, is so very stately that there's most too much of it. I'm afraid to move in her presence, and so it would be actual relief if her tall, prim figure could melt down and mould into the little, pliable, old-fashioned Miss Susan.

Miss Harris is continually lecturing me; I hope I do her teaching justice. I must not act *thus*, because it isn't the style; and I must do *that*, because all ladies do—and oh! dear, might she take the liberty of telling me that my position would appear very ungraceful if so and so came in. And then she initiates me in such a prim, *superior* way. I rather think I'm as good as

she is, if I hav'n't had the advantages of a fashionable education.

Yesterday it was really provoking! Miss Harris's little waiting-maid popped into the room and told me that a lady wanted to see me; so I went into the parlor, and found a neatly-attired young girl every whit as graceful in manners as Miss Harris. She spoke very sweetly, and I of course treated her as I would any respectable-looking person. Miss Harris came in immediately, and, going up toward her, said, "So Miss L—— I hope you have done the work I sent you; I went down in the kitchen, expecting to find you there."

A hot, angry flush covered the young lady's face, while this was said in a cutting, ceremonial tone. She arose instantly, as she answered, "I left *your* work in the kitchen, madam; I came to speak with Mrs. Golding. I was not aware that propriety made it necessary for *her* to go down there."

I am sure I felt both offended and deeply hurt at this *fashionable* manner of slighting honest poverty. *I never will do it.*

Miss Harris is going home soon. I can not say that I am sorry; but I no longer wonder that she was never married. I begin to be a prodigious favorite; am intimate with the great Dr. S——s' wife, and a host of the wealthiest persons in town. I can hardly realize that I can be little Alice, the shy village child—the rustic country girl. I have every thing I could desire; my wishes are like an exhaustless treasure, for they always bring me gold, or whatever else I want.

Received such a sweet letter from my mother today; full of consolation, full of good advice. Mr. Lansden is still at the Harts', but not at all intimate

with either of the girls yet; but I know he *will* be; he can not withstand the artless manners and happy disposition of Annie—I know he can not. What a dear little country minister's wife she will make! I will go to the wedding.

Miss Susan sends her best love, and seven receipts for making cake. I sha'n't dare to give them to our prim cook, who is fond of her own way, and a mighty pompous body.

By-the-by, speaking of cake, I asked Miss Harris, on the day of my return from Niagara (how comfortable I feel without her), if it was not time for me to make the biscuit.

She stared at me, and said "*What?*" in such a queer way that it made me nervous.

I repeated the question, and added, I was sure Herbert liked my biscuit, for he had often said that no one else made them so good as I.

"You would lower yourself instantly in the eyes of our cook, then," she said very slowly; "no lady should go among her domestics, except to give them orders or to superintend their work; our cook would never forgive you if you should so infringe upon her rights; besides, I don't think I ever heard Herbert complain of her biscuit."

I was angry at the manner more than the language, and fearing I might say something not respectful, I got up and left the room. However, that produced no effect, as it was obvious she considered me only a child.

CITY LIFE.

Can it be possible that five years have passed since my marriage? Well—this is yawning weather! I believe I am not quite as lively as I used to be—certainly not in such good health. Rose at eleven this morning. Feel somewhat the effects of last night's assembly. Throbbing pain in my temples; frightened at myself when I looked in the glass, on rising; so pale, so different from the preceding evening.

But, then, we must experience reactions, whatever be the modes of one's life. My satin last night was the richest in the room. Cecilia Bond, whose father is a millionaire, looked at me as much as to say, "Well, after all my pains, I have the mortification of seeing that Mrs. Golding carry off the palm!"

It will take Abby two hours to get my hair in any thing like proper order. A fine thing it is to own natural ringlets, when so many are obliged to get them at the barber's; but they're a deal of trouble. Nobody eclipsed me in the arrangement of head-dress. Moss roses! it was well I thought of them; there was not such another coronet there.

That conceited Mrs. Maberle, all rouge, all false—entirely made up.

> "Oh! wad some power the giftie gie her
> To see hersel' as ithers see her."

It was disgusting to witness her maneuvers. And that pretty Mrs. Lessing; she is a fresh, beautiful creat-

ure; but it really made me sad to see her flirt so desperately. And there stood her husband, thinking no one could read the gathered passion on his brow. Poor fellow! he is jealous—I fear not without cause.

The major complimented me on my appearance. It is *so* laughable to see an old dandy. His frilled shirt and gray hairs—his finger-rings—and wrinkles—his perfumed handkerchief and shrunken form; his white waistcoat and—pumps—ha! ha! And there's his sister—a love of juvenility runs in the family. She can not be far from fifty, yet, shade of delicacy! she wears low-cut dresses and short sleeves; she rouges and pads; every tress on her head is paid for, and her teeth are false! I always want to hide my face when I am near her, and ten to one if my curls don't get hooked by her artificial flowers.

Just changing my slippers behind the curtains, in the drawing-room last night, I overheard the following little dialogue:

"It's abominable, George; you've danced with her three times, and followed her like a shadow, while *I've* been alone most all the evening; little flirting wretch, I *hate* her!"

"Now, my dear, don't make a fool of yourself."

"Oh no; don't make a fool of myself! Wouldn't you have been glad to keep me at home this evening, hugging the hearth. But I'd come if my head had split open, just to thwart you, cruel that you are. Oh! go by all means, go by all means—see, she is looking for you!"

He was just hurrying out, and his wife following him, when I stepped from my little nook. A case of jealousy, thought I; I see the green-eyed monster often

at these parties. Returning to the ball-room, Mrs. Chandler met me. "Oh! my dear," said she, laughing gayly, "come and adjust this ribbon for me; do you know, my baby wants me just now?"

"How can you tell?" I asked.

"Because he's generally awake at this time, and crying like fun. I suppose I ought to go home, but I am engaged for two dances to that charming Boynton; so bub must worry through. But, really," she added, looking serious for a moment, "I must give up these routs; bub is extremely delicate, and doctor charged me never to leave him over two hours at a time, and now it is"—consulting her jeweled watch—"it is five hours since I saw him. I console myself by the thought that he has a good nurse; one can not give up every thing for children, you know. But there's the signal, and Boynton is beckoning; pray, don't think me a model mother!" and off she skipped with her charming smile. Could *I* leave a sick child and attend a rout? No—no; may I never be quite so heartless. I don't wonder, now, why Mrs. Chandler goes into mourning regularly every three years; she has laid five children in the ground, and yet it is no warning to her.

"I'm *so* tired!" said little Miss Hart to me, smiling languidly, as her brother handed her into the drawing-room. "And, to crown all, Henry keeps scolding me for coughing; I'm sure I can't help it," she added, drowsily, sinking down on the luxurious cushions.

"What made you come, Bella? You looked sick the first part of the evening," I said, gently. Bella is a favorite of mine.

"Oh! I can't tell, unless it's because I got tired of the house," she answered, yawning; "I've only been

there half a day, too!" she continued, with a slight laugh and a spasmodic cough; "for I was at Ellen Grey's party last night, up till three this morning, and stayed with Ellen till two this afternoon. Let me see: I've been to one—two—three; why, I've been to a ball or a party every night this week!" and she sunk more languidly backward, and closed her eyes.

"Bella, Bella!—oh! here's the child—come, darling!" said her mother, panting, as she hurried toward her; "that splendid fortune, Augustus Boynton, wants to be introduced to you. I overheard him say to Henry that you was the most beautiful girl in the room; come, sweet—exert yourself a little; somebody else will secure him; every body is crazy after him—*oh!* come, daughter. He said you was *so* beautiful!"

Bella's eyes lighted up, sparkled for a moment, then she grew suddenly languid again, and coughed out, "Oh! mamma, indeed I can't move—I'm tired to death; and maybe I shall cough in his face; it comes so suddenly."

"Pooh! pooh! that cough is all a whim of yours, child. Oh! Bella, you are ruining that lovely dress!"—[Oh! heartless contrast!]—"Come, here's my vinaigrette; I declare you are so obstinate—such another chance you may never have; I know the man is in love with you. Look here! you shall have the party, if you will; I'll coax father for the two hundred—I will, indeed."

This promise seemed to restore animation; so, getting up, and smoothing her dress, she bent down, coughed with all the force she could muster, and thrust her handkerchief, which she had held to her mouth, slily in one corner of the lounge. I happened accidentally to see it afterward, and was shocked more than I can tell at the sight of a spot of fresh blood. That young victim of pleasure! Horrible thought, that her mother is helping drag her down to the grave!

Bella will never be married. Bella will fill a spot in the church-yard before another year.

"You will kill yourself," I whispered, when I saw her again, her cheeks unearthly white, though, even gasping as she was, she seemed more beautiful than ever.

How was I startled at the reply, "*I mean to!*" in calm, low tones.

I caught her hand: "Bella, you're not in earnest?"

"You knew they had sent Eben off?" (a clerk of her father's), she said, hurriedly.

"Yes; but you certainly would never have married him?"

"I would have died for him," she exclaimed, wildly, though in an undertone, and clutching at my hand so that she left the finger-marks in red spots; "I *shall* die for him; they drag me around, night after night; and I cough, and cough night after night. *I* know what ails me," she continued, in a reckless manner. "I'm just coughing my way to the church-yard; and I don't care what becomes of me, any way, body or soul."

I hear too much of this semi-infidel rashness among our fashionables; still, I pity the poor child more than I blame her. They think to secure her a splendid match; they will wake up to their folly over her coffin.

Just as I was coming away, young Lawyer Meriner, who was married only last week, came into the lady's room, staggered to the sofa, and reeled over on his side. A moment more, and he was in a stupid sleep. His little delicate wife stood in the corner, striving with all

her might not to cry; but I would not have suffered her mortification for the wealth of the Indies.

Had a little controversy this morning with Herbert; he contends that the husband and wife should be natural and agreeable toward each other in company, while I think they should be studiously and coldly polite.

There is Mrs. Winchester, the leader of fashion—the extremely elegant, bewitching, fascinating Mrs. Winchester, whom every body takes pattern after—she notices her husband no more than if he was not present, and he does the same by her. To be sure, he is rather pale and spiritless. I have thought it was the habit of the man, but husband says not; that five years ago he was one of the liveliest, happiest fellows he ever met with; but his wife's dissipation—that is what *he* calls it—is ruining him. Yet we would sacrifice something to be so much admired; still, not a husband's love. No, vain as I have grown, that is all the world to me; so I will be a little less fashionable next time.

Excitement has a wonderful effect upon me: it is my life. Got dreadfully worried because Mary sugared my tea; I wish such little things troubled me less, but my nerves are *so* disordered, and I *must* have the whole strength of the tea, without milk or sugar.

Think the two cups of coffee, and possibly the ices, I took last night, may have caused this throbbing headache. Remember Doctor H—— forbade my drinking stimulants; but how can I give up my coffee?

Eat a sandwich for breakfast, and two hot rolls—how soft, and rich, and flaky! Well, thank fortune! I have an angel of a cook; what delicious cream biscuit she makes! Took a powder afterward, and

would have gone out on a walk; but I am so languid of mornings. Sent word to nurse to keep the children by her, and laid down for a few moments reading "The Chateaubriands." Became so interested, that I did not get time to dress for dinner; so had a plate of chicken, with salad fixings, and some wine, sent up to my chamber. Appetite wonderfully improved; eat the breast and wings, besides picking a few bones, and drank two glasses of wine. Doctor H—— says that wine agrees with me. I thank him; if he didn't, should dismiss him to-morrow. Can't get along without my wine!

Wish I *could* find something that would put a stop to this burning in my stomach. Have had a physician now for three years, all to no purpose. He tells me to walk. Walk! does he think I'm a bear? I can not walk.

"Then take a house in the country for the summer," he says, "and work in the garden."

I *work* in the garden! Why, look at my hands! How white and soft they are! Husband likes my white hands, because they show well on my harp. Now I think of it, let me remember to send Philip for an A string. I must play to-night; and really it is such a pleasure to perform on so beautiful an instrument. Herbert says there is not another such in the city.

Work, indeed! How would these diamonds look flashing in the sun? And if I lay them off, they might get in the suds. Sully the fairness of my complexion by toiling in the air! Put on a frightful sun-bonnet and a check apron, and, trowel in hand, make a sight of myself! Not I! My ease, my calling, are too precious for that.

FASHIONABLE ENNUI.

Really, my headaches are getting quite to master me. Did think I should go to church yesterday morning, but felt so miserable; besides, our minister did not preach.

Wonder if every body has such terrible dreams! Last night, was falling down interminable chasms, or else standing on the dizzy height of some mighty mountain, every moment nearing the brink, impelled forward, as it were, by an irresistible power. Another time I was strangling by the tight grasp of an unseen hand, that held me in its horrible grasp till in agony I shrieked myself awake. And again a monstrous being grinned in my face with a most diabolical expression, while he held some terrible instrument of torture with the grasp of a giant upon my poor chest.

I am told that these are symptoms of seated dyspepsy; but what can I do? Three bottles of bitters have disappeared the last week; they give me, to be sure, a good appetite, but they do not cure me.

Went with a party, Saturday, to consult about getting some new furniture for our minister's house. Expected to find every thing dilapidated, but really! the house looked well enough for a minister. Mrs. G—— remarked that the carpet had been worn ten years in the parlor, and suggested that a new one should be bought. The centre was only faded, the figures quite distinct; on the whole, it was respectable.

"A plain ingrain will do very well, I suppose," said Miss M——.

Mrs. G—— thought it would be better to get a neat and good Brussels, as their late fair had brought them proceeds sufficient.

I inadvertently exclaimed out against it; I wish I had held my tongue. "A Brussels for a minister's parlor! It is really too extravagant."

Mrs. G—— answered (I never did like the woman; I wonder she is tolerated), "You have Brussels on your parlor, do you not?"

"Certainly," I replied; "my house is carpeted throughout with Brussels."

"Then I think our minister has as good a right to a Brussels carpet as you have. For my part," she continued, "I feel mean to go into my pastor's house and see the great contrast between it and those of our wealthy church members. *They* can afford candelabras; but tallow candles are good enough for the minister. They can lay out their hundreds upon silver plate and fashionable dress, and thank God their minister is a pattern of humility, because he wears the shabby cloak that has served him for years."

Somehow, I never can answer the woman; but a good number sided with me, and some of our most distinguished members.

Went to church yesterday in the afternoon. Mrs. L—— was there, and wore her India shawl. It's a beauty, and cost a thousand dollars. Think I shall coax one out of husband, yet.

How beautiful the hoar-frost looks, not yet yielded to this warm fire. It has wreathed itself into perfect yet fantastic shapes upon the panes. I love it. If I

am ever so dispirited, there is a softness about it, a beauty so novel, that it charms me. The long icicles drop from the eaves, and the snow lattices the windows opposite—pure snow! gentle, clear, soft snow! Once I could look at it so innocently, and make little childish verses about it. I can't do that now.

The country is the place for a snow-storm. There, there is a wildness, and yet a symmetry almost supernatural in the drifted beauty of the snow. Where have I read the following? I forget.

> "And see where it has hung th' embroidered banks
> With forms so various that no powers of art,
> The pencil, or the pen, may trace the scene!
> Here glittering turrets rise, upbearing high
> (Fantastic misarrangement!) on the roof
> Large growth of what may seem the sparkling trees
> And shrubs of fairy-land. The crystal drops,
> That trickle down the branches, fast congealed,
> Shoot into pillars of pellucid length,
> And prop the pile they but adorned before.
> Here grotto within grotto safe defies
> The sunbeam; there, embossed and fretted wild,
> The growing wonder takes a thousand shapes
> Capricious, in which fancy seeks in vain
> The likeness of some object seen before."

Ah! well, it is good sometimes for my old moods to master me. Little Herbert has been with me this morning. He is a fair child, and beautiful, very beautiful—so it seems to a mother's partial eye. I sometimes wish I could give him more attention; but he troubles me with questions, and will not be satisfied unless I answer him according to his humor; and I hav'n't the patience. Once I was not so irritable; but *once* I enjoyed health; now it has failed me, and company is the only thing that keeps my spirits up. What a little jabberer he is!

"Are they feathers, mamma, say? Well, then, are they sky-flowers? Do they fall off from the sky-children's wings? Well, then, what are they? Who made them? What makes them come down? What holds them up? What makes them white like sugar? Are they sweet? What do you do with them? Ain't they sky sugar-plums? Where do they put it up, then? Who carries it up? and what's it cold for?"

So question after question came pouring in, till, utterly vexed with his noise, I sent him in the nursery. Children do well enough to look at; but they're so tiresome. When little Herbert was born, I wanted to caress him and have him in my sight all the time; but, dear, I'm used to him now, and glad to get him off with his nurse.

Heigh-ho! I should like to see mother. Wonder if I should lay my head upon her bosom as I did once. It would seem childish to me now. My whole previous life appears childish. Old texts intrude sometimes. I happened just then to think of the passage which I loved to repeat to my little class—"*Except ye become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter the kingdom of heaven.*"

Heaven! how seldom—how very seldom it is in my thoughts! I must not be so conformed to the world: I must strive to overcome.

If I could only remember the name of that sweet song Mr. Brookfield sang last night! I meant to get it to-day. It was so touching. I could seem to see the poor, neglected girl dying daily; bearing taunts and scorn because she would not stoop to exalt herself. And then her dark room, lighted rarely by a sunbeam—her bird—her violets—the scant pallet—the tears—

the crucifix—the agonizing prayer—the imploring gaze—the death-struggle—and, at last, the gentle corpse, with her white brow on the violets, and her pet bird pecking at her cold fingers. Oh! how often pity, and love, and succor come too late.

Mr. Brookfield has a magnificent voice, and performs wonderfully upon the flute. How beautiful is his wife! I noticed at the table, when the wine came on she often looked anxiously toward him. I do not wonder; her husband drank deeply, and afterward was not like himself, but boisterous and silly by turns. Poor little thing! it is almost a pity for one so sensitive as she to marry a man of brilliant talents; for I have noticed that such are almost invariably addicted to wine. I love Gretta Brookfield!

THE FARM-HOUSE.

Husband brought me in a box of delicious strawberries; they are from the conservatory of a mutual friend—and so rare! I do not know when I have had such a pleasant surprise; they really made me in love for a moment with my old home. I thought of Miss Susan, in her faded red gown and white apron, standing in the strawberry-patch, holding her green spectacles in one hand, and talking with me while I picked the rich, juicy fruit to my heart's content. Ah! Milly will have all those good times. Mother writes that Mr. Lansden seems to live the happy past over again with Milly, teaching her just as he used to me—calls her his child, &c. What a queer thought! But if ever he *should* marry Milly! He must even now be twenty-six; Milly is twelve: not such a terrible difference. When he is only thirty-two, she will be eighteen.

This intolerable headache! this wearing dyspepsy! this sickness of the heart! when even the invisible moments lie upon me like burdens! How loud little Herbert laughs! I must ring the bell, and request that he be taken to some other part of the house.

Went with a select party on a sleigh frolic this afternoon; took no comfort. Don't know but I worried Herbert with my complaints; but I was cold and wretched. Didn't want to go, in the first place, and was sick in the second.

Rode only a few miles into the country. Compelled

to stop at a farm-house. Wide old-fashioned fire-place, with a crackling fire of logs; how it blazed and roared! Sanded floor—creaking and making one shiver in spite of the flames.

A great coarse girl rolling out dough, who stared at us as if we were the first human beings that had ever crossed her vision. An old woman dozing by the fire, perfectly indifferent to our accommodation, asking if the ladies wouldn't better be seated. Had to drag the chairs up to the fire ourselves, while the gentlemen attended to the horses.

Couldn't help laughing at the great box of a cradle, in which laid a monster baby. At any fair for the exhibition of fat children, I think he would have taken the premium. As to eyes, I couldn't see any—they were completely covered by round rolls of fat. What a hand he had; as large as mine, almost! I thought of Alice—delicate, fairy-like Alice, with her little hands like white lily leaves, and her fair rose-tinted cheeks, and I pitied the mother of such an overgrown lump.

It was only wasting sympathy, however; for the old lady, observing us looking at him attentively, broke out in a shrill, whining voice, "Picter! ain't he? weighs a'most thirty poun', and on'y four month old; his mother's desprit proud of him—biggest baby she ever had—had ten! yes'm, ten babies; three pairs twins—all livin' 'cept one; nary one but what's a picter, too. Gone through measles, hooping-cough, rash, and every thing—all on 'em! Their to schuil—schuil's most out; jest you wait a piece, an' you'll see 'em all."

Hoped we shouldn't have to wait "a piece;" but Herbert came in and said that the runner was broken, and we should be obliged to remain, possibly, till evening. I thought I should cry for sheer vexation, but the rest enjoyed it hugely.

The girl now drew up to the fire, and began flouring the baker. Mrs. Bateman and Mrs. Mills acted as though they had never seen such things before. I felt provoked with them—provoked with myself. Mrs. Bateman was her husband's cook, rumor says, when a young, poor girl; but she is a perfect woman of fashion now, and would die if she thought I knew the fact. Mrs. Mills worked in a milliner's shop, but her beauty got her a rich husband; and I—ha! ha!—have rolled out flour many's the time, milked the cows, washed dishes, hung out clothes, scrubbed floors; and now I would wish to blot away all such remembrances. Well, I don't think there's any danger of that! Yet I don't see as it makes me very humble.

"Well, ladies, what sort of thing's going on in the world nowadays? You all look mighty citified—'spose you live in the city—'spose you know the news?" said the little old woman in the corner.

She addressed *me*, so I replied in a somewhat low tone, not being aware that she was deaf, that I believed there was nothing in particular—nothing that I *know* of, I added.

"Whose got a beau?" she asked, with such a comical look, and such a funny motion of her hand, jerking it up to her ear, that I couldn't keep a sober face in spite of my ill humor.

I apologized, however, and spoke in a louder tone.

"Oh!" she replied, "thought to the massy you said somebody had a beau; little hard o' hearing I am; you see I got the head of a pin in my ear last summer, in cabbage time. Jerry—that's my son, and a nice

creeter he is! He was hoein', and I called to him—You Jerry, says I, your old mother's got to die, says I, sure as the world, Jerry; for the pint—no, I mean the head"—

"La! mother, don't," said a new-comer, and the old lady stopped short, as if accustomed to the command; and the mother of the family, a great stout woman, with a dirty gingham gown and a cap of the newest style, with flaunting streamers, came and sat down, saying, with an independent nod, "Du, ladies!" and, taking the sleeping baby roughly from the cradle, to show it, I suppose, set it to crying lustily.

All this time the girl was laying the long table with blue and red crockery, and a brown cloth, with a great ham, and black, hard biscuit, and wash-leather-looking dough-nuts, and two enormous plates of butter. Mother used to say that butter should always be done up in neat little lumps with pretty stamps upon them. Then came a great yellow pitcher of milk, with an earthen one of water, and a dish of dropsical pickles. Such fare looked so odd to me.

Then she turned the cakes, and took them up, and set them (a huge pyramid) in the centre of the board. One child after another came in; I thought they would never be done, and that they were all of a size; but I give them credit for being quiet, for they dropped down in seats around the room, and sat hunching their shoulders and working their mouths. What a party we were when we drew up to the table! I can't help laughing at the recollection. Four sun-burned farmers were seated opposite to us, trying hard to look easy; all the ten children occupied a long settle next to them, and as they lifted their elbows on a level with their

heads, and hadn't room enough, kept knocking each other's spoons and forks out of their hands. I counted just six times that they overturned their mugs of milk, and at each repetition of the accident the mother would jump up, tuck the fat baby under one arm, and box the youngsters' ears with the unoccupied hand; but they didn't mind it at all; then she would go back, and give her great baby a mouthful, and turn out a cup of tea, and cut a loaf of bread, I believe, all at the same time. I didn't dare to eat much, for I was too full of laugh. And yet my conscience always condemns me for such feelings. But the old lady was the most aggravating cause. She always heard wrong, and gave such amusing answers, though she was invariably checked by "La! mother, now don't!"

How could I ever live on *such* fare? How could I ever love *the country?* I'm sure, notwithstanding I tried to get up a little poetic feeling for the occasion, three or four times I felt absolutely homesick for the city.

THE OLD QUAKER UNCLE.

CAN scarcely realize that I am the plump, round-faced girl I was ten years ago. But then I knew nothing of fashion. I am now called graceful, my figure is slender and delicate, my friends all seem proud of me, and Doctor H—— says I have got the dyspepsy. Never mind, most of my fashionable friends are similarly affected.

We returned at seven. Riding gives one a keen appetite; eat some cold chicken, and one slice of Mary's magnificent pound-cake. How good it tasted after those homely dough-nuts—ha! ha! To think I ever could live on them—and worse, make them; faugh!

Had some friends call in the evening. Felt tired, and wished them at home, but was obliged to be polite. Sat up till eleven. Felt a little gnawing at the stomach; eat a cruller, drank some cold tea, sipped a glass of wine, took my powder, and went to bed.

Have been sick for nearly three weeks; almost despaired of getting well, but to-day have been able to ride out a little way. Went round by the park; and although the trees are no longer garbed in beauty, though the cold winds whistle along the bare walks, and the little pools in the streets are frozen over, I longed to get from my carriage, and just trip smartly once across the square. But then it would look so strangely if I should meet any of my fashionable gentlemen acquaintances, and I think it very likely I

should. How very cold those little ragged apple-girls must be! I suppose they get used to it. They don't mind the weather, like other children more carefully reared.

Returned home, and found my clever Quaker uncle in the parlor. Was really heartily glad to see him; but his stare, as he held me off at arms'-length, rather disconcerted me, and yet it was ludicrous. At last he spoke, very solemnly and exact, as is his custom.

"Alice," said he, "*can* this be thee?"

"Certainly," I replied; "but how are my mother and sister at home?" I was *so* eager to hear from them!

"Alice, thou art wonderfully changed!" was his only response. "Where are thy blooming cheeks? Where the plump roundness of thy form? Where the brilliancy of thy once sparkling eyes? I must say, Alice, thou art wonderfully changed!"

"But my health is miserable, uncle; I am sick nearly all the time."

"Thee was right healthy once, if my memory serves me right."

"Oh yes!" and I half sighed at the remembrance.

"When thee was a simple-hearted country lass, and knew not of, nor wished for these luxuries!" he said, broadly.

I felt my cheeks tingle, for I was unusually richly attired.

"Why! Alice, how thee used to dance through the old house at home!" he continued; "and how merrily thee used to laugh! and then, how pretty thee did always look in thy neat white dresses, and thy loose hair, that needed not that piece of bright silver thee fangles it up with now! Thee should have married young

Lansden, the minister, and methinks thee would have been better in soul and body!"

"Be a vulgar country parson's wife?" was on my lips, but happily I did not say it.

"Thou art living well—thou art living *very* well," he continued, casting his eyes around upon my elegant parlor; "but dost thou think as much of the good Giver now as thou didst when a pleasant country child?"

I was startled for a moment—for when and how do *I* ever think of God?

"I hear thou art called very fashionable, and a fine lady; but is the glitter of the gold and the incense of adulation to be compared with the clear, pure fountain of living waters that give health, contentment, and happiness? And are these gewgaws any recompense for the loss of that simplicity of soul, that goodness of heart, for which thou wast so famous? I stood upon thy stone steps as I came here, and beside me was a meanly-clad child. Thy domestic, herself decked in finery, came to the door and bowed courteously to me, but frowned on the poor infant. The little child asked a very pitiful question, 'Give me a bit of bread, please?'"

"'Go away!' was the unfeeling response; and the little one turned from the door, frightened.

"Canst thou not give the child a crust?" I asked, sternly.

"'My mistress has forbidden me, and I never dare,' was her answer. Alice, thou art indeed changed!"

I tried to excuse myself on the plea that I had been so often deceived, but nothing would do.

"The little thou givest of thy abundance can not impoverish thee," he said, "even if it be not rightly used. It is not thy nature, Alice; contact with fashion

and frivolity, and heart-hardening gold, have altered thee; but we will drop this subject. I came not to lecture thee; but that little scene upon thy door-step changed the current of my sympathies."

"How is thy husband?" he asked.

"Well," I replied; "as well as usual."

"It is a serious time with business men now, perhaps thee knowest," he said, thoughtfully, while his eyes roved round my parlor.

I assured him that I knew nothing about such things; that husband never told me of his business affairs.

"Then he *should* do so," was his reply; "perhaps it is out of tenderness for thee that he troubles thee not; yet the wife should know every shade and variation in the affairs of her nearest and best friend. Thou once possessed a good mind for counsel, niece; dost thou remember I called thee my little gray-beard? Dost remember how thou didst help thine old white-headed uncle when thou wast a mere child?"

"Yes, but that was by accident!" I answered, laughing at the recollection of the incident.

"Not so, niece, it was by thy womanish intuition; thou didst not doubt and solve, nor take time for reflection; but quick as a flash of light the reason why came to thee like a sort of inspiration, while I was plodding and plodding."

"But you alarm me, uncle," I replied; "why do you talk to me thus? Have you heard any thing of a serious nature from Herbert? I have thought him too secure to—" I could not bring myself to pronounce the dreaded "fail."

"No—no, child, be settled upon that point; I know nothing save that some of the firms hitherto thought

the wealthiest and most secure in the city have lost their credit within twenty-four hours. But thy husband is very prudent, and his large fortune will no doubt carry him through. Now tell me if thee playest upon that mass of silver and gold? a harp, I believe, thee callest it!"

I said yes; and asked him, laughingly, if I should sing him something.

He only gave a deprecating shake of the head, and murmured, "Thou art the same naughty girl as of old; thee should do better than waste thy time in such corrupting amusements. Thy mother was too easy—too easy; she departed from the faith very far to allow thee such pleasures. I have heard that people in thy station dance to vain music, also, adorned like the woman Jezebel, with rings, and bracelets, and jewels, and painted faces. Thee dost not do this sin, Alice! thou the child of Christian parents?"

I blushed, and said nothing, for I am very fond of the dance.

Again uncle shook his head, and sighed; and that silence, that look of sorrow, were more than a sharp reproof. Still, I think uncle extremely bigoted, not that I blame him so much for his strictures on the dance; but music, heavenly music! The angel of the fireside—the angel of the lowly home! She who deigns to dwell where splendor was never known; haunting the banks of sweet rivers in the still moonlight; sighing through the harps of the pine forest; humming with the bee, and filling the woods with melody! Why, uncle, uncle, how can you be easy when the songsters of the morning fling their dainty notes in at your casement? Oh! uncle, God wills that we should love music; it is

the language of Heaven. Well! I am in one of my old strains; but such thoughts come, and down they must go. If I only felt better, I think sometimes I would write something worth my while.

Uncle is chatting with little Herbert; the youngster is just asking him what he wears such funny clothes for? so different from his father's; and uncle is answering with as much gravity as becomes the subject. Meanwhile, he takes up this corner of the frock, and that bit of ribbon, and the little tassels that hang from his sleeves; and I can read a lecture in his eye as he turns it this way. "Oh! vanity of vanities!" But ah! my beautiful child, he is so handsome in his gay dresses, and gets such a world of praise!

THE SUDDEN DEATH.

My only resource now is writing. I have been at my worsted frame, my harp, my piano—every thing distracts me but my pen. I am low-spirited, and dream of funerals. I shudder when the wind moans; the ticking of a watch seems like a warning voice. I have a short pain in my side, so severe that at times I am obliged to take powerful opiates in order to get sleep. I wake in the dead of night, hungry and thirsty; I drink more wine! My hands are hot in the morning, my lips are parched. I dread that scourge of woman—consumption!

Husband endeavors to laugh me out of my fears; but I know too well what my own feelings are. Sometimes I think it would be better to die; I do not like the melancholy which seems coming upon me like a giant armed.

This morning Mrs. Beech deceased very suddenly. I can not—can not realize it. How gay—how perfectly heartless she seemed; how indifferent to every thing but pleasure! And what a death! full of horror—full of dreadful visions. Her husband, with assistants, was obliged to hold her down. Her last words were—"I can not die in peace!"

Noon. Mrs. Beech is a most ghastly corpse. I have been to see her. Why did I go? It was terrible! the whole house in confusion; her eldest daughter in strong hysterics, and her screams could be heard all over the

house. Her little babe lying helpless in the arms of its nurse. Her husband! poor man, what a change in his appearance! Hollow-eyed and pale, we could scarcely recognize him. The little children, with swollen eyes, and sobbing piteously, moving slowly round. The wailing voice of desolation seemed to fill the great stately rooms. How cheerless every thing looked in the parlor, where she laid in a sort of state upon satin strewed with flowers!

How fearful the thought! she in her white shroud lying where, but a week ago, she stood brilliant in health and beauty, laughing and chatting with her guests. It was on the occasion of her great party. How secure she seemed from a fate like this!—the bloom on her cheek, fire in her eye, her lips ruby, her motions almost like the lightning, her conversation sparkling, her smile bewitching. And now she is dead! dead! and to-morrow she will be—I shudder as I write—in her grave!

If we could only avoid such sights! The sorrow of these poor children is constantly before me; I can not keep the pale mourners away; I take it all to my own heart. Poor motherless ones! May God spare me to my Herbert—my Alice! And yet *am* I, in the holiest sense, a mother?

To me death seems doubly awful in the home of splendor; the contrast is too painful. My heart throbs—my hand trembles. Husband wishes me to attend a concert to-night. I fear it will be impossible.

LITTLE ALICE.

My good uncle returned home yesterday. Can not say but I am glad, for he has such a plain way of speaking to one. Have been sick nearly all the time he was here, and he was forever telling me about country sights and country pleasures, and how healthy I was once. That was his perpetual din.

Mrs. M——, whose husband bought the prize pew in our church, gave a magnificent party last night. Husband came home from the store unwilling to go, and pleaded a headache; but I was really anxious to be there, and prevailed on him to accompany me.

Nurse told me my little Alice seemed indisposed; hadn't I better look at her? hadn't I better send for Doctor H——? so I went into the nursery a moment.

But baby slept soundly, her little plump cheeks red, to be sure, feverish-like; no other symptoms of illness that I could see, and I laughed at nurse Blake's fears; told her she had likely taken a slight cold. However, she looked so anxious, that husband almost insisted that I should stay at home.

"Indeed, Mrs. Golding, you should hear her cough," she kept repeating, but (I am entirely ashamed of my heartlessness now) I would not be persuaded to remain. Perhaps my ignorance of sickness, and little experience with children, may plead some excuse.

I did not feel wholly right on the way. Herbert was silent, and seemed unwell. I knew it would have been

better for us to stay at home. And when we got there, the crowds of friends, the rich music, the splendor and adornment amused me only for a moment. My heart was not there.

"Mrs. Golding will play," I heard some one whisper, as a throng gathered near the harp; and "Come, dear Alice," exclaimed Mrs. Brookfield, passing her arm around my waist, "husband says you must sing our favorite song; come, let me be your gallant;" and she led me to the harp.

I never *could* withstand her coaxing; so I was soon seated, and Herbert arranged my music. He is proud of my performance, I can see that plainly.

I had nearly finished my prelude, when of a sudden my fingers felt paralyzed. The listeners swam around me; the voices and lights grew faint and confused, and in the midst of this strange excitement, a small, infant voice sounded on my brain in tremulous accents, calling "Mamma!" It was my little Alice. A faintness came over me; my hands fell from the harp. Herbert caught me; but wildly rising, I parted the crowd and hurried through, exclaiming, "My child calls me —she is dying!" It was a singular presentiment, and no doubt the friends thought me delirious.

"Drive quickly—drive quickly," I cried to the coachman; "my child may be dying." Oh! never shall I forget that gripe upon my heart—that mortal terror—that guilty condemnation.

Found every thing in confusion, and the servants frightened and weeping. They told me my dear babe, my little worshiped Alice, had the croup—and oh! the fearful sound that reached my ear from the nursery. I flew to her room; nurse held her with her face avert-

ed—horror marked on every feature. I snatched her from her arms; the oils that laid over her throat and chest spread upon my costly satin. What cared I for that? I shook from head to foot as my eye rested upon her features; they were suffused with a purplish hue, and fearfully swollen; the veins red and blue, corded her pallid temples; her eyes seemed starting from her head. Oh! I could have shrieked till the very heavens were filled with my wailings; my heart almost burst in the effort to keep silent. Oh! to hear her gasp—to listen to that awful vibration, to see the panting breast, the mute glances, imploring for relief.

The doctor came in. I am not fully aware of what I did—I think I knelt to him, and prayed him to save my child. I remember that for an instant I caught sight of my reflection in the mirror, gems flashing in my hair, my face ghastly pale, my party ornaments shining with unwonted radiance—and then the babe was taken from me!

I knew nothing more. For an hour I was unconscious, but, thank God most fervently, when I came to myself, they told me my child was out of danger.

Oh! how despicable at that moment seemed all those giddy and attractive pleasures! I rushed to my babe, my sweet little Alice, whom I have so often left for hours, nay, even days.

I kissed her and kissed her, and knew not when to stop. Then first, from having known a mother's pang at fear of separation, I felt the full tide of a mother's love. I wept, but silent and thankful were the tears; I could not look upon the beautiful creature without emotion.

I pressed her wildly to my bosom; I gazed yearningly into those sweet, bright eyes; I laid my hand upon her still flushed, velvety cheek; I felt more of a mother's tenderness than in all my life before.

I could not cease thanking God; how kind He seemed for having spared my babe! and how I felt I should ever, ever love Him! And when all was over, and the violence of my joy had subsided into the calm of a sweet thankfulness, I laid upon my husband's bosom, and felt as if never again would I seek vain pleasure, or neglect my home.

To-day I have felt wretchedly sick—the effects of last night's excitement. Bitters and palliatives do me no good now, indeed they make me worse. I am growing old; not yet twenty-four, and my cheek sunken as if with age, my eyes lustreless except after my usual dram of wine. Dram! the word makes me shudder with horror, it sounds so like drunkenness. Husband startled me to-day when he gave me the wine bill to look over. It can not be right; there must be a mistake. I never drink over three or four glasses a day, I am positive; and husband takes only two at dinner. These wine-merchants, if one is not particular, are apt to put down a few extra items.

Was astonished when husband gravely told me that we must retrench our expenses, especially in the matter of wine. How can I do without my wine?

Twenty times to-day have I clasped my hands in almost utter anguish, and asked myself what I *should* do. This sickness is becoming alarming; it is intolerable.

A friend has just left me, who advised me to try homeopathy. It is the last resort. I think I shall take her counsel.

I see by the papers that there are numerous failures. Husband is daily growing more anxious in appearance, but says he is perfectly secure. Poor Mrs. M—— and Mrs. D——, how they will be obliged to come down—living in such elegance as they did! I wonder if any one will call upon them now? Perhaps, though, the report of the failure is unfounded.

THE FAILURE.

Well, Mrs. M—— and Mrs. D—— have really "fallen — fallen — fallen from their high estate." They now occupy two mean little mansions in the country. I should like to call upon them, but I suppose it will be best to get the opinion of Mrs. Doctor Mader.

Their husbands have paid every thing, to the last farthing, and it has left them utterly penniless. I wonder if they were extravagant? I know Mrs. M—— quite supported a poor family. They will miss their benefactor.

Mrs. D—— never seemed to me really the lady, or else she was much more of one than I am!

I recollect being on ——— street one day, when she cried out in a sort of loud under tone, "Why, there's Mary!"

Of course, I thought Mary some very near and dear friend by her manner, and was quite pleased to be introduced to a youthful-looking woman, dressed very plainly, yet genteelly. Mrs. D—— talked with her in the most affectionate manner, held her hand, and seemed almost unwilling to part from her—indeed, made her promise to call the very next day and see Willy.

When we were again together, I mentioned that I did not recollect having met the lady before among my acquaintances.

She supposed not, she said; Mary had lived with her more than seven years, and she esteemed her very

highly—indeed, thought of her much more in the light of a daughter than a servant.

I hope nobody noticed me! It may be silly, but I would not wish it known, now. I shall not, of course, recognize the young woman if we happen to meet again.

Have seen Mrs. Doctor Mader, and she seemed incensed at the bare mention of continuing an intimacy.

"I shall cut them!" she exclaimed, scornfully. Well, then, so shall I; and so, I presume, will most of our fashionable acquaintance. It does seem almost a pity, but then folks should not hold their heads so high!

Mr. Latham is reported to be the richest merchant in the city; of course, his wife, although they were so very intimate with her, will not condescend to call them her dear friends now.

Feel sick—despondent—mortified. How constantly unhappy I am! What a life to lead!

Mrs. Latham was here this afternoon, and our conversation turned upon the recent failure. At first she said very little, and I foolishly launched out in a tirade on extravagance and pride, which, I believe, was put into my brain by the father of evil.

Mrs. Latham is a very beautiful woman, truly dignified and commanding; and I have always been so proud of her commendation. I felt so secure, also, in the belief that she was of the same mind with myself.

I told her I was very sorry they were so reduced, but remarked I thought they had been living beyond their circumstances, and that they carried their heads higher than their neighbors. "Pride must have a fall, you know!" I remarked.

"It is a great disappointment to them; it is natural

it should be; but I hope they will bear it with Christian fortitude!" replied Mrs. Latham, calmly, and, I thought, rather coldly.

"So do I; for they will need much consolation," I said. "It is probable they will be but little noticed now by the fashionable; and as this level is new to them, having never associated with the poorer classes, they will be doubly lonesome."

I never saw any thing look like Mrs. Latham's beautiful great black eyes, as she stared at me.

"But little noticed!" she exclaimed, in slow, even tones; "why, women like Mrs. M—— and Mrs. D—— never lose the respect and love of those who are worthy of entertaining such sentiments. I have been to their pretty little cottages, both of them, and convinced them of my unalterable friendship, my steady attachment. Do you think the mere matter of dollars and cents would make or mar such ladies as they really are?"

"Oh!" she continued, "I have been sick, disgusted, to hear those whom I have in some measure heretofore esteemed drawl out as they lounged on their delicate couches, 'Of course, they will not expect *us* to visit them in their reverses!' Mrs. M—— and Mrs. D—— can get along very well without such companions; they need no butterfly friends—no sunshine lovers; they will be sought after now by those whose good opinion is better worth possessing than gold. Indeed, I question if theirs is not an envied privilege—that of separating the chaff from the wheat, and learning who seek them for themselves alone."

I was dumb—I was silent. My better judgment would have prompted me to say and feel the same; but oh! my foolish pride and tongue!

Mrs. Latham must despise me. She will never call here again, I fear.

Met Mr. Le Rand to-day. His cousin, the belle of Philadelphia, who is on a visit here, was hanging on his arm. She is really a beautiful creature, the most lovely woman, I think, I have ever seen. Mr. Le Rand, who is an artist, and very intimate with husband—I believe husband patronizes every painter, poet, and musician in town—is engaged upon her portrait; and a fine thing it must be.

They say she, too, is to be married to an artist, a man who was brought up by the charity of her father, and who cleaned the knives and forks in their kitchen once! Now he shines "a star of the first magnitude," the possessor of envied genius. The world echoes his name with pride; the father spurns him. But this beautiful heiress clings to her lover, and will, if her father disinherit her. The artist is now in Italy. One would even fight misfortune and court poverty for the sake of such as he.

Have not seen Gretta Brookfield for a long while. Wonder where she and her erratic husband are sojourning? Heard yesterday that her only parent was very sick.

A letter from Miss Susan! Well, well, poor old creature, she has not forgotten me. But the chirography—oh! ludicrous! I laughed till the tears ran down my cheeks; so did husband.

She says she made twenty jars and ten pickles last year—her jars mean jams; and if she was near me, she would send me as much as I want, for she is "feared of their spiling!"

Miss Milly, she says, has just gone from there. *Miss*

Milly! really, my little sister must be quite grown; and Mr. Lansden, "good, dere, kind gentleman, cums to sea her every Sundy nite. Her gardin beds ar al hansum as ever," &c., &c.

Poor Miss Susan! she has got the "rumatiz," and pines still for her Milly. I will write her a letter; it will *so* please her. I'll invite the dear old soul to come here; of course she can't, especially as she has got the "rumatiz!"

Did not rise till eleven this morning. Could hardly command my nerves to go through my toilet; wearied and disgusted with every thing; wish I could fly from myself. A dullness over my eyes, a pressure on my brain that no medicine will relieve. Contrary to usual habits, could eat no breakfast. Had three callers, and fear I was very unsocial. Could not, and did not talk. Threw myself down and slept for an hour, when husband came home. He seemed alarmed at my indisposition, and petted me. He is very tender, very kind, and all that, but he don't understand how really sick I am, while I keep up an appearance of spirits. I fear I shall die before long; my nature will wear out under these repeated attacks of melancholy. I often weep when he knows it not—at what? I can not tell myself. The very sight of my children at times causes tears; it would be hard to leave them alone, for, although I am not with them a great deal on account of my health, I am a mother, and feel for them as none but a mother can.

I have now been two months embroidering little Ally's frock! Uncle—even mother, would call that time misspent; but what else can I do? I wish sometimes I was the chambermaid. What a happy thing she is!

Hark! she is singing this moment like a lark. She has a fine voice; with cultivation it would be beautiful.

Little Herbert gives a party to-morrow, and although quite small—being select—we have expended a hundred dollars upon refreshments. One would not be mean in these things, and it is Herbert's birth-day; he will be four years old.

Husband brought me in a letter from mother. It is reproachful—that is, as much so as *she* can write. She says it is now six months since I have been out to see her. I really did not think it was so long.

But if she knew how completely every moment of my time is engrossed, I believe she would wonder how I contrived to go at all. She wants me to send Herbert on a visit a while. I can't let him go: his complexion would be ruined by the sun! Besides, he is my invariable companion wherever I call. I don't think I shall let him go.

THE PAINTER'S STUDIO.

I ACCOMPANIED husband to Mr. Le Rand's studio to-day. Such a scene! I really wonder men can not be neat. If he gets a wife, I hope she will teach him the first rudiments of cleanliness. Here hung a Madonna, with a drapery of spider's webs vibrating above the radiant head; there stood a bust, which might have been Washington's or Michael Angelo's, so rimmed and defaced with dust that I could not easily tell which. Grand old pictures, that needed but an effective arrangement of light and shade to bring out, though dimly, the glorious realizations of some noble master; but, as it was, dark corners concealed both defects and beauties.

I was allowed a glance at the portrait of his cousin, the belle and heiress. He has done both her and himself justice; a fine blending of the spiritual and intellectual. Her eyes are large and liquid—quite the gazelle eye—with a touch of fire that must give them an almost startling brilliancy when she is animated. The soft brown hair rolls over from the crown of the head in rich, thick ringlets. I could wish her to be more simply attired—scarlet seems almost too regal; and yet, how gracefully the folds fall over her delicate form! I felt quite a disposition to shake them out.

Three little paintings, side by side, thrilled me very painfully—they were so true to life. As I stood before them, I thought of little Alice grown to womanhood,

and pictured a fate like that, which God grant may never befall her! But such things have happened—will happen again.

The first disclosed a young and beautiful creature leaving her father's home by night. The moon was high, the stars shining; but there was one thing to mar the loveliness of holy nature. From the lofty window hung a silken rope; the maiden stood in almost utter helplessness at its foot, supported by the strong arm of a young man, who seemed chiding, yet encouraging. In the mellow distance two steeds patiently waited to bear them far away. It was an elopement.

The second scene exhibited the same maiden, now grown to mature womanhood, with a pale, sad, imploring face, her slight figure wrapped in the weeds of mourning. Upon every feature was written the despair of a proud spirit; and sorrow, though it had lent a cold and hard look to her beauty, had not impaired it. You could read poverty, also, in the scant, clinging garments; the limbs had lost their roundness, her cheeks their soft, clear bloom.

She knelt upon a richly-carpeted floor, and, with hands clasped in anguish, seemed praying for forgiveness; but the stern old sire, with iron-gray locks and hard eyes, gazed from her with unbending brow, and a cold, merciless smile, that almost spoke the fiend.

In fancy, I could hear him say, "You married against my will, went forth with my curse—and if you come to plead for *him*, go; I will *never* forgive!"

The third scene was laid in a hut of the most wretched description; ruin hung in festoons of damp and mould on the walls; the floor was of mud, and a mendicant broke her mouldy crust in the corner of a decaying fire-place, in which the flame had long since gone out. And there, too, were the old man and his daughter—the former grasping convulsively at the tattered quilts in which his face was buried; the latter, with glaring eyes and fallen jaw—a livid half-clothed corpse!

As I gazed, I felt my blood almost congeal to ice. The illusion grew upon me, till, with shuddering and sickness at heart, I hurried away.

The belle came in just as we were leaving. Turning to her cousin, she said, "I declare, cousin, I am ashamed of you; your studio is a reproach to you; such an estimable man, and so careless! Fie! to ask visitors here. Now I shall set you an example you will not soon forget!" So she commenced overturning chairs and shaking pictures, till we were all forced to retreat, or we should have been blinded with the dust. Le Rand laughed till his face was crimson; and his cousin, conscious that she had displayed zeal without knowledge, stood in the long entry, half laughing, half pouting, shaking the offensive powder from her dress.

I rather think the artist will be more careful after this.

KITCHEN TROUBLES.

FEEL feverish and low-spirited; have a severe headache and throbbing pulse. These girls worry one so! I shall die with them—I shall, I am certain. Oh! the trials poor housekeepers are obliged to endure!

Be thankful ye who have spirit and independence enough to do without servants! Your spare time is your own; you do not need to be silent when you know that the contents of your store-room are scattered on ten or a dozen tables somewhere *out* of your vicinity! You are not ruled in your own house; your kitchen is a part of your own premises, and you do not feel, when you enter it, as if you were invading forbidden territory. Neither do you need to ask favors when Betty's brow is black; and your children can safely cross from door to door without listening to some elegant expletive of barbarism. You may sit at ease; sure that no house-maids, or cooks, or chamber-maids are assembled in committees of six to canvass your doings, report your sayings after they have distorted them to suit their own malice, and sit as judges upon your private character till they have crushed it out of all shape. You do not find them going innocently down stairs when you open your door, as if they had never done such vile things as put their ears to the keyhole. All these, and innumerable other annoyances, be ye thankful to escape, who sleep sounder for your wholesome routine of household duties.

Am getting fretful and wrinkled—every thing worries me. By dwelling continually on my own feelings, my mind concentrates upon every blemish in myself and others; the bright side never occurs to me. I am restless, unhappy, wretched!

Little Willy is three months old, and one of the most beautiful of infants. I don't know what husband would do but for his children; I am never in spirits when he comes home, and he romps with them till my head aches with their noise. I believe they are getting to love him more than they do me. It is better so; if I should die, they will not need to transfer their affections.

Abby, my pastry-cook, left me this morning. Wages too low—usual complaint. Husband told me to retrench, so I began in the kitchen. My little girls *must* have new and expensive dresses, too, if we would keep up with the fashions. Ally's bonnet cost me near eight dollars, and baby's suit little short of twenty—velvet is so high!

Abby we always gave four dollars per week; she is a good pastry-cook, and since Mary went away no one but she has suited me at all; and my friends always praise my cake and my table. Last week I told Abby that I could give her but three dollars and a half. She expostulated, grew angry—so did I. She said something about ladies who had been poor country girls, and so forth. I told her to go, and go she did.

So, since then, I have had frequent applications, but find no one yet to suit me. My other domestic began to complain of low wages, and yet I gave her nearly two dollars, besides my cast off clothing. Ungrateful creature! she too left me. She said I shocked her nerves, I was always so sick. *She* have nerves!

To-day Mrs. M—— called; the most fastidious lady of my acquaintance. I had forgotten, in my hurry and vexation, to tell my new help, a raw Irish girl, to say I was not at home; for I had to go into the kitchen to bake some rich cake—expecting company to-morrow.

I saw Mrs. M—— from my window. I knew it was her, and listened at the foot of the stairs, trembling with dread, in expectation of hearing my girl make some Irish blunder.

"Is your mistress at home?" asked my visitor.

"Yaas, ma'am," answered the girl, broadly.

"Can I see her?"

"Oh! yaas, ma'am, if ye'll take to the parlor, shure. I'll be afther calling her oot the kitchen; she's doon bakin', ma'am, bakin' the cake for the morrow, shure!"

I thought I should sink. I could almost see the scornful smile that lighted up the aristocratic features of Mrs. M——. I have been more than particular with her, for she is leader of the *ton*, and sometimes I have felt my cheeks tingle as I thought she discovered some tokens of my country bringing-up in my address.

What should I do? There was Mrs. M—— in the parlor and I in the kitchen, my hands whitened with dough, my hair whisked entirely back, so that I looked like a fright; my sleeves rolled up, my pastry half cut out, and some in the oven that needed skillful tending. What should I do? There was no getting at another dress; I must go as I was, or run the risk of offending Mrs. M——, and that would never answer.

I hardly know how I got up stairs, after giving a spiteful and savage injunction to the ignoramus of a girl to mind my cake, and take it from the oven in ten minutes.

Mrs. M—— was more studiously polite than usual, and I was more confused than a school-girl. I stammered and blushed, and made my apology seem more like a ridiculous evasion than a sober excuse.

Mrs. M—— really seemed to enjoy my embarrassment, and stayed longer than ever before.

I know I appeared ridiculous, and after she had gone I actually burst into tears of shame and vexation.

Went down stairs. My girl was awkwardly moving some round black balls from the stove to the table. They were my poor cakes, all burned to cinders!

No matter for that; but to have that Mrs. M—— call, and find me so engaged!

Yet, was there any harm? any actual degradation? Have I no independence of character?

NOT AT HOME.

Mrs. Granger, Mrs. Doctor Mader, and a little interesting woman, Mrs. Ringgold, a new acquaintance, all happened to meet here this morning. My first impulse was to be not at home; but, on second thought, I contrived to infuse a little animation in my features, and crept down stairs. They were all so cordial and happy, and so delighted with my baby, that I felt better pleased with the visit than I thought I should.

Our conversation for once took an unexpected turn, and somewhat an elevated tone; the theme was the very one, of all others, that I have often wished to broach, the propriety of that universal excuse, "Not at home!"

Mrs. Mader declared she could see no harm in such a very little white lie, for in one sense we were not at home—*to company!* She found it a most convenient thing for bores, and if she had a headache, or wanted a day for herself, she did not scruple to use it.

"I shall remember that!" said Mrs. Granger, laughing.

"Oh! to my intimate friends I *am*, of course, *always* at home," replied Mrs. Mader, blushing; "but now confess that you use this subterfuge occasionally, though you *are* a professor. You certainly can not always see your immense circle of visitors at all hours."

"I certainly can not; but I believe I never sent that message to the door but once—and for that once," she

continued, a very painful look crossing her sweet face, "I shall never forgive myself. It was some few years after I became a Christian; and when I told my servant that morning to say 'not at home' to whoever might call, except she knew the person, and it was a very near friend, I felt my cheeks tingle; and the girl's look of surprise mortified me consciously. But she went about her duties, and I about mine; sometimes pleased that I had adopted a convenient fashion by which I could secure much more time to myself, sometimes painfully smitten with the reproaches of my conscience.

"Well, the day wore away, but left me with a good consummation to my fancied duties, and a wretchedly accusing spirit.

"When husband came home, he startled me with the news that a very near and intimate friend was dead.

"It can not be," I replied; "for she exacted from me a solemn promise that I would, alone, sit by her dying pillow, as she had something of great importance to divulge. You are misinformed; no one has been for me;" and here, suddenly, a horrible suspicion crossed my mind.

"She sent for you, but you were not at home," said Mr. Granger, innocently; and then he continued, "I am sorry, for Charles, her husband, says that he thinks her distress was much aggravated by your absence, from the fact that she called your name piteously. He would have sought after you, but the servant said *she did not know where you had gone!* I am sorry. You must have been out longer than you usually are, for Charles sent his man over here three times."

Never in all my life did I experience such intense

loathing of myself, such utter humiliation. My servant had gone further than I; but I had placed it out of my power to reprove her by my own equivocation. I felt humbled to the very dust; and the next day I resolved, over the cold clay of my friend, that I would never, under any circumstances, say "Not at home!"

"But did you find out the secret?" asked Mrs. Mader.

"Never; it died with her. It was in relation to a little child in the family, over whom there is a lawsuit pending; and I have always felt painfully conscious that I might have received information by which the child would be greatly benefited."

"That reminds me of a similar circumstance that occurred in my husband's practice," said Mrs. Doctor Mader. "When we first moved to the city, we were very intimately acquainted with Justice Allan's family, who lived in the suburbs, in a very beautiful mansion. The doctor called there quite often as a friend and acquaintance. Mrs. Allan had but one child, a son, some five years old, a little angel in looks and disposition, and as complete an idol as ever shared the love of two devoted hearts. One day my husband rode by, and, as was his wont, stopped there a moment; but a green servant met him, and told him the mistress was not at home; so he drove off again. Some two hours after, he came back, and was surprised when I told him that Justice Allan's man had been after him long ago; that Mrs. Allan was nearly crazy, and the child dying, having accidentally swallowed poison. He hurried back; the house was thronged with doctors, and little Eugene laid just breathing his last. He ascertained what time the accident occurred, and found that, had he not been

misinformed at the period of his first visit, he could easily have saved his life. When Mrs. Allan learned that he had actually stood at her own door at the very moment of the discovery, her reason forsook her, and she has never since fully recovered. She had given strict orders that morning that she was at home to no one; and, unfortunately, a physician could not be found till nearly an hour too late. So, since that, husband detests the practice. He would be quite angry with me if he knew me to say 'Not at home' to any one. But what can I do, when my visiting-list is so large? One would not like to send down an excuse; for my part, I don't see how you get along!"

"I do very well without resorting to an absolute falsehood."

"Oh! you can't call it a lie," exclaimed Mrs. Mader, much mortified.

"Then, what is it?" asked Mrs. Granger.

"Why, certainly, not exactly a lie!" and then she hesitated.

"What else can you call it? Suppose I should tell a friend, who might happen to ask me, that I had not visited Mrs. Golding to-day."

"Why! of course it would be false."

"Well, and where is the difference, if Mrs. Golding had sent word that she was not at home? Certainly, we should have felt bound to believe the correctness of the message."

I felt uncomfortable: Mrs. Mader looked uneasily toward the door.

"Besides," chimed in little Mrs. Ringgold, who had been quite silent, "I think it leads to loss of confidence in one's friends. We can not tell those who would

wantonly deceive us from others who would not, for worlds, give us a false impression. And when we must think, from surrounding appearances, that it is but a subterfuge, our feelings are wounded."

"It is an ugly way of displaying one's partiality, too," said Mrs. Granger. "For instance, I take particular pains to call on Mrs. Mader to-day: she is 'not at home.' I regret it, leave my card, and to-morrow meet Mrs. A—— and Miss C——, and understand from them that they yesterday spent a delightful hour with Mrs. Mader; and at the very time that lady was 'not at home' to me, they were chatting quite cosily in her parlor."

I don't think Mrs. Granger hinted at any thing of the kind; but Mrs. Mader's cheeks were scarlet. If she did not take it home, I did.

"But what shall we do?" asked Mrs. Doctor Mader, after a long pause.

"Send down the true reason for your non-appearance—you are engaged, or not well, as the case may be, but will see them at such an hour. Act the Christian's part, listen to the promptings of conscience; better offend an acquaintance than burden the soul with a falsehood."

"But when one has come from a great distance?"

"Oh! we can easily ascertain by card whether it would be rudeness to decline in such cases; but even then, if the friend comes in a carriage, it is not much trouble to ride away, and no *rational* person will consider it an affront. Certainly, it is better than, as Mrs. Ringgold says, to wound one's feelings, as it assuredly does to be so cavalierly treated—to be obliged to swallow a falsehood."

Now, in many places where I go, I can tell, by the very air of the household, that the smiling "not at home" of the sleek servant is false, and I dare say many feel the same who come here. I have almost resolved to act upon Mrs. Granger's plan; it is shocking, this daily round of deception. How far we who live fashionably stray from the pure commandments of God! Once the very thought of an untruth would have made me shiver with horror!

Poor Mrs. Allan, how sad was the fate of her little babe! How thrilling to think that just in the emergency means for restoration were at hand, and all lost by what she considered a harmless white lie!

Attended church yesterday in the afternoon; carried Herbert and Alice in their new dresses. They were quite prominent objects of interest. Mr. M—— (he is a graceful preacher) officiated. He has a magnificent person, curling black hair, dark eyes, and preached a delightful sermon; a sparkling, original, witty discourse, if I may add the last clause with propriety. I do not remember much of it, though.

It was one peculiarity of Mr. Lansden, that he seemed to impress his thoughts upon the mind, so that they could be recalled any time with distinctness. Like a beautiful face that has once struck the vision, one could dwell upon them with pleasure at the most distant period. I can think of many of his living sermons now.

THE INEBRIATE'S WIFE.

Have been out buying some pretty new caps for mother. Got fatigued and faint, and very imprudently eat a slice of mince-pie, and drank more than my usual quantity of wine.

Mr. Brookfield came home with Herbert to supper; was obliged to exert myself, but believe it did no good. He would make me play, but I could not, and did not do myself justice. Then he took my harp and struck its chords like one inspired. How the music rolled out! leaping and quivering, and at times almost laughing.

Mr. Brookfield looks strangely. I wonder if his wife notices his altered mien? He certainly drinks to excess; he has been drinking to-day. Poor Gretta! her father is dead, and it is found that he was not so rich as has been supposed; in fact, not rich at all. He leaves nothing but a little landed property. Gretta is out of town, mourning for her loss. She loved her father.

I wonder that her husband could leave her at a time when she so much needs consolation. Poor Gretta! Brookfield is a drunkard. Husband says he noticed his situation to-day, and urged him to leave his boon companion, a notorious gambler. He pities him, but I foresee his ruin. Oh! I am so sorry for Gretta!

Have just packed away a box of silks and de laines, and a number of little things to send to mother. She has at last consented to visit me; to be sure, she will look and act a little unfashionable, but mother has such good sense, and is so lady-like in appearance and actions, that I shall not be ashamed to present her to any of my friends.

MY MOTHER'S DEATH.

What a world of misery has fallen on me! I am steeped to my very lips in sorrow. Oh! my mother! my mother!

I can scarcely hold my pen; I can hardly credit the reality of what has happened. Life is alternately light and shade, they tell me. Alas! my life is all shadow, and I am creeping slowly down its long vista, a reproach to myself, and a trouble to those I love.

My mother is dead! It is sudden, overwhelming news. Whither shall I turn for comfort? Every thing is blank, black around me; my heart sinks. Oh! that I too might die!

How *can* I write it? My dear mother is dead! The words mock me! Dead; and the burden on my conscience is that I have neglected her, and that because I have been ashamed of her homeliness, her want of knowledge pertaining to the fashion of this heartless world. How carefully she brought me up—my widowed mother, with her slender means; how she denied herself comforts that she might minister to my little wants; and how proud she was of what they once called my beauty. It is faded now!

I have been more like my former self lately; I was planning for so much comfort. I have had the room I thought she would like best all refurnished for her; I have gathered together a thousand little things she would love.

Once I thought of her slender wardrobe, her close Quaker caps, her ungarnished conversation, her old-fashioned ways—all these to array before my fashionable friends! And thus I lost honor, respect, in a certain sense, for one of the loveliest and best of mothers. And though I have repented of it again and again, my conscience will upbraid me forever and ever. May God forgive me! It is the only heartfelt prayer I have breathed since the days of my childhood.

Oh! blank of blanks! the house seems a vast tomb—its splendor wearies me. Oh! could I fall upon my mother's bosom but once more and breathe out my sorrow and my penitence there. Oh! that I could but see her smile again, wind my arms about her neck, feel her warm embrace. She can not be dead—she can not! Mother! word that I have abused—maternal heart that I have forsaken—wounded—now forever at rest in the grave!

I have seen my mother. I shall never forget that meek, white face—and the lips were mute—the gentle lips always ready to bless me! The eyes were dim that looked upon me so fondly. Mother, mother! I am alone! alone!

I have been to the little cottage where I was born, to weep above her placid face. Doubly endeared seemed every part of that old house; the floor in the wide kitchen was as white, and sanded just the same as when I was last there; but the form of my gentle parent laid in the little parlor opposite. Dreary sight! They wonder at my excessive grief; they would not, knew they my self-reproaches, the crushing weight of agony upon my spirits. As I stood by that coffin, I heard again the "God bless my daughter!" which was

murmured through smiles and tears on the morning of my wedding-day. I remembered the sad forebodings which sometimes sank in whispers within my heart when the rich stranger sought the favorite child—my wayward self. How she implored me to be humble, and bear my exaltation meekly; and yet how she could not help feeling flattered at the distinction which, for lack of humility, has not proved the greatest earthly blessing to the lowly-reared child.

They have laid her away; they have buried my living heart with her. It was in a storm; the rain dripped from the willows, the turf was soaked with water. The little white church where she has led me so often by the hand, looked gray through the mist. The very chirps were mournful as the birds hopped from branch to branch. Black, and oh! so fearful the grave yawned at my feet. I clung to Herbert in terror as I looked within. And then I thought she might not be dead, and I laid my hand again upon her forehead—stony cold! I shrieked; I could not master my feelings.

Mr. Lansden conducted the service. It was solemn, fearfully so. In his own way, he adapted his remarks to every person present. He spoke of her sweet resignation in the dying hour—so unexpected; he quoted the very words she had murmured:

> "Jesus can make a dying bed
> Feel soft as downy pillows are."

He told with unsteady voice how tenderly she had alluded to her children; and for that one away she had prayed with her failing breath, and commended her to her father's God.

I sobbed aloud. How could I help it? Herbert supported me, and oh! how I clung to him then. Suddenly

he filled the place of my mother. I could almost hear her whisper, "He will be more to thee now than ever!"

I could not look while they lowered the coffin. I shut my eyes tightly, and for a moment felt as if I cared not whether I ever opened them again. I wondered at Milly's calmness; she was so still—oh! so pale and still in her grief.

When I looked up, ten thousand prismatic colors flashed upon my sight. The sun had burst from the thick clouds, and every round globule caught a tint of beauty from his rays. Mr. Lansden was just saying, "*And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither the light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign forever and ever.*"

Every word sank into my soul, and I drank in the inspiration of the scene. My mother was then an angel! in heaven! glorious, radiant, and happy! Even now, while the low sonnets of lamentation were uttered over the grave of her body, her soul exulted in the sinless light of the beautiful city. Heaven never seemed so near to me before. It was but for a moment. The earth rattled upon her grave; the clouds grew gloomy and drifted together; a quick, heavy shower pattered against the leaves; the branches swung and sighed; the grass crept closer to the graves; and at my foot a slimy worm, thrown up with the clods, writhed and dragged himself along. My heart grew sick again. "That worm, feasting on corruption!" I thought, must it all come to this?

We walked slowly out through the narrow gravel-walks, over which somebody had dropped flowers, red and white flowers, and sprays of mignionette; and they

had faded there. The old sexton stood at the gate with his hat off, out of respect; and I just caught the words, "God bless her!" as I passed him. Milly began, for the first time, to weep, as the carriage drove away. Poor child! she was leaving a kind mother—strange! horrible thought—underground; shut out from the sweet light, the soft air, the beautiful flowers. Oh! that dark, cruel, cruel grave!

When we had returned, the rain had ceased again. A flood of sunshine bathed the little cottage. The jasmine loaded the air with its perfume. It seemed as if every thing around that house looked, for the moment, doubly beautiful. The dark background of clouds, not yet broken, was the only thing in unison with the sadness of our spirits.

"She is not there now!" sobbed poor Milly, as we saw the top of the old chair in which she always sat at the west window.

"Nor ever will be!" I replied, while a choking feeling almost stopped my breath. Miss Susan had arrived there before us, and now she was setting the table, often, as she moved from thence to the closet, wiping her eyes with the old white apron. She said nothing; but we could see how she felt. She loved my mother. Who that knew her did not?

How desolate! oh! how desolate! There was the little, low chair by the corner; a stand by its side, on which laid the family Bible; and there too, lying sadly, as if conscious that their work was done, my mother's old spectacles were folded on the green baize cover. I bent over, and took up her little work-basket: every thing was in order; her work all arranged; her little book of "Daily Food" in its old nook. I took it

from thence, and laid it in my bosom. I will read it as she did, God helping me.

We sat down to tea, but could not talk; at every turn our eyes met something that called up tears and sighs afresh. Here her choice flowers—her favorite geranium, just bursting into blossom; there a little porcelain vase that she had kept her pennies in for the church collection; but *she* was gone, and hard, indeed, it seemed to realize how far she slept beneath our feet.

Uncle came in after supper. He cheered us all with his Christian words, and I began again to think of my mother as a ransomed spirit—to look less toward the grave; more toward heaven.

Milly concludes to stay with aunt and uncle. Mr. Lansden seems best suited with that plan. We shall return to-morrow: the house and all appertaining are Milly's.

If I had been as loving to my mother as I ought these past few years, I should feel this sore bereavement less, or, rather, differently. But I seem to have neglected her—forgotten her, in my round of giddy pleasures.

I am a mother—and yet I have not felt all these things before. I have seldom thought, Will my own children be ungrateful? Will they ever be ashamed of me when I am gray, and bent over with years? It would be just recompense—yet, forbid it, Heaven!

I have expended a large sum in gay clothing; it is wasted, for I must put on the sable hue that best will express the utter desolation of my soul.

I have an undefinable suspicion that Mr. Lansden will marry my sister. The time is approaching when she will need a protector. All farmer Hart's daughters are well mated. What a strange, strange world! —marrying and burying!

My health has almost entirely failed; have been obliged to engage another nurse for little Willy. Good Miss Susan, hearing I had the dyspepsia, has sent me three recipes, which she is certain will do me good, if any thing will. One is *burned comb and molasses;* another, burned egg-shells; another, brandy and salt. I feel very grateful for her kindness: she means well. Husband returns from business earlier than before to cheer me up. I can do nothing but complain; and, since my mother's death, life seems a blank.

I have been very calm for a week past, although I feel that my constitution is hopelessly ruined. Since mother has died, my nerves have been in so relaxed a state that I have seen no company, and that has induced a tranquillity that has long been foreign to me. I begin to love quiet, and almost wish I could pass the remainder of my days—for I feel I can not long remain here—in retirement. I believe I can be happy again—certainly my mind is in a very resigned and pleasant frame, although I suffer so much from this weakness.

Milly writes me word that she is as contented as she could expect to be, and that my good Quaker uncle and aunt are very kind.

THE NEW MINISTER.

HAVE had a visit from our new pastor to-day; can not say that I am quite as favorably impressed with him as with his predecessor. Do not know why, for he is graceful and dignified, and has altogether a very intellectual face and winning address; but he is plain-spoken, quite so. He called on me thus early (he has been here but a week) on account of my recent affliction, I suppose, and he certainly talked like a very zealous Christian, but made me feel uncomfortable; his tones are so decided, his eyes so piercing, there is so much weight in every word he utters. He does not seem at all backward in speaking as he thinks. In a less elegant person, it would be called bluntness.

His conversation was confined entirely to religious topics, unlike Mr. ——, who always kept up a little desultory chit-chat, which made one good-humored and pleased with one's self. I did feel strangely at first, when he advocated the prevailing and fashionable amusements of the day so unqualifiedly; for I was reared to look upon these things as follies, if not sins. Still, although I became accustomed to this, I have always felt that he neglected the one great theme—certainly too much for *my* good!

On reviewing the past interview, I can not but remember the very pleasing manner of our new pastor, and I begin to think that, perhaps, my self-love and pride were a little wounded; for, after talking with

him a short time, my complacency had vanished, and given way to a sort of uneasy, reproachful feeling.

I spoke too confidently of my own peace—with too little heart. He must have seen that my profession is of more moment to me than my religion. It is, no doubt, as he said—the death of my mother, the absence of excitement, my own feeble health, and perfect security against want, and the common trials incident to poverty, have contributed to make me resigned; but alas! more torpid than meek, more indifferent than religious. His deep eyes read my soul, I am sure; for even now I feel that, were my health reasonably good, and were the circumstances in which I am placed different, I should rush headlong into fashionable dissipation again.

There is something wanting, not only in myself, but scores of our members whom I could name.

How applicable seemed the passage of Scripture which he repeated; it never sounded before as it did this afternoon—withal, it reproached me. It was this: "*Pure religion, and undefiled before God and the Father, is this, to visit the widow and the fatherless in their affliction, and to keep ourselves unspotted from the world;*" all of which I have never done—therefore how can I be a true Christian? This is a serious thought to one as responsible as myself, and I fear I can not answer the question. I can only hope that something may happen that will lead my mind, truly and fervently, in the right direction.

GRETTA'S SORROW.

"Brookfield is going down rapidly," said my husband to-night. "Have you seen his wife lately?"

I told him I had not; that I had heard they lived in greater splendor than their income warranted.

"You did not know then that Gretta was a mother?"

I did not, indeed, and was startled at the intelligence. Husband thinks that Brookfield is a gamester, and says he shall no longer encourage his acquaintance.

I must call there to-morrow.

Have not been able to visit Mrs. Brookfield till yesterday. Took the carriage and drove round; for I knew she was anxious to see me; and so, though it rained hard, and I was far from well, I ventured out.

When I got there, the nurse told me that Mrs. Brookfield was lying down and asleep; but would I go in the parlor and wait? I told her to take me into the nursery; that I was an intimate friend, and the lady would not be displeased.

I have never seen the interior of her house before, and I must say I was surprised at the elegance displayed on every hand. Even the nursery was decorated with all the gorgeousness of an Eastern harem; silver and blue ornamented the delicate furniture, and satin draperies hung gleaming from the bed; velvet ottomans lined the sides, and luxuriant carpets yielded softly to the foot. I heard in the stillness a little, quick, gasping breath, that proceeded from an exceedingly fairy-like and richly ornamented crib, over which a superb miniature satin coverlid was thrown, and I went there softly to look at the baby. It was a tiny child, but exceedingly lovely—so tiny, that its little form was scarcely discernible beneath the soft texture spread above it; so ethereal, with its lovely little head flecked by a few gossamer and golden tresses; its features minute, yet regularly beautiful; its waxen, doll-like hands shining with that painful transparency which always indicates ill health; and its purpling, heavily-fringed eyelids closed in deep slumber.

And while I stood there, Gretta came softly, and laid her hands on my shoulders. She startled me; and even more as I turned round and kissed her, she was so altered. It did not seem that she could be the Gretta of old! Her large eyes were sunken, and a line of light blue circled them. A sort of despair looked out occasionally from those eyes, as a haggard face will look through prison bars, darting away at the slightest chance of observation.

For a long while she avoided my direct glances; but at last I said, "Gretta, you are unhappy!" Then she flung herself into my arms, and wept, oh! so bitterly.

"I would not tell you; but you must know it, you must have seen it; you have noticed, dear Mrs. Golding, at your own house!"

I knew immediately that she referred to her husband's habits of intemperance, which have grown upon him till he is their slave. I could hardly forbear my tears. I have always felt unusual interest in her.

"Do you think any thing will save him? Can I do any thing to reform him? Oh! if you knew how many whole nights I spend in tears, and he not by my side,

you would pity me. Don't tell any one, dear Mrs. Golding," she implored, in most mournful accents; "I would not for the world—and yet all my friends know it!" she added, despondingly.

Poor child! I consoled her the best I knew how, and she begged me, again and again, not to neglect her. I felt, as I crossed the beautiful hall profusely adorned with statuary, and my feet sunk down into the soft carpet, how many aching hearts there were under the trappings of wealth—how much misery there may be in the fashionable limits of ——— Square.

I am lonesome to-night. Have been in the nursery to see the children play with their new gifts, but their noise almost distracted me. I take very little pleasure in my children; I am always so sick.

Was surprised to-night, at the supper table, to see husband, who is so abstemious, drink wine immoderately, and even offer it to the children. I did not like it; and were it not that I have perfect faith in his high sense of honor, I should fear for him. Seeing Gretta, and hearing what I did, has made me nervous.

But Herbert does seem altered. Until last night, he has been home much earlier—it was nearly eleven; although, poor man! he is not very congenial company, his head is so full of business matters. He certainly acts somewhat strangely when he does come, and if I had not perfect faith in his integrity, I should fear—

He told me not to sit up for him. I wonder where he is gone? not to any convivial party, I hope. I remember once mother wrote me to be careful and entertain him at home, so he might not frequent clubs and societies. Can it be that my constant complaining has wearied him?

But these are foolish notions—and I am so nervous. Perhaps he *is* tired of hearing my murmurings and seeing my pale face. Well, if so, I am sorry; I can not help it, I am sure; it is bad enough to suffer as I do, from morning till night. Sometimes he says that exercise would be my best physician. What can I do? I have nothing to do!

If I go into the kitchen, Mary will hint that it is not my place; and it would look strange, indeed, for me, in my precarious health, to send away nursery-maid and chamber-maid. The idea is ridiculous. While Herbert can pay for it, I do not think I shall be a drudge!

I could not even go with Mrs. Grove to see a destitute family to-day, because the carriage was in use. I *can not* walk!

Homeopathy does me no good. My physician says, "Diet!" I can not diet. Even now my appetite is outrageous, although I have eaten cold ham since supper. I believe I will order Mary to bring me up some trifles; they are rich, to be sure, but so light and delicate!

What a horrible thing this appetite is when it masters one! Husband says, "Don't indulge it; deny yourself." As well might he say to the ocean in a storm, "Be calm." Food is the only thing I enjoy, while it lasts, and I *will* eat!

There is my darling little Alice standing at the door; she wants her good-night kiss. What a fairy beauty the perfect little creature has; no wonder her father almost worships her.

She does not dream I am writing about her, the pretty one, as she glances so coyly at me, thinking to

surprise me so much when I shall look up. I can not liken her to any thing earthly as she stands there, with her slight waxen fingers partly raised, her soft blue eyes gleaming like two glorious stars, her locks, fairer than gold, flecking her spotless bosom, her bright, red lips apart, her soft, white brow unsullied by a single wayward passion.

Oh! beautiful childhood; careless, happy, innocent childhood! why do thy blessed angels forsake us on the threshold of maturity? They do not—they do not, my heart whispers; we grieve them away, and welcome in their stead baser spirits, ambition and envy. So with these we go hand in hand through life, though like scorpions they sting us, or turn our dearest joys into bitterness and misery.

Me moralizing! Well, well, it is time to lay down my pen. Such thoughts do *me* no good. There are better pleasures than those I pursue, I am aware; but I am weak, wayward, and the period has passed when I felt my nature was fitted for nobler things. At times something whispers of a better future; but alas!—

I must put aside my journal. I hear husband's foot upon the stairs.

THE ANGEL HAND.

My dear babe is just pronounced convalescent. Day after day I have looked upon him as I deemed for the last time in life. Last night we thought him dying, but the darling struggled through, and this morning the doctor says he will live. I never shall forget my feelings as I knelt, though all weary, yet strong, by his little couch. I seemed to see death tints stealing over his face; but he slept, blessed be God, and awakened to life, and, perhaps, returning health. It was almost as if he were given back from the grave.

Hours with the dying—how wearily they glide away! How heavy their footfall upon our hearts! How full of gloom, how dark with woe, how interminable they seem! Alas! I have watched with the dying! I have seen the icy hands stretched out toward me, and felt the mute eloquence of imploring glances that seem so mournfully to utter, "Save me, help me! Will you not snatch me from these cold waves that are surging over my heart and stifling my breath? Must I go alone through this deep river?"

Years ago, when I was very young, and little accustomed to the stern face of sorrow, I called in, late one evening, to see the sick child of a neighbor. It was the last of four little ones who had died in succession at a very tender age. Beauty, even then, when illness had emaciated, and convulsions distorted its face, lingered around every tiny feature. The mother sat by

the head of her child, pale, grieving, and exhausted. She had doemed night after night the very last of the little angel's sojourning with her, and so she had watched herself, declining the offered services of friends, till nature was utterly exhausted. I saw the large tears gather and stand trembling between her half-closed lids as I asked if the little one was better, and I, too, turned away to weep as she mournfully shook her head and strove to answer, but could not. The babe was somewhat quiet then; it looked calm and holy in the soft light of that chamber—so holy, that, when I gazed upon it, I forgot my fear of death, and felt peaceful—strangely so for one of so careless a nature as I then was. I turned to the mother, and, pointing to the babe, said, "Let me sit here while you lie down and rest a while; if there is any change, I will call you." It needed not much entreaty to cause her compliance with my request. She sought her couch after one yearning glance at the babe, and, begging me to call her if it moved, she sank instantly to slumber.

And there I was, alone with the dying. For a while I sat, my eyes fastened upon those of the babe—those two blue orbs from which the sunlight had faded; now dull, yet soft and sweet in their expression, as they slowly moved from side to side under the veined and drooping lids. The lamp was trimmed to a mild, glow-worm light, and the snowy drapery of the bed and windows shone out ghastly in strong relief against the dark furniture of the room.

It was my first experience as a watcher. I had never before seen the fearful inroads of disease so stamped upon our frail humanity. An hour passed. I felt a strange awe creep over me, thrilling through every

fibre of my being, almost benumbing all my faculties of thought and expression. I longed to speak, but dared scarcely draw my breath. To my fearful vision, the babe grew unearthly in its appearance. I knew not then that its innocent lips were quivering with the last agony; I thought not that the snowy covering on the sinless breast, seeming so like the fluttering wings of a white dove in that dim chamber, moved to the cadence of the labored breath for the last night on earth.

I bent lower over the child, and strove to fathom the mystery of its expression. Upon its brow I fancied I saw a pale, beautiful, glimmering light, a halo that was not of time; yet a drapery of blue shadows was gathered around the pallid lips, and clouding yet more darkly the now wide open and glaring eyes.

A spasm passed over the face, sharp but transitory; the sweet features were instantly composed again, but I was so terrified that for a moment I was speechless and transfixed. The chamber was awfully solemn to me in its stillness! Not a motion was there—not a sound save the deep, hard breathing of the worn-out mother. For a while I was irresolute whether to call her from her slumber, the first she had had for days, or not. Twice I stood by her, my hand upon her arm, but the extreme exhaustion of her pale countenance reproached me; and, conquering my weak fears with a great effort, I stole back to the little cradle. My heart beat fast and loud, but I nerved myself to firmness, and wiped from the soft brow the dewy damps that had gathered upon it. All kinds of strange fancies grouped themselves in my brain, or flitted aimlessly through the chambers of my mind. Were there angels around me? Could I pierce the veil that sepa-

rated me from the invisible, what should I behold? A mighty form, a great, grim skeleton, with hollow sockets and fleshless face, wooing the warm breath from the gentle child that had never known harm, and pressing upon his little breast with his hard, icy hand! I almost felt his presence, and cowered, weak and trembling, closer to the cradle. I almost saw the gleaming of his merciless scythe, blinding the sweet eyes of the babe with its fatal flashing. A chill from its hideous mouth came over me, lifting the hair from my brow; I loathed, I hated death—cruel, pitiless, destroying death!—blighting the fairest flowers, snatching from love its most precious treasures.

These emotions of terror fearfully increased, and I started, determined to waken the sleeping parent, and have at least a sharer in my horror, when my eye was arrested by the face of the babe; it was, oh! so heavenly, so perfectly lovely. I forgot my terror once more; I involuntarily cast my eye upward, as if to fathom the glories revealed to the little one, when, just over the head of the cradle, with one finger pointing significantly downward, I saw a beautiful little hand, a cherub hand, of the most delicate and exquisite mould, yet so ethereal that it seemed as if a breath would dissolve it. A little ruff stood out around the wrist, and beyond that an impalpable white cloud floated, faintly blending, at the distance of a span, with the atmosphere. I shall never forget it, nor the emotions it awakened in my bosom. "The babe is surrounded by angels!" was my first thought, "and its almost ransomed spirit is now communing with them. They are beckoning with their white hands, and this dear one will soon join the holy band!" My dread had passed away. Death seemed kindly now; its crown of terror and sceptre of iron were gone. It was one of God's ministers.

I did not waken the mother. She slept another hour, and then, composed, refreshed, joined me in my vigils. The next morning a white cloth shrouded the baby and the cradle. The soul had gone up to the great jubilee—the bright jewel studded the crown of the Redeemer! And while I gazed with weeping eyes upon the beautiful dead, an inexpressible joy settled upon my spirit as I remembered my vision, and felt that the soft clasp of the cherub in heaven was now twined with that of the angel hand.

LITTLE HERBERT'S TRANSGRESSION.

YESTERDAY the accomplished principal of the L—— school called upon me. I was delighted to see him, for I anticipated good tidings of my little son, who has been there now three years. Besides, the visit itself was an honor, for Sidney Vale mingles in the first society every where. He is a man distinguished for his learning and talents, and those, I find, have more weight with the really cultivated and refined, in the higher walks of life, than the possession of wealth. I greeted him cordially, and did not perceive, in my eagerness to show him proper and marked attention, that his brow was somewhat clouded, and he appeared at times disturbed in manner. However, it became so visible at last, that I could not but feel annoyed; and, after a little forced conversation, there was a pause—to me a painful silence. At last I ventured to inquire after my son, and of the progress he was making.

Ah! shall I ever forget the impression his answer made upon my heart? I know not why I did not sink, utterly powerless, to the ground. Even now I tremble at the recollection. I tremble in view of the future.

"Your son is a fine scholar, madam," said the principal, in a low tone. "He has genius, which, with the proper training, will fit him for the most exalted position. He has a good temper and a warm heart; but, with all these, he has one or two great faults, of which I hope, madam, you will allow me to speak freely."

I said nothing: I was fearful—stricken with a vague tremor.

"I deemed it best to call upon you myself," he continued, "feeling a greater interest in the child on that sad account, and, and—really, madam, it is an unpleasant duty—I am a parent—I can appreciate your feelings. Still, it is best that you should know all.

"Your little son, madam, has at various times taken articles of value belonging to other boys. This fact I was unwilling to believe until it was forced upon me, and until I actually saw in his possession a penknife of exquisite workmanship, which I had awarded to one of my pupils as proof of my satisfaction, and which I had ordered to be made. I can not but feel pity for the child. He does not seem depraved at all; and I would have taken the toy away from him, and punished him in my own way, but a strict sense of duty impelled me to call upon you, and to you alone unfold this indiscretion. Judging from what he told me, his nurse must be implicated in these matters. I fear you have an unprincipled woman to oversee your children; and as one of them is a little girl, she may do an incalculable amount of mischief before you are aware of her baseness."

"And the other things?" I murmured, half fainting.

"Those are not of so much moment," was his reply. "Still, persistence in trifling indiscretions lays the foundation for maturer sins; and if the child's heart is but slightly impressible, that of the man will be seared as with a hot iron. Your boy does not, I hope, willfully deceive; but he has a habit of leading others to think as he wishes, by little expedients unworthy so powerful an intellect. You, madam, can have great influ-

ence over him in these things, now you are aware of them. Domestics oftentimes ruin children by flattery and other odious means, so skillfully, too, that the parent is in the dark till the work is done, and the stain indelibly impressed. So firmly do I believe this, that I will allow no servants to have the care of my children out of the sight of their mother, who, although a delicate and sickly woman, takes sole charge of them herself."

How his face lighted up, and his dark eye too, when he spoke of his wife! Ah! how utterly worthless did I feel myself then! Never before did I dream of my dreadful accountability; never before did I so feel my guilt in neglecting the charge God has given me in training these young immortals. I had forgotten that they were immortal. I have not yet told husband. I dare not. As it is, he is troubled somewhat—though, alas! I have not his confidence. He is anxious, dispirited. Have I not cause for anxiety? More things the principal told me, but my heart is too heavy to note them now.

I see my boy from where I sit; the wind plays freely with his long curls, floating them across his unstained brow. But how is it with his little heart? His satchel swings from his shoulder, his eyes sparkle, his cheeks glow with exercise. It is not often he looks thus. But I must not meet him yet. I must sit by myself, and collect my thoughts; I must think over the words of Sidney Vale; I wish to impress them on my memory, that they may serve as a continual warning.

He said Herbert had an inordinate desire for delicacies, and was constantly bringing sweetmeats to school and feeding upon them.

Well, I have always allowed him free access to the pantry, never thinking, as I am accustomed to eat every thing, that they would injure him (and how could I blame the child for indulging in what I love, and can not possibly deny myself?). But the accomplished and gentlemanly principal has lifted another veil from my eyes, and I behold the dreadful danger threatening my boy. "An improper indulgence in rich and highly-seasoned food," he says, "has an effect, not only upon the body, but the imagination, and the whole moral being."

To one with a highly susceptible temperament and fine organization, with a mind so liable to be overwrought, as of itself to feed upon life and wear it away, it is like adding fuel to flame. It stimulates the passions, and brings them prematurely into action; it weakens the power to resist temptation in more forms than one. It renders the blood, which should flow steadily onward, like the pure river from its exhaustless fountain, thick and turbid in its swollen veins; it makes the glutton, the drunkard, and, finally, the debased and ruined debauchee. More vile animal natures in mature life are caused by this sinful indulgence, fostered by parents, than the community is aware of; more criminals fill the lonely cell, and sleep upon the damp flags of prison floors, brought there directly through this very agent, than can be estimated.

Alas! I tremble when I say it—the boy loves wine already!

I can not think of all he said with reference to company, kindred spirits, disease in a thousand forms, but I remember enough. The question with me now is, Shall I have influence over the child? Too late I find

that this indulgence of appetite and inactivity of life have had a most deleterious effect upon me. Too late, I fear, this warning has come; for, startling as the truth seems to my own impaired mind, I can not live without my usual draught, day by day.

Have dismissed my nurse, and am astonished that I did not discern her true character before. It seems that the younger children have been for some time in mortal fear of her. She has even taken articles dishonestly, and used the children as a means for procuring them. She has taught them petty deceits, which, skilled as I am in fashionable diplomacy, seem perfectly horrible to me. Ah! this giving little ones to the care of domestics! This neglecting them for fashion and pleasure, and placing them under vicious example, leaving them to form habits never to be wholly corrected, to imbibe principles never to be entirely counteracted!

Well, thank God! I am at last awake; the paralyzing stupor, of which I have been the willing victim, is passing off—for a while. Sick and suffering as I am in mind and body, I will make a determination to take care of my children myself. When I feel my incompetency, I shrink back; yet, when I realize my delinquency in neglecting what every mother should deem the most sacred of all her duties, I am shocked, pained beyond description. I find that my life has been all wrong, and I have no courage, no will, nothing to buoy me up in my new resolves, save the recollection of my sainted mother's example. Have not yet spoken to my son. How shall I gather courage? In what way address him? I can not be harsh, for the child has been as much sinned against as sinning.

To-day is my child's birth-day, and I must improve this opportunity to tell him that which has been disclosed to me by his preceptor. The frowns gather on my husband's brow, and I can no longer doubt that some severe misfortune has befallen him.

Heard footsteps to-day, after dinner, in the drawing-room; went in, and found husband pacing rapidly back and forth. There was gloom in his eye, such as I have often observed of late; but, although he looked as if he did not wish my presence, I went softly in, and, stealing to his side, wound my arm around him, and walked with him. He moderated his pace, and gazed down, half smiling, yet the glance was far from a happy one.

"You are not in good spirits," I said. "Something troubles you!"

"Oh, it is nothing!" he replied, with a sort of absent manner, and then asked me some trifling question about household matters.

I answered him; but could not help recurring to his melancholy mood again.

"The weather affects me," he answered lightly, and then suddenly asked, "Have you that sixty dollars I gave you last week?"

I had but ten, and told him so; I had been making presents to the girls, and getting a few trifles for Willy. He seemed a little annoyed, and, stopping before the mirror, eyed its proportions, and, I thought, grew suddenly pale. I was frightened; for he clasped his hands before his eyes and groaned. I led him to the sofa, and, making him sit down, passed my hand soothingly across his forehead; it was hot and dry. Presently he grew better, and said again, he believed the

gloomy weather was affecting him; so he laid down, and threw his handkerchief over his face. Knowing his passion for music, and suspecting that he had met with some disappointment, I stole softly to my harp, and sang an old, old song that I have not heard since I came from home. The air was sweet and plaintive, and the words were very soothing, the refrain to each stanza being,

> "For the ravens
> They are fed;
> Birds of air they be;
> If the Lord
> Have care for them,
> Will He not for thee?"

I was startled by his earnest ejaculation, "Thank God!" as he arose from his seat and came and bent over me. Something fell upon my forehead. I put my hand there; it was a tear. I did not dare look up. I felt strangely oppressed; I knew not what to fear or hope. Immediately afterward he went out. Well, time will tell. How these words ring through my brain:

> "If the Lord
> Have care for them,
> Will He not for thee?"

But that tear! It is a wild, wild March morning. A storm is howling through the streets, and the rain taps at the panes, as if rudely asking for admission. Presently it comes with an angry gust, and driving spray sheets the window. The flood sweeps down the pavement, whirling and tossing, and breaking into miniature cataracts where it leaps over the curb-stone. Now and then a carriage looms dimly through the thickening atmosphere, the driver bending his head to

shirk the cutting blast, and using his whip in lieu of his tongue. No one is out. I was too quick; yonder goes a poor girl with scarcely covering enough to protect her. Her thin white shawl is dripping; her shoes are evidently wet through and through again; her dress is black with gutter-mud. Poor thing! how closely she holds her bonnet. There—the wind had almost taken it. The string is broken, and the distressed object has sought refuge on Captain Baker's door-step while she readjusts it. I am glad; the girl has come out and asked her into the house. They are benevolent people, those Bakers! I have heard that Mrs. Baker supports a number of poor families.

I sit in my chamber, both rejoicing and trembling. My boy stands by my side with quivering lip and downcast eye. His hand is working nervously in the folds of my dress. I do not disturb him by word or look, for I know his thoughts are serious. My task has commenced. To-day I have told him all I have heard with reference to his school character, and I trust I performed my duty as became a mother. At first how hard it was to listen to his denials, his protestations, almost fierce in their determination; to see the red blood paint the fair cheeks of my child an angry scarlet; to behold the fire of a wayward and indulged temper flashing from his eyes, and a scornful smile, too mature for one so young, curving his lips into deformity.

All this was painful, for it was my first experience in government, my first real correction; but I strove to be gentle as well as firm. I remembered my own errors, the contagious example of the nurse; I mourned over him, and, finally, subdued him to tears.

I had conquered. He owned all, and wept and sobbed his penitence; he is even willing to confess his fault to his teacher, and make reparation as far as he can. He has a noble heart, and I will strive, God being my helper, to fill it with generous impulses, and warm, good affections. There is yet time; but oh! the terrible influence of a crowded city upon the young. I sometimes wish I was obscure and unknown, away in some lonely dell, with the flowers, and the trees, and the birds, with my husband and little ones around me, free from the carking care that fashion and wealth induce.

I can not forbear, at times, gazing around me with new and strange delight. I sit in the nursery, which long ago should have been my place, and mine only, with my babes all near me. The golden hair of my Alice streams over the little pillow of her crib, and her blue eyes are half unclosed, as if waking up to the bright reality of some beautiful vision; her pretty lips seem yet to breathe, "And will you stay with us always, and have no more naughty nurses, dear mamma?" Ah! but this is a sweet place! How little I knew before of happiness!

My boy is asleep, his head resting against my lap. The tears still wet his lashes, and occasionally a low, almost inaudible sob comes up from his full heart. Such as he seems now, I think, must angels seem; for what child looks not pure and good in sleep? Oh! that these innocent ones, born to the inheritance of immortals, should be so often degraded by false teaching to the level of brutes, or worse, the companionship of fiends. My heart is too full for words, as I gaze upon him and think of the dreadful danger he has escaped.

My husband has talked strangely to-day of a coming crisis. What does he mean? Surely not that he shall fail? He never can be poor! I never can live without these refinements! My children must not be attired in coarse clothes, and denied the little luxuries and elegancies of life! But this is only a fancy of husband's. My doctor's bill, for myself and children, startled him a little to-day—a bill of $700—and perhaps he is somewhat pressed for money. I know even our first merchants have told me they should not fear if they were as safe as my husband. I will ask my old Quaker uncle to ascertain the truth: he has a way of eliciting such kind of information.

Am, as usual, languid in frame, suffering from the effects of drugs, which I now feel confident are eating into my vitals like slow poisons. To-day, made a solemn resolve to let medicine alone, after an interview with my good old Quaker uncle, who has spent the past week with us.

"I tell thee, Mary, it has lapped the rich bloom from thy young cheek—for thou art still young," said he, to-day. "There is a time thou need'st not fear, when the fever sets in, or thou art seriously ill, to hearken to the words and take the nostrums of a good, honest physician, one well skilled in pharmacy. Then he will do thee good; but he whom thou employest knoweth this day that he is doctoring thee for whims and for foolish sicknesses, brought on by thine own indulgences and folly." (Uncle is plain-spoken.) "But thou hast a long purse, and he hath a large family. He well knoweth thou wilt not be persuaded but that thou art very sadly diseased; and as thou wilt have a doctor, he might as well take the benefit of thy ills as any other. Doest thee blame his worldly policy?"

I have thought upon these remarks long and carefully, and now, live or die, I will doctor no longer.

My boy is *so* thoughtful—*so* tender. I talk with him daily; I keep him near me; I read to him and the rest of my little flock; I almost forget my sorrows—all but one; my husband is still sad and constrained.

Another letter from Miss Susan. She has troubles enough to tell me. The old cat is dead and buried. Many a worse puss than he was. The recollection of his mild pur carries me back, back to the little red cottage again. There sits Miss Susan now, gazing at the sky, and guessing "we're going to have a spell of dry weather," or "a rainy time;" and then knitting away for dear life, while Deb perches on her shoulder, or in a chair by her side—for Deb was entitled to great consideration. He always had his seat at the table with his mistress. I remember once the good old lady told me, with tears in her eyes, that when Debby should die she would have him buried under the peach-tree; "and then, you know," she added, "that will be a decent grave, and make fine peaches."

Now she says she is all alone in the wide world! "First Willy went; and now her dear, affectionate cat has left her for another and a better home!" She didn't mean to add that last clause, I know, but she forgot herself—she is *so* absent-minded. And another "misfortin" is, that the rats got to her nice leghorn, and "utterly spiled" it. She 'sposes she shall have to get another, and thinks, if it won't be unbecoming to her age, that she will be "obleeged" to have her old green silk—the one that was colored ten years ago, and that was once destined to be her wedding-dress—made into a bonnet, and put on the same yellow ribbon—now faded

—that was Willy's own choice. She says the thought was "digested" by seeing the butter-cup mixed in with the grass.

She writes Milly is growing as "hansum" as a "picter," and looks just as I did. Dear soul! she thought a deal of me.

I must collect my thoughts, though my brain reels with some vague terror. My uncle seems thoughtful, severe. Two or three times he has attempted to tell me something, and has restrained himself: I dare not urge him. He has been talking to my little son about self-control, manliness, denial, and submission. His remarks tend strangely to a sort of comforting; yet there is no trouble. I thought the conversation directed to me—ostensibly to my child. What cloud is now to lower upon my head? There *can* be no trouble.

I now know the extent of my misfortune, and, strange to say—I can not tell why—I am calm. Calm! perhaps it is utter indifference. I never had such feelings. And husband is silent—agonizing, I know. Oh! how justly he might upbraid me, and tell me I have, perhaps, ruined him by my extravagance. Yet, had he confided all to me, I would have been so careful. I am very calm—I am a wonder to myself. The house is still; it feels like the grave; it looks like the grave—like utter desolation; and there is a coldness in my heart that is kin to despair. Only the thought of my children saves me from a desire to die—to die this moment. One must be brought to this verge to attempt destruction; still, I am calm, and I *will* be calm. I strove to soothe my husband, and in return he spoke to me—passionately, and—but I have been to blame; bitterly do I repent. Of what avail is that? He stared

at me wildly, and told me that he was a bankrupt; ay, that we and ours were beggars. And then he raved; I could not stop him—I feared.

My babes sleep—happy, unconscious beings—they rest so quietly, so gently. *I* can not sleep. My husband paces the chamber overhead; I should tremble as I listen, only my good uncle is with him—my kind old uncle. He has influence over him, and he only. Poor husband! he has been so indulgent to me—too good, too kind; and now, I fear, he will hate me. God help me! I have been through every room and looked my last. Never before did I realize the lavish expenditure that has heaped together these costly things. I looked at them all, and took my leave of them as one would of some old friend.

Every thing is in order. I have no domestics now! Every article I have arranged with as much taste as I could—all is pomp and glitter. To-morrow there will be strange forms trooping through these rooms of mine, rough hands will test the value of these heavy ornaments, rough voices jest unfeelingly upon the rich man's downfall; yet I am wonderfully calm, prepared for any event which may happen. What great change has come over my life's dream?

One room alone to-day is sacred to me. My children sit silently around, little comprehending the misfortune that has befallen us. "*Has* father failed?" whispered my little son this morning, as he came in from play; "the boys all laughed at me, and said that was the reason why I left school."

I told him it was too true! that he was now a poor boy, and must expect his companions to insult and deride him—those who had ignoble natures—and that he

would now be dependent on his own character for the little meed of friendship or sympathy that would henceforth be awarded him.

"I won't be a poor boy, mother, and go to the common school, and dress in coarse frocks, and play with poor children!" he pettishly answered, bursting into tears. But this is fruit of my own planting! My wayward son has been nursed on pride and luxury, and he will but stubbornly submit to be deprived of what he has been all his life accustomed to. It must be a sore trial to him. As to me, I am a wonder to myself. I believe this trouble has benefited me somewhat; for, although I shrink from the pity and contempt which will now be lavished upon my family, my nature seems to elevate itself above the circumstances that surround me. My husband, too, appears to regard me with astonishment. It is evident that he expected upbraidings, tears, hysterics, from his poor weak wife. He did not look for fortitude; he has not known me; I have not known myself. He, also, is beginning to arrange his affairs with something of calmness, now that the first shock is over. Strange as it may seem, we talked together more last evening than at any previous period of our wedded life. He has not for a long time thought himself secure, but feared to distress me with the intelligence; so he has suffered alone. Oh! why has he not given me his confidence? And, again, why should I ask the question? Have I not appeared a frivolous being? swallowed up in fashion, caring little for his interests, spending his money as if his sole object in life ought to be to furnish me with luxuries? I am certain that we should show ourselves true wives before we can have the confidence of our husbands;

and true wives are not mere parlor ornaments, but heart-sharers, advisers, helpers. My husband has confessed to me that he has sought to solace himself with wine, and thus drown his cares. He has now abandoned it forever, and so have I; yet I feel a most unnatural craving for stimulants. Should I give way now, I am lost; for the love of wine has gained a fearful ascendency over me, and I am yet feeble in health, and, alas! weak in my resolves.

UNHAPPY AGAIN.

Very soon the auction will commence. I will remain with my children till the sale is over, then we are to go with my good uncle to his quiet, though not elegant, home. I hear the tread of strangers; they are moving noisily through my rooms. Well, let them come and carry away this splendor; after all, they will leave that peace of mind that has emanated from good resolves. I shall begin to find by-and-by, I know, that happiness depends not upon possession of this world's goods. I feel very strong; but hush! my boasting heart. I have not yet been tried. I have not yet seen the cold look of summer friends, the averted face, the sneering smile—these will vex me sorely. And I have kept afar from me the thought that now, as my boy says, we shall be very poor, and for a long time poor. I dare not think of it. I must meet my fate as it comes—not anticipate.

I should not like to stay here to be cut by all my fashionable acquaintances. I judge others by myself, for I have looked contemptuously upon the fallen. I deserve the same cold neglect. No one has yet been near me, save Gretta and our good pastor, who, feeling for my real trouble, gave me much consolation, and talked more freely and feelingly than ever before.

Gretta came last evening. It was before husband returned; and I sat with my harp, playing now and then some mournful prelude, and thinking how deso-

late must have been the children of Israel as they sang the last melody before they hung their harps upon the willows. Gretta had heard all; and, like a true friend, she came to weep with me. And when I spoke of my sorrow in leaving the home to which I have become so accustomed, her tears fell afresh.

"Oh! you have so kind a husband!" she said, "so true-hearted and gentle! What do you care for this misfortune? You know not what it is to meet with upbraidings, and deserve them not. You know not what it is to feel your heart full of love, and have it changed to bitterness, and turned back to its fountain by the reproaches of—oh! how can I say it?—a husband. Alice, I speak truly. I would exchange all that we have of wealth and worldly honor for the little meed of sympathy for which my spirit yearns from poor Henri. But, alas! I never shall get it! I feel I never shall."

Gretta is broken-hearted. I read it in the expression of hopelessness that shadows her fine countenance.

We stood in the embrasure of the window. The hour was calmly beautiful. The full moon laid her white mantle over the sparkling snow, and hung the icy peaks upon the houses with diamonds. The light was so vivid that it seemed like a faint sunshine in an early dawn. Suddenly, Gretta laid her head upon my shoulder, and burst into a violent fit of sobbing. Alarmed, I exclaimed, "Dear Gretta, why are you so strangely grieved?" I passed my arm around her waist, and felt how her frail form shook.

"I was thinking of years ago," she murmured, "when Henri and I passed such evenings as these together—how in France, when we traveled, we would

sit in the vineyards, and in Germany wander among old castles, and together feast upon the grand and beautiful. Now every thing is so changed! My father is dead. My husband neglects me. I have but one earthly comfort—my babe; and he, too, is so frail, I fear I can not keep him long."

Striving to comfort her, I felt that, for my own foolish repining, I deserved not to be forgiven.

No one has since been near me; but I can not expect callers, and I do not wish to see them now. I shall find out soon enough who are my friends.

DOMESTICS.

To-morrow the sale commences. Every thing shall be given up, even to my harp. Never mind, I have cherished Miss Susan's little old guitar; if we are happy, I will make it speak our joy; and perhaps we *may* be happy.

Husband says I must walk out this afternoon. I have secluded myself too long; he insists upon it, so I will go and try to comfort poor Gretta. It may be the last time I shall see her. Something tells me she is not long for this world.

Gretta's child is very sick. She has not seen her husband yesterday or to-day. Herbert thinks he is concealed in some gambling saloon; he says he has heard reports that will ruin him if they are true. It is sad to think the innocent wife must suffer for his sins.

Had quite a laughable scene to-day, and have felt in better spirits ever since. Well, well! this fashion cuts queer capers, or, rather, its votaries do. Three sisters have frequently visited me—three delicate, fascinating, handsome girls, always attired in the very height of the prevailing mode.

In all things they are considered to be unexceptionable. They give one grand party a year, and live in one of the finest houses on —— Street. To be sure, I have often heard it remarked that the old gentleman's circumstances did not seem to warrant such style; but as

nobody ever saw the *internal arrangements*, it was considered all right.

As they have expressed so much and such undying affection for me, I thought I would call there, although it was a great exertion, I confess; for I am unused to walking of late.

I rang at the door-bell, and no one answering, I thought I would take the liberty of walking in, as the door was unfastened, and I have always been intimate there.

Nobody was in the sitting-room, nobody in the parlor; loud laughter proceeded from below stairs, and so thoughtlessly I hurried down. I opened the kitchen door; shade of neatness, what a sight presented itself! The floor, carpetless, was discolored and dirty; a bit of a stove in the fire-place shone ruddy with a hot coal fire; a table was set on one side, with meagre fare and broken crockery, and a kettle without a nose sputtered away, the only thing unconcerned there.

It was four, and past visiting time, so work had just begun. Two great wash-tubs, a broken clothes-basket and clothes-pins, with dirty clothes, ornamented the floor, and Miss Mary and Miss Amelia, with tattered handkerchiefs thrown over their heads, and streaming down their shoulders, sleeves stripped up to their elbows, and dark, uncleanly frocks on, were emphatically *in the suds!* *Such* lugubrious looks as were interchanged; for I was as much astonished as they were mortified. The handkerchiefs were snatched off; but there was no reason in attempting to reduce the cluttered room to any degree of order. It couldn't be done. Now if they had laughed upon it as merrily as they were laughing a few moments before, I should

have felt immediately at my ease; but their lame excuses and real distress, their crimson cheeks and utterly awkward manner, made me uncomfortable, and put it out of my power to extricate myself from my ludicrous position.

Presently the door opened, and Eliza, the youngest daughter, who had apparently been in to a neighbor's for a moment, entered in all her finery; her beautiful satin dress held daintily up from the threshold, and truly there was need enough! It was evident that she was the one "set aside" to receive callers, if any should happen to come; and her sisters, on washing days and at particular hours, were "not at home!" Sometimes when I have been there, and undoubtedly this arrangement was not a new one, Eliza has told me that Mary was *engaged with her music*, and Amelia had *gone to take her riding lesson!*

Eliza was not a whit behind her sisters in expressing her chagrin; and though she invited me up stairs, and chatted on every thing with amazing volubility, she could not forget the meagre, poverty-stricken kitchen, and the disclosure, after all their maneuvering, that poor living and—to them—repulsive toil was the penalty with which they bought their foolish and expensive pleasures, a box in the opera, a promenade on the fashionable side of ——— Street, where they might be acknowledged as the *ton*—as Paris millinery, just out.

I could not forbear thinking of Mary's speech the last time she was at my house, that pa' had just bought her a seven hundred dollar piano, because the old one was not in good taste.

Dear father!

THE SALE.

Here we are, all gathered together in the little sitting-room. The curtains are gone, so I have closed the blinds. The whole suite of rooms on the first and second floors are heaped with our all of household goods—I had like to have said gods. But here there are only three poor chairs and one little pine table. I have dismissed all my servants; I really had no idea how much I was attached to them. They have stayed by me well, for I have been most inordinately indulgent, giving them, besides the best wages, clothes that were scarcely worn, and presents innumerable. Dear little Alice! her eyes are red now with grief. She was very fond of our chamber-maid, and she has been ranging through the empty rooms above, wondering why she has gone, and weeping for her most bitterly. But she has forgotten her sorrows in the new picture-book that uncle, whom she calls grandpa', presented her. Herbert has his little box of water-colors, and is busy painting a map, as he lies stretched out upon the floor. Little Willy sleeps in his crib, his angelic face peeping brightly out from the blanket. Hark! the rattle of carriages; the red flag streams from the window. Few pass the house; there is the noise of expectation in the street, and the thoughtless boys cry out "Auction! auction!"

I can hear the quick tread of the stranger and the jostling of the furniture below; now the sharp rat-tap

of the hammer. I wonder what they have begun on! Every thing will be sacrificed. No doubt many of my fashionable friends are bargaining for some choice *bijouterie* that they have often looked upon with envious eyes.

While Herbert was abroad, he obtained several rare vases, and numberless little ornaments that have been my especial pride, they were so chaste and beautiful. I know Mrs. Leston and Mrs. Vorighan will purchase as many as they can; for they have praised them extravagantly. Well, I hope they may enjoy their possession. Hark! the laugh and the jest below; and now there is a crash. What could it be? It brings to my mind mother's old story of the looking-glass and the red-haired sheriff. The murmur of voices reaches even here. How merry they are over our misfortune! and yet what else can I expect? Sympathy rarely extends far beyond the circle of the afflicted. They gain by our loss, and I have gained by *my* loss; my family seems ten-fold dearer to me.

We have just partaken of a frugal dinner. If there is one thing more than another to which it will be difficult for me to submit, it is the necessity of eating plain food. And my head throbs for want of my daily stimulus; delicacies have so long formed the staple of my nourishment that it seems impossible to do without them.

Sister Milly has come; what a great, beautiful girl she is growing! She seemed to sympathize with me so truly, and entered into all my feelings so readily, that I love her more than ever. She has a sunshiny temper, a way of always looking on the bright side. I had once; but I am not what I was. The moment I

begin to complain, it is the signal for her to throw off a whole shower of merry thoughts, and her wit is so sparkling that one can not long remain moody under its influence. Her laugh is enough of itself to dispel care; and she has a quiet way of pleasing children. Herbert declares that she is a "darling aunt," and has already made a bargain with her to live with us altogether. Alice has her white arms around her neck half the time, and I do believe Willy thinks she is something more than mortal! Her freshness and vivacity are worth all the stereotyped smiles and studied grace of the most courted city belles.

When I asked after the minister—ah, Milly! the blush and the little apologetic cough! I could not but laugh when she asked me, quite innocently, a moment afterward, if I thought Mr. Lansden was so very old!

The auctioneer has a harsh voice. Once in a while I hear "Going—going! gone!" and then I try to shut my ears to the sound, and my heart to the regret.

THE FLOWER-GIRL.

THE sale is over, and I fear my false strength is departing. Every thing is sacrificed. Ornaments that I chose myself from among the costliest stores of art have been, under the ruthless stroke of the hammer, bid to the tasteless purchaser for less than half their value. Candelabras of bronze and silver, for which, small as they are, I paid seventy-five dollars, that presuming Mrs. Brown, flashy and common, bought for ten dollars only! She rejoices in my misfortune, I am sure, as much as any one can.

I can not bear the sight of these empty rooms. I do not like to think that the home we have proudly called ours shall pass into other hands. My harp stood in yonder corner. Who will sweep its strings now? I can not forbear weeping. And I feel for my husband! He will miss his rare groups of statuary, his beautiful paintings, the music of my harp! I never saw a man so passionately fond of the arts. There was hardly an evening but what some child of genius sat in this very room. And what rich strains of music have floated through these parlors! What strange and rare stories of other lands have enriched our intellectual feast! Mr. Le Rand was wont to call it the artists' home! Many a struggling son of misfortune has been cheered by husband's bounty—generous in that as in every thing else. But he regrets it not.

After all, one can not help liking the luxuries that

wealth affords. It always made me laugh to hear my rich friends, lolling on crimson lounges, with a delicate fan in one hand, and a golden-chased vinaigrette or an eye-glass in the other, lisp about the sweets of the cottager! his freedom from care, his pleasant association with the beauties of nature! The country has charms, I allow; but it does not follow that those who daily associate with them must assimilate in mind or form. Indeed, they seldom or never appreciate a fine landscape or a magnificent sunrise. Many a farmer would rather hoe corn for a day than spend fifteen minutes in gazing upon a glorious sunset!

What do I miss so painfully? My beautiful flower-girl! I had promised it to little Alice. Husband tells me that the auction-dealer appropriated that to himself; and there it will stand, in his dingy office, for the dust to gather on its polished whiteness, and blacken the delicate roses that so life-like and natural are grouped in its little basket.

I have loved that marble creature, cold and passionless as she was. There is not such another exquisite piece of statuary in all the city. A poor Italian artist, dying with consumption, fashioned it; and, grateful for assistance rendered him by my husband, he devoted his failing energies to make it a triumph of his skill, that he might present it to us. Poor young creature! I shall never forget *him*, with his sad face, and slow, halting speech. When he would come here before his sickness, his pale cheek always gave me a pang at my heart. He was a spiritual kind of a young man, never interesting unless his passion for art overcame his timidity. Then the light would spread in his dark eyes, his whole face kindle with expression; and the hectic,

faint at first, but gathering brilliancy as it crept over his white cheeks, gave him an almost inspired look.

But at last for long days he was absent; and, after much inquiry, husband found him in poverty—even wanting for food! Too proud to crave assistance, he had determined to die alone; and undoubtedly would, but for this timely relief.

One day he begged my husband to carry me, his wife, to his lonely chamber. It was near sunset when we called upon him; and I, haughty that I was, would not drive up to his door in the poor court, but prevailed upon my husband to alight at the hotel in the square. So, leaving our carriage there, we walked up to the mean residence of the poor artist. I am sure I can never forget his appearance, nor that of the little chamber into which we were ushered. The sun stole in with a faint glory through the narrow casements that fronted the west, and crept softly over the mean straw carpet, across the meagre-looking couch, and laid upon the pale brow of the poor foreigner. He half arose as we entered; but, from extreme exhaustion, fell back again, and laid helpless as a child upon his uncomfortable bed. I know he was no ordinary man; and years after, how many a little romance I have made, in which he was always the mournful hero!

His brow was as fair as the marble forms that stood by his bedside; his hair, which he had suffered to grow very long, laid thickly on the pillow; his eyes were hollow, and looked larger and brighter than ever. Yet, pale as he was, he did not appear like a dying man, there was so much animation in every feature. Sad young thing! I never pitied mortal as I did him. He gazed long and earnestly upon me, and, in broken English, told me how thankful he was for my good husband's kindness; and, pointing to the flower-girl, which stood, beautiful and pure as a little angel, where he could look upon it, stated his intention of leaving it to us, as a token of his gratitude. He had been working at it all day, he said, and it was now nearly finished. There was only one other like it—that he had made at home, in Italy!

His chisel laid upon his pillow; for at times, he said, when he felt stronger, he would lean out of bed and work. But oh! when he pressed his thin hand on his side with such a look, a blending of almost intolerable suffering of body, and enthusiastic pride in his beautiful art, I could not forbear weeping. And when I wept, he told me of his sister, who, he said, was as young as I, and very lovely. He whispered, with half-shut eyes, how she would mourn herself to death if she but knew her only brother was suffering in a foreign land. He drew a picture of his mother, not yet old, and very fond of him, who would go down broken-hearted to the grave when she heard how he had fallen into the last sleep in a land of strangers, where she could never visit his grave! But further than that he said not. Of his birth he would not speak. Whether dishonor or poverty had sent him from home; whether freedom from want had been his lot, or nobility had titled the name of his ancestors.

He lived but a week after that visit, and on the last day, they said, he passed his chisel over the surface of the statue, as if working out the creation of some new and more beautiful thought, and murmured, "Rosa, Rosa! Does she think of me? does she love me yet? Mother, mother! dear sister! God, our Father! dear

God!" then, with a smile and a sigh, laid it upon his humble couch, and never did it feel the twine of his poor, trembling fingers again. Poor Gillet! I have forgotten my trouble in writing your story. I wonder if his mother and sister know that he is dead?

My flower-girl! I should have kept that; and yet it was a fitting ornament only to a palace. It will twice repay the auctioneer; but I hope he will screen it from the dust, and shield it from accident. My beautiful little statue! Why had I not my wits about me? I could have withheld that.

All my vases of the purest alabaster; my French shepherds—the rarest ornaments of gilt and bronze; my silver-mounted fire-frames; my pretty marble-top annual tables; my embroidered ottomans—all gone! How I shall miss them! They had become indispensable to my comfort; but hush! this is repining. I must shut my eyes while I pass through our empty rooms.

Faint and weak, doubt will intrude—fear that I may be taken from my children. A dreadful thought, and they so young! My uncle is on the stairs, and sister says tea is ready. Well, I suppose it will be our last meal in this mansion.

THE OLD BEGGAR'S SYMPATHY.

It is dreary moving to-day! I had trusted the sun would shine, and the sky look bright and spring-like; for these storms, so varying, yet gloomy, depress me, and make my bodily ills seem more real and hopeless.

I wonder where we are going? To a pleasant spot—but a few miles hence, my uncle says; to a very old, but very cheerful cottage, where there is a garden. I never shall be able to work in a garden! And some fine fruit-trees. Well, that will be nice for the children. But, alas! poor little creatures, I can not endure the thought. They will grow frightful—perfectly frightful! Their delicate complexions—now as soft and pure as the most snowy pearl—will change, and become dark and coarse by exposure. If they had been reared in the country, it would be different; but I have so sheltered them from sun and wind—have so prided myself upon their exceeding fairness—have so loved to hear them called little fairies and angels—have so delighted to feast my eyes upon their clear brows and cheeks, on which there is not a blemish! I can not endure the thought of their being transformed into mere vulgar country children, fat, and red, and blowsy!

Little darlings! they are all singing one of their pretty nursery-songs in the next room, and my sister is accompanying them. My sister is so different—so much better than I! She has so sweet a temper—so patient a disposition! The mantle of our dear mother has fall-

en upon her; and, indeed, she is most worthy. She has dressed my little ones this morning in their simplest white frocks, and tied around the waist of each a ribbon of blue. They look more beautiful than ever. They can not, of course, wear their lace dresses any longer. What a mint of money my children have cost me! Enough, perhaps—almost enough to buy an humble home. I shudder at the thought of my extravagance! And are they benefited by their finery? No, no! Neither their hearts—for it loads them with vanity; neither their minds—for they are brought down to the level of only those powers which teach how to discriminate between the fashion of a dress and its cost per yard; neither their forms—for it cumbers their free movements; and, while they are youthful and beautiful, simplicity is their best adornment. Still, I am resigned, because I am forced to it. Could I have my way, if I possessed the wand of an enchanter, I should, no doubt, with its first magic motion, recall the splendor that has departed, and left an empty desolation in all these silent rooms.

Talk as we will about philosophy, it is a great trial to part with what we have hallowed as ours.

Yet be still, my heart! But an hour ago, a heavy, crawling hearse moved gloomily past my window, and within its shrouding curtains laid the sweetest form that ever graced a home of splendor. And she was the last—the very last—the very loveliest in that garden, where so many rare plants have withered before their time. Poor father! though a millionaire, no wonder your white head bends to this chill breath that has blighted your buds of promise. Poor parents! They have lost seven children. They have boundless wealth,

but they are childless! I am poor; but, thank God! with me, my husband, our most precious jewels are all safe—not a lustre dimmed. It is only the gilded setting that has gone, and that was dross; the gems are left.

Old Martha has been here to-day. Since my good Quaker uncle gave me a lesson on the sin of neglecting the indigent, I have sought some few objects on whom I might worthily bestow charity. She is a good old woman, though I never knew more about her, before to-day, than that a thin, faded form came to my back door every Saturday with some little fancy articles, in return for which I charged my servants to give her four-fold in sugar, tea, and such things.

I was standing in my dining-room, just after our frugal dinner, and thinking how forlorn it looked, stripped of its rich carpet, when Martha put her wrinkled face in at the door, uttering an exclamation of surprise that I was moving. Her expression, with my melancholy thoughts, made me lose my self-command, and I could not keep back the moisture from my eyes. How suddenly she comprehended all. She placed her broken basket on the floor and burst into tears. Here we were, the woman of the world, and a withered, decrepit, destitute, miserably poor creature, weeping together!

"Oh, I am sorry for you!" she exclaimed. "How has it happened? Ah! I recollect just such a day," she continued, clasping her lean hands—"just such a day, when I, too, was young and bonny, but never so handsome as you; I, too, was forced to leave a sweet home—a cherished home!

"You may have seen that rough-cast house in L——

street? It was not always deserted and cheerless in appearance as now. No, no; it was a right elegant house, ma'am, with a noble garden in front, and two grand trees that shook their summer leaves in at the highest window; and iron chains on the pillars by the door, and sightly stone steps. And, then, the lofty rooms were all stuccoed round the ceiling, and the fire-places were carved, and the frames of the window; and the mantels were shining black marble, and the banisters oak. I remember every room as saying I had walked over them yesterday. I remember the landscape paper on the hall. We don't have any such nowadays! And that was brought from England.

"Yes; it was the finest, the most fashionable house in town—indeed it was; and it was our own—George's and mine!"

I sat down by her side, for I had never noticed her particularly before; and I saw that her features were intelligent, wrinkled though they were, and her manner was lady-like. A certain refinement that is unmistakable, though rags cover its possessor, characterized her movements, and I became much interested in her.

"My father," she continued, "owned a good farm, all clear, and was counted rich by his neighbors, then. But, after the war, fifteen thousand pounds were left to him by an uncle, and he was, indeed, wealthy.

"I was very young then, only nine years old, and my father determined to make a lady of me; so I was sent to the best schools. But my head was full of vanity, and I did not learn what I should, but wasted my time in frivolous things. I grew up, and had plenty of admirers. It seems laughable to talk of that now," she continued, looking at her shriveled fingers. "But

many, I suspect, would have married me for my money. There was one I liked, and he liked me! But since the fortune came, my father had got mighty high notions; and George hadn't enough of a fortune, he thought; and, besides, he had set his heart on marrying me to some one out of the common run; and so he told me that if I wedded him he would be forever offended with me. I retorted in hard words. It was very wrong in me—a child; but I was ignorant, and knew no better. I married George; and my father—he was a terrible, stern man, ma'am—told me never to darken his door, and never to come to him for help. My mother felt bad; but she, too, disliked my marrying a poor and common man—so she sided most with father.

"Well, we lived humble; but somehow George got along fast, and prospered better every year. We lived frugally, for love made me a good and economical housekeeper; and in nine years George went into a grand speculation, and made his fortune. He put up some grand houses—grand in those times, ma'am; and people called him esquire, and the rich and great began to court his company. My husband, though I say it, is a fine scholar and a real gentleman, though, dear soul! he fails every day in mind and body. And no wonder folks liked him, for he was superior to many of his class; oh! so superior to me, too. I used to wonder how he could like me so well as he seemed to. Year by year he was getting along better and better; and he had bought that rough-cast house, which then was the handsomest in the town.

"One night there was a great ringing of bells and shouting of 'Fire!' The streets were thronged, and our chamber was bright as day with the red light of the

burning buildings. The flames were in the direction of my husband's property, and we both felt a sudden fear that it was that. So it proved. In the morning every house in the whole square lay level with the ground, and my husband lost a deal of money. It injured him so much—for he had invested a good part of his cash, and depended on his rents—that he was afraid of a hard time, for there was a great stoppage in business. A little cash would have saved him, and I sent to father for a certain sum; but father held his old grudge, and wouldn't advance a cent. Husband grew melancholy, and I foresaw what was coming; but how could I help him? I dreaded to be very poor—that I had never been; for when I was a child I was much indulged, and had all the money I wanted; and since I had been married, I had always got along comfortable. But the trial came. My husband lost all his investments. He failed in his business; and we had to give up our elegant house, just as you're giving up this, ma'am. You wouldn't think I'd ever been rich, would you?

"We moved into a little house, and George's spirits sunk lower and lower. He grew sickly-like, and we hadn't lived there a year before another fire took that building; and, in escaping, my poor George fractured his thigh so badly that he was laid up for a year. And all that time my father wouldn't help us, God forgive him! although at times I almost starved myself, so I could give my husband proper food. At last I wouldn't ask help any more. My mother died first, and left me a few pounds. My father died shortly after, and never remembered me in his will. Then all hope deserted my poor George. He took to his bed for good;

and these ten years he hasn't sat up an hour at a time."

Then her husband is living. I little thought it. "But," I asked, "how have you supported yourself?"

"By hard work, lady," said the poor old woman, lifting her little basket. "My pride went long ago. I toiled and took in washing; indeed, I do that same now. If my children had lived, they might have helped me get along. But I've buried six, all at the most tender age. Some ladies are very kind to me, and call and see my poor George, and give me charity. You have always been kind to me, and I have had choice things from your store; and I'm sorry, not because you can't help me longer, but sorry for your own sweet sake. God bless you, and give you better fortune!"

As the good old lady went away, I felt the luxury of doing good, and thanked Heaven that thus far I was more favored than she in her reverses.

H

THE UNTIMELY DEATH.

ALTHOUGH I saw so much to encourage me, in a little while I gave way to despondency. Husband came in and found me crying to myself. Instead of saying a word to comfort me, he laid an open newspaper down, and pointed silently to a single paragraph.

I looked closely at it through my tears, and my blood congealed as I read the following:

"The only child of Mr. Brookfield, the well-known professor of music, was instantly killed this morning by the falling of a large secretary. He was a beautiful boy, and the event has plunged his parents in despair."

Oh! I shudder when I think of it! I felt it my duty to go there on the instant, even if it delayed our removal. My very heart ached; and though husband was unwilling I should encounter so much misery, fearing it would affect my spirits, I could not listen to him.

"How should I feel if my nearest friend deserted me at such a time?" I pleaded. "I know my influence over Gretta. Do let me go! Perhaps I can somewhat soothe her sorrow!"

Husband said not another word. He could not, however, accompany me; so I went alone, my heart bleeding for Gretta.

There were a few kind-hearted ladies in her chamber, who, not too sensitive to behold suffering, flitted around the agonized mother, vainly striving to soothe the heart that, in its first overwhelming sorrow, refused to be comforted. But now she was growing calmer. She sat in a large arm-chair, her head leaning against its back, her face entirely colorless, her eyes swollen and tightly closed, her pinched lips moving, as if in prayer. The physician who stood beside her often spoke to her in low, gentle tones, to which she did not audibly reply, but mournfully and slowly shook her head.

I stood on the threshold. I could not gather courage to go forward. I could not speak for the grief that was choking me. Some one whispered, "There is Mrs. Golding!"

The stricken mother heard her, and, unclosing her eyes, held forth both hands, faintly exclaiming, "Oh! Alice! Alice!"

I restrained my tears, and buried the sobs in my heart as I hurried forward, and, kneeling by the sufferer, threw an arm around her neck and drew her face to my bosom.

"My beautiful boy! my precious child! my darling little Alfred!" gasped Gretta, in detached sentences; and then a long, wailing groan burst from her heart, so hollow, so spirit-broken, so plaintive and full of agony, that even the physician, accustomed, as I suppose he must be, to scenes of misery, shrank from its hollow repetition.

"Can you not say, 'The will of God be done!' my dear?" said an aged, benevolent-looking lady, bending above the motionless mother.

"Oh! if there is no hope!" murmured the sufferer,

clasping her hands, and speaking at intervals; "if he is gone! gone from my love! if his dear face must be laid in the tomb! if his little heart is, indeed, pulseless! if the light has departed from his beautiful eyes forever! and those dear limbs are, indeed, cold in death! Doctor, *can* he be dead?" she asked, frantically turning her white face toward him.

"He is in heaven!" said the physician, softly.

"Then," she gasped, after a long pause, "I can say His will be—!" and immediately she fainted away, and fell lifeless in my arms.

The interview has been a trying one to me. I saw the babe; its little face was as sweet and lovely as ever. Had not the glass doors above burst open in the descent, shielding the head and face of the sweet unfortunate, he would have been but a mass of crushed flesh.

Gretta says I must attend the funeral. She will not hear of a denial.

I have just come from little Alfred's burying. How solemn seemed the house when I first went in, at noon! The great parlor was shrouded in black, and in the centre stood a table draped with a long, rich, sable pall, upon which was arranged a little bed of satin and fine linen, shaded with the softest and costliest lace. And there, in that funeral gloom, like a sweet flower with the untimely blight of a death frost upon its fair petals, laid the lovely proportions of the yesterday breathing, and bounding, and beautiful love-child!

I pitied his father as he wandered from room to room, now hurrying over the stairs, and tramp, tramping in his solitary study, now pausing on the threshold of the parlor, where death triumphed in the possession of as

fair a bud as ever grew in earth's sunny gardens. There he would stand, give one long, yearning look, wildly bid the maidens who watched by the boy lift the windows that his child might have breath; then, starting at the waxen white of the delicate features, and the motionless, steady droop of the veined lids, rush again from that childish presence and wring his hands, while his eyes, hot and red, were never so much as once moistened by a tear.

Dear Gretta sat in her room motionless, as, I suppose, she had been for hours, her white hand spanning her forehead, her foot perpetually beating against the crimson of the carpet, her breathing one long-continued sigh, while all the fibres of her heart, like the harshly torn strings of a harp, hung quivering, and yet vibrating with the wild wail forced from them by the hand of the destroyer.

I sat down beside her. The tears came fast and freely as I saw her mournful garb laid out upon the bed. The Bible was open; and with a faltering voice I tried to read that glorious fifteenth chapter to the Corinthians, in which occur those triumphant passages commencing with, "*Now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept.*"

After I had finished, she took the Bible from my hand, and with her pale, shaking fingers pointed to these words: "*I know that my Redeemer liveth, and though after death worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God.*"

"I took up the Bible yesterday," she murmured, "and accidentally opened it at that passage. It soothed me so much, it was so full of sublimity, I learned it by heart, and have thought of it all day."

Then, after a moment's silence, her mood changed. She burst out into such a strain of sorrow that I feared for her reason. "Such a death! such a horrible death! He was my all," she almost shrieked—"my all in all. I worshiped him. I *can not* believe him dead!

"Oh! Alice—Alice, God has afflicted me. He has taken my darling. The bird that filled our house with music—my pet, my beautiful darling! Oh! *do* you remember his soft smile? *Can* it be that his dark eyes will never, never look into mine again? I combed his silken hair only this morning. I wonder I did not die! Oh! Alice, I pray you may never know a sorrow like this. He was my all—my all—my all!"

How could I comfort her? I, who never knew such anguish? I could only weep with her, and hold her burning brow close to my bosom.

I could hardly persuade myself that the changed face and fragile figure before me were those of the once brilliant beauty.

His funeral was very magnificent—so said every body. The coffin was of rosewood; the plate of solid gold. Gretta leaned upon me when they lowered the child into his grave. I thought the poor creature would shake to pieces. She was very still till the first shovel full of earth fell heavily on the lid; then she burst from me, and, with a piercing shriek, cried, "I can not give him up! Don't bury him!" and then her husband drew her gently away, her strength all gone, her face deathly white, and lifted her back to her carriage. How I have been supported I can hardly tell. My health has suffered, my nerves are shattered; but, most of all, I mourn for that poor lonely mother. Surely, if any thing will reform her husband, it must be such a loss.

THE OLD HOUSE IN THE COUNTRY.

The first of June! The very words breathe the incense of flowers. Birds trill it in sweet song; the grass laughs and nods to the music; the waters flash and dance with a merrier motion; the sky seems beds of azure heaped with pearls; the sun tinges the gates of the dawn with a richer crimson; the vast ocean sparkles with countless diamonds; the soft zephyrs wind through the leaves of thick branches, and they whisper to each other, "It is June! it is June!"

Many an invalid sits by his high window thanking God that he has lived till now; for these breezes give promise of renewed health and of brighter hopes. Many an eye that has moved dimly in the socket, pained by the long snow-glare of winter, flashes to the rich light of the summer heavens. Many a brow that dear ones thought might bear the pressure of the coffin crystal ere now, and, above that, the dust that dampens and moulds beneath the surface, is suffused with the warm glow of life. Many a heart that sank at the thought of death bounds with lighter motion, and sends up to God the sweet incense of praise that he has spared the unprofitable servant yet a little longer, to give love and joy to kindred. Sweet June! beautiful month of flowers; thou art welcome—thrice welcome!

So have I commenced my notes for this month, because I *will* be happy if I can. It is my first twilight hour in my neat old cottage. Old in years; so old, that

long seams of moss, green as the emerald, cross the low roof. I have been weary, worn, and dispirited today; and now I must sit down to think of the past, and plan for the future. For a few weeks back I have visited with our uncle. He has proved himself a friend indeed.

At home! Well, that home *is* a sweet word! The wealth of the Indies, the unlimited range of kingdoms, the best corner in the palace of a friend, if it is not home, all else but our own seems desolation and emptiness. Yet this is so different from my other home. Even while my heart almost sinks within me as I gaze around on this humble room, with its yellow painted chairs and straw matting, the rich, red light of evening tempts my eye to wander over the heavens. Clouds, piled in gorgeous luxuriance, here hanging like drapery from some blue arch of the sky, whose inner temple is dazzling with the gold of sunset; there floating like sylvan islands in an azure sea, form every shape of beauty of which the imagination can conceive. I am as yet unaccustomed to this great space around, above me.

Our cottage stands on a slight elevation. It is true, as uncle said, it is pretty, quite pretty; and were joyous youth, with its beautiful romance, mine again, I might sigh, for very fullness of joy, at sight of such loveliness as nature has spread around us here. They say this was once the residence of a poet. An unfortunate man was he; for, alas! he was never appreciated till within a year or two before his death, when, with a rich legacy, the world found out he had genius! But it was too late. In humility he had struggled—in that strange, mournful humility whose very foster-parent is pride;

pride unbending, unyielding. He was an unhappy man after he became rich, though flattered and courted. His only pleasure was in planning and overseeing the construction of this house; and though so very old as in some parts to seem almost insecure, it shows, in its odd nooks and corners, traces of the master-hand of a fanciful being.

The room in which I sit was his study. There, on the right, is a wide niche, where once, I suppose, his library graced the walls. It is surrounded by a gothic frame in carved work, well executed, though the heavy wood is stained and battered. From this, down four wide steps, worn smooth and hollow, we go into the parlor, a large, low, studded room, and cheerless enough just now, for the good reason that we have not yet furnished it. A whole wilderness of rose-bushes grows underneath the parlor window, and I see the buds are formed. Then comes the wide, long entry, with a sweep clear through from front door to back. The floor is uneven, and the oak knots are apt to trip one up. It is delightful to look out either end and see the beautiful green trees flashing and waving, and the high grass bending to the breeze. Then, on the other side, the wide doors lead into an old-fashioned, comfortable kitchen of an irregular shape, with any quantity of closets, and long oaken shelves ranging around the walls, and an enormous fire-place, such as I have seen in old farm-houses. Economy, I fear, will compel us to substitute a stove—at least for the present. Next to the kitchen are three little rooms, all leading from each other, and as cheerful and light as we could desire. When the grape-vines leaf out over the windows, I do not know how it will seem. Milly has already

begged for one of these nice apartments, and fitted up with mother's furniture. It will be just the cozy place for her.

Then overhead there are any number of chambers, some large, some very small; and the old, black garret is a curiosity. I noticed some barrels there filled with what appeared to be manuscripts and letters, stained and discolored. On some far off, rainy day, I will take the liberty of looking them over.

I admire particularly the prim brass fenders with which almost every fire-place is garnished. Yonder comes Milly, with a bunch of lilacs almost as large as herself. My old love for flowers revives every day.

Some careless body has lived here, I think, for bits of the quaint, wide mantle are broken off, and the tiles are cracked and gummed with dirt; the plastering, too, is dented in many places, and a hundred little marks tell of neglect. The door is double, opening outward on what might be called a respectable lawn; the upper half is glass, though such odd, small panes!

They tell me that there stood formerly, just beside those old door-posts, now covered with budding vines, two very rare statues; and that in the garden, which was once a paradise, many a beautiful work of art dwelt amid the flowers, and beside the silver streams which he taught to meander through the walks. The room has no particular form, but it suits me for that. Yet, oh! this poor, unpolished, unshapen furniture, shall I ever get accustomed to it?

To-day husband will bring home an assistant for me. I find my strength fails me. As uncle said, I have begun in a whirlwind, and that is always short-lived. Milly works bravely, but, poor child! she can not do

every thing. She is an admirable cook, and our meagre food under her hands assumes quite an air of luxury. I believe I am an adept in making rich pastry; but, alas! the days of rich pastry are over, and I must learn with frugal means to cook a frugal, but at the same time, palatable dinner.

My husband is changed. That cold sternness which he so lately assumed when we were wealthy has given place to a gentle fondness. He does not wholly regard me as the heartless woman of fashion—the wife more in name than heart; and how great a comfort it is to me!

Last evening we all sat out upon the portico. The night was most glorious. A veil of silver folded gracefully over every shrub, and we could count the thinly-scattered lindens on the height opposite, so intensely vivid was the white moonlight. The hush of Nature, grand in her stillness, stole into my heart, and I inwardly thanked God for life. I brought out Miss Susan's antiquated guitar, and the inspiration of the scene giving me an unwonted impulse, I sang as it seemed to me I never sang before. Dim but beautiful faces floated around me. My mother smiled from out a shining circle; I seemed to hear soft whisperings; I was bewilderingly happy. Before I knew it, I was singing "Oft in the stilly night!" with my whole soul; but as I came to the sad words,

> "When I remember all
> The friends so linked together,"

the thought of broken-hearted Gretta flashed over my mind, and I could not go on. The tears came unbidden; and before I could wipe them away, Herbert and little Alice stood by my side looking up to me, dumb

with wonder, and with grieving lips. Dear, sensitive little things! I dashed the tears away, and struck up a lively measure. In a moment Milly caught them both by the hand, and they danced like so many fauns to and fro, shouting and laughing, till they were forced to stop from sheer exhaustion.

Husband walked with me this morning around the garden, and seemed somewhat cheerful. His face brightened as he talked of his future prospects, though to me they look dull enough.

"You will soon be cured of your dyspepsy," he remarked. "Get up early in the morning and inhale the fresh air; walk briskly over yonder fields, and gather violets with which to grace our breakfast-table; take the trowel, and turn up the healthy ground; plant the seeds of our summer flowers, and get accustomed to a little out-door labor!"

It is all very well, his advice; but as I came in, I could have sunk upon the floor from sheer exhaustion, so much fatigued was I with even that little exercise. Oh! I would get well for his sake; but I have so little volition, so weak a will—I am so easily discouraged. However, *I will try!*

Even writing those magic words has infused new life in my veins. As I look at them, the resolve strengthens, sinks deeper in my heart. I WILL TRY!

A mighty concentration of great deeds lies in those little words. To them many a kingdom owes its existence, many a lofty work of art its conception and execution. I must make them household words among my children.

Here comes my boy, bounding like a wild creature over the lawn. He is beside himself with this wide

range of liberty. His cheeks glow, his eyes sparkle. How out of breath he is, panting with exertion, yet off again, and there! away out of my sight. No more delicacies for you, son of mine. If necessity be the mother of invention, I think it is also the foster-parent of content. Early this morning my dainty one could not eat his brown bread and warm milk. He left it in sheer disgust, and took to roaming in the fields. An hour after, what a change! Brown bread or white, it was all the same to him; and more than once he exclaimed, "This is good!" Ah! he will learn to accommodate himself to circumstances as well as myself. Mother and child will here be equal.

THE FIRST VISITORS.

We had hardly arisen from our simple dinner yesterday, when Betty, my new Irish servant, introduced two ladies into the kitchen. I could not help being confused and blushing very much; for really, with extremely meagre furniture, and dilapidated ceiling and plastering, it is not the most desirable place in which to meet company. With very awkward grace, I led them into the sitting-room, vexed enough with myself for showing so little self-command as almost to cry, particularly when I saw something that appeared like a smile on the face of the elder lady. My husband was not at home. I was in miserable spirits, and I could scarcely extend the courtesies of politeness. My visitors, who were exceedingly well bred, although their attire was plain and unpresuming, seemed to comprehend my situation, and after a few expressions of congratulation, and so forth, were preparing to leave, to my utter satisfaction, when in burst my little household band, with sparkling eyes and shouts of mirth, Willy, my baby boy, tripping with every timid step, and clinging to my sister, whose sweetest occupation seems to be teaching him to walk. Leaving a mother's partiality out of the question entirely, I must say they did look beautiful — like a troop of little angels! My kind sister had hurriedly attended to their toilet, and dressed them all in fresh, white clothes, to show, as she afterward innocently expressed herself, that I had something to be proud of.

Instantly the attention of my visitors was arrested, and each of my little ones passed an ordeal of kissing and hair smoothing, besides praises almost too extravagantly expressed; but I can not help saying that I was pleased, indeed very happy, for the time. My little Alice repeated her pretty hymns and sang her little songs, and Herbert kept them laughing at his quaint speeches; and Willy, his fresh red lips parted with sunny smiles, his pretty, round face bright as baby innocence could make it, fairly won their hearts with his gentle caresses.

They prolonged their visit over an hour, and I made the discovery that they were the most agreeable people I have ever seen—witty, talented, and amiable. I really felt better for the visit; and when husband came home, I was actually at work on the garden, arranging a little plat for a pink border. The pinks had been promised me by my visitors.

"Rosy cheeks, my dear wife!" was his first fond exclamation, and I threw down my trowel, sprang laughingly past him, and hurried to the mirror. True enough, my cheeks were scarlet with the exercise. I fairly clapped my hands at the sight; I seemed restored to health once more. It was but transitory. The listless stupor came again; the heavy oppression which sometimes makes me labor for breath, tugged at my very vitals; and the overwhelming conviction that I should never, never be well, instantly depressed my spirits.

Husband noticed the change, and, catching at my hand, dragged me unwillingly to the door, and out upon the green lawn. I was obliged to follow, and, spite of my sudden depression of spirits, could not help laughing heartily at his uncouth movements as he en-

deavored to dance about the green-sward. The children flitted around him, screaming at the top of their shrill voices, and my sister, in her glory, swung Willy up to the lilac bushes, that she might echo back his gleeful laugh.

It was a pretty sight to see his little white hands, buried in a bunch of the pale blossoms, pressing them against his round face, and showering them all over his white frock. And then, overhead, the intense blue of the heavens, around us the long shadows of the hills, the fire of the sunlight gemming all the windows on the west side of our antique mansion, the trees fresh in their spring drapery, and, above all, the subdued radiance of the departing day, haloing each dear head of our little group. How sweet a scene it was!

Again I forgot all my troubles, forgot that my oldest boy had wept an hour because I took off his shabby velvet coat, and dressed him in a coarse jacket of home-spun cloth. He inherits my love of dress, I perceive. While he wore the rusty finery, he lorded it over the village boys, what few he would associate with; but to-day he has looked somewhat crest-fallen. Well, it will, perhaps, do him no harm; but, alas! that I should ever have instilled such false, aristocratic notions into his little brain; it is so mortifying to be obliged to retract—to unlearn hard lessons.

LOSSA AND NINI, THE LITTLE ORGAN-GRINDERS.

I was reading rather listlessly this morning, when the music of a hand-organ struck up in the garden. As is usual in such cases, I became suddenly interested in my book; and, getting provoked at the monotonous twang twang, hurried to the window to send the grinders off. The moment I looked at them my ill humor vanished. They were a boy and a girl. She with soft, sunny hair falling over her sharply-outlined forehead; and rich masses of curls, black as night, clinging to his brown throat. Suddenly they enlisted my sympathies. They were ragged, very much travel-stained, and barefooted. But the girl, with her hollow cheeks and the fitful flashes of her dark eyes, so unearthly large and brilliant! Her very smile gave me the heartache. For she *did* smile, wan as she looked, the moment I appeared at the window; and, turning the crank with a sort of desperate eagerness, began singing a wild air, whose notes first floated among the purple hills of the Alps from the simple mountain reed of the Swiss shepherds. Her voice, her manner, and evident suffering, quite overcame me. She panted violently, and the sharp, quick gasp with which she caught breath every little moment told how already disease had laid his strong grasp upon her vitals. I threw several pennies into the boy's hat, for which they both thanked me with glistening eyes, and then,

with a bow and a courtesy, turned away hand in hand.

"Shure, you'll let them come in, ma'am, and have a taste of something," said Betty, thrusting her honest face, upon which a few tears were drying, within the door.

"Certainly, Betty. I wonder I did not think of it." But, before she had heard more than my assent, away she was after them; and when I went into the kitchen, the girl, with one hand upon her side, and in the other an enormous slice of bread and butter, was eating voraciously. Her companion, I observed, just stood still, gazing delightedly at her, without tasting the bountiful supply that laid on the table before him.

"Why don't *you* eat too, my boy?" I asked him. "You can't be less hungry than your sister!"

"I so glad for her!" he said, blushing, and taking up his share; "she's hadn't no vituals two day, three day!"

Just then the girl turned aside to cough. It was a painful cough! Betty wiped her eyes with her apron, and said, "Poor thing! She's but only ten year old, ma'am!"

With a heavy heart I saw them leave the house. Before they went, I filled their ragged pockets with bread, and pinned up a few little niceties in the piece of frock that hung like an apron before the girl; then telling them to come again, I almost cried myself at their eloquent thanks as I bid them good morning. I would have made them stop and rest, but the boy seemed frightened when I proposed it, and the girl, with her slender fingers, pulled at his frock.

I asked them both if they had parents, and the mournful answer was, "All dead!"

"And who takes care of you, darlints?" asked Betty.

The children looked at each other, and then at me. It was a look that spoke of loneliness, of desertion, of anguish such as cruelty begets.

At last the girl said, nervously, at the same time motioning to go, "We're bound!"

Bound children! it made me shrink all over to hear that. *Bound!* oh! it is a sad, sad word. I look sometimes upon the rosy cheeks and sparkling eyes of those near and dear to me, and picture such a fate for them, and the blood shrinks back to my heart. What! *they* sleep in the broken garret where the snow sifts through? *they* feel the hard hand of anger upon their quivering flesh? *they* pass long, terrible days, and dark, lonely nights, and no sweet kiss dimple their cheeks, no soft, loving arms enfold them, no heart beat close to theirs? For all these dreadful alternatives centre in that cruel word "bound!"

"And her eyes were unclosed, and their glassy rays
Were fixed in a desolate, dreamy gaze,
As if before their orbs had gone
Some sight they could not close upon.
* * * * * *
And her hands were clinch'd, and cold as stone,
And the veins upon her neck and brow—
But she was dead—what boots it now?"

"Quick, come, lady! quick, come! Oh, she will die! quick, come, lady!"

I was startled at the wild, haggard expression of the organ-boy, the same that came yesterday, as he ran like one frantic into my room this morning.

"What! is your sister sick?" I exclaimed, starting up from my work.

"Lossa! She will die! Oh, quick, come, lady!" he reiterated.

"Where shall I go, my poor little fellow?" I answered, following him. He ran rapidly before, looking uneasily round, and led the way to an old barn, half in ruins, on the edge of our premises. And what a sight was there! The poor girl, lying on damp straw that had been recently soaked by the rain, her head falling backward and over toward the floor, every feature unnaturally strained, and the large black eyes moving painfully in their sockets. Near by stood the little hand-organ, with a tattered green baize thrown over it, and the strap rested upon the heaving chest of the child. My soul sickened, and a faintness came over me; but he ran and knelt beside her, and cried, in tones mournfully pathetic, "Don't die—leave poor Nini! don't die, poor Lossa!" and his gestures were so affectionate, and at the same time so despairing, that I could hardly bear the sight.

"No, Nini, I won't die!" she whispered, faintly, turning her head with a great effort, and lifting her thin arms toward him. "Rest me a little, Nini; won't you rest me a little?"

The poor boy, at the same time beckoning to me, lifted her head against his breast.

I gathered courage, and stood beside her. If I had never seen death before, I should know it now. There was the gathering film, half covering those beautiful eyes; the tremor of dissolution upon the lips; the strange pecking of the fingers; and, more mournful than all that, the harsh, gurgling sound with which the broken breath escaped.

"She die, lady?" he asked, fearfully, and he almost

suspended his breathing as he saw me watch her more closely.

"No, Nini, I won't die!" murmured the poor girl again, fixing her dim eyes with a glance of unutterable affection upon his face.

"Yes, lady, she DIE!" he sobbed, looking up in my face; "me see it all—me feel it all—*she die!*" and with a pathos untransferable, he continued, while the tears rained down his cheeks, "leave poor Nini all alone—beat him, kick him—no Lossa to cry too, and speak how sorry; leave poor Nini all alone—dark night—cold—rain—no Lossa speak good words—no Lossa cry too. Hunger—starve—no Lossa say, 'Padre in heaven, give poor Nini bread.' Leave cruel master—run off—no Lossa go too. Find nice home, kind peoples. Nini care not now—he die too!"

"Nini!" whispered the dying girl, low and softly; and then, as he violently checked his grief, she calmly turned her eyes from his face upward, and raising her quivering finger, she pointed it in the same direction, while a heavenly smile broke like light from the spirit world over her wan face. "I—won't—die—Nini!" she articulated, with difficulty.

Suddenly the hand fell, the eyes snapped once, convulsively—Lossa, the poor little organ-grinder, was with her God! She had sung in weariness and pain for the last time on earth; she was singing glad strains in the glory beyond—warbling halleluias with the angels.

Her eyes were yet wide open, and fixed and glassy! Like one stupefied, the boy gazed down at her dead face, and gradually let the head slide from his arm; then, for the first time, comprehending, he caught her again to his bosom, and laying his face close down by

her pale forehead, he wept and sobbed with an abandon most touching to witness.

The poor boy, in his broken language, has just told me his simple story.

"I have been with my master two, three, four years. I came from Italy. My mother died in Florence. I was so much years," holding up five fingers. "I street beggar den—sometimes make little money, sometimes be kicked, sometimes want to die. I sleep in streets, under steps—hungry, often—cry very much. *I have much tears*," he said, with touching artlessness, at which I could hardly refrain from weeping, for it told the sad story of his life. "One day a man ask me, 'You go wid me to other country—make rich—have fine clothes, clean face—nice peoples, plenty food, plenty all things; make music for de peoples, take money, be smart, be fine!' I go—come to this country. He take off his smile; he put on big black frown. 'You, my boy now, no chentleman, but poor beggar brat—my *servant*, my SLAVE! I do what I please with you. You play this—take moneys; but moneys all mine; I do what I please with *dat*, too. You keep him, I *beat* you, I *kill* you.'

"Well, plenty tears, plenty crying—no good; plenty kicks, plenty swearing. I take organ, and go on de streets. Give master everyting—get noting; bad vittles, bad sleep. I go one day in leetle small place. I see leetle girl crying. I say what is it for? and she tell me her madre dead, her padre dead—*all* dead! No one to care for her. I say come with me. Oh! my heart big, bright, happy den, me large (proud). Such nice girl—plenty fine curls, plenty white skins—red cheek, soft hands; she go with me—love me!" Here

the poor boy faltered, and, bending his head low, he sobbed violently. But after I had said some soothing words, he looked up again, and continued,

"Master like her very much, because of money she make. No love her as me—oh! no, no, no. He cross, angry, he slap her cheek," and such an expression as gathered on that dark face—his eyes, his nostrils dilated, while he clinched his hand—I wish never again to witness. "He clip her curls with shears—sell 'em! He make her go in wind, sun, rain; he make her sing, and then send her with me. I beg many time for her; I make her set in warm place in cold storm, cover her poor feet—sometimes they bleed; then I so sorry—bleed at my heart.

"She never talk big, talk angry; but she look sorrow. She wipe my tears from off my cheek; she kiss me on my cheek; she say, 'Brother, there is good God; He love us, He care about us.' I ask her what for He give us such wicked master? She say, 'No matter; He take us to heaven; no more trouble—hungry no more.' Then we kneel in the snow, and ask God, may we have heaven; and she tell me, 'By-and-by, brother, when we go through bright blue sky.' Then she come pale, and master no care. She ache hard—master no care. She say she sick—master no care; out all same—cold, rain, wind. She cough bad—master no care; out all same. She lay down sometimes in road—lay her poor head on my shoulder, kiss my cheek, and say, 'No matter; all nice by-and-by; go to heaven by-and-by,' so that it make me cry much. Then she get up, try to smile happy, sing—sing till pain stop her, pain all over; sometimes blood come from her lips."

"But where did you go after you left here yesterday?" I asked.

"We go just up road; then she turn white—say she die; go in field—lay down. I no could play—I cry much. We stay there till night, then come to the barn—same place as last night."

"But where is your master? Why are you so far away from him?"

"Oh!" he exclaimed, shrugging up his shoulders, while a look of extreme terror passed over his face, "we run off—run away; we fear all time master catch us. Oh! die first—die, and go with her."

As soon as Herbert came home, we went together to the barn. Betty had dressed the sweet corpse decently, in a clean white shroud; a table had been carried in, and there she laid, marble white. Meanwhile the news had got round, and several persons came crowding to the place; among them Justice Meriden, who decided to have her carried in the little school-house for the present. Poor Italian Nini! he stood and sobbed, and sobbed as if he had lost his all.

"Where is he? the infernal blackguard! By the powers, I'll be the death of him! Only let me get my hands on him! I'm burning to shake the thief to pieces! Where is he?"

Poor Nini ran trembling toward my husband, as the fearful words issued, apparently, from a brazen pair of lungs.

"Oh! Padre in heaven!" he cried in extreme terror, clinging to Herbert's arm, as a massive-framed, brutal-faced man sprang in at the door, and, folding his arms, stood gazing grimly and ferociously upon the cowering boy.

"You sneaking rascal!" he muttered between his clinched teeth; "you thieving gallows-bird! how dared you run away with *my* property?" and his lips grew livid with the passion that was working at his black heart. "Unhand that rascal, sir, and give him over to me, if you please. He undertook to run off with my property, he and the wench together. Where's the organ? Blast you—ha!" Like one transfixed to stone, he stood as he turned, a livid hue settling about his mouth, his white lips parted, his eyes protruding. It was a sight he little relished—that dead face, that meek, lily-like face, that wan, suffering child-countenance. For now she was dead. The youthful expression, once altogether lost, had returned, and in all the smiling serenity of infancy she laid asleep. He fairly glowered upon the corpse (if I may use such a word); he was transfixed like one fascinated. Nobody spoke as he drew a long, heavy breath, and taking out a handkerchief, passed it across his brow, upon which the perspiration stood in large globules.

"Look here!" said Herbert, moving toward him, and speaking in slow, resolute tones, "you had better leave this boy. Take your hand-organ, and leave him with me, or—" and he pointed toward the bed, "you know what the consequences may be."

"I'm not afraid of consequences," he growled in a more subdued voice; "blast me if I'll leave the brat."

"This boy was not yours," continued Herbert, still firmly meeting the horrid glance of the beast; "and as to the girl, she has been murdered by inches. It can be easily proved. That she has been beat and bruised by your hands, this boy is witness; and I dare say her poor body bears yet the marks of your fiendish

violence upon its dead surface. Look at her, man! She was a girl—think of that!—a poor, sickly, helpless girl, upon whose white and quivering flesh that heavy arm has spent its force—a poor, defenseless girl, with no mother to shield or to love her. She lies before you dead—*your victim!* We have covered her for the first time decently; we intend to lay her decently within her grave. Will you do as much? Shall we give the corpse, with the boy, into your care? or shall we incur the expense of her funeral, and take charge of this poor child, over whom you have not the least control by law?"

The man looked sullenly round, seemed undecided for a moment, and then, with a moody frown and a smothered curse, pulled his hat over his eyes, and vengefully shaking his head toward the Italian, he stalked from the poor place. Then to see the emotion of the little organ-grinder! He gasped for breath in his bewilderment, and crying out, "Nini, stay?" to husband's "Yes, poor fellow!" he fell instantly on his knees, the tears rolling down, sobs choking him, and hugging our very feet with passionate gestures, he almost shrieked his thanks.

The heart must have been hard indeed that could have witnessed this scene unmoved.

So little Lossa is buried, and husband has obtained a place for Nini—a good home, where he will soon be contented and happy.

It is so sweet to do one good action like that!

"I can not bear the sight of affliction," is the excuse of the pampered fashionable. How, then, do the weak and miserable children of poverty differ from her? Are

they of stronger nerve? of more hardy frame? Are they strangers, and not sisters? a race differing in every essential, that they can bear, aye! not only the sight, but the harrowing, soul-sickening *weight*, the heavy burden of want; humbled pride, neglect, scorn, hunger, destitution—and sympathy, which is meat and drink to the afflicted? These they feel day by day, hour by hour, minute by minute; and when the mute eloquence of the hungry child asks for a bit of bread—"Only one grain of corn, mother"—oh! how does each lagging atom of time pierce the heart like a fine needle drawn slowly through, while strength and hope desert the spirit and the frame in the hour of utmost need.

It is easy to describe sorrow, say some. Let them go and experience how easy it is to relieve it—go and feel the emotion that a kindly deed, gratefully appreciated, will create in their hitherto passionless souls. The happy smile of contentment on the face of the little one rescued from wretchedness is worth more than a season at the most brilliant opera; and the splendor of a ball-room fades before the meek, loving glance of a gentle woman who tells you she hopes God will repay you for your kindness to her.

THE VILLAGE SCHOOLMISTRESS.

BETTY called us in to tea just as we were all flushed with exercise, and it was pleasant to see with how eager an appetite the little ones eat their cold, coarse bread. I am not yet used to the deprivation of hot muffins, and therefore eat but little; perhaps it is my best course. In the evening I spoke of my visitors, having forgotten them before, when, to my utter surprise, husband told me they were the wife and sister of Judge Waugh, whose family has been distinguished for years as eminent for talent and goodness. I could hardly realize that they would call upon me in my old house.

"Pray why not?" asked my husband.

Truly, why not? I could not answer him.

My husband left me very early this morning to go to the city, and although it is late, he has not yet returned. I feel anxious when he stays so long, for the road is a lonely one at night. After he had been gone some little time, I concluded to look around at the different schools—there are only two; and accordingly, taking Herbert with me, I went first to the primary school, which I found kept by an exceedingly beautiful young lady, whose face, clouded, it seemed to me, with early sorrow, won me at once. I felt as if I could love her for a companion, and make her a confidant. She had no scholars as old as Herbert in her school, yet she seemed much interested in him, and offered to spend

one or two leisure hours per day in teaching him. Herbert pouted and called it a baby school, while I quite complacently hinted that my boy was very far advanced in his studies, had begun to read in Latin, had finished his second geography, and was familiar with most of the rules of grammar.

Miss Clara—for so I found the children called her—smiled very sweetly, though it was evident the smile was impulsive, and called forth by my remarks. She asked Herbert a simple question in geography concerning the boundary of Massachusetts. He held down his head and pouted. I spoke sharply to him, and commanded him to answer the question; but he evidently could not. She then asked him where the State of Massachusetts was, and he actually said *in Boston!* I felt my cheeks tingle, and could not believe for the moment that I heard aright; but with a soft voice Miss Clara explained the difficulty.

"I often find," was her remark, "that those children who shoot up so fast intellectually are very ignorant in matters where they should be perfectly at home. Now I have known some children who could solve a difficult question in algebra completely puzzled when called upon to make change in the ordinary mode of currency.

"I feel assured that this dear little fellow has studied hard and progressed rapidly; but the great fault of teachers, as far as I am acquainted with their methods, is, they work on the forcing system, and work alone by book. Now there is not a lesson I give my little pupils, from day to day, that I do not in some simple manner, and as forcibly as I can, illustrate by examples and by anecdotes.

"There, on the last bench, you observe, are very small children. Any of those curly-headed little girls and boys will name for you every state in the Union, and their capitals; yet that is my youngest class.

"It is no more trouble to educate them in this manner than on the old system; and to me it is delightful, instructive, and often very amusing, for they ask me quite frequently the most curious, and yet sensible, questions in their own artless manner.

"Now Herbert," she continued, kindly, "translate me this little sentence in Latin;" and to my surprise she distinctly and purely enunciated a Latin motto, while Herbert, completely interested in her, gazed in her sweet face with eyes wide open and sparkling. He timidly gave the translation, and I stood by almost breathlessly, for I remembered the encomiums of his former teacher, and felt sure he knew something.

"That is quite correct," she replied, and I saw that confidence was established between them.

"Do you not think," she again said, addressing me gently and deferentially, while her lovely eyes sent a thrill of pleasure through me, "that a mother can do more in keeping the first germs of education fresh in the mind than the teacher? It must be a great aid to the parent as well as the child to sit down, and in a manner that banishes all reserve, give and get information respecting our own countries, their history, the memorable incidents so closely connected with their rise and progress, their commerce and institutions.

"In after years, this knowledge may open the way for patriotic advancement; and he who lives for his country and labors for its good, with an eye single to God and a nation's prosperity, in my opinion, lives up

to the highest standard of manhood; and there is no one whose memory I cherish with such perfect reverence as that of such an one, when he sacrifices love, life, all, for his country's sake, and dies its martyr."

The teacher's manner impressed, even awed me. Was I mistaken? There were surely tears in those brilliantly dark eyes, and the small, faultless coral lips were quivering with some emotion strongly suppressed.

Instantly I felt that she was no ordinary creature—that some weighty anguish had laid, or still bore heavily on her heart; and I took my departure full of the mystery of her manner, and apparently humble life.

As she accompanied me to the door, she added, "You may be astonished at my impassioned language, but it is characteristic of my nation; for I am not an American. I am French by birth, an orphan, and isolated, though many kind friends surround me.

"I teach from choice, not necessity; for in no way can I forget my misfortunes so easily as in this delightful employment. My scholars are my children; I am companion, mother, and instructor, all in one. You have observed the silence of those classes not reciting to their monitors; they thus obey me out of love and respect."

I was lost in admiration, and at once urged her to call upon me. I forgot my poverty and my fashionable predilections; I felt that I was in the presence of a superior mind.

I noticed, too, on her bosom a small cross that flashed unsteadily as she moved. It was brilliant, and evidently very rare and valuable. Often, when she was talking, she unconsciously pressed her forefinger upon

it so hard that I imagined the ornament must indent the flesh. It is a habit of hers, I suppose.

"Who can she be?" I have again and again asked myself. At any rate, I will profit by her instruction; my leisure time, once spent in adorning the robes of my children, shall be passed in cultivating their intellects to the extent of my humble power. It will be charming. Is not a new life before me?

I am glad the little school-house is so well situated. A yard is inclosed sufficiently large, so that, even while engaged with their sports, the children can be under the eye of the teacher; and there are some garden-plots which she allows them to fill with flowers.

A LITTLE PRIDE.

Lifting my eyes, I look upon rows of golden daffodils but a little way beyond my window. How fresh and beautiful they are! Herbert takes great pleasure in the garden. I see the rose-bushes are budding, and hundreds of green leaves, as yet giving no promise of what they shall become, shoot out of the earth in all directions.

I wonder if the old poet planted yonder bushes of box. They looked neglected when we first came; but husband has reduced them some, and evened them, so that they are almost perfect globes. The evening dew glistens all over them, and reminds me of the innocent question of my little Willy, last night, "If the sky had been crying on those pretty bushes?"

But here comes husband. I must go to meet him; in Judge Waugh's chaise, too! How kind of the old gentleman! He evidently thinks we are somebodies, and overlooks distinctions of wealth nobly. I am somewhat fatigued with writing. Just now the thought came over me, What kind of a book would my experience make?

I feel grateful and happy to-day. Through the aid of my kind old Quaker uncle, my husband has obtained a good clerkship in a mercantile house in ———.

When he first informed me of the fact, I could have wept with vexation at the idea that he must now serve where formerly he has commanded; but it can not be

helped. His failure has been ruinous, and I think has somewhat injured his energy, although he affects to be quite cheerful for my sake.

His salary is large enough to answer all purposes in our present situation, for there is not much chance for show, even if our means would warrant its indulgence.

This is, in truth, a country village. There is not an aristocratic mansion here. Indeed, our house, old and dilapidated as it is, is by far the most imposing building in the place. Judge Waugh's house, which I understand has been built for a century, stands on a hill, and is completely buried amid trees. The mansion itself is guiltless of paint, and clumsy in appearance; yet they seem to value it as highly as if it was a costly and splendid edifice. Whatever the building is, the grounds about it are almost a paradise. Even now the garden is blossoming with early spring flowers; the grass is greener there than elsewhere, and tropical plants, rare and fragrant, fill their luxurious hot-house.

In the town where I was born, although the manners of the villagers on the outskirts were comparatively simple, yet there were more gay and fashionable people there, and residences that would compare favorably with many in the city. Our church, too, to my childish fancy was quite superb; and I never trod its aisle, covered with its pretty carpet of small and delicate pattern, but with a feeling of reverence which would do honor to a Loyola.

But the church here, so small, so antique, with its high pews and stiff seats, its uncarpeted floors and pulpit, perched away up, so that one must keep the head in a painfully backward position to get a look at the

minister, seemed such a contrast to our elegant church in the city, that I could scarcely avoid uttering an exclamation of surprise as I entered its sacred portals. Overhead the beams are roughly whitewashed, and not a few cobwebs hang dusky and dim away up in the perspective of the ceiling, made more distant by the shadowy light that glimmered through the closed window-blinds.

I gave way on the last Sabbath to my ruling passion. It now appears very foolish to me, viewed in the light of calm reflection. I had never been to church here, and consequently knew nothing about the church-going habits of the villagers.

I had reserved a few of my costly dresses, among which are two very rich satins, excusing myself for so doing on the plea of economy, thinking that by-and-by I could turn them to account for our little girls. Casually opening the trunks that contained them one day last week, a sudden wish to display them on Sunday took possession of my mind.

When I went below stairs, as the village bell sounded faintly on the still air, husband, who was waiting with Alice and the children, started as he gazed at me. His tone was reproachful, though he strove to disguise his chagrin because our little ones were near, as he said, "My dear, is that dress appropriate to our present circumstances?"

I was instantly vexed with myself, but there was no help for it. The church was distant a quarter of a mile, and the bells had been ringing for some time. But I was punished. Never did I feel so contemptible as when I walked up the rough, uncarpeted aisle and heard the rustling of my dress, while on every side sat

ladies in the most simple attire who were able to afford much richer garments than myself.

I fancied every one was laughing at me, and unfortunately the sermon was preached from this text: "Behold the lilies of the field; they toil not, neither do they spin; yet I say unto you that Solomon, in all his glory, was not arrayed like one of these." I left the church humiliated, repentant; resolving in my mind never again to give way to a vanity which has more than once exposed me to ridicule.

THE LIVING TOMB.

Two or three times to-day I missed the girl. I sent my little sister over the house, but she was not to be found. When she appeared, her cheeks were flushed, and she seemed to have been unusually hard at work.

About an hour ago she came running to my room, shouting, "Oh! ma'am, I've found what's in there, and it's jest frightened the sinses out ef me."

"What do you mean?" I inquired.

"Why I mane the big iron door down cellar, that I've been thrying with all me might an' mane to get undid; and there's the queerest thing there, and the strangest reading about a coffin."

I hurried down cellar, wondering what could be the meaning of the girl. She pointed me to a large door which I had never perceived (for I had been there but once before), in the lock of which was an immense rusty key.

"I meant to open it," said the girl, pushing her brawny shoulders against the door, and displaying the arch to its widest extent; "for I thought, maybe, who knows but there'll be a treasure there; and only look, ma'am."

I did look, and nervous enough the sight made me.

The little vault into which I half ventured was a small square aperture, lighted by a very minute pane of glass, now thickly covered with dirt. There was nothing remarkable there but the particular object

which Betty pointed out; and that was a long, bier-like-looking frame, somewhat raised from the ground, made of very beautifully polished oak, though stained with mould. A large plate, somewhat rusted, was fixed in the wood lower down; and after Betty had rubbed it a little and made the words discernible, I read with astonishment the following couplet:

"He shows more wisdom who for death prepares,
Than he who gathers gold for thankless heirs."

Then followed,

"I, John Durand, cause this coffin to be placed here this 22d day of November, 17—, for the purpose of mortifying self pride, and that it may continually teach me a lesson of humiliation. It makes me familiar with death; for often, as I enter here, I am virtually shut out from the world and its cares, and inclosed, as it were, in my own tomb. Here I can silently commune with my heart and Heaven; here I can learn wisdom. Why should men call me a gloomy misanthrope? They know me not. They seek me, for what? My gold. That shall the poor possess after my death. I have no near and dear kindred to mourn the departure of the gloomy old man. I await my end in silence and composure."

How strange! how startling! To me the very atmosphere grew stifling. I felt, as the old poet expressed it, as if in a living grave, and, with the wondering girl who had been staring in my face, I left the little cage. How freely I quaffed the glad air, and stood in the glad sunlight at the arched door-way overhead! I caused the door to be locked, and hid the key; for I must confess the little superstitious tinge I inherited from my father darkened to a sort of awe as I thought of the strange fact that in our house once stood a coffin, yawning long years with open lid for its inmate.

All day I mused upon it, and when evening came and my husband returned, I communicated the strange discovery to him. He was as much surprised as myself, and had heard nothing of it hitherto. In the evening the sister of Judge Waugh called upon us, and on my speaking of the circumstance, she enlightened me with regard to the matter.

"I remember old John Durand, as every body called him," said Lizzy Waugh; "he was very tall, and stooped somewhat, and always carried a very large gold-headed cane.

"His hair was long and flowing, and, toward the end of his life, very white. I can just recollect how he would beckon me to him as I wandered by his beautiful garden (for indeed his lands about here were much more elegantly laid out than brother's) and stroked my 'golden locks,' as he called them, while his fingers trembled so violently they almost seemed to shake me. He was very eccentric. I have heard brother and his wife talk of him by the hour. Once he called us into the house, my little cousin and I, and after telling the housekeeper to give us some bread and honey, which we ate from a beautifully polished mahogany table that ran the whole length of the dining-room, he took us up stairs, in the very room overhead.

"I never was more astonished in my life than at the sight there exhibited. All around the room hung cages of various sizes and delicate workmanship, filled with every variety of birds—birds which he said he had tamed himself; and such was his power over them, I have heard brother say, that if he let them out in the air, they were sure to return again to their cages.

"Then in one corner of this apartment were four of the most beautiful little white mice; and he had a number of tame squirrels, too, in another part, and every thing was kept in the nicest order; even the pet

cat had a little silken bed. They say he gave a bright lad quite a salary for taking care of this room.

"For seven years he kept his coffin in the cellar, and used often to take visitors down there to see it. He had the little room, in which you went to-day, all draperied with black velvet, so that it looked the very picture of gloom; and how he could enjoy himself as he really appeared to, sitting down there, like a monk in his cloister, I never could tell, especially when he so delighted in the bright and beautiful. The room in which were the birds was decorated with all kinds of evergreens, festooned against the walls, and hanging from the ceiling. It looked to me like a fairy palace.

"In another room, in a glass case, there hung a skeleton, and on the table were skulls and bones, while the shelves on every side were lined with minerals and fossils, and dead birds and insects. He was a very studious old man.

"When he was dying, I have heard my brother say, although suffering from the most exquisite agony, he would not lie on his bed, but constantly kept two persons supporting him, while he dragged his slow and feeble footsteps across the floor.

"A little before he died, he ordered his coffin to be brought up stairs and placed by his side, and he would occasionally move toward it and look within it. How far this fortified him to meet the dread king of terrors, I do not know. It is said he breathed his last with religious composure, and with the name of the Savior upon his lips."

Is this not an odd story? Since then I have narrowly examined the room in which the old man kept his pets, and find traces of nails, by which, I suppose,

the cages were fastened to the walls. Altogether it is a curious old house, though retaining proofs of former magnificence.

The old man was worth half a million when he died, but he left it all in charitable donations. Miss Waugh has a manuscript book of his poetry, which she assures me is excellent, and intends lending me.

POOR BETTY'S TROUBLES.

My health is slowly but surely returning. Every morning the amiable sister of Judge Waugh calls for me in a neat little carriage, and drives me around the country. That languor of spirits which once almost unfitted me for life is passing off, and I feel a buoyancy and youthfulness which was never the result of medicine. We ride through the most beautiful natural avenues, and in the sweetest rural valleys I have ever beheld. Our village abounds in scenery of the wildest and yet softest description.

I love the country. I have been blinded to its advantages for years. It is so delightful, on a fresh breezy morning, to throw up the casement and feel the gently breathing winds lave your cheeks so quietly; to touch the gemmed branches of the loaded trees, and behold the sparkling dew-drops fall in a shower, like gleaming emeralds, through the green of the waving grass, upon the roses and the starry butter-cups and the blue-eyed violets. It is so thrilling, that gushing joy-music of the birds; their clear voices mingling in a wild, rich strain of soaring music, so startling and triumphant that the very leaves tremble as though touched by the power of song and listening in mute ecstasy.

Then the hills, purple with haze, but through their mantle of mist displaying every graceful bend, every shaded recess; and the sky, blue, though pale, not yet having bathed in the sunlight that just touches the far

away, melting clouds with its crimson rays—all this is so far beyond description, so soothing to the soul, that I would not forego its pleasure for the glory of a queenly reign. Then the walks, in the cool of the morning, through the sequestered lanes around our cottage, while the cattle are quietly browsing on each side, and the tiny but sweet wild flowers spangle the carpet under our feet—yes, at last, I do love the country again.

I am finding time to read my old and favorite authors. Lizzy lends me all the books I want. I understand we shall lose her soon; she is to be married to a gentleman from the West. But I shall not miss her as much as Milly will. And speaking of Milly, *somebody* sent her a letter yesterday. I think I can guess who. And somebody sent her a miniature. That I rather think I shall see before sundown to-day.

My children are all healthy, the neighbors are kind and social, and many of them seem really fond of me. Only yesterday, good old Bessy May, who keeps three cows, sent me a jug of the richest cream, and another kind friend left in the door-way a basket of ripe, red strawberries. Every few days my mantle is adorned with the most lovely bouquets of flowers gathered from the gardens around, and bright-eyed children strive for the pleasure of bringing my little girls from school.

"Mother," said my oldest boy to me this morning, "don't we have good times now?"

"In what way?" I asked.

"Oh! there's so much room here, a fellow can go out in the fields and not be afraid of hitting old Goldby's window, as I did once in the city. Don't you remember, mother?"

"Yes," I answered, "I remember that your father

paid a bill of fifty dollars in consequence of your breaking a very elegant vase in that same window, besides the glass."

"All the fault of those narrow streets," he replied, so laconically that it made me smile. He did not seem to think that for his own heedlessness he was to blame.

"It was not a very narrow street we lived in," I suggested.

"No; but it wasn't that field out there, by a good deal," he exclaimed, tossing his arms up, and pointing to the smooth greensward.

"Would you like to go back in the city again?" I asked him.

"N—no," he answered, hesitatingly, "I don't believe I should—to live, that is; and as to leaving my teacher, I can't do it. No, I don't want to go in the city only on next Thursday—Fourth of July, you know; and that's the beauty of it, mother, we shall enjoy such days so much better for going seldom.

"Between you and I, mother," he continued, sidling up to me, "I expect Josh Benton, Harry Stanwell, and all the boys I used to play with, won't look at me now; but I don't care for that, I know what I'm worth. I'm too independent to care for 'em now, that's what I am;" and holding his head proudly up, he strutted out in the field, and away he bounded in his homespun jacket, leaving me thinking of his reluctance and tears the first day I put it on.

Well, an honest pride is not, perhaps, wrong to cherish, and I am glad my boy has learned to stand on his own merits. I must teach him to view others with the same leniency.

To-day I have come to the determination of doing

my own work with the aid of my sister. I know, were some of my former acquaintances to look in upon me, they would, with a curl of the lip, mutter, "How extremely vulgar!" But I am growing a wiser, if not a better woman; I shouldn't mind it if they did.

I get up at five, when I formerly arose at nine, and by performing the most laborious parts of my labor early, I have some of the day to myself.

I can hardly believe I am the same woman who once needed two or three maids about her own person, and could not raise her hands to her head without a sigh. My husband is making great sacrifices for me and for his creditors; I should be a reproach to him did I not strive to economize in all things.

Betty has just left my room. She declares she must stay, even if I give her no wages. I was quite affected at her manner, and allusion to my kindness, and could not help weeping.

"Only give me your cast-off clothes, ma'am, and the victuals I eat, and let me stay. Please God, I will never leave you. An' how could I go from the babbies? It would be tearing soul from body, sure."

I told her I could not take her on such terms, that she was able to get high wages, and she had better go to some good place.

"An' where could I find one like this? Oh! mistress, don't let me leave you, and indeed I will work for you till I die—indeed will I; and if the gentleman gets rich again, ye may give me wages. But indeed I can't leave you."

Her manner was so wild, and her grief so strange, that I suspected something more than common lurked under her apparent meaning; so I questioned her close-

ly, and with many tears and lamentations she told me her simple story.

Poor Betty! while she poured out her sorrows, I felt forcibly that we are all of one kindred, the lowly and the proud, the rich and the poor. With many a sob and tear, the poor creature, in her own simple and unaffected manner, narrated the most harrowing events of her young life—for Betty is not yet twenty-four—and in that manner, as nearly as I can, shall I record it.

"I came to Ameriky jist four years agone, an' I was not so poor neither. There was many sailed over in that great ship that was distracted, desolate creatures enough, God help 'em! but I had a good friend and a rich lady who took me to her work when I was little, and kept my wages for me—a real Cork lady, who treated her servants more like some folks do their own childer; so when I got the notion into my head that I would come to Ameriky, she took me by myself an' her, and she talked to me like a Christian as she was, and told me I had thirty poun' now, an' that were a great sum for a lone girl, so she would fix for my passage, and make me something I could hide my money in, and carry it tied about myself.

"I thanked her for that an' all the kind advices she give me, and when the time come, if I hadn't gone so far, I'd stayed with her still. Oh! why didn't I? Sure I'd been better off now.

"Though I was a steerage passenger, I had things fixed more comfortable than many of the poor creatures; but yet it was so clos't and onpleasant-like down there that I always was most of the time on the deck.

"Well, there was a nice, tall, comely-lookin' man, in decent clothes, that had eyes as blue as the heavens over us (truly was they, ma'am), that took a good deal of notice of me the first few days; an' we'd sit on the deck and watch the dark water turn white as the vessel went on so smooth an' swift; an' he'd tell me such sweet stories about his home, and a nice little black-eyed sister he'd left behind in Ireland, who looked the very image, he would say to me, of myself—an' that's why he said he liked me. Yes, he told me, at the very first, it was for her sake he liked me."

Poor Betty wiped a few tears from her face, as she murmured these words, but continued, "I never talked so much with any man before, 'specially with any that had the soft tongue like his; and when the other passengers laughed, and called him *my* man, I'm sure I felt distressed; for though I *did* like to listen to the very sound of his footsteps as they came nigh me, I never thought for a moment that one who knew so much, and was long years older than myself, would think of me any different from what he did of that sweet sister in ould Ireland.

"But my good mistress had made me promise not to say a single letter of the money I'd about me, an' I hardly can think how I came to tell him of it now; but somehow he had the way with him to make me say every thing I knew, and I felt so safe-like by his side—I never dreamed of harm, indeed never did I.

"It may ha' been perhaps a week when the storm came on—a terrible storm, ma'am, that made the vessel shake like a crumb in the water, tosting it like as if it went over an' over; an' the passengers was all sick, an' obliged to keep their beds, so that for a long time they couldn't even hold their heads up.

"It was a distressin' time; for little childer were taken and cried day an' night, and many of the women swore so badly that I was afraid God would sink the ship. But most of 'em got well enough in time to crawl up to the deck. I was longer sick than any of the rest.

"One day I laid in my berth just like any helpless baby, and there was about seven or eight round me, some asleep and some looking like corpses with their eyes open.

"I felt as if I never was going to see the blue sky an' the water again, an' I was wonderin' where was Michael, when a dreadful feeling came over me, and a kind of brimstony smell made me try hard for breath. It came worse an' worse, and I grew fainter an' fainter, till the life all left me intirely, and I knew nothing till I waked and saw Michael's blue eyes looking right into mine.

"Oh! ma'am, I can't tell you how happy I was then. I forgot that the sky was above and the waters shining all round, I only saw Michael's eyes.

"He had saved me from death; for a box of brimstone in the steerage had caught fire from the pipe of one of our women, who left it burnin'; and when the smell was noticed above, Michael ran down into the steerage and snatched me up in his arms, and carried me safely to the air and sunlight.

"Three of the women were dead," continued Betty, with a shudder, "before any body could get at them; and I was so weak I too should 'av died soon if I hadn't got help. Sometimes I've wickedly wished I had.

"Well, after that Michael got to be my idol; for I thought, hadn't I ought to be grateful to the man that

saved my life? And so, when he asked me one day to be his wife, I thought it was too much joy, and I said 'Yes;' and we went to the church soon as ever we set foot in Ameriky.

"Michael got work, and did well for a little; but I found soon that he wasn't over sober; and when it was the case that he would drink, he was savage and threatened me, till at last I'd give up every penny of my money. For all that, didn't I love him as a thrue-hearted wife, sure?

"One day we was just going home from church, me an' Michael, and Michael was dressed in a nice blue suit and looked the real gintleman; and for all thinking of his bad ways, I was prouder of him than ever.

"We had come to the corner of a little square, and was just turning, when we met a woman, a little, delicate woman, and she could scarcely walk, so sick and thin she was. I knew she must be dying; I knew it by her cheeks and her wild eyes. She stopped all at once't as we went by her, and looked at Michael with a strange sort of look.

"He turned pale and tried to hurry past; and when we had, the woman fell against the house, and Michael wouldn't let me go back to her, much as I felt for her.

"It wasn't a week after, ma'am," added Betty, much agitated, "that poor sick crature came to my room in the house where I lived. She hadn't strength to move any further, so I took her in and made her rest on my bed. What do you think she told me? that she was *his* wife, married in ould Ireland years ago!

"Oh! if God had taken me to himself that day, as he did her, wouldn't I have been a happy woman? But He didn't. I lived till Michael came home, though I

thought I shouldn't, and I pointed to his dead wife, and made him tell me the whole truth. And there I left him that night, though I loved him so dearly—left him without him knowing where I was going, though it almost broke my heart; and I hav'n't seen him since —four years come St. Patrick's day."

"Would you live with him if you should find him a better man, and yet single?" I asked, curious to test her feelings.

"No, ma'am. He decaived and killed one poor woman; how will I have faith in him again? But he was such a jewel of a handsome man! you couldn't help liking him yourself if you once't looked in his eyes, ma'am."

This speech was enough to provoke mirth, but the tears still stood on poor Betty's round cheeks, and I restrained my smiles. She again begged that I would keep her without wages, for she was happier there than she had ever been since; and I consented, telling her that the moment she wished for wages, or a place elsewhere, she was at perfect liberty to go.

She was very thankful. She is a pretty woman, more refined in looks and manners than most of her class.

Since Betty told me her little history, she has been more cheerful than before. I am convinced that she loves the children, and I can leave them with her and feel that she will not harm them, either by conversation or practice.

UNEXPECTED GOOD FORTUNE.

Husband gave me a surprise last night. He rode home on a beautiful little bay, and brought with him a lady's saddle. I was astonished when he presented them both to me, and naturally exclaimed, "How did you come by them, husband?"

He answered me in Yankee fashion, asking one question for another, and inquired if I remembered a head clerk he had some five years ago—a tall, striking-looking young man, to whom he had been much attached. I recollected him perfectly, also his sudden departure for India or some other foreign land.

"Well," said my husband, "at that time I was wealthy, and had no fears of losses or any thing of the kind. Ralph was uncommonly obliging, and his manners were more pleasing than those of any young man I ever saw.

"I thought, the last few months he was with me, that his health was seriously affected, he grew so pale and languid; indeed, I feared that a deep-seated disease was preying upon his vitals, so that, when he announced his intention of leaving America, I could not find it in my heart to dissuade him, though I could hardly bear the thoughts of his departure. You may judge of my surprise when to-day I received this letter;" and, unfolding a large square sheet, he read it to me. I have taken a copy.

"Mr. Golding:

"Dear and much esteemed Friend,—

"You will find inclosed a check on the M—— Bank, good for the amount of $2500. I have heard, though at a later date than I could wish, of your misfortune in business. I have not been to India, as was my original intention, but have been settled for six months in Germany, where I am pursuing a business that I feel persuaded will bring me a large fortune in a few years, if my health is continued. I can not now unfold it to you, as it is somewhat complicated; suffice it to say, it is *honorable*. I have not forgotten your uniform kindness to me when I was a poor lad, penniless and unknown. I have not forgotten the confidence you reposed in me, when you advanced me as you did to the honorable post I occupied in your counting-room. I have not forgotten that when my mother laid sick and dying, you loaned me money, and would not receive it back from me; nor have I forgotten how you took me like a father under your protection, and in numberless ways strove to make me forget my sorrow at the terrible loss I experienced in my mother's death. But enough of this. I know you will not refuse this little sum as a mark of gratitude and affection from one who feels he never can repay you what he owes. Were it twenty times what it is, I should not blush in tendering you the gift. Remember me, and write to me. My place of business is ——, and a word from you would give me great cheer.

"God bless you, and remember me ever as your obliged and grateful friend, R. T. G."

It was a luxury to weep over such a letter as that. It was a luxury to feel that such a husband I called mine; and I looked up into his noble face, thanking God silently for the good gift he has given me; for every day I observe traits of character which, had they appeared to me long years before, would have forced me to realize how great a treasure I so lightly won.

My husband said, after I had read the letter, that he felt as if he must purchase some little gift for me; and as this pretty steed was offered by a friend at a very reasonable rate, being slow-gaited and a lady's horse, he thought, in consideration of my health, it would be real economy to purchase it. The rest of the sum goes

mostly to his creditors. He has given me, also, a small donation for Betty, and laid by a little appropriation for to-morrow, which is the Fourth.

Already I hear crackers whizzing about my ears, and two or three times I have been startled by my son's wild mirth. I know not how many times he has trooped all over the house, shouting "Hurra for Independence!" Last night I was startled as I came home by hearing a very unusual noise. I had told Betty to put the children to bed, and then walk out if she liked; so no one was at home but my sister, who sat very comfortably asleep in my large arm-chair down stairs. I stole to the room from which the sounds proceeded, and as the moon shone very brightly, I could see every thing that was transpiring. Five little night-capped heads were grouped roguishly together (a neighbor had begged the privilege of leaving her young sons in my care for the night, while she watched with a sick sister), and ten little ears were drinking in Herbert's marvelous stories of former "Fourths," which he, well pleased with such an attentive auditory, garnished and embellished to his heart's satisfaction; and it was his expressive "boom, boom, boom!" shouted through his doubled hands, imitating, as closely as he could, the cannon that would awaken the city on the following morning, that occasioned the singular sounds I had heard.

All at once my young hero sprang up, unobserved, as he thought, and began delivering an original Fourth of July oration, shaking his head, stamping his feet on the bed-clothes, gesticulating more violently than is usual even on such occasions, and grotesquely mingling his patriotic sentences with such exclamations as

these: "Oh! sis, the times we'll have! Bub, I'll buy you six sugar-sticks. We will bring baby lots of candy when we come home;" until the children, grown enthusiastic with their anticipations, joined in the frolic, laughing and shouting, tumbling heels over head, frisking over the bed and jumping upon the floor, each one apparently full of the spirit of fun and mischief, while the moon lent her full beams to enliven the comical scene.

At last the uproar grew so frantic, that I was obliged to appear in their midst, and, suppressing my laughter with great difficulty, seriously ask whence all this uproar arose. Then came a sight that would have delighted a Cruikshank. Complete silence reigned; one or two, with faces sobered, scampered for the bed and crawled under the clothes; the rest, with the exception of Herbert, stood like statues, as if suddenly transformed into stone, glancing timidly with an underlook into my face, with their fingers in their mouths, not exactly knowing whether to laugh or cry.

Herbert, the rogue, stood as if transfixed, his lips parted in a broad smile, his face drawn up into such a funny expression, half dubious, half smiling, yet daring, that I could not restrain the impulse, but burst out into a loud, hearty laugh, in which all the children joined, screaming till the tears ran down their cheeks, and, taking courage from my mirth, jumping down and scampering round the room. My sister, awakened and frightened, came running up to the chamber, and no sooner saw us than she too began; and to complete the picture, husband appeared at the door with a wondering countenance, which was quickly shortened by almost half as he joined in the laugh. If the children

have not had a good time to-night, they never have; and yet by this hour the little innocents have forgotten it all, and lie sweetly slumbering, with the smiles of happy dreams upon their faces.

But I must retire, after one more glance in the kitchen to see that the white dresses are all in their places, and the little shoes shining, and the wardrobes all ready; for father will start early with our little family, and every thing must be in readiness.

THE STRAWBERRY SUPPER.

The noise and hurry of the holiday are over. I am fatigued, but the children seem as lively as ever. How buoyant is childhood! That which would press down the shoulders of age rests like a rose-leaf upon the brimming cup of their youthful happiness.

Last night I had an opportunity of noticing the wide difference between the party of genial friends in a country district and a fashionable party in the city. We were invited to Judge Waugh's to partake of a strawberry supper. Carriages came in from the city near noon, conveying relatives to the hospitable mansion of the judge. I began to grow nervous about my wardrobe as I caught a glimpse now and then of their rich attire, and paraded on the bed what were once my most fashionable dresses; but alas! wrinkled and out of date in style, it was impossible to select one in which I could look suitable for evening company.

Husband came to my aid at last, and begged me not to wear satin or silk, or finery of any kind, but a simple white muslin dress, one that I had altered and made suitable to the prevailing mode.

But there were a great many objections in the way. My complexion has roughened from contact with sun and wind; I am not as fair as I was, and I did not like to suffer by comparison with city ladies—very foolish reasons and feelings, I acknowledge, but could not seem to help them at the time.

Husband overruled them all, however, by telling me that I should certainly look well in his eyes simply and modestly attired, and asked me why I should care so much for the good opinion of others. Of course I did not attempt to set aside this argument, but I could not help asking him what had so changed his taste. Once he seemed to delight in seeing me loaded with ornaments. Once he purchased the costliest jewels at my request. The difference seemed so odd.

He smiled as he said, "Did you ever ask me, my dear, what I should prefer? Your ambition seemed to be centered on making as much display as you could, although, I must say, your taste was always exquisite. Other ladies in your circle dressed expensively, and I, proud of your beauty, and knowing how young and fond of gayety you were, took pleasure in silently acquiescing in your wishes. But my real beau ideal of the character of woman's dress is simplicity; a perfect arrangement, a nicety of material, and absence of showy jewelry. White is, I think, most appropriate for the costume of any lady. It is pure, delicate, and spotless —just what the character of woman should be. In it a child looks a cherub, and a fair woman almost an angel."

I could not help laughing aloud at my husband's rhapsody. And it seemed so strange to hear him talk upon such a subject. Indeed, I now remember that I never did ask his opinion about dress. I thought men cared very little about what women wore; but, undoubtedly, they have their preferences. I accordingly dressed in my white muslin, and wreathed a sprig of myrtle among the braids of my hair. I was rewarded by the smiles and encomiums of my husband, who declared he never saw me looking better.

Found a large company at the judge's. His sweet sister, Lizzy, singled me from the rest, and sat down by my side, after introducing me to nearly every person in the room. There were two young ladies present, whose pale cheeks, and large, lustrous dark eyes and raven locks made me suppose that they might be foreigners, perhaps Spanish ladies. They both wore black dresses, with no ornament save plain gold bracelets on each left arm. Lizzy saw that I often glanced at them, and asked me to observe the one to the right narrowly. I did, and noticed more than once a painful expression flit over her clear brow and across her magnificent eyes. I became extremely interested, and Lizzy told me a little romance about her. She had loved, yet loved a poor young man, who had formed her acquaintance some four years ago. Her parents had seemingly allowed the friendship to exist; they knew their child professed an affection for him, indeed they had reason to believe the young people were engaged. Secretly, her father contrived to have her lover sent to a foreign port, under expectation of acquiring a competence sufficient to insure the consent of her parents that he should wed Mariette.

"He went," continued Lizzy, "and is now absent; before he returns, Mariette, my poor cousin, will be the bride of another. Her father declares she shall marry an Englishman of rank in the army—a colonel, I believe—and she dares not disobey him. From my heart I pity her. Wealth will never compensate for want of love. I understand that the mere outside of her bridal robe cost $900, and he has presented her with magnificent jewels.

"Poor child! Brother says it will be a complete sacrifice. See! here comes her intended; he is handsome and noble, though older by twenty years than herself. Mark how proudly and coldly she receives him, and yet he worships her almost. No doubt she is thinking of young N——, who is perhaps crossing the ocean in some good ship, to meet and claim her as his bride. He will not find her here. She sails immediately for Europe—that is, if she marries; for she has a most resolute temper, and declares she will go to her grave before her bridal shall take place with this gentleman. And who can tell but her heart is breaking?"

"Does he not know of it? Is he not aware that she is suffering for the love of another?" I asked, indignantly.

"Yes," Lizzy replied, "he is aware of all; he has repeatedly told her; but he loves *her* so very much (in all charity's sake we ought to think so) that he can not relinquish the hope of being united with her. He tells her that he shall be content with her pure friendship, confident that he can yet win from her a deeper sentiment; and when, as a last resort, she took the locket of young Barnard from her bosom, and kissed it wildly before his eyes, saying, with a gush of tears, that she could never part with it, but should keep it sacredly next her heart, he told her, with emotion, that he was perfectly willing; if it would give her pleasure, he should not object, if she kept it her life-long. Strange, is it not?"

"It *is* unaccountable. I should hardly think him a man rightly jealous of his own dignity and honor, and yet he has a noble bearing."

And this is pride, I thought; pride that could imbitter the whole pathway of two gentle young creat-

ures for life. Surely it is the most noxious weed in the heart.

The teacher was there, Miss Clara, as many of our friends here call her. She and I are very intimate; and as for Herbert, I could not coax him from school for an hour. I think the dear little woman fails, of late; her face is of almost ashen hue sometimes, and her lips, those wonderfully beautiful, trembling lips, flush with the deepest crimson, or else are perfectly colorless. With that flashing cross upon her breast, she sometimes awes me.

As she sat for a while in the great state chair—an odd piece of furniture which was brought from England by some ancestor of Judge Waugh's—and Lizzy, laughingly calling her queen, placed a crown of lilies upon her marble fair brow. I thought I had never seen so exquisitely beautiful a creature.

"Oh!" exclaimed Lizzy Waugh, "you want your kingdom of little children here now, all kneeling round and paying you obeisance." Clara smiled, but the smile was broken suddenly, as her eye encountered some one, and even as her lips were parted, the color fled from her cheeks. I turned, and observed a tall stranger who had just entered—a man of magnificent proportions, and all at once it flashed over me that he loved our sweet teacher—perhaps she loved him. Yet why, then, should she turn pale!

"To the garden!" exclaimed Judge Waugh; and at that moment the tall stranger stood beside Clara. I could not decide what was the expression of her face; but, laughing and shouting—if it is not undignified to tell of it—the merry company hurried out, and I lost sight of both.

The garden presented a scene of bewitching brilliancy. The pond in the centre laid without a ripple on its shining surface, and a round moon in the centre; a clear, rich light, and a magnificent sky, threw the whole range of the surrounding country into distinct and bold outline. Almost in raptures with a moonlight prospect, as I always am, I left husband talking with the judge, and, wandering on, sat down in the deep shadow of a great oak on the very verge of the garden.

In a few moments I saw the glimmer of a white dress, and before I had time for consideration, two persons—Clara, and my stranger, I was sure—came and sat in another rustic seat, directly in the rear of mine. I knew it was Clara by the brilliant cross in her breast. The deep, rich tones of her companion (they linger yet like the echo of sweet music) fell upon my ear. Full of devotion, trembling even with excess of feeling, I was about to leave stealthily, if I could, when her words riveted me to the spot.

"Count, you shall have your final answer. I rejoice that you are changed, that your love for me is purified. I know I might go to my own native land, and perhaps, as you say, wear a coronet at court; but I can not—no, no, I can not love you, count—I can not; I have tried, and in vain. Your religion will support you under this decision. Go back to France and be happy; find some gentle girl, love her, and be happy. As for me, I can not give you a heart long ago buried in the grave of an idolized husband. I know your graces, I doubt not your virtues; but oh! I implore you, as you love me, never, *never* speak to me of marriage! I implore you, do not. Meanwhile, let me disclose your true rank to the judge."

"No, Clara, if this is your determination, I shall leave directly for France, and never return. I go almost a broken-hearted man. It may be better so, though God knows how devotedly I have loved you these seven long years."

All this was said in such a subdued, sorrowful manner, that I felt my eyes moist, and, before I knew it, tears stood on my cheek.

"Will you go back to the garden?" he asked, his voice quite unsteady.

"No, not yet. Count," she continued, in a lower voice, "forgive me for causing you this pain; I *would* love you were it in my power; as it is, we had better not meet again—farewell!"

He moved slowly away. I saw him look upward; his fine dark eyes were dim with tears and an inexpressible anguish. I pitied him sincerely, and half wondered at Clara for refusing so manly a heart.

"Dear Clara!" I hurried immediately to her side. She was pressing, as usual, her delicate hand upon the cross. "Is that you?" she said, faintly, and leaned her head on my bosom. I could do nothing to comfort her but fold her to my heart as if she had been a child, and murmur my love. When she had gained a little more composure, we returned to the garden; but she still trembled, and would have excused herself from the supper, but Mrs. Waugh insisted, and she went in with Herbert and myself.

A long table was spread with a snow-white cloth, and down the whole centre, at equal distances, stood great bowls heaped with luscious strawberries, alternated only with beautiful ices of various and delicate colors. Before each saucer sat an antique china cream-

er, filled with rich cream, and four or five large silver flagons held a quantity in reservation—great, old-fashioned dishes, filled to the brim with sparkling sugar, formed the crowning beauty of the arrangements. Spoons and tongues were soon at work. In a short time the dishes were filled with what seemed like amalgamated rose-leaves and snow. Never was there a merrier gathering. All save poor Clara, and perhaps another, if he were there, were light-hearted; I could not see that he was. I tried several times to jest with Clara; but the heart sadness in her eye restrained me, and I was obliged to swallow my feelings with my strawberries.

Milly attracted much attention. How well she conformed herself, and how sweetly she looked with her rosy cheeks, and eyes that sparkle like nothing but a sun-flash on the water!

Turned to leave the table, when I caught sight of the stranger. He stood just outside the door, his glance—may I never behold another so fearfully sad!—riveted upon Clara. She did not see him—she was looking through the open window up to heaven; and I think to my heart she will soon be there. I have never beheld the stranger since.

After an old-fashioned play, in which I took no part, the guests left for home.

Now, in contrasting that festivity with the glare and glitter of a city rout, how incomparably superior it was! No foolish flirting; no parade—simple attire, simple pleasures, and simple feasting. With the exception of that one painful interview, about which, in honor, my lips are sealed, I never passed so delightful an evening.

A letter from Mr. Lansden!—not for me, but for Milly. She allowed me to see just a little. The reverend gentleman inquired very kindly after me, wished to be remembered to Herbert, and concluded in this way:

"*Miss Susan is yet well and hearty. I visit her every Sunday night, and sometimes through the week. She never fails to inquire after your sister's health, and has given me so many recipes to send that I can remember but very few. One is, how to make a cream pie; the other, a lemon pie, both of which I inclose, written with a pencil as I took them down from her lips. The ancient red gown is yet unfaded, and she has taken to her heart—to make up, I suppose, for the loss of Deb—two pet rabbits, bright little pink-eyed things. I fear she will kill them with overmuch kindness. Miss Susan is getting old. I have never realized it before, though she has attained a ripe age; but her 'rheumatiz' advances upon her; her sight is failing, and her soul is growing riper for heaven day by day. She still feels the hope of seeing Willy—a very comforting one—and talks about him more than ever. Through forty-five years she has clung to the recollection of that sacred love. So may it be—*"

I found that I was trespassing, and gave up the letter into Milly's eager hands. She was all blushes, and her fingers were fairly tremulous when she gently slid within my grasp a locket containing a miniature of Mr. Lansden.

"Why did you not show this to me before, Milly?" I asked.

"It was only sent to me yesterday," she replied,

winding her arm around my neck; and so, with her happy brow resting on my shoulder, she looked at it with me. I could not see that a feature was changed; the same frankness of eye and brow; the same little cluster of curls laying on one side of the dark forehead; the same meekness within the gray eyes, and moulding the lip into a delicacy like that of an innocent child.

"What do you think of it?"

"Why, Milly," I answered, "it is the very handsomest face in the whole world, *always* excepting Herbert Golding's!"

"Ah! you think I know nothing of your former heart affairs, my staid sister," she said, with an arch smile; "you suppose I forget. You see I was a little pitcher, and had—what is it?"

"Long ears, that I pinched whenever they betrayed me," I replied, laughing heartily at the recollection of some of Milly's provoking speeches when she was a very little girl.

"Well, never mind; he loves me better than he did you."

"How do you know that?"

"Because he says he does."

And that made me laugh heartily again—her manner was so innocent. "I don't wonder," I could not help saying; "for I was never one half so good, or beautiful, or—" Here Milly clapped her hand upon my mouth, and I was forced to cry for mercy. Milly will make a pattern minister's wife. She has much more firmness than I, and a judgment as superior—to use Miss Susan's favorite comparison—as light is to darkness. And then she enters readily into the little

troubles of a household, and fairly looks care out of countenance. Sorrow flies at the merry ring of her voice, and melancholy can not abide in the same atmosphere.

Happy Milly!

Herbert, Alice, Julia and Henry Waugh, and the baby, are raising a general din in the old dining-room. A few moments ago, tears and sobs—now mirth and laughter. They have had a solemn time of it superintending the funeral of a chicken, which has died in spite of my solicitous care. I was invited out to see the body when it was laid in state; and really, if it were not for the very long faces about me, and the apparent solemnity of the poor things, I could not have kept my countenance. The little chick laid decently on his side in a tiny box constructed out of gilt paper, and all sorts of flowers, roses, mignionette, morning-glories, and a plentiful sprinkling of leaves, arranged tastily about it. To crown the whole, the defunct bird had his little claws fastened together, and from them, most ludicrously, peeped a tiny rose-bud. I did not go with them to the funeral, under an old beech-tree, but I saw Herbert dig down with his little spade, and even baby Milly was silent as they laid poor chick in the earth. Well! children will be children! Why should we interfere, and hold up the uselessness of such little farces? They show where the heart is.

Now, with their quondam scales and bits of sugar and bread, they are keeping store, and famous merchants they make. It is obvious, by the straightforward denials which I hear at times, that no credit is given there. Generally speaking, they play very harmoniously.

THE SAD LETTER.

I HAVE tried often and again to realize how it would seem to be the wife of a coarse, sensual drunkard, but I can not. I have fancied how such a one must sit all the long evening, perhaps suffering with want, watching the few dim coals go out, and the storm beating against the loose windows; shivering with cold, yet more with dread, for fear, at the approach of her husband. I have seen her tuck the scanty coverlet over the little body of her sickly child, and carry it to the furthest corner that it might be out of the way of *his* violence, then trim the dying lamp, and crouch together on some low chair, striving, by clutching with her numb fingers at the garments that hung so loosely about her, to make her poor frame warmer. I have seen her start at the sound of a passing footstep, and grow paler as it receded in the distance; then, leaning her heavy head upon her hand, and shutting her eyes, from which the big tears fell slowly, slowly, think solemnly, not pleasantly, of other days, when her foot was light and her heart unburdened with the heavy sorrow that is consuming it.

I have thought all this; and yet, no doubt, the reality far transcends the description.

Ah! Gretta! born in a palace, reared in the midst of luxury, cared for as gently as the tender dove, delicate in person, refined in intellect—can it be that she is the wife of a drunkard?

I have before me a letter full of pathos, tenderness, and woe:

"*Oh! that you were here,*" it says; "*you, to whom above all others I could pour out my sorrows and tell my agony. I am dying, Alice, day by day, and hour by hour—and such a death! We have left our beautiful house, and taken another near the north part of the city—a poor, small tenement; yet, under different circumstances, it would be a paradise to me. You remember little Alfred. Blessed child! if he were but living; if I could only press him to this sorely stricken heart, and call him mine; if I could only see the tender light of his dark eyes, and hear him once say 'Mamma,' I would perhaps be happy yet. And still, what do I ask? Could I endure to see that noble child the sport of his playmates—in tones of derision called the drunkard's child; doomed to linger on, when I am gone, a poor beggar, a hanger-on of the bounty of the cold stranger? Oh Alice! I am* GLAD *he has gone—I am glad he is in heaven—that beautiful home of the weary, for I shall be there soon. Once I shuddered at the thought of death. It is different now. I long for the dark grave—long for it with a yearning inexpressible. Perhaps you may have heard of Henri—perhaps not; it matters little to me now who knows, since he has become a by-word and a jest.*

"*If I could save him, Alice, there is no danger I would not undergo; this moment would I lay down my life for him. Oh! to see him come home as he often does; you would not know him, dear friend; perhaps you would not wish to, or me either, since we are so reduced. How* MANY *tears I have shed! it seems to me whole fountains, and their source is not dry yet—nor, indeed, ever will be in this poor world. Think sometimes of the childless mother, Alice—the worse than widowed wife; think, in your sunny home (for with blessings such as yours it must be sunny), of the friend who was once dear to you—who fondly hopes some tie may yet connect her memory with yours. Alice, dear Alice, could I only look upon you once—only lay my weary, aching brow against your dear heart, and then I should not dare to tell you—I should not dare!*

"*Come to me, if you are ever in the city, and I am yet alive. They tell me I am in a consumption; indeed, I decline daily—mind, spirit, and body. My cheeks, my form, are thin; my hair—you used to praise its gloss—fallen off; the fingers that tremblingly guide this pen emaciated to the bone. None of my former friends visit me. Many know not where I am; others fear my husband's brutality; others care not for either, and never did. It is almost midnight; my lamp is going out, like my life—in gloom; yet I constantly repeat that precious, precious verse,*

"'I KNOW THAT MY REDEEMER LIVETH; AND THOUGH AFTER DEATH WORMS DESTROY THIS BODY, YET IN MY FLESH SHALL I SEE GOD.'

"*Comforting hope, is it not?*

"*Come to me, Alice, if you can visit the poor drunkard's home—for you are one of my heart-angels. I never think of you but I see you in white garments; your sweet face so pure, your heart shining through. I can not forget your kindness to me when little Alfred died. Though suffering yourself, you blessed me with your presence, your aid, your tears, your love. Others were kind, but you excelled them all: I pray for you night and morning.*"

Who could help weeping over a letter like that?

With my whole heart I pity her. I can do nothing more. I will go to her the first time I visit the city. I wish she was with me now.

To-morrow is Sunday, and Mr. Lansden is coming to exchange with our minister. He will stay here. Milly is very busy getting up some little delicacies; but likely enough, as she says, Miss Susan will send him with his hands full. I look certainly for no less than three jars of preserves, though, good soul! she little knows I have abjured all those things.

Betty has just been in to say that she has a pain in her head and side; and, bursting into tears, she exclaimed, "And sure, where will I go, then, if I have the fever?"

"Not out of this house, Betty," I said, warmly; so I sent her to her room quite overcome with gratitude, and Milly made her a little medicine, and bound up her head with wet bandages. I never saw a poor creature so thankful. She little knows how closely she has knit our hearts to hers by her gentle attentions and unassuming acts of kindness. Alice wanted to stay and read to her; but I thought it best she should get some sleep, so I left her alone.

Betty is much better, and begins to think she will not have the fever after all. Mr. Lansden has just arrived. Happy Milly! how much and how well she loves him! but not more, I am sure, than he does her. Fortunately, Miss Susan sent nothing more than a great box of strawberries from the identical vines that I have often picked myself; and, I must not forget—her love, which is worth a great deal to me.

THE THUNDER-STORM.

I HAVE felt more actual terror to-day than in many years before. The soft fleecy clouds are rolling grandly back from the blue of heaven. But an hour ago their gathered blackness walled up the sky. I never felt such an atmosphere: it seemed loaded with sulphur. The birds flapped their wings heavily, and seemed pressed earthward. Moaning in the distance, and shrieking as it rose, wilder and more wildly the wind came roaring along, bending the great trees and snapping the trellises as if they had been wax-work; while the hills yonder were undistinguishable from the heavy masses that spread from their tops completely over the horizon. Rose-bushes and vines were borne down to the ground, and the grass rolled and surged in great heavy waves, as if it had been an ocean. We hurried from the sitting-room to the kitchen, as the safest place. I have always been fearful of a thunder-storm, and it was with the greatest exertion that I controlled my shrieks at every burst of the terrible thunder and the awfully vivid flashes of the lightning. And there sat Mr. Lansden at the bow-window, calm and serene, and quoting sublime passages of Scripture through the whole, though the room was dark and the scene without painted in a purple gloom that was indescribably awful. Herbert, of the children, was alone undaunted. I could not keep him, as I did the others, by my side.

It is over now. The whole garden smiles in renew-

ed splendor. The roses are lifted up again, and their crimson petals glisten with the tear-drops of the storm. My bed of violets gleams through the heavy moisture, a thousand little blue eyes looking their thanks for this refreshing season.

I remember an incident connected with such a storm as this. I have not thought of it before in long, long years. Soon after we were married, Herbert took me to call upon a friend of his father. It was my first view of the grand palisades that lined the noble Hudson. On the banks of the river, surrounded by lofty trees and soft blue hills, stood the palace residence of the retired merchant. The massive furniture of venerable hue lining the hall, the old gray-looking pictures, and the rich, shrouded radiance, blended from many colors through the stained windows, into a soft harmony of light and shade, impressed me with almost a feeling of solemnity.

There was but one thing in that beautiful house, with its lavish adornments, its stately halls, gorgeously-fitted apartments, its broad, solemn mirrors, and heavy, rich, oaken furniture, that gave a sadness to my heart when I chanced to gaze upon it, sending a thrill of aching anguish to my innermost being; and that object was a child!

It may seem strange, but the first time I beheld this lovely creature—and never before saw I aught so beautiful—I shuddered with an undefinable feeling of terror. A something vague, indistinct, mystical, enthralled me; and while I gazed upon the little creature like one fascinated, I felt it could not be a being of earth; I knew it was not a being of heaven.

She was very slight and fairy-like, and her hair absolutely hung about her delicate little form, shrouding it like a glittering gossamer mantle in a shower of golden, gleaming curls. Her deep-set, yet large and spiritual eyes, were, chamelion-like, constantly changing in expression, sometimes appearing a deep brown, sometimes a soft dark blue, sometimes intensely black. She was dressed with exquisite taste, and her little robes were lavishly adorned with various shades of silken embroidery. Her complexion was colorless, but dazzling; her expression—ah! there was the mystery—at once spiritual, heavenly, and yet wanting in earthly intelligence. She was an only child, and heiress to an immense fortune.

Perceiving my bewildered and half-averted glance, the father, a man of great beauty of countenance and a most commanding figure, drew the little girl toward him; and while a shadow veiled his brow, he said, in a subdued voice, "This is our Lilly, madam, our dear little crushed Lilly!" and he folded her to his heart, and gazed down yearningly upon her.

"She was one of the most frolicsome children," he continued, "bounding from room to room, flinging her trilling bird notes through the corridors, and laughing in infant joyousness, only a year ago.

"It was but a year ago, my Lilly," he murmured plaintively, drawing her closer to his manly bosom.

"One day there was a wild storm—a terrific tempest—and we all sat hushed and breathless, listening to the rolling crash of the reverberating thunder, whose hollow echoes yet ring in my ear.

"We sat together. I supported my shrinking wife. Little Lilly had flung herself upon the floor, and buried her face in my lap. Suddenly the atmosphere be-

came dark and heavy; even my heart, stern as I am, grew sick with fear. The house rocked, the wind seemed to pour in sheeted gusts against the windows.

"A great flash of red light filled the apartment. That shriek! My God! the child was struck! She rolled over from my lap upon the floor with distorted features and distended eyeballs. Oh! my God! can I ever forget that moment—that terrible moment?"

Large drops stood in his eyes, and for myself, I was weeping.

"My poor, delicate wife, who adored the child, filled the house with her lamentations. Medical aid was at hand. I would have died for my Lilly—I besought the Almighty; I—" he bowed his head—"*dared* him to summon my idol. I was wild—I was mad—mad!

"Consciousness was restored; but the mind—the mind was stricken. It had folded its wings when the fire-bolt scathed their brightness, and it has never soared since.

"But we love her more dearly than ever before," and he impressed burning kisses upon the child's waxen brow, "we love her with a more intense devotion. It would be death to part with her now. God spare me to strengthen the drooping plant—my poor, crushed Lilly!"

I stole one glance more at the child. She was asleep. The noble father bore her in his arms, and laid her upon her little velvet couch; then, as the threads of gold fell in shining bands over the rich fabric, and mingled with the glittering bullion fringing the drapery, he sighed heavily, and, turning, left the apartment with hurried tread.

"Truly, a crushed Lilly!" whispered I, as I bent

over and touched my lips to the crimson petals of her sweet mouth.

Dear little angel! she is in heaven now, and the broad domains of her father have fallen into the possession of distant kindred.

THE FASHIONABLE CALL.

I WAS, indeed, surprised this morning with a visit from Mrs. Dr. Lakin, a lady who formerly resided near me in the city, and who is extremely fashionable. When her elegant carriage drove up to the door, and I saw who it was thus honoring me, I was weak enough to feel irresolute with regard to meeting her; but as I have grown more conscientious of late, I did not dare to say "Not at home!" Once I had no scruples about the matter; but now, thank God! I have.

It was well for my pride that she came late in the afternoon. My work was done, my children well dressed; the whitewashers were all through early in the day; my rooms have had a new coat of paint; and, hastily viewing the premises, I felt satisfied with them and, I may add, with myself too.

The good lady met me with a very patronizing air, declared she was delighted to see me, and would have kissed me, I verily believe, if I had been less distant. But fashionable kissing—ah me! I have had enough of it. I can not forget a scene which occurred in the circle where I once moved. A lady had returned from Europe, and meeting with a few friends at our house, rapturously kissed, and was kissed in turn, by every woman present. And oh! the congratulations! Oh! the delight and the "my dearings!" She went home early, and there was not a black name in the vocabulary of fashion that was not bestowed upon her. I

never heard so much scandal, I never heard so much backbiting in connection with one person, in my life. Every sort of calumny was heaped upon her.

I was astonished, being but a novice in the great, gay world then; but I too soon became accustomed to such things, though I was always averse to kissing, knowing in my heart that many who would so salute me would as readily heap dishonor on my head. But Mrs. Dr. Lakin, how very kind she was, praising every thing, though I knew she despised my situation in her heart.

"How well you are looking!" she exclaimed, gazing at me with evident surprise. I could not, in truth, return the compliment; for a more faded-out, wearied-appearing creature I had not seen for months. She said she had heard about my house, that it was somewhat singular, and must see it—every room; and though I knew she only wanted to find out how I lived, and how my house was furnished, I felt brave, and carried her, yes, I verily believe, from cellar to garret, in the latter of which are some broken chairs more than a hundred and fifty years old. I wonder if she contrasted my uncarpeted chambers, with their white, striped muslin hangings, and very plain pine chairs, with her richly-furnished rooms, her Wilton, Turkey, and Brussels carpets, her satin hangings and rosewood furniture? No doubt she did; but if she pitied me for my lack of luxuries, I pitied her for her dull eye and expressionless face, for her languid movements and sickly smile. Besides, she can only look, with all her finery and fashion, upon brick walls and narrow strips of sky, while I have all the beautiful things of the country on every hand.

Betty, into whose brain I can not beat one atom of etiquette, put her head in at the door and asked me if she should lay the bit of straw carpeting into the room I cleaned for the children this morning.

In as unconcerned a manner as I could assume, I told her "Yes," and then turned to answer the rather impertinent question of my visitor, if I really did my own work?

"As much as I can," was my reply; "for I never enjoyed such health as I do at present, and I impute it to the wholesome exercise I take daily, and the plain food I eat. I never have to call in Dr. Lakin now!" I added, laughingly.

I was glad when she went away; for I could not help the feeling that her protestations of friendship were all hollow, especially when she told me she had just come from Judge Waugh's, and they had spoken very highly of me as a particular acquaintance of theirs. Their friendship, then, or rather their endorsement, was the talisman that brought Mrs. Dr. Lakin here—not an unselfish affection for me. I envy her not the splendid establishment of which she is so proud. She is not happy, poor creature. I wish she was.

My uncle came here to-day with a most welcome present, though I did not see it until he had gone. Happening to enter my parlor some few moments after, I was so delighted, so surprised; for there stood my beautiful statue of the little Flower-girl! The blinds were closed, and the rosy light of day came faintly in, folding about her with its soft glow, and the meek, innocent face looked so childishly happy. I instantly thought of the poor Italian, dying alone, his dim eyes resting fondly upon this sweet creation of his genius.

I wondered if his mother and sister mourned him as dead, or yet yearningly looked forward to his return. While thus musing, my eye caught sight of a little billet perched among the marble flowers, and taking it out, I instantly recognized my uncle's handwriting. It ran thus:

"Dear Niece,—

"Accept this little offering from thy old uncle. It was once thine, and I know how highly thou didst prize it. I am so well pleased with thy deportment in thy reverses, that I can not find words to express my pleasure. Verily thou wilt have thy reward.

"Thy affectionate uncle."

Always a man of few words, his letter is a type of his speech. Husband tells me that he was walking with him up ——— Street, where he saw this "flower-girl" for sale at an artist's window. He immediately bought it, expressing his sorrow that he had allowed it to be sold. "But," said he, "thou knowest, friend Herbert, my sect care nothing for these gewgaws, so I bestowed little thought upon it."

Dear old uncle! to lay aside his prejudices for my poor sake!

And yet another pleasant surprise awaited me; for toward night the express-man brought me a great package, and stood it in the entry. My heart told me what it was; and when Herbert untied the strings and took away the wrappers, there stood my dear, old, beautiful harp in all its glory! Didn't I spring toward it like a very child, and twang its chords, and elicit the almost forgotten strains of yore! while Herbert danced round, exclaiming, "Oh! I'm so glad!" and Alice lifted her tiny arms to reach the "gold little angels," and Willy ran crying out, "What is it, ma?"

Then came Clara and Lizzy with their congratula-

tions. Inspired by their bright eyes, and the peculiar, but I fear fatal, brilliancy of Clara's face, especially, I played a soft, wild air, to which they listened with apparent delight. No performer with the laurels of successful fame fresh upon his brow need crave a more attentive audience than mine at that moment.

"And now," said I, turning to my husband after he had brought the great harp into the parlor, "how came I by that dear old friend again?"

"Why, I bought it," he answered.

"Yes, but I don't understand if it's the same harp 'that hung in Tara's halls' long ago. Who had it? Did you get it at auction?"

Yes, that was the way in which he came by it. The person who had purchased it at the sale had recently failed himself, and happening to see it as uncle did the flower-girl, he had repurchased it with great pleasure.

Were we not happy? singing, laughing, and enjoying the sweet, calm evening with its moonlight?

Mrs. Mader would not believe it. The fact is, the aristocracy won't believe that people without money and a name are as good as themselves.

Ten to one, the wealthiest men in our great cities, were they to trace their genealogy away back, would find some little obscure couple, good and contented, sitting down cheerfully in a little plain hovel, before a little ungarnished table, eating their scanty meal, perhaps without knife or fork.

They might see that same little couple up before dawn, the little wife scrubbing the coarse earthen floor, the little good man bringing out his old, well-worn handcart, with its scales and capacious brown leather bag to hold the rags which he may collect in the course of

his travels. They might behold a little brown, ruddy fellow playing in the dirt before the door, as unconscious that he is to become the great great-grandfather of Mr. Somebody on 'Change as is Mr. Somebody's bright-eyed son that he shall be the great-grandfather, perhaps the grandfather, of Mr. Nobody without change.

Aristocracy! It is so laughable to hear American people quoting "the aristocracy!" Yet I did it myself, once.

THE OLD POET'S GARRET.

THIS very rainy day I have been rummaging in the old garret. It is long since Betty's tidy hand has touched the glistening cobwebs. All over the chimney wasps' nests hang in clusters; for here, in "daintie summer time, they most do congregate"—those "wicked stingers," as Willy, who has felt their venomous bite more than once, calls them. Setting aside old chairs, whose damask long ago faded into pitiful shades of crimson and blue—ghosts of their former brilliancy—and, turning over pieces of chests, with their quaint drawers and bits of brass ornaments, I came to the time-worn, time-stained chest, wherein were old manuscripts left by the former proprietor, and which the present owner of the house had given me liberty to disarrange to my heart's content. Now if there is any thing I *do* like, it is to sit in just such a garret as ours, far enough from wind and rain, yet with the little windows, that look so oddly at each other from either end, opened wide to admit the soft, cool air. The musty, booky smell of such a place is delicious to me, especially when full, ripe roses lend their perfume from without, and herbs, sweet fern, and dried fruit regale the senses within.

The chest contained a very venerable budget of manuscripts, fragments of poetry, and scraps of biography. Over some of the stained letters, even where I had to make out the sense of old-fashioned words in my own

way, I could not refrain from tears. Many of them I have taken down to peruse more at my leisure, and to read to husband.

Here are letters dated Shropshire, England, 1752. They appear to have been written by the family of the old poet when he was quite young; and though many of the sentences are almost illegible, yet there is enough to tell more than one story of the heart, and give room for plenty of romantic conjecture. The one before me commences thus:

"DEARE MOTHER,

"Alle is over! She has gone to her Faythe who art in Hevynge. Her last words were in ye sweetest remembrance of you. She murmured Againe and Againe of youre kindness, and wisht it were in her power to repay You. Oh! mother! mother! I am desolated! and you Soe far awaye! She lyes before me now, and aching as I am at ye Hearte, coulde I see thy deare smile but once, to beam on this sad, tear-wette face, I woulde feel my sore Anguish soe lightened. 'Bury me,' she sayed, 'with that same Rose in my haire!'—Oh! mother! that bright haire! that golden-waving, that sunny-shining haire, bound up now all tightly and closely under her grave-cap! 'Bury me with that same Crosse in mye hand.' Oh! ye long fingers so slender! Oh! ye blue Eyes so closed! Oh! ye white, white brow! Oh! ye erst rose-leafed lips! Oh! ye Lilly cheek! Oh! ye WHOLE of my darling! my darling!—my Good and true! my dead! my living! my mortal! my Angel one! I write in ye agony of soul, which must surelie have veiled ye spirit of ye Mary mother, when her lyfe, her Delyght, her most

wholesome and heavenlie Blessing did lye all in ye cerements which eyes look last upon, and which eyes loathe with unavailing bitterness!"

Here closes the epistle, at least what there is left of it, for my search has been unavailing to find the twin-brother of the page. Who was his angel, his darling? I know not, whether a sister, a betrothed, or a wife; but plainly enough is it to be seen that "hys sorrowe" was for one long and "tenderlie" loved.

Here is another fragment; for I have not a single whole letter in my possession. It is dated some years before the first.

"Alle is not soe dark now! Fayther is Home once more in ye midst of hys little Familie, and we so happie to kiss hym againe. Ye colonel (he is soe likelie and tall; hys Browne eyes make a merrie light, and allreadie he calls me 'pet,' with fayther and mother) settled all ye heavie debt, and fayther must pay it when he is pleased to—only think, not till he is Well and Strong, not till manie yeares if soe be his pleasure. Ye colonel has brought hys Ponie over to ye house—ye prettiest little grey thing—and sayes, how well I ride considering soe little practice; and sayes my form is better for ye Equestrian than Cousin Lilly's, and she soe Handsome and noble! Well, I do like praise, and anie one might flatter me, I suppose, most easilie, *and I* none the wiser. Fayther says ye colonel is ye bravest, ye best—" There! is it not provoking? there's all of *that* choice morsel; yet I think I have some clue to the "labyrinth of love" in an old, stained paper, with the following marked around, in what was once black ink:

"*Marryed, in ye House of her fayther, on ye 22d day of February, Anno Domini,* 1754, *Miss Mary Bolstead, to ye gallant Colonel M'Mene, of the 22d Regiment of his Majesties Hussars.*"

Here is one in a large child's hand; it commences in the time-honored way: "Dearest Mother." After telling of sports and sights, he says, "Nowe, mother, if you coulde see ye prettiest thing that ever was seen! It is a little Babie, with such white, white haire, that does not begin to curl longe yet, but just turns up into little rings soe cunning. And when I goe in in ye Morning, he will crow, and beat hys fat, white hands together. And when I goe through ye room, he looks with hys blue eyes all round after me, and if soe I hide my face behind a hat or ye curtain, and then on ye sudden dart it out, He throws back hys head, and ye laugh rolls out like ye music Bird's song. He is soe sweet a babie! I wish he were mine own brother!"

That's a pretty picture of a baby; but oh! here is a sad page, and written in the same round hand:

"When ye doctor came he lookit at hym, and soe turned ye cradle round to ye Light. And he lookit long, with a certain frown on hys browe, and sayed, 'Surely he is a Sick Child!' And ye while ye deare little fellow never styrred, but layed with hys eyen turned till ye whites showed onlie under ye heavie lids. And Aunt Bessie cryed at ye Doctor's solemn looks, but verie softlie lifting her apron nowe and then. By-and-by, after ye medicine, a pinke flush came on his Cheek and in hys lips, and Aunt Bessie said, 'Look! my Childe, he is certainlie better.' And when he soe sweetlie held up hys little fat Hands, Nowayes altered, she clasped them to her bosom, and sayed, 'Thank God! thank God!' Soe till ye evening he layed quite sweet-

lie, and well Astonished were we to note, when ye doctor came again, a sadder look in his eye.

"'Soe deare a child!' he sayed, softly, and we all had heavie heart.

"And then, when he went forth, I followed hym, and I heard hym say to ye nurse, 'Get hys shroude readie, for he will die to-night!' and I went in ye stillest room and cried by ye hour.

"Soe, in ye morning, when noebodie stirred, as I thought, I got up still as anie mouse, and crept to hys little chamber. A strange smell of burning spirits was there, and ye nurse's voice soft as ye flute, and ye mother moaning; and soe there he Layed, not stirring ye least, and ye lips and ye cheeks were whiter than ye snow.

"Ye breath was not there! ye soul had departed from ye prettie bodie, and taken with it All our sweet comfort; and nowe, whiles he lays in hys coffin, ye wind swells mournfullie." Dear, dead baby!

Oh! here is a little poem—a love poem—for the caption quaintly says,

"TO MY DEARE AMIE.

"Oh! my sweet luve,
Now in ye golden time,
When ye finch singeth in ye hive,
And winds come wooing with ye breath of flowers,
And humming-birds like stars
Flash through ye saffron bars,
Ye Jasmine maketh round our floral bowers;
When rosy fingers upward fling
Sweet censors of ye spicy spring,
And on each altar chant ye priests of song
And on each hill ye sun-shafts linger long,
Let me tell unto ye
How mine soul loveth thee.

Now stand ye soe,
Thy cheeks aglow
Thy blue eyes kindling with a wondrous light,
Thy forhead like ye wax-drops clear and white,
Soe flowing soft thy bands of Golden haire,
And silken as ye tassels of ye larch;
Thy lips red-ripe, and in ye dimples rare
Ye sweet smiles nestling, mirthfullie and arch.
Now daintie turn thy throate,
Ye white and slender moate
Between ye castles of thy heart and lip,
O'er which but Luve may send his Arrow tip;
Like Snow it gleameth faire
Like Ivory seemeth rare;
Soe I hang chain of Gold about it,
'Twould look no brighter than without it;
For how could Splender more improve
That, ready hung with chains of luve?
Soe sweetest, fairest,
If but thou darest
Lend thy chaist ear to my rough words of passion,
That art can smoothe not, policie not fashion,
I'll tell thee how my soul hath learned to say
Alle that it findeth Language for, to-day;
I luve thee; sweetest, do thy blushes tell
That some neare time thou will luve me as well!"

And still another, written in a style more quaint, but apparently by the same author.

Stop! this broad signature—*can* it be his?

"With very great respect and consideration, I have the honor to be, &c.,

"G. Washington."

The handwriting of our great patriot and national Father, and only the signature, cut apparently from

some letter. Precious relic! it shall be treasured most sacredly by me. Now for the poetry:

"A LYTTLE WILDE WOODE BYRDE.

"A lyttle wilde woode, yellow Byrde, a wondrous pretty thing,
Sits perched on ye lylac boughe, and plumes hys golden Wynge,
Not that ye Sunlight flashes Red in Beauti on hys breste;
For see, ye duskie, flame-eyed Clouds hang heavie in ye Weste.

"Fraile habitation is not thine, Thou Gentle summer byrde?
Now that by tempeste-wynde and teares ye forest-Heart is stird?
Thy lyttle home, so lighte and High, like Dew-born Lillie shakes,
And o'er thy Head with Jarring crash, ye stormie Thunder Breaks.

"He opes hys bille—ye Woodlande song—How rich, and soft, and wild—
Comes gushing from hys Sylverie throte as when ye sunshine Smiled;
Tho' with each quivering Melodie ye storme-blast Bends ye tree,
He ceaseth not; but still, Mie God! hys Song goes up to Thee.

"Oh! yellow Byrde—oh! yellow Byrde, what teachings dost thou give,
Ye Christian neathe ye Stormiest Skies still hopefullie shall live,
While Hys faire tree of Earthlie joys bends broken to ye Sod,
In ye fierce tempest's Sharpest throes, Hys Songs goe up to God."

Another little morsel, and I have done—*perhaps*. The fact is, my heart lingers about these old relics. I love the smoothness of the antiquarian English, the simplicity of style, the freshness that is gathered like bouquets of sweet-smelling roses all over it. Ah! this bit of sentiment—I know not what it is, letter or essay, but it pleases me.

"*Ye farmer has come out of hys old grey Stone-House, and with hys scythe over Hys Shoulder, trips it blythelie, while Pattie, his little Daughter, with curls blown like briar downe on pynke thistle alle over her Rosy forehead, legges it merrilie after hym, Singing a fragmente of meadow Roundelay, such as ye Hay-*

makers caroll. Ye blue skyes alle hung with white and crimsoned Banners, smyle as ye Summer in her chariotte, drawne by dragon flies, alle green and gold, and shimmering butterflies, and silverie piping mockynge-Byrdes in ye most delicate browne harness, spotted withe red, and daintie humming-byrdes, and nightingales sombre, spinning ye fine-drawn notes from ye angel harpes in theire little bodies, rides over ye gravele avenues; whereof onlie ye great sun and hys sweet Bryde ye moon, ye stars of midnight, ye bugle-blowing wyndes, and ye witching, caprice-changing seasons, know ye way. Across from mie littel Studie, milkie roses and ye soft Columbine, with yellow and red honiesuckle, where bees plunge in ye nectar-filled goblets, grow alle together, like a sweetlie ordered familie. Cows, browne and white dappled, browse to ye edge of ye streame, covered with fairie shallops, green and silver, and fairie temples, with snowy shaftes and golden altars—I meane ye chaste lillies. I saye, ye sleek kine lag lazilie to ye edge, snuff ye fragrance-loaded air; then first in goes one foote, and then another, till up to ye shining flanks they stand, seeming to dreame all pleasant things in ye cool water, where ye gad-fly, with hys little trumpet and hys sharp stynge, can noe longer goad their poor bodies.

"*Nowe see ye glistening lines of dew-wet grass lying in straite rowes from fielde to fielde, and yon urchins, with not a few bright-eyened wenches, Gambolling together after theire day's worke. Peep adowne to ye little style against ye red cottage, and beholde a bashfulle lad and a prettie lass sitting together on ye green, and talking, sometime with their glances*

on ye red glory of ye sky, but oftenest on ye grass at theire feet. He plucks a littel floure, and she, noe wayes behind hym in Industrie, pulls up a handful of ye tansie. Happie lovers! not Longe from nowe ye silverie bells of oure little churche, most fitting melodie for such holie service, will part ye violet air with their merrie peals, and you will be proud husband, gentel wife, sweet journeyers together on ye Untried, flower-sprinkled path.

"*What is she tellynge hym, as she throws back ye rich curls, and lookes up into hys face with a sudden smyle? and then with her cheeks redder, and her blue eyes caste downe agayne, ye rosy lips still move. Is she sayinge how sweet it will be to have a Deare lyttle home that they can call their owne, where they may plante theire garden, and raise theire orchard—eate of theire own fruit, and sit by theire owne deare hearthe? And nowe he takes her hande, and looks again in her downcaste eyes, and smyles; and nowe he is drawing a lyttle paper from his breste, and pointing to it with finger; he lookes nowe at it, nowe at her prettie face.*

"*But see little Pattie has turnēd ye corner by ye briar hedge, and suddenly espying them, she runs—careless Child!—near to them, and with her little prankes breaks up theire communings. And ye stout farmer's wife calls out, standing under ye woodbine, 'Nannie, Nannie, 'tis time Brindle was milkēd, and Tam is wanting to mend ye harness;' and so, like all pleasant things in life, there's an end to that wooing for ye time.*"

How much Herbert will be pleased with these little things! He is a confirmed antiquarian.

I said *perhaps* the above would be the last of my budget; but here is one more letter that is so serio-comic, I believe I must transcribe it.

"*Mayhap you heard ye News! how Mister Helderborn has took hymself away—and when all ye town was sure of our marriage. Well, 'joy go with hym,' is ye old good-bye blessyng; but I do say, Sorrowe, and myserie, and blyghte go with hym forever and forever—so say I. You would ask me wether I ever lyked him? Well, soe far as goode lookes, a pert curlie hed, and ye plenty of Lip went, I can not saye for certaine; I may have Lyked him well Enouf, but otherwyse nay—nay. I am glade soe far escapit from hym, for I heare verie bad storys of hym, surelie—verie bad. Some say, Mystress Rowe, it is youre tung sent hym awai.* NOWE IF EVER! *My poor, departed Husband blessed me for that same tung, and sayed, when ye rhumatic kept hym wakeful of nights, he was thankfulle he had a wife coulde talk; for there was Mys Arabelle, hys sister, now sometime a sainte in Hevynge, she, poor soul, could but sit and think—think, and* ONLIE THAT. *Why, bless me! how knowe we but ye Brutes have that same qualitie? How knowe we but They thinke? but ye God-like in mann, aye! and in woman, too, is ye speech. Bless God, I have a tung; if Mister Helderborn were here, shuldn't he know it! for a certaintie he shuld. I wuld give hym Such a peice that he culdn't mesure it with ye yard-stick. Ye base, ungrateful, redd-haired loone! I wuld tell Hym in Mye plaine speech what I thoct of hym, Ye myserable caitiff. Not that I care for* HIS *gallantrie—when scores stande reddie waiting for Mye hande. Pshaw! I caste such faldrals*

to ye wynds, along with ye fools that practice them, doe I. Ye Mister Helderborn—and ryghte appropriate is hys name (pronounce it a littel differentlie)—may goe around breaking Hearts (not that he has broke mine yet—indede noe); but I DO *hope that ye vengeance of ye Lord will overtake hym, and overrake hym as for that matter."*

What is the word written on every line of the above?

THE TWILIGHT WALK.

THE children have just come in, with mouths, hands, and white frocks stained with the juice of berries. If there is an evil in the country, this is one. The little things look really frightful. But how can I deny them this indulgence, when the ripe black fruit grows in clusters by the road side so temptingly?

Down near the river there is a place where they look thicker than the leaves—cluster upon cluster of juicy, tempting berries. We always gather them for the table in their season; and, with cream, they are the richest delicacy I could wish. Husband has bought a cow. She is Betty's sole charge, and how proud the good creature is since she has learned to milk her!

I shall be obliged to dress the children like little monks, all in black, when next they go on these excursions.

Have taken a long walk with the teacher. We crossed the rustic bridge, and paused for a few moments to watch the bright little rapids dashing along over the stones. Then we stopped for a moment at Aunt Rachel's, a poor old black woman, to see if she was comfortable, and found her, as usual, happy and contented—on nothing, I had almost said; for she is bed-ridden, and subsists on charity. Clara read her a short chapter in the Bible, turned her pillow, emptied the cup on the pine table by her side of its withered flowers, and placed a fresh, beautiful bouquet of the rarest roses gathered in Judge Waugh's garden. The

poor old creature looked at her all the while as if she thought her something holy; and I confess there seemed to me an unwonted light shining from those clear, brilliant, loving eyes, and the slight form never looked so fragile, so somehow sacred.

Followed by blessings, we left the humble cottage and sauntered along at our leisure. We were nearing a large, old-fashioned house like ours, when we chanced to see a beautiful tableaux. A large, light wheel-carriage stood by the roadside, and within laid two lovely twins. I had never before seen such perfect beauty. Flaxen ringlets, blue eyes, and rosy cheeks have been again and again portrayed; but I could find no language with which to paint these little darlings. Nor were they all. A brother and sister, one perhaps five, the other seven, were leaning over the little vehicle, pressing into the dimpled hands of the crowing babes lady's-slippers and little green twigs plucked from the roadside. The wind blew the auburn curls from the wide straw hats, and the broad blue ribbons tied under each little chin flapped against their bright, round cheeks. A young, good-looking girl stood a little distance off; but when she saw us, she hurried up to the carriage, and prepared to drag it, with the help of the children's chubby hands.

"She should be a happy mother, whoever she is," said Clara, "in the possession of such rare creatures. She must be perfectly happy. Little darlings!" and she walked along by the side of the carriage. "But they seem strangers here. Whose children are they?" I asked, turning to the girl.

Her face grew solemn as she replied, "Mrs. Harvard's, ma'am;" and her lip quivered as she added, "She's dying, ma'am!"

I can't tell how those few words affected me. I grew faint and chill. It was so unexpected, that sad answer.

"Yes'm, she's dying! *They* don't know—they're too young. She looks horrible—very white, and she can't possibly live an hour. Dying of consumption, ma'am; and the poor babes 'll be left alone with their poor father. They're only six months."

The sad effects of this little speech were visible immediately in dear Clara's countenance. Tears gathered in her eyes, and she walked quickly toward an old tree by the road, and leaned against it. Perhaps she felt a premonition that her own end was approaching, but she only said, "Oh! Mrs. Golding! the thought that these sweet babes will so soon be motherless! I can not bear it; and yet God's will is best!"

We learned subsequently, from the children's nurse, that the mother had years ago married a Southern gentleman; and after the birth of her twins, having the consumption fastened upon her, she had come home to die.

Little thought I, when I almost envied the poor mother the possession of such treasures, that while the glad sunshine and the soft summer wind were dallying with the tresses of her last-born, she laid gasping for the breath of life! Surely, surely we can trust but little to appearances.

Returned home slowly with the teacher. Methought her step was more halting, and the color went and came too swiftly upon her cheeks. Often we met little groups of her scholars, and not one but pressed upon her some floral gift; so that I laughingly remarked she looked like a Queen of May.

"If I can reign queen in the hearts of the little ones, it is triumph enough!" she said, with a thoughtful smile. "Did you ever fancy," she added instantly, and with

a manner that startled me, "that the friends we have loved in life come back to us, and fold us in their arms as they were wont to? Because, while I was speaking to you just then, I felt, or seemed to feel, distinctly the presence of my husband. I often have that singular thrill of late, that tells me he is near. What do you think of presentiments? For if I yielded to the strange vagaries of my imagination, I should really fancy my end quite near. Do you ever think of such things?"

I never did, except when suffering formerly from severe attacks of dyspepsia. I hinted that that disease, in some of its peculiar forms, might annoy her and affect her spirits.

She answered nothing, but shook her head; and instantly her hand sought the cross. I called her attention to an old deserted house, upon the panes of which the last sun-rays were falling, changing their crystal to gold and pearl, and anon streaming in long lines of crimson and purple athwart their surface. My experiment was successful.

"I love to look at an old house," she murmured, "and muse on the changes that have happened within its walls. What a multitude of hopes, joys, loves, sorrows, births, and deaths have occurred in that same tenement! You see it is in good repair, though over one hundred and seventy years old. The last child that was born there was a girl. She used to trip over this same green-sward with bare feet, and pick berries from the roadside to sell, and so support her aged parents. It is said she was not remarkable for beauty, except that she had the most wonderful tresses that were ever seen, hanging in golden waves nearly to her feet. Would you believe it? that poor child, whose

sole inheritance was the virtues of her ancestors—for this cottage had long been mortgaged at the time of her marriage—is to-day the wife of a distinguished man, whose claims for the presidency are now before the people. Her husband is the wealthiest man in the state, and it is said she is very gay and fashionable. But one charming feature of her character is, that she annually visits this old house—walks over its grounds and through its rooms, and even weeps in the old chamber where she was born, and where both of her parents died peaceful, Christian deaths. Don't you love such reverence for parents and home localities?"

I looked at the house with new and pleasurable interest, and lingered to turn back and watch the splendor of twilight fading in the dark and sombre panes.

Nearing home, Herbert came bounding toward us, and, grasping Clara's hands in both his, he began, "Oh! Miss Clara, the heliotropes are all in blossom; come and see!" So we were marched round to the rear of the house, and made the young gentleman quite happy by our ardent expressions of admiration.

"And see the sweet peas and the carnations!" he cried, leaping from one to the other; "just see how splendidly they have come out; but all my roses have faded!" he added, sorrowfully.

"What does not fade?" she murmured, turning her tearful eyes on me.

I hurried her into the house, and played some soothing melodies for her till husband came. He brought a stranger. I vanished instantly to change my attire, and took the teacher with me; grew merry over some little mishaps, and actually made her laugh out loud before we went down to supper.

THE STORY.

Our guest is a stranger—a foreigner, I think; though I have not yet learned. It seemed like old times last night, and husband was in his glory. Mr. Vendomé is the most remarkable flutist that I have ever heard, and I accompanied him with my poor skill. Altogether we had a glorious evening. To-day he has gone with Herbert, having several letters of introduction to various professors. He will be here again to-night.

My home is my paradise; and, should I paint a life-like and beautiful picture in words, I would tell of the happy home—of the cheery red blaze leaping up through its dark inclosure, and the crimsoned flagstones clearly and cleanlily shining in the strong light—of the sweet circle there, wife and mother, and merry bairns, all bright and busy, overflowing with mirth, or occupied with their respective tasks.

Touch the cottage, where the sturdy farmer lives, with the brown and mellow tints of age—festoon it with the living drapery of the vine—place it in a Northern forest or on the swelling soil of a Western prairie—environ it with fields, wealthy in their store of golden wheat or gleaming corn—stud its pastures with cattle, sleeping or dreamily moving upon the emerald sward—group about its grounds in clusters, the trees bending with the weight of their luscious fruits—place the rustic laborers among the sheaves in harvest-time, or display the loaded wains winding along the country road

in the soft haze of early morning, and we have the dearest, sweetest picture of an American home.

I noticed Mr. Vendomé—the name has an Italian accent—spoke very beautifully of his own home, though he is in raptures with America. He has traveled much over our country, and grew quite eloquent while dwelling on its charms.

"In your happy country," said he, "go where I would, even to the rude settlement of but few years' growth, I found the great reformer and refiner, the public school—the common public school—where not the poor children only of broken-down nobles are educated, but the poor children even of Europe's refuse population are made nobles of by the right of intelligence.

"There is the great secret of your pleasant homes. No matter how illiterate the parents, the little scholar brings to its woodland nest a light from the hallowed shrine of learning that straightway shines into their hearts, and, repeating its lessons, drops often a pearl within the ruder though stronger minds that surround it. The child, all unconsciously, cultivates tender and beautiful emotions, that, while they soften the rugged paths of life, throw a charm over the domestic duties and avocations."

"Yes," replied husband, "even in the little parlor of the cottage, upon the old-fashioned table or the swinging shelf, the stranger will recognize first the Bible, then volumes of choice poetry and the best literature; often works on abstruse sciences. Music, 'heavenly maid,' takes up her abode in our rustic habitations—for every village has its singing-school; and the dainty flute, guitar, piano-forte, or, sweeter still,

the clear voice of the bright-eyed maiden, chanting some familiar strain, attest to her divine presence."

Mr. Vendomé's eye—he has a very expressive eye—always lights up finely at the least mention of music. He seemed much gratified.

I believe, too, that every perfection of that which is good and beautiful, true and tender, in the nature of man or woman, owes its existence to the carefully instilled precepts taught in our lowly, domestic homes. Splendid homes may send forth finished belles and fashionable gentlemen; homes where wealth is the only desideratum furnish the world with avaricious Shylocks or depraved spendthrifts. Luxurious homes may add a few more debauchees to the already frightfully gorged list; the home where discontent broods sullenly, and evil tempers dampen the ardor of affection, may train up misanthropes and ascetics to grapple with forever-recurring difficulties; but the true American homes, where republican simplicity never degenerates into an affected passion for foreign tastes and imported finery, where the charm of delicacy and power of will, and the influence of holy love, mould mind to its most glorious stature, making heroes of untitled men, and sending statesmen from log-cabins to stamp their names ineffaceably upon the monuments of all time—these are America's boast and glory; these the firm foundations upon which rest the fame and imperishable greatness of our country. Enthusiasm! I fancy husband would cry if he saw my rhapsody; but who would not grow enthusiastic over such a theme?

I see Milly just turning into the lane with little Willy. Ah! I warrant me she has gone to read over one of those nice letters, or, it may be, the manuscript

that I saw Mr. Lansden slip into her hands just before he went away. Wonder what it is?

She could not go to a pleasanter retreat, for what is more quietly charming than a sweet and shaded country lane? It is quiet, but the sward of short, thick grass is softer than Persia's choicest carpets. It is narrow, but on each side droops the summer foliage of bending trees in all graceful shapes; while the subdued sun-rays just touch the cool path, and glance back to spend their scorching heat upon the unsheltered fields. It is humble, but the wild rose crimsons the undergrowth and perfumes the air; while juicy fruits, scarlet and ripe, twine with their glossy vines, or peep from the mosses upon the banks.

It is but a few days since I answered Gretta's mournful letter, and, alas! to-night she is dead. And here is one of her rings upon my finger that, in dying, she bequeathed to me. Precious friend! she is sleeping with her little Alfred in the old ——— burying-ground. I feel to mourn her as if she were, indeed, my own sweet sister. Earth contains few nobler natures than was hers, and how fearfully has it been crushed and withered! Simple and artless as a child, pure in her affections as an angel, trustful and pious in the very happiest sense of the word, she has yet been tortured day by day, and hour by hour, with the agony that none can know but the poor victims of the shameless inebriate.

Husband told me a fearful tale with the news. He was called to see poor Brookfield, and found him writhing in the horrible *mania a potu*. I shuddered at his description, and Mr. Vendomé, I noticed, was singularly agitated. His cheek turned deathly pale, and I am sure that tears swam in his dark eyes.

Presently he said, in subdued tones, "I could tell you almost such a story; and, if Mrs. Golding will permit me, I will place a manuscript containing it in her hands. Happily, the ending is not as tragic as that of this poor family.

I gladly availed myself of the manuscript, and found it so interesting that I transcribed it in my note-book. It has quite a romantic title:

THE LAST OF TORCONNIER'S BAND.

Torconnier was an Italian, and the leader of a band famous for its great harmony and power. All Verona rang with its praise. Was there to be a marriage of some don's dark-eyed daughter? Torconnier must be there, with his handsome, straight young musicians—that is, if one was able to pay them their stipulated price, which, it must be confessed, was enormous.

Of gigantic stature, massive frame, and portly mien, this chief of melody surpassed all others of his countrymen in grace of form and commanding beauty of feature. Passionately fond of his profession, at times his deep-set eyes would sparkle with a fire that made them too intensely brilliant; and his finely-cut lips, naturally of a coral glow, grew pale and tremulous with the emotion that wild or sweet sounds awakened in his heart.

To belong to Torconnier's band was esteemed a great honor; and many young men of noble families met with him in private at his rehearsals, and in public showed him much favor, *feting* him, and getting up entertainments in a style of almost princely magnificence. The great leader was unmarried, constantly receiving immense sums of money, yet always poor.

His saloons were rich in adornment beyond description; the rarest works of art, the most elegant and costly tapestry, the softest frescoing on walls and ceilings, carpets of luxurious pattern and material, statues of the finest marble, and gorgeous furniture; indeed, the mansions of the great were rarely more splendid in appointment than that of Torconnier.

He had also magnificent villas in the country around, some of them entirely of glass and fancifully stained; but they were forever under the ban of debt; he knew not each moment what he could call his own.

Yet, alas! what a sight was this mighty leader at times, when the carousal was over, and the last midnight lamp gave a yellow tinge to his handsome face, as its sickly flame streamed over him. Stretched out upon one of his velvet couches, his great eyes glaring and bloodshot, his fine features convulsed, poor Torconnier laid, driveling and insensible. He had sipped the wine till he was drunk; and none of his band, as they reeled home from his splendid suppers, were in much better condition than himself. Generally, at such a time, a young female of great beauty stood weeping over him, and lavishing caresses upon his insensible form. She was his niece, the gentle Viola Torconnier, whom a dying brother had commended to the care of his famous kinsman; and she was betrothed to young Tricolo, first player upon the flute, who, Torconnier himself said, would yet be the wonder of the world.

Both loved with a passionate fervor peculiar to that clime, burning and fervid as it is; and Viola seldom appeared in public, because her loveliness made her subject to many annoyances; for all Verona knew that the famous Torconnier had in his splendid home a gem,

for the possession of which many would have parted with their whole fortunes.

A dark day dawned upon the Italian city. Not that the sun shone with less splendor—not that the soft winds were less cool and fragrant of flowers, or the skies shorn of their blue, enamel-like transparency—no; the harp still sounded in the land of song; but fair fingers elicited most melancholy cadences. Torconnier was dead. The man who moved all hearts with his stirring melodies, who brought forth tears, smiles, or sighs at his pleasure, would never again sway the baton, nor, with the magic of his pen, clothe with glorious garments the noble creations of his genius.

No! he slept forever; his tongue was mute, his thrilling glance passionless. The thick lashes fell heavily upon the marbled cheek; the blue veins meandered across the massive brow, but through them no longer coursed the rich blood of life. His hands were crossed over his bosom, never again to sweep the strings of his great golden harp, that stood, with its sculptured angels smiling in soft beauty, near where he laid.

Shorn of his great strength, he slept motionless beneath a canopy of sable velvet. Over the dim splendor of his darkened room, the tall candles threw at times a startling brilliancy, the warm wind from between the marble pillars sweeping their dull flames aside, as the mourner or the sorrowing stranger entered to pay their last tribute of respect to Torconnier. The massive cross at the foot of his couch, all blazing with diamonds, flashed with a ghastly radiance over the scene of death, and the tall forms of monks gliding here and there in the funeral gloom, and the mourners clad in white,

moving with measured tread, and whispering low, gave a ghastly sort of harmony to the sad scene.

Poor Viola! her slight, girlish figure trembled like the silver aspen. She leaned upon young Tricolo, near the tall jasper vase that a monarch had presented the gifted Torconnier; one of her white arms shining through its slight drapery of black, laid upon the embossed handle of the ornament, the other within that of Tricolo.

Her betrothed occasionally spoke to her soothingly, but his eyes were troubled, though tearless, and his manly heart swelled with this mighty grief. He, of the few favored ones admitted into the great composer's presence, enjoyed most his confidence, understood best his wild, wayward genius. Early bereft of parents, the chance child of fortune, he cherished in Torconnier all the emotions of filial gratitude, because he had, indeed, been as a father to him. And then, did he not feel the gentle but more decided pressure of that fair arm? Had not that little hand been laid within his own by the doting uncle? And now, left as she was, without father, mother, relatives—full of gentleness, guileless as innocence, and beautiful as the light, was he not bound to stand before the altar with her?—yes, even on the morrow, and take upon himself those vows which no strong power but that of death could sever!

And in that solemn presence, the thought that Viola would soon be his wife, made his heart throb wildly; for not another such woman graced the fair Italian city; she was peerless, as well in amiability and graces of intellect, as in perfection of form and exquisiteness of feature and complexion. He felt, even there, that

to win her for his bride would mitigate the anguish that filled his heart.

Not such were the thoughts of Viola; her sorrowful glances were constantly fixed on the still troubled face of the corpse. He had died in her presence—died raving mad—drunken with wine. She knew, whatever the smooth-faced physician might say, that, to his last breath, he had raved the incoherent blasphemy of the inebriate—the sot; that he remembered her not, though her fingers sometimes laid upon his burning temples; that he saw her not, though his starting eyeballs, glaring with the red lustre of the maniac, roved meaningless from feature to feature of her beautiful face. And yet, so accustomed was she to the sight of this ruby beverage, crowned with frothy pearls as it leaped from the sparkling champagne crystal—so often had she seen it upon the tables of the wealthy—so frequently had she herself sipped the juice of the grape since she was a little child, that she comprehended not the true source of this great calamity, or very dimly felt that an excess of indulgence, and that only, had been the ruin of her beloved uncle.

The grand funeral procession marched from the house of mourning in solemn state. It was conducted on an almost regal scale of splendor. Neither music nor mourners were wanting; the priests chanted, and the solemn line of monks, all belonging to the monastery where Torconnier had sometimes electrified thousands with his entrancing strains, swelled the *cortège* to an immense number, and gave an appearance of regal solemnity to the occasion.

Viola returned to her desolate home. Sobbing like a child, and throwing herself within the open arms of

her old nurse, she half shrieked, half sobbed, "What friend have I now on earth, dear old Lara? Oh! this terrible loneliness!

"How empty the halls look!—how desolate! Oh! there is the chair he sat in! Here is a roll with his half-finished dirge. Alas! he little thought to-day we should chant his funeral hymn! Oh! my heart will break! I shall be happy no more! He loved me so!"

"Tricolo will take care of you now, my child. See, you distress him with your grief. Compose yourself, my darling. Nay, he does not hear me; he is weeping over master's baton; I can see his eyes are full of tears. Torconnier, your uncle—may his soul be at rest!—has left you all this beautiful furniture, these magnificent rooms. Tricolo has wonderful genius—your uncle himself said that. He will yet be a leader—he will be famous—rich. Ah! he will take care of you as if you were a queen! See yonder! the poor youth is refreshing himself with wine. I do not wonder; he wishes to drive away his heavy thoughts."

Yes, from the crimson goblet flecked all over with little gold stars, with beautiful, brilliant serpents coiled around the slender stem, the young man was imbibing a long draught.

Viola shuddered as she turned her gaze slowly toward him. The nurse's kindly-meant consolation had not lifted an atom of the weight that crushed her spirit.

Before many months, Viola wore the long bridal veil with its complement of orange blossoms, and her young face, though pale, gleamed bewitchingly sweet through the thick tresses of curling hair that fell heavily over her white neck and down to her jeweled waist. And there she spoke solemn words which one like her

breathes not lightly, and from thence she moved, amid admiring multitudes, the bride of Tricolo, the matchless flutist of Torconnier's band. A home of splendor had been decorated for her; a deathless fame seemed awaiting the husband of her love in the future. By degrees, the sad calamity that had befallen her assumed a softer shade; and though for a long while she mourned Torconnier, and looked through tears upon the many possessions which his touch had hallowed in her eyes, yet the sunny smile came back as of old, and she gradually forgot that she had ever felt so lonely and heart-broken as when she left the ashes of the great composer in his last and lowly home.

* * * * * * * * *

Bellonte, a man noted for benignity and his great deeds of benevolence, hurried through a narrow street in Verona. Upon the balmy air shrill music floated, for the inhabitants of these lower haunts were carousing with dancing and drinking. A thousand lights of gorgeous colors flared from the low, broad shop windows, and gaudy red signs in all directions displayed a legion names of choice wines.

A man stood near the entrance of one of these miserable places, and peered so strangely at Bellonte, holding out his long, thin neck, that he could not forbear pausing, and gazing into the cavernous eyes that met his own.

The stranger deliberately raised the slouching cap that kept his face in shadow, and speaking in a sepulchral tone, exclaimed, "How do you like the looks of a starving man, seignior?"

"Good God!" exclaimed Bellonte, falling back apace, for the horribleness of the countenance before him was

too much for even his equilibrium, seldom though it was moved.

The eyes of the wretched man shone like a fitful fire, but they were set deep, deep within their sockets. His hair, intensely black, fell in unstudied waves over his threadbare coat collar, and his cheeks, whiter than parchment, were plastered in, as it were, to the very bone. Wild and ghastly, famished, yet awful, as if inside that pallid receptacle a mighty and restless spirit struggled for release, looked that strange, but truly, as he had said—starving face.

"Is it possible! can you want for food?"

"I could gnaw the veriest bone that ever a dog fought over in the street; but—but, sir—I would die sooner than tell you this, had I not a wife—a wife—" he articulated thickly, and then his utterance was checked by tears. Bellonte had never so pitied a human creature. He drew nearer to him, and smelt the fumes of wine upon his breath; he looked closer, and noticed the unmistakable rim of flame around those tomb-like eyes, such as none but the Bacchanalian displays.

"You have had wine recently?" he said, in a tone of inquiry.

"To-night, once. I snatched it from the very lips of my sick babe; it was a choice treasure, saved by my poor girl for the hour of need; but my tongue was swollen with starvation; my breath was leaving me, and already sounded dry and rattling—away down my throat was Death, choking me. Good heavens! I could not bear the thought of starving then—of falling dead at the feet of my wife! No—no; I prayed for strength to carry me from the house; and if I find no succor—

to-morrow—" he made a fierce gesture, passing his lean fore-finger across his shriveled cheek.

Bellonte shuddered. "My poor man!" he exclaimed, his heart deeply moved, "do not tempt God. Has he not sent me to your relief? Have faith in him."

"Give my sick wife some nourishment, and then I will talk to you about faith. I only ask mercy when I feel to what depth of poverty I have brought her. She is an angel, seignior, and I am—the devil, I believe, else I could not have made for her such misery as this. We lived in splendor once, seignior. Perhaps you know what luxury is: you look as if you did. Imagine yourself plunged to the deepest, darkest depth of misery; imagine yourself villain enough to drag down a young, tender, and beautiful wife with you. Oh! you can not, you can not!

"But if you will go with me. No—no, trust me not with that now!" and here he quickly added, as a piece of silver shone in the hand of the stranger, "Go to her—give it to her; I have not the heart to ask it of her."

Bellonte at one glance comprehended the case; he threw the folds of his ample cloak around him, and, motioning the sufferer to go forward, walked hurriedly after him.

In a still narrower and more filthy street, where balcony after balcony of the tall gray buildings overhung each other, like inverted terraces, until the old, black walls nearly met, away up in the gloomy space, lived this poor victim of his own base appetite. Flight after flight of broken and still crumbling stairs did the two men ascend, hearing on all sides noisy mirth and drunken revelry, till they had gained and entered the topmost apartment. A feeble little candle flickered

upon the hearth, and close beside it, watching the face of her babe with the most agonizing earnestness, sat a young creature, whose soft, mournful eyes were floating in tears, so that they flashed like diamonds in pearl setting as they were raised, with sudden surprise, to the benevolent countenance of the stranger.

She, too, had the abundant and glossy locks of an Italian woman, and her rich, clear complexion was instantly suffused with a burning flush as she glanced quickly around the wretched chamber, and then, with almost a look of reproof, toward her husband.

In truth, it was a deserted and cheerless place, being a room of unusually large dimensions, containing not a particle of furniture beside a high-post bedstead without coverlet, and a low bench or table, perhaps used as both, against the wall, from which latter hung remnants of diverse-colored paper.

Closet there appeared to be none. There was no food in sight; the embers had long ago died out in the black fire-place, and that young creature, so beautiful, sitting wan and hopeless by the desolate hearth, completed the most affecting picture that Bellonte had ever beheld.

"What is the matter with the babe?" he asked, in a low voice.

"Want of proper nourishment!" exclaimed the father, abruptly; "he and that poor girl are dying by inches."

The woman moved her face toward the wall; large tears were streaming from her eyes.

"Go and get whatever this will furnish!" exclaimed Bellonte, placing a gold coin in the burning palm of the husband and father; "but—stop," he ejaculated rapidly, as the man turned away, "promise me—"

"I know what you would say," interrupted the other, almost haughtily; "but there is no need; yesterday I promised the Infinite—did I not, my Viola?—that I would never again quaff the infernal poison; and perish this right arm if I keep not my oath," he muttered, with clinched teeth; and the slight frame of the woman shuddered perceptibly as again the large, hot tears rolled unrestrained over her cheeks. "Stop!" exclaimed her husband with energy, and, hastening to a corner, he returned with something wrapped in green baize. Unrolling it, he displayed a magnificent flute with silver rims and keys, and curiously inlaid with crimson and violet pearl that ran in delicate vines from end to end. Kissing it reverently, he held it forth to the stranger, saying, as he did so, "Take it as a pledge; never yet have I asked charity; I do not now. Take it; it is costly—the companion of my life. I have declared that nothing should separate us but death; but I can not beg. Dear and loved relic of Torconnier, farewell! I will redeem it, should my fortunes brighten;" and he held it out toward Bellonte.

"You mentioned Torconnier?" said the stranger, in a tone of inquiry, without assenting to his proposition. "Is it the great composer you speak of?"

"Yes," answered the other, toying nervously with his flute; "but Torconnier is dead—perhaps you knew. His band did badly after his death. They were noble men, good musicians, princely in disposition—not one but would have adorned a throne; but you see, seignior, they loved"—and he peered into Bellonte's eyes with such a malignant expression that the latter shrank from him—"that which ruined their leader—wine, wine; and, would you believe it, out of his twenty fine fellows,

but one remains. You see him before you. Yes," and his voice grew low, "I am the last of Torconnier's band, and in a few little days the sun will shine too upon my grave."

"Alberti!" exclaimed a voice, in agonized accents, and before either could spring to her assistance the fragile creature had fallen insensible upon the hard floor.

"My poor girl!" said Alberti, in a low tone, springing beside her; "you are starving, and I am mad thus to forget. Oh! that we might both die together! I, that have been a brute, have murdered you, my poor, poor lily—so pale—so deathly!" and a groan from the very depths of his spirit told of anguish, mortal in the extreme, as he took both mother and child in his arms, and staggered with them to the wretched bed.

Bellonte hurried from the room. His steps were bent toward a *salon* as he left the rickety tenement; he ordered fresh viands and a basketful of delicacies, and, with a boy to carry them before him, returned to the suffering family of Tricolo, the once eminent flutist. He found him still hanging over his wife, who had partially revived, lavishing the most passionate kisses upon her marble forehead. Tricolo started as the food, varied and bountiful, was taken from the basket and spread over the narrow table; his cheeks, his high temples, his very throat crimsoned; but, mastering his pride, he snatched a delicate cake, with which to tempt the appetite of the young mother, and held it to her lips.

"You will take my flute," he said, rapidly, as Bellonte, assuring him that he would send him more comforts on the morrow, turned to depart.

"But I am no musician; I do not need it, and you do. You are welcome, wholly welcome, to the favors

I have shown you, and some time, not now, you can repay me."

"I insist that you *must* take the flute," exclaimed Tricolo, springing to his feet; but Bellonte had already gone, and was hurriedly descending the stairs, aided here and there by the casual opening of some door, through which light streamed upon the broken staircase.

Tricolo sat down by the fireless hearth; his wife slept. He snatched his flute from the floor beside him, and blew a wild, wondrous, and weird melody, so soft that every note seemed born of silence and to well back to it again. Then he leaned his head upon his hands, and strange phantoms swam before his vision. Torconnier's head, all of flame, peered at him from the black hearth, and the eyes were two lurid coals of fire.

Springing from his posture, he wrestled with the fancy, but could not drive it from his brain.

The phantom had shifted; it flickered, and danced, and grinned against the wall, flashing out and fading away, flashing out and fading away, and each time it returned assuming a more horrible complexion. Now leering, now frowning; and still more ghastly with that mocking smile than when it frowned. The Italian ceased his walk, and strove to fix his gaze steadily upon the infernal presence; but he had no sooner looked within its horrible eyes than the phantom mocked him from the ceiling. And groups of diabolical faces gathered around him till he tore his hair in frenzy. He was still conscious that his poor exhausted wife slept well after her long fast—her weary vigils; but he felt the stealthy footfall of madness upon his brain, and he knew reason was deserting him.

The following day, two hours before high noon, Bellonte, true to his promise, again visited the lodgings of Alberti Tricolo. Before he gained the door, he was astonished to hear loud voices, as though a harsh and angry altercation was going on within. Entering, a terrible sight, truly, presented itself. The young wife, crouched in a corner, corpse-like, and with distended eyeballs, was vainly striving to hush the moaning of the miserable babe. Three strong men stood near the bed, and, as they moved aside at Bellonte's wish, he saw that the unfortunate man was lashed, limb by limb, with strong cords to the bedstead. Tricolo, frothing at the mouth, and making most unearthly noises, was now, the men assured the stranger, much calmer than he had been; still, for all their assertions, Bellonte instinctively shrank from the scene, for the yells of the poor wretch were unlike any thing he had heard before.

"He has gone mad!" thought he to himself; "he is dangerous; he will burst his puny bonds;" but just then a half-whispered sentence gave him a better light on the subject.

"I thought it would come to this!" said one; "for three weeks drunk—and for a week this has been advancing steadily. *Mania a potu* they call that complaint; that is what he has got, seignior."

Suddenly, as Tricolo's blood-shot eyes rolled upon his benefactor, he ceased raving and became comparatively quiet. Bellonte's mild face seemed to act like a charm upon his bewildered senses, till by degrees he grew passive.

"Where is my flute? give me my flute!" he whispered; "unbind my hands, and let me call forth its forgotten melodies for the last time. Give me my

flute!" he repeated, so plaintively, that the men turned to Bellonte, recognizing his superiority, and to their mute inquiry he said, "Give him his flute, poor fellow!"

They unpinioned his arms, and Viola, grieved and care-worn, came forward with the beautiful instrument, and, as she timidly bent over her husband and placed it within his hands, she imprinted a kiss upon his hot forehead.

"Thank you, my poor, forgiving girl," exclaimed Tricolo, gratefully, "you will not be troubled with me long; take care of her, seignior, she is a dear wife;" and, as Viola retreated to the corner to weep unobserved, the musician, half reclining on his elbow, placed the flute to his lips, while the by-standers stood ready to seize him on any renewal of violence.

"A dirge for thy soul, Torconnier," he whispered, while his eye lighted with a supernatural splendor, and he waved the flute gracefully above his head; then he caressed it with his fingers, wiped the dust from its polish, and held it almost as one would hold a child.

"My fingers are strangers to it," he murmured, after running lightly through the scale; "yet, 'tis the same flute; Torconnier loved it; it has swayed the impulses of an audience both divine and mortal; it has the tones of an angel—hear!" and, again resuming an attitude, he broke out into a soft foreign melody, beautiful and impassioned, and performed with so much skill that the strangers present gazed at each other, seemingly transported with pleasure. By degrees, a sort of inspiration came upon him; the tones grew wilder, and leaped from the flute as from the silvery throat of a mocking-bird; they seemed to flash and penetrate the very soul of the listener; now dancing and sparkling,

anon tumultuous and intermixed—flying from harmony to discord, and from discord to harmony with inconceivable rapidity. In the pathos, Tricolo would bow and bend, and sway his thin body from side to side, his eyes swimming in tears; in the execution of the swifter passages his brow flushed, his eyes were rigid, his whole frame trembled, the veins on his white hands, delicate as a woman's, swelled and grew purple; indeed, sitting on the wretched mattress, his lean arms thrust through the wide sleeves of what had once been a rich dressing tunic, and to which some of the soft silken fringe and gold embroidery yet adhered, his black, wiry tresses falling in disorder down his bony neck, his fingers quivering, yet flying over the stops, he looked the personification of a fiend, striving to pour all his unhallowed passions into the thrilling language of melody.

Wilder and wilder grew the tones, and his body writhed till it was terrible to behold; the veins stood out bluer and stronger upon his marble brow; the perspiration rolled off and stained the silver ornaments; more unearthly the music swelled, till it seemed the agonized shrieking of a chained demon. Bellonte stood back aghast, and the poor young wife wept aloud.

Suddenly pausing, he blew a shrill, unearthly note; his brow gathered blackness, and his eyes shot fire, as he raised the flute high above his head and, with a yell of agony, dashed it against the opposite wall with such violence that it was broken into fragments.

"It has struck him!" he yelled; "he has mocked me till I can bear it no longer. The blood streams—the wound gapes—blood and wine—it mingles—ha! ha! ha! pledge me in hell, noble master mine—stay!

I'll be at thee and finish thee—ha! ha! we'll go there together—ha! ha!" No word can express the prolonged, infernal yell that closed this horrible mirth. He sprang up in the bed; the arms of four strong men held him firm; they struggled with him, grappling as often as he with his giant strength shook them off again.

His wife ran wildly from the room. More help came—rugged fellows, who appeared able to cope with the strongest; but they had to do with a raving maniac now. Three times he beat them off, foaming at the mouth, cursing, and ever and anon sending up those shrill, horrible laughs, that had nothing human in their tones.

But his frenzy gradually forsook him, and once more were the ropes crossed and recrossed above his slender body. In his exhaustion he resisted them not; and Bellonte, without striving to soothe the agonized wife, who stood sobbing aloud outside the door, motioned to one of the attendants to keep strict watch, and hurried away. When he returned, he came in a carriage with two men. They were ushered into the chamber of the wretched victim, and in a few moments more he was pinioned within a strait-jacket and led down stairs, Bellonte, in the mean time, detaining the poor distracted wife, who implored, with piteous shrieks, to be allowed to follow her husband.

"He shall be well cared for, and you too," he said, as, finding her passionate entreaties useless, poor Viola had thrown herself upon her knee and was violently weeping; but the woman looked up with such a strange mixture of pride and dislike, glaring in her dark eyes, that the benevolent man was distressed; "I have aided her—I have done a most needful office for her husband," he thought, "and she evidently hates me.

"I leave here in a few hours for England," at last he said, when Viola was more calm; "if you will, you shall have a home in my family, you and your child, till the recovery of your husband. To-morrow I will send for you; my servant will convey you to my residence: you should not distrust me; I wish to befriend you, and save your husband."

In the morning a grand equipage rolled up before the frowning tenement, and Bellonte, springing out, wended his way up to the forlorn room of the Tricolos. It was empty; neither mother nor child was there. The people in the next apartment had seen them go away the night before. Bellonte returned dissatisfied to his carriage, near which some curious tenants of the old house had crowded.

"It is useless to wait!" he exclaimed to the driver; "drive to the quay; I must lose no more time; tell the family, when you return, that the bird has flown."

* * * * * * * * *

Six years had passed; Bellonte was becoming an old man; his abundant locks were tinged with gray, yet his forehead was smooth; for a peaceful life, a clear conscience, and temperate habits seldom indent a man's brow with wrinkles. He had sojourned two years in America; and, since then, he had heard no tidings of the last of Torconnier's band, except that he was discharged from the hospital, cured of his malady, but wretchedly thin and dispirited. Time banished the trio from his mind, though his benevolence was more active than ever, and he was always bestowing charity upon some needy recipient; indeed, he was every

where known as the good and merciful friend of the poor.

On his sixty-seventh birth-day, all his family met together, as usual, to celebrate the occasion. They were assembled in the beautiful parlors of Seignior Bellonte; the young, the lovely, and the gay were there—wit, mirth, music, and dancing had alternately engaged the happy company, till it was now near the midnight hour. All had grown still and thoughtful; lovers whispered together as they sat in the wide nooks that shielded them from prying observation; and of the older persons, some were serious, some sleepy.

Of a sudden, when each one thought of whispering a happy "good-night," a tone of tremulous music floated on the breeze—unearthly and heavenly. Purer and stronger it arose, the clear, soft music of a flute. It was as if an angel filled the midnight air with melody; and so much did each one fear to break the sweet illusion, that no one stirred until the conclusion of two very beautiful airs.

Then a murmur arose—Who could it be? Several ran to the window as the music ceased, but only in time to behold an elegant carriage start from before the mansion, and move rapidly away.

Every tongue was busy with conjecture save Bellonte's; he alone was silent, revolving anxious thoughts in his mind—anxious, yet pleasing, and perhaps, too, somewhat perplexing; but he kept his own council.

The next afternoon, Bellonte and his two nieces were riding in a volante; the weather was peculiarly charming, and the ladies, more pleased than otherwise at the attention their very beautiful faces attracted, persuaded the old gentleman to drive slowly through the avenue

that led directly on the suburbs. They had just reached a sweet little cottage, whose grounds were laid out with such faultless taste that they paused to admire them. The girls broke out with exclamations, commenting on this and the other rare flower, when a sound that thrilled them to their innermost being surprised them into silence. As if entranced, they sat there, while a weird and singular melody issued from behind the Venetian blind; a flute solo, so magical that the youngest niece declared it to be the production of no human effort.

"Hark!" said Bellonte, suddenly; "I recognize that—it is so distinct, I shudder—I remember the night," he continued, half speaking to himself, while the young girls looked at him in astonishment.

"We will get out here," he said, abruptly; and, leaping to the ground, he assisted his wondering nieces to alight.

A little rosy-cheeked girl, with a happy, round face, and laughing black eyes, answered to his impatient knock. Who should he ask for?

"Do you want to see papa?" asked the little fairy; "he told me to let you come in;" and, leading the way, she threw open the door of a beautiful little study, ushering them into the presence of her father.

"Is it you, Tricolo?" and "Seignior Bellonte, I am overpowered!" both simultaneously exclaimed as each sprang forward.

"I am happy beyond measure to behold you thus," said Bellonte, with unusual animation; "your wife—"

"Is here," answered Tricolo, with a proud smile, as Viola, lovely as ever, and with a sweet dignity, enter-

ed at that moment, followed by a noble little fellow, and the child who had met them at the door.

Frankly smiling, she advanced toward Bellonte, and exclaimed,

"How much do we owe you! Thanks, my good benefactor; it is you that has saved us and restored us to happiness! My little son, and you, Viola, this is the good gentleman we have taught you to pray for."

The generous man was affected almost to tears; but half smiling, he replied, "I hardly see how I have been of this very essential service, since you so cunningly eluded me and my family when we attempted to find you, in order to learn how you were prospering."

"Be seated, sir," said Tricolo, "with these young ladies."

"My nieces, sir; and let me add that they paid you a high compliment, declaring that no mortal power called forth the strains to which they have just listened."

Tricolo's face grew red, and he looked grateful: "I have much praise in public," he said, "because I am popular; but when commendation comes thus unsought, and from such a source, I am always happy. My little boy or my little girl sometimes say, 'Oh, you do make such sweet music, papa!' it is better, seignior, than showers of ducats, it is so fresh, so real."

"We think them good judges," said Viola, smiling.

"Excellent," exclaimed her husband; "my boy, there, plays even now upon this difficult flute; it is my highest ambition that he shall be a second Torconnier. But I must tell you my story, seignior; I left the hospital, whither I was carried that dreadful night, in company with my wife, who had lived concealed near

me. I was weak and penniless; Viola, too, looked languid; our child was still sick. I knew not what to do—where to get food; we had already taxed too much the purse of poor old Zara, once the nurse of my wife, with whom we were residing for a time. Each morning I felt less inclination for life; my wife smiled in vain; how humiliating the feeling, that I, a man—an Italian, was dependent upon the bounty of a faithful old servant. The thought distracted me. I sat one night weeping inwardly; I was too proud to show my tears; my wife had just said, 'Surely, if you do right, something good will happen,' when the door opened, and in walked Zelda—Claude Zelda, the superintendent, whom I had often seen at the hospital. He came straight up to the table, and I know not why, but in a moment my heart was light.

"'I have been absent from my post the last week,' he said, 'else before you came away I should have delivered you a message left by Seignior Bellonte, to this effect, that you should use this purse of gold. Consider it as a loan, and pay it back whenever you shall be able.'

"The good man went out, leaving me in bewilderment. I doubted the evidence of my senses. I drew the purse toward me, and pushed it back again twenty times; but my Viola came and laid her head upon my shoulder—that restored me to recollection. If you had seen me then, seignior, you would have thought me delirious in reality. I felt free—a man once more. I was elated beyond reason; I danced around the room, dragging Viola after me; I laughed and shouted; I could scarcely contain myself for happiness.

"Now, my wife," said I, as soon as I could com-

mand my faculties, "here we are, placed once more above want, thanks to our benefactor. I have three things to do which are imperative; the first is, not a particle of this gold shall be expended for that fire-liquid which has proved almost my ruin; the second, I will buy a good flute to-morrow; the third, you shall go in the country and drink plenty of milk, you and the boy, till you are healthy again."

"Ah! seignior, how can I repay you? I went forth into the world; they crowded again in my path—they clamored for my music. I had some choice pupils, who paid me well; I have tasted not a drop of wine since. My concerts have brought me a fortune, and seignior, here is your purse—the same amount is there; take it, and make some other poor heart rejoice as mine does now."

"I will accept it," said Bellonte, with quivering lip, "because I know the delicacy of a noble heart; but—I—I am overcome with delight; I really know not what to say. Young man, you have done bravely; I thank God that it is so good to help His creatures."

The evening was near. Bellonte and his nieces prepared to depart, after exchanging mutual kind wishes. The latter had fallen in love with the amiable and beautiful Viola, and they were lavish in her praise long after they reached home. There the story was told, and the unknown flutist of the birth-night recognized.

The following day a parcel was delivered into the hands of Tricolo by a servant in livery. It was one of the costliest flutes that could be purchased in Verona, adorned with pearls and gems; and inscribed on a delicate plate of pure gold were the words, "To the son of Tricolo the flutist—may he be Torconnier the Second."

Alas! Gretta! thought I, how different a fate was thine! doomed to die with thy hope unrealized!

I told Mr. Vendomē that I had taken the liberty to transcribe his little story, at which he did not seem displeased. He leaves to-day. Husband tells me there are more celebrities than usual in the city. Among them is one charming Philadelphia belle, with her husband. He saw them both to-day, and they are coming out here—here to our humble home. Well! let them come; thank Heaven, I have lost my false pride.

A strange surprise! Our Mr. Vendomē and Tricolo are the same. A dim supposition that it might be so crossed my mind once, and, now he is gone, husband confirms it.

Alberti Vendomē Tricolo is his name. I suppose I ought to add the seignior now, for he is quite famous. He does not need to play in public, having amassed a fortune; but his son bids fair to excel even him.

He was a sagacious man, and talked so sensibly. I remember he was speaking of reflection. I can recollect most that he said, but I can not give his impressive manner.

"Without reflection, men are but mere infants in will; possessing it, they are giants in power. They will grapple with a great idea as the iron fingers of a powerful machine grapple with the rock that has stood for ages, until they wrest it from its foundation, and cut a highway for nations even through the heart of the granite mountain. It is not always that a fort is a strong-hold; the building may be weak and shattered, but through the advantage of a peculiar location, or well-built walls, a garrison may effectually repulse the enemy.

"So may ordinary intellects, by the judicious exercise of reflection, accomplish purposes the event of which seems improbable to stronger minds.

"Reflection can be grafted on the most thoughtless character by a determination to stop and think before putting any resolution into practice.

"In trifling things this habit should be persisted in, and constant practice will make it easy of observance.

"Let an army of raw recruits be surprised by an onslaught from the foe, and how visible are confusion and utter want of system; they fly hither and thither, fire, not knowing whether falls comrade or foe; but the same band, after efficient training under the supervision of an experienced leader, will fall almost instinctively into order upon any sudden surprise."

He was led to say this by husband's remarks upon the thoughtless character of singers generally.

OLD SUPERSTITION.

One learns many a curious little thing in a village like this. I listened to the narration of a most singular incident yesterday at the house of a neighbor.

It seems that there is an old superstition, strongly believed by the credulous even at this day, that if the heart of the last deceased member of a consumptive family is taken from the body and burned, and the ashes reserved as a medicine to be given to the rest in small doses, no other person of that family will die of this terrible scourge. Various reasons are assigned as causes for belief in the efficacy of this curious experiment. Among them, one that in that dead heart there is a drop of blood which retains its color and freshness, by preying upon the vitality of those connected to it when living, by natural ties.

Several members of a large and respectable family had been early taken from earth by consumption; and, after following the body of an amiable sister to its final resting-place, the survivors met to talk over past events, and to mourn together for their loss. Each brother and sister felt the hectic glow, with its fitful fever feeding on their cheeks—each knew that the seeds of an insidious disorder were deeply sown in their feeble constitutions. They painfully realized how hopelessly doomed they were to certain and early death.

Among the matters discussed was a proposition, made by a friend of the family some time previous, to test

the efficacy of this strange remedy—the roasted heart of the buried sister. No wonder they shuddered as they thought of it, standing sorrowfully together, a little remnant, soon to be uselessly laid by—nor that they each and all shrunk back from the idea of eating their own flesh and blood. But one after another they submitted to the alternative. The physician was consulted, and requested to apply the knife to the corpse after it should be taken out of the tomb. He hesitated, and persuaded them to relinquish the idea, at once senseless and heathenish, and they desisted. But another fell a victim to the disorder, and they determined, at all events, to perform what they considered their duty.

Again the doctor was summoned, and this time he complied with their strange request.

Accordingly, at midnight he repaired, with a few of the family, to the old burial-ground, and, with a dark lantern, they all stood beside the grave in the stillness of the ghostly hour, while the aged sexton threw up the damp clods, and finally lifted the door that led into the tomb. The heart was carefully separated from the body by the surgeon's knife, and placed in charge of one of the brothers. As if to verify the truth of the assertion, there was, truly enough, a drop of fresh, red blood in its centre; and shocking as was the ordeal in prospect, they almost exulted as they fancied that the true and only successful remedy had been at last discovered.

They burned the heart to ashes, and used it as a medicine. But, alas for human hopes! the hand of the destroyer was not stayed. Long since, every soul of that family had gone to its last account. So much for old superstitions.

An incident almost laughable took place at the time of the raising. A very fearful old lady lived opposite the church-yard, who, for some strange, unaccountable reason, was wakened just at the "witching time o' night." Perhaps the ghost of a heavy supper was the cause, or the freaks of a wild youth, who sometimes made his spectacled "grandma" doubt whether he would ever keep up the dignity of her staid descendants. She heard a noise, and saw a sight that to her dim vision seemed a congregating of all the spirits whose dissolving tenements occupied the space around her. The "Lorys" and the "Massys" were completely exhausted the next morning in her account of the horrid ghosts she had seen in the old church-yard; how a blue flame flickered up from the ground, and three white spirits stood under the old willow, sometimes dancing around underneath it, and sometimes flitting among its branches; how they looked up at her, and made horrid faces as the blue light shone strongly upon them; and how, out of sheer fright, she took her trembling way into the house of her daughter, which communicated with hers. Every body believed her but the operators, and they kept their own secret. The vision was detailed with enormous exaggerations; and for a long time few passed the gray old grave-yard without a quick glance over the shoulder, and a hurried pace.

Our little burying-ground is a sweet resort at twilight. I only wish there were more flowers planted on the graves. As it is, there is one little mound that I always look at through pleasant fancies.

"I often come here," said Lizzy Waugh, one day, when we had alighted from our horses, and, after ty-

ing them to the gate, had sought this pretty spot; "I often come here to trim that little bush since the sweet child's mother died some four years ago. Almost one of the last things she said was, 'Who will keep little Luly's grave decent?' You see the mother lies here by the child, so this fine tree shades them both. The roses bloom only on Luly's little mound."

"And who was Luly?" I asked.

"Sit down here, and I will tell you. I am a real old maid in my love of reminiscences," she added, laughing, as we seated ourselves comfortably.

"Well, we used to call her THE BEAUTIFUL CHILD OF THE ALLEY.

"You have lived in Boston. You must remember having seen or heard of the ancient mansion where one of the old colonial governors resided, on the corner of a large square, called North Square, at the north part of the city. Well, this little child lived near there. Her mother was very poor. But I will begin at the beginning.

"At the private school which I attended, I always saw, seated in the youngest class, a cherub-like little being, who in summer was generally dressed in white, and in winter, when she came—which was rarely—in pretty robes of some thick material, that kept her warm and comfortable. I would often wonder whose little girl she was; so perfectly beautiful, with such a soft, dazzling complexion, and such clear, gazelle-like eyes, that always looked as if they were more fit for a sorrowful soul to weep through than for the channels of smiles and mirth. She was a pet with every one of the scholars; and as they were mostly children of rich parents, many a little present was brought to school

for her—some very costly and beautiful. There would be quite a discussion sometimes at the foot of the stairs as to which two should lead her home by her little white hands. Being silent and reserved, it was a long while before I made her acquaintance—a long while before I dared to twine her glossy, golden curls around my finger, and clasp my arms about her neck and kiss her, or teach her in such a manner to caress me. But at last I learned her to love me, and I learned, too, that the little, bent-down, delicate woman, with her old and patched clothing, that sometimes brought her in her arms, and always pulled the child's pretty robes away from her shoulders, and arranged her curls before she left her, was not a servant in her mother's family, as I supposed, but the mother herself; that she lived in one of those narrow courts leading out of Ann Street, and took in washing for her living.

"Never saw I such devotion displayed by a parent as by that humble and broken-spirited washer-woman. She would wear the very meanest garments herself, to deck the unearthly beauty of her child in the finest clothing. She lived on the coarsest food, but the little girl had an elegant tiny set of the nicest porcelain from which to eat her dainty fare; and her little mug, fancifully gilded, was replenished, morning and evening, with fresh, sweet milk. The mother's bed was low and uncomfortable, filled with hard straw, and her coverlet was a rug, or an old blanket, or some scanty quilt; but the little Luly, as the school-girls called her, had one of the nicest of little polished cribs, with clean little sheets, and, what always appeared wonderful to me, a faded blue satin quilt, lined with faded pink satin, and worked all over very richly and elabo-

rately with needle-work. These things seemed almost out of place in the dark cellar; for the washer-woman was very poor, and was obliged to live under ground, where she paid but a small sum for the rent. But when that little sinless one sat in her pretty rocking-chair, singing, and looking upward till her eyes seemed to melt into soft stars, like those that shine in heaven on a moonless night, it was full of light and beauty to the heart of the self-denying mother.

"The quilt that so much attracted my attention was brought from over the seas by sweet Luly's father, who was once the first mate of an India-bound brig; but he was suddenly killed on the second birth-day of his child, by falling into the hold. This dreadful accident turned the poor widow's brain for a time, and when she recovered her reason, she was a long while sick. Upon her recovery, she scorned to be assisted by the hand of charity, and exerted herself to procure work which would enable her to take care of herself and babe. She was scrupulously neat; and many a time a gift to herself or the little one was found on the cellar steps by the poor woman when she returned from her hard work.

"One balmy summer's day, such a day as makes the by-lanes of a great city glad and bright, school was let out sooner than usual by nearly two hours. The little Luly had looked and behaved uncommonly well, and had so engaged all our hearts that we thought surely not such another angel lived in the whole wide world; and there was a great clamoring for the honor of assisting her home, as usual. When one would ask her to go with her, she would lift her bright eyes and strive to clasp her neck; and if another gave the same invitation, she would turn around and laugh a glad assent.

But by-and-by we arranged it that a number of us would accompany her to the old court, and play there a while. We knew that our parents would not object, because carriages and horses were never allowed in its narrow precincts, and it was a still, quiet place.

"You know, Mrs. Golding, how little girls play when they get together on a pleasant afternoon. We kept school till we were tired; but we had so much fixing to do about Luly's pretty hair, and so much talking baby-talk to her, that the rest of the scholars received very slight attentions. Then we began to play 'keep house;' but we all wanted to be 'mother,' and call Luly 'the baby;' so we got but a very little further than the resolve.

"We had placed little Luly on a cricket in the middle of the court, and given her a book of colored pictures to busy herself with, and become quite engaged in a boisterous play which children call 'tag,' when suddenly we heard a terrible shrieking of female voices, a loud shout of 'For God's sake, take care!' and before we could move, up dashed a furious white horse into the centre of the path, his eyes red and inflamed, and the thick white foam falling in large flakes from his horrible open mouth.

"Up he flew, like a wild, pale demon, his hoofs ringing, steel-like, against the paving-stones. We could not move, speak, think, breathe. Oh! how awful a moment was that!

"I can not remember distinctly what happened, except that my distended eyeballs were riveted upon that sweet, trampled form that laid lifeless in the middle of the old court-yard; that idolized creature, still and white, with blood on the ground beside her; and I saw,

too, the cruel horse that reared up against the old building, and, turning, rushed back again, stamping upon that precious little object of so much care and love as if he would rend it to pieces. The vision still lies upon my mind as a reality. I hear the frantic shrieks of the mother; I see her spring up and down clasping her hands, her dark hair floating all about her face and shoulders; I hear the loud, awful, confused murmurs of pitying neighbors. Oh! it was, it was most horrible!

"I would fain persuade myself that it was not true, but I can not; for I well recollect how on the following day I turned my steps sorrowfully, with many of my companions, in the direction of the washer-woman's home, and the fair, yet fearful picture I saw there.

"The crib had been moved near the door, that pretty sleeping-place that had so long nestled the head of the fair child; the quilt was replaced by a beautiful veil of costly lace, with which the mother of one of my school-mates had covered the sweet body with her own hands. There, on the round, polished brow, had the fingers of the destroying angel lingered; and as the silken flosses of the bright hair stirred, one might think he was yet breathing his cold breath among their threads of gold. All in snowy garments, pure and holy, laid the sinless one, her dreadful wounds hidden by the folds of soft cambric that gathered over her form. The poor mother sat away in the corner, in a dim light, her head bowed upon her bosom. Sometimes we could see her raise her arms to heaven, and clasp her hands over her head, and then she would be still again. We noticed a lady standing near her, who bent down and whispered something with tears in her eyes.

"'Yes,' exclaimed the heart-broken mother in tones of piercing grief, 'yes, I ought to be thankful for that. He didn't touch her face, he didn't dare to touch her beautiful face!' and then she sobbed and moaned. 'Oh! my child! my child!' while we stood gazing in mute sorrow, till the lady came to us, and told us all to kiss dear little Luly, for she would be put in the cold ground that very day. So we touched our lips to the innocent face, and left the dark cellar, weeping bitterly for the loss of our lovely playmate."

"How terrible a fate!" I exclaimed, gazing at the little mound over which the red sun streamed.

"I thought so at the time," murmured Lizzy, "and I shuddered with icy fear when I dwelt upon it; but now I feel differently. Suppose Luly had grown up in her ethereal beauty—for you can hardly form an idea of her loveliness—so admired, so caressed by every body? And then suppose her mother had died, and the delicate, petted child had been thrown upon a cruel world! How can we tell what might have been her fate? Is it not better, infinitely better, that she should bloom in immortal beauty on the fair shores of the spirit world, than live and sorrow, sicken, pine, and die in this?—perhaps lose that innocence that was to her such a crown of glory?"

THE CROSS.

I HAVE often spoken of a cross worn by the teacher, and which seemed always inseparable from her toilet, whatever its style.

"And where," said I, one day, in as careless a manner as I could assume, "where did you get that cross?"

She pressed her delicate finger upon it, as was her wont, and, looking searchingly in my eyes, answered, "Do not accuse me of foolishness if you learn for the first time, after so long an intimacy, that I am superstitious. I inherit from Catholic ancestors a portion of their love for relics, and this cross is said to possess a peculiar virtue. Now, pray don't smile. It has been in the family of my husband's father for over a century. Tradition says that it laid in the tomb of a French princess several scores of years, and was taken from thence by a priest, who chanced to find out the secret. You have, no doubt, heard of the wonderful ring that gave to its possessor the power of charming all hearts, and of binding *one* to itself through life, and—" she shuddered, turning pale—"after death, even. But of that we will say nothing. I do not like to speak of that."

It may appear singular, but a thrill ran through my veins when her hand fell to her lap, and the brilliant stones flashed out in all the glory of their prismatic beauty. It seemed as if the pale face and form, whose contour was fragility itself, imbibed a new interest from

the romance with which they were blended, and a new link of affection attached itself to my heart. Such force has imagination!

"It is said," she continued, in a voice low and agitated, "that this little cross will give new lustre to the wearer, that from its brightness evolves a sort of charm; and by some inexplicable, undescribable attraction it draws the bonds of friendship closer between the hearts of careless acquaintances and between united hearts." Here she paused. Her lips quivered. Tears welled up to her eyes, and rolled over her cheeks. Was she thinking of the dead? Doubtless. And all the while she was pressing against the bawble (as, under any other circumstances, I should have called it), till I almost felt the mark that it must have made—upon my own flesh.

To think she believes even now that the love she bears to her husband is quickened by the pressure of that golden cross!

"It is more delicious," she murmured, "to remember the dead than to love the living."

THE SHADOW OF DEATH.

SEVEN years ago we came to this delightful home, and what a change has been wrought in that little lapse of time! My oldest daughter sits by my side engaged with her sewing. She is fourteen years of age to-day; a dear, healthy, happy creature, with so much of the fatal gift of beauty, that I should sigh for her hereafter, did I not feel and know that her mind is far more beautiful than her sweet face. Herbert is just walking past the window with the son of a friend; as he looks in and smiles, I can hardly believe that he can be my son—so grave, of such an earnest and lofty countenance. How changed he is! Once he was wild and unsteady, and my heart trembled for him; now he seems like a man in manner, in language—and he is but sixteen. He is so tall, that when I lean upon his arm, as he loves to have me, I am almost head and shoulders shorter than he is.

I hope I am not too proud of those two sweet children—sometimes I feel as if unworthy of such blessings. Herbert has long been at college; it is now vacation, and he will be home three weeks. For a while back his letters have breathed a spirit of lofty poetry, which is surely uncommon in one so very young. They are religious, too. Why does a spirit of rebellion come over me when I read them? Why does he not seem as my own son? Have I passed through the fiery ordeal, and is my heart not yet softened? No; happy as I am, at times, it is not the joy of religion that pervades my heart; and yet I have such an example constantly before me. Was that *her* cough? Alice whispers that it is, and I must go.

I feel as if the shadow of death was over this house. The teacher is here. She has boarded with us now two years; sweet, gentle one, I might almost say sinless one, how much she has suffered; but now she is passing away—yet so calmly. Consumption has fastened his hand upon her; her brow has grown whiter, and her eye brighter, with the touch of his dread fingers; but her soul has become purer also.

I have her history in this diary. Let me turn back and read it once again. She was born in France, of rich parents. Her father was dishonored—he was a gambler; but she knew it not until after his death. He died by the hand of violence, but herself and brother, with their surviving parent, were left in affluence. Her only brother, a frank, generous, but hot-blooded youth, fell, two years after, in a duel. He was killed by the first shot. This great grief almost maddened her; but she had little time to think of it, for her mother was taken sick, and in one short week she too was laid in the grave. Almost heart-broken, she took up her residence, after all her affairs were settled, with an uncle, a venerable old man, a scholar and author, and for two years she did not go at all into society. At the expiration of that time she met with the learned circles that constantly filled her uncle's saloons. Here it was she had the misfortune to gain the love of a violent and impetuous foreigner, who wished for her hand. She was already engaged to one of the sons of an honorable family, a man distinguished for his attainments and genius. Again and again she repulsed the Italian, and still he was unmanly enough to renew his

attentions. At last she would not behold him; he swore vengeance, and declared he would kill either her or her betrothed; meanwhile keeping in strict concealment, but sending anonymous letters full of passion and threats. She was fearful that he would accomplish his oath, and accordingly young Germaine (her betrothed) and herself were secretly married, and in a few days on their way to America. But alas! poor child, she saw but a brief moment of happiness; it seemed as if some relentless spirit of darkness was forever following and persecuting her with the bitterest malice. They had arrived at New Orleans, and taken a suite of splendid apartments; but one sultry night, amid all the luxury and loveliness of their beautiful parlor, poor E—— sat with the head of her sick husband resting against her bosom; his eyes were fearfully wild, and the hot tide of fever rushed through his veins. In a few days he died, with strangers bending over him, for she too was tossing upon a bed of sudden sickness; and when she awoke to consciousness, her loved and dead one was sleeping in other arms than hers, even in those of the chilly earth, among the graves of a thousand.

Was here not romance? How many would mock at the fiction that portrayed such startling events!

She became a sorrowful woman. She gathered her property together and made her residence among New Englanders. Here she found friends, for who could know her but to love? Becoming acquainted with the family of Judge Waugh, she came to our quiet village, and entered upon the duties of a teacher, free of charge, in order to occupy her time. She loves my children, and they, in turn, almost worship her; so, indeed, do all the children of the village. The family with whom

she formerly resided have moved away, and, anxious to remain, she came to live with me.

Her sweet, white face has become necessary to my happiness now, and I can scarcely trust myself to think that she will soon die. She sits in the next room from morning till night, her books and flowers beside her, her neat nurse busied quietly in attendance upon her. How many beautiful thoughts she has, and how often she writes them down, saying, with her quiet smile, she will leave them all to me. They will, indeed, be precious memorials.

Herbert is very much attached to her. He will sit for hours reading and talking with her. If she was not an invalid, I should grow quite jealous; but she has a most excellent influence over him.

Last night he told me unexpectedly that he had decided upon his profession. "You know, mother, that you and father are very anxious that I should be a lawyer," he said; "but I will tell you what I desire—I feel it my duty to study for the ministry."

I was astonished—sorely disappointed. I had set my heart upon having a lawyer in the family, having been repeatedly told that Herbert's talents fitted him peculiarly for that profession; but he seemed very decided, and when I remonstrated, and told him how much his father had thought of his studying that profession, the tears came to his eyes, but he was still firm. I know not what to make of his seriousness, unless dear Mrs. Germaine, in view of her death, has talked him into the belief that it is his duty to be a minister. I wish Herbert was as light-hearted and merry as he was formerly; but still he is a good boy, kind and thoughtful. Time, perhaps, will change his inclination; I can not think it any thing but a boyish whim.

DEATH ITSELF.

SWEET Autumn—bright, beautiful Autumn is here! Behold her handwriting on the leaves; it is traced with a pen dipped in the hues of the rainbow. Hear how gently she sings the requiem of the flowers, poor tender things, that are perishing because Summer is sleeping, and needs them no longer to make garlands for her sunny brow. Yes; Autumn has stolen upon us with a right gentle tread, and her breath is fragrant with the scent of yellow corn, and the odor of golden peaches and ripened apples. She has come, murmuring to the farmer, "Fill your barns high with grain and stacks of sweet-smelling hay; for when I am gone, there shall come an old, old man, with icicles freezing on his white beard, and a cold welcome in his stony eye. He shall come leaning upon a staff cut from the petrified forests of the frozen North; but though he creep along with a shivering form and a shaking tread, with frosts congealed upon his snowy locks, and pale languor in his shriveled cheeks, yet there is power in that old man's grasp, and a strong current of impetuous life bounds vigorously through the pallid veins. He will seize upon your treasures if you secure them not, and a touch of his chilly fingers is as fatal as the shaft of death."

Look upon the hills; Autumn and her sprites are busy there. Wherever their dancing feet touch the sward, lo! it is transfigured, and a thousand nestling beauties sleep in the little hollows they have made.

Gaze upward to the skies; has summer gone there? They are as darkly, as richly blue as in her softer reign. The little runnels babble to the meadows, and the meadows answer back again, and tell how strange a desolation cometh in the train of Autumn, and how, if they were larger brooks, they would find some dark, warm cavern, out of the reach of grasping Winter. But the brooks, like children, heed not the words of experience, and babble on, contented, because just now they are warm, and the sun glitters to their very depths.

Behold again; Autumn wraps her mantle of scarlet about her glorious form, and bows her head in sorrow. Just beyond the little inclosure, I see her, shadowy yet bright, moving like a spirit, while the fading verdure scarcely feels the pressure of her soft tread. And Autumn is among the tombs—among the green mounds and the white monuments. Many a babe, that one year ago held forth its tiny hands to greet her, lies there, sleeping. Many a young bride, who waited for her to bless her bridal, twelve months ago, is folded in the cerements of the grave. He who swung his scythe, and carolled a song to her honor when last she was here—he of the manly form, the powerful arm, the noble brow, and merry eye of blue, has finished his course in his bright spring time, and his head is pillowed on a lowly bed. Autumn kisses the venerable and the aged; she pauses by the tall shafts that mark the repose of the fallen great; she kneels by the simple headstone of the village clergyman, and her fingers play with the faded chaplet that adorns a father's grave. And before another autumn has come—before the lilies again shake from their golden tresses the pearls that Summer has fashioned among them, dear Clara will lie

in her last resting-place; but how ready, how ripe she is for heaven! I wish I was half as reconciled to lose her.

This morning I rode with husband into the city on horseback. Met some of my former friends, particularly the two young (?) ladies so unfortunately caught in the suds. They gave me a glance, and *did not know me!*

When I returned, the house was thronged with children. They had come, at the teacher's request, to say their final good-by. Some of the elder girls were sobbing as if their hearts would break; and one little golden-headed creature ran to me, crying, "Oh! Miss Dolden, sha'n't we never, never see dear teacher again?"

I can not tell how the thought affected me. Her last visit to the school lingers in my memory yet. It was in June when the roses were out. The scholars had known for some time that she was coming among them for the last time; so, with the assistance of their new teacher, they got up quite a little celebration there. Clara went in leaning on my arm, and lo! the schoolroom was transformed into a bower! All over the walls, on each little desk, were festoons and beautiful bouquets. It was the sweetest sight that I ever witnessed. She was affected beyond expression; and as each child came forward to receive one pressure of her gentle hand and a good-by kiss, she turned to me and said, "Oh! Alice, could I only meet them in heaven as they are now, innocent, happy things!" Then suddenly, as her hand sought the cross on her bosom, she whispered, "I shall meet *him* there!"

Walking around the garden this morning, I was saddened by the change.

The trees—poor naked things!—how sorrowful they seem, flinging upward their bare, brown arms in the keen air! They have given us of our abundance, shed the fruit that so beautifully clothed them in purple and gold upon the changing earth, and now they are turning black, and withering at the frosty touch of Autumn.

My flowers, too, are paling, drooping, and dying. They turn their sickly heads to the sun; but alas! in their very hearts the hoar-frost is nestling, gnawing away their gentle lives; so, when the kindly glance of their good physician falls softly upon them, there is no longer vitality in their still beautiful forms.

They are dying!

And so are many gentle ones of earth. Outwardly lovely, like those sweet flowers, the angel of death is shadowing them with his broad wings, and they are swiftly passing away.

Dear, blessed Clara is dying! She can not survive but a few days at the longest. It is a comfort that we can add so much to her enjoyment. Herbert and Alice both read to her by turns, and sometimes I play and sing in the next apartment. Every thing is a pleasure to her.

The teacher lies before me on her accustomed couch, but her eyes are tightly closed, and no breath issues from those cold, pale lips. How beautiful she looks, wrapped around with the mysteries of death! Her sorrowful life is ended. She has met that one friend who was dearest on earth. Oh! in such a time as this, how sweet the support of a religious faith! I thought, when that dear creature was dying, could the confirmed infidel but look upon her happy, peaceful face, and behold the sweet smile hovering about the

white lips, and see how trustingly that tender woman resigned her quivering breath into the hands of her Maker, he would forsake the dreadful errors that close so darkly around him.

She went to sleep as calmly as the babes I have often hushed to rest on my bosom; her face was lighted up with that radiance not of earth; she triumphed in the hour of the body's agony. She saw the faces of angels, with the brilliancy of heaven glorifying their beauty; she heard music as of flutes and golden harps, and indescribably rich voices floating on air so light, so rare, that its inhalation was ecstasy.

"The harmony of celestials," she murmured, "such as my soul has dreamed of in its night communings, and my feeble voice striven to embody in melody; shall I soon join in those strains?"

Herbert stood by, pale, and in tears, holding one of her wasted hands. I strove for composure, but I loved her, and could not bear the thought of parting. Now that she is in her shroud, I could wish that thus she might remain here forever—so holy and sinless—so lovely in death. But the wish is vain. Yonder they bear her coffin, and to-morrow they will lay her away out of our sight.

The teacher is buried! We went with her to the open grave—we could go no further. The grave-yard seemed a desolate place. No flowers were springing in this garden of the dead, for the grass was sear, and the trees gray and leafless. But the children had brought garlands of hot-house flowers, and strewed them upon the ground and the coffin. How sweet a sight, and yet how mournful—thirty-five little children, all of the ages of from five to twelve years, following the hearse of

their more than friend and teacher! Many of them wept as they looked their last on her still face, and thought that the sweet teacher would never meet with them again.

How still the house is! Even my own footfall seems foreign to the solemn silence; the children, as just now they join in a little song that *she* composed for them, sing slowly and softly, as if their hearts were busy with memory; yet I do not feel gloomy, though every face is sobered, and the merry laugh is silenced. There was something so beautiful in her death.

THE SILVER SERVICE.

Was surprised to see husband at home by noon today. He drove up in an elegant carriage, in company with a merchant with whom he once transacted business. I have never seen the gentleman before, but have heard all sorts of good things about him. It is rumored, also, that he is very rich. My husband introduced him, then, turning to me, said, "I have received an earnest invitation for you to visit the family of Mr. Arnold this afternoon, and his wife says you must not decline; so we will wait while you get ready. Take as much time as you desire for your toilet."

This, I knew, was a hint that he wished me to look particularly well, and, full of wonder, I retired to my chamber. There was so strange, so gratified an expression upon his face, that I longed to question him, but, of course, found no opportunity.

The only luxury I have afforded myself this winter has been a rich black silk dress; this I put on, braided my hair very carefully, and, on the whole, thought I looked pretty well. We were driven to ——— Square, in ———, and stopped before a princely mansion. Mrs. Arnold received me very cordially, and with evident affection, saying that although she did not know me, she felt a great interest in me, and hoped that henceforth I would visit her, and make her my friend. I was very much pleased with her appearance. So free from affectation of every kind, she is genuinely a lady;

my heart went out toward her, but I could not express the pleasure I felt.

"We are to have a meeting here this afternoon," she continued, her face the while lighted up with a pleasant smile, "and as they will all be gentlemen, we will give up the front parlor, and sit down and enjoy a little chat by ourselves."

All was mystery to me, of course, but I felt perfectly at home in her elegant room, and soon reposed the utmost confidence in my charming acquaintance. I observed that a table was set in the centre of the other parlor, covered with a beautiful white cloth, that hung nearly to the floor; I thought it too small for a collation, and did not trouble myself with conjecture.

Very soon a few gentlemen came—fine, noble-looking men; some of them I remembered having seen before. Others kept calling, till there were, I should suppose, some ten present. At last my husband entered, leaning on the arm of Mr. Arnold. He looked pale, but happy.

I was bewildered when I saw the gentlemen all rise and take him by the hand, and seem to express unbounded pleasure and approbation.

Presently Mr. Arnold went toward the table and lifted the cloth, when lo! a whole service of silver glittered there. To my utter astonishment, one of the gentlemen took his stand by the table, and presented it, in the name of the merchants present, to my husband! The sudden surprise was almost too much for me, and Mrs. Arnold passed her arm around my waist, or I believe I should have fallen. I gathered, from the few words spoken, that Herbert had discharged every debt with interest; and his creditors were so much delighted

with his honorable conduct, that they had determined to confer this costly gift upon him as a token of their commendation.

I was afterward introduced to each of them, and I could not but feel proud of my husband when I heard their warm eulogiums.

"Now," said he, as we rode home, "how much we need a beautiful city mansion, in which to display our rich service."

"No, no," I exclaimed, "never let us be fashionable again; let us rather own a dear little cottage in our pretty village, and I will never more sigh for city pleasures. We have been so happy."

He answered, with a glad, bright smile, "Well, as you wish; thank Heaven I am out of debt. I feel like a bird; my heart is light, my conscience clear, my wife healthy, my children dutiful—"

"And beautiful," I broke in.

THE YOUNG POET.

I SEE, by looking back, that dear Clara, who so twined herself about our hearts, has been dead nearly a year. Yet how fresh is her memory!

To-morrow is my thirty-eighth birth-day. Thirty-eight, and no wrinkles! Now it may be a foolish thought of mine, but I do believe there is not that woman living who does not dread to see the first marks of age. If, instead of enjoying the free and happy life I have for the past ten years, I had still moved in the circles of fashion and frivolity, I think my locks would have been gray with premature age. As it is, I have a fresh color in my cheeks, as fresh as at eighteen, and my eyes feel clear—I will not pretend to say they are as bright.

Have had some pleasant visits from city friends this summer, though it was rather palling to feel that many of them were attracted by that sesame of a word, wealth. It is said that my husband is fast approaching his old standard, and that his firm bids fair to be one of the richest in the city. Well, I care not. Happy in my children, pleased with little, delighted with my home, to which we have steadily been adding comforts, I am content, gain we much or not. Oh! the blessedness expressed by that little word "content!"

My friends like my house—its airy situation, its simple furnishing; and they praise the good white bread that Betty makes, and the golden butter that we have fresh from the churn. Husband has bought two cows

lately, and we have a strong little maid to help Betty, who still clings to me with so earnest and true an affection that I can not help loving her back. Faithful girl! she came to me only yesterday with a bank-note which she assured me she found crumpled up in an old waistcoat of my husband's that I gave her to cleanse. It had been lying there I know not how long—perhaps years. When husband came home, I related the incident to him, and he told me to give it to her; but I could not prevail on her to accept it, so I shall go to the city and buy her some nice new dresses, get them made without her knowledge, and stow them away in her wardrobe: it will be a pretty surprise.

Speaking of surprise leads me to think of the joy, gratitude, and pride that filled my heart yesterday morning on learning something very new and very welcome. For four years we have subscribed to as many family papers. Once, how seldom I thought of a newspaper. Now it is daily food.

The one I think the most of is a little, witty, original sheet, of a high character, and ably conducted. It is my favorite, though a new caterer for the public. From time to time there have appeared some very beautiful fugitive pieces of poetry—sweet and soothing, and appealing to the heart most powerfully. Every week I have become more interested in this elegant contributor, and at each fresh effusion I have wondered who he could be; for the signature was "Leon"—that of a gentleman.

Yesterday I was reading a thrilling poem, which I considered the best that had yet appeared. Herbert, who is at home for a short vacation, sat by, listening, and apparently enjoying it with me.

"Read that again, mother," said he, as I slowly enunciated a line somewhat wanting in energy of expression.

I complied with his request. He looked perplexed.

"Are you sure, mother," he exclaimed, "that you are right? The sense is weak."

I knew I was correct, and so asserted.

"Then the printer has murdered it most shockingly," he murmured, impatiently.

I started, and gazed full in his face. "Herbert," I exclaimed, with a thrill of pleasure, "do you know who 'Leon' is?"

Never saw I so conscious a countenance; his fair cheeks were crimsoned with blushes; and I could hardly refrain from clasping my arms around his neck as when he was a little child, and showering kisses upon his brow. Nevertheless, I endeavored to appear perfectly calm, and asked him again if he knew who 'Leon' was.

"Yes, mother," he said, modestly; "but do you care very much that I should tell you?"

"I have just conjectured that it might be my son," I replied, my heart fluttering with joy.

"Mother?" he said, with an eloquent glance.

I know my eyes were full of tears as I looked upon him. Oh! he appeared so beautiful at that moment!

"Then, dear Herbert," I said, as soon as I could command my voice, "I owe to you those sweet emotions which the perusal of these little poems has always awakened. I am gratified, nay, almost proud," I continued, "and I need not fear to increase your vanity, for I firmly believe you trust not in your own strength."

In another moment Herbert was at my side, his man-

ly arm around me, and his eloquent eyes fixed full upon my face.

"Mother," he said, almost in a whisper, "now you see what I can do, with God's blessing. Will you give your full, free consent that I may be a minister of the Gospel?"

I could not but say yes. Herbert will go back to his studies with a light heart. He is a dear, good boy.

I will copy this little poem of his:

THE CHILD AND THE ACORN.

Singing by her cottage door,
Sat a youthful mother;
Spinning-wheel her feet before,
Babe half dreaming on the floor,
Far beyond, the sand-white shore,
Waves like Naiads, laughing, leaping,
Purple hills in distance sleeping,
Slender mast and snowy sail,
Shimmering through the golden veil
That the sun, 'twixt day and even,
Softly drew o'er earth and heaven:
There the youthful mother,
Musing, thought on fairy lore,
As the cherub on the floor,
Almost dreaming, smiled;
While its curled fingers pressed,
Crimson corals on its breast,
And the linsey robe, unstrung,
From its dimpled shoulders hung;
Bending o'er the child,
Thus she sang while I drew near her
Silently to see and hear her,
Deeming nothing could be dearer
Than that treasure by the door,
Than that babe,
Sleeping on the cottage floor.

"Gather quickly, gather lightly,
Acorns from the stateliest tree;

One I'll plant, and watch it nightly,
For, my babe, it likens thee;
With the tree,
So fair and free,
Thou shalt grow, boy, with the tree.

"In the warm and nursing earth,
See! I place it, robed in mould,
So, like thee, 'twill have its birth,
And, like thee, grow old:
Lo, the tender leaves,
Tipped with shining crests,
With a modest fear,
Peeping from their nests;
So, my lightsome boy, with thee,
May each new-born honor be,
Tempered by humility;
Thou art growing with the tree;
With the tree,
Fair and free,
Thou art growing with the tree.

"Lullaby! on hill and plain,
Cometh down the rain;
On the tender limbs it falleth,
Forth their fresh young vigor calleth;
Wider, broader, see, they spread,
Forming shelter for thy head;
Thou art into manhood blending,
Manhood's storms thy bosom rending,
Learn a lesson from the tree;
Purer grow as tempests beat;
When thy passions threaten thee,
Firmer, stronger, plant thy feet;
With the tree,
Firm and free,
Thou art growing with the tree.

"Lo! the stem, dark and green,
Draperied by leafy screen,
Lifts the shining foliage high,
Yet, all sheltered, shuns the eye;
So, child, let simplicity,
Shield, and sword, and buckler be;

What thy left hand may bestow,
Never let thy right hand know;
Fair and free,
Thy spirit be,
Upward springing like the tree.

"Higher soaring, birds are pouring
Music from its fresh young boughs;
And its shade o'er the glade,
Cools the weary woodmen's brows;
So let thy love
The poor man bless;
Thy heart with singing
Its heaven-flight winging,
Seek justice, peace, and righteousness.

"Freely give, if given much,
Never let the world's cold touch
Steel thy soul and harden thee;
Thou art growing with the tree,
With the tree,
Fair and free,
Thou art growing with the tree.

"Every morn and eve from heaven,
Are the brightest pearl-drops given,
And the leaves drink in the dew,
Gathering strength and beauty new;
Like the tree,
May'st thou be,
Drinking wisdom silently,
From the Christ, thy holy Brother;
In, above, below, beside thee,
May the risen Master guide thee,
With thy mother,
To the gloom
Of the tomb,
And beyond, where new immortals
Enter Heaven's holy portals;
There may we,
By the tree,
Spreading o'er the crystal river,
Live forever, and forever."

And the youthful mother
Laid her wheel and distaff by,
Ceased her song with smile and sigh,
Raised her babe, as low she bent,
Gave it tender nourishment,
Folded it unto her breast,
Sealed her cot, and sought her rest.

BIRTH-DAY FESTIVAL.

HERE comes Alice, busy with preparation for my birth-day. The children are determined to have a festival in my honor. Yonder black-eyed youth is often with Alice lately, Edward Waugh; he is a stately-looking young man, and a dear friend of Herbert's. I think Alice and he are wonderfully intimate.

Glorious and bright the sun arose this morning, and never was I more hopeful and happy than when my dear children pressed around me and wished me, as is their custom upon my natal day, another happy new year. I was not to see the arbor they have erected, in which to have our little *fête*, until a certain hour after noon; but I knew by the bouquets carried from room to room, arranged with great taste, that they were preparing a very pretty surprise for me. Husband came in from the city quite early with a great variety of good things, which Herbert and his sister immediately claimed and made way with to the back part of the garden, where they are at work. I, of course, was to sit quiet and unobserving; but I often indulged myself with a sly laugh at their movements as their important young faces looked in upon me, once in a while, to see if I was very busily doing nothing.

At one o'clock Herbert came in and said, "Mother, you must take a light lunch, for we are going to depart a little from the established custom, and have dinner at four in the afternoon; and as you promised to

do as we say to-day, will you please to ride with me to the bower that Edward and I have chosen for our studio. Father thinks it will do you good; he is busy with Alice, or he would go too."

Of course I assented, and we were soon on our way to a charming waterfall some six miles distant, where, with young Waugh, Herbert often repairs to pursue his studies. And a romantic place I found it. Around the waterfall was an open space, smooth and velvety, inclosed by tall, straight pines, that made a most delightful shade, and induced an agreeable coolness. Three or four rocks jutted out from the green-sward, two of them almost as smooth as tablets. From an opening could be seen, first, level and grassy slopes, then softly undulating hills, and, further back, wide and seemingly endless forests. There was none of man's handiwork here; Nature spoke only of God. The little waterfall rippled and babbled, singing a hymn in concert with the harmonies around it, and the clear sky looked calm and holy, as its cerulean appeared deeper and darker from the narrowness of the inclosure through which we gazed upward.

"Here, mother," said Herbert, "is where I nurse my fledgelings of poetry. I get here by myself sometimes, and the stillness and beauty are so impressive that they paint pictures on my brain, which I strive to embody in thought. This, you see," pointing to one of the rocks, "is my table—my writing-desk; on the little mound of moss at its base, I sit and scribble for hours. In the hollow trunk of the tree yonder I keep my materials for writing. Now is this not an agreeable studio?"

I was very much pleased with it, and expressed my

approbation. We drank some of the cool water from folded leaves, plucked a few wild flowers, and again and again admiring the fine scenery on each side of our path, we returned home.

Nobody was in the house. The parlor was stripped of its sofas and mirrors; and, as I looked around in blank amazement, Herbert cautioned me not to betray any surprise, but be ready to go with him to dinner as soon as possible. When I had dressed with care, I found my son still waiting for me; and, full of agreeable wonder, I went with him to the place prepared for my reception.

There was formerly, at the back of the orchard, a rude sort of bower, which, I had often remarked, might be made into a delightful arbor. Thither we went; but oh! what a change! I was bewildered, astonished, delighted. A large space had been cleared, the trees interlaced at the top, and branches woven in on every side.

From the roof to the ground hung garlands of flowers, festooned by delicate ribbons of every hue. The ground was inlaid with moss in such a manner that it resembled mosaic-work; and mirrors were flashing on every side. My sofas were there, covered with a fine and glossy texture which was looped up with roses. A round table was set in the centre, on which was displayed the magnificent silver service presented to my husband, glittering brilliantly bright, as here and there a sun ray stole across its polished surface.

All the children, with the exception of Alice, were dressed like fairies, with garlands of flowers around their brows, and depending from their garments. I can not tell how my heart throbbed as they came forward hand and hand, and led me to a beautifully canopied seat, and then, each one gracefully kneeling, presented me with a gift prepared expressly for their "darling mother," and recited a sweet little poem, which I suppose my good son must have written.

Alfred, my youngest pet, whom I have named after poor Gretta's little child, gave me a Bible, which his father has since told me he bought with his own money, having saved all he could beg of him or earn. It was a most elegantly bound volume; and the tears came to my eyes as the little child gave me "the Word of Life."

Willy next brought me, in a rare and splendid flower vase, a moss rose-bush full of buds and flowers, with not one withered leaf, and of a perfect shape. This he has been cultivating for nearly a year, and never saw I such rare perfection in a plant. Alice gave me a bracelet, in which, on touching the spring, I found inclosed an excellent miniature of myself. I have since learned that it was executed by my daughter. Truly I have cause to be thankful for such children, not only lovely and talented, but dutiful and amiable; and as Herbert handed me a little volume of poems, many of which I had seen and appreciated, I could no longer restrain my emotion, but leaned upon my husband's shoulder and wept tears of joy.

All were not through yet, however; for Julia Waugh came forward with her gift—a beautiful ivory basket, inlaid with delicate paintings; in the inside, a little silver plate, on which were inscribed the simple words, "To the mother of my beloved friend, on her birth-day."

After I had somewhat recovered from my surprise, we repaired to the table, spread with simple delicacies,

and never was there a more happy company. The children laughed, sang, and chatted, and husband was unusually animated.

"It is in this way," he said, with enthusiasm, "that enjoyment should be sought. Of what use is it to spend money for the entertainment of those who care not for you, except to quote you as the rich and fashionable of their acquaintance?"

My heart responded, "It is worse than useless;" but I could not speak for joy. This uninterrupted happiness is almost unreal; I feel sometimes as if it could not last. Why are we exempt from suffering, while thousands, more worthy, perhaps, drain misery from a full cup?

After many innocent amusements, as evening stole on, the bower was lighted up with magic lamps, ingeniously concealed, and a few choice friends who had been invited joined us—among them the family of Judge Waugh.

How could I but notice the blush that so eloquently spoke on the fair cheeks of Alice, when Edward Waugh, with all the gallantry of eighteen, led her to the harp, and whispered her what song to sing?

Alice is sixteen now, but how womanly; I tremble when I say how beautiful!

THE TRICK.

Alice and Julia behaved so mysteriously this morning, that I was full of conjecture; and at last I asked them, half in jest, what nonsense they had been at now. Julia crimsoned, and Alice burst out into a merry laugh.

"Why! mother," exclaimed Alice, "I can't, for the life of me, keep a secret from you, and how we got along as we did without your knowledge I don't know; do you, Julia? The truth is, we've been playing tricks; there! now I've made a clean breast of it, I feel better."

I could not tell what she meant, till she explained that, having found an old book of charms in the garret, she and Julia had been practicing them. The silly girls had eaten little cakes, half salt, half meal, gone to bed backward, and dreamed very foolish and unexplainable dreams. I never heard of such a thing before. Truly, children are increasing in wisdom.

Alice could not remember who gave her water, only that she had drank it out of a silver chalice; and poor Julia dreamed that the adversary himself ministered to her thirst.

I talked as gravely as I could to them about this, as I thought it—sin; for I never would have dared to do such a thing in my youth. Thank God, I never consulted a fortune-teller, or tried in any manner to ravel out the threads of the future till the full time. I told them that, having eaten so much salt, it was but nat-

ural they should be thirsty, and dream of water and whatever gentleman might be uppermost in their minds.

"But Mrs. Golding," said Julia, seriously, "I didn't think of *him*!"

This made me laugh heartily; "Nevertheless, you were about his business," I replied, not much to the comfort of the poor child, I expect.

THE TWO STRANGERS.

If what has happened to-day had been enrolled within the pages of fiction, I should have thought it altogether improbable; and I record it as a strange providence, yet one conclusively proving how constantly the Almighty guards, and how wonderfully he guides his creatures. In arranging our pleasure party yesterday, Alice took her little statue of the flower-girl, and placed it in the entrance of the miniature bower. The evening being so beautiful, it was left there all night, and I did not recollect it till afternoon to-day, when I immediately hurried out, apprehensive of a coming storm. I was quite astonished at finding near the place two ladies, one of them advanced in life, the other young, beautiful, and foreign looking, with very brilliant dark eyes and haughty features. Bowing gracefully, she begged my pardon, and said that, driving around in their carriage, her mother and herself had been struck with the beauty of the place, and, catching a glimpse of a statue between the trees, they thoughtlessly wandered thither.

I told them they were very welcome, and asked them to step within the house and rest, but they declined.

"The statue which you have there interests me exceedingly," said the mother; "excuse me if I ask you how it came in your possession."

I answered, that it was given me by the artist.

Her cheek turned a shade paler, and she faintly articulated, "Who is he? is he yet living?"

"No, he is dead!" I answered, and before I could speak but half his name the lady had fallen fainting within the arms of her child.

We led her between us into the house, and, carefully lifting her long veil, her daughter took off the bonnet of deep black, and, passing her arm around her waist, drew her head gently toward her and rested it upon her bosom.

"She is an invalid," she murmured, smiling faintly, as I bathed her mother's forehead in cool water; "and if it is as I fear," she continued, with trembling lip, "she will suffer much; but to me a certainty of his death is better than a continued and wearing apprehension of evil."

Just then the lady raised her head, and faintly whispered, "Roselle, for all I have accustomed myself to think of my poor boy as being in the grave, yet this news is a sore trial to me. Tell me, madam, where did he die, and how? where is my poor child buried?"

I related the story of his last hours, and the scene came up so vividly before me that I could not restrain my tears; I told her how touchingly he spoke of his mother—of his sister; how he commended them to God, and wished in vain that he might once more behold them. I described his narrow studio, with the pale glory of the setting sun streaming over his pillow, and his little creations of art. I did not forget to say that my husband soothed his dying moments and caught his last faint whisper, nor that he had bequeathed the pretty flower-girl to me as a memento of his gratitude. I pictured him lying there, with his glossy, uncurled locks floating across the transparency of his high, white brow. I told her how beautiful he looked, with his

large, dreamy eyes turned toward me, as he told me of his sister's loveliness; his sister away in a foreign land, who little knew that the brother she idolized was dying.

They listened almost calmly; and when I had ended, the mother bowed her head upon her hands, and that she felt deeply I could see by the trembling of her frame.

"My brother had a luxurious home," at last said the sister, with some exertion, gaining command of her voice. "He was always a worshiper of art from his childhood. But he formed an attachment for a very poor flower-girl, one of the lowest orders of our citizens. This statue is intended to personate her. How she fascinated him I can not tell. She was not uncommonly beautiful; but he loved her, and he was honorable. My mother would not consent to the marriage, and he would not wed without her approbation, having an almost superstitious reverence for her word. He depended upon her, also, for his fortune, which she threatened to withhold if he willfully dishonored himself by such a connection.

"The result was, that in a fit of anger he resolved to leave us—to leave the country; and though we did not believe he would ever put his threat into execution, the event has proved sadly otherwise. My poor, poor brother! He lived, doubtless, in poverty; for I know him. He was too proud to solicit the smallest favor from us. We received a letter from him, which, according to your account, must have been written some days before he died. In it he says he has adopted America for his home, speaks of his health as being frail, implores the forgiveness of his mother and myself,

calls upon God to bless us both, and begs us to cherish the little statue of the flower-girl which he left behind." Again overcome, the young lady wept bitterly for a few minutes.

"We came almost immediately here," she continued, after a pause, "and we have been striving for years to find some trace of my dear brother. We have long thought him dead, and oh! it will be such a comfort to weep over his grave."

I know not when I have held so painful, and yet so interesting an interview. At our parting, the old lady caught both my hands in hers, and thanked me again and again, saying, "I shall love the memory of your face, for you saw my boy when he was dying. God forever bless you!" I accompanied them to the carriage, and with saddened feelings returned to the house.

A GOOD CONCLUSION.

This morning Lizzy Waugh came flying into my room, exclaiming, "Oh! I have such news to tell!" Of course, I was as curious as any woman could be; and as she is not at all inclined to teaze, she gave me a short and concise story.

"I was at my cousins' last night. You remember I introduced them to you at the strawberry party. Don't you recollect I told you of Mariette's engagement? Well, on Monday she was to have married the colonel. Poor thing! tears have been her meat and drink for weeks. She was in her chamber; so I hurried directly up there, and found her mute and passionless as an image.

"'They will *force* me to marry him!' she exclaimed, flinging her arms around my neck. 'This evening I am to ask him, formally, to cancel the engagement; but don't you suppose, cousin Lizzy, he has received his instructions? I have promised to abide by his decision; and it is only the thought that he *may* be magnanimous that gives me any composure at all. Lizzy, I'll tell you what I'll do: I'll kill myself rather than marry that man.'

"I knew she was not aware what she said. My blood ran cold. You know what a magnificent person she has. Well, as she stood there, bearing herself so proudly, her lips and cheeks bloodless, her black eyes flashing, I felt half afraid of her myself; I thought, perhaps,

she may be going mad. I shuddered, and tried to soothe her; but at every chance of hope which I brought forward she only shook her head and curled her lip.

"'Perhaps,' said I, '*he* may come unexpectedly—'

"'No!'—you can't think how curt and thrilling that no came; it closed my sentence instanter—'no, he will not. He was to be gone two years. Eighteen months only have passed. Cousin Lizzy,' she added, with startling emphasis, 'do you stay in the parlor to-night—I request it—as a witness; father and mother will be here'—her voice fell from its high, cold tone. 'You will, won't you?'

"At times my influence over her is very great; I thought it better to comply with her request. So, after supper, when I went in, cousin and the English colonel were already together. You would have trembled as I did when the scene began. I never shall forget how her appearance changed when she preferred her request. I could only think of a tamed eagle.

"There was the shrinking of a cowardly spirit in the manner of his answer. It was a denial.

"'Then,' said Mariette, drawing her form to a still more positive queenliness of stature, 'I call my father and my mother, and you, Lizzy Waugh, to witness my words, that before I will be a bride to yonder gilded craven, I will scoop out my own grave; *I will not* be treated as a helpless child'—she shrieked this in an unnatural tone—'as an idiot—a fool! I am a woman, and have rights. You can not force me to marry him; I defy you all.'

"I certainly thought she would rush past the colonel; I actually put forth my hands to stay her impetuosity, when suddenly she cowered, drooping, drooping almost

to the floor, and turning deathly pale. At last I heard it; it was a step on the stair; the door was flung wide, and between the gloom of the passage and the brilliancy of the parlor, stood a young, strange-looking man, in the very roughest sailor's garb. Wouldn't it have done you good, as it did me, to see her spring, leap toward him, and almost sink in his arms! Why! I could have shouted huzza like the veriest enthusiast at a political gathering.

"Aunt and uncle looked at each other, with what kind of an expression shall I say? just a blending of that a thwarted lion and a foiled fox might be supposed to assume on the failure of their darling plans. For myself, I was not the tame Lizzy at that moment, I assure you; and the colonel—his appearance was most positively undefinable; he looked at the last like a man who is uncertain which of two cross-roads to choose. He didn't know whether to go or stay.

"There was no helping it. Mariette is of age on Monday; she chooses the portion of the portionless, if I may so speak. Her father will no doubt disinherit her. But infinitely better so; the wife of a poor Christian, humble though she be, is richer than the most exalted unbeliever; and the gilded throne of infidelity is that to which this foreign colonel pays his most assiduous devoirs.

"But the strangest of all is to come. What think you sent Alfred home? Why! a dream; and, if I was inclined that way, I should think there was something supernatural in it. He dreamed three times that Mariette was married. He saw her at the altar—a white, long bridal veil over her face, but—horrible! the ghastly luridness of a corpse gleaming through! from the

wreath in her hair issuing snakes! and the bridal ring, given her by one he thought infernal, was a faint circlet of living fire! A voice said to him, 'Behold, and save her!' while at the same time two soft arms, that he felt must be Mariette's, encircled his neck.

"It so affected him, and, coupled with sundry strange incidents, that he now took the hue of discouragement, as he remembered them—seemed so unmistakably a warning—that he resolved, at a great loss, to return home, and return he did; in time, I feel assured, to avert some dreadful catastrophe.

"Now, don't you feel glad all this has happened? Is it not singular how God's providence works toward and for our good? It brought to mind the whole of the old hymn that I repeated so often when a child,

'God moves in a mysterious way;'

and especially the majestic verse,

'Blind unbelief is sure to err,
And scan his works in vain,
God is his own interpreter,
And He will make it plain.'"

THE DISAPPOINTMENT.

Is it a perverseness of our nature that causes us, in the midst of our blessings, and when we are almost too happy, to fancy somewhere near us dark clouds, that shall burst in gloom on our heads?

In excess of sorrow we seldom look for joy; in excess of joy the mind somehow realizes that happiness is not the boon of earth, else should we be too much wedded to the world. Still it is good to feel thus, for in the conviction a silent strength lies imbedded, a strength both to bear and resist the reverses that may befall us. For years there has been such a calm, domestic quiet about my hearth, such prosperity in our lot, that life seems like a wide ocean lying smiling and motionless in the glad light of the sun.

This evening the harvest moon silvers the hill tops while I write, the cricket on the hearth sings a slumberous music, the hum of evening insects, reveling in their wide halls, whose corridors are lighted by the firefly's lamp, soothes me to a delicious quiet of mind and body. A letter before me, written by Professor Treutham, a friend of early days, speaks in unmeasured terms of praise concerning Herbert's collegiate course; he will graduate, probably, with high honors. The professor says, "Persuade him from this singular idea of preaching.

"His talents are too brilliant to be hidden between the four walls of some country church—not but that

his eminent virtues and rare qualities might lead him to popularity, and even fame in that line; but promotion from such a source is slow. He has unmistakable abilities for the profession of the law, and he seems to feel this; yet struggles between a sense of duty and a passion for controversy.

"I confess I am astonished to find his dictates of conscience leading that way, for there is every chance of greatness, wealth, and position on the side of the law. I predict for him, as a lawyer, a bright career; certainly, a seat in the national Congress at an early period.

"That he has some little predilection for the law, I am certain from the ease and seeming relish with which he argues questions of moment in the mock assemblies of our students. I confess he surprises me, and I regret that the bar should lose such an advocate, and the profession such an ornament.

"Can you not advise him? I speak to you as an old friend; you have reason to be proud of the young man, not only on account of his talents, but the devoted affection and high respect he bears for yourself. I am confident that no one else could turn him aside from what he has seemingly set his heart upon. In the hurry and excitement of the world, he will soon forget his preference, or remember it as a foolish fancy, and from his excessively moral, not to say Christian view of things. His habits are most unexceptionable—he is upright in every sense of the word.

"Will you try to divert his mind from this channel? You see on which side are the greatest benefits. He has confessed to me, some time ago, that he had scruples about indulging his inclination, as you was so averse

to his studying for the ministry; but lately he says that you seem better pleased with his course."

I wish with all my heart that I knew what to do in this matter. I had rather Herbert would turn to the law; but then to break off from his present studies would seem inconsistent. I confess my pride rises up against the vision of a little country church, with an audience that perhaps can not appreciate his genius.

And then, on the other hand, I behold him standing before thousands, thought sparkling in his eye, gems falling from his lips, applause, favor, adulation, surrounding and following him. I have always wanted him to be a lawyer, so has his father, though he is not as anxious as I am. I believe I will try to change his resolution.

Husband told me this noon that the Italian mother and daughter are coming out here to-morrow. They have taken a beautiful house in the city, and the younger lady has found favor in the eyes of Mr. Hawthorn, my husband's partner, who has long been thought a hopeless case in bachelordom. Well! she is really beautiful, and, I judge, good. I hope it will result in a marriage, for Mr. Hawthorn will make an admirable husband.

I hear voices; Alice is coming from the social circle, and, as usual, young Waugh accompanies her. Alice will be happy if she should ever become the wife of that young man; but she seems scarcely more than a child now.

The house is alive with mirth and merriment. Betty, her rosy cheeks rosier than ever, her eyes sparkling with joy, goes dancing round, "dying with impatience," as she expresses it, to behold "the darling Master Herbert," who is to be at home to-morrow.

The dear boy has acceded to my wish, and chosen his lot in life according to my desires; though I can see, by the very tone of his letter, that it will be a sacrifice. But then, as the professor says, in the bustle of the world, and the triumphs which are sure to await him, he will forget that he has ever fancied otherwise. We are to give him a party, the first one we have made for years, and I have been busy all day, first with the pastry, which custom will make necessary, then with the arrangement of the rooms, for the decoration of which Alice sits near me, busily sorting the flowers which Henry has brought from his father's conservatory.

The first snow has fallen to-day, and its light drifts hang along the naked branches like white webs of spray; to me it is very beautiful. And then, to turn my glance in upon this comfortable room, with the glowing, warm fire, to gaze upon my beautiful girl, so busily tying together the bright buds and roses that fill the sense with June fragrance, while Henry Waugh sits laughing by her side, clipping off the long stems and arranging the flowers upon the table, is a luxury that fills my whole soul with gladness. I trust I do not rate the accomplishments and attractions of dear Alice too highly; but how exquisite are the delicate paintings from her own little hands, that hang against the walls; husband is proud of them; he has been a little extravagant in framing them, I must say, but he so delights to look at them; I believe he never enters the room without walking the round and admiring them again and again. Alice has a sweet, low brow, perfectly clear; and dazzling, yet pure-looking dark eyes, while her soft hair, which she will braid, waves thickly back from her forehead.

There is but one thing which troubles me with regard to Alice; she is too easily influenced by the opinions of others—she is sadly deficient in strength of will; but, by my constant exertions, I trust she may improve in these respects. Henry Waugh is not handsome, and yet sometimes I think his face beautiful. He is rather coarse-featured, but has a magnificent forehead, wide and towering. He, too, is to study law, and his parents place great dependence upon him. He is their only son.

Never saw I such devotion to a human being in one so young as he displays toward Alice. He seems to hang on her every word, trifling as it may be, and the reverence with which he touches her hand would be amusing, did not true and pure feeling throw a sacredness around it, a charm that makes it too holy for mockery. That he loves Alice with all the strength of his soul, child though she is, he can not hide from a mother's eye.

And I love him next to my own son—he is so angel-like, if I may apply the term to a man; there appears to belong to him none of earth. Even in his childhood, his mother tells me that although, like other children, subject to waywardness, he would repent so ingenuously after every fault, and exercise such maturity of judgment in correcting himself, that she feared the realization of the old adage, "The good die young," and held him to her heart by a slight tenure. And so he is now the pattern of a dutiful child.

Will he escape the contagion of college example through all his course of studies? Will Alice, on her further introduction in society, still cherish that for him which I would fain call love—which seems, in-

deed, to be a daily strengthening affection? My Herbert is safe so far as he is pledged against wine. From his seventh year I have taught him to abhor it; but still, fearing his own resolution was not strong enough to "root and ground him in the truth," at my earnest solicitation he attended a temperance celebration, and signed his name to the pledge. He seems to exercise a good control over this dear friend of his; but daily does Judge Waugh place before his family the choicest wines from his cellar, and I tremble at the idea that this youth may be led into the excesses practiced by so many young men.

In a recent letter, Herbert says, "I am persuaded that one reason why so many promising students make but indifferent men, who have the brightest talents, and, in some cases, most brilliant genius, is the dreadful habit they contract at home. Most of them are wine-bibbers. Sometimes, when wit and humor rule the hour, the flushed faces and bright, restless eyes of our finest young men proclaim that the wine-cup rules them. Dear mother, I thank you for your earnest advice. They laugh at me here, and perpetrate biting sarcasms; but they fall harmlessly, and often rebound most ungracefully on themselves.

"I am proud that my name is enrolled among the pledged and true, and never will I disgrace the Father by writing on the tablet of the mind he has given characters so foul that rivers of grief can not wash them away."

Dear Herbert! as I read his letters I can see his sparkling eyes before me; I can feel the soft pressure of his hand.

How wonderful the mysterious sympathy that binds

heart to heart, though a wide void of space, a chasm of countless miles may intervene! What is this affinity so closely connecting and so far extending?—this circle, that, like the span of two hands, can unite hearts that, bodily speaking, are at antipodes?

It is like a golden mesh-work, elastic in nature as delicate in fabric; it can widen and extend over the Atlantic Ocean, over the Pacific; it will expand from the shores of America to the forests of India, from the sunny lands of the South away to the Greenland ice and the Arctic Seas. Is it not sometimes as if the absent-loved were very near? We speak to vacancy, but surely a voice falls upon our spirits; and though in far wilds they may be sojourning, we almost feel as if the outstretching of the hands would call forth a responsive touch, and the smile awakened by some sweet memory elicit an answering smile. It is very strange, very beautiful, and sometimes awful to the comprehension of the limited sense, this affinity of souls—one of those incomprehensible things which gives to the too sensitive and vivid imagination that constant though shadowy impress of the unreal, clothing singular fancies in fantastic garbs, and making the wildest hallucinations seem the tangible embodiments of some odd superstition.

But my pen is getting too sentimental.

Henry does not intend, then, to be present to-morrow evening. He has just informed Alice that his father expects to go to New York in the morning, and he will accompany him. He tells her that a Charles Brechman will take his place, and probably come home with Herbert. I am sorry Henry is to be absent. How highly he commends this Brechman, how readily he

praises his beauty, and hopes Alice will like him—for his sake, he half whispered. And Alice looks up with such glowing cheeks.

Henry Waugh has just left the house. He goes with his father to New York, to stay a week. Alice is very sad about it, and declares she shall not enjoy herself at all to-night. She even wept a little; but, noticing my glance, smiles came mingling with her blushes. Betty has been, with duster in hand, all over the house a dozen times, I verily believe. First she swept the parlor out, then carefully cleansing the broom, to work she went again, diving into every discernible corner; and at last, not contented, she took a very clean new cloth, and, getting down upon her hands and knees, wiped the carpet as carefully as if it had been marble. I told her she need not be quite so particular, as on ordinary days I had nothing to complain of on the score of neatness and cleanliness. She was delighted at my commendation, as she always is, and said, "Indade, but she should feel better to have the house claner than clane, if it could be!"

I have been arranging the vases, and placing the delicate, blooming flowers in them; and now they are marshaled on the mantle-piece and table, ready for the supper. Hark! what noise is that? Betty has let something fall. I hear voices; and hither comes Alice, her cheeks crimson, and the tears in her eyes. I must go to her.

Poor Alice! it is a great trouble for her. The cause of the disturbance was this: For weeks the poor child has been engaged on a very elaborate piece of mosswork, in which she has shown much ingenuity. It was a representation of "the Children in the Woods;"

and, after its completion, her father purchased a beautiful frame of glass in which to exhibit it to most advantage. It is ruined. Betty, for the first time, has been careless. She lifted it, to remove it to the little round table; and striking her foot accidentally, down went the whole fabric, and there it lies, demolished.

I was no less pleased than astonished at Alice's self-control; for when she went into the parlor with me, I expected to see her give way to her angry impulses, as she often has. At first she stood perfectly speechless, the color mounting to her forehead; then she exclaimed, "I *should think*, Betty—" But the poor, faithful creature presented such a picture of misery, that she instantly added, "There, don't be frightened, Betty; it's a bad accident, but it can't be helped now. Don't cry, Betty; it won't take me long to make another." And by this time her cheerful face had returned, and she was my own Alice again. I can not tell how delighted I was at this new triumph, and I know my happiness was visible. Betty sobbed anew as she gathered the fragments together, declaring that surely the time was unlucky, and she would rather it had happened on any day but this.

How gray the atmosphere is! Almost every vestige of autumn has gone. Yesterday, as I was coming from a neighbor's, I saw, calmly descending in the clear atmosphere, two oak leaves. But the sere winds of winter had stolen their freshness. Crumpled, yellow, and withered, they came slowly downward, as if wearied of their little life, and longing to lie together and be forgotten, mingled with the soil beneath the feet of the traveler.

Dead oak leaves! they have had their youth when

dainty veins mingled with the delicate fibres on their smooth texture; they have been refreshed with the wooing zephyrs of the bright spring-time; they have dallied with the spray of the rain-drop, as the warm south wind broke it into pearls to scatter upon them; they have passed their prime, are old and decayed; for through their very hearts the worm has threaded his way, and left his corroded and slimy paths behind him, and they are ready for the death.

So go an aged couple to the tomb. The instance but rarely occurs where a man and wife, who

> "Have shared each other's pleasures,
> Have felt each other's woes,"

lie down hand in hand when the march of life has ended. Yet there have been such, in which the gray-haired patriarch and the meek-eyed dame have murmured their last petition in the same breath, and in the same moment entered the glories of their everlasting home. I thought of this when the faded leaves fell in my path yesterday, and a silent prayer found echo in my heart, that if I lived to be old and decrepit, I might sail as calmly down the river of death as those blighted children of the forest were wafted to their common grave.

THE PARTY.

HERBERT has arrived. He came just before the dinner hour. He is *so* much improved! Every time he visits home, I fancy I see some new perfection. I can not press him to my heart as I used to when he was a little fellow full of glee. He is such a tall, reserved, yet elegant young man now, I have considerable respect for him. He brought Charles Brechman, Henry Waugh's particular friend, with him. He is of German parentage, but a very model of manly beauty.

Next to Herbert—mothers are always partial—I never saw so handsome a man. His eyes shade from a deep blue to an intense black. He affects a style very peculiar—that of wearing his hair in long, thick ringlets, so that they almost touch his shoulders. Herbert says he is a great student—quick, nervous, and irascible; but I should think him to be one of the calmest of his phlegmatic race; and his smile has even a quiet, touching sadness in it, that is somewhat captivating. I just caught myself thinking what a nice companion he would be for Julia Waugh.

Do I fancy it, or is there an abstraction about my dear boy? Even now, as Alice is talking so lovingly to him, with one arm around his neck, and while he is replying to her fond questions, he seems to be gazing inwardly, and thinking of far-away scenes; for there is a cold look in his dark eye that grows painful to my sight, and at times there is a flush around the edge of

what seems a marble, almost deathly whiteness. What can it portend?

I am glad he is here; I am glad his friend is here. Alice will enjoy herself much better than she expected without Henry.

The festive scene is over. It was a merry time. Mrs. Leston, with her beautiful daughters, richly dressed, yet with an almost severe simplicity of style, were among the finest groups present.

Julia Waugh did, indeed, look magnificent in her robe of purple velvet—rather aristocratic for an humble country festival; but as many of husband's friends came out from the city, I suppose they thought they must fall in with city customs, and perhaps I may add extravagances. How often corrupted fashion finds its way from its city temples to the most rural haunt: and well is it if it does not poison the pure fountains of simple pleasures by its mere reflection upon their surface.

The Italian lady, now wedded to my husband's partner, was the life of her circle. How her expressive black eyes flashed while she was speaking; and how beautifully the fragments of our fine English, when she could not master some difficult word, fell from her lips. I can not wonder that her husband is all devotion to her; and I was told yesterday that a large fortune, for some years contested, is soon to revert to her. I am glad of it; she is a noble creature; even now she never can speak of her dead brother without tears. By-the-way, she has had designed a beautiful monument, which she intends erecting to his memory. It is to be of clear, white marble, and will represent him standing, chisel in hand, leaning on a block half sculptured into the semblance of Fame, with her wreath of laurel.

He has chiseled the figure to just beneath the chest, when Death, who stands ready, levels his fatal arrow toward him. It is a most expressive and elegant design; and when she comes into possession of her fortune, no doubt the work will be accomplished.

What have I neglected to say? Ah! my boy, my Herbert. He was unusually animated; so much so, that, Heaven help me, had I not been certain of his integrity, I might have suspected that he had been drinking wine. His cheeks were sometimes scarlet, sometimes deadly pale; his eyes painfully brilliant. What it was, I know not; but I felt a dull pain at my heart when I noticed how unnatural was his manner. Young Brechman did not take kindly to Julia Waugh, but kept constantly near my Alice. How pure and sweet she looked last night. I did not half like his extreme attention, nor her evident pleasure; and here he comes with Herbert.

Still, that strange excitement in my child. I can not account for it. I must talk with him. He has just spoken severely to Willy, and the poor child turns with tears in his eyes. Now, how hurriedly he walks, grasping the arm of young Brechman. Alice meets them. Brechman speaks, bending his head; and Alice blushes, but smiles. Why this undefinable dread of coming evil?

Here is a letter from Milly:

"Our boy is such a perfect little creature," I must laugh over the rhapsodies of the young mother. Every baby is the most angelic that ever was born. But, seriously, I don't doubt that it *is* pretty, having such very handsome parents.

How contented Milly is with her home, her hus-

band, her people, and last, but not least, her dear little baby.

Poor Miss Susan is dead! She has bequeathed me her—receipt-book. Dear Miss Susan! an honest soul has gone to its God—she must be happy in heaven with her Willy.

THE SICK BOY.

YESTERDAY mirth, to-day sorrow in the house. Yesterday, when I had just finished writing, Herbert came in with his friend, and sat down with Alice. He was pale and haggard, and frequently passed his hand over his forehead. Suddenly he sprang from his seat, called for water, and, attempting to walk, fell senseless on the floor. Oh! that moment of agony! I thought my child was dead; oh! the unutterable anguish of that moment! I know not what I did; I was frantic! They laid him upon his bed, in the room where Clara died, and hurried away for assistance. As for me, I could only chafe his hands and weep, while my heart was heavier than lead in my bosom.

My poor boy lies very ill. I have watched him all night. The doctor fears brain fever; pray Heaven not that. He is now in a restless slumber; his face is flushed hotly, and the deep crimson spots make my eyes ache to look upon them. Have I made him an idol, my Father, and art thou about to call him hence forever in thy inscrutable wisdom? I know not how I *may* feel, but now—oh! I can not, I *can not* submit!

Was there ever a nobler youth, one more lovely, more loved? How beautiful his features! how perfectly formed his commanding brow, that, as the silken rolls of hair are thrown heavily back, gleams in all its broad outline through the gloom of this darkened room like polished marble. My heart grows sick as I gaze and

think how many like him, as commanding in beauty, as exalted in mind, have trodden thus young the valley of shadows—even to death. The doctor has just called. It is the second time to-day.

The clouds lie heavily on the tops of the hills, the wind moans and shrieks, and rattles the long branches against the roof. It has been snowing heavily—it hails now. From that strange stupor, dear Herbert has not yet been aroused. Charles Brechman leans upon his bedside, gazing mournfully, and sometimes with starting tears upon his face. Alice, with quivering lip, is watching the dim face of the old clock; husband has gone into another room to consult with the physician; and I—why do I write? My old fears, my old trembling, heart-burns, and throbbing pulses, have again attacked me. I can not leave the room; still, mind and hand must be occupied, or else, it seems to me, I can not command my faculties or control my nerves. My trust is in a good, omnipotent God.

The wind shrieks more fitfully; still, this awful stupor, to be succeeded, perhaps, by insanity or death. His face looks ghastly, corpse-like, in this funereal light. The good old doctor, with grief upon his face, is bending over his pillow; his father is almost unmanned. Why am I calm? God has given me strength equal to my day. I hear soft footsteps. Alice is up; Julia Waugh is here with the poor girl; the children sleep unconsciously, though they went to bed weeping; and young Brechman lies upon the sofa. We can not prevail upon him to leave the room. The gusty sighs of the sobbing wind find mournful response in my soul; the sharp click of the hailstones; the short gasping breath of my dear one; the clear monotonous tick, tick

of the old clock alternately pain my ear. Oh! at such a time as this, how confined in the very centre, secret being of the soul, is all expression! What words will clothe its intensity of feeling? Every sense is locked up within it, every nerve quickened, till a mere thought will set them all vibrating with anguish or with joy.

I can spare but a moment. My boy is raving. What have I done? Intense mental anxiety is the cause of all this suffering. "Mother, I must be God's messenger; mother, I *must* be God's messenger. Do not stand between me and heaven." Thus he unconsciously rebukes me. It is a bitter cup, but I have myself prepared it. I must drink it—God forbid, to the dregs.

Surely this is a house of affliction! Tears are our food from hour to hour. I knew not what I possessed—I knew not the worth of this treasure God has given unto me. Herbert has just now a lucid interval, but so weak—so weak, dear lamb. We do not expect it to continue long. The physician will let him see no one; I am banished from his sight. It is very hard; mother, *you* alone know how hard.

My brain reels when I think of his upbraiding last night. How has the dear child kept all these feelings pent up in his bosom, out of filial regard to me! Last night he called wildly upon the teacher, now lying in her narrow grave—bade her not look so coldly upon him, that he *would* preach Christ with his dying breath.

Never would I dare do again as I have done. Farewell, earthly pride! By the bedside of the dying you reveal your emptiness! Oh! for his life, only for his life! He might preach in the humblest barn of the meanest village; he might carry with him all the

splendor of his talents to the forest wild, and teach the untutored savage. Only for his life, Father! He might cross oceans, and spend that precious life among the heathen in benighted nations. Only for life—ay! my soul says life without reason, though hope be a blank, and memory swept away forever into the tide of the past—only for life, for life!

IDA GREY.

I AM calm now. I have thought of it so long, contemplated it so constantly, death appals me not as it did. I have been sitting by his side all day. At times he knew me, though he had little strength, and has been unable to converse much. The doctor says *there is no hope.* I laid my pen down and read over those agonizing words till my brain was bewildered. *No hope!* Merciful God, dost Thou love me so well that Thou sendest me this affliction? Do I need so sore chastening? Then surely Thou wilt give me grace and strength.

Alice stood near her brother this morning. Julia Waugh—alas! *now* I write that dear name with pain—she, too, with her hand clasped tightly in that of my daughter, leaned tremblingly forward to catch a glimpse of the dear sufferer, and then, half choked with sobs, crept slowly toward the window. All at once he spoke.

"Mother," he murmured, "send for Ida—my Ida; I must see her once more!"

On my inquiring who she was, and where we must send, he whispered, "It is Ida Grey, the sexton's daughter; she is in L——. You *must* send for her. Tell her it is my dying request; she will come."

I dared not say any thing further, though lost in astonishment. Alice sprang quickly toward Julia Waugh; she was insensible—she had fainted. Poor girl! how sad to make such revelations—too late!

We are hourly expecting this Ida Grey. I have learned since that she is a very poor, amiable, and pretty girl. Once I would have remonstrated against such an intimacy; but what matters it now? Every few moments I steal to Herbert's bedside; his father, heart-striken and haggard, watches for the first signs of that mysterious change.

"Ah! ma'am," said Betty just now, "it's hard, it is, to be working about and working about, and knowing that sweet young master is so near his end—it must be so good to be with him; and oh! if I feel so bad, how must the mother of him feel?" and throwing her apron over her face, the poor creature sobbed aloud. In sorrow, as in the grave, there is no distinction of persons. I mingled my tears with hers; and though my heart felt almost as if it was broken, yet it was strangely comforted by the sympathy of my faithful girl.

Hark! there is an arrival. Oh! my son, my son! would to God I could die for thee, my son.

At noon, yesterday, Ida Grey arrived. I kissed her as I met her on the threshold, for was she not beloved by my dying son? She is very small, and her face is not beautiful, but full of character. Her cheeks and forehead were very, very pale, even rivaling his; but in her blue eyes were no tears. I felt her hand tremble in mine as I led her through the door of Herbert's chamber, and how cold it was! We drew near the bed. He slept. She stood there gazing intently upon him, and then, closing her eyes, her lips moved visibly. I knew, I felt, by the awe of that moment, that she was at prayer. There is something holy about that young creature. I feel impressed with a sense of her

goodness. Where Herbert first saw her, how he became acquainted with her, I do not yet know.

In an hour Herbert awoke. He gazed anxiously around, and when his eyes rested upon hers, he smiled, oh! so happily. He could not speak, but motioned her to come nearer; and then, moving his head toward her, laid languidly watching her every movement. I saw with what a terrible effort she repressed her tears, kept down her grief, and my very soul blessed her for her self-control. Sobs and sighs then might only have hurried the poor boy's spirit from its frail tenement.

Alice and Julia have gone together to Judge Waugh's. Poor Julia!

As evening drew near, our fears increased. Every nerve was stretched to its utmost tension; every thought and agony, every motion, caused a thrill through the whole frame. Herbert seemed in a stupor; he moved not; and once or twice I thought his glance was fixed, *as it would be when the light had fled from its tabernacle forever.* The physician came. I watched him with all a mother's anguish.

"Life or death! which is it, doctor, life or death?" my heart kept saying, and every pulsation repeated the momentous question. I noticed the firmer pressure of that good old man's lips, that upward sweeping glance of his, with which terror is associated; *for I have seen it only over the pillows of the death-doomed.*

"What may I expect?" I whispered.

"The crisis!" said he, with pointed finger, as if not heeding my question, and he looked up at the clock. It wanted five minutes of eight.

"Two, three, four hours will decide," he murmured, and then he peered down closely into the face of the

sufferer, placed his hands upon his forehead, and softly raised the almost pulseless wrist.

"How?" asked my husband in a whisper, joining him. He seemed to know not, or else feared what to ask.

The old man turned away, drew up a chair, and while he took the moist glasses from his eyes, he said, tremulously and slowly, "*Expect the worst!*"

And so we sat there expecting the worst. Each time I looked toward him a deathly faintness came over me; I trembled from head to foot. The silence grew intolerable; my heart refused even to pray; my senses seemed benumbed; icy chills came over me from head to foot. Let those sympathize with me who, with suspended breath, and eyeballs almost cracking with the strong, straining glance, have stood over the bed of the dearly-loved and dying.

Nine, ten passed. The silence was as the silence of the tomb. I never felt before how noiseless Time's footfalls are; my heart failed me; there was surely a blue tinge creeping around his pale lips, and then a wild prayer went up from my soul to God, "Spare him, spare him!" How could I think of parting with him now? now, when he had grown to manhood—just entered upon his glorious race; with every prospect of wealth, honor, fame even, before him—oh! I could not, *could* not drink deeper of the bitter cup. And still time passed, and the long minute-hand pointed to six, and the hour-hand—it seemed like a death-shaft—was stealthily journeying toward twelve; a dimness came over me; I gasped for breath, and, moving my seat to the window, looked up into the clear face of heaven, as if I might gather strength from its calm majesty.

Groaning in spirit, I strove to feel "Thy will be done, Father!" and I believe I had brought myself to rest upon His judgment and mercy, when suddenly a bright light struck out over all the wide landscape; the icicles glittered; a pale glory illumined the snow; the trees, in the language of holy writ, seemed to clap their hands; the stars grew twice as large, and shot forth an intense white brilliancy; the sky deepened into a clear, luminous, radiant blue; and then a low voice fell upon my ear—"He is out of danger!"

The excitement, the reaction, were too much for me; I fainted, and laid for nearly an hour insensible.

Yesterday was the brightest and happiest Sabbath I ever passed. Herbert is very weak, but recovering, thank God! Little Ida—and a darling creature she is, all light and sunshine now—still keeps her watch by his bedside. She has told me how she became acquainted with my Herbert; but, strange to say, a word of love has never passed between them; yet I see how it will all end. I read it in her eloquent blushes, his soul-full tenderness. I am drawn irresistibly toward her.

The invalid has arisen from his couch of pain for the first time. To-day he obtained his father's and my consent; he will prepare for the ministry. Ida is poor in this world's goods, her connections are all humble; but I am more and more persuaded she is a pearl of great price.

Julia Waugh was here a few hours ago. Poor girl, she is altered! In attempting to congratulate me on the recovery of Herbert, she burst into tears. I folded her to my bosom, and could not repress the wish that she had been Herbert's choice.

Young Brechman is too much with Alice. Henry Waugh is expected soon. I do not like this intimacy; I do not fancy Brechman, though from my soul I thank him for his devotion to Herbert. Ida has returned home.

Alice has just brought me a letter—from the young man. It is as I feared; he has told her how dear she has become to him; oh! surely, surely she must have encouraged him, or he never would have done thus. I looked the reproof, the anguish I could not express, and Alice, confused and trembling, sat by my side with her head bowed.

"Is this his first letter?" I asked, gravely.

"No, mother," was the reply, as her head fell upon my shoulder.

"And is it possible? has a correspondence of this kind been carried on beneath the roof of my own house, and by my Alice, the child in whom I have reposed so much confidence?"

"Oh! mother, don't reproach me," was her reply; "it has all been very, very wrong, but indeed this is his first letter of *this* kind," she added, nervously.

"Poor Henry!" the words came involuntarily from my lips; and Alice uttered a slight, smothered expression of grief.

"Have you been so guilty, my child, as thus to encourage two hearts with hopes which must prove false to one? Oh! Alice, do you know, do you once think how despicable a sin you have thus committed?"

"I did not mean to do harm; I did not think—" she sobbed.

"Alice," said I, solemnly, "Henry Waugh is no common man; beneath that plain exterior beats a heart

that can in life know no change; the object of his love, even though unworthy, would still be cherished. I never knew but one such, and he, all strong, mighty in intellect, proud and unapproachable by common minds though he was, died of a broken heart. Alice, my own brother died of a broken heart, my only brother; and nobody but myself, then scarcely more than a child, knew it. He loved a beautiful girl in the village where we were born—was engaged to be married—traveled for a few months with my uncle, and, while gone, an adventurer, with a showy face and senseless prattle, usurped his place. When my Harry—his name was Henry, too—came back, he learned the sad news only too soon. He used honorable means to win her again, thinking it might be but a passing fancy. It was in vain; she married, and thenceforth I never knew my brother to smile till his death. No one imagined, while his pale brow seemed to grow loftier and his stature more commanding day by day, how great was the struggle that momentarily threatened his frail being with dissolution. Oh! I have seen him, when he knew no one was near, throw down the book on which his eyes were riveted, and, dashing the long black hair from his forehead, seem for a moment frenzied with the pangs of recollection; then, kneeling on the ground, he would cry—and it seemed almost a fierce invocation—'Help me, oh! my God—help me!'

"One morning early, I was called into his chamber by strange sounds—by shrieks and lamentations; I remember it as if it were yesterday. He laid there dead; noble, beautiful still, in death; his *right hand pressed rigidly over his heart.* That heart, Alice, was broken; I know it was; and who think you, my daughter, was

the murderer of my brave, unhappy brother? It was she who before her Maker led him to believe that her love should be the bright star of his life, the incentive to great and high aims, and then coldly making a wreath of her blighted promises, laid it in mockery upon his brow.

"Oh Alice, bring not her reproach upon your own conscience, my dear girl. It is a solemn thing to feel that you have darkened the whole pathway of a trusting spirit, that you have strewn it with the great and awful wreck of a broken vow; think before you do this, my child—take this letter, go by yourself, answer it as your own true, pure soul shall dictate; but forget not what I have just told you; it has never been breathed to another human being; and remember that your intimacy with Henry has been, not for a few short days, but for years."

Pale and agitated, Alice left the room.

Alice, my own noble Alice, has not disappointed me; she has acted worthy of her pure and loving heart. I think I suffered as intensely as herself at the time that I conversed with her about the letter; I felt all the emotions of her wounded spirit through sympathy, and could scarcely compose myself to go the round of my accustomed duties.

I often went to her door and listened, nervously suspecting that I had put her affection for me to a great test, that she must be weeping, agonizing—it were well if she were praying; it was very still. The tea-bell rang. We sat down, as usual, and for the first time with my dear Herbert at my right hand, so pale, so very pale, but so fair and soft, with such a dependent look in his noble face that won all my glances. It

seemed as if I wished constantly to fold my arms around him, and sit as sat Jesus with the beloved disciple, his head leaning upon my bosom, where it was cradled in infancy.

I do not idolize him. *Do* I idolize him? It is a fearful, fearful question. Whence this strong love but from God? Yet why this rapt, absorbing communion of my spirit with his! When away, my soul seems to fly out toward him, as *it should toward my Maker;* in my prayers have I even had schemes of ambition enter concerning him. When I have searched my thoughts, and the question has occurred, Which could you part with most easily? my heart has ached with acute pain as it traveled over the four sweet beings God has given me, and rested upon him, clung to him, agonized for his life, whispered, though it fain would have shut the eyes and ears of the spirit within, that it might be deaf and blind to its own decision, "Take all, but spare me him, my best-beloved son."

I fear I have worshiped, and I tremble when I feel that God has mercifully held back his hand from severing the golden chord—perhaps by his sweet forbearance to bring me back to him; and, if I repent not—

But I meant to speak of Alice. We were seated; my daughter did not make her appearance. Carry and Willy cried out, "Where is Ally?" and little Albert, who was impatiently fingering his toast, exclaimed, "She and Mr. Brechman are in pa's library."

"I thought Brechman had gone," said Herbert.

I started to my feet, regardless of my husband's surprise or Herbert's flitting color—for had not Brechman bidden us farewell that morning? What terrible thoughts will at some sudden bidding of impulse, al-

most hurl reason from her throne! I was nearly distracted, and flew over the entry through the parlor; there, on the threshold, I met Alice, her cheeks flushed, and her eyes red and heavy. She burst into tears, and hearing footsteps—for the children all had left the table—she begged me not to detain her, to let her go to her chamber alone. "I will tell you this evening, mother, I will tell you all. I have done what you wished me, mother—let me go. He is not there," she added, seeing the direction of my eye; "he has gone long ago; don't detain me now, mother."

I could not resist her agonizing appeal; I rested upon her integrity—I gazed after her slight form as she hurried up the stairs, and oh! how I wished that this first cup of sorrow might have passed from her lips!

Thus early to learn life's troubles, thus soon to feel life's thorns, while just grasping its roses. But it is a lesson no one can learn for her, it is the first mystery from which the curtain of the future has been lifted, the first link in the chain of real trouble, whose iron hitherto the blissful, confiding ignorance of youth has kept from entering the soul.

I excused Alice, and we again gathered around the evening meal, all thoughtful, and forbearing to question me. After tea was over, I hurried up to my daughter's chamber. There was no light; the moonbeams stole softly in. Alice was reclining upon the bed, her face hidden in her hands, but she moved not, spoke not.

She must have known I was present, yet she was still, and I, not wishing to force her confidence, stole softly from the room. An hour passed, and again I stood beside her. This time she was asleep, but the traces of suffering were visible upon her face.

I looked closely, and it sent a pang to my heart to see the faint line that sometimes corrugated her pure brow; "it is but a harbinger of many," was the sad reflection, like the first faint cloud shadowing the storm, that should blacken all the sky. My only consolation is, that calms come after great sorrows, and surely the more the heart is untried, the more crushing are its woes, for the first trouble is the hardest to bear.

ALICE'S CONFESSION.

She did not rest calmly; her eyes moved to and fro under the white lids; her lips were often tremulous; sighs disturbed her sleep. My poor dove, may the blessed Redeemer fill thee with his consolation!

I could not disturb her, and moved noiselessly to my study, and sat for an hour thinking. Father and Herbert were in the library, and I, uneasy, full of anxiety, had just resolved to join them, when a soft voice said, "Are you alone, mother?" and in another moment Alice was in my arms.

She did not weep now; and as I kissed her, and led her to the sofa, I whispered, "Reserve nothing from your mother, my child; she has a right to demand your most secret thoughts—she would probe the wounds only that she might heal them. Tell me, then, why Henry Brechman, when we thought him miles from here, should be in this house, in the library with you, in so clandestine a manner?"

"I will tell you all about it, mother," said Alice, in a low tone; "when I left you, I had resolved to answer Mr. Brechman's letter, as you suggested. I felt that I had unconsciously done very wrongly, very imprudently, and I determined to repair that wrong, that imprudence. I had just sat down to write, when Julia stole to my room with a note for me. Perhaps you did not know," continued the dear girl, in a faltering voice, "that Henry has been at home a week."

I was astonished, certainly, at this intelligence, but bade her go on.

"Julia kissed me, and then, looking very sad, put the note in my hand, and, though I urged her to stay, left me immediately.

"Mother, it was a letter from Henry, and here it is. Do not reproach me," she added, in a sorrowful tone; "after you have read it, please counsel me. Oh! I have been weak and foolish, but not wicked, mother; I hope you do not think I have been willfully wicked."

I read the note through hastily. It was written, no doubt, under great provocation and strong excitement. He knew all, but he reproached not; he argued kindly, though not calmly. It was a noble letter. He offered, for the sake of her happiness, to give up the dearest hope of his life—the hope that she might, in future years, become his wife. He spoke with pity and strong affection, yet in every line I saw the crushed heart bleeding, the strong man writhing. I could not forbear my tears as I gave it to Alice again. Her hand trembled.

"I was very much humbled by this, mother; for the first time I felt as if I deserved his contempt. I knew not what course to pursue, and determined that, as my resolve was formed with regard to Mr. Brechman's letter, I would answer that first. I found that my paper was all out, and went down into the library to get some more, when Mr. Brechman came by the window, and, seeing me, instantly entered. I could not think where he had been, nor his reason for returning, and he looked so pale and agitated that I was frightened. He told me that he had heard of the arrival of Henry; and then, mother, he talked so wildly

and incoherently, that I begged him to desist; but he would not. He used the most passionate language—oh! mother, most idolatrous. And then he spoke of Henry. He wronged him, mother. Had he never been more than an acquaintance, I could not have heard what he said tamely. Mother, I defended him; and then—oh! it was so frightful—*he* charged me with coquetry, duplicity, mother, and, seizing a book from the table that had been a gift from Henry, he tore it to fragments before my eyes. His face, so beautiful before, looked fiendish. I shuddered—I would have shrieked, but I had not the power. The foam came to his lips, the purple veins corded on his forehead, his eyes were bloodshot, staring, protruding; you can not think how dreadful it all was; but"—and she drew a long breath—"it is over, all over now. Oh! mother, how have I been undeceived!"

"And Henry?"

She blushed crimson, as she said, "Mother, I *have* wronged him; and when I think now of that letter, so exalted in sentiment, breathing so self-sacrificing a spirit—" her voice faltered, and the tears rained down her cheeks.

"You have learned now, my child, the difference between the love of a high, holy nature, and that of an impulsive, passionate character," I said. "Henry Waugh, with his plain exterior, possesses a soul as gentle and true as that of an innocent woman. In him you saw none of these rhapsodies. He never flattered you; he talked but little in your presence; he was often awkward, and stammered in his speech. His affection was a reverence of the immortal within you; the virtues he saw, I might say, he worshiped. Mr.

Brechman, on the contrary, was beautiful; his exterior was uncommonly prepossessing, his manners polished. He could whisper soft words in woman's ear, with a mien unaltered and a face unmoved. He was never awkward; he would watch to do every little favor, and his manner was more than graceful. He could flatter; his tongue was always ready, his attention unceasing. Such men as these, strange to say, win their way quickest to the heart, because they strike the fancy, and please self-love. But, my child, why this distress? Have I said what has wounded you? Alice, you frighten me by your manner."

"It is nothing, mother, nothing," she answered, faintly, throwing her hair back with an impatient motion.

STARTLING NEWS.

At that moment there was a quick knock at the door. It opened with a strange, jarring sound, and in rushed Julia, looking half wild. Off went her bonnet and shawl. She threw them upon the table; then, running up to Alice, she kissed her, without seeming to notice her agitation, and exclaimed, in a hurried, sharp voice, "Congratulate me, Alice, and you, dear mother; I am going to be married."

"To be married!" exclaimed both Alice and myself. The news startled us both from our sad reflections.

"Yes," she exclaimed, half flying across the apartment, and dragging a low ottoman to my side, never heeding the little basket filled with work, that fell, scattering its contents all over the floor; "yes, I will tell you all about it, mother. I may call you mother, mayn't I?"

There was a cold, painful brilliancy in her dark eyes as they sought mine, and I could not but shudder at her smile, so strange and meaningless.

"Yes, I know you will let me call you mother," she added, never giving me time to reply. "Now listen, for I have got such a story to tell you; but oh! my forehead—place your hand there, mother; isn't it hot, *very* hot?"

There was even a flush upon it; and, as with my fingers I pushed back the heavy, warm masses of hair, I was startled to notice the red line of fever around those rich, dark eyes.

"Well, in the first place—oh! how cool your fingers are!—our lawsuit is ended, and, alas! for poor father, unfavorably."

"Your lawsuit?"

"Oh! you knew nothing about it; I forgot that; don't notice my nervousness, dear mother—and—you are sure we sha'n't be disturbed. I thought I heard footsteps;" and she turned, looking anxiously toward the door, while I saw her hand tremble on my lap.

I assured her that we should be alone all the forenoon, and quieted her as I would a child.

"It is so ridiculous," she said, and then added, quickly, "no, so fortunate, so opportune, so providential. I know what I am saying, dear mother, don't look at me so. I am going to be married—he is very rich! I shall have a good husband, and save my father—*save him;* oh, I am so glad I was born to do this great service. You know suffering purifies, dear mother, suffering purifies; don't you think it does?"

With tears in my eyes, I assured her that the little gold in me had been burned from the dross; that once I had been a poor, thoughtless moth, fluttering around the light of fashion, worthless as a member of society, unfaithful as a parent; but now—

"But now," she exclaimed, catching up my words, "you are my pattern of a perfect woman. Hush! oh! forgive me, I did not mean to speak so; but I can not hear a refutation of what I believe. About this lawsuit," she continued, flying from subject to subject; "I never could enter into technicalities, you know, of course; but for a great many years there has been a chancery suit in England, by which my father expected to be benefited long before I was born, but which

has terminated in favor of another branch of the family, I mean the Lengordons; and General Lengordon—oh! a fine, noble, handsome old English gentleman—has been to my father's three days or so. He is there now, and he it is I am going to marry, ha—ha!"

That laugh thrilled me through. I had heard just such an one long, long ago, in the *hall of an insane asylum*—so high-pitched, so unnatural, so cutting, so *heartless*, or, rather, soulless; and then the immobility of feature that followed instantaneously—that laugh filled me with horror.

"But Julia, this is entirely unexpected!" I murmured.

"Is it? Well now that's strange—it seems all natural enough to me—all in the course of things. *I* don't feel surprised or moved in the least; I have been all ready for it this—oh! this six months. It is my passiveness that is singular to me, if any thing—it is my perfect resignation; only it will seem quite hard—*very* hard, to leave Alice. By-the-way, my dear sister, what have you been saying or doing to that brother of mine? You can't think how entirely he is changed. Oh, my head! mother, press your hand down harder; there, that's nice. You see, Alice—what was I saying? oh! Hugh, Hugh has altered; he's strange in his ways—quite strange; he won't eat, and he is melancholy, and if it wasn't for my wedding—*ha! ha! my wedding!* how it sounds."

Alice was struck with the insane earnestness of her manner, and, kneeling beside her, spoke to her softly and caressingly.

"You will not leave us, Julia," she said; "you are not in real, true earnest; I don't think you will marry

that man, whoever he is; I don't think—indeed! I don't know what to think—you are not yourself, Julia."

"I know it. Never was more conscious of the fact that I am a fool—a fool from necessity," she added, bitterly; "and not a fool either, for I am trying to save my father. Indeed, I am, and I aint; I can, and I can't; I will, and I won't, all at the same time. I don't know what I am doing, and I *do* know; I believe I am here in this dear old house; I know my kind mother and sister are close beside me. My brain don't burn so now, and I'll try to tell you again.

"My father is poor—*very* poor; yes! Judge Waugh, descendant of dukes, with a genealogy that dates back to the Saxon sovereigns, is a *very* poor man. The world sees his fine house and conservatory. Report says he has an excellent wine cellar. Now on my word there are only six bottles left; almost his last cent has gone; his old servants stay with him from very love; and oh! my dear mother, Henry, my beloved brother, can not go back to college. It is this that distresses me. We have looked for so much—for certain, *certain* news of good; we have felt rich, assured of great wealth in the future, and now it is all gone, every hope, every shadow of a hope. Here comes this General Lengordon with this terrible news. He could see all, for he has an eagle eye, a keen discrimination, a quick penetration. He could tell how we all were, and so he made love to me—ha, ha! no, not *that*, but kindly, calmly, affectionately asked me to be his wife."

"But Julia, my child, do you love him? and if not, let me—"

"He knows, mother, I tell you he knows every thing but that which my Maker alone is witness to," she

added in a low, reverent voice. "I told him I *could not* give him my heart. He seemed to feel compassionately toward me, and said he did not ask it, for he was an old man—he could not expect it. 'But my child,' he said, 'I am childless; be to me a daughter, pay me those little attentions you give your own father, I shall not need them long, I am stricken with a mortal disease; be unto me a child. I ask no more, and this'—he continued, with an impressive manner, 'this for the sake of your father and family. I can not last long, I solemnly assure you, and then, my sweet child, my vast fortune shall be your own. I must travel; no hand of servant, be it ever so soft, can soothe like the hand of a gentle woman. It shall not be a hard task I require of you; I am frank, as you have been;' and so I said yes. Wasn't it a strange compact? Well, it may as well be so as otherwise, for I am weary, weary of this world."

"Julia!" I exclaimed, in alarm; for her face was hidden in my lap, and her frame shivered as with a chilling wind.

She raised her head, and her eyes were almost glassy. She smiled. "You can't think what a fine, stately air he has, and what a grand walk! Then his hair—so thick, soft, and glossy—yes, absolutely glossy—although it is silver white, and curling too—oh! he is a 'fine old English gentleman, all of the olden time.' You know how often we have sung that, Ally. Who thought then that I would marry such an one! Yet he is good, fatherly, and I shall go abroad, be rich, courted, have my own way, fare sumptuously, dress extravagantly. Don't look so distressed, dear mother; you know I only talk for the sake of talking, and I feel very

foolish, and very, very weary." Again her head fell upon my lap.

It is *so* hard to look upon the sufferings of others! Twice the pain snaps our heart-strings that tortures us in our own consciousness of misery—twice the heavy weight bears our spirits down to the very verge of despair, over which we look with a vague, indefinite wish that ourselves were the recipients of sorrow, instead of our loved ones.

Julia lifted her head after a moment, and mechanically arose to go.

"Oh! here is something I found on the door-step," she said, producing a folded paper and giving it to me; "I have not looked at it."

I returned it, telling her she had better read it, as it was somewhat applicable, and might do her good. It was written by Herbert. Her hand trembled violently as she took it again and run her eye over the page. And here I will transcribe it:

THE COMFORTER.

He is the comforter blessed, oh! weary heart,
Kneel to the lowly Jesus, pour out thy prayers,
Kneel in thy deep contrition, with burning tears,
Tell Him thy soul's condition, thy hopes and fears;
Dread not to trust His goodness with all thy cares,
On His dear breast thy sorrowful heart he wears.

Lean on the bosom of Jesus, oh! stricken one,
Cold disappointment may wither the flowers of joy,
Turn their bright petals to dust, and smoulder the flame
Of innocent love, or blast the fair bud of fame;
He will award to thee pleasures without alloy,
Give thee a crown unfading—the Father's dear Son.

Go to the gentle Jesus when the world's hate
Pours on thy bleeding spirit its bitter balm,
Scathing the wound, not healing, while rankling sore,
The poison of grief yet chafeth thy soul the more;

Bow thy proud forehead till, stayed by His mighty arm,
Thou canst look humbly upward and joyfully wait.

Wait till the day of redemption, for it shall come,
When that dear Savior will softly, with gentle hand,
Lay on thy forehead, white with the dews of heaven,
The crown of clusters more bright than the stars of even';
The crown of thy virginal triumph, and thou shalt stand
And harp glad songs with the harpers of heaven—"sweet home."

"That is soothing," she murmured; "if I only knew how. Herbert is a Christian, is he not?" asked Julia, turning her dark, swimming eyes toward me.

I believed he was a true, practical Christian; in no other way could I account for his angelic patience and sweetness during a tedious illness—in no other way understand how he could relinquish a profession for which his brilliant powers of rhetoric qualified him, and which promised him abundance of wealth and fame. And more, when inclination so strongly pleaded for a life devoted to the ministry, he was willing to give up all his cherished plans out of filial obedience to his mother. Oh! yes; Herbert must be a Christian in the highest, purest sense of the word.

"Dear mother, I must go," said Julia, in a low, tremulous voice; "but—I wish—" She hesitated a long while, and then exclaimed, passionately, "I wish *I* was a Christian, for there is sorrow enough and pride enough in *my* heart; but I fear I never shall be one. You must all come to my wedding," she cried lightly, her careless mood returning; "I suppose we are to be married in the old church. But Alice, if you *do* treat Hugh badly—she often called her brother Henry, Hugh—I will punish you by not writing you a syllable of the grand sights I shall see on the continent."

I followed her to the door; and, though she urged

me, I would not compromise my child's dignity by an explanation without her consent. But I found out what confirmed my previous impression; Julia had taken too much wine. She confessed it with tears, but said it was the first time. Oh! how I trembled for her. I pleaded with her by all my love, by all the sacredness of the trust she was about to incur, by the hopes of her parents, never even to touch it again, and she promised me she would not.

I will, in the mean time, see how Henry bears himself under his trial. If he indulges in this pernicious habit merely to efface memory, or to sustain himself by fortifying his spirits in an unnatural manner, he can not marry my child; but if otherwise, all is well.

GENERAL LENGORDON.

General Lengordon has just been here with Julia. He has a most imposing appearance. One could almost read a proud old family lineage in his massive brow, and his white locks seem flowing under an imaginary coronet. There is little of Judge Waugh's look about him. He is taller, grander, less affable, but every way equally winning, for his smile has a world of beauty in it.

He was pleased with Alice—said she had fair English beauty. Every thing English is of course superior in his eyes; yet he gave American beauty very flattering preferences. I asked Julia why Henry did not come. She seemed surprised at the question, and said, a little coldly, that he was most of the time away from home.

Julia is to be married in three weeks. The preparations are splendid. I saw her for a moment to-day, and questioned her about her promise.

"I have not tasted it since," she answered. "It is time for me to stop; I have felt that long. I should grow to love it, and then what is there to keep me from ruin? But oh! poor Hugh! Dear mother, what has Alice done? I can't bear to see him so altered; he is my only brother, you know, and I think more of him than I can tell."

I could say nothing.

This evening we are all invited to Judge Waugh's.

Alice will not go, of course; she is far from well. To-morrow we expect Herbert back, with his father. I hope he will be improved. He has been on a little jaunt. We can hardly decide what he will do now. He thinks some himself of studying with Eldridge Lockton, D.D., a venerable father in the ministry, who has taken great interest in him.

There were none but the family at the judge's last night. I took an opportunity of speaking with Mrs. Waugh, a kind, motherly woman, with somewhat aristocratic manners, about the coming union. She seemed pleased, delighted at her daughter's prospects. Can it be that she has not the discrimination to see that poor Julia is sacrificing herself for her parents? Can it be that Julia so adroitly conceals her real feelings?

Every thing went on harmoniously. The judge and the general—august titles!—played chess in perfect good humor; and I augured well for the happiness of our darling, for twice the judge beat his antagonist, and, though the latter declared it was the first time in all his experience, he was calm and gentlemanly as ever, never betraying, by a flush or momentary contraction of the brow, the least annoyance.

I have seen those that would, and the best-bred gentlemen, too, as they were called.

Julia sang several times, but her music was either as wild as the forest bird's, or as plaintive as the poor little whippowil. Henry was somewhat distant toward me, but, as usual, perfectly respectful. He talked a great deal with his cousin—a pale, consumptive-looking girl, who is staying there for her health; but I could tell of what he was thinking in those moments of abstraction. I actually trembled when the

wine came on—Judge Waugh is really a confirmed moderate drinker. I did not touch it myself; and the judge rallied us—Julia and I—on our abstinence. I caught the dear girl's eye; there were tears on her lashes.

The glass was proffered to Henry. How was I astonished to hear him say, in a clear, firm voice, "No, father, I have forsworn wine."

The judge looked up in evident surprise.

"What did I hear you say, young man? a Waugh, and refuse wine?"

"Yes, father; and if I was a prince royal I would refuse it. It has brought many a proud family to beggary."

I was so delighted! The judge looked flushed and half angry; Julia smiled significantly at me, and Mrs. Waugh seemed strangely affected. I looked with pride upon the noble brow of the young man; I felt instinctively that he was aware of the fortunes of his family, of his sister's true position. I could hardly forbear going toward him and exclaiming, "Right, my son."

"He and I have entered into a solemn compact," whispered Julia to me, subsequently, "never to touch it again. There was danger in the cup for both of us. I think it has injured my dear father more than any of us are aware. Say nothing to mother about my marriage; she thinks it is all well enough—and it is. You see what a kind, fatherly gentleman he is; and don't you think I sometimes contemplate my future with a kind of joy?"

And again she said, "Do beg Alice to be reconciled with Henry; it ought not to be so serious a quarrel. By-the-way, where is that Mr. Brechman? How handsome he was! how devoted to Herbert! Is he?—has Alice?"

I comprehended her, and said, hastily, "He is nothing to Alice, she is nothing to him. You may say so in any manner you please to Henry."

She thanked me with a sweet smile. Oh! how dearly I am beginning to love Julia! I can not help wishing, at times, that she *could* have been Herbert's wife.

They took me up stairs to see the bridal clothes, and the rich assortment of millinery. All the veils, bonnets, and dresses of lace and satin, were extremely beautiful; still it appears to me like sacrificing a lamb crowned with flowers.

THE RETURN.

Herbert is again home, but still an invalid. Can it be that we must lose him yet? I dare hardly acknowledge it to myself; but he has a cough, a hard, dry, unnatural cough. He was astonished when I told him of the wedding so soon to be.

Doctor Hutton informed husband yesterday that nothing could save Herbert's life but a sojourn in another and a milder climate; at any rate, he must travel. This is melancholy intelligence. And so we all look forward to a sad parting hour; still, if it is to be beneficial, I will strive not to murmur.

I conversed with my dear son a long while last night about Ida Grey. She is almost as delicate as himself. Poor child! I am sorry for that.

Unexpectedly, a very rare piece of fortune has occurred. Mr. Ralph Gordon, to whom my husband was so great a benefactor long years ago, is at present in Boston, attending to some branch of his business there, and he is desirous that Herbert should return to Germany with him. He unfolded a plan to husband last night that met with his approbation. He thought it best that our son should be married, as he would then have some one who would care more tenderly for him in a strange land, should he be an invalid. My heart sinks every time I contemplate his absence. He is twenty-one now, and Ida is nineteen. They shall both be his children, so says this noble-hearted man—he has none of his own—travel under his protection, and find a welcome at his home. Under the circumstances, I see nothing to prevent all these arrangements.

THE RECONCILIATION.

Henry Waugh has been here to-day. I stole softly from the sitting-room when I saw him in the road, and left Alice alone. I know not how they managed their reconciliation, but when I went in Alice was blushing very much and looking quite happy, and Henry was talking in his old affectionate manner. Both looked rather shy at me, and I, of course, was very unobservant.

"Why can not we be married, mother, in the church on the same day with Julia? It will be but hastening matters a little, and Ida is ready!" said Herbert this morning.

I begged him not to think of it, but could not explain my reasons why. He may conclude to be married on the same day, but not at the church. A quiet little wedding at home is best.

Poor Julia!

Her brother understands all, but says he has sealed his lips. He looks very sad about her.

THE WEDDING.

This morning early we were all making preparation to attend Julia's and General Lengordon's wedding. Alice and Henry were her only bridemaid and groom. Last night quite a procession of carriages rolled past here, and the bride's house is filled with company.

After attending to Alice's toilet, we all rode to the house, and from thence to the church. I never saw a bride more magnificently attired.

Her laces were very costly; the general has not spared his money. Her veil alone, Mrs. Waugh told me, came to a small fortune. But pale, pale and weary she looked, as the words that bound her in such sacred ties were pronounced. I feared she would sink upon the altar—a sacrifice indeed; but she bore bravely up, and a murmur of approbation ran through the assembly as she passed through the aisle, lined on both sides with admiring throngs; for with her marble brow and drooping eye, she seemed almost ethereal.

And while they were feasted and *fêted*, Alice and Henry stole home, and stood quietly up by Herbert and his meek little Ida. So to-night we have two sweet brides in the village; but the wide, wide difference in their prospects for the future!

THE DEPARTURE.

"Mother," said Herbert to-day, "I shall see and learn much in those grand old German cities, and I trust I shall come back prepared to be a worthy minister of the religion I profess. Four little church walls, mother—my ambition at present soars not beyond that limit. Let me be a preacher to the poor and humble—I ask no higher lot."

How can I, how *can* I write it? Herbert is no longer here. He has taken with him the sunshine of our home; its very peace, and quiet, and beauty seem to have gone out after him. How I clung to his neck! For I thought I may never, never see him again, and my heart was almost bursting with grief. Oh! it is next to death—it is next to the bitterness of death, this sore parting.

Julia Lengordon—the name seems so foreign!—leaves us next week. We have not seen her much since her wedding, but I hear she is quite calm. She would not bid Herbert and his young bride farewell.

God keep my beloved boy in his perilous journey! I shall look forward, and count every hour till I know he is safe. Henry Waugh has gone back to college; so there seems, indeed, a dearth of hearts here.

THE DREAM.

I DREAMED of Herbert last night. I thought I saw him in the cabin of a beautiful ship, studying his German. He looked toward me, with a grave, sweet smile, and said, "You see, mother, I am preparing." Then suddenly the sky was overcast, and the waves lifted their white tops almost to the angry clouds. I shrieked with fear at the rolling of the vessel, but that sweet smile still rested on his lips, and he said, "We shall not perish, but be saved." Then I thought that the volume in his hands appeared to be the Bible, and the moment my eye rested upon it I was calm too.

It affected me singularly, this dream, but not unhappily. By-the-way, I thought of a fragment which I found, in the dear teacher's handwriting, yesterday, among her books. Here it is:

"And what a wonderful inhabitant do we hold, housed up in our frail bodies! When sleep cometh to our pillow, and, with drowsy breath, lulls us to forgetfulness of sense, how then does the divine being within weave of gentle memories a ladder of roses and gold, and, lifting it to heaven, wait, listening, to hear the descending footfalls of angels!

"And they come. Years may have grafted the sad mistletoe, born of tears, upon the branches of our young, fresh hope, and turned all the leaves to an autumn decay; but at the touch of these angel fingers, blossoms shade the parasite, the clustering leaves grow bright

with health, and under its shadow sport the lambs of the flock, beautiful with garlands of the heavenly pasture, twined by the great Shepherd of little children.

"The young, the good, the lovely, gather about us. Ourselves are dead to the outward, but we see them, bless them, and by them are blessed. The cuddling babe, whom we thought locked too securely in the treasury of our love for death to covet, but who, nevertheless, took seraph wings just as it had learned to fold its little arms about our necks, sits once again in its olden place, and leans once more its dear head against the mother's bosom. And in its eyes is Heaven's own unfading light, and on its brow the seal of Heaven's covenant, and its whole presence is like a ray from the throne of God, penetrating the soul. The pallor of death, the shroud, the gaping earth and swelling sod, with its white head-stone, upon which some cherished name is sculptured, are not remembered then. It is with us again. The tendrils of our hearts lie no longer damp and uncurled. With their old beauty they gather up and close around the object of our undying love."

Alice is a sweet companion to me now. She has lately grown so thoughtful and steady. Willy reminds me every day of Herbert, but he is far less gentle; and wee Ally is a great rogue, and a prodigious favorite with Betty, whose merry voice I hear this moment.

A LITTLE STORY.

The quiet of our pleasant town is disturbed. The dull sounds of laboring picks break upon the ear with monotonous regularity. They are making tracks for a rail-road. I am not pleased at this "improvement," as some call it, for a pleasant farm-house, and its surrounding fields, that sloped from high and undulating hills, have vanished before its nod. The great genius of enterprise, with his ugly shears of commerce, is clipping at the poor wings of poetry and romance, till, I fear, by-and-by they will have power only to flap along the ground, their ethereal faculties chained down to stock-taking and invoices.

I am sorry the house has gone, for there were some recollections connected with its history, for which it would be pleasant, could it have been spared. Judge Waugh, who is by far the best story-teller I have ever heard, gave me a little incident that happened there in the days of the Revolution. We were talking about the scarcity of time-honored mansions, and, said he, "An old red farm-house, surrounded by fields of waving grain and corn, in the autumn time, and overhung by the branches of various fruit trees, golden with their fullness of years, is a sight of a picturesque character in a rich valley, especially if a fine old mountain looms up in the background, or a deep of forest trees stretches away into the clear, mellow atmosphere beyond.

"In that one before us," he continued, pointing to the old house, "the widow of a noble Captain Pierpont

lived, some eight years ago. The lady was a fine specimen of old-time women; dignified, even commanding in manners, with a fresh bloom upon her cheek, a finely moulded forehead, and a deep, earnest expression in her yet bright eyes.

"And she was really a woman of refined and cultivated intellect; a woman who, in her youth and early womanhood, had known no stint of wealth; whose mind was stored with classic lore; who had never, until she emigrated to the wilderness of the New World, soiled her white fingers even with household work.

"She was the daughter of a nobleman; but misfortune had exiled her to America, and she espoused the cause of the new country with heart and soul, and was a thorough republican.

"Father and husband were both dead; the bones of the former reposed in old England, beneath a granite monument; the latter had now slept two years in the little burial-ground beside the wooden church, in sight of the red farm-house; and a small gray stone marked the spot where his ashes mingled with the dust.

"One day, during the hardest campaign of our sturdy soldiers, Madam Pierpont was alone at the farm. Pomp, a negro servant—he had been a slave—had gone on some errand, which would detain him till nightfall, and Aleck, the hired man, had wounded his hand in the morning with an axe, so that he was quite disabled, and obliged to return to his home, about a mile distant, which, by-the-way, was the nearest homestead to the old farm-house. The widow's four brave sons, of ages varying from nineteen to twenty-four, had started but two days previous for the field of their country's battles.

"And yet, feeling that in all probability some, or per-

haps all, of her treasures would be smitten by the ruthless hand of war, her cheek was still unbleached, and a holy hope sat in the repose of her beautiful features. Only now and then she turned to the open Bible before her, and read a few consoling passages, and straightway resumed her work with a trusting smile. Ah! patriotism found an enduring home in many such a gentle breast, exclaimed the judge, with emotion. Suddenly, in the distance, came a sound like the tramping of horse's feet, and a great cloud of dust betokened the approach of travelers, hurrying to their destination.

"Madam Pierpont moved to the door, and shading her eyes from the intense sunshine, watched their progress. They drew nearer, and in another moment three horsemen wheeled up before the door; they were dressed in military costume, and were all fine-looking men; but one, the foremost one, far exceeded the others by his imposing figure and the greatness of his countenance. It needed no introduction to inform the widow that this man was Washington. With that courtesy which always characterized him, he bowed gracefully to the widow, as he said, blandly, 'Can we find rest here, madam, for ourselves and our wearied horses, a few hours? We have ridden since nine o'clock this morning, and would fain recruit.'

"'Certainly, gentlemen, and welcome,' she replied, smilingly, and threw the inner door wide open as they dismounted.

"'Our poor beasts,' said one of the officers, patting his smoking horse, 'I would they could be attended to now. Is there a groom or a servant about your house, madam, who would rub down and feed these creatures? I will reward him liberally.'

"'We would ask no reward,' replied the widow; 'if

you will lead the horses round, they shall be cared for.'

"The animals were conducted to the stable, and there left, although the officer thought there was no indication of a man stirring about the place.

"'Make yourselves perfectly at home, gentlemen,' said the widow, 'and excuse me while I prepare you some refreshment, for you must be hungry as well as fatigued.'

"In another moment the widow was in the stable unharnessing the poor horses—work to which she was not accustomed, but which she nevertheless could do, in time of need, being a woman of strong muscular frame and great energy. She knew it must be done by herself, or not at all. As for both men and horses, they seemed completely jaded out. In a little while the animals were free, and she, with clean straw, rubbed them down the best she could with her own hands, led them into their stalls, and prepared and gave them food. After changing her dress, she returned again to the parlor, where the officers, having unbuckled their swords and donned their caps, sat conversing together, evidently keenly enjoying a delightful rest.

"As the widow stepped on the threshold, one of the officers was just remarking, 'He was one of my best men, and as fine a looking fellow as ever volunteered.'

"'Do you speak of young Pierpont?' asked another.

"'Yes; he fell yesterday, pierced by three balls—horribly mangled. I never saw a more shocking sight.'

"For a moment the cheek of the widow was blanched, the heart of the mother shocked; but she spoke very calmly, as she asked, 'Which one was it, sir?'

"'Henry Pierpont, if I am not mistaken. Was he known to you?'

"Oh what a torturing question! Was he known to

her? Henry, her noble first-born! A deathly faintness came over her, but she rallied with a great effort, and said, as calmly as before, as she turned from them, 'He was my son, sir.' They did not see her face, for she walked quickly but firmly from the room.

"'Now God forgive me; I feel as if I had done a cowardly thing,' murmured the officer, while his face grew pale with emotion. 'Coming here to partake of this woman's hospitality, I have cruelly stabbed her to the heart.'

"'You are not to blame, my friend,' said Washington, in his deep tones, in which were blended a sudden pathos; 'neither, if I read *her* aright, would she call back the child, bravely fallen in his country's cause. That is no common woman. Her very face tells of a soul's nobility. Mark me, when you see her again she will be tearless; no word of sorrow will issue from her lips. Our mothers, our wives, I am proud to say it, are heroines in this trying period; and this,' he continued, pointing to the Bible, 'this is the secret of their greatness. Wherever you behold that volume opened, bearing evidence of constant perusal, there you will find woman equal to any emergency. I say, when we meet her again, she will be tearless and calm, although a mother bereaved of her child.'

"And so it was; Madam Pierpont had schooled her grief for the time into a sudden and sacred submission; and when the officers were called into another room, to partake of the smoking viands she had prepared, they found her collected, unchanged in manner, and serene in countenance. The officer from whom the news had so rudely burst was lost in admiration of her conduct, and was often heard to say, subsequently, that he almost venerated woman ever after for her sake.

"Toward night the trio departed, thanking the kind woman, with grateful hearts, for her courtesy. They found their horses ready saddled, and were forced to the conjecture that Madam Pierpont had herself performed the duty of hostler. General Washington took her hand before he mounted his charger, and addressed her tenderly and affectionately, with such words that they brought tears to the eyes of the stern men; but though an increasing pallor spread over the widow's face, she murmured, 'I am thankful to my God, sir, that he has deemed me worthy of demanding my child in this glorious struggle. I taught him to love freedom, sir—I taught him to love freedom.'

"Not a word did she ask about her remaining sons, not a message did she send. It may be she felt she could hardly bear another such stroke, and she preferred to live in ignorance of their fate.

"Of her four sons, but one ever returned; and though the widow had grown, as it were, suddenly gray, though her form was no more erect, as during their life, yet she often spoke with a kind of subdued joy of the gift which she had been enabled to bestow upon the altar of liberty."

Such were the mothers of the Revolution. How little many of us now resemble them!

Farewell, old house, with your carpet of mallows, and old-fashioned flowers in old-fashioned pots standing upon the stoop. I feel half sad at the thought that I shall never again see its open door, wreathed with vines, whereon hung clusters of luxuriant grapes; nor its windows, on the lower floor, all opened, with their snowy muslin half curtains floating with a dreamy, undulating motion in the pleasant breeze.

BETTY'S ENCOUNTER.

I HAD almost forgotten my nice old house this morning. Betty, who had been down to Aunty Susan's, in the vicinity of the new rail-road, came hurrying home, her face deathly in its hue. Into my room she flew, and sat down, trembling violently, striving again and again to speak; but so excessive was her agitation, that she could not articulate a word.

I put by my sewing, and went toward her, when she cried out, holding up both hands, "Oh! ma'am, it's such a shock intirely!"

"What is it, Betty?" I asked, beginning to feel quite alarmed.

"It's him I've seen, him—Michael. May the howly angels kape us! He was working on the new road, an' he seed me, an' he ran afther me, an' he talked wid me," she almost screamed, her rich Irish brogue growing broader and still richer with her excitement.

"Be calm, Betty," I said, sitting down by her, "and I shall understand you better. You say you have seen Michael, the same Michael, I suppose, that deceived you before?"

"Oh! he did decaive me, indade he did—he did decaive me; an' I vowed a'most to the howly Virgin niver to spake another word wid him; and what'll I do now, when I've committed meself to listen an' hear his talk, an' look into his eyes? What'll I do?"

"Did he say any thing about his former conduct?" I asked.

"Och! and the crature did that same," she continued, the tears now filling her eyes; "he made me feel very bad intirely, he did, for he seemed older and sadder; an' he tould me he'd had one raal hard life of it, what wid bein' sick in hospitals and bein' pinitent for the thratement of meself. I asked him, 'Michael,' says I, 'av ye had no other poor woman besides since ye hindered yer soul wid that wicked crime?' An' he said, No, an' called the blessed name to witness for him.

"And then he began to say, 'I loved you so darely,' and says I, 'Hush! Michael,' though my heart swelled like; sez I, 'ye must never say the word of love to me agen, for how'll I tell to trust yer?' And then I felt a sorrow that I allowed meself to speak so plainly; for he turned away, and a whiteness came over his cheek that struck heavy on me spirits."

"Well, did you leave him so?" I asked, much interested.

"No; for afther that he axed me, where did I live? and when I tould him he said, 'And may'n't he come up here jest oncet?' and I said, 'Oh! no—not widout permission from the mistress.' And then he shook my hand and bid me good-by; and—and—me heart was in me mouth indade when he looked at me sad-like wid them blue eyes."

I told her to rest easy, and I would see Mr. Golding about it. He will make inquiries, and if the man is really repentant and honest, who knows but poor Betty may sometime have a home of her own? I'm sure love speaks in every lineament of her round, handsome face.

NEWS FROM ABROAD.

Two letters from Herbert and Julia. Herbert is in raptures with Germany. Enthusiastic child, his letter made me weep and laugh in the same breath. "His dear little Ida," he says, "sends her love. She is a precious companion, and, above all treasures, dear." And so my poet boy writes me about her, calling her his vein of gold, in the following strain:

A VEIN OF GOLD.

I have found a vein of gold,
By the valley green and old;
Where the summer smileth ever,
And the floweret dieth never;
Where the sun is flinging glistening
Mantles on the hill-tops, listening
Late I stood,
By the rustling, delicate fountain,
Weeping from the gray old mountain
Tears of blood,
As the red rays tinged their glowing
Drops, adown the rough rocks flowing;
So, while listening
There, I found a vein of gold.

Not in earth's deep bosom sleeping,
Through her sluggish arteries creeping,
In her heart its tapers burning,
In her gloom its charms inurning;
Not with knife, and spade, and ladle,
Not with miner's pick and cradle,
Did I find this treasure golden,
By the valley green and olden.

In a simple cottage maiden,
With a soft fleeced lambkin laden,
And bare feet
Gleaming on the carpet glossy,
With the fresh young grass—her flossy
Yellow curls, by zephyrs lifted,
Shone like sparkling amber, drifted
From the Baltic on its snow-white
Banks, that glitter by the moonlight.
In that sweet,
Gentle, loving, happy creature,
Angel-like in form and feature,
I have found a vein of gold.

Through her eyes my soul went glancing,
While the fringed sprites were dancing,
Brightly beaming;
Many a nook I searched, till 'minded
They who dare the sun are blinded
By his gleaming.

Oh! a heart, so rich in holy
Love and sweet devotion, lowly
As a little child, that met
My spirit eyes! could I forget
Its gentle charms?
No! I sought, and soon I brought her
To my home beside the water,
And my arms
Daily clasp that guileless creature,
Angel-like in form and feature.
Still, when old,
Dimmed by sorrow or unkindness,
Mute with grief, or touched with blindness,
She shall be my vein of gold.

But more than all else do I value those touching allusions to his dear home, and the pure affection toward his parents that breathes in every line.

"I am afraid you will never know how well I love you, mother!" I could live in the remembrance of those few, heart-spoken words for years.

Husband is very proud of him; indeed, he nearly idolizes all his children.

Julia's letter is bright and glowing, *only* eight pages long, and closely written. It is a great letter. I never dreamed she was such a masterly hand at delineation. She is at present stopping with a Lady Westerlin, and she, too, is rhapsodical over the charms of her fair hostess. She has seen the queen, and many of the principal objects of interest, and says she is in a fair way of having her head turned with the adulation paid her. "I am now quite well known," she adds, "as General Lengordon's pretty American wife. Doesn't that sound well?

"But about Lady Westerlin. I know you are fond of gathering stories for your note-book," she continues; "I'm going to tell you an 'ower true tale' about this charming woman. You see we are the best friends in the world; and she does seem so much like you, that I love her to the full extent of my capacity. She has confided to me the story of her early life, and as it is quite interesting, I have penned it down, nearly as she told it, for your gratification. You must imagine us sitting together in a little rose-colored room, I with a beautiful baby, her youngest, in my lap, its silken curls hanging all over my arm; and thus she begins:

LADY WESTERLIN'S STORY.

"I CAN remember when my mother died. We lived in an exceedingly mean cottage, that nobody else could or would inhabit. In stormy weather, the mud around it was nearly a foot in depth, and the floor was wet. I doubt not that my mother took her death there.

"She died alone with me, in the night. There was a terrible tempest abroad, and I think my mother repeated once, in a very faint voice, 'It is the noise of His water-spouts!' I do not know that she was conscious of what she was saying.

"I was lying awake beside her, for her breath rattled so I could not sleep. At last she exclaimed, quite loudly, 'Daughter, get up—the lamp is out; light it, and give me some water.'

"I was quite startled, for I could see the lamp burning, with my own eyes. However, I arose, and, picking the wick up a little way, hurried for the water.

"'Won't you light the lamp again?' she asked, fixing her eyes on the ceiling.

"'Mother dear,' I whispered, 'there is light here. I can see you.'

"'Then it is death—death!' she murmured; and she was soon icy cold, and motionless.

"I did not know how to get away from that strange, wild stare. I wept and screamed, but the storm only roared in answer; and soon, quite too frightened even to think, I crept into the corner and hid my face in my hands. There I fell asleep.

"In the morning nobody came near us; the storm was too horrible. And through those long, dreary hours, I sat, trembling in my poor refuge, dreading I knew not what, quite chilled to my heart, and awe-stricken. I think I can trace to my experience of that shocking day the emotions of horror which I invariably feel whenever I look on a corpse, however beautiful it may be.

"The next morning some neighbors dropped in. They appeared astonished, and talked very loudly, and bustled very noisily about. I could not bear to see them touch my mother; and when she was lifted into her coffin, I ran from the house as fast and as far as I could—ran till I was exhausted, and obliged to sit down, in very weariness, on a fallen log. When they searched for me they told me she was buried, and henceforth I must live in a stranger's home!

"A 'stranger's home' has a very desolate sound. It made me weep anew; and many a day after did I go by myself to indulge in the sad, sweet luxury of tears.

"I began to live when I was fifteen. Before that time I may truly say I knew naught of life but its sorrows. I was called to take care of two pretty children, whose father, a young English baronet, had been a widower some four years.

"Gertrude and Grace—two sweet, winning, angel children; and they were all my own, for so I called them—my own, beautiful darlings, and no mother could feel more pride and pleasure than filled my young heart.

"What a noble room that nursery was! full of grand, old furniture, and hanging high up, so that it reached midway between the ceiling and the floor, with its rich, quaint tapestry. Then the wide, pleasant windows, arched at the top, with their green blinds folding over and over; with deep embrasures, in which we three often sat and watched the old gray gardener trimming the shrubs, or the fine equipages dashing along the far-off highway, or the brilliant birds flinging snatches of merry songs through the emerald leaves of elms and oaks.

"At one of those dear windows the sun came to bless us in the early morning; at another, when his broad arms from the midway of heaven embraced the earth; at another, when the day bade him farewell, waving banners of red glory, as the great sky seemed to fold over him. Oh! can I ever forget that dear, happy period in which all the joys of earth, all the blessings of heaven seemed mine?

"And there was the stately housekeeper—stately to every body but me—who used to part my hair with her slender fingers, and murmur, 'It's very fine and glossy; you must take pains with it, child;' and then she would press her hand on my shoulder, and with such a searching, though absent look, say, 'In all the wide world there is nothing like a beautiful face—and the Lord made man in His image. Oh! child, be thankful that you are lovely, but often think that through eyelids as white as yours, through lips once as ruby, on pure cheeks, over lofty brows, through long golden tresses, between soft fingers, under gleamy teeth, the worms of corruption revel, and wind their slimy forms.'

"These words of hers made me shiver from head to foot, her manner was so solemn; but they checked my vanity, oh! how often; for when I stood before my mirror, glorying in charms which since many have

pronounced matchless, suddenly have I seen, or seemed to see, the worms of corruption there; and that has turned my heart to praying for grace to be better prepared for the fiat that should doom my beauty to decay.

"But my little children—fair-haired darlings! I have their portraits now. Lift that veil—there! The one with the deep, dark eyes is Gertrude; she of the glad, sparkling glance is Grace. Gertrude and Grace—they were well named. The former was calm, reflecting, given to strange sayings, and dreamy, mysterious thoughts; the other was only happy when both dimpled hands were heaped with roses, and kisses were showered upon her round cheeks. She lived in an atmosphere of earthly love. Gertrude—yes, even then I think she had a being in heaven.

"They loved me, those two children, with an absorbing affection, and were never so happy as when, both gathered to my bosom, they would lie, listening to the stories teeming in my fertile imagination.

"The baronet was absent from home for a year after I lived at the hall. He had been traveling, to forget, if possible, or wear away the dread sorrow of his great loss; for the housekeeper would tell me, for hours, of his devotion to the fair, fragile creature, his lady; and how, on her death, he shut himself up for months at a time, and only walked after nightfall, in the thick shadows of the trees, over her dear grave. I had learned to venerate him, and never tired of gazing at the old family picture that represented him, a boy of thirteen, in a light-green hunting-frock—a pale-faced boy, without beauty, without nobleness of stature, only a drooping, rather sickly-looking youth. And after I

had learned to read easily, I often mounted upon a chair, to trace with indefatigable zeal the pedigree of the young man through long lines of ancient families, as they were painted upon the gay family tree. And sometimes, before I knew better, I would wish I was descended from the proud and brave; but then, what a useless wish! it would occur to me, 'I am happy now, I could not be more then.'

"One day I sat sewing by the housekeeper's side. Lady Mendon, a former friend of the baronet's sweet wife, had taken the children out, who seemed to love them very dearly. We were listening, every moment expecting them back, when the housekeeper suddenly sprang to the window, exclaiming, 'Here they come! but, Heaven preserve us! I believe the baronet himself is with them.'

"This announcement gave me a strange sensation, that was neither fear nor pleasure, but, I believe, a mixture of both. First, I thought I would secrete myself, for I was very bashful; then, moving back from the windows, I seated myself somehow in the shadow of the crimson curtains, through whose thick folds the sun gave a subdued light.

"Such a noise and hubbub as ensued!—such hearty shaking of hands and exclamations of surprise! I did not dare to look up till I actually felt that the baronet was before me, and the two girls clinging to my neck, crying out, 'Oh! kiss her, kiss her, too, dear father!'

"'I ventured to engage her,' I heard the housekeeper say, timidly; 'she has been very faithful, and Gertrude and Grace love her very much. Lilian, look up; this is the baronet.'

"I raised my head as far as I dared, and encoun-

tered two dark, shining eyes beaming down from—it seemed to me—an unapproachable height; and as I murmured something, I know not what, I caught the glance of Lady Mendon, and it turned my very heart's blood to ice. Such an expression of malice I never saw before. It troubled me—it haunted me. She so lovely, why should she hate me? for I felt sure that her expression *was* hate, pure, unmixed hate.

"The next day and the next, I saw the baronet, and could look at him without blushing quite so much as at first, or stammering painfully; he was—but it becomes me not to praise, though surely I may say that I thought him a prince in beauty and bearing. Every day he would take the children into the garden, and play with them as if he were a child himself; and when he would return them to my care, he sometimes gave me such a penetrating, singular look, that my heart beat fast. I could not tell why it should.

"Two more short, blissful years fled rapidly, and I was eighteen. I now nearly idolized the children, and I was very happy, but for one thing: daily was I persecuted by Lady Mendon, who contrived to meet me somewhere, and pour poison into my mind. She affected to be my friend—to counsel me, to aid me; but she appeared, at the same time, to dislike me—at least, an indefinable dread, that always came over me in her presence, warned me so. She would give me advice—tell me how poor I had always been, and how humble I should be; caution me to beware of the baronet, and give dark, mysterious hints that invariably frightened me into a headache, and led me to shun my good benefactor.

"One day, when my brain was hot and heavy, I carried Grace over there, as she had requested me. My brow beat and burned intolerably; I could not lift it easily.

"'You are getting subject to these headaches,' said Lady Mendon, with a sort of sneer; 'you suffer very much from them, don't you?'

"'More than I can tell,' I answered, faintly.

"'I can relieve you easily,' she said, with a suppressed eagerness of manner.

"'How? Tell me. I will do any thing you think best.'

"She came close beside me; she gathered the long curls that fell profusely and heavily over my face and neck. 'Your hair, child,' she muttered, while her lips compressed; 'it will kill you, induce brain fever, perhaps; let me cut it close;' and she reached her scissors with a malevolent expression.

"'No—no,' I half screamed, for I was very proud of my hair; and like a flash—I can not tell how, nor from whence it came—a thought had taken possession of my bosom, an idea that this grand, beautiful woman was jealous of me; me, a poor nursery maid!

"Her eyes flashed fire. She still stood with her jeweled hand raised, the shining blades parted in her white fingers, gazing at me with the most withering passion.

"'O! you think yourself a paragon of beauty, I can see. You wish to retain your long ringlets, that you may mesh them about the baronet's heart; yes, yes, you think your bright eyes will enslave him—you poor beggar; and so they may, but mark me, minion, only to your own disgrace. The baronet knows how well you like him, and he laughs at you, poor fool! he jests at you, he despises you. He told me so.'

"Do you wonder I fell almost senseless to the floor, and lay writhing there? Pride, shame, all the noblest passions of my nature, were contending together; I, so trusting, innocent, undesigning, to be charged thus; and thus to learn that I was a poor, despised, ridiculed dependent.

"I staggered homeward, little Grace, who had been among the roses all the afternoon, prattling by my side. I sought my chamber, to suffer that with which all other sorrows were bliss in comparison. Hours after, I kissed the children as they slept, gathered a few needful things, and then knelt down to pray for those who had so injured me. At twelve the house would be silent; at twelve I would go forth, I knew not whither, cared not whither, so that I might place miles between them and myself.

"I listened for the stroke of the hours. Eleven rung out coldly and sharply from the church tower. I arose, yearningly gazed upon the dear, familiar objects, and softly opened the door. Hurried footsteps sounded near —the baronet, his proud face deathly pale, was coming toward me.

"I had time neither to fly nor shriek, when he exclaimed, 'Lillian, will you go to the nursery? Gertrude is sick, raving for you, dying, I fear,' and, with a loud groan, he leaned against the stair-case, then turned again, as if sure of my following him.

"I threw down my bundle, flung aside my bonnet; all feeling was merged in commiseration for the unhappy baronet, terror for the fate of my best-loved darling. The sweet girl was screaming frightfully for me, and, as I bent over her, she sprang up with a shriek of rapture and clung to my neck; nor, till she died, would

she release her hold. In the morning, a fair, dead child laid, all damp and cold, upon my bosom.

"Need I tell my misery when I beheld that glorious face under the glass of the little coffin! or how I wept as I saw them lower her deep, deep in the gloomy grave!

"Now it would be easier to leave, since my best-loved child had gone to heaven; for, after Gertrude was laid away, my old fears returned, and haunted me day and night.

"One evening, when I heard the loud, quick pacing of the baronet, I again resolved to hasten from the fine old mansion, and seek humbler, but, as I fondly hoped, truer friends. I had reached the gates, when I felt a desire to look once more upon the grave of sweet little Gertrude—to pluck at least one violet from thence to treasure hereafter. I retraced my steps, and knelt in the moonlight upon the lowly mound, breathed one prayer, gathered a few flowers, and turned to depart. The baronet stood at my side! I did not fear him now, nor dislike him, for his face was so sorrowful, his deep, tomb-like eyes so mournful, his cheeks so white, as the pale beams laid across his features—how could I?

"'What is the meaning of this?' he asked, his eye catching sight of the bundle at my side; 'now I remember,' he continued, 'just so you was prepared when I called you to Gertrude. My child, were you about to leave us, and in this manner?'

"His tones were so soft and trembling, his manner so tender, I was instantly subdued. I thought that perhaps, since the death of his darling, a change had come over him. In fact, I strove every way to excuse him to myself, for I felt abashed at his kindness. I hesitated.

"'Do we not treat you well, Lillian?' he asked, still more mournfully.

"'Oh! yes, yes,' I murmured.

"'For her dead sister's sake, can not you remain with my poor little Grace, you who have been so long as a mother to her?'

"At this I burst into tears, and wept violently. Losing all self-command, I sobbed, 'If you had not jested at me, despised me, boasted that I—that I—' I could not get the words out.

"'What!' he exclaimed, in a strong, measured tone, 'Lillian, what do you mean? who has deceived you in this manner?'

"'Lady Mendon told it me.' I was calmer now, and, as well as I could, as far as my delicacy would permit me, I narrated her very language, word for word.

"'It is all false, and very, very cruel,' he murmured, looking fixedly at me; 'for, so far from boasting that I knew you loved me, Lillian, I did not dare believe that one so young, so beautiful, so good and gentle, might feel other than sentiments of friendship for a man so much older than herself.' His voice grew softer and more musical. For myself, I was overwhelmed with astonishment; confidence deserted me.

"'Yes, Lillian, gladly would I make you my own dear wife,' he continued, moving nearer to my side. 'True you have not gold but the wealth of a whole, glad, sinless heart like yours is all I ask. Say you will take the place of that sainted one who lies here beside her child, Lilian, and you shall be well fitted for the responsibilities you must assume. Lillian, tell me, can you love me well enough to marry me?'

"What could I do? I found, strangely enough, that I already loved him. Suffice it to say, that in eighteen months, during which time I was placed with a good teacher in another city, I became his wife; and my first visitor, after I returned from the bridal tour, was Lady Mendon, who almost fainted away when she recognized me. It is needless to say why she had hated me; she hoped to wed the baronet herself.

"Lady Mendon lives alone and unloved, while the poor nursery girl has been for ten years a happy wife and mother."

There now! isn't there romance for you. Julia alludes delicately to her husband, says she is really happy, for he is so tender, so regardful of her comfort. Well—it *has* proved "better than all our fears."

Alice is in the city. She will stay there a month or two, in order to perfect herself in music, for which she has a great passion. The society of my husband has become so much dearer to me; I have never known, till now, what a treasure I possessed in his love. It has always seemed a delight to him when he could anticipate my wishes, and render me some delicate little attention. But now he is doubly devoted.

Oh! how many hearts are slowly, surely breaking at this moment—hearts that have laid all upon the shrine of some selfish, exacting love, that will not bend to tenderness. Never a caress, never a glance of approval, never a request; but commands, orders, and stern glances are dispensed to the dependents of the unapproachable husband and father; dependents on his protection and sympathy—his wife and children.

"Madam, I am your husband," speaks in every gesture; "child, nothing saves you from utter insignifi-

cance, save being *my* child. Look at me, admire me, fear me, and go back to the nursery."

Is it not beautiful to see the man whom crowds reverence—if he is truly great, if his is a giant mind that can mould will, and subdue the wild passions of the multitude by the magic of his eloquence—throw off the God-like, and become human, susceptible to domestic influence, playful, child-like in the precincts of home? Then his is truly a charmed circle. The babe may grasp with its plump fingers the hand upon whose gesture the fate of a nation seemed to hang but an hour ago; the laughing boy enjoy a game of romps with his stately father; the wife look with gladness into his beaming face, and, with mingled love and reverence, utter the sweet words, "My husband!" Friends may call upon him without fear of a rigid and formal reception; the indigent man need never cringe to him, nor the poor scholar shake as with an ague-fit, while craving his supervision over some unappreciated manuscript, which, if it receive his verdict, will enter the student on Fame's high road.

Such a man is worthy the love and confidence of nations—of worlds. The Almighty has stamped upon him the seal of true manhood. His is a nobility that no patent-right can secure. It is of the soul as well as the intellect; the rare blending of great faculties and pure, true affections, of monarch-like dignity and child-like simplicity, which is inborn with the few mighty of earth, who, while they command homage, are not unapproachable.

Last night I witnessed a most beautiful exhibition of natural beauty. The rain had just ceased falling, and the dark blue of the sky was flaked with the fleeciest of white clouds, that, like a string of pearls, encircled the horizon, floating in fantastic shapes, or melting into the calm ether as softly as the coloring of a dream dissolves in the light of the morning. Upon the faded form of the old mill on the river a mantle of crimson had been thrown, and the glowing waters underneath flushed with the sun's rays, while they reflected the beauty of the blue dome above them. Every leaf was covered with rain-drops trembling to the breath of the breeze; and one field of grain, to the left, seemed absolutely like a wide surface of burnished gold. I thought, "Oh! could a painter but catch the inspiration of this moment, and, with a free stroke of his bold pencil, delineate yonder hills, fresh with the sweet shower; and the gray mist that so gradually assumes the brightness of the clear sky; and the farm-houses, shining with a lustre that such a sunlight as this can only give; and the orchards, so dark, and green, and grateful; and the fragrant roses and grasses by the roadside; and the glad corn, almost laughing for joy at such a refreshing; and above all, this broad, gleaming pennant of such gorgeous tinting, this bridge thrown over the great chasm between heaven and earth, for the angels to walk upon—what could make a more truly perfect blending of nature's attributes!"

THE REUNITED FAMILY.

Five years ago, Herbert left home and country, to sojourn in a far-off land. To-morrow—blessed thought! —these eyes will look upon him again, these arms clasp him to my heart! I feel a solemn thankfulness, that I can not mete out in words and sentences.

I little thought this beautiful mansion was ours. I have watched its progress, from week to week; been enchanted with its location, and the faultless taste with which the grounds are laid out; and here husband has brought me, seated me in the parlor, so like our first, rich home, and says, "It is ours, dear wife."

I should know whose judgment has decorated these walls, whose hands grouped the statuary, whose taste selected the rich hangings. In a little alcove, covered by a curtain, stands the silver service. I prize it more than all that is valuable in our beautiful house. It speaks of integrity and high-souled honor.

It is the happiest day of my life! Herbert is here with his Ida, and their only sweet, blue-eyed child. Julia is here, too, with her young husband, a Mr. Kendall Westerlin, who, I half suspect, is a near relative of the baronet. Julia is happy too. She has forgotten her early predilection (of which, by-the-way, Herbert has never dreamed), and seems devoted to her husband. General Lengordon has been dead four years. By my side is my sweet Alice. Her husband, young

Waugh, has gone into the conservatory to gather her some flowers, for she is, as usual, wreath-making. Husband, with a very few gray hairs upon his fine brow, sits in the porch, in earnest conversation with the old judge. They are talking about Herbert and his book of travels, that has so completely taken the reading public by surprise. In the large, white house yonder, lives sister Milly, now a staid matron, with three noble boys. Her husband, Mr. Lansden, is the pastor of the most flourishing society in the town. Nini, now grown a fine young man, is in husband's employ. Lizzy, my old friend, Judge Waugh's sister, is here on a visit from the West, where she has resided these nearly thirteen years back. So all my dear old friends are around me.

We are making preparations for a little party to-night, at which Betty and Michael are to be united. Nothing short of a ceremony will satisfy Betty. Michael has saved enough by his economy to purchase a neat tenement, near the mill, and set up shop. He bids fair, with a little help (for husband intends to make him a present of some stock), to become quite a man of consideration here.

I wish all the world were as contented and happy as I am to-day.

THE END.

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