



The hand dropped ;—eyes filled with tears, and further back, shining through their crystal veil, with woman's quenchless love, looked into his face. He started forward, catching both her hands in his. " Mine at last, Sophie?—God bless you, Sophie—Time has gone back, Sophie—Sophie Ainslie!" P. 350.

KATE WESTON;

OR,

TO WILL AND TO DO.

BY

JENNIE DE WITT.

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To
THE REV. JOHN DOWLING, D.D.,

WHOSE PRAYERS HAVE BEEN THE DEW,

WHOSE SMILES THE SUNSHINE,

TO

EACH BUD OF INTELLECT,

EACH GERM OF HIGH RESOLVE,

THESE PAGES ARE DEDICATED,

BY A DAUGHTER'S LOVING HEART.

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KATE WESTON.

CHAPTER I.

VERY good humored, very. Not a wrinkle nor a crinkle upon the great benevolent face to indicate less greatness or less benevolence within. Like the sun, round and rosy, that face seemed made to beam upon all mankind. So it was. Was anybody in trouble? Who but Mr. Jeremiah Clarence was at hand to help them out? Was anybody poor, neglected, forsaken? Who like him was always ready with convenient pocket pieces slipped carelessly into the hand of the sufferer, and what was better far, words and looks of sympathy? Were any struggling hard against vice, temptation and ruin? When others looked harshly upon their trembling endeavors,—whose hand but his drew them gently over slippery places,—whose voice so untiringly urged them back to forsaken virtue and neglected good?

There was, however, no peculiar exercise of all these qualities involved in the present occupation of Mr. Jeremiah, who sat very composedly waving a tremendous red silk handkerchief, and watching the progress of the serving up of dinner. This, for a hungry man, who had been gathering corn since daybreak, was a some-what trying occupation, when we take into consideration that he had some half dozen times called out, in a jocular tone, that either he was most tremendously

hungry, or that the dinner was a most tremendous while in coming. He sat quite still, however, neither kicking over his daughter's workstand, nor thrusting his head into the kitchen as a vent to his impatience, but looking out across the lawn and road in front of the house, and surveying with considerable complacency large fields spreading away to the opposite hills, and bearing evidence of the plentiful harvest they had borne upon their bosom.

He was dressed in rough farmer's guise, but the objects about him bore the marks of an easy affluence not uncommon among well to-do farmers in almost any part of our Union. The apartment answered the purpose of both sitting and dining-room, and was furnished comfortably, with a well-filled book-case, standing in a recess, for the more profitable disposal of many an odd hour when no important business was on hand. The dinner-table was set out in the middle of the room, covered with a very neat set of white ironstone china, and loaded with substantial country fare. A huge piece of beef formed the staple dish of the repast, flanked by a fair sized chunk of pork, plenty of freshly gathered beans, squash, cabbage, and other concomitants of a farmer's fare. On a little side table stood two large dishes of newly picked peaches, and a pitcher of fresh cream, quietly awaiting their turn for stepping into public favor.

All this was ready, but still the bell had not yet rung for dinner, when the gentleman, losing patience, as far as in him lay, called out in a stentorian voice, "Girls, girls! I shan't get the corn in to-day if you don't hurry a little. There now," added he, as they bustled into the room, "everything's ready, what under the sun is the use of waiting?"

"None at all, father," answered the eldest, seating herself at the table, "only Edward wasn't in yet, and I thought you were in no hurry." Just at that moment, Mr. Clarence, looking out of the window, saw a boy walking by upon the other side of the road, with a pail in his hand, and a large roll of

papers upon his back. Said boy, coming directly in front of his, Mr. Jeremiah's, gate, set down his pail, took a slight survey of the premises, and having satisfied himself, apparently, that they were worth honoring with his notice, proceeded to unroll his parcel, and taking out a large placard, seemed casting about for a place to paste it. Say what they will of women's curiosity, the present instance proved sufficiently the inquisitiveness of Mr. Clarence above and beyond that of his fairer companions, for they sat quietly down to the dinner-table, wondering "what that boy *was* about," whereas that gentleman himself stood looking earnestly out until the boy, having finished his task, shouldered his bundle, lifted his pail, and trudged on, unconscious of the eyes that had been watching his performance. As soon as the lad turned away, Mr. Jeremiah's burly form passed out of the room into the hall, and down the walk into the road; he commenced reading the mammoth placard, which ran very much as follows:

"NOTICE.

"The inhabitants of LACONIA and vicinity are respectfully informed that the subscriber has opened a Saloon, where the most critical epicurean taste may be satisfied.

ICE CREAM,

FRESH OYSTERS.

The choicest Wines, and the finest brand of Cigars, always kept on hand.

N. B.—Several Daily Papers taken.

TIMOTHY GALT."

All this time the ladies were waiting patiently, discussing the rival merits of a blue and a pink thibet that Mr. Marks, the store-keeper, had just brought from New York. When they had come to the conclusion that neither would quite suit, and, that in order to produce the slightest effect, the dress to be purchased should at the very least, be procured at Newburgh, which was only seven miles away, they looked around for the absent Mr. Clarence.

"There," exclaimed Mary, as she walked to the window, "now that is so like father; hurrying us all as though he hadn't a moment to spare, and then keeping us waiting for

half an hour. How very provoking! Oh sis, do look here, what father is doing!"

The lady stepped to the window, and there stood the tall, portly form of her father, quite nervously pulling off a tremendous sheet of printed paper, that was pasted on his fence, and looking, for *him*, exceedingly vexed and ill humored withal.

"What is the matter, father?" exclaimed the eldest from the window. "I should half think you had been advertised for some criminal offence, if I didn't know to the contrary. What ruffles you so dreadfully?"

"The devil has come," exclaimed he fiercely, scattering the remaining fragments of the paper, indignantly flinging his bandana, and shaking himself angrily up the walk. "The devil himself, my dear."

The astonished ladies, not feeling much enlightened by this pleasant little piece of information, looked inquisitively for an explanation, which, at that moment, Mr. Clarence seemed hardly likely to give. He seated himself with such a flourish of indignation at the head of the table, that it was a full minute before he could recover himself. "Why, Jennie," he said, you know we have always congratulated ourselves upon having no rum-holes in our village. Well, one is to be opened to-morrow—to-morrow, do you hear?" bringing his tremendous fist upon the table with a force that made the dishes ring again. "No little contemptible place either, where none but the vilest and the lowest would congregate, but a fine handsome saloon, furnished with studied elegance, supplied every morning with the freshest oysters, fruit, real Philadelphia ice cream, &c., &c.,—all to draw in the unsuspecting of every class. I tell you, if that stays here, it won't be five years before we'll have ruined homes and broken hearts lying all about us; yes, and graves too. Graves of the noble and beautiful. Oh, the devil is in it; I've seen so much of it. He's at the heart of the whole matter. He

edges a finger into a good many pies, but I protest he has the making of this one, out and out. Just show me any one thing on the wide earth that carries off half as many bodies and souls to utter wretchedness and eternal ruin, and I'll believe then that his head-quarters are likely enough somewhere else than in the porter-house and grog-shop. I say," cried he, as he waxed warm with the heat of his subject, and brought down his fist with another tremendous thump upon the table, "I say, I'd rather have the plague or the cholera here any day, or an army of soldiers to sack the village. Bless me, they wouldn't do one half the mischief."

Having delivered himself of this opinion, he gave his pocket-handkerchief an energetic flourish, used it vehemently about the region of the organ it was intended to serve, coughed stentoriously, wiped the perspiration from his forehead, and fell precipitately upon his dinner, fearing to indulge himself in any further remarks, and leaving the subject for his daughters to resume at leisure.

While they are doing so, therefore, we will leave him in order to take a glance at them. The children had lost their mother in Mary's infancy. But her careful training had rendered Jennie, the eldest daughter, capable of so much self-denial and womanly management, that her father had been able to dismiss his housekeeper in two or three years after the death of his wife, leaving Jennie at the age of thirteen to oversee the housekeeping. With the aid of an old and experienced servant she had succeeded admirably. And the early cares thus laid upon her had induced a gentle dignity and self-control that held the impulsive temper of Mary in check, and helped not a little in developing the noble traits of her brother Edward's character. Since her marriage, which had occurred about a year before our story commences, there had been scarcely a day in which she had not stepped over from the parsonage, to aid Mary in the discharge of duties that we

must acknowledge, were sometimes neglected by the novitiate in housekeeping.

Mary was very small and delicate, like her dead mother. The baby of the family, and, like all other babies, quite a spoilt one. Hardly sixteen, with black eyes and hair, long eyelashes of the same color, rosebud mouth, and rosy cheek, she was very pretty, for all the little defiant pug nose that was always saying, "I don't care a straw for you—I will have my own way, so!"—and for all the rather low forehead, that was pretty often shaded by a fitting cloud of anger or discontent. But the absent son was the gem of Mr. Jeremiah's family. Scarcely a boy in the village but looked on him as the model of youthful manliness. Nor boys alone, but parents also, loved and admired; a rare coincidence, indeed, when we remember the difference in taste between men and women of forty, and frolicsome boys of sixteen.

Fearless, liberal, warm hearted, frank in speech and easy in manners, Edward was a universal favorite. Loving his father and sisters with all his might, it was not difficult for him to be a dutiful son and brother, and being so, he was held up before the eyes of all belligerent sons, of what age or temper soever, as a study of peculiar excellence, worthy of the closest imitation.

With these same rebels from parental authority he was no less a favorite. They could never see a fault in the beautiful, noble face that had always that winning smile beaming upon them, nor in the heart so brimful of sunshine, that it flashed like a charm upon everything, turning the darkest places bright in its refulgent glow.

As for father and sisters, their very life was bound up in him, only now and then little spoilt Mary would look vexed and talk fast when she imagined him encroaching upon her natural, inalienable rights as sole baby of the family.

Having so far introduced our friends, we shall listen again for a few minutes to the conversation, as the dinner party

pushed back their chairs from the table, and, as was their usual custom, enjoyed a little family chat among themselves. Dinner had had a wonderful effect in restoring Mr. Clarence to his previous agreeable condition of mind and body, for he sat with his chair back against the wall, looking very benignantly upon the round of beef before him, towards which certainly he had shown a powerful affection, and seemingly forgetful of his former perturbation.

"Father," said Mary, "can we have Jerry to go to Newburgh to-morrow, and Teddy to drive? We want to buy some thing there; something so pretty."

"Edward is to have the horse to-morrow, my dear," said her father, smiling. "Don't you remember he was to go to Ogden's Rock? I can't spare the other at all. We shall be using it. You shall have it the next day, Molly."

"Oh dear!" pouted Mary, deeming it a proper time for asserting her prerogative, "I never saw anything like it. You'll let Edward go and take that fine horse off there to Ogden's Rock, all of twelve miles through the sun. And I must wait and wait; I have been wanting to go to Newburgh for a whole week, and I think it is really too bad."

The young lady wiped her eyes, and twisted her apron into her mouth, as though that afforded some relief under existing circumstances, but her father took it quietly, asking her why she had not told him before, when there was plenty of time.

"Why because,"—cried she, "I thought all along I could have them any day I chose, and now I can't have my new dress for Sunday, I declare it's a shame."

"You can wear white one Sunday more, I think," said her sister, "I am sure it isn't worth crying for."

"No to be sure it isn't," answered her sister, "but then I think poor Jerry's comfort is worth thinking of, and I really can't see what notion can have got into father's head to let Edward kill him to-morrow, for I'm sure it's enough to kill

him to go sweating and working up that dreadful hill. Ned drives so awfully too; but the fact is, I think father's an outrageously careless man; shouldn't wonder if Edward got his neck broken some day; that I shouldn't, and my sputtering won't do any good then."

This "sputtering," being of daily occurrence, and perfectly understood, excited no surprise, but her father merely observed, "You are a little obstreperous, daughter, Edward's the only son; I must look out for him a little."

"Well," said Mary, pouting more than ever, "I think, that if you let him do that, Edward has little judgment and you have less"—

"Molly, Molly," interrupted her father, good-humoredly, "you remember what the sailor said—'A woman's just like a ship, and sometimes she carries too much sail.' Now, you are getting out a leetle too much sail; better take it in again, Molly."

Miss Mary merely mumbled something about her having to wait for necessary articles, while Edward went frolicking off on all kinds of wild expeditions, but, just then catching a glimpse of her brother's merry face and curly head at the door, she forgot altogether what she had been talking about, and subsided into a calm. The door opened, and Edward burst into the room, performing a series of evolutions; whirligig No. 1 bringing both hands into sudden and dangerous proximity to Mary's ears, whirligig No. 2 leaving a bouncing kiss upon Mrs. Terrie's cheek, and whirligig No. 3 landing him square upon his seat.

"Why can't you behave yourself, Ed?" said Mary, smoothing her hair; "you're so rough there's no peace with you in the house; there's no denying that."

"Well now, Moll," laughed her brother, "my private opinion is, that women are always for war rather than for peace; so, on that principle, I am perfectly reconciled to my bellicose disposition."

"Quite a gallant sentiment," said his elder sister, laughing. "What puts you in such glee to-day, Edward?"

"Oh, Jennie, we are to have such a jolly day of it to-morrow. There are a dozen of us going a-fishing; and I'm to deliver a speech at the Lyceum in the evening, a grand affair, no doubt. First-rate horses, first-rate roads, first-rate spirits, first-rate weather—nothing under the sun to hinder our fun. Now, Molly, dolly, *don't* you wish you were going along? I see you are looking a little cloudy. That's the reason, I'll bet a sixpence. Never mind, dearie, I'll get up another party, and take you soon. Ladies are the best company after all. Heigho! Father, just give me a piece of that meat, will you? I'm desperately hungry. Helped poor old Jake a full mile and a half with that basket; bless me, it's heavy enough to break a fellow's arm."

The family having chatted as long as they thought it convenient to stay, dropped off to their various duties, leaving Edward to discuss eagerly, beef, beans, potatoes, &c., and last, not least, the peaches and cream, upon each and all of which he regaled himself, and unreservedly pronounced them good.

CHAPTER II.

THE evening being quite damp and chilly, Mr. Timothy Gamp was seated before a comfortable country fire, alternately scratching his head, and smoking his cigar. Mr. Gamp having been left by his parents pretty much at his own disposal, had grown up with a strong predilection for porter-houses and club-rooms, considerably augmented by continual indulgence since arriving at the age of manhood. He had in early life set up for himself with a capital of nothing but unbounded assurance, and, after having rambled about the world in quest of adventure, had at length settled himself to work, and had gradually risen to the dignity of keeper of a free-and-easy retreat for young men, in Catharine street, New York.

His business prospered finely, and everybody wondered why he should have left his stand for one less profitable in the village of Laconia. They knew that a rival house had been opened opposite, but that was a thing that might be expected anywhere.

The facts of the matter were these. Mr. Gamp, while the fitting up of the other porter-house was in progress, kept a vigorous lookout upon the motions of the intruder. One day he saw the face of the proprietor turned inquisitively towards his window. Nobody knew why, but that night he started off on a journey, leaving his affairs in the hands of an agent. He never returned again, but went directly about looking for another situation. He had been recommended to this place by Mr. Dunn, a wholesale dealer in liquors of every

description, who generally spent the summer there in company with his daughter.

Had it not been for an ill-favored squint about the black eyes, and a savage-looking protrusion of the upper lip, Mr. Gamp's physiognomy would have been decidedly agreeable. These latter characteristics were however swallowed up, as it were, and rendered null and void, by a certain oiliness of speech, that never for a moment was forgotten, and that had gone further in his business than the pleasantest eyes and most conciliating mouth in the world.

He looked about him very complacently, quite satisfied apparently with the result of his operations, but evidently a little perplexed upon some subject or other, which perplexity induced the scratching of the head before alluded to. He debated the matter aloud with himself, a habit of his, when nobody was by.

"I wonder, now, whether that would be a good plan. Stiff necked parson, temperance judge, sanctified elders, and a host of confounded ranters all about me here. It'll hardly do now, I should judge." The worthy gentleman cocked his head upon one side, and looked inquisitively up at the handsome clock on the mantel, as though modestly requesting its opinion. "It'll hardly do, at present. I'll wait awhile, till this business is fairly under way, and then it'll be an easier matter. Make a handsome room in that tremendous loft, and get cards and dice out here and I'll fleece them. O-oh, yes—I'll fleece them. Blast that Schroeck, what on earth did he want to pop up for, just as I'd got my machinery working there. It makes a fellow plaguy uneasy too, the fancy of his happening along, as though he'd dropped out of the clouds, to do a body some mischief that nobody but him's got the power to do." Having quietly consigned his absent friend to perdition, with a composing squint he looked again into the fire. It burned cheerfully away, sending a ruddy glow out into the room.

This room was the whole lower half of what had been a good sized house, with the partitions torn away, newly papered, newly floored, newly furnished. The large fireplace stood directly in the middle of one side of the apartment, flanked on either hand by deep recesses, hidden mostly from view by freshly painted lattice-work, and filled with casks of the very best Otard brandy, Holland gin, Scotch whisky, etc., etc. At the upper end stood several small marble tables, surrounded by tasteful cottage chairs. One corner was partitioned off to serve as a passage-way to the cellar below, where oysters were cooked, ice-cream frozen, and other similar operations performed. Opposite the fireplace, shelves were ranged one above another, displaying in a manner that might have tempted a Diogenes, decanters, red, white, yellow, sparkling like so many gems in the fire-light. Oranges, lemons, peaches, apples, the finest of every species, lay lusciously inviting, piled upon dishes on the counter. A few tolerable paintings adorned the walls, for the most part imitations of Hogarth, with one or two landscapes of doubtful execution. A large, handsome clock stood upon the mantel portentously ticking away the hours, and on either side of it two vases filled with dahlias and artemisias. The oil-cloth upon the floor was new and pretty, and the small chandelier hanging from the ceiling lent an air of positive elegance to the apartment. Directly in front of the fire-place, stood a tall fire-screen, upon which was pasted one of the identical placards, that had so disturbed the farmer's quiet in the morning.

The windows were all closed except a small one over the door, which had been evidently forgotten, where the pale moon glanced down only to be mocked by the rosier glow within. The proprietor sat there with his feet stretched out before the fire, communing silently with himself, until the flame gradually died away, and the coals lay, slowly fading among the ashes. Then he pushed back the screen, arranged some wood upon the andirons, ready for kindling in the morn-

ing, and, after satisfying himself that there was no danger in leaving the few dying embers to smoulder themselves away, passed out and locked the door, leaving the room bathed in the glimmering moonlight that found its way through the little top window. * * * * *

Tick—tick—tick—all dark and still, save the flicker of the moonbeams, and that measured tread of Time, stepping—stepping ever onward to eternity.

A blackened ember falls now and then upon the hearth, as a sigh of wind echoes among the rafters of the dreary loft above, and sighing fitfully down the great chimney, dies out in the silent room below. Clouds come marching up to the zenith between the placid moon and the uncovered window. The darkness deepens, and the stillness grows more still.

One solitary star looks down upon the time-stained roof, and passes softly on beneath the lowering clouds. A fiercer gust sweeps out the ashes upon the floor. Another, and a faint spark flashes from their bosom.

Slowly it creeps along the embers, shooting out gleams into the darkness. The sigh swells into a howl. The clouds grow denser, and look threateningly down.

Still the great clock is ticking—ticking calm and undisturbed. The wind, gathering strength, shrieks fearfully through the night. Another gust and the glowing ember flashes to a flame, that circles lovingly the brand above; catching at the splintered logs, and spreading slowly from end to end, it lights up the large chimney, and sends out warmth and light into the deserted room. Sometimes a broad tongue of flame is driven by the angry wind out upon the hearth, as though greedy of a greater prey. A piece of burning wood breaks off, and falls down directly between the irons. Look! a small, dark figure flickering in the blaze, dimly swaying to and fro,—so uncertain in the glimmer that it seems a mist gathering before the blaze. But that dies slowly out, and the tiny figure looms clearly from the flame behind. With lurid

eyes peering eagerly out into the room, and visage distorted with a fiendish leer, it thrusts out its long finger towards the paper on the screen. A shadow, like a fitting cloud, sails over it, and passes again away. The letters have faded out, and upon the broad white sheet, a bloody finger traces out the words

Ruin, Death,
Hell.

A low sound, like fiendish laughter, quivers through the room, as he stands there motionless, pointing—pointing steadily to the words of blood, Ruin—Death—Hell.

As the rays stream out upon the opposite shelves, other forms float upon their bosom, and gradually taking definite shapes, whirl in frightful circles out upon the hearth, over to the marble tables, in among the casks, up around the decanters sparkling in the blaze. Hush! was it the wind? A shriek, grating on the ear above the howl of the autumn storm without. Again—low fierce, scornful, it rings out fearfully to the remotest corner of the room. Then all is still, but the beat of that fearless pendulum, telling faithfully its tale of flying hours and unrepented wrong. Out upon a stream of light a hundred figures glide, and hover above a decanter clear as crystal, and foaming like spray upon the ocean.

They cling upon the glass, and mutter strange words, peering earnestly through the liquid, and twisting in a thousand mazes upon the surface. The calm light changes to a lurid glow, and settles in a fierce halo of burning rays around the glass. Slowly a miniature room gleams out from its centre. A table about which four noble youths sit, smiling pleasantly, and sipping cheerfully from foaming goblets before them. Suddenly one rises with an angry flush upon his face. His hand is unsteady, and his eye gleams wildly, as he turns hastily towards his friend. He too starts up suddenly, and a

dagger flashes to the light. The other sinks with the blood streaming from his bosom. A quick ray falls upon the face of each, as the aggressor drops upon his knees beside the murdered man.

How very like they are, the face paling in death, and the one bending above it in anguish and horror. They are twin brothers!

The wind screams down the chimney, and crushes the flame for an instant. When it blazes again, the vision has vanished, but another stream of light bathes a goblet that sends back rays like those from a thousand rubies. A hovel; no windows—no doors—mud upon the ground—the storm beating through the roof. In the very centre, down upon the bare ground, two infant forms lie stiff and chill. No motion in the little arms—no light in the eyes—no beating in the heart. All still and cold. A woman, brutal and hard-featured lies beside them, now and then rolling heavily over and tossing up her arms. Upon the ground at her feet, a half-drained bottle lies, dearer to her than the nurslings at her side. Again that fiendish laugh of derision mingles with the howling of the wind, and the hovel vanishes suddenly as it came.

The bloody glow falls now upon a glass cut richly, and gleaming with a golden light. A fine mansion nestling among forest trees. A group gathered on the porch, the homestead of generations gone. A father erect in manhood, a mother beautiful and young, children, rosy, happy, all about them; smiles and blessings, looks and words of love.

The mansion vanishes; the broad elms disappear. A great moor, lone and desolate. The young mother, beautiful no more, but wan and gentle, stands with hands and eyes upraised above the bloated form of the waster of her children's heritage, looking earnestly, appealingly, as though to call down aid from Heaven. The children stand shivering, starving, clinging to her dress, crying for the bread that she cannot get to

give. The flame is again swept out, and kindling shines once more upon another.

A pile of straw, and a man lying upon it. Hair matted, eyes red and glaring, tongue swollen from the mouth, limbs convulsed with agony. The fiends leer down upon him, and he sees them! They coil like serpents in the air. They thrust out tongues of fire, and writhe in a thousand frightful contortions about him. They hold out their arms, inviting him to their embrace. He shrieks and starts wildly back, but they beckon him on. Great drops stand upon his forehead. He fights them fiercely away; they only mock his horror. They take some familiar form of wife, or child, or mother, dead long ago of a broken heart, and torment him with their cries. They laugh horribly in his ears. They clutch at him with their fangs. He shudders—shrieks—and dies. A louder, fiercer laugh of scorn echoes over the marble tables, among the casks, up through the broad chimney. The wind whistles wildly as though in answer to the call; the flame dies out upon the hearth, and the great clock is left to tick away in darkness and alone.

CHAPTER III.

"COME now, Molly," cried Edward Clarence, as he dashed in after his book, "don't pout, I beg of you. You are mightily afraid of my killing the horses, no doubt. Now, to tell the truth," whispered he, confidentially, "I've a little fancy of my own, that if father had said, 'Now, Edward, my son, I think there's danger of your hurting the horses to-morrow, you had better stay at home,' I have a certain little sister who would have laughed very hard at the bare supposition of such a thing, and who"——

"Nonsensical notions, Ed," returned Mary, with a sly curl at the corner of a very pouting mouth, "you needn't talk about fancies; your fancies are very ridiculous, I can assure you, you silly boy, to go fancying yourself in love; and with my pretty Kate!"

A very musical laugh put to flight all traces of the ominous pout, and the lips were just moving again when Edward unceremoniously stopped them with a resonant kiss, and flew off, book in hand, down the walk, calling out behind him, "The rest another time, please, sis, I could not stop now, I'm in such a desperate hurry."

Edward sauntered very leisurely along under the trees at the roadside, with a head far more fully occupied with pretty Kate than he had at all suspected, the occupation in which he believed himself engaged being the repetition of the specimen of eloquence he intended to deliver to his assembled audience in the evening. As he seldom had written anything without her knowledge since his first grand essay upon the

"Dog," he could not be expected to deliver an oration on the present important occasion without her sanction and approval. So, although he had secret misgivings about the propriety of such a proceeding now that his saucy sister was beginning to imagine such silly things of him, he was just running down to Mr. Weston's before dinner, to rehearse his piece, and see what she would think of it.

When he reached the door it was standing open, so he walked right in, and knocked at the door of the cosy sitting-room. Kate herself opened it, looking fresh as any rosebud, and not a little surprised at seeing him at such an unusual hour. A mild, pleasant-looking lady in a Quaker dress and cap looked over her spectacles, smiling very benevolently, and saying, "Well, how does thee do, Edward? Going a pleasuring, eh? I'm very glad it is such a fine day, my boy."

"Are there a great many of you going, Ed?" said Kate. "I thought it was this morning you started."

"No, not till afternoon; too much of a good thing is good for nothing, you know. We are to have a meeting of the Lyceum, too, this evening, and a speech; and what do you think, Kate, although Ned Waters and Jim Reid are to be there, I was chosen to deliver the speech."

The young girl's eyes sparkled with pleasure; and her mother, looking quietly up from her sewing, said, "Well, now I don't think that is strange at all. Thou wouldst beat those college chaps in a turn at almost anything, Edward. They pass very well, but they haven't the real genius in them; now thee knows that as well as I do."

"But the question is," answered Edward, "have I the genius? Sometimes I really think I have a little of it, but I have to labor so long before I bring anything I write at all up to my idea of the thing, that's all. Genius should come of itself, Auntie."

Mrs. Weston shook her head very decidedly. "You

haven't learned the road to fame yet, my boy. Labor is the lever that moves everything—hearts, bodies, and souls. Nothing done without labor. A great many have talents, but it isn't every one that knows how to work them. Toil away, don't get any of these foolish notions into your head, and we'll all be very proud of you some day. Do you hear that? Kate often wishes that you were studying law, so that"—

"O mother," interrupted Kate, blushing, "why do you tell over my silly speeches? I'm sure they are not worth repeating, do you think so, Edward?" She looked up into his face to recover herself, for she knew she was blushing, and so blushed the more; but he was looking such an evident contradiction to her words, that, although trying to look extremely self-possessed, she felt more embarrassed than ever. Her mother, glancing over her spectacles, was conscious of a new idea suddenly flashing across her mind. Something quite foreign to the easy intercourse of childhood, certainly glimmered, for a moment, in Edward's glance, and Kate's unmanageable blush. She, however, resumed her work as placidly as ever, with just the slightest smile playing about her face, while Edward held out his manuscript, saying—

"Come Kate, you know I want to rehearse my piece, and hear some critic's opinion before I trust myself in public; let's go out to the grove, and you shall be corrector general."

Kate ran for her sun-bonnet, and they walked away together, Mrs. Weston looking after them as they disappeared, with a look of peculiar earnestness, and quite a naughty confusion of fancies running through her brain. Kate spent a great many cheerful hours in the grove, to which they were hastening. Study, sewing, reading, were all more vigorously carried on out beneath the green trees, where the sun shone, and the birds were singing. Her favorite seat was upon the borders of a little stream that came jumping along over

a brown rock, forming a miniature waterfall. Here the trees cast a pleasant shadow, and the birds and water sang cheerful songs together.

The young girl sat down upon a rustic bench by the water, while Edward stood at a short distance and went through his speech with as much earnestness and spirit as though he had been addressing a numerous audience. It was quite a matter of course to them. He had rehearsed to Kate for years, ever since he began to rehearse at all, and she always listened and criticised as naturally as his sister would have marked his collars, or darned his stockings.

She sometimes found a little fault, but on the present occasion she had nothing but applause to give. Indeed, the piece would have been to other ears than Kate's a perfect little gem of eloquence. Terse, vigorous, and earnest, it bore the evidence of no common talent, while the energetic address of the speaker lent an additional charm to the well-written production.

"Well, Edward, if you *were* a lawyer, you would make a judge some day," said Kate, as he sat down beside her. "You may be President yet, who knows?"

It was said quite in earnest, as her companion knew by the serious look of the great blue eyes, but he didn't deny it. He gazed at her for a full minute as she sat there so calmly looking into the water, then looked into it too, with a thoughtful, absent look that told he was not thinking of it at all.

"What are you thinking about?" said she, suddenly turning towards him.

"I was wondering," answered he, musingly, "who I should have to rehearse to then. It would be very undignified for a President to rehearse at all, unless it was to somebody that"——

"What a comical idea," laughed Kate, with a quizzical smile. "Maybe you won't be President, after all! only sec-

retary of state, or something of that sort. Wouldn't that satisfy you?"

Edward didn't answer her again, nor pay any attention to her bantering, but peered into the water as before. "See here, Kate," said he, at length, drawing her gently over until they could see their faces in the water, "don't you think we make a pretty couple?"

His companion drew back while the tell-tale blood rushed to her face, belying her careless tone. "To be sure I do; you know I always had a pretty good share of vanity on my own account, and as for you, why, I consider you tolerably good-looking; I believe other people do, don't they?"

Edward did not seem to fall in with her jesting humor, nor indeed to notice it at all, but that might have been only pretence. "No, but really now, Kate, I have been thinking that I love you more than I love anybody else in the world, and if I *should* ever be anything or anybody, it would be nothing at all if you didn't talk to me, and encourage me as you do now. And all honor and pleasure and wealth would do me no good unless I could make you happy. Why, I am sure we love each other more than everybody else, why not always, Kate?"

This was said so seriously that there was no laughing it off. Kate's heart fluttered very much, and she kept her eyes fixed upon the water. "How *can* you talk so, Edward, when here we are nothing more than a couple of children! I really wonder that such a thing should enter your head. Three or four years hence it would be more reasonable, but now"——

She stopped because she could not get any further. Edward read something very pleasant in the downcast eye and failing breath, more pleasant, perhaps, than anything she could have said.

"To be sure, Katie dear, we are young; you are not quite sixteen, but I am twenty, although I *look* so boyish, and I

don't expect we are to run away or anything of that sort, but if we do love one another, we might as well find it out now as ever. 'Tisn't like two meeting one another that haven't grown up together, and played together, and studied together all their lives. 'Tisn't falling in love at all. We've been in love always, and I think it's high time we found it out. Now, I know you love me, Katie dear; just please say so, and I'll make a lawyer, or President, or anything you choose."

Now Edward had informed her of the same fact a hundred times before, but not in just the same way, and he almost always called her "Katie dear," but somehow it sounded so different now. She tried to speak, but the words wouldn't come. She felt very happy, but for all that, poor, silly little Kate! she finally laid her forehead on Edward's shoulder, and sobbed as though she were hopelessly wretched.

All this time Mrs. Weston had been sitting, revolving a great many schemes, very agreeable ones, apparently, judging by the peculiarly benignant smile that every little while glowed over her placid brow, and played about her mouth. When Mr. Weston entered, and, as he had always done from the day they were married, gently pressed his lips upon her forehead, she looked so particularly pleased that he said, "Prithee, what has happened, Rachel? Thou hast some cause for rejoicing, I am sure."

"I don't know," she answered; "perhaps so; wait a bit and I will tell thee."

Uncle Weston, as the whole village called him, was a Quaker of the first water. Nothing had ever been known to provoke him to anger. Taking ever his Redeemer as his pattern, he strove with every power of his soul to walk in His footsteps. Always opposing the wrong, always upholding the right; firmly, steadily, with a judgment that seldom erred, he was regarded by his neighbors as a sort of oracle to be consulted in doubtful cases. Many a quarrel that would have

made the lawyers chuckle, and impoverished the clients, had been settled by him, to the entire satisfaction of all parties therein concerned.

As Edward and Kate came sauntering up the path, Mrs. Weston pointed significantly towards them, saying, "There's not an ill-looking pair; Josiah, dost thou think it?"

Her husband turned towards the window and watched them for an instant, then turned about, and looked with a curious, half laughing expression into his wife's face.

"And what then, Rachel?"

"Why, doesn't thee see they can't always be children?" said she. "See how tall they are."

"Well, and what then?" in the same tone as before.

"Now, Josiah," answered his wife, a little piqued at his quizzical manner, "thee needn't pretend not to know what I mean. Thee knows they can't go on so much longer. It'll either have to stop, or else"—She turned her mild eyes full upon him with a happy smile that spoke her meaning very decisively, and he answered accordingly.

"Rachel, my dear, thou art certainly beside thyself. Surely thou wouldst not think of *marrying* our Kate already."

"Not of marrying her already," said Mrs. Weston; "but thee knows it takes sometime to think beforehand of such a thing as that. Now say, wouldn't it suit thee better to have Edward Clarence for a son-in-law than any young man in our village?"

"It would, certainly; Heaven bless the children," said Mr. Weston, something very like a tear glistening in his eye as he watched them coming up the walk. "But, Rachel, how silly we are;—such mere babies—half a dozen years hence is time enough to think of such a thing. Pooh, pooh! how ridiculous."

"Does thee know how old they are now, Josiah?" said his wife, laying her hand on his arm.

"Why, I believe Edward's nineteen or twenty, but Kate's

only fifteen, and they've never done anything but read story-books and play baby-house. No such whim ever troubles *them*, I'll warrant me."

"Don't thee believe it;" answered the lady. "And what canst thou mean by saying that, when Edward is nearly through his profession, and Kate is such a capital little house-keeper?"

"Oh well," answered her husband, "it's just because she has played baby-house so much that she is something of a housekeeper. Oh, they're too young, don't speak of it again Rachel, for the credit of thy wisdom."

"Thou wilt find that housekeeping is a very essential acquirement, in consideration of the matter of which we were speaking. But Josiah," said his wife softly, fixing her clear, loving eyes upon his face, "dost thou remember just how old thou wast when thou put the ring upon my finger, and I promised thee never to remove it till we had joined heart and hand irrevocably for life. I have been thinking since they went out of that moonlight night of thy eighteenth birthday, when we wept so bitterly at parting, and promised never to marry until thou shouldst come back with enough to buy a little place, and take me for thy own true wife. I don't think that we have ever repented that we plighted our faith so young, and I don't think thou shouldst complain if they go and do likewise."

This last argument being a decided clincher, Mr. Weston deemed it prudent to content himself with looking affectionately upon his wife, and humming a tune in an under-tone to himself, while Mrs. Weston went back to her chair, laid away her work, and passed out to see about the preparation of dinner

CHAPTER IV.

THE afternoon was as pleasant as all parties had expected. At one o'clock a merry party started from the village in a four-horse wagon of very accomodating dimensions. The vehicle in question contained some twelve young men, most of them at that doubtful age that feels mightily insulted at the expression of a shadow of doubt on the question of their manhood. Two or three, however, had evidently a right to turn up their noses at the rest, bestowing upon them the euphonious appellation of "snobs," which they accordingly did upon every convenient opportunity.

These gentlemen, having arrived at the age of two or three and twenty, and being students at a neighboring college, were usually looked up to as standard authorities on a great many doubtful questions, such as the most approved method of wearing a cravat, the most graceful tip of the hat or swing of the cane, the most genteel manner of cultivating a moustache, and numberless other important matters, that they considered pertaining peculiarly to the station of sophomore or junior in an institution of learning.

As for Edward Clarence, although he felt a considerable contempt for these gentlemen and their acquirements, he could not quite escape the infection so natural to his age, and unconsciously imitated them in many minor particulars, while they, falling in with the current of public opinion, and captivated by his pleasing manners, condescended to pronounce him a decided "wunner," a chap that would make something one of these days, if he only cultivated himself a little more, and wouldn't do everything so carelessly.

One member of the party was considerably in advance of all his companions. Mr. Higgins was the gentleman under whose auspices Edward was becoming initiated into the mysteries of the Æsculapian art. He had come merely for the sport of fishing—the only species of amusement for which he had any taste, and of which he was passionately fond. He was a tall, spare man, with a face that never wore any expression but a most lugubrious smile, to which another's fiercest frown would have seemed quite an agreeable contrast. So pinched and meagre, so forlorn and desolate, one might have fancied him perpetually meditating suicide, had he not always taken such excellent care of his precious health, never starting from home without extra coats and shawls enough to smother an ordinary man, "in case," he said, "a shower should come up, or he should be unavoidably detained after nightfall." The consequence of all this care was a violent fit of fever and ague every two weeks, and the pinched appearance just noticed.

The back seat was allotted to this gentleman, Edward Clarence, and a bashful boy in a very high collar, with a head projecting very much as a turtle's would come out of its shell. The young collegians were seated in front, swinging their canes with such tremendous flourishes as were quite detrimental to the self-possession of the spirited horses, who, every now and then, catching a glimpse of them brandishing in the air, started off at a pace that required considerable skill in the driver to control.

"Halloa, Dick," cried young Reid, as they came in front of the new saloon, "jutht hold-up a minute here. I left an order with Gamp that I want to thtop for. I'll jump out for a thecond. Won't you take a glath of thomething before we thtart, boyth?" All declined the invitation except the bashful boy in the back corner, who blushed as though he was expected to answer for the company, but couldn't summon resolution to speak, and Mr. Reid went in alone.

A minute afterwards he came tripping elegantly back, followed by a boy carrying a basket containing a few bottles packed in straw, and a dozen or two of handsome oranges. As he jumped into his seat again, he turned to his fellow-dandy, exclaiming, "Thith ith at my expenth, you know (the lank man on the back seat smiled graciously at this information, as he had been half fearful lest a tax should be levied upon the company); that man ith a very enterprithing fellow, Mithter Myerth. He kept a thaloon in Catharine threet. I uthed to patronithe him there, now and then. That finely furnished thaloon ith quite an ornament to our village, do you not think tho?"

"Certainly," answered his companion, "we shall have chance for a little life now; sleigh-rides in the winter, and picnics in the summer are nothing unless we can make a little show of something more than bread and butter, and it's always been such a trouble to get anything out here, that somehow we never have any fun at all."

"Yeth," said Mr. Reid, passing his fingers thoughtfully through his whiskers, "all the boyth rethiding in the village have cauthe for rejoithing, I am sure. You alwayth want thuch a plathe to give thpirit to any thort of thport."

Here the bashful boy so far forgot his dignity as to frown and shake his head violently several times, but suddenly recollecting himself, he looked at every one in the company to see if any one had noticed him, and finding himself unobserved, looked so relieved, that Edward, who was casting a sly glance sidewise, had to bite his lips to keep himself from laughing. He liked the looks of the boy, who, for a short time, was studying with a literary gentleman in the village, and determined, if possible, to scrape acquaintance.

"Are you much pleased with Laconia?" he asked; "almost every one likes it that comes here."

"Yes sir," answered his companion, "I like it very well."

"Have you ever visited here before?"

"No sir."

"I think it's about one of the prettiest spots this side the Atlantic," said Edward, glancing at his companion's face. "Look behind you, now; isn't that beautiful?"

The gentleman addressed looked very much afraid to stir, but being thus appealed to, turned his head stiffly around, neck, collar and all. The scene they looked upon was indeed very beautiful. The village lay at the foot of the hill whose summit they had just gained, smiling up among the trees. Clouds of smoke curled slowly up in the clear air; fine mansions lay, scattered here and there, among the neat white cottages, not one of which bore marks of indolence or neglect.

The three principal churches each stood on a little rising ground, distinctly visible from almost every portion of the valley. Now and then, among the gay autumn foliage, a narrow stream glistened in the sun, while cattle browsed upon its banks, or stretched themselves out in the warm sunshine. All had that cheerful, thrifty appearance that speaks of unusual enterprise and content.

The bashful boy for a moment forgot his bashfulness and exclaimed eagerly "How beautiful!" as he gazed admiringly upon the landscape lying serenely at his feet.

Edward watched his sparkling eye, and began to entertain decided hopes of him. "We think we have a very industrious set of villagers here, Mr. Steele?" said he inquiringly.

The "Mr. Steele" recalled that personage to the remembrance that he must "hold up his head and speak like a man," so he turned round stiff as ever.

"Yes sir, I should think so."

"There are other things too," resumed his companion, "that make me like it very much. We have excellent fishing here, and nutting, and hunting too, at some seasons of the year. A great many visitors come here from New York in the summer. Two families among them are friends of ours, Judge Ainslie's and Mr. Dunn's. Indeed, with the latter gentleman's

lively little daughter I carried on quite a flirtation last summer,—on brother and sister terms, you know."

"I know Mr. Dunn very well," ventured his listener.

"Indeed?" exclaimed Edward; "I am going down to New York with him to-morrow. I have a number of little matters to attend to there, and Dr. Higgins will excuse me, I'm sure." He winked confidentially at his companion, thereby encouraging him wonderfully, as the gentleman referred to turned round, and eying him stoically, replied,

"You know, Mr. Edward, that no young gentleman prospers in the study of medicine unless he treads the mill steadily. I'm afraid you are getting a little neglectful. It'll never do unless you stick to it. Prudence is what you want, sir, a little more prudence."

"Well," answered Edward, "I believe I do now, that's a fact. Father says so, and you say so, though I can't see it myself; I suppose I am a little reckless. Some day I may get to be as exemplary as Dr. Higgins, who never leaves his office but three times a year, to go a fishing for his breakfast and his health. I can assure you, Dr. Higgins is quite a pattern for us all. Even when he has the ague so badly that he has to lie for half the day on the settee, he *will* be at his office. Never taking rest, even in illness."

"Tread the mill steadily, Mr. Steele, that is my motto," said Dr. Higgins. "Never lose a penny by neglect. I have to be very careful of myself, my health is so poor, but for all that I've sat up night after night many a time in difficult cases. And yet, it isn't a great deal I've been able to scrape together, only a little, a *very* little." He looked at his companions with that same doleful smile, and shook his head sorrowfully.

Edward took the chance of giving another sly wink at his new friend, who began to think him a very pleasant fellow. "You said you knew Mr. Dunn, I believe," he said.

"Yes sir."

"He's quite a gentlemanly appearing man."

"I don't like him at all," said Mr. Steele, shortly.

"Why not?" inquired Edward.

This question requiring an answer longer than he had courage to undertake, Mr. Steele merely twirled his thumbs, and answered, "Because I don't."

Edward left the subject until some more convenient opportunity and joined in the general conversation, which, by this time, was becoming quite animated.

The great wagon jolted along over the road, the air was clear and inspiring, the country gay and inviting. Everything tended to the enjoyment of the young men, who alternately jested, laughed, and sang, with the exception of Mr. Steele, who did not dare, and Mr. Higgins, who did not desire to join in the sport of their companions.

When they had ridden some six or eight miles, the wagon, after making a sudden curve around the base of a precipitous rock, drew up before the door of a dingy cabin on the bank of the river. Oyster-shells lay scattered along in front of the door, fish-nets were spread upon the grass at a short distance, and boats lay high and dry upon the shore. Over the door a sign hung out, consisting of a piece of weather-stained board, with the inscription in chalk,

"BOTES AND BATE HERE."

The young men jumped out, and Mr. Reid, as spokesman of the party, knocked imperatively at the door with the head of his whalebone cane. An elderly woman made her appearance with a very wide-ruffled cap upon her head, and a large ear-trumpet in her hand.

"Have you any boath to let to-day, my good woman?" said the young gentleman, with foppish dignity.

The old woman didn't say anything, but the moment she saw his lips move, she whisked the huge bowl of her ear-trumpet so close to her questioner's face that it seemed a

dubious question if it was not her intention for him to jump in, and inserting the other end in her ear, stood listening for his orders.

"Have you any boath to let to-day?" again inquired the young gentleman, in a somewhat louder tone.

"Boats to let? Yes. Walk in," she answered shortly, dropping her trumpet, and motioning them to follow her. She turned round, and called shrilly to a stunted man who made his appearance in a red shirt, and a pair of blue cotton pants. Having arranged matters with this worthy gentleman, our friends proceeded to remove their fishing apparatus from the wagon to a rickety boat that had been shoved off by the stunted specimen of humanity before mentioned.

"Oh! young gentlemen," exclaimed Dr. Higgins with a doleful shake of the head, "you are not going in *that* shaky concern. If we escape drowning, it'll be a mercy. But, at the least, we shall some of us take our death-cold. Don't you see it leaks through the bottom? To go in that would be a willful tempting of Providence."

"First time I ever knew he believed in a Providence at all," remarked Edward in a side whisper to Steele.

"Never mind, if it makes us all sick, it'll give you business, doctor," said Myers, jocularly. Dr. Higgins's lank figure looked like anything but business, as he cast such deprecating glances upon the leaky boat, which, in spite of him, the young men were making the repository of their treasures.

"We mutht retholve to take what we can have, if we can't have what we would take; thee here, doctor, thith'll keep out the chillth," remarked Mr. Reid, swinging his basket of wine into the boat, and stepping cautiously in the glory of newly polished boots across a small puddle that lay in the centre.

"Oh, we mustn't mind a drop of water on such expeditions as these," cried Edward, springing lightly in after him.

"Come, William, you are a novice at fishing, you may as well sit by me for the benefit of my skill."

Young Steele stepped awkwardly upon the seat, as three or four of the party winked at each other in appreciation of his queer collar, while Myers gave the corners of his a complacent pull, and tossed his head with true dandy nonchalance.

The fishing, at this season, was excellent, and the fishermen, with the agreeable prospect of capital sport and well-filled baskets, were in the best spirits possible. The dilapidated state of the boat caused them little annoyance, seeming to be rather enjoyed than otherwise by the greater portion of the company. Dr. Higgins, indeed, lost some of his sport in his constant fear of the water at his feet, and Mr. Reid had some difficulty in concealing his anxiety with regard to his shining boots. At length he bethought himself of an expedient.

"Harwood, I'll thteer for you," he said, making a cautious move towards the stern. "I'm a firht-rate pilot."

"Well, you can have the place and welcome," said his friend, slipping to one side. "I've no great taste for the business."

Reid seated himself carefully in the end of the boat, elevating his feet upon the seat, to the no small amusement of Edward Clarence, and the envy of the less politic doctor. When they had reached a suitable place and cast anchor, they commenced operations immediately. The fish nibbled well, there were plenty of them, and our party were pretty good fishermen, so that the sport was of the most exciting character to lovers of the art, in which William Steele alone was an entire novice.

After two or three hours the anglers began to be satisfied with their acquisitions. Dr. Higgins's grim smile was grimmer than ever, as he crowded in the last fish that his capacious basket could possibly contain, and proceeded to lay

aside his line and fishing-hooks. Young Clarence and Reid had also succeeded to their entire satisfaction. This last young gentleman, having become weary of his constrained position, and feeling that he could never survive the disgrace of making his appearance in the village with muddy boots, had laid aside those articles, placing them with his stockings upon the bench at his side, and stowing his bare feet under the seat in close proximity to the water in the boat. Myers was, or pretended to be, extremely busy with a kink in his line, and Steele, who, notwithstanding his efforts, had accomplished very little, continued his operations, feeling quite flushed at the consciousness of a few mischievous smiles that were flying about at his expense.

At length he felt a sudden jerk at his line, so violent as almost to snap it asunder. "Now then," he thought, "I shall beat them all hollow. Not a bite has there been like this to-day." He pulled hard and fast, and at length gave his prize a sudden, triumphant swing out of the water, when lo, and behold! a large black bottle dangled into the boat, greeted with a roar of laughter that sent the blood in torrents to the young man's face.

"That's some of your work, Myers, I'll be bound," cried the young man sitting next him. "I thought there was no kink in your line. You've been meddling with Reid's champagne."

"Never mind, Steele," said Edward, pitying his confusion, "I've had the same trick played on me before now. Your hook only happened to get caught in Myers' line, and he's taken advantage of the accident, you see."

But the poor fellow did mind very much. He couldn't help minding. Had it been any one else they would have felt mortified. But to him—there is no knowing what might have happened, had not the general attention at this moment been diverted by a short shrill cry at the stern of the boat, followed by a splash into the water. Every one started sud-

denly round, only to see a pair of exquisite pants and naked feet performing various pantomimes in the air, in company with a huge crab that evinced a decided affection for the great toe of the left foot, and formed a picturesque ornament to that interesting member. The remainder of the body to which those articles belonged was entirely concealed under the water, notwithstanding the firm grasp of the amphibious gentleman's hand upon the side of the boat. Poor Reid had been so much engaged in laughing at Steele, that he had forgotten the crabs crawling under the seat, and this was the lamentable result. He had saved his boots and lost his head.

The first thing to be done was to fish him out as speedily as possible, and rub his head dry, a process which seemed highly satisfactory to the young gentleman himself, and, when it was ascertained that no injury had been done, highly amusing to his comrades. They wisely concluded that they had enjoyed sport enough for one day, and turned the boat shoreward; Edward volunteering to act as steersman for the rest of the journey.

When they had unloaded their boat, they proceeded to remove the basket of provisions they had brought from the wagon, and to seat themselves upon the grass to partake in a homely manner of an excellent repast.

Young Reid seized the wine, pouring it out, and passing it with a smirk to each gentleman present. Edward hesitated for a moment as he remembered his father's opposition to the saloon, but, satisfying himself that he could have no objection to wine, when temperately used, took his glass with a smile, and sipped it with all the more relish after his afternoon's task.

Dr. Higgins very complacently observed that, "it was excellent wine; never tasted better. Thought Mr. Reid quite a judge."

Mr. Reid observed that, he "never uthed any but the betht;

a tip-top article or none at all for him; he conthidered himself thomething of a judge, thertainly."

The bashful Mr. Steele alone declined touching anything but water. They urged him to join them, but, although evidently alarmed at what might be the result of his temerity, he positively declined; whereupon Mr. Myers took occasion to remark in an undertone to Mr. Reid that, "he *was* a green 'un," and Mr. Reid honored the shirt-collar and the head it contained with a prolonged stare that made poor Steele color up to the roots of his hair, and down to the tips of his fingers.

"Mithter Clarenth, I believe you are to addreth uth thith evening," remarked Reid. "Pray, upon what thubject do you treat?"

"The young men of our country," answered he.

"Ah, yeth," answered his questioner, with a patronizing air. "A very good thubject, thertainly, a grand thubject. I intend to choothe that for my own at the neeth quarterly. A motht inthpiring theme. Mr. Thteele, do you ever thepeak in public?"

"Sometimes, sir," said he, hesitatingly.

"Pray couldn't you give us a stump speech now," said Mr. Myers, laying his head impressively on one side; "we ought to have something of the kind."

The poor fellow looked so frightened, and Myers evidently took such delight in teasing him, that Edward thought it high time to turn the tables, so he called out, "Oh, I have it, I have it, Ned Myers must give us his last oration. Come now, don't make any excuses, we'll have it, won't we boys?" Some half-dozen seconded this proposal, but Mr. Myers earnestly begged to be excused, declaring that he "could not remember a word of it, hadn't looked at it since," &c. &c.

Edward, who, having known him intimately at school, secretly imagined that he had never written it at all, inasmuch as he had never been known to compose a page worth

reading in his life, insisted upon it so strenuously, that Myers began to be quite alarmed.

"Give us a stump speech then," cried Edward, "we'll be satisfied with that."

The gentleman protested, and insisted, and declared, to an extent that was actually surprising, but at length young Clarence, who was really very much averse to giving pain, even when actually deserved, let him off with a wink at his timid friend, who felt considerably reassured by this time, and who fully understood the drift of the whole affair.

At length, having finished their repast, Steele and Clarence walked away, leaving Dr. Higgins taking his sixth glass of wine, and solemnly denouncing all who were so imprudent and improvident as to indulge too freely in that inspiring beverage.

"Why did you refuse to take the wine?" said Edward to his companion, as they walked away.

"Because I'm a teetotaller, and never will be anything else as long as I live," said his companion earnestly.

Edward was a little surprised at such a decided opinion, but merely remarked, "You must have some peculiar reason for being so earnest, Mr. Steele."

The championship of Edward had done a great deal towards loosening the tongue of William Steele, so he answered quite naturally, "I have cause enough, Mr. Clarence."

"Call me Edward, if you please," interrupted his companion, "and I shall call you William."

"Well," said he, "Edward then. When I was a little boy I had a schoolmate whose father died of *delirium tremens*. I saw him when he died, and he kept on cursing the *first* glass, and raving about the first temptation. I signed the Temperance Pledge then, and I'll never break it, if I can help it, to the day of my death."

"But you don't imagine," said Edward, "that you haven't sense enough to keep from killing yourself. Why, you might

take two or three glasses of wine every day of your life, and never die a drunkard. Temperance is necessary even in eating. I would as lief be a drunkard as a glutton."

"Yes, but there isn't the same temptation to that. There is that, I tell you, in liquor of any kind, that chains the body and soul of those who indulge in it. It's a fire that once kindled, wants fresh fuel every day and every hour. It's a thirst that's never quenched. I'll never get under its power, *never*."

Edward was astonished. He looked at Steele, thinking inwardly that the turtle was coming out of his shell, and wondering how he would look without that astonishing collar.

They were now rejoined by the rest of the company, whereupon Mr. Steele became suddenly rigid and stiff as ever, keeping always close by Edward, as though it were a mighty comfort to have anybody at hand with whom he could feel quite at ease.

It required some expedition for the young men to reach home, and refresh themselves with a thorough ablution and a new toilette in time for the evening Lyceum, where Edward delivered his address to the edification of the public, and the pride of his more immediate friends.

CHAPTER V.

MISS ARAMINTA DUNN reclined at ease upon a richly-covered lounge, with an open letter in her hand. The long parlor bore marks of the wealth and taste of its owner. The softest velvet carpet in the world spread out luxuriantly upon the floor, like a turf scattered full of the loveliest flowers of summer. Silk and lace curtains fell over the windows, supported and looped by cornices and arms of the most exquisite workmanship. Mirrors, reaching from floor to ceiling, gave back the soft light in a softer glow. Pictures, the work of our most eminent artists, were arranged with a view to the best effect. Bronze branches, carved to imitate leaves and flowers, poured out their jets of light.

Ornaments of ormolu lay scattered here and there upon the tables. Chairs, elaborately carved, and spreading out their velvet cushions, invited to repose. A splendid clock, that every hour sent a lady riding out from a secret chamber to sound the hour with a silver bell, stood covered with glass upon the mantel. Alabaster figures, bending in graceful attitudes, were disposed about the room. Nothing was wanting that money could buy, or the most exacting taste desire.

Miss Araminta was not paying the slightest attention to any of the pretty things about her, but lay there, poring over the contents of that open letter. You could easily see that she was one of those pets of fortune to whom nothing had ever been denied. She was not faultlessly beautiful, but all that art and dress could do, heightened the comeliness of the fair face and graceful figure. So delicate, so fragile, as though a

breath might destroy her, and yet so much animation in the curve of the lip, and flash of the eye, that one was instinctively drawn to her side, in spite of whatever contempt for doll-faces they might venture to express.

Mr. Dunn, having been left a widower during the infancy of his daughter, had trusted her almost exclusively to servants, who had instilled into her mind whatever suited their fancy, while her father himself, a devoted man of the world, seldom found fault with the flattery and adulation every one lavished upon her, or with the paramount importance in which gaiety, dress, and show were held by those who instructed her.

It was not strange that the young lady, surrounded by such influence, should gradually come to be extremely vain and flippant, nor was it strange that her father, although almost idolizing his child, should fail, engrossed as he was in the pursuit of wealth and pleasure, in strengthening those links that bind together the parent and child. He often wondered, with uneasiness and chagrin, that she seemed so indifferent to his absence, never reflecting that all through her life he had left her night after night in quest of pleasure.

It was not particularly unnatural, that as soon as she was old enough to be his companion in the fashionable world, she should choose other associates than her father, or that while he was playing whist at the card-table, or drinking Madeira in the supper-room, she should polk and schottisch with the fine moustaches and Spanish-looking eyes in the parlor.

The letter she held in her hand was from her accepted lover, a Southern gentleman whom she had met at a private ball, the handsomest and most amusing gentleman, she thought, she had ever seen. It would have been difficult to say whether the young lady was most in love with the unexceptionable cut of his coat, or the orange groves and spacious halls of his Southern inheritance, for both had certainly much to do with the matter. She had, however, determined to marry him with or without her father's consent, which he had

decidedly refused, threatening to disinherit her for ever if she disregarded his commands. Like all other spoilt beauties, she was extremely willful, judging that herself was the proper arbiter of her own affections, so the next night had been appointed for their elopement.

She hastily crumpled the paper into her pocket as she heard her father's ring at the door.

"Well, Minnie, you see I am here in time, and have brought your old friend with me," said Mr. Dunn, saluting his daughter with a kiss.

The young lady stepped forward, delicately extending the tips of her fingers to Edward Clarence.

"Good evening, Miss Dunn," said Edward cordially; "I am delighted to see you looking so well. City air hasn't injured you yet."

"Not at all," she answered, putting on some airs, that somehow seem indigenous to freshly blown young ladyism. "I think I am better now that I have resumed my old habits again. I am getting quite dissipated, I can assure you."

"Indeed!" said Edward; "I am sorry to hear that. Dissipation in young men is bad enough, but in young ladies it is ruinous. What have you been doing?"

"Nothing at all," answered the lady, with a slight shake of her head, "nothing but going to the opera one night, to a party the next, and having a reception the next, ever since I came from Laconia. You saucy fellow, how dare you express so free an opinion to a lady?"

"You know," he answered, "I always say precisely what I think, and that is more than you expect after listening to the compliments of your city gentlemen. Don't try to be angry, for I see through it all so plainly that it will do no good. But I had almost forgotten, Molly sent you a bouquet of late dahlias. Excuse me, I will step into the hall for them."

Araminta was "perfectly charmed," thought the flowers

"divine," and wished so much she could see dear little Molly, she had a great secret for her.

"You have a new dress of the finest china crape for your next party; can't I guess a secret now?"

Araminta smiled and shook her head, thinking to herself how much more important an article a husband must be than a new crape dress, and wondering what her country friend would say if she only knew it.

"That reminds me," exclaimed she, "we are to have a party here to-morrow evening, and you must stay till it's over. I have sent invitations to the prettiest young ladies in the city. Maybe you'll lose your heart to some of them.—By the way, how is Kate Weston?" added she, turning suddenly round, and looking in his face.

"Quite well, I believe," he answered, with a vain attempt at indifference, "was the last time I saw her."

"Which was the last thing before you came away, of course," said Miss Dunn, highly delighted at his confusion. "But here comes the tea,—I wonder where Father can be staying."

Mr. Dunn had merely stepped up to his library to lay aside some important papers he had brought home, but soon reappeared, and seated himself leisurely at the table. His daughter looked earnestly in his face, as he sat there with silvered hair and anxious brow, and it would be unjust to her to say that she felt no pang at the thought of that father's sorrow when he should find her gone. But then she reflected that he would forget both sorrow and displeasure soon. What rational objection could he have to Adolphus Marteau? She knew her own heart better than her father, and his ideas about her lover were utterly false. Who could think him insincere with that full dark eye gazing so calmly into theirs, or who could for a moment doubt his pretensions to aristocracy, with that elegant air marking him indubitably as one of the *elite*?

When the supper was brought in, Mr. Dunn ordered the waiter to bring him a little rare old wine from the cellar, "some," added he, turning to Edward, "that was imported in '32. The rarest I have ever tasted."

"You must excuse me, if you please," said his young guest, bowing, "I prefer taking none to-night."

"Why surely," answered Mr. Dunn, with a slight smile of ridicule playing over his face, "you are not going in for teetotalism. I hope you are not such a fool as that, my boy."

"No, I don't know that I advocate that, though I do think it a question whether it's not as good a principle as was ever carried out. My father thinks so, at any rate."

"Tut—tut—nonsense; why, according to that I should be a wretch worthy of contempt and banishment, and the Lord knows what. My opinion is just this, that all those people are making desperate fools of themselves, and will have to hide their diminished heads after a couple of years. To think of condemning a man for selling or drinking wine. I'd much rather go without my breakfast than my glass of toddy, and if I drink it myself, I'm sure I'd allow the same privilege to my poorer neighbors."

Edward shook his head with a dubious smile. "I have known some excellent men who were teetotallers, my father among the number, and I have a fancy that way myself."

"Edward," exclaimed Mr. Dunn, "there's no knowing where it will end when such a fine fellow as you twists such fanatical notions into his head. Depend on it, 'twill injure your prospects in life. Nobody likes to see a young man so illiberal. He is always set down as one of the 'holier than thou' sort of people that every body is anxious to avoid."

"You seemed to be anxious for our benefit, when you sent Mr. Gamp to our village," said Edward, not knowing exactly how to answer the last appeal; "if you could hear what my father says of his establishment, I'm afraid I should be out of favor altogether."

At this moment the waiter set the wine upon the table, and Mr. Dunn, pouring out a glass, handed it to the young man, begging him to try it, just try it, nothing more.

It was difficult to decline so pressing a request, so Edward took it, with his thoughts reverting to the headache that had been the consequence of last night's indulgence.

"You don't intend to say that you are not going to patronize Gamp at all?" asked Mr. Dunn.

I may take a little cream or oysters now and then, or even an odd glass of wine, but for all that, I think his *entrée* will be a great injury to our village. I don't like his looks either; I'd venture to say he has had a hand in some black affair or other in the course of his life. I noted him well when a party of us dropped in after the Lyceum last night."

His listener bent his head quite low over his plate, but Edward could see a shadow pass across his forehead, so dropping the subject, he commenced a lively chat with Miss Araminta, who alternately sipped her wine and nibbled her cake, very much as a canary bird would have regaled himself on sugar and water.

The waiter, having occasion to descend to the kitchen for some trivial article, informed the company then and there assembled, that "Tim Gamp, what shut up in Catharine street, had been and sot up business in Laconia, and that he was mighty glad on't, cause he never could get a drop o' nothin' when he was a stayin' out there in that uncivilized place."

He did not stay to notice the effect of his observation, which created a very sudden and violent commotion.

"Faith, an' its the Evil One hisself that's been afther sending him out there," cried the jolly-looking laundress, who sat comfortably warming her feet at the fire. "In my opinion, all the rumsellers ought to be clapped into jail till they come a little to their senses."

"Hush, Biddy girl, I never heard nothing like you," said the cook, stopping short, with the tea-pot in one hand, and

the knife-basket in the other. "Can't you remember that Mr. Dunn himself is a dealer?"

"I can't help it, Ann," was the emphatic retort; "if me own father was a dealer in that same, I'd say he had niver a bit of business to be murderin a man, an' dhriving the sowl out iv him intirely. Och! Teddy, darlint, I thrimble for ye!"

Ann merely answered with a slight shrug of the shoulders, intended to intimate that she wouldn't be so bold for the world, but her husband, who was an inveterate stutterer, and who had been snoring in the corner, raised his head suddenly, stammering out, "N—n—n—now wh—wh—what are you tr—t—t—tr—trembling over, Biddy?"

"Thrimbling is it I said?" exclaimed she, "thrimbling! It's a killing iv meself I'll be, if Teddy gets into bad ways agin. Sure but it would break my heart to say them poor childher in the throuble they was in afore. Och, sorra's the day that iver that child o' Satan opened his rum-shop in Laconia!"

"J—j—just c—c—co—comfort yourself, Biddy," answered the coachman; "t—t—tain't at all likely he'll t—t—turn out bad again. He's had enough."

"Well thin," she rejoined, "an' I hope he has, an' it isn't Bridget Toole that would be saying anything conthrary, an' accusing her own brother iv things he'd niver do, only there's no telling; when the dhrink's once afore his nose, he can't kape hisself from tasting it. An' me rejoicing so at the being so sure he'd niver git a chance at it agin!"

"Well now," said the cook, "I always told you not to let him away from you; he'd be not a bit better off there than here. If a man's got a mind to be a rascal"—

"Now," cried Miss Bridget angrily, "if anybody dares to say that same o' the brother that's been the life o' my heart for twinty year an' more, iver since we set foot on the sile of Ameriky! An' wasn't he the best-natured, and the honestest,

an' the lovinest lad on airth, till the crathur destroyed him intirely? An' when meself once put it in his head to lave all his throubles and thrials behind him, an' go where he could git niver a dhrup o' the nasty, hateful, bastely, murderin stuff, didn't he mind me?" And isn't it hisself that's the stiddiest, industrisest husband an' father in all Laconia?"

"But what made him drink at all, then?" said the cook. "It didn't pour itself down his throat. I've got no patience with these silly chaps that can't let the fire alone, when they know it burns them. I"—

"Och," interrupted Biddy, "but you lay the blame at the wrong door thin, an' I'll stan' up for Teddy as long as I live, that he'd never kape a shop to sell rum till the manest crathur upon airth. An' how is a poor, good-natured boy like him to kape out o' danger? He'd a'most thry to swim acrost the say, if any spalpeen was baste enough to ax him, and how's he to help dhrinking, when there's some dirty varmint of a Dutchman on every corner, a winkin' an' a blinkin', jest like a sar-pint waiting to devour. Och, but Ameriky's a glorious place if they would dhrive away the crathur! If St. Patrick wasn't clane gone intirely now! Many's the time I've cried all night long, a wishing an' a wishing that he'd jist step down an' dhrive all the sperrits, rum, an' gin, an' brandy, an' whisky, out an' out of Ameriky, as he dhrove the sar-pints out of Ireland!"

"M—m—may as well take it easy," stuttered the coachman. "D—d—don't believe he'll get t—t—tipsy again."

"Niver a bit do I vex meself for nothing," answered Biddy. "They kape a talking an' a talking about old maids, an' a saying that it be's so bad for the timper, but I don't belave that same at all, at all, for there's niver a married woman I know, that's raaly as happy as Biddy Toole, if they'd only be afther letting her baby alone."

The baby referred to, being a man of thirty with a wife and some half-dozen children, the cook winked at the coach-

man, and the coachman, dropping back upon his couch grunted at the cook, while Biddy, sitting bolt upright, folded her brawny arms, and looked, with her broad face a little cloudier than usual, but yet with an expression of complacent satisfaction, straight into the fire.

Now it so happened, that while all these matters were being discussed in parlor and kitchen, a little weary barefoot girl stood shivering on the side-walk, taking a survey of the premises, now standing on tiptoe to gaze between the curtains at the beautiful things in the parlor, now stooping with wistful eyes to see the comfortable fire in the kitchen, where the servants seemed enjoying such a cosy chat among themselves.

Then the little girl sat down upon the carriage step before the door to rest herself, and leaned her head upon her hand. She was thinking, poor child, if she could only stretch herself down upon that dry floor, and sleep till morning. How pleasant and motherly that great comfortable-looking woman must be, sitting so straight in the chair by the fire. How cosily that man settled himself to sleep in the dark corner beyond. How delicious that bread and butter and meat looked, as the other woman stowed them away in the closet. How hungry and tired she did feel!

But she must go home. That was no place for her. She wondered whether the watchman would let her sleep on a bench in the Parade-ground. No, she was almost afraid to do that, but her cellar was so damp, and cold, and dark, she thought she would rather venture it. Why had they turned her out of her place when she had tried so hard to please them? Why must she wander about the streets, homeless and friendless, when others rolled all day in their beautiful carriages, and slept all night on beds of down? Why had her mother sent her to school, and kept her neat and clean so long, while she scarcely spoke to her, and left her alone for days together? Why had she put her away from her to a strange

place, and never come near her for a year? And why did she come at last, one night, pale and thin, and cry over her, and kiss her, and go away again, telling her that she could never see her more? It was *very* strange.

And then her mistress had turned her away without her knowing why. She had washed the sidewalk, and run of errands, and taken care of the baby, and done everything she was expected to do, and nobody had found fault with her. Where could her mother be? She had gone to their old lodging, but nobody knew anything about her, and then she had paid the woman in the basement her last shilling for letting her sleep a few nights on the floor. How nice that fire looked!

Then she thought maybe that pleasant woman would pity her, and let her sleep there. No, it was no use; that was not the mistress of the house, and she wouldn't ask. If they only knew now, just how she felt, and would believe her story. She had wandered from house to house, being driven rudely away, or unnoticed entirely, until she thought she would have to die soon, and almost wished she could. If she could put her trust in God, as her teacher had told her once, perhaps she could die easier. She didn't know.

She might have been some twelve years of age, or maybe a little older; thin and sallow, with great brown eyes, and a profusion of dark, untended curls blowing out from beneath the tattered sun-bonnet. Her neck and face were red with cold; her delicate feet were blistered with her weary journey, and her light dress but miserably warded off the chilly evening blast.

So the poor little girl sat there on that dark October night, utterly wretched and hopeless, while men hurried by to happy homes and cheerful firesides, where wives and mothers and children were waiting their return, and boards heaped with plenty were spread temptingly within. While the carriage of the belle whirled by towards some scene of triumph, and

the beautiful girl within, cast through the darkness a passing glance at the heartsick wanderer without. While the great house on the corner, glowing with light from garret to cellar, threw open its doors to the satin-slippered child of fashion, tripping haughtily in the consciousness of unquestionable *ton* through the mazy waltz or less-inspiring quadrille. While men and women, with hearts where God had planted tenderness, and love, and pity, settled themselves complacently in luxurious Voltaires, with that living sermon on their neglected duties weeping at their very doors.

And *such* as her, wandering through every highway of our proud city, struggling against scorn, neglect and oppression, suffering hunger and cold, and dying in airless rooms and mildewed cellars of starvation and neglect.

As the large woman drew her feet from the fire, a sudden impulse seized the child. She started to her feet, and ran hurriedly down the basement steps.

"What's that?" said the cook, as the child's figure flitted by the basement window. "There's a rap at the door, Thomas."

"I'll go," cried Biddy, casting a glance at the snoring coachman; "sure I'm niver a bit afeard in me own house, an' if ye weren't a coward, ye wouldn't be ayther."

"Won't you please give me a piece of bread?" said a sweet childish voice from the dark area; "I'm *very* hungry."

"Jist come in, darlint, an' let us get a sight of ye, ye've got a swate way o' spaking, anyhow." So saying, Biddy opened the door wide, and the child, eying her timidly, sidled into the hall.

"Why need you trouble yourself to bring in all the beggars out o' the streets?" said the cook, as Biddy ushered her protégée into the room. "I never saw nobody like you."

The child looked at her protectress, thinking it was a pity there wasn't somebody like her, and Biddy answered, "Sure now, ye wouldn't be afther dhriving such a wee thing as

that away from your door, widout giving her a bit of bread when she axed it. Och, but ye never had childher o' yer own, an' poor soul, how should ye know?"

"You've had so many yourself, Biddy," answered that lady contemptuously, "that you know a sight more nor I. I've seen enough o' the little impostors that run about the streets lying and begging, and stealing, too, when they get a good chance. Don't talk to me, I know—I know."

This was said with a dignified toss of the head and wave of the hand, intended to indicate that she knew more than her companion was capable of comprehending. Biddy only smiled, and drew the little girl to a seat by the fire, saying, "Now Ann, won't you plaze til lave me to meself, and let me do as I like, so long as I don't hurt you. Where did you come out of, my little girl?"

"I came out of a cellar in Laurens street," answered she. "It's a dreadful place."

"And how did ye iver come til git there?" asked Biddy.

"Why, I was sent away from my place, and couldn't get another, because I couldn't show a recommendation. Everybody said I told falsehoods, and wouldn't try to help me."

"Where are your father and mother?" asked the cook.

"I havn't any father, and I can't tell where my mother's gone; she went away from me before I went to my place, and I never saw her but once since."

"Oh, a likely story," cried the cook; "haven't I heard all sorts of 'em, and an't they all pretty much the same thing! If you are fool enough to believe her, I an't."

"Well, poor thing," interposed Biddy, "you are tired enough til rest yourself a bit. What happened til you to be turned out o' your place?"

"I don't know," answered the girl; "I tried hard to do everything, and they just called me ill names, and sent me away."

The cook raised both hands, and opened both eyes at this

rare piece of audacity, while Biddy asked. "And didn't you git your wages? What did you do wid them? Sure they didn't kape them from you."

"I didn't get anything, ma'am, but my clothes, and an odd shilling now and then. I paid all I had to a woman for letting me sleep on her floor, and that's where I'm going now, only I'm so hungry."

"Faith now, and aren't ye ashamed to let a poor thing go away from ye, and her only axing a bit o' bread? Ameriky's a glorious counthry, but there's sorra a bit of compassion in some of your silfish sowls." As Biddy spoke, she walked towards the cupboard, and took therefrom a large piece of bread, some butter, and a bit of cheese, then, turning to the cook, she said, "Come now, can't ye jist show a body that it's yerself can be a little gracious, and be afther gitting a bit of the cold mate ye set away in the safe."

The opinion Miss Biddy evidently entertained of her selfishness, by no means tending to render her "gracious," she answered shortly, "Not a bit of it does she get, the little wretch. Don't I know she's telling me lies as fast as she can speak, an' don't I see her mother waiting out on the sidewalk for her this very minute?"

The little girl cast an involuntary glance towards the window. A female figure stood leaning against the railing, with her face veiled, and the gas-light from the sidewalk shining full upon her form.

"It is my mother!" cried the child, dashing for the door, with a wild look upon her face that was easily mistaken for fear, and hurrying into the hall.

"Not so fast," said the cook, grasping her roughly by the arm, "I want to know where your mother is now? Thomas, Thomas."

The tone and manner frightened the child more than the words, and she burst out crying, calling "Mother—Mother," while the sleepy coachman, thus appealed to by his wife, raised

himself up, scratching his head, and grumbling "Wh-wh-what the d-d-deuce is all this noise about? C-c-can't ye leave a feller alone?"

At this moment the parlor door opened, and Mr. Dunn called over the stairs, "What confusion is that, Ann? Who's calling 'mother' so loud?"

"Please, sir, it's a little liar, that Biddy's brought in from the street, and I'm holding onto her for a minute."

"Just bring her up here, and I'll lecture her. These confounded beggars thumping at the door every hour in the day."

It didn't occur to the gentleman to ask himself how many of the trade it was his business each year to turn upon the streets, although, if the record were kept faithfully in Heaven, their names were neither few nor far between.

Ann pushed the sobbing child before her up the stairs, while Bridget followed in her wake, and Thomas, sinking back upon his lounge, muttered to himself that it was c-c-co-confounded p-p-provoking to have a young w-w-wagabon' a' waking on him up."

As Mr. Dunn looked at the culprit, Edward, who was standing in the doorway, noticed the same shadow that he had seen once before that evening flit suddenly over his face. For some reason or other, he neither "lectured" the child, nor censured Bridget, simply asking why she came to be out so late. But that was not strange. Few persons of any discernment could look at the young, sad face, and not feel that her lot, be what it might, was a hard one. Young Clarence thought so as he watched the great tears falling upon her tattered dress, and he stepped forward into the hall.

"Let me go to my mother," cried she. "Oh dear, I'm sure she will be gone, and she doesn't know I am here." She burst out in fresh sobs to the apparent gratification of the cook, and discomfiture of the laundress, who looked indignantly upon the whole company, inwardly condemning what she considered their undisguised cruelty and injustice.

"Do you pretend to say that you did not know your mother was outside?" asked Mr. Dunn, casting a troubled glance towards the child.

"I never knew a word of it; I didn't indeed, sir;" cried she, "won't you *please* let me go to her?"

Edward stepped to the door with a vague idea that her story might be true, although it certainly appeared quite improbable. The figure was just starting from the walk, when he called out, "Here, my good woman, your daughter's crying for you."

She turned suddenly round, and fixed upon him a gaze of fierce scrutiny through her heavy vail, then, seemingly satisfied with her observation, stepped up to the door, and looked into the hall.

"Mother! mother!" cried the child, springing towards her, "where have you been all this time? I thought I should die."

For a moment the dark eyes beneath the vail were riveted on Mr. Dunn, then the head was turned so that he could not see her face, while she merely took the hand of her daughter, saying, "Come away, child, I didn't know where to find you," and turning away, drew her down the steps, and out into the street.

The party in the hall were too much astonished to follow, but Edward, as though struck with a sudden fancy, came out after her. "Here, wait a minute, I want to speak to you."

The woman came back, and stood at the foot of the steps, with her face turned partly away, with an air of some impatience, as though anxious to be gone.

"Has your daughter been with you to-day?"

"No, sir," with utter indifference.

"Didn't you know she was here?"

"No, sir," in the same tone as before.

"Did you say you hadn't seen her at all?"

"Not to-day," a little impatiently.

"And can't she work at anything to keep her out of the streets?"

"To be sure she can, and has; and if people hadn't hearts like stones, she wouldn't have been here to-night." This with a little quick stamp of her foot upon the pavement.

"Tell me your story, my good woman," said Edward, considerably interested in the strange couple. "I have a sister who has commissioned me to find a girl of that age to tend her baby, and if she can obtain a recommendation, I may try her."

"The woman looked eagerly up into the handsome, manly face, then turned her own quickly away, saying, "If you would come, sir, to-morrow, to see me—if you would, sir"——

"Well, then, I will," said Edward, "upon my word. Where do you live?"

She whispered a moment to the child, and answered, "At — Laurens street, sir, in the basement."

"And who shall I ask for?" said he.

She hesitated a moment, then answered, still averting her face, "Ask for Sarah Collins, sir," and walked quickly away.

Mr. Dunn drew a long sigh of relief, the cook turned up her nose and puckered up her mouth, Biddy surveyed the party with a complacent smile, and Miss Araminta retreated into the parlor, thinking to herself that it was not strange for Mr. Clarence to make such an appointment, knowing so little as he did about the ways of the city, and "after all, he was only a farmer's son."

"What did the child tell you?" said Edward, closing the street door, and turning to the servants.

"Why, she told us a pack of lies, sir," said Ann, tossing her head, "about being in a place, and not seeing her mother for a year, and getting turned off for nothing at all, and

being abused into the bargain. And said she hadn't seen her mother since, the little hussy, when the woman only said herself, she hadn't seen her before to-day."

"Och, sir," cried Biddy, glancing indignantly at the cook, "but the little sowl was half dead wid the hunger and fatague, an' niver a body but could aisy say that same, barrin' they hadn't Christian hearts in their bodies. Whin she sated herself at the fire, she seemed starvin' intirely wid the cold, but she got sprighted up a bit, whin she was afther gitting warm, sir."

Ann, who was mightily provoked at the turn affairs had taken, stalked by her complacent companion with an air of the most emphatic contempt, muttering something about "Paddies," and "simpletons," and "impertinence," the drift of which Biddy neither caught nor cared for, while Edward and his host went to join Miss Minnie in the parlor."

When the mother left the door, she walked hurriedly on, still grasping the hand of the child, and not speaking a word till they were in a narrow, lonely street where nobody was passing. Then she sat down on a step, and drew the child to her bosom, sobbing and quivering till the little girl was actually frightened. "Mother, what is the matter? Please don't cry so; and I'm so glad you've found me. I was almost starved," she sobbed, putting her arms about her mother's neck. "I'm very hungry now."

"If you had starved at *his* door!" The woman twitched her head nervously, and lifting her child in her arms, hurried on to the nearest bakery. The array of biscuit and cake looked very tempting to little Maggie, as the mother drew the vail closely over her face, and left her to enter the store. When she returned, she thrust a large bun into the hand of the child, and, drawing her again into a retired place, took her upon her lap, and watched her as she ate, while burning tears rolled down the mother's cheeks, and more burning drops were seething in her heart.

CHAPTER VI.

WHEN Edward Clarence visited the place designated, in Laurens street, on the following day, he found the little girl neatly dressed, with her hair smoothly combed and curled, and a new pair of shoes upon her feet. He had been thinking all day of the singular circumstances under which they had visited the house on the previous evening, and his interest was not at all lessened at seeing her thus metamorphosed into a very interesting, dark-eyed child, with waving curls, and a face that bore the impress of a thoughtful, earnest soul within.

Her mother was not there when he first entered, so he commenced a conversation with the child, inquiring of her with regard to her former life, what she was capable of doing, and endeavoring to ascertain if it would be expedient for him to take her out to his sister. She answered him with a simplicity that quite convinced him of her truthfulness, telling the same story that she had told Biddy on the previous evening. Still, it was unaccountable, the fact of her having been turned from her place, for she knew not what, and that when she had always endeavored to do her duty. It was hardly safe, either, to pick up a child out of the streets, without any recommendation. But then, he reflected, if she were hardened and unprincipled, she would have concealed the truth from him with regard to their sending her away in such a disgraceful manner.

He watched her narrowly as she answered his questions;

but could not catch the slightest indication or consciousness of guilt.

"Haven't you any one to whom you could apply for reference, child?" said he.

"I don't know of anybody, sir. Nobody knows me but them."

"And where is your mother? She was to be here, too."

"She said, I had better see you first."

"Isn't she coming at all then?" said Edward, a little surprised.

The child hesitated, and looked timidly into his face.

"Come now," said he, beginning to suspect some double-dealing, "what did she tell you to say?"

"Why sir," she answered reluctantly, "she told me to tell you to please try me, but she would rather you"—Here she hesitated again, and turned quite red.

"Would rather what?" said he, quite astonished.

"Why she didn't like much,—that is, she thought,"—stammered the child.

"Thought what, child?" cried he, with a little impatience. "Speak out,—don't be afraid. I shall be a great deal more likely to take you, if you tell me the whole truth."

"Thought she had better not see you, but she didn't want me to tell you that,—Oh dear, what shall I do?" Here the little girl burst into tears, and put her hands up to her face.

"Are you afraid she will whip you?" said he, still more astonished.

"Oh no, sir!" cried the child, sobbing violently, "she never does that."

"Well, what are you crying for then?"

"She said that if I told you that, you wouldn't take me;—but I couldn't help it—Oh dear—Oh dear!"

"Can't she take care of you, then? She has brought you plenty of good clothes in a very short time. I don't understand it."

"Oh no, sir," sobbed the child; "won't you please take me; I will be so good—please try me, *just* please."

"Why can't she take care of you?" asked Edward. "Can't she work?"

"Oh, it isn't that, sir," was her answer. "I don't know why, she didn't tell me, but she can't, she said she couldn't. Indeed she *can't*, anyhow. Please try me."

This was said so appealingly, that Edward's curiosity and interest were raised to the highest pitch. He sat thinking for some minutes, then turned to the child and asked her the residence of her late employer. "Tell me, my little girl, said he soothingly, as she continued sobbing, "and if they have done you injustice, it shall make no difference with me. I will go and see them, and come again to let you know the result."

As he spoke, he rose from his chair, when a small door at the back of the room opened, and a woman rushed towards him. He knew by the figure that it was the same he had seen on the previous evening,—but the face! Bloated, haggard, bearing the mark of intemperance and guilt. Eyes wild and fierce, forehead seamed with the impress of grief and dissipation, and a restlessness in every motion that told too plainly of peace destroyed for ever. She stood up before her visitor with those great dark eyes fixed upon him, her breath coming and going, while she, apparently, possessed no power to speak. He began to doubt her sanity, but she spoke, at last, with a violent effort.

"You *must* not go, sir; *they* would tell you the truth, and you would never return again. As I live under heaven, *I* will tell you the truth, and the God who reigns above us will bless you if you save my child. Maggie," said she, addressing the child, "come here." She drew back the curls from the childish forehead, "Does that look, sir, as though guilt or falsehood had left its stain upon her? Oh sir, by all that you hold pure and good, by the mother who nursed you, by the sisters

who watch for you, by the fair girl whose love you are hoping for, do not go without taking my child. See here, sir."

She opened the door by which she had entered, and pointed to a dark damp room within. "There was where I found her staying, with eight women and children around her, and not a morsel to keep her from starving; and she must come to worse than that, unless some hand is put out to save her. Sit down, and I will tell you a story." She spoke rapidly, without stopping for a moment, as though fearful, if she should, of being unable to resume.

"Two birds built their nest in a green tree. The sunlight fell upon it, the sweet air blew around it. There was plenty of food and drink, and the birds sang merrily all the day long. They made a feathery lining for their nest, so that none of the birds about had as pleasant a habitation as they. By-and-by two little fledgelings filled their parents with rejoicing. They fluttered over them, sang their sweetest songs, and brought the softest feathers for them. The father flew away for food, and the mother fed them, chirping for joy, and hovering always over them.

"But the spoiler came. An evil bird one day destroyed the father. The mother waited and waited, but he did not come. She could find no food for her fledgelings, and one of them died. At last the slayer of her mate came, and charmed her with his fierce eye away from her desolate nest. The fledgeling went too, but when they were in a desert-place, her enemy flew away, and left her there with drooping wings and wounded heart.

"Perhaps if she had been left alone, she would have recovered. But other enemies came. They gave her poisoned water to drink, they picked away her feathers, they tore and bruised her sadly, until the poor wanderer lay, bleeding and quivering, without the power to stir. All this time the little bird had been getting larger and prettier. The wings were growing strong, the feathers were white and downy, and the

little throat now and then tried to warble a simple strain. But when the mother was bruised so badly, she thought her little one must die. There was nobody to feed her, and the birds of prey began to look with baleful eyes upon her. Then a friendly hand was stretched out to save her, and she was taken away from her mother. The poor sick bird cried piteously after her fledgeling, but was glad to let it go where it could have food and care.

"It was a long time that she stayed away, but at last she wanted to see it so much that she fluttered to its new home, and all loathsome and diseased, with her feathers torn away, and her eyes red and fiery, fell quivering down beside it. She only stayed for a little while, and flew away again. But they saw her there, and hated her, and so thrust the little white dove, pure and beautiful as it was, away from them. She went out, scarcely fledged, chirping with terror and hunger—to struggle, and—to die."

The woman stopped for a moment, then throwing herself before him, she cried in anguish of spirit, "Let it be *your* hand that shall rescue her! Rum and the rumseller have been my ruin. No voice censures them. But the finger of scorn, the hiss of contempt,—the biting taunt,—the fire that is eating out my life,—are all for me! For *me*—their victim,—their slave! But for them, I should have been able to look proudly upon a husband and two beautiful children, to nurse them and care for them, and hold them to my bosom as happier mothers do.

"But all are gone—all but this one, and she—the last bright thing on earth,—I must thrust from me, that she may escape the vortex down which I am whirling with no hope, no remedy, no friend. And I swear to you by Heaven, she is free from stain as the lily of summer. I have guarded her from pollution, shut her out from my guilt and shame, kept her always where she could learn that alone that was true and pure, hoping ever, if such as I have any right to hope, that

the day of her rescue would come. I promise you," cried she, falling on her knees, and clasping her hands, "I will never see her more. Take her with you. Deny me not. God has sent you here. I knew it when I saw the pitying smile upon your face last night. Father in Heaven—save my child!

Her voice had been gradually rising with the intensity of her emotion, until the last words were uttered in a wild shriek, as though her heart went out in that brief prayer. She knelt there with hands clasped, and face up-turned, while for the moment, the tenderness of a mother's affection shone from the fierce eyes, and the guilty woman's tears streamed over a face disfigured with drunkenness and vice.

Edward had listened earnestly, with alternate emotions of pity and indignation. As she concluded, he drew his hand rapidly across his eyes. He did not speak directly, for he could not trust his voice, but he looked over to where the child stood crying, half terrified at her mother's manner, and back again to the woman kneeling there. At length he said,

"I will take her with me, and do what I can for her. But do not go back again to your wretched life. There is an asylum for such as you. Take refuge there, I entreat you. Mr. Dunn will use his influence."

A fierce glance of scorn shot over the softened face, and she sprang to her feet. Then, as though stopped by a sudden thought, she dropped her eyelashes, bit her lip till the blood almost came, and stood for some moments evidently struggling hard with some violent emotion.

"You would be happy again," resumed the young man, "if you left all your sins behind, and took refuge where they could not follow you."

"Never, never, in this world or the next. I am past pardon—past pardon," and she shook her head sadly. "And yet, there are those who will have a heavier account than mine to render—those who made me what I am—those who make thousands such as I—those for whom both task and

pastime are to crowd felons and murderers into our prisons, to drive men and women mad," here she laughed wildly, and beat her hand upon her forehead, "to fit them for the pit of perdition to which they are driving them by hundreds, and thousands, and millions. And there is no hand to save, no voice to plead for their salvation. Why don't you make laws, and *drive* the demon from our land? You'll let them go on *for ever*, flattering their victims into hell, while you talk about slavery and no slavery, war and no war, and never raise a finger to put down the master-tyrant of the world, that enslaves more freemen, and destroys more bodies and souls than all the tyrants that ever lived. The day will come for your punishment. When the blackness of darkness shall close around you, when—no, I can never be saved—do not ask me—there now—take her—God will bless you for it—leave me to my wretchedness."

She clasped her child suddenly in one quick embrace, placed her before her new protector, and darted into the street,

Edward, startled at her wild earnestness, and believing from the incoherency of her last words that reason was wandering, started after her, but before he reached the street she was out of sight. He looked up and down, but deeming it useless to search for her where so many alleys and cellars afforded her a refuge, he returned to the child.

She stood weeping bitterly where her mother had left her. He could with difficulty keep back his own tears as he took her by the hand, and, calling her by the name he had heard her mother use, strove to soothe her.

"Maggie dear, don't cry, you shall be taken better care of than ever you were before. Here are two shillings for you if you won't cry, and you shall go for a nice ride with me to-morrow."

It was some time before he succeeded in quieting her, and then he began to think how he should dispose of her until the following day.

"Do you know of anybody you could stay with to-night?" he asked, "anywhere but here."

"I don't know," said the child; "Sally Clark keeps boarders sometimes."

"And where does Sally Clark live?" he asked.

"Just round the corner, sir," said she, still sobbing.

"Well, I will go with you and see," said Edward, pushing her gently before him, and ascending the steps into the street.

As they turned the corner, the child pointed him to a shabby-looking house, over the door of which a piece of painted tin gave notice, in very large letters, that "Boarding and Lodging" were to be obtained within. A dingy brass knocker corresponded with a green door, scratched and battered with hard usage, and a pair of very dirty curtains at the front windows formed a pretty correct index to the character of the landlady.

Sally Clark came to the door to answer the knock, and was very civil indeed when she saw Maggie in the company of so spruce a looking gentleman.

"Walk in, if you please, sir," said she, "and what would you like to have?"

"Can you accommodate this little girl for to-night?" said he, looking inquisitively at the little room into which he was invited to enter.

"Yes, sir," was the answer; "please to walk in here to the fire."

He complied with the invitation on the child's account, and, although not much pleased with the appearance of things, he concluded to leave her there for that night, and to call for her on the following morning, when about leaving New York for his home in Laconia.

CHAPTER VII.

Music and mirth. White satin and blue tarletan floating over the floor, black velvet and green brocade reclining on the sofa. Fairy feet peeping out from trailing skirts, and less graceful ones carefully concealed beneath their folds. Moustaches of every curve and color, false calves of unexceptionable mould, kid gloves of the daintiest white, vests and coats of the latest fashion, displaying to the best advantage the grace of Brother Jonathan, simpering to pretty girls in crape and flowers, and the awkwardness of Uncle Sam, talking politics to would-be-blues in velvet and feathers. Hair dressed in every mode, from *à la Grecque* to *à la Parisienne*, and every mouth smiling just enough to exhibit a row of beautiful teeth, from the excellent set made to order for buxom Mrs. Hezekiah Pillipin fanning herself in the corner, to the row of exquisite pearls gleaming from the lips of Miss Araminta Dunn tripping over the floor.

Gaslight streaming upon the flowers budding on the carpet, the little figures of ormolu, the alabaster vases, the beautiful faces and graceful forms, bathing them all in brilliant beauty. Music swelling through the room from harp and violin; light figures gliding swiftly to the lively measure. Daughters flirting atrociously with brainless fops, and mothers looking on with admiring eyes. All this upon the surface. How much beneath is not for us to know. How many jealousies, hatreds, and heartaches, but more, perhaps, than even a misanthrope believes.

"Miss Araminta looks charmingly to-night," said Mrs.

Pillipin to Mr. Dunn, as he seated himself on the sofa beside her.

Now Mrs. Pillipin being a stout and wealthy widow, the upper tondom of New York had set her down as an excellent match for Mr. Dunn, an opinion in which the lady herself concurred, to the no small discomfiture of that gentleman, who, unconscious of any design upon his devoted head, considered the profusion of smiles and compliments lavished upon him by the coquettish widow as entirely superfluous and uncalled for.

"I may say the same of your daughter," answered the gentleman; "Miss Pillipin looks uncommonly well this evening."

The lady thought he might as well have made it *Mrs.* Pillipin, but she contented herself with remarking—

"Well, I must say, Malvina looks very well, except that she appears so much older than she is. Why, would you believe it, she is scarcely seventeen, and I'm sure she looks twenty. But, dear me, how young you are looking yourself, Mr. Dunn. I declare you do resemble so much my poor, unfortunate husband, and he was called one of the handsomest men in New Orleans. I never see you without recalling him to my memory."

The lady's glance of admiration was utterly lost upon her auditor, who bowed slightly in acknowledgment of the compliment, but did not answer her. Just at that moment, Edward stepped out to dance with Miss Malvina, and the delighted mother exclaimed,

"Pray who is that young gentleman, Mr. Dunn? I do so admire his manner; very much like your own, indeed; so graceful and gentlemanly."

"He is a young man studying medicine in the country with an old friend of mine," said Mr. Dunn, "out at Laconia, where I spend the summer. I took quite a fancy to him when I first went out there, and he often drops in to pay me a visit."

"He has not completed his studies, then," said Mrs. Pillipin, keeping her eyes fixed upon the pair.

"No, madam," he rejoined, "he is"— Just at this instant a stout, red-faced little gentleman, with brass buttons upon a blue coat, waddled suddenly up to them, looking extremely pleased and pleasurable.

"Mrs. Pillipin," said he, "do you never dance?"

The lady interrogated having a decided tendency to dropsy, and weighing some two hundred pounds, replied, with a simper,

"Never, myself, sir; I leave that for my daughter. Indeed, we who have daughters to *chaperon* in the fashionable world, enjoy a privilege that you less fortunate bachelors can scarcely appreciate."

"No Ma'am," said the rosy-nosed gentleman, nodding his head several times in succession, "not at all, Ma'am. Can't say I'm partial to single life, Ma'am. Can't say it's altogether my fault, that I'm a bachelor, Ma'am. Some ladies are very hard-hearted, Ma'am. You must know that by yourself, Ma'am; that is, in some particular cases, Ma'am; now you can't deny that, Ma'am."

Mrs. Pillipin neither could nor would deny anything of the kind, for the prizes of numberless admirers of her maiden charms, and the forms of a superannuated navy officer, a corpulent alderman, and a fortune-hunting German nobleman, who had respectively laid hand and heart at the feet of the lady-millionaire, rose like ghosts to hinder the perpetration of any such falsehood; so the lady smirked, and simpered, and smiled, very much to the amusement of Edward, who was watching the mother of his siren from the opposite corner.

"Perhaps," said Mr. Dunn, "you will bid farewell to the fraternity some day. You bachelors do have a sorry time of it with the ladies. Let them be ever so hard-hearted, it is only natural that they should feel indignant at seeing one of

your class remain so long apparently indifferent, when they know so well the power and variety of their charms."

"Certainly, sir," answered the good-natured bachelor, putting his white kids behind him, and tetering adroitly back and forth upon the toes of his pumps. "Perfectly natural, sir. Allow me to say, perfectly right too, sir. Hope as you say, sir, the day may come for me to bid farewell to the fraternity. Nobody'd be half so glad as myself, sir. But there's no telling, sir. Depends on circumstances, sir."

Now these circumstances, as everybody knew, having reference to a certain other widow, of whom the widow present was mortally jealous, caused this widow to turn up her nose at thought of the other widow, and to change the subject without more ado.

"How is trade now, Mr. Pufton?" she asked, looking as though extremely interested for his answer.

"Why, Ma'am," he answered, planting himself firmly again upon his feet, "none of the briskest, Ma'am. Haven't sold more than a hundred thousand dollars' worth this year, Ma'am. Sold at least a hundred and fifty thousand before this time last year, Ma'am. Don't know how it is, can't account for it, Ma'am. Don't let it trouble me; take it easy, Ma'am. That's my advice."

"Oh, you're a happy soul," cried Mrs. Pillipin. "Well, I consider that every one should enjoy life as far as possible. Malvina, my dear."

The young lady, like a dutiful daughter, had brought her new partner for an introduction to her mother. The ceremony was over before the dumpy gentleman had time to turn round, but he no sooner laid eyes on Edward, than he pounced upon him with ferocious eagerness, regardless of all the laws of etiquette, tearing his new kid glove in shaking hands, and actually frisking his coat-tails into the face of the astonished Mrs. Pillipin, who was still bowing gracefully to her new acquaintance.



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"My dear boy, how are you?" he cried, "'Pon my word now, looking more like a man than ever. How 's father, eh? and mother—and pretty Molly, eh? got over her pet at my kissing her? ha—ha—ha—but I'll do it again, yes, I will now."

The company generally understanding Mr. Pufton, paid little attention to that gentleman's abrupt descent upon the young stranger, except Miss Malvina, who looked extremely disconcerted at the sudden interruption, but thought it more amiable to simper, "Why, Mr. Pufton, what a funny man you are! Did you know Mr. Clarence before?"

"Know him before?" he cried, giving his kid glove another tear in the delight of a second shake. "I think so, my dear. Known him a good many years, my dear. Capital fellow; fine baby was Ned Clarence, and a tolerable looking chap yet, my dear, quite tolerable." He finished with a little satisfied bob of the head, evidently meaning that he considered him something more than tolerable, while Mr. Dunn exclaimed:

"Excuse me, Mr. Pufton, I had forgotten entirely that you were one of Mr. Clarence's earliest friends."

"And truest friends, sir," said Mr. Pufton, with eyes twinkling in an ecstatic manner. Bless my heart, boy, I think as much of you now as your own father does, you know I do. Like old Higgins as well as ever? He likes good Madeira well as ever, I'll be bound; that is, when the article comes already paid for, and he don't take enough to hurt his constitution, ha—ha—ha!" Here the puffy little Mr. Pufton gave Edward a facetious little poke, whereupon Mrs. Pillipin rolled up her eyes at Mr. Dunn, Miss Malvina reiterated her assertion with regard to his being "such a funny man," and Edward himself, although a little abashed at finding himself the object of considerable attention from the company around, looked and acted highly delighted at meeting one of his warmest friends.

At this moment supper was announced, and Mr. Dunn, slightly bowing, took the widow on his arm, while Edward

followed with Miss Pillipin, leaving Mr. Pufton to escort a lady just behind them, who might have been a wax figure just modelled in Paris, so exquisite was the tint of cheek and forehead, so elaborate was the coiffure, so perfect even to the falling of a tassel was the *tout ensemble* of the lady's personal appearance.

Mrs. Morley languished into the supper-room with the air of a drooping lily, while her rosy companion carried his fat little body upon a very slender pair of legs, presenting very much the appearance of an apple dumpling upon stilts. But then nobody noticed it. The fashionable lady herself didn't notice it. Wasn't Mr. Pufton the comfortable recipient of some fifteen thousand dollars per annum, and hadn't he one of the largest liquor-warehouses in New-York? Mr. Pufton didn't notice it. He, the jolly little soul, never noticed anything in particular. Nobody could imagine how he had made his money, for he never thought much about business matters, although, like other men, he was fond of having plenty of money, and spending it as fast as he conveniently could.

He had always been a bachelor, not because he did not admire ladies, but because he couldn't win the lady he admired. Having waited for some ten years after first proposing to her, his hope had taken a sudden bound in the event of her becoming a widow. But now, after the lapse of four years, he seemed to be no nearer his goal than before, for the lady, although sensible enough to appreciate his many good qualities, remained inexorable, giving him no encouragement whatever. Mr. Pufton fell in love with all the pretty girls, petting and kissing them precisely as he would have done so many interesting babies, while the star of his first love never waxed pale through all the clouds and shadows that hovered ever between it and him.

"Here is a seat, Ma'am," said he, "allow me," and he placed it nearly as possible by the side of Miss Malvina, who was standing wedged in a corner among a posse of dandies and

dolls, all chatting and laughing together, like so many magpies fastened in a cage. "Now what will you take, Ma'am? Some lobster-salad, Ma'am, or pickled oysters, or a little of this boned turkey? All very good to appearance, Ma'am."

The lady, gasping faintly at thought of the possible effect pickled oysters might have on her complexion, preferred a very little of the lobster-salad."

Mrs. Pillipin, on the contrary, deemed it inexpedient, as the various luxuries had been provided for the express purpose of gratifying her taste, to let the opportunity pass without improving it to the full extent of her capacity. Indeed, the piquancy of the viands set before her was so obviously appreciated by her, that the Honorable Mrs. Morley, of Baltimore, set her down in her own mind as a vulgar upstart, with whom she would not associate on any terms whatever.

Edward, notwithstanding his natural self-possession, felt a little awkward in the present company, a circumstance not at all singular, inasmuch as his simple country code of politeness had taught him to prefer others before himself, while the politeness here practised seemed to consist in crowding everybody that stood in everybody's way, and, in general, making themselves, and their partners of course, as comfortable, and every one else as uncomfortable as possible.

Edward, however, was not in the least troubled from his want of initiation into the mysteries of the fashionable world, for Mr. Pufton did the work of both. He pushed, and crowded, and trotted backwards and forwards from the ladies to the supper-table, and from the supper-table to the ladies in the most laudable manner, until his little shiny forehead was quite wet with perspiration, and his little rosy nose glowing like a very purple turnip-radish.

"Here is something you must taste, ladies," he exclaimed, lugging along a splendid decanter, and followed by a waiter who managed to squeeze along a silver salver, capable of containing three or four glasses. "This is some of my best wine,

and it beats Mr. Dunn's all hollow. Never saw anything to equal it. Been in my warehouse cellar twenty years and over. Allow me, Ma'am." He poured out the sparkling beverage, offering it first to Mrs. Morley, then to Mrs. Pillipin and her daughter, then to Edward, while Mr. Dunn smilingly remarked,

"Do not exult too much over me, Pufton, I warrant you my brandy as far exceeds yours, as your wine goes before mine. You know I never like to play second fiddle, even to such a superior importer as yourself. I think you said trade hadn't been brisk with you this year."

"No sir," said Mr. Pufton. "Not at all, sir. Never saw it so dull, sir. Can't account for it, sir."

"It has been directly different with me. I have cleared full thirty thousand this year, above all expenses, and if I do not make it fifty before the year's out, I shall be quite dissatisfied."

"Well, sir," answered Mr. Pufton, "it's a good business, sir, and when you keep the best, you are sure to succeed in it. I wanted Edward here to enter my warehouse, but his father, would you believe it, had conscientious scruples,—as though it would hurt him, sir."

"Excuse me," said Edward, "you are mistaken, Mr. Pufton. That was not the ground on which my father's objection rested. He considered the free use of wine an evil, and consequently thought it inconsistent to allow me to sell it. He never imagined that any injury would result to me from entering your warehouse."

"And you think it an evil, too, sir?" said Mr. Pufton, glancing at Edward's untasted wine. "Now, my dear boy, I beg of you not to be fanatical upon this subject. People will think you quite a baby, if you are afraid to take an innocent glass of wine, for fear you won't be able to stop until you are tipsy. They will indeed, won't they Ma'am?"

Mrs. Morley, to whom this question was addressed, bowed

languidly, while Mrs. Pillipin, who had been sipping the wine with evident satisfaction, facetiously remarked,

"Why yes, Mr. Clarence, if every young man assumed such a position, there would be nobody to get tipsy, and nobody to make other people tipsy, you know."

Miss Malvina, considering her mother's sally an excellent joke, tittered excruciatingly, and the lady herself looked as though she wanted to, but as it failed to draw more than a smile from the gentlemen, both relapsed into an awkward gravity.

The remark brought to Edward's mind the scene he had witnessed in the morning, and he inwardly thought that the event of "every young man assuming such a position," would be about the best thing that could befall the world in general; but having a decided veneration for popular opinion, he considered himself totally unequal to the maintenance of such a principle, and made up his mind that all *his* efforts could make no difference in the state of affairs. How many make up their minds with a precisely similar result.

"Excuse me, Ma'am," cried Mr. Pufton, replenishing Mrs. Morley's glass. "Really, Ma'am, you must pardon my negligence, Ma'am; allow me;" and taking her plate, he hurried off in quest of a fresh supply for that lady to look at and nibble at; while Mr. Dunn had the satisfaction of seeing his less fastidious partner enjoy the exquisite repast with true epicurean delight.

Another circumstance also tended to the gentleman's more immediate satisfaction. Araminta had not danced with young Marteau during the whole evening. He began to hope that her girlish fancy was cooling down, and would eventually cool itself entirely away.

His heart was bound up in his child. Fond as he was of the world and its gaieties, all his real affection was centered in that only daughter. He was proud to see her move among so many beautiful ones, and know that she was more beautiful

than all. He was proud that she dressed with the most splendor, and moved with the most grace of any among her companions, and he kept hoping for the time when she would see from his constant watchfulness and affection, that his love was worthy of a more ardent and confiding return.

By this time the guests were enjoying themselves in a manner showing that they knew how to enter into the spirit of the entertainment. Pickled oysters, turkey, ice-cream, and Charlotte Russe, were disappearing from the elegantly furnished tables. Ladies were being smothered, and their dresses smeared. Gentlemen were making havoc among the Methglin, and Madeira, Cognac and Champagne. Sometimes an unlucky wight tripped over some lady's foot, spilling jelly or port wine over an elegant satin or velvet, while the lady, heartily wishing the aggressor in Van Dieman's Land, felt constrained to smile her sweetest, and speak her prettiest, that she might let him know, that, to her, such a catastrophe was of the slightest possible consequence. Pale cheeks were flushing from partaking of the universal beverage, and all kinds of remarkable capers were cut under the influence of such excitement. Mr. Fitzroy stumbled against one of the tables, knocking off a salver containing some half-dozen splendidly-cut decanters, Mr. Livingston demolished at one blow a beautiful fairy grotto in the center of the table, while reaching eagerly across for a glass of sherry, Monsieur Roc-cieri, feeling a sudden dizziness, and concluding thereby that he had taken quite enough, threw the bottle from which he was pouring some of the very finest Amontillado indignantly upon the floor, as though taking his revenge upon it for having induced such an uncomfortable confusion in the headquarters of his understanding.

When supper was over, the party adjourned to the parlor in the highest glee imaginable. Ladies' tongues were rattling faster than ever, to the delight of admiring beaux, and the contempt of rival belles. Slender dandies in white kids bore

very much the appearance of having worked faithfully all day beneath a broiling sun, both from the burning color of their faces, and the somewhat unsteady motion of their lower extremities. All the gentlemen seemed so superlatively happy as to be ready to engage heart and hand in any enterprise that was proposed; or, in other words, looked quite prepared to enter at once upon what is vulgarly termed, "kicking up a row," had not the circumstances under which they were assembled, prevented any such unlawful proceeding.

In short, they were as zealous in tumbling over each other's toes, knocking each other's elbows, whizzing dexterously about with charming girls, gambling in miniature at the card-tables, and exhibiting every other similar accomplishment, as could have been expected of members of the most fashionable and refined society of this great metropolis of our Western World.

"Where is Miss Araminta?" "Have you seen Miss Araminta?" "Is Miss Araminta ill?" "Where is Miss Araminta?" The carriages were waiting at the door, the ladies were standing in the hall with tassels of every color dangling about their faces, the gentlemen were ranged, hat in hand, watching for their respective charges, but the young lady did not appear. Her father had been to the parlor, drawing-room, supper-room, dressing-room, but she was not to be found.

"How very strange!" remarked Mrs. Pillipin. "I haven't seen her since supper."

"I don't think it's strange at all, Mamma," said Miss Malvina, "Araminta is such an odd creature. She likes to be different from anybody else."

"Well, I believe you will have to give Miss Dunn our adieux," said her mother to the astonished father, as he descended the stairs. "Perhaps the dear girl isn't well."

Miss Araminta not making her appearance, Mrs. Pillipin's example was followed by the other ladies, who, one after another filed off into their carriages, and rattled away, to make

the unexpected disappearance of their young hostess the theme of conversation during their homeward drive.

As soon as the coast was clear, Mr. Dunn hurried up to his daughter's room. It was empty, and everything lay, apparently, as it always did. He advanced to the table. His eye fell upon a small note directed to himself. A sudden chill crept over him, but he tore it open and read,

"MY DEAR FATHER :

"Do not be angry with me. I feel that you cannot appreciate the depth of my attachment to my dear Adolphus, and knew, as the event will surely prove, that your objections to him were totally unfounded. Forgive us, father, we should never have taken this step had I not felt certain that you would not only pardon us, but that you would very soon be proud of my noble husband. He is the handsomest, most affectionate, and the best-educated gentleman I ever saw.

"Before you read this, we shall probably be married, as I intend leaving orders with one of the servants to lay this note upon my dressing-table at the very hour in which the ceremony will be performed.

"I tell you by whom we are married to set your mind at rest. We go from home to the Rev. Mr. Mercer, in Grand street. To-morrow we leave for the East, but expect to be back in one week's time to receive your pardon and your blessing. Now, my dear father, don't be angry with us, and we will be *such* good children.

I remain always

Your affectionate daughter

ARAMINTA DUNN."

The strong man dropped the paper from his hand, and fell senseless on the floor. The noise brought the servants rushing up stairs, while Edward followed with a fluttering heart, half-certain that something unfortunate had occurred.

Restoratives were applied, and Mr. Dunn was lifted from the floor. The first words he spoke upon recovering, were to call for his daughter, and when she did not come, he looked anxiously around. Then, appearing to recollect, he burst into an uncontrollable cry of anguish. Edward endeavored to

soothe him, but he paid not the slightest attention, striving to rise, and move towards the door.

"What is the matter?" said Edward, gently detaining him. "Wait a few moments, sir, until you are better."

"Let me go," he cried feebly. "My child has gone with that dissipated gambler. *Why* did I not forbid him the house?"

"Calm yourself, sir," said Edward, endeavoring himself to appear as little excited as possible. "Nothing can be done until you are sufficiently self-possessed to act calmly. Have you any clue to her?"

"Yes," exclaimed the father, starting up again, "if we are not too late. Will you order the carriage. Tell Thomas to hurry for life or death."

Thomas, whom the emergency of the matter on hand had actually kept awake, set to work in earnest, so that in five minutes, the father, accompanied by his young guest, started out in a frame of mind bordering upon insanity. The residence of Mr. Mercer was easily found, and, after knocking up the clergyman, they ascertained that Mr. Adolphus Marteau and Miss Araminta Dunn had been, by him, united for life three hours previous to that time.

"At supper time," groaned Mr. Dunn; "I thought it strange that I did not see her for so long. She writes as though it were a pretty little bit of child's play. I wish to Heaven it was! Is there *no* way of recovering my child?" He beat his hands upon his forehead, and fell into a seat, with the perspiration standing in great drops upon his forehead.

"I am truly sorry for you, sir," said Mr. Mercer, "but it is too late to separate them now. Mr. Marteau is your daughter's legal protector, and it would be useless to interfere."

"Can you tell me which way they have gone?" said Mr. Dunn. "I will follow them at least."

"Indeed," said the clergyman, "I have not the slightest clue to their intended destination. They came in a carriage, and

left immediately after the ceremony was performed." The kind-hearted clergyman proffered a few words of sympathy and consolation to the bereaved father, but they were founded on faith in Him who has promised His children never to leave nor forsake them, and consequently found no echo in his heart.

It was of no use. The die was cast, and any effort of his must be unavailing. They returned to the carriage in silence. The homeward drive brought back to that unthinking man of the world years of gaiety and dissipation; scenes over which he would fain have thrown the shadows of oblivion; hopes growing up of after years of quiet peace, for which his weary soul was longing now, but which he felt were torn from him for ever; love that had been sinking deeper in his breast, as its object added grace to grace, and charm to charm, until so strong that no earthly power could heal the wound it made in parting. Then there came back to him the faces of his early love. Father, mother, sisters, wife—how changed he was, how very much changed, since they looked upon him last? How many dark spots lay all along his line of life, that no sunshine could brighten. Pale faces gazed reproachfully upon him through the darkness, as he waved them impatiently away. Bloated ones leered upon him with their hideous eyes, of those *he* knew were lying in the drunkard's grave. And, strange to say, the figure of the desolate child weeping at his door, mingled with them all, now fixing those large eyes upon his face, now wandering along in the cold and darkness, now lying, pale and chill, beneath his feet.

He looked out at the great houses, looming through the darkness, and at the trees through which the wind sighed mournfully. They bore naught to him but shades of gloom that seemed lengthening along his future, shutting out for ever all light, and hope, and love. The night opened in revelry and mirth. Day was dawning upon a broken heart.

And yet—sitting there with the memory of the widow's

wrongs, the visions of evil prompted by a lust of gain, the overwhelming consciousness of his own sin and heartlessness, he crushed the tenderness that was swelling in his bosom, and vowed that he would never see his child. She, who had learned of *him* to turn from the purity and simplicity of home to the intoxicating whirl of fashionable pleasures; she who had watched in *him* the pride of wealth, and rank, and beauty, for which same pride she was discarded now.

Poor, short-sighted mortal! Was it for thee or her, the bitterest portion of the bitter cup poured out in that hour of thy mortal anguish and immortal pride?

CHAPTER VIII.

"Poor little creature," said Mrs. Terry, wiping her eyes as Edward finished relating to her the history of the child, "if I had known all this, I should have made no objection to your course."

Mr. Terry being naturally of a reflective character, deemed it incumbent upon him to impress upon his thoughtless brother-in-law the necessity of greater caution in yielding to the dictates of a generous heart. After fumbling his handkerchief suspiciously across his eyes, and clearing his voice with two or three ahems, he said—

"Which, notwithstanding, I can but consider an imprudent one. It would have been safer, at least, to have visited the family by whom she was previously employed. Ah, Edward, you cannot tell how much deception is practised in such matters in New York."

Edward peeped over one shoulder with a mischievous wink at his sister, saying quietly, "Clergymen who let crazy men into their pulpits, shouldn't be unwilling to let beggars into their houses."

"Well, I don't know either," was the young clergyman's answer; "this child's story is a very painful one, and she certainly looks innocent and sorrowful enough to justify all your credulity. As for poor old Father Benson, although flighty on some subjects, he can and does preach as evangelical a sermon as I do. Very plain and homely, it is true, but evangelical, nevertheless. And I am certain," he added with some warmth, "you cannot complain of anything in his char-

acter to debar him from entering the pulpit, for a more consistent Christian I never saw."

"Upon my word," cried Edward, glancing out of the window, "here he comes. Talk about a certain personage, and he's always at hand. Now, then, brother, for an hour's imprisonment. I don't envy you."

"And I have a sermon to write this afternoon," exclaimed Mr. Terry, in a tone of vexation. "What *shall* I do?"

"Why, send the old gentleman about his business, to be sure," answered Edward, "you *can't* expect to sit and talk with him two or three hours. Don't let him disturb you; tell him you are engaged."

"There is no use in it," retorted the disturbed clergyman; "I can never get him away without giving him permission to preach, and my principal train of argument is not even laid." The grave, clerical face wore, for a moment, an expression of considerable impatience, but it cleared again as a knock sounded at the door, and a servant ushered in the visitor.

A short, gray-headed old gentleman, in a very long-skirted overcoat, ambled into the room, holding in one hand a silver-headed cane, and in the other a parcel of books. He gave three affable little bows as he entered the room, accompanying each with a little thump of his cane upon the floor. Then he went straight up to the table, and deposited thereupon parcel, cane, hat and gloves. Then taking his cane firmly in his left hand, he faced about, and with a cordial business air, made the tour of the company, beginning with Mr. Terry, shaking hands as though he had not seen them for years, and accompanying each individual shake with three affable little bows, and as many decisive little thumps. Having accomplished this, he kissed the baby three times in the same off-hand manner, and, stepping nimbly to the sofa, seated himself thereon, looking about him with an air of perfect satisfaction.

"Well, Father Benson, how do you find your business to-day?" inquired the clergyman; "sold many books this week?"

"Quite a good many, sir," answered the little old gentleman with a peculiarly pleasant twinkle of the eye. "Thanks be to God, He takes care of poor old Daddy Benson while he's waiting such a long time for the day of his rejoicing. Yes sir, I can trot about and sell my standard library until the prodigal returns, and then will be the time to kill the fatted calf, and make merry." Here he testified his delight at this agreeable prospect by a short, ecstatic laugh, and three little bows and thumps as before.

"Well, Father Benson," said Mr. Terry, a little uneasily, "I think you must excuse me this afternoon, for I have some important business on hand that I cannot feel it my duty to neglect."

"How strange a coincidence!" said the old gentleman, looking round delightedly upon the company. "It was some very important business upon which I came this afternoon; some business that I consider the most important in the world. I have walked three miles on purpose to see you about the matter. Take a seat here, and I will tell you."

Under such circumstances, what could the clergyman do but sit down and listen, especially as he really loved the aged man, and only avoided his society because it was forced upon him at such inconvenient seasons. Edward and his sister withdrew to the sitting-room, leaving them to their conference, and only casting a sly smile at the patient martyr who was revelling in the delightful expectation of delivering a very poor sermon on the following day.

"Now, my dear brother," whispered Father Benson, drawing close up to his listener, and giving one soft knock upon the floor, "do you know that the wolf is in the fold?"

"Indeed," said Mr. Terry, thinking how he should lay out his discourse.

"He's fairly in," continued the old gentleman, "and nobody's put out a hand to stop him. Now, I'll tell you what I've got on my mind, and you mustn't hinder me. I have written a first-

rate sermon, and I want to give it to your people to-morrow. I want to open their eyes a little to the wild beast of the desert that is waiting to devour them. I want to let them see that they've got to stick fast to the anchor, or they'll all get stranded on the rocks. Have you seen the new saloon?" He turned round, eying the young man with considerable earnestness as he bowed an affirmative to his question.

"I tell you," he continued, "that man's a child of Satan. If I were you I wouldn't eat oysters there, nor I wouldn't take cream there, nor I wouldn't let any of my people go there. I've seen just such places before, and nothing but death and destruction follows in their wake. What makes thieves, I wonder? What makes murderers, I wonder? What made the noblest boy that ever gladdened a father's heart go off to sea, and kill his mother of a broken heart? I wonder who'd buy oranges and sugar-plums of a man that made it his business to poison people. But say now, can't I preach to-morrow? I can preach a first-rate sermon, now you know I can."

"I have given out my subject for both morning and afternoon," answered Mr. Terry, "and have not the power to grant your request."

"Oh dear!" said the old gentleman, with a double thump, "that's of no consequence whatever. Really now, can't you believe me when I say that this is the most important matter in the world. All you have got to do, is to give out to your people in the morning, that a discourse upon a subject of the highest importance having been prepared by a distinguished brother-clergyman, you have concluded to wait until next Sunday before delivering your own. That'll bring them out. You see I can manage for you." This appearing to him a very satisfactory way of "managing," he let go his cane for the purpose of rubbing his hands, at the same time turning his round bright eyes so as to bear upon his companion's face.

The congregation being decidedly partial to his own preaching, the clergyman was determined not to give up the point.

"You see, dear Father Benson," he answered, "my people have requested me particularly to prepare a discourse upon this subject, and I think it would be hardly right to disappoint them. And now, I must beg you to excuse me. I have so much to do this afternoon. Another"—

"My dear brother," interrupted Father Benson, "you must exercise the grace of patience. I wish I could make you understand the importance of this matter. My poor prodigal boy knows well enough, and maybe he'll tell you when he returns from sea." The poor old gentleman looked a little perplexed, as though beating about for some new argument. At length with a decisive knock of his cane, he resumed in a confidential tone. Did you know Edward Clarence went into T. Gamp and Co.'s last Tuesday night, and took three glasses of wine. Now, who blames Edward? Not I. He's a poor lamb that the wolf is thirsting to devour. And there are many and many more that'll be drawn into his den if you don't let me warn them of their danger. Come now, I'll read a bit of it to you." He took a large roll of paper from the huge pocket of the long coat, and prepared to open it, when Mr. Terry, laying his hand upon it, said persuasively:

"I will read it another time if you will not hinder me now. You see I am in such a hurry that"—

"But," said the old gentleman, holding fast to his roll, "my dear brother, you *must* exercise the grace of patience. Who should tell you that but me, who has been waiting this twenty years for my boy to come back. They told us he was dead, and his poor mother, bless her soul, believed every word of it. But then I know it's all stuff and nonsense, contrived by some one of their own crew to make us unhappy. And what's the consequence? Why, I lost my precious wife," here the tears started to his eyes, "and my old age is very desolate without her. But then," he added in a more cheerful tone, "I know he'll come back to me some day, and take me home to his wife and children, for they said he was married, and I shall

be so happy again. Do you think it'll be long now?" He looked with such an eager expression into the young clergyman's face that the tears almost rushed to his listener's eyes, but he merely answered, striving to quell the sudden impulse of sympathy.

"Dear Father Benson, how can I tell when you do not know yourself? You ought to inform me upon the subject, so"—

"To be sure," answered he quickly, "but I mean do you think so? If the rum-sellers would only clear out now, and leave the coast clear, I might hunt him out, maybe. You see they've kept him hidden away these many years, but I don't think they'll hide him away for ever. He's a fine boy. A fine boy indeed, is Willie Benson. Just wait now, till you see him. Hush now, and I'll tell you a little plot of mine. I'm going to find out if this is the man that's got him. I'll tell you how.—No, I don't dare tell, he might hear me." The old gentleman looked mysteriously about as though intending to communicate some important secret, but suddenly remembering his manuscript, he exclaimed, "But I must read you a little of my sermon. You'll like it when you hear it, I'm sure," and he again essayed to open the paper.

Mr. Terry knowing that if once suffered to commence, it would be impossible to stop him without listening to the whole, and having sundry visions of a large congregation and a very inferior sermon, made one more effort to break free. "Father Benson, if I had the time, I would listen with the greatest pleasure. As it is, I really cannot stop, as my afternoon's sermon is not"—

"My dear brother," again interrupted the old gentleman, enforcing his advice with three emphatic thumps, "you *must* cultivate the grace of *patience*! You know I preach for you in the afternoon. In the first place, I divide my sermon into three heads. Three's my number always. Three knocks," enforcing it with an illustration, "three heads, three years

(that is, to the return of the prodigal, and the killing of the fatted calf), three this, three that, three everything. But to begin."

The result would have probably given abundant evidence of the grace of patience in the despairing young clergyman, had not his father-in-law at this moment flourished into the room a tremendous red silk handkerchief, as though that article were the sole and immediate occasion of his entrance. When the burly Mr. Jeremiah Clarence, standing full six feet three in his stockings, and stout accordingly, strided up to the little withered gentleman, there was such a shaking of hands, such a profusion of bows, such a shower of thumps, and such a waving of the red pocket-handkerchief as were unutterably delightful to the heart of the reviving son-in-law, as tokens of immediate relief.

"Why, my dear Daddy Benson," cried the gentleman, "it's full six months since I've laid my eyes upon you. *Have* you been trudging about now, with that great bundle of "Standard Libraries" there, and never giving your old back a minute to get rested alongside of your old friend. Come now, you go home with me to-night, and don't get off again till I say the word. You're my prisoner, so don't cut any capers."

"You see, Jeremiah," said the old gentleman, putting on his very pleasantest smile, and knocking ahead some dozen times in the intensity of his delight at this agreeable meeting, "the fact is, I've been trying to make this dear boy believe that I've got a first-rate sermon here to preach to-morrow, and upon a subject of the greatest importance, and can't make him listen to the very first word. You know the old adage, 'Young folks *think* old folks are fools—' ha—ha!"

"And old folks *know* young folks are!' that's it, precisely," laughed Mr. Jeremiah, "and the worst part of the business is that *they* don't know it, the young pedants."

"Come now, Jeremiah," said Father Benson coaxingly, "can't you say a word in my behalf?"

Mr. Jeremiah took the tremendous red handkerchief by the two corners, and after giving it a slight shake, rolled it under and under till reduced to the size of a small loaf of bread, then, after blowing his nose most terrifically, proceeded to shake it out and roll it up as before. After this operation, he winked at his son-in-law over the old gentleman's head, crying in a stentorian voice, "Oh nonsense, let the sermon take care of itself. I want to have a chat with you. Leave the young pedagogue to look out his own sermons. Isn't that a tiptop baby of mine?" So saying, Mr. Clarence put his hand upon Father Benson's shoulder in a manner utterly irresistible, charming along old gentleman, long coat-tails, package, cane, hat, gloves and all, until they had left the rejoicing young clergyman in undisturbed possession of his study and his time.

The two gentlemen walked lovingly down the road, the lusty arm of Mr. Clarence supporting his feeble brother, while the venerable man trotted along by his side, with a bright look of peculiar hopefulness beaming from his face, and no inconsiderable amount of the same article streaming from his tongue.

"Tell you how 'tis," said he, tapping his companion's arm with the head of his cane, in lieu of the usual thump upon the floor. "It does my old soul good, Jeremiah, to see you and hear you talk; you are so hearty and right to the mark. I don't come across many such men now-a-days. It makes me think of my poor boy; he'd have been just like you for all the world, if he hadn't been led away, and drawn on and on—but he'll come back yet, in three years, you know everything goes by threes. But see here," he whispered, looking all about him, "what *do* you think of that new place, T. Gamp & Co., you know?"

"What do I think of it?" cried Mr. Jeremiah, taking a stride that made his companion stagger. "I told my girls the devil had come, when I saw that detestable placard pasted on my fence."

"Hush, hush!" said his companion, looking carefully all about him, and peering into the hedge-row at the side of the road. "Don't talk so loud. They'll hear you."

"Hear me?" shouted his friend, "hear me? let them hear me. I mean they shall hear me. If there was any way to manage it, I'd battle 'em to the last drop of my blood, and the last cent of my money. Poor Father Benson," he added, in a lower tone, "I needn't go far for a reason for my hatred of this vile traffic in life and health, and happiness." He cast a pitying glance down upon the silver hair and bent form of the old man, who was watching his animated gestures with a look of eager interest.

"Yes," he answered, tapping with his cane as before, "I know it's horrible, all horrible, from beginning to end. But if they hear us, they won't let me have my boy. I have a plot now, you know. We'll go along by T. Gamp & Co.'s, and we'll just step in by accident, altogether by accident; oh yes!" here the old gentleman made a feint of rubbing his hands together, but his cane being in the way, he substituted a little rapturous shake of the head, "well, then, I shall look all about behind the screens and under the counter (there's where they used to keep him, you know, until they carried him off to sea), and if he isn't there, why I shall have to wait another three years. Three, Jeremiah, everything goes by threes. Then, you know, I wanted to warn the people to-morrow, against letting their boys get entrapped. Now, how would you feel, if Edward should get carried off to sea after Will? He was down there the other night, and you don't know what they'll do to keep him."

"Oh," said the gentleman, with a wave of the handkerchief, "I'm not a bit afraid of Ed. They can't come any of their tricks over him. But there are so many poor undecided creatures that can't resist temptation. Poor Teddy Toole, down by the creek, came here on purpose to get clear of the danger, and Edward tells me his sister is coming out to warn

him never to go near the new rumseller. Thomas Brown, too, with his poor old widowed mother, moved here because there was no liquor sold. They are not the only ones either, that have come here to get away from their enemy, and now it's come to them again, 'tisin't likely it will be any easier for them to leave it alone than before. I've seen what such places bring, and I know where they lead to."

"They lead," said his companion, "to—to—sea, and to a broken heart. I'm afraid that's what's become of my poor child. A broken heart!"

He shook his head mournfully, while Mr. Clarence exclaimed—

"Yes, and further than that, I can tell you. But never mind," he added, checking himself as he remembered whom he was addressing, "here we turn off, let us change the subject. I have no patience to talk about it when I cannot help the evil; but I really think when Satan comes, he might as well take his natural shape, and not gloss himself over with a rumseller's smooth words and deceitful smiles."

As they turned the corner, and passed along the road, a head was cautiously raised just above the level of the hedge, and a pair of malicious, squinting eyes took a survey of the whole immediate neighborhood. Then a pair of shoulders followed the head; then a jewelled forefinger performed a very expressive pantomime in the direction of the two receding figures, and the words hissed out from the set teeth, while a frown of defiance and hatred worked upon the face.

"That is your song, old wizard and burly brag. That's your fancy. The devil, eh? Then the devil shall have his own!"

Having thus shortly expressed himself, he shook his head with a sudden snarl, as though to give vent to his superfluous indignation, and, allowing his features to relax into a hideous smile, crept out into the road. He walked slowly along at some distance behind the two men, keeping a little in the

shadow of the trees, with his hands in his pockets, and his eyes fixed upon the ground, apparently in deep meditation. Now and then he cast a furtive glance towards the pedestrians before him, on every repetition of which he performed the same peculiar evolution with his forefinger, and gave utterance to a short husky laugh, not loud enough to be heard by the apparent objects of his mirth.

Now, the office of Dr. Higgins being directly on his route, he concluded to call upon that gentleman, who, in years gone by, had been a bosom friend of his own. The doctor, as he had hoped, was alone.

"What's the matter, Higgins?" said the squint-eyed individual, as he entered the office. "Got another fit of ague, eh?"

"Slight touch," said that gentleman, shaking perceptibly, "how do you find yourself to-day, Gamp? Climate doesn't affect you?"

"Climate!" sneered his companion. "I've tried pretty much all the climates in this world, and I've had parsons tell me I'd try the climate of another some day, ha! ha! ha!"

"I have to be so careful since I came out here," replied Dr. Higgins. "I use every possible precaution, and yet I am continually suffering. I will not, however, leave the office, unless I have business elsewhere. Tread the mill steadily, that's my motto. Business can't be neglected without a terrible loss of money, and that, you know, I could ill afford; for, notwithstanding all my perseverance, I have been able to lay up little, very little." He shook his head dolefully, and certainly presented the appearance of a man very poorly off in the world, both as regarded health and wealth, for his dress on the present occasion was decidedly seedy, and his rickety body was lankier and shakier than ever.

"Oh! oh, Higgins," replied his visitor, with a knowing squint of his ugly eye, "it's no use your stuffing me. I don't

want any subscriptions or charities from you. But I've a little business on hand. You remember I talked of purchasing a lot from Mr. Clarence. I merely want to get you to send Edward Clarence round to see about the business.

"What's that for?" said Higgins quickly, to whom a percentage had been promised in the event of his selling the property in question. "I am the agent of Mr. Clarence in this affair."

"I know my own business, I suppose," snarled Gamp. "There's no use making words with you. Fact is, I've got a notion for making the young dog drunk. I've a reason of my own."

"Well, well," said Higgins, fidgeting a little, "I don't suppose it will hurt him for once, but really, he's such a fine fellow, I hope you won't take him too far. You see he hasn't the prudence. Now, I never indulge beyond what is good for my health, but he wouldn't think much of that, I imagine." Here the lank doctor put a sanctimonious expression of remonstrance on his cadaverous face, and passed his fingers through his bristly hair.

"Gammon!" sneered Gamp, "do you suppose I don't know that you wouldn't care two straws if he or anybody else were sprawling dead drunk in the gutter yonder, as long as you made your spec out of the matter? It's no use. You and I know one another, better by a long shot than anybody else, I reckon. I'm an out-and-outer, you know I am; and if I succeed, I'll fork over a penny or two. Once get him under my thumb, and I'll make him dance to a jolly tune. Old dad's worth forty or fifty thousand dollars, I hear. Rise of property, &c., &c. Sticks to his farm close as ever. Fine man. O—oh yes, capital man, hates the devil like poison. So does the devil hate you, old boy, but he likes your handsome son. Pride of father's heart, eh? We'll see who'll win the battle. Maybe you'll spill blood and money both for something you han't calculated on. Old codger, too,

maybe your boy'll come back again. Oh, yes, maybe he will."

This address being evidently intended for some person or persons not present, Dr. Higgins sat immovable during its delivery, as though so accustomed to his companion's humors as to pay no attention to them whatever.

To do Mr. Gamp justice, he never exhibited any of these humors, save in the presence of this same gentleman, whose heart being cast in nearly the same mold as his own, was capable of making allowance for any peculiarity in his manner of exhibiting them. In all other society, he was the obsequious, unassuming humble servant of everybody he did or did not desire to please, so that the present interview may be considered a peep scarcely lawful into a little private eccentricity of character.

CHAPTER IX.

AUNT BIDDY'S VISIT.

Down at the further end of the village, stood a small, comfortable cottage, right in the middle of a long patch of potatoes immediately joining the road. Behind the potatoes another patch, where cabbages lifted up their wholesome heads to the dew and sunshine, and behind them, still another patch, smiling forth in the pride of onions, carrots, corn, &c. The whole garden was just now considerably under weather, from the fact of the lateness of the season having induced a considerable digging of potatoes, cutting of cabbages, gathering of corn, &c., &c. Enough, however, still remained to show the abundance that had been; and to give evidence of a bountiful supply for the cottage cellar.

The house was a one-story cottage, containing four good-sized rooms, the parlor and kitchen being on one side of the hall, and two bed-rooms on the other. A smart, happy-looking woman, with a good-natured twist about the mouth, stood in the open doorway, with arms akimbo, surveying the whole establishment with an expression of unmitigated delight. She wasn't at all out of the way either, in her admiration of the premises, for everything looked bright and pleasant about, from the row of glittering pans spread ostentatiously along the bench over by the kitchen, to the shiny faces of the children playing before the door. The house was painted white, and at each of the four front windows, a green paper curtain supplied the lack of outer blinds.

The steps and hall were well-scrubbed, and the parlor-door standing open, revealed a very bright rag-carpet upon the floor. The whole half-dozen children in clean jackets, gowns, and pinafores, were gamboling up and down in front of the cottage, between the narrow flower-beds, reveling in the prospect of Aunt Biddy's cookies and sugar plums.

A comical-looking lot of children they were. Very much alike, with white hair, pale blue eyes, and faces rounder, if possible, than any apple. Not ill-favored, either, with such a rosy hue of health, and such a superfluity of good nature in their simple fat faces. The two oldest boys had long ago attained to the dignity of jacket and trowsers, a position greatly envied by three-year-old Johnny, who had not yet doffed gown and petticoats. The white heads of the three girls were ornamented, on the present occasion, by sundry knots of sky-blue ribbon, and their white necks encircled by sundry strings of large glass beads, worn only on holidays, and highly prized as Aunt Biddy's gift on her last visit.

As Mrs. Toole stood admiring her hopeful family, another woman came stalking up the road. Very lean, very yellow, with a very low forehead, and very cross eyes, she was quite ugly enough without the peculiar expression induced by the powerful magnetic attraction appearing to exist between the outer corners of mouth and eyes. "What's to pay?" said she, glancing inquisitively at the children in their elegant attire.

"Why, you see, neighbor Jones," said Mrs. Toole, "Bridget is coming up to-day, an' I was wanting to git the young 'uns tidied up a bit, to let her see how nice we're thriving. They're a pretty tolerable set, considering."

"Uncommon children," answered Mrs. Jones, in a quick, nervous manner. "I wish to mercy my children'd nudge about as good-natured as yourn. They're forever in some sort o' wrangle or t'other. You have easy times of it, that's a fact."

"Don't stand outside there," said Mrs. Toole, "just step into the parlor; Mike, now," added she, giving the oldest boy a thump upon the head, "how dare you be afther turning a somerset with your Sunday clothes on? Do it again, an' I'll lick you. Can't you keep decent more nor five minutes together? Och, I'll settle yiz, if ye're afther making yourselves all of a muss afore your Aunty comes." So saying, she bust led into the house, followed by her vinegar-faced companion, and enforcing her threat by a shake of her doubled fist out of the parlor window.

"Dear me," commenced her visitor, raising both hands in astonishment, "you've got a carpet on your floor. Massey me, wouldn't I like to see Eben a gitting of a carpet? He holds on to the money mighty tight. Now, I couldn't git a carpet o' him, if I was to go down on my knees to him. And do see those chairs, all painted up so bright. Catch him a painting up his chairs. But some folks has easy times of it!" Here the aggrieved lady rolled up her eyes in resignation to her fate, and brisk Mrs. Toole smiled as she answered.

"Faith now, and Teddy is afther gitting all these things new last month. It's niver a ha'porth I ax him for, but he fetches straight home til me. The other day I sez to him, 'Now Pathrick hinny,' sez I, 'we've got as dacent a lot o' childher as ye'd see atween here an' New York, only they want fixing up a bit. Couldn't you take a little out iv the money you've laid up, an' buy a bit o' something to put upon their backs. Sure, I'd like to see them looking a little genteel, as well as other folkses childher? Well, what did the darlint do, but go straight away an' buy a piece iv the very best check til make them new aprons, an' six yards of woolen plaid till make new suits for the boys. I said when he got home, sez I, 'Now, childher, if you don't walk mighty straight in your new clothes, I'll be into ivery blissed mother's son iv yiz,' an' they all the time a capering an' a hopping about the

house, an' Teddy jist standing, and looking on, so delighted like, an' niver saying a word."

"Well now, I declare," sighed her companion, with another gesture of resignation. "But some folks is born to be lucky! My young uns han't seen the color of a new suit, not all of 'em together, since the day they were born. I'm forever patchin' on 'em up, with some o' their daddy's old clothes, an' now an' then, he gits 'em some gimerack or other just to satisfy 'em. Did you say as how Bridget was a comin' up this afternoon?"

"Sure," answered her friend, "an' it's expectin' her ivery minute, I am now. Bliss her soul, it's niver a sorry heart can stay long wi her jolly face. Be the blissed Vargin, but there goes that young spalpeen a kickin' up his heels agin. He'll be afther ruinin' hisself intirely. Jist now, Mikey, I'll break your blissed head, if you *dare* to turn another somerset till you're out of bed to-morrow morning."

The white-headed boy brought himself square upon his feet at this terrible announcement, but seemed not the least disconcerted, considering the excessive improbability of his being able to keep himself straight for such an unreasonable length of time.

"Goodey gracious!" ejaculated Mrs. Jones, "I think you have mighty easy times with your children, when you can make 'em mind like that. There isn't a day o' my life, I don't give all mine a wollop, but it don't do a bit o' good. They cant about, an' tip over the chairs, an' ride on the tables, an' pull the rooster's tail, an' chop off the cabbages till I'm a'most crazy wi their carryin's on. I do think sometimes I shall have to give up in despair, and then I get all out o' patience agin, an' whop 'em about enough to make 'em the blessedest, good-natur'dest creeturs in all the Univarse. An' for all that, there's no livin' with 'em. I have mighty hard times of it, I can tell you." The unhappy sufferer finished off with a lugubrious shake of the head, inducing a belief in

her listener of her actually having the hardest times that ever might, could, would, or should be.

"Och, I kin manage aisy enough," answered the other; "my childher always mind fast enough when I spake; to be sure, I have it to say til them over an' over agin, but childher is childher, an' there's niver a bit o' use in expectin' iv them til act like men an' women. Kitty, Kitty, stop a diggin' your fingers in the dirt, or I'll be out there afther you. Kape yourselves clane, ivery one iv yiz, agin your Aunty comes."

The command was lost upon the children, for Michael, at this moment catching a glimpse of a stout, wholesome looking figure parading down the road, uttered a shout of triumph, and utterly forgetful of his mother's threat, turned one ecstatic somerset, and galloped up the road, with Kitty, Maggie, and Patrick at his heels, while little Johnny and Biddy trotted on behind, in a vain attempt to keep pace with their older brothers and sisters.

"Och, bliss all the darlint sows o' yiz," cried Biddy, catching the two foremost in her arms, and imprinting a hearty smack upon their fat cheeks. "How are ye all? Jist for all the world like a lot iv splindid cabbage-roses. How's daddy, Mike? an' mammy? Jist come over here, you Mag an' Pat; aren't you ashamed o' yourselves til come away an' lave them blissed little angels til trot along by theirselves? Here Biddy hinny, I've got sugar-plums for ye, an' for all iv yiz, when ye're oncet at home." So saying, the happy laundress bore down upon the cottage with a niece on one arm, and a nephew on the other, all three with a broad grin of satisfaction upon their faces, while the no less delighted mother stood at the gate waiting to welcome her guest.

"Well now Biddy, how are ye?" she cried, catching her hand, and shaking it heartily as soon as the two children were deposited; "lookin like a cricket, I declare. I needn't til ax you." Upon this there came quite a little shower of questions, followed by a larger shower of sugar plums, amid smiles

shouts and kisses, on the part of the whole family in general, not to mention grunts and somersets on the part of Michael in particular, who could not for his life avoid using them as a sort of escape-valve for his superfluous delight.

Hat and shawl having been laid aside, and the questions of more immediate importance answered to the satisfaction of all parties, brisk Mrs. Kitty grew very anxious to exhibit to Miss Biddy the novelties of her *ménage*, of which fact the latter being perfectly aware, she exclaimed, as soon as practicable, "Well Kitty, can't ye be afther telling a body what ye 've got since I was here? A power o' fine things, I'm sure, be the looks iv yiz," at the same time casting admiring glances upon the bran new suits of the children, and the smart carpet on the parlor floor.

"Why Biddy," said her sister-in-law in a cheerful tone, "you see the way iv it was this. The other day Teddy comes into the kitchen with his face all of a grin, an' sez he, 'Kitty,' sez he, 'would ye be afther likin' a new carpet for the parlor? I've bin a lookin' at some.' 'An' Patrick, hinny,' sez I, 'but I'd be greatly plazed with that same. Sure, now you've got sivinty five dollars laid up, it wouldn't be foolish on you til buy one.'"

"'Kitty,' sez he, 'have ye been intil the parlor this mornin'?' 'No,' sez I, 'it's niver a fut I've laid inside iv it. An' sure it took me the whole day to milk the cows an' churn the butter.' 'Jist come in a minnit thin,' sez he, 'an' see how much it would take til cover the floor.' So I went a briskin' in afther him, an' there was this splindid carpet spread all over so nice an' smooth, an' thim six new chairs. Faith, an' what did I do, but jist drop down intil one iv thim, an' begin til cry for delight intirely. Somehow all iv a suddint it come back til me, how Teddy used to be afther spindin' ivery blis-sed cent he airned for the dhrink, carin' niver a bit for his wife an' childher, as long as the crathur had a howlt iv him, an' how we had many's the time to go hungry an' cowl'd,

with no coverin' barrin a bit iv miserable rags, an' how the poor childher used to cry, an' run away up the street whiniver they heard their father a coming. Och, but it was a blis-sed day we iver came out to Laconia; the blis-sedest day for us, we've seen since we came out of owld Ireland."

Biddy thought of the new saloon, and a sudden little twinge caught at her heart, but she battled it off, and looked quite as happy as her sanguine sister, who tried to keep back two or three obstinate tears that would trickle down her sun-burnt face. All this time Mrs. Jones was fully occupied with the conversation, and the children were equally busy with their treasures. At this point, Mrs. Jones put in a word of surprise. "Bless my soul, who'd ha' thought you was ever so bad off as that, now? But, dear me, your Teddy was never the cross-grained feller my Eben is at all. I dessay I've got worse times than you ever had."

"Why neighbor Jones," said Biddy, "it's sorry I am to hear ye've niver got rid iv yer troubles yit."

"But I havn't shown you the half iv my new things," said Mrs. Kitty, leading the way into the kitchen. This apartment served the purposes of cooking, eating, working, playing, and all other occupations in which the family happened to be engaged. The floor was smooth and white, the cupboard presented an imposing array of well-brightened pewter mugs and pitchers, and the "chayney," the epithet bestowed upon a set of blue earthenware, was ostentatiously ranged on the upper shelves to be used only when company were present. Everything about looked cosy. The stove was blackened, the kettle was singing cheerfully away, the table-cloth was spread upon a table in the middle of the room, and everything bore marks of having been rubbed up for the occasion.

Mrs. Toole looked up to her sister-in-law as to a loving mother, and took the same pleasure in showing off her various household treasures, even to iron pots and tin steam-

ers, in all which minor particulars her guest took as deep an interest as could have been expected

"But won't Teddy be afther crowin' when he catches a sight iv you?" said the bustling little housewife, proceeding in her preparation for tea by ranging along upon the table the whole set of "chayne" for children and all, regardless of the breakage that might ensue. "He knows niver a word iv yer coming at all, at all. It was Mr. Edward hisself told us this very afternoon. Kitty, Kitty," she called, popping her head out of the window, "jist run down an' fetch up them stewed pears, an' the butter, there's a hinny."

"The children's forgot about you aready," remarked Mrs. Jones, a little envious of the hold the new comer had on all hearts; "that's just like mine, han't got no more feelin' nor a stone. You might die, and they'd forget it next minnit."

"Och, an' I'm afther sending iv them out to tell their father," cried Mrs. Toole, "I couldn't have them tumbling about undher my feet when I was wanting a quiet talk wi' Biddy. He'll be along jist directly now. There, sure the tay's ready, all but the biscake, an' I won't be taking on'em out till he's here, or they'll all get cowl'd."

And a very tempting tea it was. Golden butter, stewed pears, some slices of cold ham, a tremendous custard-pudding, and the biscuit that were yet to come, would have formed a repast that an epicure would have relished. But when we take into account the happiness of a reunion, the consciousness of ease and plenty, contrasted with the poverty and heartsickness of years gone by, the pride of a well ordered home, the love that is always looking for some new mode of manifestation, it was a repast that many a prouder home might have longed and striven for, and *never*, although aided by wealth and rank, been able to attain.

Matters having been thus satisfactorily arranged in the kitchen, the ladies returned to the parlor. Mrs. Jones, who

had an eye to the tempting table, seemed to be in no hurry whatever, notwithstanding her family of troublesome children at home. Mrs. Kitty, being a little warm with trying to blow the fire, took a seat opposite the window, commanding a view of the road down which her husband was to come, like a loving wife as she was, and commenced fanning herself with her apron.

"Mother, mother," cried Kitty, poking her head in at the window, "Johnny's afther pulling off all the big marigolds, won't ye plaze call him in."

"Johnny," cried she, in a tone that might have been the forerunner of a terrible punishment, "come in here, till I give you a bating. Come right in. Och, you little spalpeen, how dare you?" As the last words were uttered, she caught the "little spalpeen" in both arms, giving him the promised beating with a pair of lips that must have been very powerful, judging from the noise they made, then resuming her seat, she winked at Bridget, saying in an under tone, "He is the smartest little chap now, that iver ye saw, Biddy. Why wasn't it only yestherday, sez I to Teddy, 'now Teddy,' sez I, 'meself will just leave the chaze in the far cellar for fear iv the mice;' sure an' I left it there, and when I went afther the same, wasn't it all gone intirely? and didn't I ax ivery one iv the childher, Mike, an' Kitty, an' Pathrick, an' Mag, an' niver think iv axin Johnny, an' didn't the little spalpeen come over, an' stick his finger in his mouth, an' look so sly? Then I axes him, 'Johnny,' sez I, 'do you know where the chaze be's?' an' didn't the weeny fox jist open up his mouth, an' put his fat finger half way down his throat til show me? O, the young" —

At this point Mrs. Kitty, who had been now and then looking up the road, uttered a short quick cry, "Och, och, o—och!" and dropped very far back in her chair.

"What is the matther wid ye?" cried Biddy, running up to her, and holding her head. "Is it sick ye are, Kitty?"

Poor Kitty didn't answer, only opened her eyes and tried to speak. Failing in this, she veered off into what would have been in any fashionable lady a regular fit of hysterics, but what in Mrs. Kitty Toole, could not possibly have had a name at all. "Jist unhook her gown," cried Bidy, as Mrs. Jones came up, "Bless her sowl, what on earth's come over her? She'll be afther faintin' if we don't look out." Just then Mike came dashing in with a whole troop at his heels, and began "Mother, mother, father's" —; upon seeing the peculiar state of affairs, he stopped short, forgetting the purport of his communication, in the sudden start at seeing his mother in such an apparently critical situation. After a little, the two eldest became alarmed and set up a yell, which was very soon chorused by the rest, to the no small discomfiture of Aunt Bidy.

"Whist, hinnies, whist," she began, "Mother"—but the young hopefuls commenced in a second strain with more spirit if possible than before. In the midst of it all, in came the cause of all the trouble, poor, good-natured Teddy, staggering along to where the two women were busy with his wife. At sight of him, the half-dozen children stopped short in the midst of a tremendous scream, Mrs. Jones looked astonished, Kitty, who had somewhat recovered, sat gazing with glassy eyes upon the reeling form, and Bidy stood with her hands clasped, the image of despair.

"What is the matter wid yiz all?" he cried, catching hold of a chair, "why Bidy, hinny, how are ye? Sorra's the day ye sint me away from ye, Bidy. Shake hands Bidy. Ye're me mother, Bidy, sure ye was always me mother." Here the speaker reeled himself down into a chair, with his head hanging down, while his sister stood there before him, without speaking or moving for some minutes. At length her heart found utterance in slow, broken words, "Och, Teddy,—Teddy,—an' was it for *this* I've had ye for iver an' always at the very core iv me heart, a prayin' for ye, an' toilin' for ye,



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an' bearin' wid ye in all yer folly? Sure ye were safe away out iv' the net, an' ye couldn't kape yerself away, and whin ye were afther gettin' along so smart, and fixin' up so comfortal wid yer wee house, and yer nice garden, and yer wife an' childher lookin' as fine as any gintleman's, an' friskin' like so many butterflies—an' yer comin' home ivery night to a happy family; no more hunger, no more cowl'd, no more throuble an' misery iv' sowl—all pace, an' joy, an' contint—an' all clane gone intirely!"

"But it's not you, Pathrick," she wailed, as the tears streamed over her face, "I know'd it, I know'd it; och Ameriky, Ameriky! ye've niver a spot in all yer broad bosom to shelter the likes iv' him. Ye may talk of openin' yer doors to the poor son iv' Ireland when the cruel hunger is dhrivin' him from the home of his father's, but sure an' it is worse than famine here, O—O—ch!"

The children, who had stood quiet during this outpouring of poor Biddy's soul, being headed by Mike, commenced where they had abruptly left off, in a manner that would not be controlled. Their father lifted up his head, looking stupidly about, and muttering, "What are ye at now? afther makin' such a blarmed row."

Biddy seein' that she alone was to be depended upon, after a vast amount of persuasion, succeeded in getting her brother to bed, and the children settled about the supper-table, where they soon forgot their troubles in the good things that were set unreservedly before them. As for the rest, poor things, they hadn't the heart to touch a mouthful. Kitty sat just where she was until her husband was in bed, and Mrs. Jones had gone home, wondering if it could be a real fact that "that stuck up, conceited Kitty Toole had actually had a fall."

She sat there all the time that Biddy was clearing away the supper, and putting the kitchen in order. While the cow was milked, and the pans were set, while the children were being

undressed and carried off to bed, just as fixed and rigid as ever.

Poor Kitty Toole! The door was opened, and she could see the path they had to tread, and the companions of their journey, drunkenness, poverty, sickness, toil, guilt, death! Well might she gaze with that stony glance, down such an avenue, leading to such an end!

CHAPTER X.

THE fire was burning in the chimney as before. The irons were brightly polished, the hearth was clean, the chandelier was brilliantly illuminated, the decanters glistened along the shelves, the luscious fruit lay upon the counter. Newspapers were scattered round upon the marble tables, and large arm-chairs looked friendly to repose. The door was standing open, the window-blinds were up, displaying to the chance passer such fruit and such pastry as Laconia had never seen before.

It was just at the dusk of evening. Laborers that hurried by in red flannel and corduroy, looked into the bright windows, and then at their plebeian dress, inwardly resolving to return when supper was over, with newer boots and cleaner clothes. Children put their faces against the glass, gazing with hungry eyes upon the cream-cakes, oysters, oranges, grapes, as though they wished the forbidding pane were gone. Women looked longingly into the brilliant room, and thought it an infringement of their rights that only the other sex were invited to enter. Now and then one, some thoughtful-looking woman, or some grave-faced man, passed with a shadow gathering on the face, and anything but a blessing rising in the heart.

The worthy proprietor of the establishment bustled about, re-laying some delinquent orange that had rolled upon the floor, or giving a finishing touch to some ornamental flower-basket that lay heaped with the choicest dahlias interspersed with boxwood and myrtle, and surrounded by a circle of green moss, gathered from the neighboring wood.

But Mr. Gamp was not the only individual bustling about the institution. A boy of some sixteen or seventeen years hurried back and forth from the cellar to the saloon, expediting the freezing of the cream, the opening of the oysters &c. &c., and never stepped across the sill without looking at his companion. He seemed to draw life from the presence of that gentleman, so close was the watch he kept upon his motions, so evidently was he afraid to stir without his sanction. The poor boy looked pale and thin, as though fretted away with anxiety and trouble. There was not a line about his face, nor a motion of his figure that did not remind one of some shadow that had fallen on the boy's life, some indefinable terror that always brooded over him, awake or asleep, as though he walked, ate, slept in some vague dream from which he had no power to awake.

"Come, Bill," said Mr. Gamp, "is that Madeira up from the cellar yet? You young vagabond, why don't you obey orders? Didn't I tell you to fetch that an hour ago? What the —— do you stand there gaping about? I'll take the hide off your back if you can't dispense with that detestable stare."

The boy turned upon his heel without a word. A very peculiar smile played about his master's very peculiar mouth as he disappeared, while that gentleman muttered, "Oh, oh-yes, maybe he will."

Having arranged everything to the nicety of a hair, Mr. Gamp dropped into one of the luxurious chairs, and began reckoning something, gazing all the time straight into the blaze. Was any voice whispering to him promises of wealth and success? "Twenty-five by seven, Seven times five are thirty-five. Seven times two are fourteen, and three are seventeen. One hundred and seventy-five dollars a week. Clear two thousand a year at that rate." Again he gazed into the fire. Was anything smiling from its heart to bring that strange smile out upon his face?

The boy had by this time returned, seating himself by the high desk at one end of the counter, from behind which he could watch the muser unobserved. He glanced at the clock. Twenty minutes after six. It was time for them to begin coming. He cast his eyes towards the door. An open-faced young man, not more than twenty-two years of age, dressed quite commonly, was coming up the steps.

"Walk in," said Mr. Gamp, coming forward to meet him "Happy to see you, sir. Will you look over the papers?"

The respectful tone was extremely flattering to the new comer, who thought to himself, "Fine place, this—treated like a gentleman. Liberty and equality—that is their motto. I like such men. Shall drop in now and then." He glanced over the paper, after which he turned to the boy, stamping on the floor with his foot and calling, "Here, boy."

The person addressed darted towards him, still keeping his eyes fixed upon Gamp.

"Bring me some oysters, and a glass of soda water."

"Better try our sangaree," interposed Mr. Gamp, with a fascinating smile. "Capital, I can assure you."

The young man hesitated for a moment, and shook his head. "A glass of soda, sir."

His call was answered in a few moments by the boy, who set down before him a steaming dish of oysters, and a glass of the beverage for which he had called. The young man fell to in earnest, but before he was half through, in walked our friends of the fishing party, Messrs. Reid and Myers, tapping their canes against their teeth, and tipping their hats jauntily on one side.

"Well, gentlemen," said Mr. Gamp, bowing politely, "what'll you take? Oysters or cream? Rather cold for cream now, eh?"

"Yes, by Jove!" exclaimed Myers, "something to warm us up a bit, my man. Jim, are you in want of the needful?"

"No thirree," answered his friend, "only confounded dry."

Let's try a little champagne, Ned. I wouldn't mind a dozen raw oyttherth. Here, Billy boy, jutht fetch uth a bottle of champagne, and a couple of plateth of raw oyttherth. Do you underhtand?"

Billy boy nodded his head, and started in the fulfillment of the order. Mr. Reid was in the habit of assuming an air of dignity that sat upon his slender person very much as a crown might be supposed to sit upon a puppy's head. So that on the present occasion, although testifying his admiration at the agreeable state of affairs to his companion by sundry winks and nods, he did not condescend to make any remark upon the subject, further than observing in a lofty tone—

"Quite an enterprising chap, Ned," at the same time giving a slight nod in the direction of the obsequious proprietor, who read his paper, and looked agreeable enough to provoke a warmer compliment.

"Here, Jim, take some champagne. See how it foams. Here's to your health, my boy," exclaimed Myers, taking his glass off at a single pull. "No namby-pamby, this—the genuine article."

"Deliciouth," cried his companion, sipping it affectedly. "Couldn't find better at Taylor'th. We'll be in a fith when we get back to old Precth. Bleth my thoul, he'd annihilate uth, if he knew we were getting boothy every night. What a lecture we would get."

"Remember the time we smuggled it down the chimney?" asked his companion. "Old fox didn't catch us that time; we're rather too much for Prex; ha, ha, ha. Have another glass, Jim?"

"Thertainly," replied Mr. Reid. "When did you ever know me to leave off with the firht glath?—but you've a poor opinion of my attainment. Here'th to the pretty Quaker-eth."

"Pretty Kate Weston," cried his companion. "Better not

say much here; little Kate might get miffed, and that would not do at all. Seen Spooney to-day, Jim? He going to college? Won't he make fun for the Adelphi, vulgarly styled Dolphins?"

"With his lofty collar," remarked Mr. Reid. "He only thpeakth when thpoken to. That'th what my granny would call a good boy. No doubt Prof'th will remark the thame thing. Oh, Mithter Thteele, you have my betht wisheth for your thueetheth."

"What a deuced bore," said Myers, "to have him for a chum. If his dad hadn't been so anxious to place him under my guardianship, I should have shuffled him onto you. I don't keep him more than one term, I'll warrant you. He'll learn a thing or two in that time, don't you believe it, Jim?"

"Ha, ha, ha," answered Mr. Reid, "you're the chap for the money. You'll teach him. But it ith a confounded bore, and no mithtake. However, you can make your own fun out of him. He'th one of your regular book-wormth, I'll be bound. I believe he enter'th the junior year."

"He'll escape being freshman," remarked Myers. "Never mind that; if he isn't a freshman he's a green-man, at any rate. It'll be all the same for sport; just get him cornered sometime in an awkward box, and let the Prof. in upon him, wouldn't he cut a figure now?"

The two friends laughed immoderately at the possible event upon which they were calculating, and replenished their glasses, while the other young man looked wistfully a number of times at the foaming wine, thinking to himself, "Really now, I don't see what harm a couple of glasses would do. Mother'd never know it. I needn't drink any more. To be sure, I don't want to make her unhappy. Mary's a little notion for young Buswell. It would make me sprightlier and handsomer. 'Twould be a pity to lose her to that blubber-headed fellow. To be sure, I went too far before; that's no proof I shall do the same thing now. I'll be very temperate."

Having thus determined, he called again, "Billy, boy, I *will* take a glass of sangaree."

"Rather expensive, considering your mother," whispered conscience.

"Safer than brandy and water," suggested prudence.

"Better take none at all," conscience put in again.

But there it stood, sparkling and foaming before him, just as he had fancied it so many times when he longed for it, as he was longing now, and he could not resist the temptation. It was placed before him. His eye sparkled, his hand trembled; but he put it to his lips, and the Rubicon was passed.

Others now came flocking in. First came a stout, middle-aged man, looking as though he took delight in the good things of this world. Then an awkward, red-whiskered fellow, stalking in with a half grin upon his face. Then Mr. Flip, the village lawyer, and a client from New York, whom he thought it advisable to conciliate by every means in his power. Then poor Teddy Toole, after trying in vain to steer safely by the tempting spot. Then Edward Clarence, who had dropped in for the sole purpose of glancing over the morning papers, with the bashful boy following in his wake. Then a great many more of all classes and ages; and last, not least, a large, powerfully built negro, with a row of teeth that seemed ambitious of exhibiting themselves to the utmost of their ability, and a face indicative of any amount of droll good humor and unaffected honesty.

"Lame Joe!" exclaimed a dozen voices at once.

"He's the man for my chinks," cried Mr. Wilks, the middle-aged gentleman. "Come, Joe, I'll treat you. What'll you have?"

Joe's grin, if possible, was broader than before, as he stood for some minutes quite undecided, scratching his woolly pate with a puzzled air.

"What's the matter, Joe?" cried Wilks, "can't you decide?"

Joe only scratched away with more vehemence, and rolled his black eyes over the company as if taking a very comical view of human nature, as then and there displayed.

"Why do you want to exhibit the whites of your eyes?" cried Myers, trying to look aristocratic. "Genteel niggers never do so."

Joe turned awkwardly round to the young gentleman, remarking,

"Law sakes, massa, I don't purtend to be genteel. I leave dat for de dandy niggers. He, he, he!"

"Well, Joe, what will you have?" again asked Mr. Wilks. "Some brandy and water, or gin sling, or a glass of punch, eh?"

The darkey recommenced scratching his head, in as undecided a manner as ever.

"What on earth's the matter?" cried the red-whiskered Jonathan Meeks, losing patience at the delay.

"Why, I was thinking, 'pears Rosy won't like it if I gits tipsy. I do'no now."

The general laugh induced by the visible perplexity of poor Joe, only served to increase his good nature, while Mr. Reid interposed, "Oh, Rosy won't care, Joe. Rosy'th a good thoul. She'll forgive you."

Being quite certain that Rosy *was* a good soul, Joe decided to take a gin sling, which decision brought the company back to themselves, and their own appetites. Billy was kept running for a full half hour with oysters, porter, fruit, Madeira, and brandy and water, while Mr. Gamp kept up a battery of smiles, bows, and well-timed compliments, that caused the company to set him down for a decidedly agreeable fellow.

Mr. Reid, having by this time taken enough to be able to lay aside a little of his dignity, began to be somewhat communicative.

"Mithter Gamp, I thay you are a public benefactor, and

ath thuch, detherve the good wisheth of the community. Pray what induthed you to thtart thith ethtablithment?"

"I was so advised by Mr. Dunn," replied Mr. Gamp, with one of his most winning smiles.

"A fine stand this, sir."

"Capital stand," answered Myers. "Not another place in the whole neighborhood where you can procure a drop of anything in the way of wine or even brandy. Unenterprising place this."

The bashful boy took the present occasion of frowning to Edward over the top of his shirt-collar, while Edward deliberately broke a cracker into his oysters.

"Did you hear, Mithter Myerth," said Reid, "that Mith Araminta hath eloped with Marteau. A pretty bithneth it'll be for her, Marteau'th poor ath a church mouth, he'th been gammoning her with great thtories about thouthern plantationth and all that. She'll get thick enough of her bargain in a month."

The two young collegians, when alone, always addressed each other as "Jim," and "Ned," but whenever others were present, endeavored to inspire respect by using the "Mr." before their names.

"The deuce," cried Myers, "I had my eye on her myself. Great heiress and charming girl. Marteau's gambled all his property away, and he wants another fortune now. Shameful business that. He'll make a wretch of a husband. Got a mischief of a temper."

"That ain't the beth of it though," cried Reid. "They thay her father'll cut her off with a shilling. He loved her half to death, but he'th a very determind temper. Declareth he'll never thee her again."

"Poor thing," said Myers, "she'll have a sorry time of it, she's a little fool to marry such a chap. Why couldn't she wait for me now. I'd have made her a better husband, I'll be bound."

The young man who had first entered the saloon, having finished his oysters and sangaree, was preparing to depart, when the red-whiskered individual called out, "Hallo, Brown, you ain't going yet. Come sit down here, and let's have a little chat. It's an age since I've had a chance to see you."

The young man glanced at the clock, and thinking it rather early to call on Mary, he sat down at the table with his friend. "Boy boy," cried Mr. Meeks, "just bring us a couple of glasses of hot brandy and water." "Not for me," said young Brown, in a hurried manner, "nothing at all for me."

"Nonsense," cried Meeks, "can't you let a fellow treat you, boy, when he's got a chance? You shall take it."

"You must not press me," returned Brown, "indeed I cannot take any more to night."

"Indeed," said Gamp, just then happening by, "this is some of the finest brandy you ever tasted, sir."

"You won't be so uncivil," said Meeks.

"He's afraid Mary'll smell his breath," said the stout gentleman. The quizzical looks with which those in his immediate vicinity regarded him, decided the matter at once; he took the large tumbler, mixed very strong, with the determination of not finishing it; but it was so invigorating that his resolution vanished, and by the time that was gone, he was in a "plaguy state of indecision," as he styled it, and thinking it was now his turn to treat, ordered a couple more glasses, after partaking of which he was entirely oblivious to all the danger he had previously anticipated.

"Mithter Clarence," said Reid, turning toward Edward, who sat at the table immediately behind him, "you don't take any wine. What's the matter? Allow me to fill a glath for you, Mithter Thteele?"

"Thank you," said Edward, taking it from his hand. "No thank you," said William Steele, drawing back as it was presented to him, "I never take wine."

A sly wink from Myers induced Reid to push his invitation.

"I beg of you not to be fathtidiouth in the prethent company; none of uth conthider it wrong to indulge a little now and then. Juth try it, if you pleath."

"Excuse me sir," said William, coloring both from confusion and indignation. He saw easily enough that they were quizzing him.

"By Jove," said Myers, "you'll be looked down upon in college if you put on airs, I can tell you that, my boy. Better wear off a little of the rust, come now. *I'm* your friend. Take a glass."

"No sir!" cried Steele momentarily rising out of his timidity. "I told you I *never* tasted wine."

The tone and manner rather astonished Mr. Myers, who thought it advisable to give up the point immediately. "Well now," thought Edward, "here's this bashful fellow that one would imagine afraid to speak to his own shadow, doing what I haven't the courage for. I declare I feel a little ashamed of myself. However, I don't believe in inevitable ruin directly anybody touches wine. If a person gets tipsy, it's his own fault."

The little cliques at each table were becoming livelier. Voices were rising to a higher pitch, glasses rattling, corks popping to various corners of the room, jokes cracking, knuckles rapping, and poor Billy was dancing about the room in a state of trembling eagerness, terribly afraid that he might overlook some customer, and thereby draw down upon himself the displeasure of one whose displeasure was to be carefully avoided. Reid and Myers were each, as privileged characters, sitting on one chair, propping their feet on the back of another, with hats at the peculiar angle that you never see attained till a man is "half seas over," and conversing in a strain that our readers would consider both unprofitable and vulgar. The red-whiskered individual was entertaining Thomas Brown with the history of a "rummy" he had known, who wallowed about for a whole day and

night in a swamp a dozen yards square, at which history Thomas Brown was rolling his head and laughing immoderately. Poor Teddy was emptying his pockets for his own and the public benefit. Mr. Flip, after giving the influence of his countenance and example to the bringing affairs to this crisis, was remarking to his highly respectable client that this was no longer a place for them, and preparing consequently to take his departure. Boys imbued with the spirit of young America, and considerably enlivened with wine, were walking straight over Mexico, annexing Texas, the Sandwich Islands, Cuba, California, and promising annexation in the course of "manifest destiny" to the rest of the peopled world. Common-looking men in fustian jackets were beginning to look decidedly fuddled, and two or three had arrived at a point where Mr. Gamp was compelled to exert his talents to the utmost, in order to keep them from driving into one another after the approved method of the most celebrated pugilists.

Mr. Wilks had "treated" Joe until he was certainly tipsy, whatever Rosy might say, and was now pressing him for a song in a manner that was not to be denied. The would-be pugilists becoming quite obstreperous, Mr. Gamp announced to the company in general, and those individuals in particular, that Joe would favor them with "Dearest Mae," at the same time politely giving the quarrelsome gentlemen to understand, that if they chose to continue their appearance of animosity, their room would be preferable to their company.

Joe accordingly, in a voice that might have been mistaken for a very musical bass-organ, "favored" the company to their no small edification and amusement. He swung his great body backwards and forwards, opening his mouth wide enough to have elicited the admiration of the first opera critic of the day, keeping time with both head and heels, and rolling his eyes from side to side in the ecstasy of his theme, until the tears fairly rolled over his face. At every repetition of the chorus, the "Dearest Ma—a—ae—" was hailed by the

delighted listeners with a burst of applause, and Joe concluded the piece amid a chorus of shouts and laughter that was truly terrific.

At twelve o'clock the company dispersed with drunken cries and unseemly mirth, staggering to their different homes with brains on fire, singing low songs, and passing ribald jests to the discomfort of the sleeping villagers, and the unmitigated delight of the rumseller, who had taken in five dollars more than on the previous day.

As they went, one by one, to their respective homes, down lanes fringed with rustling trees, through fields still and pale in the starlight, up between the mansions lining the great road of the village, a shadow followed them, invisible to mortal eye, but seen and wept by angels. Like a black cloud fraught with ruin, that thing of evil crept along, floating around them in the darkness, on—on—till it settled on the broken homes they entered, to go no more out for ever.

Broken homes! for home is where the gentle word is spoken; where the loving smile lights all things with its glow; where peaceful hearts sink down to sleep at night; where ready hands and cheering tones uplift the sorrowing spirit; where fathers and husbands stand boldly forth protecting gentle ones that look to them for help. And which amid all these, is found within the drunkard's dwelling? Who but the drunkard's anguished wife and weeping children stand pointing ever to a broken home?

That night a widowed mother wept, and prayed, and groaned aloud. All through the dark hours, while her son lay heedless of her prayers, she knelt beside his bed. Memories of sleepless nights, and darkened days came crowding thick upon her. When the boyish foot was tangled in the mire of Intemperance, when the smooth face was bloated, the lithe form all unhinged, the open blue eye grown red and bleary, her heart had died within her. But that was not like this. Manhood, proud and glorious, had dawned upon him

now. He was no longer the tender sapling her hand must bend and bind, but the stalwart tree to which she clung. And the tree was breaking. The consciousness of that struck home to her heart like a living agony.

One other weeping woman stood beside her children, looking bitterly upon their innocent slumbers, while her husband snored away the night, unconscious of her tears. Her heart traveled back to a desolate garret, cold and dark, where her children lay sleeping in their hunger, with no covering to shield them from the blast that swept between the gaping boards, where she sat waiting, waiting for her husband's coming. She looked about her at the happy home that time and drunkenness must wrest inevitably away, and the protector whom she could trust no more, as wringing her hands, and crying aloud, she paced the floor hurriedly till morning smiled in upon her woe.

Other mothers and other wives wept and prayed that night over the first downward step of husbands or sons. But none like them had seen the beginning and the end. None like them could look with prophetic eye through the long night of darkness that lay teeming with sin and wretchedness before them.

CHAPTER XI.

AN old-fashioned wagon stood before friend Weston's door. The fat, comfortable-looking horses were whiling away the time with a little friendly intercourse, judging from the sympathetic manner in which they neighed and rubbed each other's heads. The only seat at present in the vehicle was placed about half-way back, flanked by a great black trunk, a little white one, a carpet-bag, a basket, a bandbox, and a cage containing two exquisite canaries, who hopped about, and sang, and seemingly enjoyed to the utmost the present peculiar state of affairs. Immediately in front of the seat stood a low chair intended for the driver, who forthwith made his appearance in the person of lame Joe, followed by his wife, a pompous looking ebony lady, with a yellow handkerchief tied turban-fashion about her head, and a small red shawl crossed over her broad bosom.

"Joe," said Rosy, following him to the gate, "yer an't a gwine to get nuffin in der way of sperrits now. Ef yer gits tipsy, yer needn't come back agin night. Tink of de way yer was in afore. Law sakes it'll upset me, ef yer a gwine to cut up in dat ere comboberlatin manner. Nebber seed nuffin like it."

"Don't be 'feard now, Rosy," answered Joe, rolling his eyes up as a confirmation of his words, "jest 'form me if yer ever know'd me to git drunk afore? I'se one o' yer stiddy niggers, I is; donno how 'tis em all goes a teterin' off the first chance they gits. Now yer *knows* I'se a stiddy nigger, don't yer, Rosy?"

"But yer comed hum tipsey toder night," answered his wife; "dar an't no knowin' what dem regimentals 'll be up to. Dey's arter yer money, dey is. 'Pears as how dey'd git hold ob yer, if yer don't look out for dar attemptible tricks."

"Don't you be afeard ob dis nigger," remarked Joe decisively, flourishing his long whip. "Rayder guess as how dis nigger is cap'l of takin' care his sef; yer's ollers so feared, Rosy; nebber seed nuffin like yer."

"Massy-laussy," cried Rosy, suddenly recollecting herself, "young Missus hab bin a forgittin' ob her unberil, an' like enuff its gwine to rain. I'll reposit dat article in dis wagon remediatly."

Having thus expressed herself, the yellow handkerchief and red shawl vanished in at the front door, leaving Joe standing in an intense admiration of the wearer of those articles, and whistling to himself fragments of Lucy Long, Dandy Jim, Oh! Susanna, and various other melodies of the same character.

While Joe and Rosy were holding the above conversation, another couple were engaged in as interesting a consultation in the shady parlor.

"Now Kate, my sweet Kate," said Edward Clarence, "I shall miss you sadly this winter; it's the first time we were ever apart so long. I'm afraid," he paused and sighed.

"Afraid of what?" said Kate, lifting her gentle eyes to his face.

"I was thinking," said Edward, "that perhaps you would think less of me when you were amid the gaieties of the city. You are very young, Kate, we are both young, you don't know yet whether you love me or not. You'll see a great many gayer and wittier young men than I, and perhaps you'll forget me."

• He spoke thoughtfully, and looked at the young girl as though never doubting that a dozen hands and fortunes would

be humbly waiting her acceptance the moment she made her appearance on the boards of city life.

"Edward," said she, with the very light of her mother's loving face playing over every feature.

"Well, Kate."

"Suppose you were leaving me and going to spend the winter in New York; no matter how many lovely girls you might meet, or how many sweet voices you might hear, would your *heart* go away from me? Would you love them better?"

Edward decided that "He might go all over the world, and he'd never find another he thought half so beautiful or half so good."

"Well, then," said Kate, coloring a little, a very little, "judge me by yourself then. I know what city gentlemen are. Elegantly dressed, fastidiously polite; but bubbles, Edward, by the side of you. Not all—I don't mean all—but none like you. Now, you see, I'm not such a little fool as you take me for! Am I, Ed?"

"But you are so young," said Edward, meditatively, "you can hardly tell. They say, you know, first love is all a fancy."

"Yes," she answered smilingly, "I know it. Then you think yours is all a fancy, eh? I see now I shall have"—

"Oh! Kate."

"Oh! Edward."

"Now I know my own mind, Katie, better."

"Better than I do. There's a compliment. There now, Ed, I think you've said enough."

Here she laid her hand on his arm, and looked with that quiet smile into his face.

"No, believe me, Edward, I know more about the matter than you. First love, as people call it, is all a fancy. A boy sees a pretty face and says to himself, 'Now, I'm almost a man, and people will think me quite one if I wait upon a

young lady. What a pretty girl that is? How proud I should be for George or Frank to joke me about her. And she is such a divine creature.' The girl is as silly as he is, so they fall in love directly, talk about undying affection, love in a cottage, and all that, and in six months go away and forget one another. Did we do so? Isn't it a full dozen years already since we fell in love. When I tumbled into the mud over the barn-yard fence, and you, in the true spirit of chivalry, tumbled over after me! No, Edward, our love is a sober, earnest kind of love that isn't born of fancy; and I, for one, am not afraid of its being killed by time, or absence, or anything else."

These sentiments accorded so exactly with his own, that Edward was thoroughly convinced, and looked into the calm eyes and blushing face turned so trustingly upon him, without a doubt of her constancy, though not without a pang at parting.

"Kate, see what I have brought you," he answered, producing a locket containing his daguerreotype; "not to remember me by, for I *don't* believe you'll forget me, but because I thought you'd like to have it to look at, now and then, when you have a few minutes to spare from the round of gaiety that you'll be running through in New York."

There was a curious look on Kate's face as she gazed admiringly at the keepsake, answering, "Edward, you have a strange idea of my character. Very different, I can assure you, from the true one. Do you really suppose now, that I shall take such an interest in those frivolous amusements. You forget that I am half Quakeress."

"Nonsense!" cried Edward, "do you imagine that I think a pretty young girl like you, just stepping upon the threshold of the fashionable world, with every prospect of admiration and homage being paid her, is going to mow herself up in the chimney-corner, darning stockings or paring apples, while everything is life and spirit around her?"

"I didn't say," answered she, half laughing, "that I was intending to mew myself up darning stockings &c., did I? I mean to be very lively, indeed, all winter, and to go to every place that is worth visiting (unless I think it an improper place), and that will make me all the more delighted with 'sweet home' when I return. But," she continued, in a more serious tone, "Edward, it is not to them that I shall look for happiness. That can only be attained through the medium of a meek and quiet spirit! Do you suppose my mother isn't a happier woman than the most fashionable lady in New York?"

Mrs. Weston being one of those fortunate people who are always happy, Edward could but answer in the affirmative, at the same time reminding her that that lady was considerably older than herself, and consequently would be less apt to enjoy the more spirited amusements of young people.

"Yes," said Kate, "I know that, but I know, too, that if I were patient and gentle as she is, I should be happier than any wealth, or attention, or amusement could render me. She has taught me ever since I could understand anything to believe that promise of One who has all hearts in His hand, 'I will keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on me!' That is the secret of happiness, I have been trying to learn it for fifteen years, and I don't think I shall leave off now."

"But, Katie, dear," said Edward, "how many learn, and learn, and as soon as they get into the whirlpool of fashion go along with the current."

"You forget who I had for a teacher," said Kate, earnestly, "very few have a teacher like my mother. She lives up to her teachings, and little as I know of the world, I know very few, if any, do that. When I have her always on my heart, do you think I shall forget her chief desire, the object for which she has labored during the whole of my lifetime, in one winter of city life?"

"No, I do not, Kate," he answered in a burst of admiration, "I don't believe you are capable of anything that would give your dearest friend a moment's uneasiness. I don't understand your feelings exactly, but I know you do yourself, and that's enough for me."

Kate's eyes filled with tears. "But Edward, it isn't enough for me. That is my greatest trouble, that you are not a Christian. I don't mean a Quaker, but a Christian. You might be a Presbyterian, or a Baptist, or a Episcopalian, or anything you chose, so long as I knew you were looking to the same goal I have in view, and hoping for salvation through the same medium."

This part of the conversation made Edward feel very awkward, as he could not think of anything in the world to answer, so he felt greatly relieved at the appearance of Rosy's black face and yellow handkerchief popping in at the door.

"Goody gracious, Missy Katie, its curi's now, dat dat ere fader ob yourn hain't done a writin ob his letter yet. It would be berry disagreeable fur you to go a 'permeatin down to dat ere wharf in Newburgh when de boat was makin away with herself." Having thus delivered her opinion, she pulled out her head again, and shut to the door.

Kate lifted her pocket-handkerchief from the table, and displayed a small book.

"Here Edward, is my parting gift, I embroidered the cover myself."

Edward took it up, it was beautifully bound in dark blue velvet, and upon its cover his name was embroidered in Kate's golden hair. He opened the book. It was a New Testament. There were tears yet standing on the pale cheek, and there was a slight tremor in the voice, as she whispered, "I ask nothing more of you, Edward, than to study that daily, for my sake, if you please, and I will live, and love, and pray for yours. As for this," she added, holding up the locket, and smiling through her tears, "I shall look at it a

dozen times a day, and think every time I see it, 'how *much* handsomer he is than any body I see here. How I should like to see him.'"

She held up her blushing face to his for a good-bye kiss, while he put his arm about her for one little minute, at the same time gulping down a very unmanly sob that was rising in his throat, and ran out of the room without giving him time to recover himself.

Mr. Weston had been writing a letter to the gentleman whose guest Kate was to be for the ensuing winter, while Mrs. Weston, who had remarked to him a full half hour before that the children would like to say good-bye alone, was busy-ing herself with a huge bouquet of dahlias that Kate was to carry from her to Mrs. Ainslie, the sworn friend of her school-girl years, and dropping a tear now and then at the thoughts of her own loneliness for three long months of her darling's absence. When she had arranged and re-arranged, and begun to wonder why they didn't come out, she heard Kate's voice in the hall, and this being the signal for her appearance, she stepped out just as the white handkerchief was brushing a little tell-tale straggler from her eye.

"Father," cried she, stepping to the foot of the stairs, "isn't the letter done? Joe's afraid of being late."

"Yes, my dear," said Mr. Weston, coming deliberately down the stairs, "it's ready now, I'll put it here just under the cover of the basket; there, thee needn't be afraid of losing it now." He adjusted it carefully, tying down the basket covers with as much precaution as though he had been concealing under them a treasure of immeasurable value; then taking both his daughter's hands in his own, he said in a low tone, and with some difficulty, "Kate, my child, thou art going away from thy father and mother for the first time. I'm not afraid of thee, dear, not at all. But we shall miss thee very much, very much. Thou'rt quite a young lady now, and they will draw thee into ungodly company, and flatter thee. But I know very well

thou hast a heart above such things, and thy home will look pleasanter when it is time to return. Thou art so like thy mother when she was young as thou,—looks, disposition and all—so like thy mother."

He needn't have said that. She was her counterpart now,—younger, rosier, but still the same. The same placid brow, the same clear blue eye, the same delicate profile, the same pleasant mouth, and just now, the same tears coursing over the cheek.

This speech over, there was such a deal of love to be given to the Ainslies, besides the canaries and the dahlias, all of their own raising; such a number of charges about such a number of things; such a quantity of tears, and smiles, and parting words; such an adjusting and re-adjusting of the big black trunk, the little white one, the bandbox, and the basket; such a quiet sadness on the part of Edward and Kate; such a fear on the part of Mr. Weston that Joe would not drive to the right wharf, and on the part of Mrs. Weston that Kate might take cold, or be blown up by the bursting of the boiler; such a great burst of tears on the part of Rosy as she warned her young Missis not to "cut up in any kin'o highfalutin manner like dem curis city folks, but to be a good girl and say her prayers;" such an important flourish of whip and reins on the part of lame Joe, as he dashed off with his precious charge; such a shower of kisses, and such a waving of pocket-handkerchiefs on the part of the whole party, as would have cheated an uninitiated observer into the belief that the parting was for life.

Notwithstanding her father's fears, Joe drove straight to the right wharf, as careful and a great deal more proud of his charge than any fairer gallant could possibly have been, depositing Kate in the ladies' cabin, placing her baggage in a "satisfactory perdition," and marching away, feeling a little sorrowful, but almost overwhelmed with a sense of the triumphant termination of his undertaking.

On reaching New York, she was met by a young gentleman dispatched by her friends, who was waiting at the wharf in expectation of her arrival.

When Kate entered the door, she was caught in the arms of a cordial, loving-looking lady, and after being half smothered with kisses, was passed over successively to a tall, precise young lady in an astonishing head-dress, a short one with a face all a-glow with pleasure, a couple of boys, both very bashful and very much delighted, and a lively, mischievous little puss with black eyes, who hid behind her mother's skirts, pretending to be very diffident, and actually standing in fear of no mortal alive.

When the happy party had succeeded in knocking her hat all out of shape, and satisfactorily tumbling her up in a general manner, she was conducted to a pleasant room up stairs by the short young lady, who chatted away as though she had a world of news to tell, and only five minutes to tell it in.

Was Kate really going to stay all winter? Did her father say she mustn't go once to the opera? She had so much to tell her about Clarence, and Carlisle, and Sophronia, and every body else. Sophronia had three beaux, "one of whom had fallen in love with her for writing such splendid poetry for the Opal, and the other two for her handsome curls, and fashionable head-dress," this last was accompanied by a mischievous twist about the mouth. "She was really going to be married right away; she knew it, for she saw a pocket-handkerchief she was hemming marked, S. M. Ellis. She had left it loose on her dressing-room table. Mr. Pufton had been there ever so much lately to see about Aunt Sophy. Wasn't he a funny lover now? She quite envied Aunty, that she did, he was such a good-natured comical soul. If she were her, she wouldn't act so, she knew. Why, she wouldn't need to read another line of Punch in her life, if she had his little dumpy figure to laugh at, parading about so queerly all day long." Here the young lady burst into a clear ringing laugh that

brought her mother, who was passing through the hall, in to see what was the matter. "Why Kate," she exclaimed, "have you been sitting there all this time, and Alice never taken off your things. She is a thoughtless creature."

"Oh! Mrs. Ainslie," said Kate, smiling, "it is my own fault altogether. Alice has been telling me the news, and I had forgotten all about my things."

"Yes, it is all her own fault, mother," said Alice, with another musical laugh. "You see I was so hard at work all the time, and she had nothing under the sun to do. Kate, you are a decidedly lazy, thoughtless, incorrigible girl." After giving her visitor this pleasant assurance, she commenced pulling off her shawl, untying her bonnet-strings, twisting off her scarf, &c., &c., with a rapidity that utterly baffled all that young lady's attempts to help herself; and when she had concluded that operation, she gave her some fifteen or twenty kisses, to ascertain, she said, "whether she was sweeter with her things off."

Her mother seated herself opposite to Kate, for the purpose of asking her some thousand and one questions relative to Mrs. Weston, and telling some thousand and one times over how she had been so home-sick for her (Kate), and Alice had been so home-sick for her, and all the children had been so home-sick for her; and how they were so dreadfully afraid she wouldn't come, and how they had waited patiently every day for a letter, running every time they heard the bell ring in hopes of seeing the postman at the door.

But, whatever bachelors may say about "no end to women's tongues," they were finally through the news and the inquiries, not because their topic was exhausted, but because the dinner bell sounded imperatively over the lower railing, and it was rather difficult to go without eating, even for the sake of talking over such important matters as those under discussion.

"Now we'll have some fun," cried Alice, catching hold of

her visitor's hand and hauling her along to the head of the staircase. "Mr. Pufton's home to dinner with father, and it's as good as a museum any time to see him making love to Aunt Sophy. You mustn't be offended," she added, in a laughing whisper, as they descended the stairs, "if he kisses you. He's always up to some mischief or other."

"Oh," said her mother in the same tone, "I guess Kate knows Mr. Pufton well enough. He's out at Laconia every few months, and she's seen him here every time she's been in. Now, Alice," she said, as they crossed the hall, "you must behave yourself, and not set everybody laughing at the table, as you usually do."

The gentlemen were standing around the table when they entered. Alice led Kate softly up behind her father, before any one had noticed their entrance. He turned suddenly round, and cordially greeted his young visitor, declaring that he was delighted, had been waiting so patiently, &c., &c."

Mr. Pufton uttered a characteristic exclamation of surprise the moment he saw her, and waited with evident impatience for his turn to welcome her.

"Bless my soul!" he cried, waddling up and kissing her, "prettier than ever. Never saw you so charming, my dear. Grown quite a woman, too. Come to turn all the beaux' heads this winter, child? How's father and mother? and Rosy and Joe? and Edward Clarence? He's a great friend of yours, too, I believe, my dear? Fine boy, Ed, fine boy, my dear. Capital fellow, eh?"

He turned his twinkling gray eyes full upon her face in perfect innocence of thought; but a little blush that was just then coming, was helped along considerably by an invisible nudge of the elbow from Alice, who went off in internal ecstasies when she saw the peculiar effect produced thereby, although she stood looking as grave as a judge.

"They are all very well, sir," said Kate, trying hard to

recover herself, and avoiding an answer to his last question. "Father has been troubled a little with rheumatism, but he's over it now entirely."

"Bad climate that for rheumatism," answered the gentlemen, as they seated themselves at the table. "Ought to spend the winter in the city, my dear. No use this trying to rough it out. Too cold altogether."

At the conclusion of this speech, he suddenly clasped his hands upon his plate, and bobbed his chubby face upon them—a ceremony which he always observed when grace was said, to the never-failing delight of Alice, who trod on Kate's toe in a very irreverent manner, considering all the circumstances of the case.

Through the whole dinner, poor Kate was kept on the verge of an explosion of laughter by means of sundry winks, nudges, and pinches from the mischievous young lady at her elbow, who lost no opportunity of showing off the ludicrous to the best advantage, on the part of everything and everybody. Mr. Pufton fidgeted very perceptibly for some five minutes after they were seated, glancing nervously at the door, giving a number of affected little coughs, and very frequently taking up his pocket-handkerchief, and rubbing it across his mouth. At last the door opened, and a dignified lady entered, followed by the young lady with the head-dress.

Mrs. Maylie stepped gracefully up to Kate Weston, expressing her gratification in an agreeable manner, and seating herself at the other side of the table beside her daughter.

"Unexpected pleasure, Ma'am," remarked Mr. Pufton, looking so relieved at her appearance, that anybody would have thought the words applied to her entrance, had he not added "A pleasure I didn't expect Ma'am, Miss Weston's dropping as it were out of the clouds. All her friends well, Ma'am, quite well, needn't trouble yourself to ask."

Here Alice lifted the saltcellar, and suddenly handed it to

Kate, at the same time looking into her eye, with so determined a gravity, that she could not keep her countenance. No one, however, noticing her, she soon came to, but kept her eyes fixed upon her plate until she was quite sober again.

Judge Ainslie was a gentleman of dignified bearing, tall, well proportioned, and decidedly handsome. There was a cordial affability in his manner, heightened by a very pleasant smile about his mouth, and a benevolent glance of his dark eyes, that made him a favorite in every circle. The highest in the land could but have felt, in conversing with him, that he was equal to the highest, and the lowest would have seen nothing in word or manner to indicate that he considered himself above the lowest.

It wasn't strange that such a man should be a kind of idol, not only to his own family, but also to a large circle of friends, who esteemed him no less for his lofty talents and unerring judgment, than they loved him for his benevolence and intrinsic worth.

His wife was one of those few people in the world, who take everything that befalls them from the hand of a merciful Father, and see in the merest trifle, either for good or ill, the finger of an overruling Providence. But she was not one of your moping Christians, to go mourning all the day long for the sins and follies of herself or others. Her faith was too strong for that. Not that she trusted to faith without works, but that she always used the two together. When anything was to be done for the sake of benevolence or religion, she walked heart and hand into the work, fully believing that He who had given her that work to do, would crown her efforts with success. Such is the labor, blessed of God, that, like the seed sown in good ground, springeth up and beareth fruit, thirty, sixty and an hundred fold.

"Are you going to the fair to night, Mr. Pufton?" asked Alice; "you were talking about it yesterday."

The gentleman cast an anxious glance towards Mrs. Maylie, answering, "So I proposed, my dear, so I proposed. Your aunt was to accompany us, I think. Shall you favor us, Mrs. Maylie?"

He leaned over, looking with such eager interest for an answer, that Alice improved the opportunity afforded her of giving a very serious wink sidewise at Kate, and exclaiming, "Oh, Aunt Sophy promised me a week ago that she would go with me to night. Now don't take any praise to yourself, Mr. Pufton, you see it was all decided upon long before you knew anything about it?"

"Come Alice," interposed her father in an under tone.

"You see, Kate, how I am persecuted," said she, trying to pout. "If I venture to open my lips, Papa says, 'Come Alice,' and Mamma looks daggers at me. When I am such a model of gravity, too."

Here she put on so demure an air, that Kate could not for the life of her help laughing. The two boys giggled to each other, little Ellie's eyes sparkled, and her mother remarked, "Alice, we know so well that some mischief is brewing, whenever we hear you speak; you can't wonder at it."

"Indeed!" cried Mr. Pufton, "Miss Alice's humor is the life of the company. Unless it happens to fall upon one's-self. I suppose I must take a pretty good share of it."

"That's right, you dear old gentleman," cried Alice, "stand my friend, you do not know how many times I have stood yours. I'm a powerful ally of yours, sir; just ask Aunt Sophy."

Mr. Pufton did not seem at all disposed to follow her direction, for he was suddenly taken with a violent fit of hunger, and seemed intent upon demolishing the contents of his plate in the shortest time possible.

"Well now, Judge," said he, cocking his head very much on one side, in order to obtain a view of that gentleman's face, "what are you going to do with Kate here, this winter?"

"Make her enjoy herself as much as possible, I hope," answered Judge Ainslie.

"A matter very easy of accomplishment, I can assure you," cried Alice. "If I were to perch her in the middle of my toilet-stand with a work-box at her side, or a book, or a couple of knitting-needles and a ball of yarn, I believe she'd be perfectly happy to stay there the whole winter, now I really do. The principal trouble will be to get her anywhere without an amount of coaxing and persuading, the thoughts of which actually make me feel faint with fatigue."

"Have to call Mr. Byng to your assistance, my dear," remarked Mr. Pufton. "Capital hand at an argument, Mr. Byng. You know that, my dear. Pretty successful, eh, my dear?"

It was now Alice's turn to blush, and be very much occupied with her dinner, and as she neither winked at Kate, nor pinched her, nor nipped her toes, that young lady had a pretty fair inkling of the disposition of affairs in that quarter. She, however, like a prudent girl, resolved to take no notice of the conversation, but to wait, and catch a glimpse of the gentleman referred to, before asking any questions.

"I don't know why-y," drawled Miss Sophronia Maylie, "but re-al-ly, Mr. By-yng reminds me of the elegant Lord Bra-al-ley, and he always reminds me of Hercules, don't you remember, Mamma-a—so comma-anding and lofty. He used to step into his ca-rrriage with the a-air of a king."

"There now," cried Alice, suddenly reviving again, "how very ridiculous it was in you, Sophronia, to cast an English nobleman and a German baron from your feet, not to speak of the cruelty of such a proceeding. There cannot be the slightest doubt that both those gentlemen have either committed suicide, or returned in despair to their respective countries, for you have never heard of them since."

"I ne-ever told you anything to tha-at effect," answered

Miss Sophronia, at the same time lifting an infinitesimally small portion of meat upon her fork.

"But you see, I am gifted with second sight, coz," answered Alice. "So there was no need to tell me."

Miss Sophronia agitated her head-dress a little, simpered a little, tried to blush, and seemed altogether overwhelmed at thought of the honors heaped upon her.

"You must excuse me, I believe," said the Judge, bowing to Kate, "I have a little business with Mr. Pufton, that takes me away earlier than usual."

"Don't speak of it, sir," cried Mr. Pufton, "private business of my own, my dear," nodding at Kate; "enjoy the present company, sir," bobbing round again towards the Judge. "This evening will do quite as well, sir. Don't trouble yourself, sir."

"You forget that you are engaged this evening," remarked Alice, with a roll of the eyes towards Mrs. Maylie. "We'll excuse you both, perfectly excusable, gentlemen. Indeed, I've no doubt we'll be rather glad than otherwise at your departure, I'm dying to have a good chat among ourselves upon matters that you gentlemen can neither tolerate nor appreciate, and Kate, I am convinced, is full as bad as I am, only she's cunning enough to conceal it. Good bye, gentlemen."

Such a hint was not to be neglected, so the two gentlemen left the table without further ado. As they were drawing on their overcoats in the entry, Clarence stole after them, and looking doubtfully up at his father, asked him if he might not go to the fair.

"Nonsense, child," said his father, "you are too young to be out nights."

"I should like so much to see Castle Garden lit up at night, and filled with all those pretty things."

Clarence didn't speak as another boy would have spoken. There was a gentleness in his manner that would have accorded better with the temper of a girl. He was a favo-

rite with his father, who seldom denied him anything. He hesitated, now, however, as to the propriety of his request.

Mr. Pufton, who did not possess the old bachelor trait of disliking children, but on the contrary, never seemed to see enough of them, put in his plea.

"Let us have Clary along by all means, sir; some fine specimens of the arts to show you, my boy. Positively you must, sir. I shall invite him myself; poor boy, shut up in the school all day, not the best teacher in the world, either."

The boy's eyes filled with tears. It was only that morning his teacher had called him an obstinate little blockhead, because he had refused to tell of a boy who, out of pure fun, had pinned up a paper man on the wall, just before the school opened. He thought it very hard. His old teacher never called him such names, and he felt very sorry that he had gone away.

His father didn't see the tears, but he told him to be ready at seven o'clock, and he should go if he liked, then went out at the hall-door, followed by Mr. Pufton, who turned round several times to bob his little round head, and blink his little round eyes at Clarence, pantomimes expressive of his unbounded sympathy with him, in the peculiarly afflicting state of school affairs.

Clarence wiped his eyes when he was left alone, and began caressing his beautiful little Newfoundland dog, who sprang to his arms in a perfect frenzy of delight.

He was a strange boy. That is strange for a boy. He seemed to possess all the affection and gentleness of a girl, and at the same time the firmness and energy of the boy. Not boisterous, but decided, not talented, but persevering, he went quietly about his duties and his pastimes, while his parents never felt any uneasiness on his account.

The arrival of a new teacher to fill the place of one who had instructed him during the whole term of his school life, a

period of some six years, caused the affectionate little fellow no small vexation of spirit. The sorrow of the boy was very evident, and the teacher, a self-willed, passionate man, had already contracted a prejudice against the thoughtful little fellow who seemed to mourn so silently over the loss of a kind and efficient instructor.

CHAPTER XII.

JUDGE AINSLIE being quite primitive in his habits, the dinner was over by three o'clock. The boys having no lessons to recite before that time, were allowed to remain, entering school again at the afternoon recess. "Good-bye mother," said Clarence, turning back as he reached the door, with a wistful glance.

"Good-bye, my son."

"Please mother, won't you give me sixpence to buy one of those handsome new balls. I've wanted one ever so long."

"Oh, Clary, you better run along to school, you are going to the fair to-night, you know."

"Poor fellow," cried Alice, "he's got a headache to-day. Here's a sixpence Clary; you know I promised you one for threading my needle yesterday when I was in such a hurry."

"Thank you, Alice," answered the boy, smiling. "I thought you were only joking."

"You will certainly spoil that boy, Alice," said her mother. "Really," she added, turning to Kate, "she never refused him anything. I believe she thinks more of him than all the rest put together. And they are not a bit alike either."

"That's the very reason," laughed Alice. "You see, Kate, I being a girl, should have been the Quaker (no offence, I hope), and Clary, being the boy, should have been the romp. Now a great mistake must have been made somewhere, inasmuch as things have turned out *vice-versa*. I'm so dreadfully persecuted in consequence, that I pity myself most heartily, and

considering Clary as badly off as myself, try to alleviate his condition by every means in my power."

"A laudable thoughtfulness certainly," said her Aunt Sophy, leaning her elbow on the table.

"Miss Weston," remarked Sophronia, with a would-be-graceful droop of the head, "Alice is such a hair-brained creature. I'm re-al-ly afraid she'll drive you to despair before the end of winter."

"I hope to be able to tame her down a little," answered Kate, jesting; "as we share the same room and bed, I shall have ample opportunity for 'curtain-lectures' whenever she misbehaves, so I give her fair warning to carry herself straight."

Alice raised her hands and eyes with a mute glance of despair, so earnest that everybody except Miss Sophronia burst into a laugh, and even she allowed the corners of her mouth to relax a little.

"It's no use," cried the self-constituted martyr, "I shall be dead before the winter is out; upon the whole, I think it advisable to commit suicide at once, and avoid the torture of dying by inches. Every one in the house a spy upon my actions. I feel like a stray soldier in the enemies' camp. Oh dear—oh dear!"

"If you live through it," remarked Mrs. Maylie quietly, "I've no doubt you'll avoid such another season by taking flight into some other camp. Affairs seem to promise that, at present."

"Now Aunty, look out, or I'll tell Mr. Pufton what you said about him the other day. I'd just as lief as not, if I hadn't a vague kind of fear that he'd turn into a balloon, like the little fat woman at the Museum, and sail away through the air in the exuberance of his delight."

"Alice is a first-rate fencer, Mrs. Maylie," said Kate, "no fear of her if she is in the enemies' camp. She can take good care of herself. What's the matter, Ellie?"

The little girl was laughing away and trying to hide herself

from view behind a large pitcher that stood just in front of her plate.

"I was just thinking," she said, putting her finger to the corner of her mouth, "how funny Mr. Pufton would look turning into a balloon."

"I suppose you think he might do for one without much altering," said Alice. "I'm sure now, if he were just puffed full of hydrogen, he'd be equal to the best balloon agoing."

"That'll do now," said her mother, "you musn't get personal, my dear."

"There, Kate, didn't I tell you so?" asked the lively girl in a whining tone. "Howsoever," she added, with a delighted little laugh, "I do love the dear old gentleman; and as I have no doubt he'll sometime be a member of our family, I suppose it's better to follow mama's advice."

"Mo-ther," remarked Sophronia languishingly, "I would not allow such dis-res-pectful jesting."

"It does not trouble me," answered Mrs. Maylie, good-naturedly. "Indeed I am so accustomed to it, that it comes quite as a matter of course. I think it has more effect upon Mr. Pufton than myself."

"Well, upon my word," exclaimed Alice, as the two boys appeared in the passage-way, capped and satcheled for school, "you lazy fellows, not off yet. Mr. Kepples'll give it to you."

"'Tisn't half-past three yet," said Carlisle, putting his head in at the door, "can't I have a sixpence?"

"No, Carlisle, not to-day," said his mother, "I want you to run to school now as fast as you can."

"Clary had a sixpence," said he, looking a little cloudy.

"Well, didn't you have one yesterday?" asked Mrs. Ainslie.

"I want one to-day," pouted the boy.

"You can't have one to-day, my son," said his mother, "you must remember Clary is older than you, a good many years; besides, Alice gave him the sixpence."

"Won't you give me one, too, Alice," said the little boy, brightening up a little.

"No, Carley, mother says you can't have it," said his sister; Clary's going to buy a ball with his money; and perhaps, if you are a very good boy all day, I'll make you one. There, run along, or Mr. Kepples will pull your ears for you."

"Oh, we've got plenty of time before recess is over, full ten minutes," said Clarence. "Good-by, mother."

The younger brother dashed away down the front steps without ever looking behind him. Clarence paused, with his hand on the door knob, to take a final glimpse of his mother.

"Good-bye, dear."

He passed down the steps, pausing again at the foot to call out, "Good-bye, mother," a process generally repeated a full half-dozen times at least, before he was satisfied to pass quietly away.

"Halloa, Clarence!" cried one of his schoolmates, as the two boys entered the yard, "Mr. Kepples is going to fight the Mexicans. He's concluded teaching doesn't suit him, he has. Father Martin is talking about coming back again, he's so much better now."

"Hurrah, boys!" cried the usually quiet Clarence. "Three cheers for Father Martin. Hurrah! hurrah!"

Mr. Kepples was no favorite, and the cheer was echoed by a dozen voices, to the no small contempt of that gentleman, who had seen the proceeding from a small upper window.

"See here, Clarence," called the first speaker, beckoning him to a corner of the yard, and looking very confidential indeed, "don't you think, I really believe Mr. Kepples has been and got drunk. Sh—don't say a word. His face is just as red as fire. And he has been acting so funny. Just a little drunk, I mean—enough to make him cross."

"He's always cross," whispered Clarence, looking meditatively on the ground. "Just to think of it!"

"Charlie Waters asked him to change his steel pen," said his companion, "and he tried to mend it with his penknife, just as he would a quill pen; and when we were reciting geography, John Cooper said that London was the capital of Australia, and he told him it was right."

"Does he act cross?" asked Clarence—"any crosser than usual, I mean."

"Well, I don't know; he doesn't say much, but he looks ugly in his eyes somehow. I'd be afraid to vex him."

"Dear me, I'm afraid to ask him what I was going to. I've learned all my lessons perfect, and I wanted to ask him to let me recite a little earlier, so that I could go out and play a while with my new ball before dark. It gets dark so soon now."

"I don't know," said the other, scratching his head thoughtfully, "he gave two of the boys a beating to-day. I'd be most afraid."

"Shan't you be glad when Father Martin gets back? I can't bear Mr. Kepples. I don't believe there's a boy in the school likes him."

"No, I know their a'n't," said the other, looking cautiously around. "Wouldn't I like to see him flogged, that's all. He flogs the boys for nothing at all. I'd play him some trick if I dared, but he is so ugly that I am really afraid of him?"

"Oh! you mustn't speak so, Henry. My mother would say that was very wicked."

"Well, isn't *he* wicked, I'd like to know? He's no business to act so ugly, that's all. There's the bell; hurry up, or we'll have to take it."

As the boy had said, Mr. Kepples certainly gave pretty good evidence of having indulged a little too freely in wine. He

was accustomed to taking a couple of glasses every day after dinner, and having to-day exceeded his quantum, felt more savage than usual. The "cheers" he had overheard from the window had not tended to sweeten his temper either; although from motives of prudence, he made extra exertions to appear calm and self-possessed.

This forced composure quite deceived Clarence, so that he commenced thinking over again the feasibility of requesting to recite his lesson before the usual hour. "There's nobody to recite that but me," he thought to himself, "I don't see what difference it can make." He thought it over all the afternoon, but when five o'clock came he felt his courage give way. It would be dark in half an hour. If he could recite that little lesson, and try his new ball. He opened his desk, and looked at it again. It was such a nice ball. How high it would bound. He might just as well go as not. He'd ask Mr. Kepples. He wouldn't kill him for it, at any rate. He rose up suddenly, book in hand, and walked along by all the boys till he came to the teacher's desk.

"Mr. Kepples," he said timidly.

"Well!"

The tone did not serve to reassure him, and his face flushed as he answered, "Please sir, would you as lief hear my Latin now. It won't take you five minutes?"

"What's that for?" demanded Kepples, abruptly.

"Why I should like to go if you please sir, when I had recited it. I believe I have been perfect in everything to-day."

The teacher looked from under his brows at the boy, thinking of the "three cheers for Father Martin," and deigned no answer to the request.

Clarence waited two or three minutes, and ventured to lay his book on Mr. Kepples's desk by way of a reminder, whereupon the gentleman whirled suddenly round, leveled a blow at Clarence's head that, taking him so entirely off his guard, threw him at full length upon the floor, in such a manner that

his forehead came into sudden contact with the corner of a wooden bench.

"You impudent young rascal," shouted the half intoxicated teacher, "how dare you practice any of your tricks upon me? Get up, and go to your seat."

Clarence obeyed, looking quite pale, and scarcely paying attention to what was said. As Kepples moved back to his desk, a good many flushed boyish faces were turned angrily upon him, and little Carlisle actually shook his miniature fist, resolving inwardly that father should hear of that. He wouldn't have his brother treated so, he knew.

"Mother, I don't think I can go to the fair to-night, my head aches so," said Clarence, as the two boys entered her sitting-room. "I do wish Mr. Martin would come back again. Mr. Kepples"—he stopped, burst into tears, and buried his face in his mother's bosom.

"Why, my dear boy, what is the matter?" asked his mother, stroking the short bright curls back from his face.

"Just this is the matter," cried Carlisle, stamping his foot impetuously upon the floor, "that Mr. Kepples ought to go to State's Prison to-morrow, and I told him so after school. We were coming along the street together, a whole lot of us, and I called out to him, 'Mr. Kepples, my father's a Judge, and he'll sentence you to State's Prison to-morrow, you see if he don't.' Don't you believe he will mother?"

Mrs. Ainslie could not help smiling. "Why dear, I don't know what the trouble is yet. What has Mr. Kepples been doing?"

"Oh yes, I forgot. He just knocked Clary right down onto the floor because he asked to recite his lesson, and every one of the boys said it was real mean and hateful of him, and I just wish he'd tumble down and break his neck, I do. He never"—

"Hush, Carley, hush, you mustn't speak so," said his mother gently. "That is wrong, you know Clary wouldn't."

"That's just it. The boys all said so. Clary is always so patient, and he hates Clary because he was Father Martin's favorite. Henry Wood told me so to-night."

"How was it, Clary?" said his mother to Clarence, who was becoming a little more quiet under the soothing influence of those gentle fingers. "Tell me all about it yourself."

The boy wiped his eyes, and related as clearly as he could, the history of the whole affair. His mother was too judicious a woman to pay attention to every trivial complaint that children make of their teachers, but she had seen Mr. Kepples, and formed a very unfavorable opinion of his character. This, joined with the burning heat of Clarence's head, led her to feel considerable anxiety on his account.

"Where did you hit your head, Clary?" she asked.

"Here mother, just over my eye."

"I don't see any swelling. Carlisle, hand me the camphor-bottle out of my cupboard there. We'll see if bathing won't relieve the pain."

The boy seated himself upon the floor before her, while she bathed his forehead, speaking so softly, and touching so gently. He wondered if any other mother was like her. He didn't think so.

"Rover, Rover," he cried, as the dog bounded into the room.

Rover's shiny black face and wagging tail as he stood before his young master said as plainly as face and tail *could* say, "What do you want of me Clarence? I'll do anything you say."

"Rover," he said, taking hold of the dog's paw, "go down and get my cap, and be careful—careful now, you don't drop anything out of it. Down in the hall."

The dog trotted proudly away, returning in one minute with the cap, and laying it on his master's lap.

"Good boy, Rover," said Clarence, as he always desig-

nated the favorite, when pleased with his conduct, "Kiss me Rover."

The black eyes sparkled like a human being's as he licked the boy's forehead, rubbed his nose against his cheek, and made various other demonstrations of his delighted affection.

"See mother, here is my ball. Isn't it a nice one? and so cheap too. Henry Wood's isn't a bit better, and he paid a shilling for it. I couldn't try it though to-day."

"That's the ball, is it?" cried Alice, skipping into the room, and letting herself down on the floor by her brother.

"Camphor—eh—why, what's the matter?"

The story had to be told all over again, aided by a few spirited touches from Carlisle, who had left the room, at his mother's instigation, to have his hands washed.

"Well, of all the stories I *ever* heard!" cried Alice, when it was done, "I'd like to see something done to that man that he'd remember."

"Father's going to sentence him to State's Prison to-morrow," cried Carlisle triumphantly, "mother said so!"

"Oh Carley, you are mistaken," said his mother, "I didn't say so. You asked me if he wouldn't, but I didn't say yes."

"Well, you didn't say no, mother," answered the child, "and I thought you meant yes. He will, won't he?"

"You don't understand, my son," she answered. "Father can't do things in that way. How are you now, Clarence?"

"My head feels better, but somehow I'm so dizzy. I can't see plain, something comes before my eyes like flashes. Where is Alice gone?"

His sister sat directly before him, and his bright eyes were gazing full into her face. She started up in alarm. A quick imperative gesture from her mother stopped the exclamation that quivered on her lips.

"Alice is here, Clarence," she said quietly, while the corners of her mouth twitched with emotion. "You have a severe head-ache, my son, and must keep quiet. Alice, dear,

take Carlisle away, and call your father up. I think I heard him come in down stairs."

When her husband entered the room, Clarence was looking very pale, so pale that his father uttered an exclamation of alarm. "Are you faint, Clarence?" cried he, laying his hand upon his shoulder.

The boy did not answer, but turned paler and sank back upon the floor. Judge Ainslie caught him up, crying in an agitated voice, "Some water, Helen, for heaven's sake, water."

The mother flew to the dresser, and held a glass of water to his lips. He paid no attention to her, but rolled his eyes as though in agony.

"He is in convulsions," sobbed his mother, rushing to the hall to summon assistance. He clenched his hands, and moaned, foaming at the mouth, and fixing his eyes in the agonized stare that accompanies attacks of that nature.

It was not, however, very severe or of long continuance. Before the physician had arrived, he was entirely over the violence of the attack, although still regardless of what was passing around him. Dr. Currer being the family physician, and a man of warm feelings, felt much interest in his patient. "Clarence," he said, stooping over the pillow. "How are you?"

There was no answer, only a deep sigh. Ammonia was applied to his nose and mouth. He stirred. "Clarence," said his mother, bending over him. He half-opened his eyes; she rubbed his hands, watching eagerly for the first sign of consciousness. At last he whispered, "Mother."—She spoke to him, "What is it, darling? do you feel better? Look at me. He turned his face towards her, and slowly opened his eyes. She shuddered; there was a look in them she had never seen before. "Where are you, mother? I don't see you," he murmured.

She sank into a chair. "Oh—my child!" then suddenly rallying with a strong effort, she motioned the doctor to his side. He took his hand, saying, "Clarence, look at me, my boy." Again those large dark orbs were uplifted, and an

involuntary start on the part of the physician spoke a world of meaning to the anxious mother. It was over directly, and Dr. Currer, with true professional nonchalance, gave quiet directions for his treatment, and took his departure, asserting that there was no danger of any sudden relapse.

He spoke encouragingly, but that quiver of agitation, and a studious avoidance of meeting her glance, sent an indefinable thrill of apprehension through the heart of the watchful mother.

There was no visiting the fair that night. Mr. Pufton came and stayed the whole evening, dividing himself judiciously between playing the agreeable to Mrs. Maylie, and nursing poor Clarence, who had been a long time his especial favorite. The attractions, indeed, proved so powerful both ways, that the poor little dumpling gentleman was thumping continually up and down stairs for a full hour after his arrival, until Aunt Sophy, taking pity on his little trotters, came up stairs and seated herself at her nephew's bedside.

"Poor little chap!" he cried, hastily mopping up his eyes. "Had a headache this morning. Villainous rascal, ma'am. Murderous wretch. Regular scape-gallows, ma'am."

Whether those complimentary epithets were applied to the lady he was addressing, the boy upon the bed, or some person unknown, it would have been quite difficult to determine, inasmuch as he frowned violently at the lady, shook his head furiously at the boy, and looked in all conceivable directions, with the air of a man who was meditating a precipitous descent upon some imaginary offender.

"See here, Clarence," he said, bobbing over him, "soon as you're well, I'll get father to let you spend the whole day with me in the fair. Lots of glorious things there. Little ships, and all sorts of everything. I'll buy you a new bat and ball, I will. You shall play with it all day, soon as you get well, mind."

"I think I shall be well to-morrow," said Clarence, bright-

ening. "If I could only see you now. I guess its one of those blind-head-aches Aunty has sometimes. Don't you think so, mother?"

Mrs. Ainslie did not think so. The symptoms were too violent. There was a terrible dread tugging at her heart, but she felt the importance of calmness, and answered with a stifled sigh, "I don't know, dear. The doctor said you would be better to-morrow."

"Suppose I should get blind," he said, thoughtfully. "It's so strange; I've got such a queer feeling about my eyes."

Mr. Pufton whisked about in a state of tremendous excitement at the bare supposition of such a thing, whipping his pocket-handkerchief across his eyes in a very suspicious manner, and taking a few hasty turns up and down the room.

Mrs. Bailey thought to herself, "What a pity that man was a rumseller. No one would ever think so, she was sure."

Mr. Pufton flew about a deal faster, and rubbed his eyes a deal harder, when Dr. Currer informed him in confidence that there was very little prospect that poor Clarence would ever see again. The injury he had sustained was of so serious a nature as to preclude the probability of his ever being free from a liability to being attacked at any hour with the epileptic convulsion of the previous evening. Some affection of the eye consequent upon his disease must probably destroy his sight.

It was many weeks before this was communicated to the unhappy parents. A sadness brooded over the house, such as an affliction of that nature alone could bring. Death steals our darlings away, and time ripples quietly over the wreck of our shattered love, until we forget that it is there. But when the sun of light goes down upon a loving son, or brother, or friend, leaving them to a life-long night, our own hearts travel with them into the shadow. As the hope of restoration grows fainter, our sympathies twine closer around the sufferer.

The whole family went softly about for a long time after the first attack of Clarence. As the gentle, amiable boy groped his way from room to room, never complaining, always patient, and loving as ever, every hand was ready to assist. His mother would sit for hours with his head upon her lap, reading or relating some history that could divert his attention. Kate and Alice taught him to knit, and braid little baskets of wire for their toilet-stand; his father took him out with him to his office; even little Ellie and Carlisle tried a great many ways of their own to amuse their blind brother. As for poor Rover, he actually seemed to understand perfectly the whole affair. He would sit by the hour together at his young master's feet, every now and then looking with such an earnest, wistful glance into his face, and rubbing his head against his knee, so lovingly that Clarence could hardly be a minute without him.

About three weeks after the first convulsion, he was seized with another, more violent and painful. Then they became more frequent, so that before the winter was half out, scarcely a week elapsed without their recurrence.

Clarence was sitting one day alone with his mother. The fire burned brightly in the grate. He sat in his low chair at one side, and she was sewing opposite him, while Rover lay stretched upon the rug before the fire. He had been musing for a long time, without speaking a word. His mother glanced occasionally across to see that he was comfortable, now and then stirring up the fire, or looking out of the window.

"Mother," he cried suddenly, with a joyful start, "I can see! I see Rover and you as plain! Oh! dear mother, I can see."

She let her work drop, and rushed towards him. He put both arms about her, and looked into her face.

"Oh! yes, you look just the same as ever, and Rover, too. Rover!"

The dog sprang up towards him, Clarence patted him, and laughed and cried alternately.

"Where's Alice and father?" he exclaimed. "I can see them now just as well as you can. Do call them quick. Oh! dear—oh!"——

He put his hand quickly to his forehead, uttering a low cry of pain, then, as though relieved, looked up into his mother's face.

"There, it's all dark again, mother. Oh! dear, how dark. Darker than it was before."

He sat down again in his little chair. His lips quivered. He burst into tears. The great drops rolled down over his face and he swayed backwards and forwards convulsively.

"I shall never see again," he sobbed. "*How* dark it is? I can't even see the fire. Oh! if I could only see father and all, once—just once. And I thought I was going"——

He laid his head down upon his knees, and cried aloud. His mother knelt down and took his head to her bosom, without saying a word, and her own tears streamed down over the clustering curls. They sat so for some minutes. At length she found breath to say, "It is the Lord's will, let Him do as seemeth good in His sight. My dear—dear boy!"

It was too hard a lesson for the child. He only sobbed the more, and clung closer to that yearning heart, while she, the tender, weeping mother sent up such prayers to heaven from her inner soul, as our Heavenly Father treasures till he shall answer in his own good time. And yet the burden of her prayer was not that he might see again. The Lord had sent the trial, and she was praying for His aid to bear it. Praying that when those sightless eyes should close for ever in this world, they might open to the glories of the celestial city. That Jesus would take the stricken lamb to His bosom, and carry him through the green pastures, and beside the still waters.

Well for thee, mother, that the blackness of coming years

fell not then upon thy spirit. "Mercy held the vail over thy future," or a fiercer curse than the life-shade falling on thy boy, would have loomed up frightfully before thy vision. Hope—and pray—and trust. Thou wilt have strong need, mother—gentle, yearning mother.

Clarence never saw again.

CHAPTER XIII.

LITTLE MAGGIE had washed up the dishes, and swept the room, and "cleared up" with a nicety that would have satisfied any Yankee housewife. Mrs. Terry had just coaxed the baby to sleep—a circumstance very satisfactory to all baby-tending mammas, and Mr. Terry was about starting down towards the village.

"I think, Jennie," said he, "I shall want Maggie along to come home with the meat, or you will not have it in time for dinner. I shall be detained some time at Mr. Meadows'."

"Very well, I can spare her now as well as not," answered his wife; "Maggie, Maggie!"

The little girl came running in answer to the call.

"You may get your little basket, and put on your hat and shawl," said her mistress. "Mr. Terry wants you to go down to the village with him to bring home the dinner."

The little pale face brightened, and the girl bounded away to do her bidding.

"There is something uncommon about that child," remarked Mr. Terry, following her with his eyes as she left the room; "I can't feel at all towards her as I would towards a servant."

"Nor I," answered his young wife, re-arranging the cradle-quilt over the sleeping baby. "She has won her way into my heart entirely. Indeed she is so gentle and affectionate, it would be hard to repulse her."

"Her manner shows that she has never learned what belongs to the station she occupies," answered her husband.

"It's your business to teach her that, Jennie. There is too much familiarity in the way in which she conducts towards you. It's for her own good to know it."

"I don't know that either, Charles. I thought so at first, but really I don't think she means any harm at all by it. I would hardly alter it, if I could without wounding her feelings, which I cannot do; so I think best to take her just as she is."

"It was rather an odd proceeding, though," answered her husband, "for her to dance up behind you at the table this morning, and kiss you while you were eating your breakfast. Can't you let her know it isn't agreeable to you to be treated in that manner?"

"I'm not quite so certain it isn't agreeable to me," she answered, smiling. "I am sure it comes right from the heart, prompted by genuine affection, and commodities of that sort are too valuable to be thrown away for the sake of a little false etiquette. Yesterday she put both arms around my neck, and asked me if I *wouldn't* please to love her, she loved me so much? Well now, what could I do? You wouldn't have had me thrust her away from me, and so break her spirits entirely."

"No, not exactly that, Jennie, but I'm afraid Catharine is beginning to put on airs on the strength of the indulgence shown to Maggie, and it wouldn't be quite so pleasant in her, you know."

"Charles, suppose we send Maggie to school, and prepare her to teach. She's quite a good scholar now, for one of her age, and I think she has considerable talent."

"My dear wife, that wouldn't do at all. How could you get along without her? She's such an excellent little nurse, too."

"I could manage very well now, Charles, if you'll let me try; the baby has begun to creep, and she amuses herself a great deal. I think it would be an excellent plan. Then,

you see, Catharine would have no excuse for putting on airs. Come, now, this is quite a pet plan of mine. I've been a whole week thinking it over."

"Well, well," said her husband doubtfully, "you may have your own way, only on trial, mind, though I really think it a strange notion, and I'm afraid you'll tire yourself out with that baby, and everything else you have to do."

There was quite a commotion in the neighborhood when Maggie made known the fact that she was to be sent to school. Catharine turned up her nose very contemptuously, and declared that she "couldn't see why some folks was always sot above other folks, when there wasn't no sort o' difference between 'em." Rosy and Joe thought Maggie deserved it—every bit of it. "She was a most uncommon cretur! they nebber seed nuffin like her." Mrs. Jones, who lived just below, grumbled that "some was always in luck; no luck ever came to her. If they'd only took her Beccy now, 'twould ha' been worth while; nobody couldn't make nothin' out of her to hum. But then she couldn't expect to be nothin' more nor the most wretchedest mortal on airth. She never was, and she didn't s'pose she could be."

On that same morning, Edward Clarence had stepped over to Mr. Gamp's sanctum with papers of some importance, having reference to the sale of the land spoken of by that gentleman to Dr. Higgins. He was to meet him there in an hour, to witness the signatures, and Gamp was to settle matters with the young gentleman previous to his arrival. When young Clarence entered the room, no one was there but Billy, who was moving about pale and spiritless as ever, with that same shadow always lingering over his face.

"Where's Mr. Gamp, Billy?" he asked, glancing at the boy.

"Gone out, sir. He's been gone ten minutes. He'll be back in ten. You was to please to wait."

"If your ten minutes is half an hour, I believe I'll take a run across the road. I might as well. Think so, eh?"

"Ten minutes—half an hour"—murmured the boy, looking up in blank astonishment,

"He didn't say half an hour."

Edward laughed outright. "I didn't say so, did I?" he asked. "Some people say ten minutes, and mean half an hour—understand?"

"*He* don't," said the boy abruptly; "he'll do everything he says. If he said he was going to kill you in ten minutes, he'd do it." Having gone so far, he started and fell back, evidently frightened at his boldness.

"You needn't be afraid of me," said Edward, pityingly. "Poor fellow, I see you don't like your master."

Billy looked round to the door, as though it might open by some invisible power, then putting his face down to Edward's, whispered,

"You'll tell him."

"Nonsense, boy. I'll cut my own head off first."

"Well, then," he answered, in an excited tone, and glancing again fearfully at the door, "I hate him. He knows it, too, and he says I shall smart for it yet. Oh, dear. I do smart for it every day."

"Why don't you leave him, then?" asked Edward.

"I can't," answered the boy, "he won't let me."

"Pshaw, Billy, what are you made of? Take my advice, have a regular blow up, and clear out. I wouldn't stay in such a place as this, at any rate. Come now, tell him so."

The poor fellow opened his eyes wide with terror at the bare idea.

"He'd kill me, I know," he muttered in a hoarse whisper, "he'd kill me if he knew I talked so to you."

"Why, what right has he to keep you? You're not his child. Haven't you any father and mother?"

"No, he says he's my uncle, and my father told him to take care of me when he died. But I don't believe him. He hates

me. Just see here." He drew up the sleeve of his jacket, exhibiting a large blue spot upon his arm.

"He did it; he does so every day, and beats me too sometimes."

"And what do you do to make him beat you?" asked Edward.

"Nothing at all. I'm so afraid of him I daren't do a thing."

"This is a very bad place for you," said Edward. "I will see what can be done to get you away. Just have a little patience, and"—

"Oh no!" interrupted the boy hastily; "don't! he won't let me go; he'll only hate me worse than ever. It's a bad place, I know that better than you. It's a horrid place. It was a horrid place in New York. They used to drink and fight, and gamble. I've seen them play till they looked mad enough to kill one another, and one night a young man jumped up from the table and screamed out, 'There's the last cent,' and just held a pistol to his mouth, and fired. I've seen women and children come there, and go down on their knees to him, and beg him to let their husbands and fathers alone, and not be holding out traps for them to drink and play, and he'd laugh at them, and maybe that very night he'd get the men drunk, and kick them out into the gutter. Ugh, it was awful. It'll kill me yet."

The boy had gone further than he had ever been before. So far that he was alarmed, and trembled violently. "He'll be here now in three minutes. Oh, if he found out what I'd been saying."

At this instant the door opened, and the worthy gentleman made his appearance.

The pitying look on Edward's countenance, and the boy's glance of terror were not lost upon him. He merely remarked, however, "Fine day, Mr. Clarence. Billy, be off to your business. You've idled away the whole morning. You're the worst boy to manage I ever knew. Go along, sir. Here, take

this demijohn over to Mr. Crane's. Don't be loitering along the road now. It won't take you over two hours. Take the road up by the creek."

The boy shouldered his demijohn and departed, leaving the young doctor to transact his business with the rumseller.

"Somewhat colder to-day," he remarked, throwing on another stick of wood. "Winter has set in, in earnest. Well, it's high time. New Year's is almost here. Is it light enough for you, sir? There's nothing doing here in the day-time, so I don't open that side window. Well, we might as well proceed to business."

"Certainly sir," said Edward, "here are my papers."

"It's so cold this morning," said Gamp, "we may as well have something to warm us up a bit."

He stepped across to the shelves, took down a decanter, and brought it to the table. "Take a glass, sir, it'll do you good after your cold walk," he said, at the same time pouring out two glasses of wine. The glasses were drained three times before business was commenced. There was some entanglement in relation to a former title that needed clearing away, and Edward, not feeling well, was considerably perplexed in explaining it to the satisfaction of the purchaser. Gamp insisted at every fresh difficulty that he would feel much refreshed by renewing his libation, and pressed him so politely to join him, that the young physician could not refuse, without, as he thought, being positively impolite.

Before the hour was over, Edward had become considerably excited, while Gamp, who had taken the same quantity, remained cool and collected as ever. The young man had gone frequently as far as this, on similar previous occasions, and had already contracted a taste for the stimulating beverage. As those indulgences, however, were generally followed by slight headaches, he had resolved at every repetition of them to indulge no more. But these resolutions, like the figures a child draws upon the sand below high-water-

mark, were washed away by the first wave of impulse or desire.

"Good morning, Higgins," said Gamp, as that worthy stalked into the room.

"How's the shakes now? Gone for good?"

Dr. Higgins's expression was certainly suggestive of a dying calf as he sank into his chair. "Bad enough," said he, "have a wretched time of it. But I tread the mill steadily, that's my motto, that's the motto for every physician, sir, for every man. What's brought you to comparative competence, sir?" He did not pause for an answer to this question, but a queer smile on Gamp's face answered it notwithstanding. "You have been always on the spot, sir," continued he, "and the day will come when I too must have my reward, although past years have done little for me, very little."

"Pho Higgins," cried his friend, "don't be nonsensical. Have something to cheer you up. Here's some Champagne. Help yourself."

The long-faced doctor helped himself quite freely.

"You're not going to be so uncivil as to let Dr. Higgins drink alone?" said Gamp to Edward. "Take a little for company's sake. You haven't tried this yet."

"Excuse me, sir," said Edward, a little confusedly. "I believe I have taken enough, it doesn't agree with me."

"That's all fancy sir," was the rejoinder. "Really, I shall take it quite amiss if you refuse to pass judgment upon this Champagne." As he finished speaking, he passed another goblet to the reluctant young man, who did not know what else to do, so took it from his hand, and commenced sipping it. By the time that was gone, it was quite a dubious point to him, whether Mr. Gamp or Dr. Higgins were talking to him, or a little of both. He had never felt quite so bad before. He began to entertain a singular suspicion of himself.

There was no business worth speaking of to transact, so

there was no need of Edward's remaining longer. As the door closed after him, Gamp burst into a laugh.

"A capital joke that," he cried, "Higgins, don't you believe his father'll stare when he sees that pattern son that 'he isn't a bit afraid of,' staggering home in that style. Well, Higgins, there's no danger of leading you astray, you tender lamb, ugh!" A leer of contempt gleamed in those malicious eyes as he spoke. You'll take good care of your health and your money, and somebody'll take good care of you, never fear. You might come to the gallows yet, but you won't be dragged there by the common agent, that's sure. You're too cunning for that. Drink away, no fear of your hurting yourself."

Dr. Higgins took this complimentary address quite stoically, looking as resigned and sanctified as though he were a Bunyan or a Latimer being persecuted for his religion.

"Well," he said at last, after coolly dispatching his fifth glass of wine, "Your business is pretty much settled, I suppose!"

"No," answered Gamp, with a sneer, "it tickles me so, this wonderful youth nibbling the bait so readily; I've had many a harder case than that. I wouldn't wonder if he took to it naturally now."

"He's young, excitable, and unsuspecting," said Higgins morosely, "I wouldn't lead him any further."

Gamp interrupted him with a mocking laugh. "You don't want to lose a profitable pupil. Don't be afraid; if the devil wants him, he's employed a better teacher for him than I am, and 'tain't likely he'll take him out of your hands. It was only for a little joke on that swaggering father of his, I knocked the chap over a bit to-day. I'll not meddle with him any more, if he doesn't come of his own accord, unless I get a gambling concern out here, and then I shall naturally fleece him to clothe myself, ha, ha! Or if he tampers with Bill—I saw the young imp cower a little more than common this

morning, if he attempts to"—he did not say what—"by heaven, they shall both curse the day they were born!" The ominous squint grew into a scowl of defiance, and his fist was clenched.

"What hold have you got over that boy?" asked Higgins, pouring some more wine; "he acts as though he expected you to murder him with that frightened look of his. Everybody sees it."

"What do I care if they do?" shouted Gamp. "Maybe I shall some day, not all at once though. Never you mind now," he added, lowering his tone, we've had business together none of the whitest before this; you've got secrets that are nothing to me, I've no doubt, and I've got some maybe that don't concern you. It's for our interest to keep mum as far as possible on each other's affairs. I owed the boy's father a grudge, that's all. Poh, 'tisu't worth telling!"

Higgins, in whom prudence was the reigning cardinal virtue, concluded that it was advisable to hold his tongue. The two friends stretched their feet out to the fire, and lit their cigars. We will leave them to a quiet smoke, and run along after Edward as he bends his steps towards home.

It was a clear winter's morning. The snow spread away in an unbroken sheet of white, sending back the rays that flashed upon its bosom. A quiet beauty bathed the trees whose pendent icicles outvied the diamond's lustre: the hills all rosy in the morning sun-light; the fields stretching away to the calm river gliding in the distance; the cloudless winter sky that arched the whole landscape; the dazzling sun that smiled down upon the world, as though no broken hearts were there.

And heedless of it all, he who so loved to mark their glories reeled on over the slippery road, scarce able to keep from falling. Strange fancies crowded through his brain. His head whirled painfully. He sat down in the road to rest. A little hand was laid upon his shoulder. It was Maggie, looking very bright and cheerful, with her basket on her arm.

"Are you ill, Mr. Edward?" she said softly, touching him. He turned round and looked into her face. She started back in alarm, with a sudden exclamation of surprise.

He spoke to her, "Y-Yes, I b-lieve I'm sick; where—am I?"

There was no longer any doubt on her mind, though she could hardly believe her senses, as she saw him sitting there, with that strange, wild look. It reminded her of her mother. What should she do? Two figures were coming toward her. She knew them both by sight, though she had never spoken to them. The younger one stooped a little, as though skulking from an enemy. They came up to where he was sitting in the road, and she standing beside him. She looked up into the face of the taller of the two.

"Oh, Mr. Steele!" bursting into tears. He stooped down in alarm to see what was the matter. He, too, started back suddenly, while the other boy mumbled to himself, "Just so. I knew it. Always so."

"Take hold, Bill, and help him up," said Steele, to the other. "He must get home, at all events. I did *not* think it would be so with him." Two or three tears dropped from between the long points of the collar, as the intoxicated youth strove to rise, and, failing in his attempts, fell heavily upon the crusted snow.

"I think—I'm—worse," he stammered. "Father'll—can't—you get me—a drink. Halloa—Steele—you there? Bless you—boy—what makes you come—out here in the snow?" He was evidently striving to appear sober, and was evidently growing worse every moment.

"I'm afraid he'll never be able to reach home," said Steele, with a sorrowful perplexity of tone and look. "What can I do?"

Maggie first looked at one, then at the other, as though waiting anxiously for their decision. The younger boy looked more jaded and despairing than ever, as he stood there, gar-

ing into the flushed face of his morning's confidant. At last, when no one said a word, the little girl looked timidly up. "Please, sir," she said, "I know where to take him, if you think so. His father'd feel so bad."

Steele shook his head. "Not to Mr. Terry's," he answered, "that's too far."

"No, I don't mean there, sir. Its just round the corner, in that little house; Rosy lives there."

"And who is Rosy?"

"Mr. Weston's Rosy. Joe's Mr. Weston's man, and Rosy's his wife. She goes across the fields to his house every day."

"Maybe she's not there," said Steele, hesitating.

"Won't you please come and see, sir; she wouldn't tell anybody, and his father wouldn't find it out then, either."

It was the best thing to be done under the circumstances, so they started for the cottage, Steele on one side of Edward, and Billy on the other, while Maggie ran before to prepare Rosy for the arrival. She knocked at the door, all out of breath, and the turbaned head made its appearance.

"Oh, Rosy, I'm so glad you're here; Mr. Edward is sick on the road, and they are going to bring him here. Don't tell anybody, Rosy, dear. He's so bad."

"Not tell nobody?" cried Rosy. "What are you gwine to tell nobody fur. What's the matter, sweetie?"

But she need not ask, for as she finished speaking, the three turned the corner, and advanced under the trees towards her.

"Lord hab mercy on him, he's been an' got drunk," she cried, raising her hands in astonishment. "What *is* we a coming to, dat's all?"

"Billy," said Clarence, as they entered the house, "walk in—poor fellow—I'm sick now—but I will help you yet. Come in."

The boy followed him. Steele laid him on Rosy's bed, while Maggie whispered:—

"There sir, we will see to him now. You needn't stay any longer. I'm so sorry."

The tears started to her eyes again, but she wiped them away, and followed him to the door, "Please, sir, don't tell of it," she said softly, as he stood upon the steps.

"No, child, certainly," he answered. "You're a good little girl."

She blushed at the abrupt compliment, saying simply, "No, sir, not at all. I love him so. Maybe I'd have died, if"—she was interrupted by Rosy's calling to her:—

"Maggie," she said, at the same time coming to the door, "Mr. Edward wants you an' Billy dar. Mebbe better both on you stay till he gits asleep, or he'll be a kickin' up a muss. I nebber b'lieved I'd have dat 'ar rumseller's chap in dar. Dey's all sons ob de devil—dey is. 'Pears I can't help it now though, no ways."

"Good bye, sir," said, Maggie, turning away. "Thank you, sir." She seated herself on one side of the bed, and the boy on the other. They kept very still, but they didn't have to watch long, for he was asleep in five minutes.

"Dar now," said Rosy, "you kin just go 'bout your business now. I'll take care ob him till he gits over. Why, what's the matter wid yer, boy? got him tipsy, and den a cryin' over it. Go 'long. I nebber seed nuffin like yer." She spoke in a tone of honest indignation to poor Billy, who had covered his face with both hands, and was weeping silently.

"Oh, I didn't get him so," he sobbed, "don't think it of me."

"Well, what are you sniffecatin' for den, dough you's got enough, de Lord knows," she answered, frowning at him severely.

"Don't, I'm sorry—I'm sorry," he murmured. "It's always so; I never see it no other way. I wish I could die."

"De Lord wouldn't hab no mercy on yer, if yer was to die now," said Rosy, a little softened. "Ye've got to git out o'

dat awful place, where yer kills folks, an' repent in dust an' ashes. Mebbe ye's doin' it now, is yer?" She gazed at him in considerable perplexity of mind as to the sources of his sorrow.

He didn't answer her, but after a little wiped his eyes, and rising, moved towards the door.

"Well, Rosy, I must go too," said Maggie, or I shan't be home in time. "You'll take care of him," glancing at the sleeper.

"Nebber you fear, dear cretur," answered Rosy. "Don't I know what de wretches is up to?" casting an indignant glance at Billy. "My Joe's come home jest so, lot's o' times, since they got out here. It'll kill me right out, ef he keeps on so. He can't help it, poor feller. They's ollers a seticin' ob him on. I'se afeard nobody dat gits in dar'll eber git out again. Poor Missy Katy. Ef Mas'r Edward keeps on, it'll break her heart, like its a breakin' mine." Two or three great sobs heaved the broad breast as she bid Maggie goodbye, and returned to watch beside her charge.

The boy and girl left the door together. She walked along at his side. He looked awkward and miserable. She turned her eyes pityingly upon his face. At length she ventured to speak.

"I'm sorry for you," she said gently.

He looked confused, not knowing what to answer.

"I know what the matter is," she continued, more gently than before. "You are unhappy, you don't like your place, nor your master."

"I didn't say so, did I?" he asked with a half glance of alarm.

"No, but I know it without. How did it come? that, I mean, you know."

"I wasn't there at all. He sent me off this morning. Mr. Clarence was there. He wasn't so then."

"It's too bad," sighed the little girl. "Don't you think so?"

There was something in her manner that spoke real sympathy, and it encouraged her companion.

"Yes, I do," he answered. "Everything's too bad there. I'm too bad. Nobody ever comes there, but they get just like him, and a great deal worse."

Then turning towards her, he asked suddenly, "What made you cry? Do you live with him?"

"No, but I love him very much. I was a little beggar in New York, and he took care of me. He's very good."

"Yes. I like him," he answered, "haven't you got any father and mother?"

"I've got a mother, but she can't ever see me or do anything for me. I might just as well not have any."

"I haven't any at all," said her companion dejectedly; "I don't know as I have a friend in the world. Mr. Clarence was very kind to me this morning. He looked pleasanter than any body has in a long time. Nobody likes me, or cares for me."

Two or three tears sparkled on the little girl's eyelashes as she looked up at the melancholy face. "I care for you," she said. "I'm very sorry for you. I like you too. I thought just as you do, before he took me out here to Mrs. Terry's."

The pitying words went direct to the poor fellow's heart, and melted the ice there. He rubbed his sleeve across his eyes, and drew a long breath, but didn't say anything. By this time they had reached the corner. Each paused a moment before they parted.

"Do you ever pray?" asked Maggie softly. "Do I do what?" he said, turning towards her.

"Pray—pray to God to be your friend. That's the way I did, and He was my friend. He sent Mr. Clarence after me."

"How do you know?" he asked doubtfully.

"Why Mrs. Terry said so." I used to have a teacher once who told me always to do that when I was in trouble. I was in a great deal of trouble then, for I thought I should starve,

so I prayed to Him for Jesus sake to help me out, and He did. He always does. Won't you pray?"

"I don't know how. I never prayed in my life."

"Never did! Poor Billy!" Here there was an awkward pause, during which the boy looked at the ground, and the child pityingly into his face.

At length she added, "Don't you go to Sabbath-school?"

"No."

"Nor to church?"

"No."

"Why? won't he let you go out Sundays?"

"Yes, if I want to. But I don't care for anything. I go and lie down in the fields where I can't see him."

"Why don't you go to church?"

"Nobody wants me there. I'm too bad. Everybody knows I'm too bad to go there."

"That isn't the way to think. The worse you are the more need for your going there. What do you do so dreadful bad?"

"Stay there. Do you suppose anybody that stays there is fit to go to church?"

The little girl smiled. "But it isn't *that* makes you wicked."

He looked up in blank astonishment. Poor fellow! That had always seemed to him the sum and substance of his evil doings, and he cowered under it with as much shame as though he could have helped himself.

Maggie smiled again. "Won't you come to church next Sunday morning? I'll watch for you. You can learn to be good there."

Billy shook his head doubtfully, but assented bashfully to her proposition.

"I'll pray for you, too, Billy. Can't you pray? It's very easy. Just ask God, for Jesus's sake, to take care of you, and make you better. That's all. I can't stay any longer now; good-bye."

She gave him a farewell glance of sympathy, and ran

quickly along over the snow with her little basket dangling from her arm, trying to make up for lost time. He looked after her a few minutes, wiped his eyes again, and walked wearily in the opposite direction. But the pale face looked a little less jaded, the bent figure a little less drooping, and a small gleam of something like hope played in the sunken eye. It seemed so strange for anybody to say a kind word to him. He had never had loving words spoken to him, and kind deeds done. Blows, and hatred, and violence had been his portion. He had seen sights that might have turned his heart to stone. But there was a something down in its far depths that would not let him become that for which he had been trained.

Some flowers will live year after year shut out from the nourishing sun-light; but they lose their brilliant hues, their fragrance, their beauty. So some hearts may be nurtured in moral darkness, with no ray of knowledge, or piety, or love to call out the hidden talents and virtues that shed lustre upon man's career. So it was with the dejected victim of the rum-seller. So it is with thousands in our Christian land, growing up in worse darkness than that of heathenism. Oh, there are many spots in every city and village of our Republic, where shadows fall heavier and denser than upon the banks of the Ganges, or the shores of benighted Africa. And they fall densest above the distillery and the porter-house, the grog-shop, and the drunkard's home.

Christians of America! as you pour out your wealth to send light to darker lands, looking above and beyond the blight that sweeps along your own—listen! A wail swells from your eastern to your western shores—a wail of human agony from breaking hearts—pouring alike from hamlet and city. The mother's shriek of despair, the last groan of the murdered wife, the cry of innocent babyhood, the ravings of the dying inebriate, the curses of the ruined outcast, the fierce blasphemy of the incarcerated felon, going up in

one eternal chorus to the throne of God. "Having eyes, ye see not, having ears, ye hear not." Will you not look? will you not listen? *You* may lift this mountain of vice and misery from your soil, and cast it into the depths of the sea; not by your puny single hands, that crumble now and then a fragment from the rock, but by the *mighty lever of the law!* A law made by strong-hearted freemen to give back liberty to their weaker comrades. Throw soul and strength into the great struggle for the right. See the plague lying at your own doors, ready to seize upon your own child or brother, and battle it away as though you felt its sting in your own heart.

Do this, and the time shall come when you may turn your prisons into churches, and your drunkards into men. Remember—that through all the broad field of human toil and struggle, "there's no such word as fail."

CHAPTER XIV.

EBEN JONES having been hard at work all day, had come home to supper. No very agreeable prospect before him certainly, as he opened the back door, and stepped into the kitchen. A dirty wash-tub filled up the passage-way, which he adroitly managed to avoid, only, however, to have his ingenuity taxed in making his way through a perfect labyrinth of household utensils that had been thrown down, here, there, and everywhere, to suit the convenience of the user.

Two or three cracked iron pots stood along in front of the stove; a couple of dingy-looking pans of bread lay on one side of it, as though just taken from the oven; a wash-boiler, half full of dirty suds, was set close upon the opposite side, two or three armfuls of wood lay scattered among the whole, and a battered tea-kettle was perched upon the top of the stove, as though holding absolute sway over its humbler neighbors.

Upon the table by the window, all kinds of articles lay jumbled up together in a most interesting state of confusion. A pail of flour, a pan of soft-soap, a dish of butter, a paper of saleratus, a dish-tub filled with swill, half a loaf of bread, and a pile of wet clothes formed the staple lading of the accommodating table, not to speak of various smaller articles, that, as it were, set off the above-mentioned to the best advantage. A small space in front between the swill-tub and the clothes was sprinkled with flour and bits of dough from the bread that Mrs. Jones had been kneading there; but the kneading-tray, pitcher of water, yeast-pail, &c., were ranged on chairs at either side, while a few jugs, skillets, and tin pans lay scattered tastefully about the floor.

It was too common a state of affairs for Mr. Jones to notice, so he went straight into the other room, where his amiable helpmeet was dispensing supper and good advice to her children, who paid vigorous attention to the first, and utterly disregarded the last, save when it came in the shape of a ringing box on the ear, or a slap upon the shoulder. No higher praise can be lavished upon the table and its accompaniments, than the assurance that it was in perfect keeping with the place where it had been prepared. The young Joneses, unwashed and unkempt, presented a picture of dirt and neglect that would have done honor to any Hottentot, a fact apparently obvious to the lady mother, from the occasional remarks she let fall upon the subject.

"Jake, couldn't you have decency enough about you to get a splice of that ere dirt off your face before you come to your supper? I declare you're the worst, nastiest lummux that ever sat down to a Christian woman's table."

What evidence the poor fellow had that he was at a Christian woman's table, we have no power to say; doubtless his mother had her own reasons for saying so, though they certainly wouldn't have been obvious to an unenlightened observer.

"Now Beccy, don't be a chopping at the meat like a pig. Here's your father a' comin,' and I reckon he'll be wanting a little on't. Jake, take your fingers out o' the sugar-bowl, they're dirty as pison." Catching an assurance in an undertone to the effect that she was a "darned mean critter," she bestowed upon the disrespectful young gentleman a vigorous stroke of her by no means delicate hand, causing him to shake his head very threateningly, as soon as her eyes were occupied with some other culprit.

"Well Eben," she said as her husband entered, "how does things get on up to the Clarence's? I reckon you'll hardly get much work there till spring."

Her husband presented the appearance of a man broken

down, not so much by labor as vexation of spirit. Not ill-looking, but with a kind of settled expression of pain upon his hard features, that made him rather disagreeable. Finding it to his disadvantage, however, to take any notice of the cause of all his troubles, he had years ago settled down into a kind of desperate resignation, that, perhaps was the best thing he could do to avoid falling a prey to utter despair.

"I shall get enough to do now," he answered, "Teddy Toole is discharged, he's never sober, and Mr. Clarence can't do nothing with him, so he's give it up for a bad job, an' I'm to get his place."

"Do tell now!" ejaculated his wife, "he was such a first rate worker too. Well, now I am just glad on it; that stuck up Kitty Toole was for ever a boasting about her fine things; I guess she'll have to sell her smart carpet after a while. Look out now, you don't get drunk an' lose your place too; you an't nothing better than you should be, I'll be bound. You young imps, what are you quarrelling about now?" she cried, turning to where her two eldest olive-branches were keeping up a vigorous fire of kicks under the table.

"Jake's a' makin' snoots at me"—cried Beccy, giving a more violent thrust of her heavy shoe against her brother's ankle, while he administered an affectionate pinch as an offset to her assault. They set up a roar simultaneously. "She's a kickin' of my shins, she's got the skin all off, I know," he cried, at the same time lifting his foot almost level with his plate.

"Hold your tongues, you young catamounts!" cried Mrs. Jones. "I'll take the skin off o' both on you; I should think you'd been a wadin' in the pig-sty by the looks of your feet."

"He's a pinchin' me orful!" bellowed Beccy; "my arm's all black and blue. I wont stop, so!" and she administered a smart slap upon his cheek with her greasy hand. This being returned with interest by her brother, there is no telling to

what length they might have gone, had not their mother stepped between them, and dealt a few powerful whacks on either side, until they were glad to content themselves with scowling at one another, and bestowing such sly thrusts under the table as would not come under the range of their mother's eye.

"If you'd a had one grain o' common sense," she continued, when justice had been administered, "you'd never a let him get in there afore. I told you that three years ago when he wanted to hire. You might a been smarted up as grand as him, if you'd only followed my advice. But it ain't of no sort o' use, I might talk till dooms-day, an' you'd never be the better for it."

Her husband didn't answer, but he thought of the kitchen in connection with the "smarting up," at the same time feeling as positive as herself of the truth of her last assertion.

"There comes the cow, Sally," remarked her husband, as they were finishing tea, "I suppose it's time she was milked. Are you going to milk her?"

"I going to milk, indeed! are you crazy entirely, you lazy chap? I goin' to milk. Just look at the pile of work I've had to do to-day, an' never stopped since five o'clock this morning. Get along out o' this, or I'll do something you won't like, and don't let me see your face again till you fetch me the milk all strained; you know me well enough, when my temper's riz."

Poor Mr. Jones did know her well enough when her "temper was riz," and felt that he had been peculiarly unfortunate in making such a remark, for his better half had fully intended to dispatch one of the children on the business under discussion, but the question he asked, had so aggravated her, that she was determined to make him do penance. He, finding opposition worse for him in the end, always yielded indiscriminately to her demands.

"Now, Beccy, do you just stir about a bit, and help me

clear up the things. I don't expect you'll do nothing though, you're too much like your dad for that. Jake, do you just go along and saw the wood for morning. You young 'uns may as well go to bed. If my brats were like other folkses, now, Beccy'd take and give all on you a sound washing, afore she'd let you go so pison-nasty off to bed; but I was never nothing but a tormented wretch since I was born, and I don't expect to be nothing else till I die."

When the cow was milked, the obedient husband ventured to remark, "Sally, I was to go over after supper to see Mr. Clarence; he had something to tell me about my work."

"Pretty work, I should think," cried she, giving a peculiarly cross curl to her ugly mouth, "if you must be off all day, and then go prancing off of an evening; it's only an excuse, I'll be bound."

"Well, but if I do not go," he said, deprecatingly, "I'll be very likely to lose my place, that's all."

"I don't believe nothin' o' the sort," she answered. "It's just 'cause you want to get over to Gamp's, I know. Well, you can go, as Mr. Clarence wants you, but mind if you go nigh the rum, I'll skin you, see if I don't, now;" and she enforced her words with a most formidable shake of her brawny arm.

So Eben Jones started on to Mr. Clarence's, thinking to himself how some men were blessed in loving wives and happy homes, while he—well it was no use. The less said and thought the better, but of one thing he was sure. If those who rallied him about the lady of his choice, could stand for one week in his place, they would find it was no fault of his, that he tried to make the best of a bad matter, and even sometimes submitted to indignity of the worst character, rather than endure the abuse of a woman's tongue, and the weight of a woman's hand.

Mrs. Jones having settled everything, which operation consisted in getting the children off to bed, the various articles

in the kitchen huddled indiscriminately into the pantry, and Jake and Beccy seated over the same apple-basket, paring and quartering, at the same time that they took advantage of their proximity to snarl at one another to their heart's content, slipped out at the door, with a jug in her hand, and started off for a drop of comfort after her miserable day. The way was very lonely, but it made no difference to her. If spoken to, she would have as soon knocked the offender down, as used the broom-stick to her delinquent husband.

In one portion of the road, a bridge with no railing at the side lay over a deep chasm, filled with rocks. As she passed it, she looked over the edge and shuddered. She would have been ready to pour out her wrath upon her husband, had he been travelling on the same errand, but in her own case it was entirely different. "Didn't she feel worn out with her day's work, and trying to make something out of those good for nothing brats. Hadn't she more need of it, poor, unhappy creature that she was, than any woman in the village?"

So she laid in a supply, and returned, rejoicing that she could, at any rate, "drive dull care away," now and then, without any one's being the wiser for it either.

When her husband had finished his business with Mr. Clarence, he started for home, but meeting Teddy Toole, was prevailed upon by him to turn in for a little into the Saloon. Sundry misgivings as to the nature of his home reception, if his breath should betray his indulgence, skimmed across his mind, as his companion shoved along a glass of Brandy and water. This was quite evident to the red-whiskered man, who was also one of the party.

"No matter, Jones," he tried, "just drink for once in your life, and forget your troubles. Don't go about for ever with that horrible scowl upon your face. Better get drunk at once, and put a merry face on the matter. If you was pretty well gone now, you wouldn't mind a gentle beating at all."

"Hould your tongue, Jonathan," interrupted Teddy good-

naturedly. "What'll you be after tazing the poor fellow for? It's enough sure he's got to worry the sowl out of him, without your vexing him any more."

"Sure as I live," said Jonathan earnestly, "I don't mean no insult. I was only a telling him for his own good, an' I don't believe I'd be a bit different if I had such a wife. Now, Jones knows I'm his friend, an' that's just what I advise him to do. Rum'll keep the blue devils out better 'n anything I know on."

No one present seemed to ask themselves what kind of devils that same rum let in, for Toole ordered three glasses of brandy and water, and they all partook. Jones, however, refused to indulge further.

"What a silly chap you are now," again argued Jonathan; "don't you *know* you'd be better off if you took the world easy?"

"If it wasn't for my children," said Jones, his features working a little. "To be sure they've got the name of bad children, but it's all *her* fault. I know what drinking leads to, and if I had a decent wife, I'd never touch a drop as long as I lived."

Teddy's countenance fell. His conscience was administering some pretty smart thumps. He had a decent wife, a very loving wife, and he loved her very much. But he couldn't help it; there was the temptation, and he could do nothing but yield.

"But your children won't be a bit the worse," responded Jonathan. "Come now, take a little comfort, for once in your life."

The poor man knew that matters couldn't be much worse than they were, and he longed to forget for a moment that he was worse off than other men, so laid aside further scruples, and took his share with the rest.

"There is Tom Brown," he cried, when he had become partially invigorated, "and Joe, too. Welcome Joe, here's a seat."

The young man walked in with a swagger, acquired since we last saw him, and Joe came limping along like a lame Hercules, grinning as broadly as usual.

A great many more came in the course of the evening, but being for the most part of a different class from our companions, the party was left quite to themselves in a corner of the saloon.

By eleven o'clock Mr. Jones felt, sure enough, like "taking the world easy," and even went so far as to assert that he "didn't care a fiddle-stick about *what* Sally did. She wan't nothing but a baby. He could manage her easy enough."

"Och, you coot you," cried Teddy, in a high state of drunken felicity. "Now is it yerself will dare to say that same, when niver a sowl of us but knows ye'll be afther getting a sound beating."

"Dar, now," said Joe, rolling his eyes, "I'd feel uncommon easy, if I know'd dat was all Rosy'd do."

"What does Rosy do, now?" asked young Brown, putting a large mug to his lips; "tell us, and I'll treat you to a gin-ling."

"Why," said Joe, "she will ollers act so curis; she looks so ricumbobflorius when I gits home, dere ain't no doin' nuffin' wid her. 'Pears I can't make her look at me at all, not till next day, an' den—doesn't she most kill herself a cryin' and a beggin' on me not to go near dem renimical rumsellers? Lawk alive, nuffin' she don't do to bring me round to be de good husband agin, she says, nor nuffin' I don't do neider to keep from de whiskey, but someways I ollers gits cotched. Whiskey's a queer ting," he added, philosophically, rolling his eyes and scratching his head. "An' rum's a queer ting, an' *brandy*, an' *gin*. Dey's all *berry* queer tings. Dis nigger neber seed nuffin' like 'em."

"Hurrah for Rosy!" cried Jones, who was getting uproarious. "Rosy's the gal. Now aren't you ashamed o' yourself, Joe, ever to go fur to git tipsy? I'd jump straight into the

Hudson afore I'd drink a drop if I had such a wife as that 'ere."

"Hurrah for Rosy!"

"Sure an' you'd niver be after wanting a darkey wife," interrupted Teddy, feeling a little of the universal jealousy between the negro and the Paddy swell within him. "Troth, I mean no offence till ye, Joe; it's yerself is a raal respectable nagur, but niver a white man marries a black woman. No offence now," he added, in a patronizing tone, "it's jist meself considhers ye the natest nagur that iver I saw since I came out of owld Ireland."

Joe, being very humble-minded, and not at all apt to quarrel on his own account, merely grinned at the compliment, while he prepared to swallow the gin-sling ordered by young Brown.

"Come now," exclaimed this last young gentleman, "couldn't we have a bit o' fun to-night? Kick up a row, or something o' that sort?"

"I'll tell yer what," said Jonathan, "it won't do to be kicking up rows now-a-days; we'll maybe get into the wrong box. Can't none of you stan' treat, and give us a supper. Some o' you housekeepers? A nice cold chicken, or a piece of boiled ham and some poached eggs'd taste fine. Come now."

"Sally boiled a tremendous ham to-day," cried Jones, pouring down a good drink of gin and water, "I've a mind to take you home wi' me, 'pon my word."

Teddy opened mouth and eyes in astonishment, Joe grinned, Brown nodded his head delightedly, and Jonathan Meeks laughed outright.

"Oh, clar out dar!" cried Joe; "guess ye'd dare to now."

"That's first-rate," said Brown. "Come along, boys; that'll be fun. Show off your spunk now, Jones. Don't let her get ahead on you."

Jones, who did not quite mean what he said, looked perplexed, but he hardly knew how to back out.

"I'll bet a dollar Eben don't dare go home, and order Sally to lay supper out for five," cried Jonathan, winking at the rest.

"An' I'll bet ye two, Eben, if ye oncet gits in, ye'll run away again;" said Teddy. "Ye'll never be dharing to show the face of a man as long as ye live."

"Done!" cried Jones. "I'll never back out when I say a thing. Come now, who holds the stakes?"

"Joe—Joe!" cried two or three voices, as the betters laid the money on the table. Joe pocketed it with a chuckle of delight at the anticipated sport, while the whole party laughed uproariously as they swaggered out of the room.

"Now then, Jones, you're in for it," said Brown, as they neared the house. "Don't lose your bet, nor let us lose our supper."

"You just wait outside till I go in and tell her," said Jones, beginning, in spite of his rum-inspired courage, to tremble for the consequences of his demand.

"Shure, an' it's fair ye'll be dalin' wid us, Jones," cried Teddy, staggering rather precipitately, against Jonathan Meeks.

"To be sure, Teddy," cried Jonathan, dexterously balancing himself against his more intoxicated companion, "neighbor Jones don't never do nothing else, I reckon. He'll go in first, and we'll wait a bit outside."

Teddy was about to utter an exclamation of dissent, but a sudden nudge, administered by Jonathan, attended by a significant nod, opened his eyes to the fact of a small window, half a dozen feet from the door, through which the gentle-tempered lady herself could be seen taking a draught from a tin cup upon the mantel. Jones, being either too tipsy or too heedless to notice the tell-tale window, stepped softly up, delighted that he was permitted to go alone.

As he walked in at the door, the men ranged themselves at either side of the window. "Squat down here, Joe," said Brown, "and put your face close to the window. She can't

see you half so well as us, your skin is so near the color of the night."

Joe's teeth glittered again. "Och, murder alive!" cried Teddy, "don't be afther grinning, Joe, she'll see every blished ivory in your head. Faix an' I couldn't say which mother's son iv us'd be afther walking in to that she-sarpint," he added, as Mrs. Jones, hearing a step in the passage, turned herself fiercely about to give her spouse a proper reception. "Shure, it's a lucky thing we stayed outside. Be the Vargin, but she's ready to ate him—look!"

"Hold yer tongue, Toole!" whispered Jonathan; "she'll hear you if you keep your gab a running so. Listen now."

Jones, who had paused a moment in the hall, before entering, at this juncture opened the door. He certainly looked in her face as he had never dared to look before, and, had she not been under a similar stimulus to himself, might have been successful in his experiment.

As it was, however, he was no match for her, and his eyes were glad to seek some other object than her fiery ones to rest upon.

"Sally," he commenced, in his blandest tones, "I have brought some friends to take a mouthful with me. Where's the ham you boiled to day? Just set it out with some bread and butter, and I'll get you a new ribbon to your hat."

His wife stood for a full minute without taking her eyes off his face, looking as though she would gladly turn into a tiger for the pleasure of munching him. "Come, my dear," he added, at length.

"My dear!" she cried, shrilly, "my dear! Don't you 'my dear' me, Mr. Eben Jones. Fine doings this, indeed, staying out till this time o' night an' then coming home drunk as a loon. Ugh! you're nothin on airth but a nasty, ha-ateful, good-for-nothin' brute beast, an' I'm jist the worst, miserablest, unhappiest wretch that ever lived; but I'll show you. You needn't to try comin' anv of vour tricks over me. You

know well enough I could wollop you any day, an' if ye don't look out, ye'll get it now."

"Sally," said Jones, with sudden firmness, "I can tell you that I'm the master in this house, an' I'll let you know it, too, if it costs me my head. Do you think I'm agoing to let you go on in this here kind of a fashion all your life? I'll take things into my own hands after this, I reckon."

"You will, will you?" shrieked the exasperated lady, seizing the tin and flinging it full at her unfortunate husband. "You are the master, are you? very well, just try it, that's all. It's all along of yer goin' with them old rummies; I knew what you was up to, you born liar. If ever you go there again, I'll thrash ye, I'll lay it on till ye can't stand, hear? You're so drunk you can hardly walk. You'd better git to bed afore I use a cow-hide to yer back; 'twouldn't be the first time, ye know that!"

Jones seized hold of the bed-post to steady himself, but having made a drunken resolve to win his bet, again confronted her, endeavoring to speak with such dignity as should awe her into submission.

"From this time, Sally, I will have the sayin' an' the doin' of things in this here house. Things ain't agoin' on as they've been agoin' on. I tell you, I've invited some friends home with me to take supper. Just step into that room and bring out the ham."

Mrs. Jones stood for one minute looking at him with an astonished kind of fury, then without saying a word, made for a corner where a rough hemlock broom, worn almost to the stump, stood ready to her hand. She seized it firmly in both hands, and rushed so suddenly upon her authoritative lord, that before he had time to prepare himself, a broad stroke from the good lady's implement of attack, descended so powerfully upon his shoulders, that he half-rushed, half-staggered to the other side of the room. She did not stop, but followed him closely, laying on the strokes with an energy

that might have made the fortune of a brigadier-general, whilst he essayed in vain to face the storm of blows, whirling himself face about, and as often ducking his head and exposing his back to the chastisement of his wife, as being more commodious to her and less annoying to himself.

So they went, round, and round, and round, he avoiding and she following him up, crying triumphantly, "That's it; that's it; *you're* the master, you are! Oh, ye dirty vagabond, I'll settle ye! I don't sit up here till twelve o'clock for nuthin'; ye got it easy this time, next time I'll skin ye alive! *Invited* friends, eh! let 'em come; I'll give 'em a supper they didn't bargain for. Get out the ham, eh! I'll flounce 'em with it, if I do'; let 'em show their faces, that's all!"

There must be an end to everything, so at last an end came to the patience of the poor belabored Jones; to her agility and energy, however, the end was much slower in coming. By the time she had just entered fairly into the spirit of the sport, he was ready to take refuge in flight, and as he preferred keeping the peculiar state of affairs from the knowledge of his out door companions, and had no other convenient hiding-place, he dropped precipitately upon his hands and knees, and made the best of his way under the bed, ensconcing himself behind the dubious colored valance. As he disappeared, however, he caught a glimpse of Joe's teeth shining at the window. Here was a fix now. They had seen it all, and he had no other resource but to become the laughing-stock of the whole party.

Mrs. Jones, judging truly enough that his concealed position gave him an unfair advantage over the enemy, declined following to his hiding-place, but stood broom in hand, ready to renew the attack whenever opportunity should offer. The gentleman under the bed considered, and very wisely concluded to make the best of a bad matter by winning his bet and joining in the joke, so lifting the valance just at the head of the bed, he called out with a nod towards the window,

"Sally, I'll show the face of a man as long as I live." She rushed at him with the broomstick, but he made good his retreat, and half a minute after his red face bobbed out at the foot, "Sally, do ye see! I'll show ye the face of a man as long as I live."

"Be jabbers," muttered Teddy at the window, "but I've lost my bet, after all. Och, he's a cunning gander, and I'll say that same."

"Law sakes!" whispered Joe, "stuffing his huge fist into his huger mouth to keep back the great guffaw that he felt bursting within him, "law sakes, she's a 'Rorer Boralis!' she'd take de pompositest citarel in dese here United States ob America. *Nebber* seed nuffin' like her."

"If ye don't mind a beating, Joe, just laugh," said Brown, fearful of his giving way to his suppressed merriment.

"Howld yer tongues, ivery one iv yiz," whispered Teddy, "say what she'll do now."

But she did not seem inclined to take any more active measures than standing still, and watching the dirty valance, precisely as a cat would watch a hole through which some unhappy mouse was about to make its appearance. Jones managed to evade her skill, and by the sudden shifting of his position in his singular quarters, to put her entirely at fault. Now he would peep at her from the wall at the head of the bed, then lift the covering from the opposite corner, then bob suddenly out in the middle, reiterating at every fresh appearance with increasing vehemence, "I'll do it, Sally. I'll show ye the face of a man as long as I live," but dexterously diving back again whenever the hemlock branches came in too close proximity to his nose.

Joe could contain himself no longer. "Ha—ha—ha! he—he—he! hi—hi—hi!" burst on the ears of the startled sovereign of her dominions. She wheeled suddenly about, and caught a glimpse of Joe's white teeth and rolling eyes. For a moment she seemed bewildered, then, reassuring herself,

she rushed to the door, and out into the hall. The men, not caring either to fight a woman, or be beaten by a woman, made good their retreat, Jonathan Meeks shouting behind him as he staggered away, "Never mind Sally; Eben's won the bet in spite of you. Hurrah for Eben Jones, Sally! He'll show you the face of a man as long as he lives!"

CHAPTER XV.

"WELL, and how's Johnny to-day?" said young Clarence, stepping up to the little bed where lay Kitty Toole's youngest child, moaning with the pains of a malignant fever.

"Shure, sir, an' he niver slep a wink the whole blissed night," answered the anxious mother. "The poor thing! his head's like fire, an' he isn't willing to keep the cowld wather upon it at all, at all. He jist got into a little doze las night when Teddy came a bursting in, and wakened him right out iv his slape; he jist lifted him right up, an' begun a dancin' him about the room, an' whin I sez to him, sez I, 'Teddy, now you'll be afther killin' the child intirely,' he laughed at me, an' histed him up on his shoulder. He didn't pay no heed to the swate little darlint cryin'; and whin he laid him down, shure I had to put the cowld wather to his head, an' the drafths to his feet."

"Poor little fellow!" said the young man, laying his hand on the small, hot forehead. "However, Kitty, I think his skin is a little moist, and that is an excellent sign. Yes, the palms of his hands are quite damp. If you are careful, he'll be well in a few days."

"Bliss you for sayin' it, sir," answered the poor woman, re-arranging the coverlet over the child. "I was afeard I'd lose him."

"No, he is past the crisis now, I think; only keep him quiet. But I'm going down to New York to-day. Have you any message for Biddy? I shall call at Mr. Dunn's."

"Jist plaze to give her our love. Shure, it'll be better

niver to inform her of Johnny's bein' sick at all; it'll jist vex her intirely, without doin' a ha'porth o' good. I'd be glad," she added, in a tremulous tone, "she'd niver find out about Teddy; but she's got a howlt iv it aready, an' tan't no use to hide it. Sometimes my very heart seems swelling as though it would brake intirely; but if I iver give up, then what's to come o' my weeny ones? Ye must plaze til excuse me, sir, but ye know yerself how things is agoin, and indade I can't help it, at all, at all." Here two or three little sobs rolled out.

"Poor woman, I feel very sorry for you," said the young physician. "Don't you think Biddy might have some influence over him? Let her come out and try."

"Och, sorra's the thing we haven't all of us done long ago, whin he was so afore. When he used to be a tryin' an' a tryin' hisself to kape away from the craythur, we did iverything on airth to help him along; but shure, an' niver nothing did a bit o' good till we come out here where he couldn't git howlt of it. Now, I'm thinking we'll go to ruin jist as fast as iver we can go. Faith, there's niver another rifuge to flee to now, an' niver"——

She stopped, and burst into tears.

"Never mind, Kitty," said Edward; "cheer up, and hope for better days; they'll come after a while, if you have patience."

Hope and Patience! Young and inexperienced comforter! Who ever heard of Hope smiling upon a drunkard's hearthstone? Yes, Patience is the sovereign there. She gazes in silent anguish upon the heart-treasures melting from her view, while Hope sits vailed for ever at her side.

When Edward arrived in the city, he bent his way towards Judge Ainslie's, intending to take a peep at Kate, before visiting the Medical College. As Mr. Dunn's was directly in his way, he resolved to call at once, for fear that some other engagement might detain him for the evening. He was ushered into the great parlor, where he found Mr. Dunn,

wrapped in his overcoat, gathering a bundle of papers preparatory to going out on business. The house seemed lonely, even dreary, and a pale, haggard look about the proprietor told his young visitor that no wealth or splendor could keep his heart from breaking slowly in its loneliness.

A studious avoidance of anything having reference to his child was observed by both. Mr. Dunn smiled faintly as he welcomed Edward.

"So you will be fairly fledged in a few weeks, eh? Dr. Clarence! Well, you have my best wishes, Edward. I have no fears but you'll succeed."

"Thank you, Mr. Dunn; I heard that you were also about to take an important step?"

"Yes, my boy, I'm going to give up business. It's getting to be a confounded bore. I think I shall take a jaunt to Europe early in the spring. I have been talking of it a good many years."

"Will you sell out *in toto*, or reserve a silent partnership in the concern?"

"Sell all out, and directly. I don't care much what I get for it. There's some ten thousand dollars worth of stock on hand, and the good-will of the business is worth at least ten thousand more, and I'll let it all go for ten thousand dollars."

"Really, sir," said Edward, laughing, "if you had the slightest prospect of selling out to me, I should certainly think you something of a Jew. What can prompt you to lose so largely in a concern where you might as well avoid such loss?"

"The fact is," answered Mr. Dunn, with a weary look, "I'm deucedly tired of the business, and really feel just now as though I'd give it away rather than be bothered any longer."

"Shall you give up your house too?" asked Edward.

"I think not. The probability is that I shall return in the fall, and I wouldn't want to be cast adrift. Are you going

to do me the favor of spending two or three days with me?"

"It would be inconvenient for me, I thank you," said Edward. "I shall have to be as near the college as possible. I thought I would run in and see you before I went up town. I have a little message, too, for your laundress. I should like to see her, if you please."

"Bridget, you mean," answered Mr. Dunn. "She is not here. She left last week for some reason or other; I don't know what."

"Do you know where she is, sir?" asked Edward. "That unfortunate brother of hers has taken to dissolute habits again. He was an excellent workman, and a better husband and father I never saw; but he has lately been so constantly intoxicated that father was obliged to dismiss him from his employ, and his family have begun to suffer quite seriously. You surely must remember his coming out with Biddy a year or two ago, to be out of the way of danger."

"Yes," answered his listener, "I remember something about it, although I seldom pay much attention to the doings of my servants. Ann knows where she has gone, I will ascertain for you."

After obtaining the street and number of Biddy's temporary abode, and exchanging a little more common-place conversation with Mr. Dunn, he proceeded to pay his respects in a more agreeable quarter.

"Good morning, Mr. Clarence!" cried Alice, throwing down her duster as he entered the parlor, and putting out her hand, "I'm delighted to see you. You're just in time. Kate and I were about going forlorn and lone down into Nassau street. Now we'll press you into our service."

"Quite happy I can assure you, to be pressed into such a service," said Edward, smiling. "You are all well, I hope."

"All quite well," answered the young lady, "except poor Clarence, and he's tolerable to-day. I'll run up and call Kate.

Mary's so dumb, she'd hardly know what to say. *Au revoir.*" The lively girl danced out of the room, and flew up stairs to Kate.

"Here, lady fair," she exclaimed, flinging her arm about her waist, and whirling her suddenly away from the glass, "just be satisfied with that graceful *négligé*, and don't smoothe your hair any more. That morning dress makes you look like a Venus in disguise. Who do you think is down stairs?"

"I don't know," said Kate, a beautiful blush betraying that she could guess pretty truly if she didn't know. "How should I know?"

"Oh, you know well enough. Cherry lips say no, and cherry cheeks say yes. Don't look so transcendently beautiful, or I shall die of jealousy. Just to think of my being there dusting the room in that horrible calico wrapper and curl-papers. I declare I'm mortified to think of it."

As she laughed very heartily at the mortification, her companion did not share in it, but hinted that perhaps some young gentleman she could mention might consider morning-wrappers and curl-papers vastly becoming. Alice, however, persisted in declaring herself a perfect fright, and drove Kate precipitately down to make apologies to Edward, while she underwent the important operation of dressing, although professing at the same time a total want of faith in her ability to render herself, even with all her skill, at all comparable to Kate, a fact true enough in itself, but one which very few young ladies in similar circumstances are ready to acknowledge or believe.

Kate hadn't a particle of the coquette about her, and the moment Edward's eyes met hers, he saw that all she had told him at parting was true. There was something so loving, trusting, and joyous, beaming upon him from their dreamy depths, as though her true heart lay there open to his view, that he put his arm about her, and kissed her precisely as though

she had not been for three months one of the loveliest belles of the season, seeming and being, in the heart of a fashion-fettered world, the same winning, unspoilable little blossom that Nature made her.

"Well, Katie," he said, when he had satisfied her that everything was going on in Laconia as respectably as could be expected considering her absence, "well Katie, I'm going to stay with you a few weeks now. As soon as this course of lectures is over, I shall be Edward Pufton Clarence, M. D. I think I shan't study law."

Kate laughed. "Oh no, one profession is enough, I think, I wouldn't have you bother your brain over another for anything. That was a boyish freak, sure enough. You'll have a chance at politics, yet." A mischievous gleam shot from her eyes, and Edward understood it well enough.

"So you think I've a fancy that way, do you?" he said, half-laughing. "The only politics in which I shall meddle have reference to a certain little charmer I know of, and aim at some day"—

"There now, Edward," she interposed, laying her hand over his mouth, "there's no necessity for exposing your boyish plans. Just wait till you are ready to execute before you communicate them so freely. Do you know I'm so glad you are going to be away from that desperate-looking Dr. Higgins. I never could bear the sight of him."

"And that's a great deal for *you* to say, Katie. But he is very anxious that I should enter into partnership with him."

"But you'll never do it?" said Kate earnestly. "Oh dear, I'm sure he's not a good man."

"Don't look so alarmed," he answered, "I wouldn't do it if he gave me nine-tenths of the profits, and did all the work himself. I'm certain you can't have a greater repugnance to the man than myself. I never liked him; there is something

about him that I cannot understand. Sometimes when I'm talking to him, a chill creeps over me, exactly like the shudder you would feel when you looked down into a dark pit, without knowing what untold horrors might be there, and I'd just as soon leap into a fathomless quagmire as put myself in his power. I'm heartily glad I'm away from him for good and all, though I don't expect he feels very friendly towards me for rejecting the honor he has proffered me."

"He's afraid you'll take away all his practice," said Kate, looking relieved. "He's very unpopular."

"To be sure he is," answered Edward, "but that's his own fault. Poor fellow, I'm sorry for him, too, he is so afflicted with that obstinate chill and fever. I think he might be cured of it, if he were not obliged to go out nights to visit his patients, and I don't know either, but the disease is of such long standing as to be incurable."

"Well, never mind about him now," said Kate. "Alice and I were just going out in search of a cook for Mrs. Ainslie, and you will be a welcome acquisition to our society. Can you accompany us down to Nassau street Intelligence Office?"

"I am at your service entirely for a day or two," he answered. "The course of lectures doesn't commence until day after to-morrow. But, Kate, I think we may find a servant without going there." I happen to have heard of one out of a situation this very morning. You'll remember her too. You remember the sister of Toole, who was laundress in Mr. Dunn's family, two years ago, when the family came out to spend the summer. I find that she has left Mr. Dunn's lately, of her own accord, without assigning any reason. She must be a good servant, or she wouldn't have been so long in his employ. I must call on her, at any rate, for poor Kitty would be mightily disappointed if I didn't. Shall we go and see her first?"

"By all means," said Kate. "You can never be sure of a good girl from an office. Well, I'll go and complete my toilet as soon as possible, if you have no objection, and we'll run on as soon as possible."

Edward had no further objection to offer than a second kiss, which he thought it advisable to take in case he should have no other opportunity for an indefinite length of time. Kate laughed and blushed, but offered no resistance, and hurried away to dress.

As the trio advanced towards the place designated by Ann as the residence of her quondam associate, Edward began to think that things looked familiar. The green door with its dingy brass knocker, and the dirty curtains at the front window, reminded him of the house where he had taken Maggie a few months before, and when he cast his eye upon the piece of painted tin over the door, with the words, "Boarding and Lodging" inscribed thereon, he knew that it was Sally Clark's domicile that they were about to enter. They knocked several times, but no one appeared to answer the call. The house could not be empty, for the sound of feet rushing up stairs was distinctly audible.

"Perhaps it would be better to open the door at once, and take the citadel by storm," said Alice, looking up at a window where a quantity of bed-clothes were airing. "There must be people enough there, but it's my private opinion, they are all deaf and dumb, for I'm certain we make racket enough to bring them down, if they had any mercy on their own ears."

"Well," said Edward, hesitating. "My only objection was in having you with me. Will you wait outside while I run up and see, or would you prefer?"—

"Oh, we are not afraid to follow you," said Kate, looking inquisitively at Alice.

"No, indeed," cried Alice; "don't, for mercy's sake, leave us behind. I always enjoy going into a strange place,

especially when we have to make our way in spite of such terrific drawbacks as the present.

Edward tried the door. It was unlocked, and they entered the hall.

Nobody was to be seen, but a great commotion seemed to be going on up stairs, from the tread of feet upon the floor, and the confusion of voices in several varieties of tone. Every one seemed too busy to pay any attention to them, so they walked on up stairs. The sounds all proceeded from a room apparently in the third story, for on reaching the second floor, they seemed little nearer than before. So up they went, determined to find out what could be going on, until, at the head of the last flight of stairs, they came upon a room with the door open, within which half a dozen women were bustling about in all directions, kindling a fire, carrying blankets and hot water, too busy and too much excited to pay any attention to the knocking below.

They were noticed now, however, by Bridget herself, who came forward to the door, saying in a husky voice, "Sure, an' it's a sorry sight ye'll see here, sir; a wee innocent jist clane gone intirely. Och, but it's a shame for such doings to be a'going on in this blissed Ameriky. Will ye be a'fter coming in to say, my swate young ladies?" she added, pointing to the rough bed, surrounded by women who were actively engaged with something upon it concealed from view.

They advanced into the room. One of the women at the bed made way for them, and there, at the foot, upon a pillow, a blue-eyed infant lay like a crushed flower, pale and chill in death. Alice started back with a half-cry, and Kate burst into tears. They glanced at the head of the bed, and were still more deeply moved to see another face, smaller and rounder, half-buried in the clothes.

"It warn't o' no sort o' use," said one of the women, wiping her eyes, "we tried mighty hard to bring to that 'ere

little cretur, but the life warn't in her; so we had to give it up. The baby's been gaping a little, I guess we'll get her round after a while."

"Were they drowned?" asked Edward, laying his hand upon the little white forehead.

"Sure, yer riverence, an' they were starved, jist starved intirely wid the cold," said another of the group.

"But it's yerself is a doethor, sir, I'm affther remimbering," interposed Biddy. "Faix, an' ye might do something yet."

Edward shook his head, as he lifted the small hand and clasped the wrist. "It is too late; poor little things!" The tears started in his eyes, and his voice choked. He touched the smaller wrist that lay upon the pillow at the head; the pulse was beating, but he could hear no breath.

"There is hope here," he murmured, looking intently into the half-closed eyes. "But we must have some ammonia immediately. Let me see, I'll go myself. There is something else needed too. Bridget, is there a drug store near?"

"On the corner, sir," said Sally Clark. "Shan't I go for you?"

"No, I think I'll go myself. Just lift it up, and keep rubbing the hands and feet. There, so; perhaps you had better hold her in your arms."

"Oh, let me take her," cried Kate, seating herself beside the bed. "Dear little creature!"

They lifted the baby, and laid it on her lap, while her tears rained down over the little death-like face.

"Sure, sir," said Bridget, huskily, "it was all along of the craythur again. The mother went away and got drunk, and the poor childher just went off wid the cowld from the winder there, and nobody niver was the wiser."

Edward walked quickly to the drug store, obtained what he desired, and turned to leave the place. As he hurried down the steps, he felt a hand upon his shoulder, and, looking round, saw Mr. Pufton, with a face, as usual, twinkling all

over with delight and welcome. But he was in no humor for smiles. His hand trembled and tears stood in his eyes.

"What on earth's the matter, my boy?" said Mr. Pufton. "Look under weather mightily. Can't you?"

"Come with me," interrupted Edward nervously, at the same time walking on. "I can't lose a moment, or it may be too late. Come, and I'll show you."

"What is the matter?" cried Mr Pufton, trotting along beside him.

"Why, I had occasion to call on a poor woman here in ——— St., and there I found her trying to restore two children who were frozen last night. The oldest is dead, but the other I hope to save."

"Horrible!" exclaimed his listener. "How was it?"

"The mother drank to intoxication, and left them all night without a fire, and with the window wide open; this morning the people in the house found them lying there frozen, one of them, at least, to death. Two sweet little creatures. I left Kate Weston and Miss Ainslie with them till I should return."

"Poor little souls!" cried Mr. Pufton. "What a wretch that mother must be?"

"I didn't ascertain any further particulars," said Edward. "The first thing is to bring the child to consciousness. Here we are; will you step up with me?"

"Certainly, my boy; lead the way."

Edward passed up, followed by Mr. Pufton, to the room where the children lay. Another little girl was there, five or six years of age, looking quite sad and frightened.

"Please sir, will the baby die too?" she cried, bursting into tears, as they passed her.

"No, no, I hope not, child," said Edward, pouring a few drops of wine into the mouth of the unconscious child.

"Mr. Pufton, will you please take her, I'm afraid it's too much for Kate."

"Oh no—no!" interposed the young girl; "let me hold

her; she has opened her eyes once. I'll hold her till she revives."

Mr. Pufton went to the bed, and looked at the dead child. It could not have been over three years of age. The face was quiet and peaceful, one little hand lay up against the dimpled cheek, the bright hair fell back from the forehead, the eyelids drooped half-way over the blue eyes.

The little dumpling gentleman stood there for several minutes, gazing down upon the bed, and murmuring to himself, as though nobody had been by. "'Pon my word, right down murder!" he jerked out, bobbing his head hard three or four times, and brushing half a dozen tears off his fat red cheek. "If they want to kill people, do let them kill grown folks that can take their own part. Sweet little cherub. Thought it was cold, eh? Father dead—mother drunk—no fire—starving like enough. Bless me, *what's* this world coming to?" He gave a nervous stamp, with his foot upon the floor, and whirled about to see how they succeeded with the baby.

"There, she's coming to now," said Sally Clark. "Here, Lucy." The other child came up and spoke to the infant.

"Millie, Millie, it's sister, dearie—look here, look here." The little creature looked up in her face, and smiled faintly.

"There, she's over now," said Edward, looking relieved. "Roll her up in the blanket, and carry her about a little, and she'll soon be lively as ever. My little girl, were you here last night."

"Yes, sir," answered the child. Mother went away about five o'clock, and locked the door, so we couldn't get out. There was no coal left, and I forgot to ask her to shut the window before she went, and it was so cold."

"Why didn't you call to somebody to come in to you," asked Edward.

"Mother told us that we must keep still till she came back and brought us some supper," answered the child. "I kept thinking she'd come every minute."

"Didn't your little brother cry?" asked Edward.

"First he did, and the baby too, dreadfully. I knew it was because they were cold, and I got up on the chair and tried to shut the window myself. But I couldn't, so when Charles and Millie got sleepy, I had to let them get up on the cot close by the window. I got my old shawl and mother's cloak and covered them over as well as I could, but they kept shivering and shivering until they got to sleep."

"Didn't you go to sleep at all then?" asked Kate.

"Not till most morning," she sobbed. "I was so cold and afraid I couldn't, but at last I couldn't keep awake any longer, so I laid down too."

"And when did you wake up?" asked Alice.

"Not till I heard somebody knocking awfully at the door. Then it was very light; I jumped up and called to them, and they asked me where mother was. I told them all about it, and they went away for a little"——

"Were the children asleep too?" interrupted Kate.

"I went to the bed and looked at them. They didn't stir at all when I called them and shook them. I put my hand on their faces, and they were so cold. I was frightened then. They burst open the door, and—Oh, dear, what shall I do? dear little Charlie's dead!" Here the little girl put her hands to her face, and burst into a passionate fit of crying.

"Poor little soul! weren't you cold yourself?" asked Mr. Pufton, opening and shutting his eyes very hard, to keep from crying.

"Oh yes, sir, I had hard work to get up at first, but I didn't think about it any more when I felt how cold they were. Oh, dear, what shall I do, what shall I do?"

"Confound it!" cried Mr. Pufton, "that woman ought to be hanged, she ought." Another bob of the head. "Blessed little souls—they look innocent enough—what's her name?" This question was asked in a tone of impatience and disgust,

as though it was sorely against his will to defile his lips by speaking of her at all.

"Ryker, sir," said Sally Clark. "Her husband died of *delirium tremens*, three months ago, Rick Ryker. He"—She did not proceed further, for her questioner, who had seated himself by the baby, suddenly started from his chair, thrust his hands violently into his pockets, bobbed his head about in all conceivable directions, and went trotting up and down the room at a rate that utterly astonished the simple-minded women who were looking on.

After taking a full dozen turns up and down the room, he came to a dead halt in front of Edward, looking very red and fiery.

"You remember Ryker, sir?" he commenced, in a quick, excited manner, "Ryker was my porter, sir,—Ryker was as good a soul as ever lived, sir. With me three years, was Ryker. Nice honest fellow then, sir. Good wife enough then too. Took to drinking, sir—did all I could to stop him, couldn't make any headway—would keep at it, sir—drove his wife to despair—heard she was bad as he—saw him taken at my store—never liked to turn him off—such a noble-hearted chap—poor wife, too, *confound* it! sir, *somebody* ought to be hanged."

The little gentleman didn't want to cry now. He was laboring under too much vexation for that; he looked at the pretty little face upon the pillow, and trotted off harder than ever. Between the heat of the room, the excitement of his feelings, and his violent exercise, the perspiration broke out in great drops all over his face. Nobody said a word for several minutes, but at last Bridget ventured:—

"Sure, sir, an' I don't think it's herself's the one at all. Faix, but I've seen the way it works, an' wouldn't I be afther knowing? But didn't I see the poor miserable sowl yister-day, whin she started out. An' didn't I say to her, 'now,' sez I, 'don't be afther spinding the money you've airt for rum.

I know so well what ye'll come to; now sure an' ye won't.' She sez to me, sez she, 'sure as I 'live, I'm only agoing to bring some bread for the childher, and I'll be back again presently.' It's that varmint of a Dutchman at the corner that leads her on, and leads thim all on, ivery blissed mother's son an' daughter of them all. Don't I know it? Isn't it myself has catched them many's the time a thrusting the murderous crathur under me own brother's nose, and they knowin' well enough that he couldn't bide the smell widout upsetting hisself intirely. Och," she concluded emphatically, with an impressive gesture of her hand, "Och, but *they're* the ones to be hanged!"

As she stopped speaking, a heavy step was audible on the stairs. Up it came, slowly, unsteadily, while the women glanced nervously at each other, and Mr. Pufton squared himself about in one corner of the room, looking with a would-be resolute air towards the door. On it came, up—up—through the hall—in at the door—and the mother stood beside her child. The mother! Oh, what a mother! The figure was bent and crouching, the face hard, bloated, brutal, the dress filthy, and over the eyes large black marks told too plainly of her last night's debauch.

No one spoke. They could not condemn her, for her punishment was there before her. They could not offer consolation, for she had forgotten a duty, and violated a love, the hardest to be forgotten, and the last to be violated in this sinful world. She stooped a little over the dead boy. She laid her hand on the frozen cheek. She looked wildly round to the strangers in the room, and, catching at one glimpse of the half-pitying, half-averted faces, the extent of her sin and wretchedness, sank groaning upon the floor.

The mother still! Yes—mother—in whose breast there burned a fire, quenchless and insatiable,—mother—on whose life there lay a weight pressing to the grave,—mother—round whose heart there clung a chain whose links no human power

could sever,—mother—on whose brow was set the seal of a living death,—mother—unnatural—wretched—criminal—but the mother still!

For a few moments she crouched there on the floor, without uttering a word. Then the disfigured face was slowly raised, and she gazed upon her child. How could it be *her* child? Not in the proudest mansions of our city, where infant forms and faces, reclining on silken couches, or tripping over velvet floors, float about like rays of sunshine in a darkened world, could be found a gentler or a sweeter face. No guilt on that fair brow, no scorn or hate in the curl of that sweet lip. Oh what joy and rejoicing among the angels of God when *such* little ones are taken from the buffetings of poverty and pain, and the fierce snares that wait their feet on earth, to lie gently on the bosom of that Savior who has said, "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of Heaven."

When she saw that life indeed was gone for ever from the small still figure, she wrung her hands, and sent forth shriek after shriek in the agony of her despair. Mr. Pufton could stand it no longer. He emerged from his corner, motioned impetuously to Edward, and rushed headlong down stairs, rubbing his eyes at every step, and nearly tumbling over the banister in his nervous haste. Edward, in obedience to his gesture, followed him to the lower entry, where he stood, making a feint of hunting for his pocket-book, but, in reality, taking time to recover his voice.

"Here my boy, here," he said, thrusting two ten dollar bills into his hand, "that'll pay the expenses of the funeral. I can't stay—no use—you must do *something*—when that's gone, come to me for more—poor Rick Ryker! who'd ha' thought it?"

He didn't wait for an answer, but opened the street door, and hurried away in a woeful state of disquietude. He passed the grocery on the corner, and recognized in the sturdy Dutch-

man one of his most profitable customers. He hurried on, talking in an undertone to himself, and paying no attention whatever to man, woman, or child that passed him by. A new train of reasoning had evidently been fired in his brain.

"What a villain you are now, Pufton," he murmured in a low energetic tone. "Who first taught poor Ryker to drink, I wonder? How came he to be the wretch he was? How came his wife to be the wretch she is? How came that poor boy — *you* did it Pufton, you know you did. *You* are the one ought to be hanged, you know you are! Bless me, I never thought of that before. Catch me getting my porters drunk again, I reckon! After all, believe it's more the fault of the seller than anybody else. After all, poor souls, what can *they* do? Slaves, just *slaves*. Declare, I've a mind to give up the business. What's the use though? Somebody'd sell it—they'd get the profit instead of me, that's all. *Confound* it, what on earth *am* I to do?"

He had probably never thought so much in all his life upon the subject. Temperance men he had always looked upon as a set of fanatics, and the Temperance movement as something very queer and very ridiculous indeed, with which he had no more to do than with the government of Terra del Fuego; consequently this peculiar light had dawned all at once upon him, tumbling him about and bewildering him to a degree quite prejudicial to the equanimity of his nervous system.

Mr. Pufton quarrelled with himself, made up again, and quarrelled again for a whole week after the above incident. He couldn't get near the place after that day, not for his life he couldn't. He placed money enough in Edward's hands to defray the expenses of the funeral, and make the family comfortable, besides promising to keep Mrs. Ryker in plain sewing enough to support them if she would pledge herself to keep sober. But, as to visiting her, or arguing the point with her, that was out of the question.

He reasoned with himself, properly enough too, somewhat

after this fashion. "Now Pufton, you've been the means of pushing her down; are you going to step up to her and say, 'Madam, how did you dare to fall. Everybody despises you, I despise you. You've killed your child. If you'll be *very* good and *very* humble, I'll help you on your feet again.' No—no—Pufton, *that* never would do. Better give your money, and send somebody she'd listen to."

The poor woman, penitent and broken-hearted at the death of her child, listened with gratitude to the generous offers of young Clarence, and, after signing the temperance pledge, and breaking loose from her old associates, commenced working with a determination never again to taste the poison which had brought death to her husband and child. This was quite encouraging to Mr. Pufton. For two or three months sundry thumps and splinters of conscience pricked and jostled his thoughtless, jolly little heart, but as Edward brought favorable reports from the widow and orphans of his faithful porter, he began to feel quite easy again, and to think, after all, he wasn't so much to blame. If Rick Ryker had never served him, something else would have given him the taste for liquor. Anybody could leave off if they chose. It was ridiculous to suppose a man couldn't keep from killing himself, if he tried. She was sober enough, now she tried to be. He didn't think he was doing exactly right. But he was doing exactly what a great many others did, and if he didn't do it, they would.

At the end of a month, when the Ryker family were still doing as well as ever, he felt quite contented again, and, after making arrangements with a large shirt establishment to supply her with plain sewing, troubled himself no further, and looked upon the case as entirely cured.

CHAPTER XVI.

ONE evening, Clarence Snow was seized with one of his most distressing attacks. Mr. Pufton and Arthur Byng were there, the father being absent. While the young gentleman hurried off in search of a physician, Mr. Pufton went up to watch with his favorite. The convulsions came on with increased violence, one after the other, scarcely giving the sufferer a moment's rest between. The usual restoratives seemed to fail entirely of effect. Arthur Byng returned with the intelligence that their physician was away, and that he could not ascertain how soon he might be at liberty. The peculiar excitement always produced in a family by diseases of that nature fastening upon one of their number was rising to the highest pitch.

"I'm sure he'll never come out of this one!" cried Alice, wringing her hands. "Do see, oh see, he's dying, he is dying!" and she grasped her mother's arm convulsively. "My dear," said her mother, who although every nerve was quivering, kept down by a strong effort all appearance of terror, "my dear, he is in God's hand. This is the way he has been before; we will hope for the best."

The sister, excitable to an excessive degree, and ardently attached to her brother, was unable to repress her alarm, and Kate, seeing that such apparent anxiety was improper in a sick-room, persuaded her to descend to the parlor with her, and used all her efforts to detain her.

At the end of an hour Clarence seemed no better, and his mother, hopeful as she was, began to believe that he would

never recover from his frightful paroxysms. But aid was at hand. Mr. Pufton left Arthur Byng for a few minutes beside the bed, and returned with a glass of brandy-and-water, to the administration of which the mother offered no objection. Contrary to their expectations, it produced immediately a most favorable result. After he had taken it, there was no return of the fits, and on recovering his consciousness, he felt better than usual at such periods. After that, whenever the symptoms of his disease began to manifest themselves, the same mixture was prepared for him. For several weeks it proved so effectual as a preventive, that his parents began to cherish a hope of his ultimate recovery. This, however, was not to be, for although some time elapsed before the return of the convulsions, they did return, at first lightly, then gradually increasing in power, until they were far more violent and unmanageable than ever.

Something at this time, began to trouble Kate Weston more than any one imagined. Like a shadow slowly condensing into form and substance came the doubt of Edward's safety from the slavery of wine. Many times she had seen an unnatural lustre in his eye, and an unnatural flush upon his cheek that sent a thrill of something between pain and admiration to her heart. She had heard and seen from infancy total abstinence advocated by her father, as the only safeguard against an enemy that almost every-one took cordially to their homes, and welcomed to their social gatherings as the life of their entertainments. She, therefore, looked upon the first incursion of the foe with a more jealous eye than almost any young lady of her acquaintance. At length she resolved, with much reluctance, to broach the subject to her lover, feeling that no false delicacy should deter her from speaking of that in which so much of his future was involved.

One clear frosty morning they started out for a sleigh-ride. Alice was to have accompanied them, but a violent toothache

had prevented. Kate resolved, as she sprang into the sleigh, that she would not let the opportunity pass for which she had so long been desiring. There had been on the previous day a heavy fall of snow, and as they left the crowded streets of the city behind, and the light vehicle glided fleetly along over the well-tracked road, that keen sense of enjoyment peculiar to the young and hopeful thrilled in their hearts, and sparkled in their faces.

"This is just the weather for me," said Edward, as the wind blew the short curls from his face, "clear and bracing. I feel like a different being on such a day. Don't you think it delightful, Kate?"

"I do enjoy it extremely," said Kate. "No amusement of which I am so fond as riding, either on horseback in summer, or sleighing in winter. It is very invigorating."

"I should think so," remarked her companion, "from the looks of your cheeks. Kate, my dear, you grow handsomer every day."

"You are very abrupt in your compliments," laughed Kate. "You haven't the least fear of spoiling me, I see. However, my mother used to tell me, when I was a little girl, 'handsome is that handsome does.' So I must bear it in mind now, and not allow you to change your opinion when you know me better."

"Know you better," cried Edward, "that I shall never do; I know you are the best, dearest"—

"There now," interrupted Kate, blushing, "so I am, I don't deny it; only spare my blushes, but wait three or four years. I don't think you know me yet. If we could drop in and take a peep at home now. Do you know I'm beginning to be homesick?"

"When I'm here, Kate? Well, that's too bad. I had conceit enough to imagine myself a sufficient attraction to divert your thoughts, but alas, I find myself mistaken."

"Never mind, Edward. I've no doubt you have something

to do with reconciling me to the prospect of remaining in the city until spring. You must remember, I was never away from home so long before. I'm only half-fledged, you know."

There was a long silence after this, broken only by the tinkling of the bells, and the hum of the city dying in the distance. At length Kate looked up at her companion, who was mechanically holding the reins, and buried in a brown study. She had been revolving in her mind the manner in which she should mention her fears, and over and over again as the words were quivering right at the end of her tongue, her heart failed her before they were uttered. As she looked up her eye met his, and she asked involuntarily, "What are you thinking of, Edward?"

She had no sooner spoken, than she was sorry she had not said what she intended; "perhaps," she thought, "I shall have no other chance, but it's too late now."

"Your remark," answered Edward, "started a train of thought, that went running away into the far future. Suppose circumstances should require it, do you think you could leave father and mother and go with me wherever my lot were cast?"

The question was seriously asked, and as seriously answered.

"Well Edward, if circumstances *required* it, that is, if it could not be avoided, I would. But I can conceive of no possible circumstances that would require us to leave them in their old age. - You surely think so too."

"Yes," said Edward musingly, "and yet we know not what lies before us. Some day we may do as so many others have done, leave the home of our childhood never to return."

"I don't see what should put that into your head," said his companion. "I'm sure there's not the slightest prospect of any such departure now, and there's no use puzzling our brains about what we might do in all sorts of improbable positions."

"Oh no," replied Edward quickly, "I did not intend that.

It was a mere flitting thought; you asked for it; and I gave it you."

"Wait a few years, Edward," she answered smiling. "I tell you, you do not know me yet. I don't know myself. Time will prove us both, but not in the way to which you allude."

"But Time," he answered, "opens up a great many avenues that we don't dream of till they lie directly before us."

Here Kate's thoughts flew back to the point they had left when they commenced the conversation.

"There is one avenue that opens to a great many," said she, making a sudden resolve to speak at all hazards.

"What is that?" asked Edward.

"An avenue leading to ruin and death," she continued, with a faltering voice.

The young man looked surprised. "What do you mean, Kate? I don't understand you."

"Edward, you must not be offended," she cried earnestly; "you know how fearful I am of indulgence in wine. I wish you would never drink it."

Edward laughed outright. "Bless you, Katie dear, you surely are not afraid of me. I thought you had a higher opinion of my judgment and firmness than to imagine I was in danger."

The laugh sounded very sorrowful to the young girl. She would rather have heard anything than that. She expected he would feel hurt, perhaps a little angry, but she read a sadder page in the careless laugh than either. It told her that he saw no danger in the sparkling cup; it told her that he thought of indulgence in the beverage as too harmless to be relinquished. It told her that he had no sympathy with her fears, no knowledge of her former sorrow, when she had seen him deeply under its influence. Her heart sank within her, but she was determined not to give it up without one effort.

"Edward, you don't see this as I do. You do not feel that the danger is to be apprehended by you. Well, don't look at yourself; look at all the victims of intemperance that you have ever known, and see if they were not all temperate young men, taking to themselves the same gratulations on their self-control, and drawn blindfold into the snare that finally proved their ruin."

"Yes, Kate," rejoined her companion readily, "I know it is so, but on the other hand, how many indulge moderately all their lives, and never become inebriates. Why, you won't find one man in half a dozen that never touches wine, and when you take that into consideration, you will see that a very small proportion of wine-drinkers ever become drunkards."

"It seems to me," said Kate, "a very melancholy fact that so many are wine-drinkers. I have often wondered that there is no law to hinder such a free use of liquor of all kinds."

"Why, there is: the license law, you know," suggested Edward.

"I don't know much about that, to be sure," said Kate, "but I could never see any good resulting from it. But, Edward, this is what I wanted to say to you. I believe that the yielding up of yourself to the influence of drink is owing very frequently to a constitutional tendency, rather than to any criminal recklessness of doing evil. The very best characters in the world are sometimes led into this snare. Many times those who, but for that, would have made public benefactors and celebrated men, are drawn so slowly, so surely down to utter ruin that they seem to have no power or will that is not subservient to this resistless tendency. That is where the great evil seems to lie. If it were not in their power now"—

"Oh, Kate," interrupted Edward, "you are too charitable. If a man becomes a drunkard, it's his own fault, and he has nobody to blame but himself. It's absurd to talk of taking it out of his power, that never could be done."

Kate heaved a sigh. She was young, but her judgment was of no common order, and upon this subject she was fixed as a rock. Her intuitive delicacy of perception had taught her how perilous to the excitable temperament of Edward was the first yielding to his taste for wine, and she had hoped to convince him of the necessity of her fears. But she found a poor foundation upon which to build her arguments. It was evident that he regarded every man criminal who yielded repeatedly to a debased appetite, and plumed himself upon his upright principles as a safeguard from temptation. She looked forward through long coming years upon what might fall upon *his* head, so noble, so generous, so aspiring. She saw in the chief charm of his character the very point, that unshielded by religion, was most vulnerable to the shaft of the enemy. Confident as he was, she knew that his eyes were darkened to the peril, and her inner spirit cowered at thought of the possible future.

"I wish then, Edward," she said, lifting her gentle, pleading eyes to his face, "I wish you would abstain from it for *my* sake, because it makes me uneasy, if you're not afraid yourself."

Edward looked quite amused as he answered, "You beg so charmingly, Kate, that if you had asked almost anything else, I could not possibly have refused you. But for you to imagine that I have no more sense than that—it's quite a death-blow to my pride, I can assure you. Why, you absolutely force me to keep on taking wine for the sake of showing you that I'm not the simpleton you take me for. Then, besides, what would people think, Katie? I should be the laughing-stock of half the world."

"Then half the world has either no heart or no judgment," said Kate, a little bitterly for her, "I wish you could look through my glasses at this matter. It seems so different to me."

"But your glasses wouldn't fit my eyes," said Edward,

laughing. "You are prejudiced, just as father is. But he never had any fear of *me*."

"Only because he doesn't know you use it," said Kate. "He thinks of the peril in the abstract; I, true woman fashion, look no further than home. Man's sympathies are apt to scatter abroad, woman's to centre to one focus. It is there the difference lies."

"Oh well!" cried Edward, touching up the horses with his whip, "it's no use our quarrelling all the way. Just wait a while, and I'll show you. In a couple of weeks I take my diploma, and I'll make the man yet that will astonish you. With the incentive I have to labor," he added with a loving glance at Kate, "I ought to succeed at anything."

So the debate was given up, forgotten on Edward's part, as soon as the words were spoken, but abiding in Kate's memory, with a sorrowful shadow, long after the fruitless effort to avert the peril had been made by her on that sunny winter's morning.

Kate was right in saying that Edward did not know her. Much as she loved him, there was many a leaf in her heart folded from his gaze. Not because she had anything to conceal, but because a deep sensitiveness in her nature, like that of the mimosa, shrank instinctively from the gentlest touch. She was chary of alluding to herself in any way whatever. Of her faults she might sometimes speak readily enough, of her virtues never. None but her mother knew to the full, what power was in that girlish heart of love and suffering; how, through long future years, let joy or sorrow walk beside her, she would be still the same, gentle, hopeful, trusting; matured, perhaps by trial, but *more* matured then through unbroken pleasure. The heart out of which hers had grown, catching each delicate shade of Christian gentleness, drinking into its finest tissues the life whose germ alone is in this world, the life that bursts forth in full perfection only in the sun and air of Heaven, that heart alone read every thought

and purpose of the youthful kindred heart throbbing with her own, mingling as the fragrance of two flowers, or the melody of two harps in perfect tune.

The following is the last letter written to Mrs. Weston previous to her daughter's return in the spring. Feelings—hopes and fears, joy and sorrow, are betrayed as much by the glance or tone as by words themselves. These we cannot see, therefore we have recourse to the most authentic source for taking a peep into the inner soul of one whose noblest virtues and most lamented faults were known to her mother alone.

"DEAR—DEAR MOTHER,

Two weeks more and I shall be with you. You know not how the time lengthens as that happy day draws near. Each day seems made up of hours that might be days, so eagerly do I long to be at home. Upon the whole, the winter has been a very pleasant one. So much has been done for my happiness, that I should have been very ungrateful not to be happy. I should not wonder if you found me quite spoiled after receiving so much attention and flattery as has fallen to my share since I have been here. But, after all, mother, there is no food for the heart in this. I would give more for one of your encouraging words or smiles than for the admiration of all the flippant pleasure seekers in New York. I do not see how Alice, with her keen perception of good and evil, can be so fond of New York society; that is the society in which she moves. It must be owing to her having been brought up in its midst, and to her natural vivacity of temper, which finds, more easily there than anywhere else, a constant field for its exercise. She is, I think, one of the most amiable and attractive girls I ever met, and the more I am associated with her, the more do I see beneath the sparkling surface of her wit, that which is lovable and true.

"I should not be very much surprised if there were a double wedding here when Alice is married. It has always been a mystery to me that Mrs. Maylie should refuse Mr. Pufton so repeatedly, when I know that she admired, and even loved him, spite of his eccentricities, or rather for the sterling qualities that cause them. The other day I obtained a slight clue to her reasons, and I believe if that objection were removed, she would accept him still. Arthur Byng

had been discussing with us (Mrs. Maylie, Alice, and myself), the various channels into which it seemed advisable to throw his capital and energies, when with a half smile he remarked, "Well, what do you think, Mr. Pufton has been using every means in his power to persuade me to buy out Mr. Dunn's establishment for the importation of foreign liquors. He says it would be the best investment I could make."

"Never do that!" ejaculated Mrs. Maylie, with more emphasis than her self-possession generally allows her to make. The words were so emphatic that every one of us instinctively looked up into her face, and—mother, she blushed—Mrs. Maylie actually blushed. Alice, in her usual bantering manner exclaimed, "Why auntie, you are turning into an apostle of the Washingtonians; I didn't know you were so earnest on that subject." Her aunt had by this time recovered herself, and said calmly, "Their opinions have always been mine upon the subject, but you know I seldom express my opinions *very* freely."

"Ah! ah, auntie," answered Alice with one of her roguish winks, "perhaps, if you would, you might do some good in a certain quarter. You ought to do all the good in your power."

"Perhaps so," answered Mrs. Maylie. "But the truth is,"—here she stopped, and shook her head without telling us what the truth was, and although Alice has been teasing her ever since to finish the sentence, she only smiles and shakes her head as before. Alice said to me the other day, quite in earnest, "Kate, I really have a mind to tell Mr. Pufton what Aunt Sophy said the other night. He'd retire from business in a minute on the strength of it; and I really believe she'd marry him at last. I've heard those that know say, that she loved him in the first place better than her first husband, but for some unaccountable reason she refuses him now. Who knows but that's it. But then why doesn't she try to influence him? That's what puzzles me. You know Aunt Maylie was never one to let her affections run away with her reason."

"I didn't tell her what I thought; but from what I know of the lady's character, the stress she places upon correct principles, and the involuntary betrayal of her feelings the other evening, I finished the sentence she began quite to my own satisfaction, although, of course, I cannot say that it was finished correctly. It runs thus, 'Perhaps so, but the truth is, I do not desire any one to give up a business that I consider wrong, merely for the sake of pleasing me; if not done from his own conviction of duty, so far as I am concerned, it might as well not be done at all.' If these surmises are true, I

think there is some probability of a double wedding, for I have noticed that the dear, good-tempered little gentleman has seemed a little fidgety on this subject ever since the incident I related to you, in which he bore so conspicuous a part; and if he once becomes convinced that he's doing anybody on earth any harm by it, he'd give it up without a moment's hesitation.

"Clarence, poor boy, is growing quite impatient and fretful; more, I think, from the liquor administered as a preventive to the disease, than from the disease itself. It pains me extremely to see that he has acquired a taste that I fear was easier in acquiring than it will be in overcoming. Indeed, you would be surprised to see the change in his character; once the gentlest, tenderest son in the world, he has become boisterous and unruly, even to his patient, devoted mother."

"Sophronia Maylie, notwithstanding her approaching marriage, has plunged enthusiastically into the cause of Woman's Rights."

"Now then, mother, for a word about myself. Something lately has been weighing on my mind—something that I cannot feel to be of slight consequence—something that you will not consider of slight consequence—Edward, *my* Edward, is learning to love wine. I see it, I know it; he does not see it, nor know it; nor can I convince him of it. To you alone, best, dearest mother, would I entrust my fears, for to you, present or absent, my heart is ever open."

"I have conversed with him upon the subject, and he treats my arguments precisely as he would if the matter under discussion were a mere matter of opinion, involving no risk to himself. Notwithstanding all I could say, he still seemed to take this unconcerned view of the case; and since then I have seen him in a condition that I should call half-intoxicated, but which he would call a little exhilarated. You will know how much this pains me, for you know as well as I how impetuous he is, how much his generous nature compels him to yield to impulse, how delightful to his buoyant spirit must be the exhilaration produced by wine, and far better than I, the danger of yielding to its power."

"Oh! there is much in life to contend with. Young as I am, I see a possible future of struggle and trial that no earthly wisdom can avert, no earthly strength sustain. When this looms up darkly before me, my soul trembles, not lest His word should fail, who says, 'I will never leave thee nor forsake thee,' but lest my poor weak faith should fail in resigning all, even the temporal and eternal life of those I love best, into His hand."

"Sometimes in the still night, when I have been with Edward to

some scene of amusement or gaiety, there steals over me a something I can hardly describe—a feeling as though all this artificial life were too empty of good, too fully fraught with evil, for a follower of Jesus to enter at all within its precincts.

“At small dancing parties, at concerts, or even in some of our fashionable churches, Vanity Fair will come irresistibly to my mind in connection with the excessive regard paid by all classes to appearances, almost always to the destruction of that which is real and earnest.

“Edward does not see this. I could hardly expect that he should. In the first place he is far more fond of excitement than I; in the next, his taste has never been subdued by the simplicity of our plain, unvarnished faith. There is to me more true friendship exchanged in the simple ‘thee and thou’ of the unassuming Fraternity, to which you and Father belong, than in the whole vocabulary of polite phrases in vogue among our wealthier classes. And after all, what is *this* world? ‘Life is real. Life is earnest,’ so far as our labors are concerned, and our eternal interests influenced thereby. But when we come to look at life as it is generally exhibited in this whirling city, compared to the life that never ends, it is nothing. Only while jostling in the great world having ‘Eye-gate, Ear-gate,’ and every other avenue to the soul so constantly besieged by enemies to God, it is hard to keep His image always before the eye of faith, shutting out the things that appeal more immediately to sense, and living as children subservient always, in all things, to His Almighty will.

“Mother dear, I see that I have written an unconscionable letter. But to you alone I can freely speak, and I know you are never tired of my talk. I love Alice dearly, but she could not understand this at all, and would laugh off in fun what I should say in sober earnest. Edward cannot *now* sympathize in my deepest feelings, but I believe the time is coming when he may; only for the shadow, mother—the shadow, dearest mother!

“Mrs. Ainslie, indeed, is much *like* you, but she is *not* you. We shall come home, *Doctor Edward Pufton Clarence* and myself, one week from next Monday, unless something occurs to prevent. Much love to dear father. Pray for me, pray for *us* to be kept from the evil.

Always the same

Your own loving

KATE.

CHAPTER XVII.

“CAN’T see it, sir—not at all, sir. My opinion, you are very silly indeed,—beg pardon, sir,—no offence, sir. Look at my warehouse, sir,” and Mr. Pufton waved his fat hand with no little complacency in the direction of some hundred casks of the finest liquors. “I say, look at my warehouse, sir,—why, I wouldn’t look at \$20,000 for my stock alone. And the business I’m doing! bless me, it’s nothing, sir, absolutely nothing to ask for that concern. Why Dunn’s warehouse is every whit as good as mine, can’t imagine why he’d be such a fool as to sell for such a trifle.

“But it’s heart trouble,” he added, in a softened tone, “poor fellow, heart trouble, don’t know, bachelor’s life is better than that anyhow. Come now, Byng, you’ll never have as good a chance again.”

“I cannot wonder,” answered the young man, “that you think me very foolish in not accepting such an offer, but it’s no use, none at all,” and he placed his foot firmly upon the floor, “if he gave it me I would not take it. You cannot appreciate my motives, for you are blind to the evils which I have seen and experienced.”

The mercurial little old bachelor jumped out of his seat, placed his hands so skillfully in the small of his back, as to make his coat tails bob very decisively at every step, and flustered nervously some two or three times across the floor. Then he came back, and stood directly in front of his visitor, exclaiming in an impatient tone, “Well the fact’s just this, sir, you haven’t common sense, sir; never dreamt of such

obstinacy. Why, can't you see that somebody'll take the matter in hand if you don't? Somebody'll make a fortune out of it; just as many folks'll drink rum, just as many folks'll sell it, if you don't do it. Better make the money and do some good with it, that's my notion; and he frowned quite terrifically upon the willful young man."

"I cannot help it if you think so," answered Mr. Byng calmly; "I should be very sorry for it, did I not know that your friendship would remain unimpaired notwithstanding my obstinacy, as you are pleased to call it. But even in that case, I should feel myself compelled to resist your persuasions, and not only that, but to resist to the utmost of my power the use and sale of intoxicating drinks as the *greatest* cause of suffering and crime that ever existed in the world."

"But your not selling it won't make any less suffering or crime," answered Mr. Pufton. "No use in losing a good chance, when nobody's a bit the better for it; the fact is, sir, I'm out of patience, sir; you know I am, sir; can't help it, sir, for my life I can't."

There was a half-smile on the decided face, and a half-pang in the unbending heart, as the young man answered musingly, "And yet I know of those whose best hopes have been wrecked in trusting to that very argument. It's a mournful tone to me, that 'no one'll be the worse for it.' However," he added, in a louder tone, "I ought to explain: the point lies here, Mr. Pufton, with me, at least. If I were *sure* that no one would be at all influenced by my conduct in this matter, I should act precisely the same. I think it wrong to sell liquor at all, and for that reason, although I stood single-handed against the world, I would carry out my sentiments in both practice and theory."

"Well, well, suppose I must take it easy, though if it were only for the sake of your bewitching little sweetheart, should have been glad to see you master of such a capital business," said Mr. Pufton, relapsing into his usual good-humored manner.

"I think," rejoined the young man smiling, "and *she* thinks that her interests will be promoted to a far greater degree by my refusal than acceptance of such an offer."

"There's Edward Clarence, my namesake now," said his companion, "he'd have been worth a pretty little fortune for a beginning, at any rate, before this time, but his opinionated father just put a veto on it at once. He's my boy, is Edward, sir. I'd have done handsomely by him, sir. He isn't a fool, either; it wasn't his doing, refusing to come in with me. He's good enough to satisfy anybody. If he would do it, you needn't quibble about the right and wrong of such a little matter. Didn't expect it of you, sir,—indeed I didn't, sir."

Arthur Byng saw that his bachelor friend was getting provoked again, and remarked quietly, "You know there must be differences in character and opinions; there are no doubt many things that I do, which he would not engage in. He would not view this subject in the same light as myself. I could see that at a glance; he is too impulsive and unsuspicious."

"Bless the boy, he's got a warm heart, sir, no, not a warm heart, but a boiling heart, sir, boiling all over with love and good nature. How he did hold on to poor Ryker's family till he saw them safe out of trouble and danger; never saw any body like him, sir."

"Better if they had been *kept* out of trouble and danger," said the young man with a slight, but peculiar emphasis in his voice. Upon this, Mr. Pufton, still keeping his hands behind him, balanced himself alternately upon heels and toes, threw his round head back so as to command an unobstructed view of the ceiling, and stood gazing thereat, as though drinking inspiration from the view. His companion looked at him in silence, but a grave expression of inquiry rested on his features as he watched the artless little gentleman so intently eying the wall.

Through the older head were flitting sundry thought-

less expressions that had escaped him when the dead baby and its wretched mother roused such a tempest in his heart. "What a wretch you are now, Pufton! Who first taught poor Ryker to drink, I wonder? You did it Pufton, you are the one ought to be hanged,—you know you are!" After that, a sweet baby face, with half-closed eyes, and a large one, all swollen and discolored, glanced reproachfully at him; then came the remembrance of reform, peace and comfort, the unuttered thought, "no need of it all—let every body take care of oneself," and with an energetic puff, intended to dispel at once all disturbing fancies, Mr. Pufton brought his head, hands, and feet into a respectable position, and looked over again at his visitor.

To him the action of his companion had suggested a sudden thought. "There are reproaches of conscience there; how transparent are his actions; how warm-hearted he is. I might do him good by relating—how can I?" Then came a dark vision floating before him, and when his eyes met those of his friend, there was an expression more than grave, more than sorrowful, gleaming from their depths.

"What is the matter, Byng?" exclaimed Mr. Pufton, his thoughts flying off at a tangent from the widow and her children. "You couldn't look worse if you'd been to the funeral of your own mother."

The expression deepened in intensity as he answered in a subdued tone, "It is there that I have been; it is to that my thoughts were wandering; our remarks had called up scenes long since transacted. I will tell you something that I have never told, even to my nearest friend."

Mr. Pufton looked surprised, but seated himself without a word in his easy-chair, and laid his head on one side in a most attentive attitude, while the young man, clearing his voice, and leaning forward, commenced his story. "When I was very young, my father died. Mother had two children, my sister Mary and myself. My sister was several years

older than I. We almost worshiped her, she was so good, so gentle, so beautiful. I think mother loved her best, but I never thought anything of that. I thought she ought to be loved more. She seemed to forget herself always when those she loved were in trouble. I remember when I was a mere baby, she would lay aside her book to tell me a simple story, or sing some childish song. She had a sweet voice, and she and mother always sang together from the earliest period I can remember, until—Well, I shall pass over all the period of her childhood, and begin again with her history when sister Mary was seventeen. We lived in a pleasant cottage in a New England village, and only those who have been through New England can know how pleasant such a home can be.

"Mother, our gentle, loving mother, devoted her time to our education and improvement. Mary more than repaid her for the pains she took in bestowing upon her both the useful and ornamental acquirements necessary to a first-class education. I believe she was not called handsome, that is, not *very* handsome, although to my memory she seems a being of surpassing beauty; but every one accorded to her the palm of true womanly gentleness, and unrivalled genius. That sister," said the young man earnestly, "had her lot been cast in other places, or her earnest soul been fixed upon a higher love than the changing ones of earth, would have been a star in the night of life's wretchedness and guilt, guiding many through the darkness, to a land where there is need of neither sun nor moon, nor star to shine in it, where the glory of God doth lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.

"When Mary was seventeen, Lester Morris first visited our village. Young Morris was partner in a wholesale business in New York, not talented, but a man of fascinating manners and unexceptionable morals.

"The day that Mary was married was a very sorrowful one to me. Never brother loved sister more than I, and never was sister worthier of love than my darling Mary. It seemed

to me as though her going to New York, and our staying in New England, was the bursting asunder of my very heartstrings. She tried to make me cheerful, and, although I cried the whole evening of the wedding, succeeded before she left in restoring me to quite a tolerable degree of comfort, by giving me the private information that she intended to *make* mother bring me on with her to stay at least a month, before the year was out. After she left, mother and I were drawn closer together. I think I must have been unlike other boys, for I never can recollect the time when it was not a greater pleasure to me to spend a quiet evening with my mother and sister, than to go off skating on the pond, or joining my boyish associates in their evening rambles.

"Then I was twelve years old, and then it was that the glorious plan of redemption through Jesus was unfolded to my spirit. Then it was that I first found the Rock upon which my foot stands firm, that neither storm nor tide can beat away.

"I have always wondered that my sister's loving heart was not drawn towards that faith that seemed to me so congenial to her taste and temper. I think she would ultimately have become a follower of Jesus had she never removed from our village, but I suppose her impressible nature was so easily and completely assimilated to those by whom she was immediately surrounded, that her earlier teachings were either entirely obliterated, or remembered as a dream in after years of temptation and misery. For three or four years mother and myself came to spend a month at Christmas with her. She was very happy then. Two lovely children and an affectionate, whole-hearted husband were sufficient treasures for her.

"Lester Morris failed in business about three years after their marriage, but they took it to heart less than any one I ever saw. Mary chirruped just as gaily, and stepped just as lightly in the humbler home to which they quietly retired, as in the

more luxurious one of their days of affluence, and Lester seemed too much delighted in the possession of such a wife and children, to let money make or break his happiness.

"At last mother was not able to leave home any more, and Mary used to come to visit her. The first time her husband was with her; the next she told us that his business was too pressing to allow him to leave it; but there was something in her manners that struck me as singular. Her cheek was paler and thinner than I had ever seen it before. She would sit sometimes, when she didn't know I was watching her, gazing abstractedly into the fire, without paying the slightest attention to the children playing beside her; and once when I had gone up to her room to see if little Arthur were asleep, she entered in the dark, threw herself upon the bed, and burst into tears. I spoke to her, begging her to tell me her sorrow that I might sympathize with her, but she said she was not well, she would soon be better, that I must not worry mother by telling her, she was too weak to bear it. So it went on until she left us.

"The next year she did not come; she was too much engaged, she said; 'Lester had failed again, and they must move into a still smaller place. He had not been well lately. Arthur, too, was quite miserable, but she was hoping they would all be better soon.'

"Soon after that, we had a letter saying that Arthur's illness had terminated in consumption, which, the previous week had lain him in the grave.

"Not quite three weeks passed, during which we had received no word from Mary, when mother and I were seated one afternoon upon the little bench before our cottage door. She was very feeble now, so that she was unable to walk further than to the end of our small garden, and it was one of her greatest pleasures to sit on that rustic bench, amid the fragrance of her flowers, and talk to me of those things nearest her heart—Mary and Heaven. Dear mother! when she was

dying she said to me in tones broken with the feebleness of her last breathings. 'Arthur, never make an earthly idol. I have always thought of Mary and Heaven, when I should have thought of Heaven and Mary.' Here the narrator broke quite down, the tears rushing into his eyes, and his voice choking with emotion. Mr. Pufton had remained surprised for some time, but now he had forgotten his surprise in the interest of the story.

"As I told you," he commenced at length, "we were sitting before our door on a pleasant summer afternoon, when Mr. Wood, the principal merchant of our village, entered the gate. He was a thoughtless man, although by no means hard-hearted. We knew that he had been to New York for his fall supply of goods, but did not suppose that he had seen Mary. I rose to welcome him, and noticed that his countenance wore an expression of pity and sorrow that quite puzzled me. He returned my salutation, and passed on to mother, saying, 'I took the opportunity of calling, dear Mrs. Leslie, to offer you my warmest sympathy in your great affliction. If anything I can do, by way of settling your daughter's affairs, will be of any service to you, I shall esteem it a sacred pleasure to be always at your service.'

"Mother sat for one minute looking at him, as though she did not quite understand his words. Then suddenly clenching the arm of her chair, she cried, under her breath 'Affliction? My daughter's affairs? What has happened? tell me!'

"Mr. Wood looked surprised and alarmed. I saw that he was sorry for what he had said, but there was now no alternative for him but to proceed. 'Is it possible,' he said nervously, 'that you have not heard from Mrs. Morris during the last two weeks?' Mother did not answer him, only kept her eyes fixed on his face, while her lips moved with hardly a sound, 'tell me.' 'You know that after Morris's last failure he opened a porter-house in the city in partnership with a man by the name of Gamp. One night about two weeks ago, they

had some disagreement or other which terminated in Gamp's stabbing him with a bowie-knife.' The gentleman stopped speaking, for he saw mother's eyes dilate, and her face turn ashy pale. It was all new to her. Lester Morris keeping a porter-house! Her daughter a widow!

"I afterwards learned from Mr. Wood the particulars relating to the course of Lester Morris for the year before his death. The cause of his last failure had been carefully concealed from us by his devoted wife, who had kept hoping for his reform up to the day of his death. He had always indulged in wine, as all of us did then, indeed, and at last the taste he had acquired proved too strong for him. His frequent intoxication had rendered him neglectful of business, he had failed, and taking Mary's little property, had been induced, in a fit of intoxication, to sign the articles of copartnership with a man whom he both despised and hated. By this means his murderer had succeeded in investing all that remained to them in his detestable business, and through his cunning and artifice, Mary never received any afterwards.

"When my mother had recovered from the first shock of those sorrowful tidings, she dispatched me immediately to New York. Feeble as she was, she would have accompanied me, had not the family physician laid a decided veto upon any such proceeding. I found Mary very ill of a fever, in the care of strangers in a condition of life far below her own. As soon as she was able, she started with me for home, taking with her her little Margaret, and traveling slowly on account of her health. For a time she found rest in a mother's bosom, and grew less pale and sorrowful. Would that she had always been content to depend upon her scanty fortune, rather than to leave her side. But in two or three months, a letter came from the city offering her a situation as teacher in an excellent school, which she at length accepted, not without many tears and struggles, but still she could not bear the thought of depriving us of the comforts to which we had always been

accustomed. I knew that by constant application, I could, in a year or two, render myself capable of earning enough to make it unnecessary for her to leave home, and looked forward joyfully to the time when she should return to us.

"But she never came again! For a year we heard from her regularly; then her letters began to be fewer and briefer. She was intending to give up her situation, and take that of governess in the family of a widower who had only one child. It was an easy situation, and she had known the gentleman, whose name she omitted to mention, slightly for many years. After that it was a long time before we heard from her again, so long, that I was about starting to New York in search of her, when we received another letter; shall I ever forget that letter? that in less than a month brought my mother to the grave. It told us never to think of her again; to look upon her as dead; to blot her image from our memory. She had been betrayed by a mock marriage, ruined by one whom she had trusted, and had resolved never to bring her shame upon us. She would take means to have her child placed in mother's care; she knew her mother would not refuse her that; for herself, she asked nothing but forgiveness and oblivion. We must not seek her; she was hidden where it would be utterly impossible for us to find her, only take Maggie and forget her! as though we *could* forget!

"Notwithstanding her warning, I was dispatched immediately in search of her, commissioned by a weeping mother to bring her back to the shelter of a mother's tenderness before further injury had come upon her. My mother did not look upon the evil that had befallen her with the eye of a worldly person. She saw in it only a misfortune which must only increase her love, not steel her heart against one who had been deceived into a state condemned by the world, no matter by what means procured, or what suffering it might produce. But I could not find her, nor obtain any clue to her whatever. After three weeks spent in useless labor, I re-

turned to see my mother die, and receive her parting blessing.

"Since then I have striven in vain to find her. At one time I succeeded in discovering that she was still living, but soon after I ascertained that she had sailed for Australia, and gave up the search with deep sorrow of heart. If mother had lived, I believe it would have been impossible for her to keep her resolution of never again seeing her, for the time must have come when she would have forgotten all pride and fear, and flown to one whom, she knew nothing on earth could wean from her. I always thought she must have heard of mother's death, because she never sent Maggie to us, as she had proposed.

"You will not be surprised at my determination on this point when I tell you that I believe the death of my sister's husband, my sister's ruin, and my mother's death, were caused solely by intoxicating drinks. I believe that any man who *sells* liquor is virtually sending crowds annually to ruin and death, whose number is proportioned to the extent of his business."

"Bless my heart, sir," cried Mr. Pufton, rubbing his eyes with his coat-sleeve, "I'd give it up in a minute, sir, if everybody else would, but, the trouble is, other folks won't give it up, sir; and folks will have it, sir; what odds, sir, whether they get it, sir, from Tom, Dick, or Harry, sir, or from Edward Pufton, Esq., sir, who wouldn't mind at all throwing away all his stock, sir, if that would knock up all the rum-drinking, sir; not a bit, sir; 'pon my word, not a bit, sir."

"Well," remarked his young companion, glancing at his watch, "I have an engagement at eight o'clock; I think you said you were going as far as Broadway and Canal street. Will you accompany me?"

"Certainly, sir—delighted sir—detest walking alone abominably, sir. Patrick!" A short, sleepy-looking Irishman made his appearance from some invisible corner, and Mr. Pufton, after leaving directions as to closing the store, and

stumping about at a terrible rate for some five minutes, patted his hat upon his head, and made for the door, saying as he looked complacently behind him, "All right, sir, quite right, sir. Everything in order, sir."

"I think," remarked young Byng, as soon as they had gained the street, "you said you would give up the business if every one else would do the same?"

"To be sure, I would, sir. Mighty glad too, sir."

"If all the rumsellers in the city sell poison, is that a reason why you should do it too?"

Mr. Pufton did not answer this question, but it evidently was a somewhat different view of the matter from any that he had yet taken, for he cocked his head first on one side, then on the other, looking very intensely at the gas-lights, and ahem-ing to himself for the space of two or three blocks, without being at all noticed by his companion.

The night was dark, and their way lay through an unpleasant section of the city. As they turned the corner of Centre street, a female figure, wretchedly attired, passed them. "What a dismal frown that always wears," said young Byng, pointing to the dreary city prison looming up a block or two before them. As he spoke, the figure which had just passed them, turned quickly round, and stood for an instant motionless, then, with a noiseless tread, followed close behind them, so near that every word they said was audible to their pursuer. The figure was enveloped in a large, faded cloak; the face, as she turned to look at the two gentlemen, for an instant caught the rays of light, that should have faded out in shining upon a face so haggard and wretched. But as she turned, she drew down a thick veil that concealed her from idle scrutiny. So they passed on, the man buoyant with youth and hope, for a moment saddened by bitter memories—the man wealthy, warm-hearted, but unthinking, striving to reconcile awakened conscience to a lawful evil—the woman with unsteady step, and hidden features, thinking—but who may read that heart

of hearts? who may tell what whirlwinds of feeling might be sweeping across the bleak desert of that shrouded woman's soul? who amid the foul darkness lying all along that wretched life, might see with her the sunlight and flowers of a youth of purity? who amid the clamor of fierce remorse and dissonant passion battling in that guilty breast, could hear with her the blessings and the prayers whose distant music was for ever floating to her ear, making only sadder the knell of her despair?

They passed on into the shadow of the prison, the woman listening intently to their conversation.

"No, sir," said Mr. Pufton, "after what you have told me, I certainly can't blame you for not entering the business, and, fact is, sir, I've a mind to give up myself. So I have, sir. Had a mind to, the day I saw Ryker's wife and child, sir. Don't know though, if it'd do a bit o' good, that's the worst of it, sir."

"Suppose half the liquor-dealers in the city closed up business, do you suppose there'd be as many drunkards as there are?" asked Byng quietly.

"Well, no sir. By no means, sir. Can't say I think so, sir. See exactly what you want to say, sir. Needn't say it. I understand, sir. You put the question in such a queer way, Bless me, sir, I see, I see!" And Mr. Pufton threw back his head and rubbed his hands together, as though it quite astonished him that he *did* see. "Believe I will give up now, sir, Do believe I will."

"I can assure you," answered the young man, in a tone full of feeling, "I can assure you that it would give me far more pleasure to see you resign the business entirely, than it would give you to see me making \$10,000 a year in Mr. Dunn's warehouse." Here the silent figure behind them caught her cloak closer around her with a sudden twitch, and pressed a little nearer. "You must pardon me," continued Byng, "for speaking with so little reserve, I feel it my duty, and

my friendship for you is an additional motive for my endeavors."

"Bless you, sir!" cried Mr. Pufon, "no apology; I honor you for it, sir,—I love you for it, sir—I always love nobility, sir, wherever I find it, sir—I adore nobility, sir, I do now, sir, shake hands, sir, to prove that I adore nobility, sir."

"I have often thought that you would give up this traffic, if you had any idea of its results," said his companion. "Although the history of my brother-in-law furnishes less direct evidence of the evils of liquor-dealing than many I could name; there is to my mind no question, that all our subsequent family affliction was traceable to the influence exerted over Lester Morris by the unprincipled man who destroyed him, strengthened by the example of men like you, honored and praiseworthy in other respects, but sadly mistaken on that particular point."

"And wasn't that villain punished?" asked Mr. Pufon. "He deserved the State's Prison for life, at the very least."

"No," answered Byng, "he was never punished. He had powerful advocates to defend his act, and, although the proofs were all against him, he succeeded in wresting the law to his own purposes, so as to escape its sentence upon his sin. From an ambiguous sentence in that last fatal letter, I gathered that he was in some way connected with her betrayer, or at least that she suspected so. Poor, dear Mary! God bless her!"

The two men passed on, but the shrouded woman staggered for a moment, made two or three headlong steps as though striving to walk on, then, stopped still, and clutched convulsively at the iron railing beside her. She threw back her vail, and gazed eagerly after the receding figures. But she was powerless to follow—scarcely strong enough to keep herself from falling, even with both hands clinging fast to the railing. The great stone-walls threw down their ominous shadow. Walls within which human guilt and misery must always have its dwelling; walls strong and mighty, the ram-

parts of the drunkard's palace, to attain which, he treads step by step through paths more rugged than the Alpine cliffs scaled by the fearless Hannibal.—Trampling out purity, virtue, love, hope and often life itself in the furious progress. Walls at whose base are gathered poverty, disease, and suffering in every shape, and under every guise. Their black shadow falls upon the walk below. The filth gathered in the street looks filthier here. The foul offensive stream coursing through the gutters is more offensive here. The old, dismal abodes opposite, although hundreds like them offend the eye in that portion of our city, seem older and more dismal here. The sounds of drunken revelry, the hoarse laugh, the bitter curse mingle in fiercer discords here.

And yet we know that one single cause produces all. We know that were that cause removed, nine out every ten of those murderers, felons, and blasphemers would be transformed into tender fathers, husbands, sons, and peaceable citizens. We *know* this, and yet we put our hands idly in our pockets, and quibble about *expediency* and *constitutionality*. Let men go on, and swear, and steal, and murder, break up your ballot-boxes, and carry your elections! It *may* not be *expedient*, *may* not be *constitutional*! Verily, Man is a Riddle.

For some minutes the woman stood there alone, for the street was deserted now. Now bending her head down to the railing, now tossing it wildly back, now crying to herself in bitterness of soul. "God bless her! too late, too late! Lost, lost, lost! My child, my child. Husband,—mother,—brother."—At last a group of men came clamoring around the corner, and the woman, letting go her hold, again drew her cloak and vail about her, and tottered away. But there is a refuge for such as she. Not in the bosom of compassionate piety, not in the ark of Christian charity, but in the lethean cup that maddens while it soothes. She passed on to

a low corner, where only two or three men and women were talking and laughing together.

As she entered, and advanced to the counter, one of the women caught hold of her cloak. "Back aready, eh? what have you been a doing? what are you a going to do?"

"Do?" cried she, flinging back her vail and letting her eyes fall with a proud scorn upon the questioner. "Do? just what you would do—drink! Drink! it's all I *can* do now."

"You han't done nothin' else this many a long day," answered the woman doggedly. "Just please speak a bit more civil. You aren't better nor us, that you need be putting on such mighty fine airs. Don't be proud o' your learnin'."

"Proud!" echoed her companion. "Proud of crime and pollution, proud of filth and rags; proud of the company of such as you? No! there's nothing left me now but drink; then give it me, or I die," and staggering to the counter, she lifted to her burning lips the portion that was at once her solace and her ruin.

"Oh, she's more than half-crazy, Mag!" cried one of the men with an oath. "Don't notice her; she'll get round after a while. She don't generally have no such carryings on at night. Its pretty much always she's worse in the day; only she shuts up then. Let her drink it off."

Drink off what? Life—body—soul—to death and eternal ruin!



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CHAPTER XVIII.

"EVERYTHING'S ready for to-night now. But I must have some of those handsome new decanters up—Billy, here."

The boy emerged from behind the screen, and approached his master. There was a something of elasticity in his motion, and a decided improvement in his general appearance since we last saw him, and his eye neither fell before the gaze of his companion, nor did his voice quiver as it had been wont to do when he answered him. "Well, sir, what are your orders."

There was a peculiar expression of inquiry upon the face of the rumseller as he glanced at the boy, not unmingled with vexation at his apparent unconcern. "How now, sirrah!" he cried. "You're mighty bold lately. Go and fix yourself for night, and open those oysters that came half an hour ago, and hark'ee, let me see any of your airs, and I'll beat you again, I'll beat the breath out of your body."

A little of the old crouching look was on the boy now, and his eyes fell, but with a sudden and quite apparent effort, turning very red in the face, he answered, "I cannot do as you ordered me, sir. I am going to leave to-day."

Gamp started back a step or two, with his diabolical eyes staring wide open upon the venturous youth, stood for a minute swelling with anger and surprise, then, in a voice hoarse with passion, cried, "Fool! to leave me? am I not your uncle? your lawful guardian? know that you cannot leave me. I would keep you if it were only for the sake of humbling you. Pray what would you do? A fine man you

to walk out into the world. Perhaps," he added, his tone relapsing into scorn, "you might make a second Franklin or Fulton, who knows?"

The boy, quite excited, but determined in his heart, spoke again, but now with a quivering voice. "I can do something. I have hands and I can work. I never believed that you were my uncle, and I am determined upon leaving at any rate; you can follow me with the law, if you choose. But I hate the business, and I'll never have anything to do with it again, unless I am forced into it, and that I never shall be."

"Villain!" cried Gamp, "that blustering Clarence has put you up to this. I'll give you a lesson!" and rushing towards him he levelled a blow at the slender youth that brought him upon the floor.

"Dat ere an't fair play, noways," said lame Joe, striding with a hobble in at the door and up to the fallen boy. "I nebber could remagine dat dat ere was fair play now."

The poor fellow got up; Gamp paid no attention whatever, to the intruder, glowering still upon the boy. "You'll leave me now, will you? You see there are more ways than one to keep you. I guess you've found out you *can't* leave me, eh?"

"But I *will* leave you," he answered, resolutely, drawing a little nearer Joe, perhaps a little more resolutely, for standing in his shadow. "Nothing on earth shall keep me."

Gamp doubled both fists, and made a dive at him, but Joe interposed his burly form, and calmly squaring himself and doubling his own fists, remarked pleasantly. "'Pears now, dis yer nigger's a better match for yer. Sakes alive, you'd comboberlate dat nutshell ob a feller afore I'd say boo to a grasshopper."

Gamp scowled fiercely at him, and made a desperate rush at the boy. Joe lifted one brawny arm between them, and taking Billy's entire shoulder in his huge hand pushed, or rather lifted him towards the door, saying, "Jest clar out dar

ef yer wants to get away. Laws a-massy, yer an't no 'count long side o' dat ere big feller. Clar out wid yer." The boy started, but his master, whose passion had overcome his cunning, bounded upon him, and inflicted a severer blow than before, that sent him again reeling to the floor. It was too much for Joe. He shouted to the boy, "Clar out wid yer, can't yer," at the same time seizing the back of his persecutor's coat collar in his Herculean grasp, and belaboring him soundly over the shoulders, accompanying the exercise with varied expressions of his opinion. "An't yer 'shamed now, to be beatin' dat mimiky arter such a fashion. Dat's worse dan dis yer nigger'd do, now. Dat's what I call real mean, any ways. Get away, Billy, an' don't yer nebber come back agin. 'Tain't no place for yer. Clar out away to New York, whar yer might make a bigger man dan mas'r yet. Hold on dar, don't yer be a kickin' an a swearin' so, or I'll hab to hit yer harder. I han't got nuffin agin yer, only I can't stan' it, noways, to see dat poor chap so kinder knocked all of a heap togedder. I'll leab go o' yer, soon's he's safe off, only jest keep still, an don't cut up so hicombobflorinous, or I'll hab to hurt yer."

While the man struggled to free himself, foaming with passion, and glaring like a demon alternately upon his escaping victim and his resolute tormentor, and while the more powerful form of the stalwart negro stood holding him fast, with as little apparent effort as a mother would have caressed her babe, the slave of that man's will passed from his control for ever.

The boy cast no lingering look behind, but flew along the road in the direction of Edward Clarence's office, with a speed lent by terror, for now he had declared his resolution and received such a decisive answer, he feared more than ever falling again into the power of his master. When he reached the door, panting and excited, he could hardly summon

breath to speak. "Billy," cried the young physician, "what is the matter? Why have you been running so?"

As soon as he could, the boy related his interview with Gamp, and Joe's interposition, concluding with the entreaty that Edward would assist him. "Assist you," he exclaimed. "What assistance do you want now? You are seventeen years old, and strong enough, and healthy enough to assist yourself. No," he added, laughing, "if I assist you I shall have to take you through a course of physic, that's the assistance I render, you know. Thanks to lame Joe, you're safe away for this time, and if you ever get back again, it'll be your own fault. All the assistance you want is a little exercise in God's free air, with a free sky above you and a free soul in you. Why, I'd cleave out my fortune without a penny in the world."

"But I'm not like you," said the boy, looking first at the buoyant figure of his companion, then deprecatingly at his own lank arms and bony fingers. "I shall never be like you."

"Nonsense!" answered Edward, in a tone that might have infused hope into the very bosom of despair. "You are a *man* now, Will, you've got the right use of your own hands, your own limbs, and your own head. Don't be chicken-hearted. Faint heart never won fair lady, you know, nor fair anything else. Make your own way now, dash into the business desperately; you remember the noblest man on earth is the self-made man."

"Where shall I start?" asked Billy, less despondingly, but still a little doubtful. "What shall I do first?"

"Start for New York, to-night. When you get there do something. Try to find a place as porter, or errand boy, and if you can't do that, split wood, or shovel coal, or do anything. I *know* you've talent, and if you go to work in earnest, you'll get to the top of the ladder after a while, my word for it."

There was something so cheerful and inspiring in the manly voice and manner, that Billy couldn't help catching a portion of his enthusiasm. "And when does the boat leave Newburgh?" he asked. "Can I get there to-night? But I've no money," he added, with a blank dismay upon his face at the sudden recollection. "I shall have to go afoot."

"Good! capital!" shouted Edward, bringing down his hand with an encouraging slap upon Billy's shoulder. "That's the spirit, my boy. If you can't ride, walk. If you can't do great things, do little things. If you can't live well, live poorly. Constant effort'll bring everything right after a while. But I won't let you go quite penniless. Here's a five dollar bill; one dollar will take you to New York. When you go there, you must go to some plain, respectable mechanics' boarding-house, in an entirely different part of the city from where your porter-house was formerly located, so as to avoid, if possible, ever meeting your master again. I don't mean that you need be afraid to meet him, for he has no power over you, and you must always stand your own ground now, but he might annoy you if he knew where you were. Then you must use your money to pay your board, and for nothing else. You'll find something to do. I needn't tell you to avoid such places as that you have just left, but you must keep your wits about you, and look out you don't get taken in."

"The doctor is wanted directly," said a red-headed boy, opening the door. "Please, sir, mother's taken dreadful, all of a sudden, and wants to see you right off. She told me not to come back without you."

"Well," said the young practitioner, rising, "I suppose I shall have to go at such a peremptory summons. Just step out there, my boy, I'll come directly." The boy did as he was directed, and Edward, taking out his own stout, but well-worn purse, handed it to his companion, after having removed the contents, and put a five dollar bill in the end.

"There," he said, "take care of it, and you'll get it well-filled yet. Be a good boy, go to church, and read your Bible. The boat doesn't go till seven o'clock to-night. It's two now, and it will take you only two hours to walk to Newburgh. There, good-bye, now, don't come to see me again till you've made something of yourself, only write to me often, and don't forget me." As he spoke, he seized the boy's hand, gave it a hearty shake, and was off before he had time to answer.

Billy stood with the purse in his hand, looking after the receding figure. The tears gathered in his eyes, and a melancholy smile played about his mouth as he murmured, "Forget him! I haven't so many friends like him, that I *can* forget;" then glancing at the worn purse, he added, "yes, I *will* never come back until I am different from now. Hope and Courage! I need them both."

When Edward, or rather Dr. Clarence (as we are forced through courtesy to call him now), was out of sight, the boy turned away, and leaping across the stile at the corner, took a short cut across the fields to the house of Mr. Terry. His heart was lighter than it had ever been before; the very air around him seemed purer, the ground he trod more firm, the sunshine more beautiful. That five dollars seemed a fortune to him; but the cheering words, the confident anticipations, the warm interest of the sanguine young doctor had done more for him than money could do. For the first time, he actually and really believed himself a man, capable of meeting the contingencies of life, and joining in its struggles.

He opened the gate of the clergyman's garden, and passed round to the back of the house. Maggie was watering her flowers. When she saw him, she stopped still with the little green watering-pot in her hand.

"Good afternoon, Will. I'm so glad to see you. Have you done it?"

"I've done it! I've done it! I'm free now, and I'll do more. I'm free, Maggie, just think of it!"

The little girl looked surprised, as she saw him actually bound up two or three times from the ground with a true boyish jump; a minute after her face clouded. "Then you are going away? I'm sorry you are going away. But you'll come often, won't you, to see us? Can't you come every Sunday to Church and Sabbath School?"

"No, Maggie, I'm going away to be gone a long time, but I will come back again sometime. I am going to work now."

"What are you going to do?" asked she, still looking sorrowful.

"To *work*," he answered. "Work anyhow, or anywhere; but I'm determined to work. Why, I feel like another fellow now, I'm away from that horrible place."

"He can't get you back again, can he?" asked Maggie, innocently.

The question was something of a damper upon his hopes, and he answered with a shiver, "If I once get away to-night, I don't think he'll ever catch me again. He's an awful man, Maggie. I do believe he would have killed me before he would let me go, if it had not been for lame Joe."

"What did lame Joe do?" she asked.

Then the whole story of Joe and the doctor had to be told over again, interspersed with exclamations and comments from Maggie, and expressions of gratitude from Billy.

"So you see, Maggie," he said at last, "I shall have to be off in a couple of hours."

"An't you going to get ready?" asked Maggie.

"What have I got to get ready? I am ready to go to the end of the world. But I'm not ready to leave you, Maggie." Here there was a sudden little break in his voice, and the listening girl burst into tears.

"I love you, Will, don't go away from me," she sobbed.

"You are just like me, without any father or mother, or brothers or sisters, and I think that's what makes me love you better."

The boy turned away his head. "I love you, too, dearly, Maggie; but you know I can't stay here. Whenever I think of you, it will make me work harder, and hold up my head higher. Some day I'm coming back again, and then"—He paused, and a deep flush spread over his face. He looked at the child; she stood with those great tearful eyes fixed with such an innocent inquisitiveness upon his face, that he only added, "then I shall come to see you again, and thank you better than I can now for all you have done for me."

"I've never done anything for you," she answered, still crying, "but I'm so sorry you're going away."

"You spoke the first loving word to me that I have heard since I was a baby," he answered in a choking voice. "If it hadn't been for that, I should never have dared attend Church or Sunday School; and I should never have learned all I know now, and never been half so happy as I am or hope to be."

"Oh! no," she answered, it was Mr. Terry that taught you to study your Bible, and find in that what was right and wrong. Will you always read it, Will, and every night will you pray to God for Jesus's sake?"

"Yes, Maggie, I promise you I will; and try to be good, try very hard to be good."

"But I can't see you though," cried Maggie, "oh dear!" She snatched up the hem of her calico apron with both hands, and commenced rubbing her eyes.

They were both crying by this time, although both trying with all their might *not* to cry. At length the boy, a little ashamed of his emotion, swallowed down his sobs, and commenced trying to comfort his companion.

"I shall come back again," he said, confidently, "I am *determined* to get rich and famous some day, if it's only for

your sake. I used to think I couldn't do anything or be anything once, but I know better now. Don't cry, Maggie."

"But it'll be such a long time," sobbed Maggie, "and you might be drowned, or get sick, and I should never know."

"Yes, you shall know too, for I am going to write to you once every month, and if anything happens to me, you shall know it; but you must write too, for I shall want to know all about you; only be careful when you carry letters to the office that somebody doesn't see the direction, eh?"

Maggie stopped crying and looked up. "Are you afraid he'd make you come back?"

"I don't know," he answered, thoughtfully. "I don't think he could, but he might try to worry me. He hates me, and," added the boy, firing with indignation, "*I hate him.*"

"Oh!" said Maggie, "you oughtn't to say you hate anybody. That's wicked, you know."

"I *do* hate him," he answered, passionately. "I'd like to know what I've ever had of him since I can remember, but blows, and curses, and ill-usage. He's tried to frighten me lately by talking about law, and his right of guardian. He isn't my uncle; I *know* he isn't; I never believed it, and I'm sure he wouldn't dare to go to law about me."

The fierce indignation pictured on his countenance for an instant banished the sorrow of his companion, who asked half-wonderingly, "What makes you so sure, Will? I don't see why he shouldn't be your uncle. I know some good people that have very bad relations. There's good-natured little Kitty Toole's got a drunken father, and"—

"Oh, 'tisn't that!" interrupted the youth, "I'm not good at all. I've been brought up always in every sort of wickedness. There isn't a boy my age in the village that's seen anything like it, not even Jake Jones!"

"But," pleaded Maggie, laying her hand on his arm; "*you* didn't *do* it, I know you didn't, and you couldn't help being there then, you know."

A quiver of pain shot over the boy's pale face, then passed away leaving the old, sad, troubled look behind. For a minute he stood, gazing mechanically at the small hand that lay so gently on his arm. "Don't look so, Will, you frighten me," she added at length, "What is the matter?"

"Maggie, once, a good while ago, when I was quite a little boy, master got angry at a man that I liked, and rushed at him with a knife. I caught up another that lay on the table, and thrust it in master's shoulder. I meant to kill him, for I'm sure I hated him enough, but he only knocked me senseless on the floor, and the first thing I knew when I came to my senses, I was lying on the floor with my hand lying in a pool of blood. I looked round, and there, close by me on the floor, lay the corpse of the man I had tried to defend. That gives me more trouble than anything else, to remember that I was just as bad as master, and if I had happened to hit him in the right place, I should have been a *murderer*." He shuddered, and put both hands before his face.

"And wasn't anything done to him?" asked Maggie, also shuddering, and recoiling a step or two.

"No, he got off because I didn't see him do it. That's one thing makes me think he'll hunt me out wherever I go. He was always ugly to me, but ever since then—he might better have killed me twenty times over, only—Oh! I'm a dreadful wretch, Maggie, I *couldn't* die, either; what would become of me? I'm almost as bad as he!" The slender form crouched, the head was bowed, and the whole attitude was expressive of self-loathing and humiliation.

For a few moments his companion stood at a little distance, looking doubtfully at him, and feeling, perhaps, less esteem and more pity than she had ever felt for him before. But the loving look soon shone out again upon her face, and she stole up to his side, "But you were quite young then, and had never been taught any better. Besides you did it to save your friend's life."

"I believe I'd have done it many's the time, if it hadn't been for fear of what would happen afterwards. I'm sure he'd kill *me* if he didn't hate me too bad. He thinks that would put me out of his power. Oh, Maggie!" he continued, with a fresh burst of anguish, "I *mean* to be better, I *will* be better, I'm going to try to be as good some day as Dr. Clarence, but I can't make up for all those horrible years, and you won't love me—and perhaps I shall die—and then what will become of me?"

The girl paused, with a puzzled, anxious look at his quivering face; at last she said half-hesitating, "Will, I *shall* love you, I shall never stop loving you, but you don't go the right way to work to be good. We are *all* bad, Will, Mr. Terry says so."

"No," he answered, shaking his head, "you're not bad, nor Mr. Terry, and I'm sure Dr. Clarence never *could* be bad. When Mr. Terry preaches about sin and the wicked place, I take it all for me, and many's the night I've laid awake crying and lamenting more over my own wickedness than over all my trouble with master. I know you never hated, Maggie. Oh! it's a dreadful thing to hate."

"I used to, Will," she answered. "There was a girl in New York I hated dreadfully, she beat me so, and called me such names. I've often felt as though I'd like to bite her nose off, if I could. And when I first came here, I hated Catharine too, she snubbed me so, and told Mrs. Terry stories about me. But I hope I don't hate anybody now."

"*You* did!" exclaimed the boy, "I didn't think you could. How did you leave off hating then?"

"I prayed to God to help me," was the unaffected answer, "and if you pray to God, He'll help you too."

"I do pray, and *pray* and *pray*," he said bitterly, "but it don't do any good. I only feel worse after; sometimes I think I'll never pray again at all."

"Don't think so," she answered earnestly. "It's because

you don't pray right, Will. Jesus Christ says 'Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, believing that ye shall receive, that ye shall surely have.' I've asked that you might come to love our blessed Savior, and trust in Him for salvation; and I *know*," she added, turning a face lit all over with the blessed, child-like faith of the humble follower of Jesus, "I *know* that some day you will love Him, and be like Him."

The boy made no answer, although his soul drank in a draught of hope from the earnest, loving words of the child-disciple. She turned quickly away, entered the house, and soon returned with her little pocket-Bible. "Come, Will," she said, "let's go down to the old apple-tree by the barn, a little while. Mr. and Mrs. Terry have gone out, and I want to tell you something."

They walked away together through the little green lane that led to the barn, and seated themselves on the grass, at the foot of a huge apple-tree loaded with fruit.

"I can only stay an hour, Maggie," said William, as he dropped on the ground beside her; "I must stop at Mr. Clarence's and Rosy's before I go."

Happy boy! that hour was the sunrise of a new day, glorious, unending; the hour to which he turned in long years of toil and trial as the parent of every pure resolve, every immortal aspiration, every deed of love and faith that rendered his after life an oasis in the world's desert to all who needed his sympathy or aid.

"I brought you here to tell you how I came to find out the way to pray," said Maggie, her voice faltering a little at first, through natural diffidence, which she was evidently striving to cast off, for the sake of her companion. "Once I felt just as you do. Sometimes, after my teacher in New York told me about God, and Heaven, and prayer, I used to pray to be made better, and try with all my might to be good; but I couldn't do it at all; before I knew anything about it, there would be that old ugly feeling coming up in my heart,

and all I could do I couldn't keep it away. Sometimes for two or three days together, I would think I was very good indeed; I can remember looking at other girls and thinking to myself, 'If they only knew how much oftener I prayed, and how much better I was than they, wouldn't they feel ashamed?' But I always found out that after I thought I had been very good for a day or two, I was sure to do something very bad that discouraged me entirely. But after I came out here, I found that I couldn't be good myself, and it was no use to try."

Her companion interrupted her. "But you are not like *me*, Maggie. You must have been a great deal better than I am, always. You haven't helped along in such dreadful wickedness as I've had to, many a time before I knew you and Dr. Clarence."

"Oh, Will," said the eager girl, "you don't know; God looks at the *heart*, and His Holy Word says 'The *heart* is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked.' My heart used to be full of anger, and envy, and selfishness, and I have to fight hard now to keep it away." The child's diffidence was forgotten now, and the simple words came gushing from the soul like waters from a fountain, while her upturned face glowed with the hope of opening light to the darkened eyes of the convicted sinner. "I tell you, Will," she continued, "if I had been situated just as you were, I really believe I should have been a great deal worse. I heard Mr. Terry say the other day, that he thought it was very strange you were not more hardened, living as you had, under such dreadful influences all your life; and Mr. Clarence, who was there, said, in his dear, good-natured way. 'Bless you, Terry, that boy'll make something yet. He's been kept from the evil of this world just by the help of Almighty God, and it's wonderful, so 'tis. If he don't make one o' the best Christians that ever lived, before he dies, then my name isn't Jeremiah Clarence.'"

"They don't know how *bad* I am," groaned the boy.
 "It makes no difference how bad you are," she replied.
 "No difference how bad I am?"

"No, not to God. We have all sinned, and He is so holy, that he cannot look upon sin with the least degree of allowance, but"—

"That's it," cried her companion. "All my fears and troubles with master were nothing to that. When I think about the Great, Holy God, and death, and eternity, and the judgment, I don't know which way to turn. All the sins of my life rise up before me; I think how hard I have tried to make myself better, and that I *cannot* do it; and so I must go on, and die at last without hoping"—

"No, no," interrupted Maggie. "You will be better, I know you will; let me tell you. I felt just as you do once; I thought God was so angry with me, that he could never forgive me. But dear Mrs. Terry gave me this blessed book, and taught me from it about Jesus Christ, who died that we might be saved. I gave up trying to be good myself, and found out that I must trust all into the hands of Jesus, and pray to love Him and be like Him. Once," she continued, letting her eyes wander admiringly over the landscape, "I used to sit down here, and look at the green fields, and the blue sky, and the shining river, and tremble at the thought that I had sinned against that God who made them; but now," she added, with a burst of enthusiasm, "when I look at His beautiful things, I can hardly help singing out for joy, because I know now the God who made them is my Heavenly Father, yes—*mine*, because 'He sent His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him, should not perish, but have everlasting life.'"

"How I wish I could be like you!" said the boy sadly, gazing at her animated face. "But I'm afraid Jesus Christ isn't willing to save *me*. I don't love Him enough. I've prayed to Him too, but I can't believe He hears me."

"Well now, William," said the young girl, taking up her Bible, and drawing to his side, "I will tell you what Mrs. Terry did for me. I didn't like to tell her at first how I felt about it, but she spoke to me so gently, and asked me such simple questions, that she found all out herself. She used to take this little Bible, and no matter what I would say, she would find some place or other in it that answered me. At first I couldn't believe all the passages were there that she used to read; then I began to think it was the most wonderful book that was ever written; and now I know it is the best and dearest. You said just now that you could not believe that God heard you. Now I have the passages all marked here that Mrs. Terry found for me, and I can find you one,—here it is: John v. 17. 'If we ask anything according to His will He heareth us.'"

"Then I don't ask according to his will, and he will not hear me," answered her companion quickly.

"Don't you think then, you ought to try to find out the will of God?"

"I know what His will is, already. It is His will that I should be good and holy, but I can not; the harder I try, the worse I seem to be."

"I thought so too, once, but I found out that wasn't all His will."

"Not all!" exclaimed Will; "I can't even do *that*!"

"Well," said Maggie, smiling, "if you could do that, you needn't want to do any more. Hear what the Apostle John says, 'And this is His commandment; that we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ.' If it wasn't His will, do you think he would have commanded us to believe?"

"I do believe in Jesus Christ."

"But you don't believe that he will save you?"

"I'm afraid not. I am not good enough."

The girl turned over to a fly leaf of her Bible, written over in a fine legible hand, and commenced reading, slightly

emphasizing some words as she continued, "'The soul that sinneth, it shall die.'

"'This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.'

"'The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth us from all sin.'

"'God so loved the world, that he gave His only begotten Son, that *whosoever* believeth in Him, should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.'

"'He that believeth on Him is not condemned; but he that believeth not, is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.'

"'Verily, verily, I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall ask the Father *in my name*, he will give it you. Hitherto, ye have asked *nothing in my name*; ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.'

The youth sat listening attentively until she closed the book, and without turning her eyes towards him, knelt down upon the turf; he unconsciously knelt beside her, bowing his head upon his hands, and such a prayer went up from the shadow of that old apple-tree, as never before had found an echo in the repentant sinner's heart. Wakening the dormant seeds of faith, and trust, and love to a new life; calling down the Holy Spirit's influences, like the dew upon Hermon to fertilize the desert, and make the wilderness rejoice. Earnest, loving Maggie! Not in vain did that prayer ascend to Heaven. Faith and labor like thine in every Christian's heart would scatter broadcast over the earth seed that springeth up unto everlasting life. Happy Maggie! "He that turneth a sinner from the error of his ways saveth a soul from death, and covereth a multitude of sins."

Mr. and Mrs. Terry, the Clarences and Rosy had all some

characteristic expression of their solicitude in his behalf. The young clergyman with unusual earnestness said to him at parting, "God bless you, my boy. Here is a reference Bible and a copy of the Pilgrim's Progress. Never rest until you are on the celestial highway, and be sure you enter it by the wicket gate, pray to God for the sake of Jesus Christ our only hope and Redeemer. I hope you may be successful in the world, but do not set your heart upon its treasures."

"Well," soliloquized Rosy, as she watched him bounding across the fields, "de blessed Lord'll go wid dat boy. Lawk alive, didn't I tink he wor de most 'markable chap dat fust day he com'd here wid Mas'r Edward. Gettin' him tipsy, and den a cryin' ober it. He make him tipsy! Law, it makes me laf to dis day to tink ob it. He's a goin' to impair his fortune now, 'dough. Good boy. De Lord *will* go wid him, dat ar a fact."

The boy's way lay over green fields and under trees arrayed in gorgeous hues of brown, red, and gold. He sat down upon a knoll in the woods, and unfolded his parcel. He had hardly had time to glance at the few parting gifts of the only friends he possessed in all the wide world. The first glance at them called forth a fresh burst of tears. His parting was no ordinary one; to the youth, whose early years went by in cloud and storm, until almost every leaf of the delicate heart-flower lay crushed and withered, it was no small thing to tear away from the fostering hands that had raised the drooping stem, and kindled a new life by the sunshine of Christian love. Even while he rejoiced at the freedom he had won, he wept that in gaining it, he had cut himself from all support and assistance save such as depended on his own exertions.

His heart sank within him. How should he, a stranger in a strange world, without education, without friends, without money, ever master all these difficulties, and bring back to those so hopeful on his behalf, good name, fortune, and a stand-

ing in society?—Above all, how should he learn that meekness and holiness for which his spirit yearned?

He opened his new Bible and started as he read on the blank page just beneath his name, as if in answer to his thoughts,—

“Seek ye *first* the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.” A little further down he read,—

“Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no searching of his understanding.

“He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength.

“Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall.

“But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall amount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.”

The boy fell with his face to the ground; where no human eye could see, no human ear could hear, he poured forth the first passionate prayer of faith and hope, “Lord, be *Thou* my helper! Lord, save, or I perish! Lord have mercy on the chief of sinners for the sake of Jesus Christ, thy Son. Lord, I believe; take me for thine own; make me thine, wholly thine, not in my name, not in mine, but in the name of Jesus my Savior.”

The All-seeing saw, the All-hearing heard, the All-pitying pitied, and light from Heaven streamed in upon the darkened soul.

The Spirit of God, bearing peace and healing in its wings, came down to the breast of the orphan boy; that Spirit, which, so often, grieved away from the home of wealth and talent, makes its dwelling-place among the lowly of earth,

bestows upon them treasures richer than gold or gems, and opens their mouth to sing aloud, a song whose depth and purity poet cannot reach, nor learned tongues command.

As the boy flew down the hill towards the boat, his heart swelled with a new and unimagined joy. “Old things had passed away, and all things had become new.” A blessed consciousness that he had now a Friend who would be always near, buoyed him above all doubt or fear. He murmured to himself, “I *will* seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and further than that, thy will, O Lord, not mine be done.”

So absorbed had he been in his meditations, that he barely escaped being left; he reached the landing, however, just as the plank was being withdrawn, and hastening to the bows of the boat, seated himself alone, and again opened his Bible, laying his Pilgrim's Progress on the package at his side. Then he recollected that he had not seen Maggie's little gift, for just as she was saying, “take it, Willie, it is a miniature of brother and me when we were little children, and all I have to give you,” Mrs. Terry had entered the room, and rolled up Maggie's little parcel in her own, before giving it into his hand. He unrolled the paper, took out some articles of clothing, Mrs. Terry's gift, and opened the little paper given him by Maggie. It was a gold locket, with the initials, M. E. M. engraved on the outside. He touched the spring; a small branch tastefully formed of three different kinds of hair lay bedded beneath the crystal. One was black, another silver grey, and another golden, the last, bright and shining, the prettiest he thought, he had ever seen. Another opening revealed two sweet childish faces, painted on ivory, both with ringlets floating partly over them, and very much alike, except that the girl's curls and eyes were black, while the eyes of the boy were a clear blue, and his ringlets the counterpart of the golden hair on the other side of the locket. He tried to trace the resemblance between the likeness and Maggie. They

looked alike, to be sure; the eyes were the same color, the features the same shape, and yet—something in the eyes, that he loved best was wanting there; something in the smile about the mouth seemed different from Maggie. He looked a good while, and at last came to the conclusion that it was not a true likeness, and folding it up, again betook himself to his book.

And yet it *was* an excellent likeness at the time it was taken; and not a feature of the child's face had changed either. But something was changed; the *heart* had been early tried as in the refiner's fire, and the light *now* gleaming from her dark eyes, and dancing about her mouth, was not the sunshine of childhood's mirth, but borrowed light from heaven, that had guided him to peace and happiness.

As he sat absorbed in meditation, he did not notice the silent approach of another searcher for solitude, nor see the glance of surprise with which he was regarded, as the stranger seated himself at a little distance, with the long skirts of his coat touching the deck, depositing at his side a package and a pair of gloves, and after taking a small book from his pocket, giving one or two satisfied little nods, and leaning his chin upon the top of his silver-headed cane, commenced reading to himself. His attention, however, seemed difficult to fix, for he could not have read more than a sentence or two, before he looked up at the boy again; then his eye happened to fall upon the Pilgrim's Progress at his side. There was a picture on the cover of Christian knocking at the wicket gate, that he perfectly remembered he had seen at Mr. Terry's. He now looked still more puzzled, but upon again looking up to see tears standing in the eyes of his companion, he jumped up, made three or four quick steps towards him, crying as the boy looked up—

"What are *you* doing here? Reading the Bible, eh?" The little old gentleman was so astonished that he forgot to bow or thump as usual, and stood, cane in hand, gazing at the

confused boy, who answered, "Yes, Mr. Benson, reading the Bible."

"Well now, I'm *delighted* at that; but seems to me, T. Gamp & Co.'d hardly give you these to read; very strange"—and the old gentleman gave two or three dubious shakes of the head, and looked wonderingly at his companion.

"No indeed," answered he, "I think not. Mr. Terry gave me these, and I shall bless him as long as I live. I have left Mr. Gamp."

"Left T. Gamp & Co.! Left! Ha—ha—ha"—thump—thump—thump—"ha—ha—ha! Then the lamb is out of the snare of the ravening wolf. How did you leave him?"

The boy, who was aware of Father Benson's enmity to his late master, related to him the particulars of his escape, every now and then interrupted by a delighted chuckle consisting of three distinct little ha—ha—ha's, or by three emphatic thumps of the indefatigable cane. When William was through his story, he sat for a few minutes as though recalling some thought that he wished to remember. Then, suddenly, his countenance lighting up with a gleam of delight, dropping his cane altogether, and rubbing his hands ecstatically together, he exclaimed, "Three years—three—everything goes by threes, my boy. Three years exactly since you came to our village. I knew it, I knew it—everything by threes. Three years from to-day, my Willie'll come back to me. You are like Willie too, he added, glancing musingly upon the slender youth, only my boy was straight and firm as an arrow, and he had fine dark whiskers, but you are bent, and your cheeks are thin and pale; but then you might have been ill, and—say, you are *not* my boy," he cried, seizing him nervously by the arm—"tell me, you are Willie, and have broken away from them at last."

The youth perceiving his excitement, and aware of his *mania*, spoke calmly, "No, Mr. Benson. I am not your son. I

never saw you before I came to Laconia. I wish I had a father, but I do not suppose I have."

"Well, well, then," said Father Benson, relaxing his hold, I shall have to wait three years longer, and you'll have to wait too—three, the appointed time. Yes," he continued, musing, and tapping the deck at every word—"three—three—three—it was always three; it always will be three."

Poor old man; he didn't remember in his partial blindness, that many threes had begun and gone, since he first wept the parting from his boy.

Father Benson was a true disciple of Jesus, and though his mind was clouded with partial insanity, no foot walked more steadily than his in the way of holiness. He was by no means an idler in his Master's vineyard; nor did he suffer so favorable an opportunity for pressing home to the youth the offers of salvation, to pass by without profit. His companion, reading in the aged face the simple benevolence of his character, related to him all the occurrences of the day, including the peace that had entered his heart, and the implicit trust he felt in the Savior who had died that he might live. Tears glistened on the furrowed cheeks long before the boy had finished his recital. He drew from his standard library Doddridge's Rise and Progress, and handed it to William, saying half-mournfully, "God bless you, boy. He *will* bless you. Verily, 'His hand has snatched you as a brand from the burning, or as a bird from the snare of the fowler.'" Then bursting into tears, he cried, as if for a moment recalled to perfect reason, "My son, my son, if your feet had but returned to the ways of peace, I could have died content. But," he continued, checking his tears, "he will come back in three years—yes, everything by threes."

The youth sat long that night gazing up to the starry skies, and out over the waters. All things lovely had in them now a still, small voice never audible before. The waves rolling up their white foam on either side, talked to him of God.

The stars, shining down from the calm sky told their own silent tale of Infinite power and unending time. But sweetest of all, in that one trampled human heart lay the changeless proof of Infinite compassion and undying love. The Spirit of God had taken of the things of God and revealed them to the new-born soul.

And Maggie, when she knelt at her bed-side that night, did no voice whisper her of a noble deed performed; of a trial bravely met, and a lofty mission done. If so, she bowed her head meekly, murmuring, "To Thy name be all the glory." Had some ministering spirit borne to her soul the tidings of the wanderer's safety, that that triumphant strain of praise and joy went up to Heaven? Faith such as filled the breast of Abraham when he bound his son upon the altar—such as the Hebrew mother felt when she left her babe beside the rushing waters, gave as truly to her soul the consciousness of that prayer answered, as though a voice from Heaven had spoken. She knelt there, not now the timid, sorrowing child, but the triumphant Christian.

Nor was it to William only that her faithful efforts had been blest. The young clergyman had that day returned with a heavy heart from some unsuccessful labors in his parish.

Not finding his wife in, he had gone quietly to the barn to leave the horse he had been riding. Having occasion to ascend to the loft above; he was attracted by the sound of voices from without, and looking out had witnessed the scene beneath the apple tree. When he recognized in the list of passages read by Maggie with such depth of feeling, the very ones he had selected for her study a year or two previous, when she was earnestly seeking the way of life, his soul was comforted. Worn out with apparently fruitless efforts, his heart had long been sick with hope deferred. Faithful always to his sacred trust, he labored in the pulpit, at the hearthstone, and by the wayside, for the salvation of immortal souls. But of late his efforts had seemed fruitless. The hearts of men

seemed hardened; vices of a decided character were emanating from the two or three small grogeries now established in the village. Gamp had associated with himself a partner, whose purposes he could too well imagine, since the loft of the old saloon had been newly furnished with billiards and card tables. That afternoon, too, he had heard that his own young brother-in-law had been decoyed into playing a game of billiards with Reid and Myers. But in the expostulations and eloquent prayers of the child he read a lesson of faith and patience. Here was a fruit of his labors least expected and least hoped for. Two years before he had welcomed the child as a lamb into the fold of the good Shepherd, and now she was pleading with more eloquence and power than he could have done, in behalf of one whose heart he had not hitherto been able to reach. From the loft of the old barn he had carried to his home a new supply of hope and strength to buoy him up amid the waves of wickedness by which he was surrounded.

CHAPTER XIX.

"No Alice, I won't have Dr. Currer. I don't want him. I want Edward Clarence. Mr. Pufton says he'll do me more good than all the doctors in New York. He promised to go up to Newburgh after him to-day."

"But Clarence, Mother says it will be inconvenient for him to leave Laconia. You must remember he has a practice to attend to there."

"I don't care," cried the boy, petulantly, "I want him here, and you don't any of you care a straw about me, or"—

"Oh, Clary!" cried his sister, reproachfully, "your sickness makes you exacting. I think myself it would be hardly right to send for him to come away from his other patients."

"Pshaw!" cried Clarence, pushing her roughly away, "you care more about everybody else than me."

Alice burst into tears, and flew down stairs to her mother's room. "Mother," she said, sobbing, "what is the matter with Clary's temper? I never saw anybody alter so much in all my life. He is so cross lately that he seems hardly to love me any more, when there's nothing under the sun I wouldn't do for him."

Her mother sighed heavily, "His disease, my child, wears so upon his mind, and you know it is a terrible affliction to be blind."

"But mother, he wasn't so at first, at all. I wish he would give up taking brandy and wine. He's scarcely ever entirely free from its effects, and I believe it's that."

Mrs. Ainslie sighed again. "I wish we had never given

it him at all. He has taken it now for two years, and I'm afraid it would hardly do for him to leave off."

"I remember," said Alice, "when Dr. Currer came that first time he ever used it, he shook his head, and looked very grave. But he did not hinder his taking it afterwards."

"I suppose, my dear, he felt afraid of after consequences, but found the relief so immediate at the time as to render him willing to hazard the application. No one can foresee the danger in such matters as those."

"I believe Kate and Arthur are about right, after all," said Alice, thoughtfully, wiping away her tears. "It isn't safe to drink at all. I wonder if we couldn't try to keep it away from Clary?"

"I have just been thinking it over," answered her mother; "to-day I spoke to your father about it, and he thought we might venture to try it. I think I shall tell him that if he will not touch a drop for two days, I will accept Mr. Pufton's offer to go up the river for Dr. Clarence."

The second day after that, Mr. Pufton accordingly started on the mission, which was no less pleasing to him than agreeable to Clarence. He reached Laconia at eight o'clock in the evening, and was about proceeding to the house of Mr. Jeremiah Clarence. As he passed up the principal street of the village, his steps were arrested in front of the old town hall, by the sound of a clear ringing voice addressing the audience within. It required but a moment's attention to make the dumpling gentleman whisk about and puff his way into the hall among the crowd that hung with breathless interest upon the words of the speaker. As Mr. Pufton listened, tears glistened in his eyes, and his big heart almost burst from his little body. Edward Pufton Clarence, *his* namesake, *his* pet, was chaining the eager attention of six hundred delighted auditors.

It was an appeal in behalf of the persecuted Portuguese refugees that he was delivering. The hall was filled with

ladies and gentlemen from every grade of Laconia society. Tender hearts melted beneath his eloquence, and even men of stern brow and rigid lip, let fall now and then a tear of pity as he pointed to the homeless wanderers, hunted from the country of their birth, torn from the bosom of friends, driven out upon the world's waste to seek the daily bread that should keep death from completing the cruel work that tyranny had begun.

Words alone seemed totally insufficient to express his ideas. The lightning of the dark eye, the quivering of the chiselled lip, the heart-light flashing over every feature of the intellectual face; the life thrown into every sentence and word by the graceful, excited motions of the speaker, the ringing tones of a voice musical as the chime of a silver bell, all these rendered the excited youth utterly irresistible, not only to the young and impulsive, but to men who had listened unmoved to the harangues of learned statesmen and eloquent divines.

It were difficult to tell whose bosom heaved highest with delighted pride, and almost adoring love. Whether the great-hearted farmer father, every now and then whisking the red bandana to his eyes, and then blowing his nose vehemently to hide the shame of crying at the speeches of his own son; the sisters weeping uncontrolledly in spite of themselves, Mr. Pufton bobbing his head inconceivably, and rubbing his eyes till they were actually redder than his nose; or sweet Kate Weston, sitting quietly beside her mother, with that intense lustre of eye and cheek, looking, as the soft light streamed over her golden hair and placid brow, the true embodiment of woman's purity.

But when, at the conclusion of his address, the speaker, stretching forth his hands to the audience, and in such tones as a yearning mother would have pleaded for her child, poured out his earnest soul, not one who listened but had forgotten the speaker, themselves, everything, in the absorbing interest of the theme.

"They are passing for ever away from the shelter of their homes, bruised under the foot of their own countryman, pronounced accursed of their own brother. The wide sea holds them now. Outcast and ruined, no land welcomes them to its embrace. Children of the Puritans, they have trodden in the very footprints of your fathers. Are not your hearts yearning to greet them? Shall the mother clasp her babe to her bosom, and cry to you in vain for a foothold on your shores? Shall the husband and father, robbed of shelter for his best beloved, look out upon the shiftless ocean, and feel that there alone he has a right to dwell? Shall the rosy child weep for the vineyards and the orange groves of home? Shall the maiden, bravely leaving her lover for her God, find like the weary dove, no rest for her foot in all the beautiful earth? No!" and here the voice of the speaker swelled to a trumpet-tone, "by all we cherish, no! The children of those who moored their bark on our New England shore send out a shout of welcome to the heroic band. Brethren by the links of a common humanity, they are ten times ours by the claim upon our sympathy. As such, we wait with outstretched arms to take them to our hearts. Let us take no sleep to our eyes, nor slumber to our eyelids, till we have found a home for the exiles in the breast of our own free country. From us they shall have love, tenderness, and assistance. Here shall be none to molest or make afraid, for *they* who wept and prayed on Plymouth Rock

"Have left unstained what there they found
Freedom to worship God."

Say, when De Silva and his martyr band touch the soil of America shall they not find a home? A home, in whose boundless forests and human hearts the joys and sufferings of their native isle shall together be forgotten? A home where the voice of prayer and the song of praise shall rise unchecked to Heaven? A home loved of man, and blest of God.

"Bless the boy, I shall live to see him President yet!" cried Mr. Pufton, catching Mr. Jeremiah by the arm as he was going out. "'Pon my soul now, never *dreamed* of such a thing, sir, *couldn't* have dreamed of it, sir. Where is he?"

"Inside there," answered Mr. Clarence, "counting up the subscriptions; but where are you from, Pufton? I'm right glad to see you; wait, let me take you to Mary and Jennie."

Mr. Pufton shook hands with Mrs. Terry and the Westons, kissed Mary and Kate with as much ardor as though he had been desperately in love with both of them, and fidgeted woefully at Edward's detention with the Committee. "Kate, you little rosebud, I haven't seen you in a year; you are exclusive, too exclusive altogether, shutting yourself up here in Laconia so long. Bless me, you've grown lovelier every day; pardon me, Pufton's a privileged character, you know."

"Certainly," said Mary, laughing, "or we shouldn't be always so delighted to see so egregious a flatterer."

"No my dear," he answered, glancing impatiently over to Edward, "I never say anything but what I mean;" then bowing to Mrs. Weston, he added, "you know that ma'am, you can't help knowing, ma'am."

At this moment Edward stepped away from the group that surrounded the stage. Mr. Pufton was watching, and paddled away fast as his little legs would carry him.

"My dear boy," he exclaimed, catching nervously at both hands; "the happiest day of my life; you *will* be another Webster yet, not the slightest doubt of it; I'm *proud* of you; yes, proud as your own father there."

"Don't flatter me, Mr. Pufton; it was a subject that might well kindle feeling in the breast of a child of the Puritans. Indeed, it would have been difficult to refrain from expressing the feelings on such an occasion. But how came you here, dear sir? I didn't know you were in Laconia."

"Nor I wasn't till an hour ago, my boy, but I wouldn't ha' missed that for fifty dollars, nor for five hundred either."

Expressing the feelings, you say.' Yes, expressing the feelings, that's it, sir," he continued, keeping tight hold of Edward's hand, but addressing himself to Mr. Weston. "This boy's got the heart, sir. Yes sir. The heart lies at the bottom of all true oratory, sir. Noble boy, sir. Heaven'll bless him, sir. You know it, sir; you can't help but know it, sir."

The Hon. Mr. Flip was awaiting them at the door. "Dr. Clarence," he remarked in one of his blandest tones, "excuse me for interrupting you; I merely wish to extend to yourself, your father, Mr. Weston, and your friend, Mr. Pufton I believe, (bowing politely to that gentleman) an invitation in behalf of Judge Reid and myself to partake of an oyster-supper in the upper saloon. It is to-night reserved exclusively to ourselves."

"Thank you, sir," said Edward, smiling, "we shall be happy to do ourselves the honor,—at least, I speak for myself," he added quickly, glancing at Mr. Weston and his father.

"Thank you, Mr. Flip, for your good intention," answered Mr. Jeremiah promptly; "but you know my opinion of Gamp and his business, and if I could only enlist my son heart and hand on my side of the contest, I think he might prove a more efficient opponent than his old father." Mr. Weston shook his head with a gentle "Friend Flip, I pray thee lead not our boy here into the snare; these things are not safe,—not safe."

It would have been strange if a young man with an ordinary share of vanity had not felt considerably flattered by such an honor from such a quarter. He did not notice the shadow that flitted over the face of Kate, or the half-doubtful look of his father as he accepted the invitation. "Excuse me, sir," he said, as they descended the steps, "I will be with you in half an hour." Mr. Pufton had gone in advance with Mr. Jeremiah, and Mary was chatting something very earnestly to Mr. and Mrs. Weston, so that Kate and Edward were left to walk alone. "If you are going, you need not wait to walk

with me, but I wish you would not go," she said, pausing a moment.

"Nonsense, Katie, you are a bigoted little lady," answered Edward, drawing the small hand into his arm, "but you didn't think I would miss going home with you; you know I care more for your society than fifty oyster-suppers. We collected a hundred dollars, Kate, for the benefit of the refugees."

"That is double what I expected," said Kate. "But your eloquence"—her voice choked and she burst into tears.

"Why darling, what is the matter?" said he, looking down at the sweet profile, lovelier in the soft moonlight, "I thought you would be pleased to-night, because"—

"Edward, dear Edward," she interrupted, with a sudden burst of feeling. "Pleased! how could I even hope that your boyish eloquence, always before my pride and admiration, would so surpass itself on this first occasion of a public display. When I saw stern men weep at your burning words, and forgot even my Edward in the cause he was pleading, pride, hope, fear, almost overpowered me."

"There, Katie," said Edward tenderly, "you are excited with the subject now. How could I help being so at the time? You are trembling, not altogether from joy either, I'm afraid," he added, as a fresh flood of tears gushed forth; "what is it, dearest, tell me?"

The young girl turned up her tearful face to his; there was such a restless, nervous agitation in her glance that it astonished him. It was like a tempest on the placid bosom of some lake whose waters we had deemed no winds could lash into a storm. She did not speak for some minutes; at last with a strong effort she pressed back the tears.

"Edward," she commenced with a choking voice, that grew calmer as she proceeded, "dearest Edward, forgive me; I know it is unpleasant for you to hear what I am going to

say, when you think I should use no words but those of praise. It cannot give you more pain to hear than it will give me to say anything that might trouble you. But it is the very depth of my love, Edward, that impels me to speak. When I saw your eye kindle, and your bosom heave, when I felt in common with all your audience, my whole soul borne along in the current of your rushing feelings, when I gloried in the subtle, resistless impulse which at that moment, would have defied your power and ours alike to quell; at that very instant I felt a pang, keen as an arrow, shoot through my heart. Those very waves of impulse, sweeping to-night all barriers from the path of the sufferers, in whose behalf your generous soul was so nobly roused—will they not be a snare to you in the path you are treading? Do you think the 'Prince of the power of the air' will leave such talents to work always good, good only? Is there not already some bait cast daily in your way that you have no power to resist? Do not the young men with whom you associate lead you further from the only true safety. Oh! my own Edward, will you not thrust aside the great enemy to such natures as yours. I know, as though an angel had told me, that iron chains and prison-bars would be but rotten cords beside the fetters that strong drink will wind about you, if you do not declare eternal war to its insidious influence."

She paused; the clasp of her small hand had tightened on his arm; the eager voice, the tremulous step were appealing to his heart almost as powerfully as those burning words. He unloosed her hand, and held it soothingly in his own. His face was very grave as they walked silently on together; he was thinking of the brilliantly-lighted room, the glowing wine, the card-table, the spirited company whose very idol he had come to be, and wondering to himself if the words of Kate were true. He had felt before a secret inner consciousness of the fascination these possessed for him—dread of the future, never. But now, like a prophet's words, those sweet

quivering tones sank into his heart, wakening doubt and mistrust of his own power of resisting evil.

The rest were far ahead of them now, so that they were walking alone. Kate at length continued: "Edward, believe me, none but those that buckle on the armor of salvation, and keep their eye fixed steadfastly upon a Savior's image, can resist successfully the temptations that lie around them. Oh, Edward, 'look not upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth its color in the cup, when it moveth itself aright; for at the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder.'"

For an instant she paused again, then suddenly arresting her steps, she drew her arm from his, clasped her hands, and raised her eyes to heaven: "Edward, never was the love of woman purer, truer than mine. Nothing on earth but I would sacrifice for you. But hear me; by the moon and stars above us, I would rather never look upon your face, or listen to your voice again, than have you continue in the path you are treading now. My heart glories in your genius, as it sways to its will the sympathies of others. But I would rather see you stricken dumb for ever, than still exposed in such society as lures you now. Promise me, Edward," she cried, again clasping his hand in both of hers, "you will leave them, you will prove that you love me."

There was no hesitation in Edward's tone, although tears filled his softened eyes, as he tenderly laid his arm around her, and drew her on. "I will, Katie, can you doubt me? Had I known that your feelings were so intense upon this subject, I would not have hesitated in giving up all for you. I do not fear for myself, I think there is very little danger, but for your sake, darling, you shall not be so pained again. To-night my promise must be fulfilled, but after this I will never accept such invitations."

They were by this time almost at Mr. Weston's door, and were interrupted by Mary's running back to meet them. She

did not notice Kate's excited face and tearful eyes, but danced up to Edward's side, crying gaily, "Well, now you are down off your high stilts, I suppose you'll condescend to speak to common people. Here, give me a good-night kiss; my dear little fat Mr. Pufton'll be desperately jealous if I don't hurry on, for I told him—but see here, Ned, isn't he going with you?"

"Certainly, I thought so," said Edward; "has he gone on?"

"Yes," said Mary, "but he's so fat it won't take me two minutes to catch him up, and send him back. I suppose he thought you cared enough about me to walk home with me, and so I think you ought, but alas—well," she said quickly with a half pout, "come, give me a kiss, for I'm sure those big bugs'll smother you with compliments, so that I actually doubt if you come home alive. Good night Kate. Don't you grow too vain now, Ned, *you're* nothing remarkable after all."

The frolicsome girl kissed Edward and Kate energetically, and flew off along the road, calling out, "Wait there, till I send Mr. Pufton. No fear of his getting impatient, unless you run away, Kate."

Kate led him a short distance into the garden.

They stood together beneath a laburnum that scattered its golden shower at their feet, while overtopping that, were the spreading branches of a linden-tree, that grew just on the other side the walk. "Edward," said Kate, now calmed to her wonted earnest gentleness, "I have heard my father say that tree was planted on the day you were born. You are like it now, young, vigorous, unbent. I take your promise here beneath its branches, and here I shall come every day, to pray God that it may be faithfully kept; that the tree crowned with beauty in youth, may increase in strength and verdure till a crown of glory shall hallow its age."

Edward pressed a kiss upon her cheek, "Good night, Kate. The man must be a brute who would gratify a mere inclina-

tion at the sacrifice of an angel's peace. You told me once I did not know you. I did *not* know you. You have astonished me; I see before me a nobler prize than my highest aspirations could have hoped to win. God bless you, darling."

He turned away and left her standing there; she passed quietly into the house, and slipped up to her chamber. Why, in thinking over the words he had spoken, did a painful mis-giving thrill her heart, spite of the joy she felt at his promise. "I have no fear, but for *your* sake, Kate," rung still in her ear. "Only for my sake," she murmured, "not for his own? not for the sake of Him whose blood was shed on Calvary? then he is not safe."

Edward walked away with Mr. Pufton, strangely absent, as that gentleman thought, considering his own eagerness. His mind was dwelling on that pure face, uplifted in the moonlight, and on those eloquent words, so fraught with passionate hope, and fear, and love; gushing from a heart whose depth he had never known, whose purity he had but half-conceived. For that heart, he felt nerved to relinquish the society that adored him; the praise and honor lavished upon his head; the cup whose fascinating draught had already gained a powerful hold upon his senses. All this for her. Alas! Edward, hadst thou no higher aim?

The upper room of Gamp's establishment had been fitted by the proprietor with an elegance very rarely equalled, even in similar city resorts. Laconia embraced in its limited circles a large proportion of select society, families of ample means and cultivated taste, for whose gentleman members, the younger portion particularly, the velvet carpets, plate-glass mirrors, and fine plush lounges, were intended as a lure to draw them from the retirement of country homes to the excitement of the evening club, or the more dangerous card party.

As Dr. Clarence and his friend entered the room they were

greeted by a full blaze of light, and a murmur of applause. Mr. Pufton was formally introduced, and Judge Reid shook hands, remarking, "You are welcome, sir, any friend of our young friend is welcome to-night. We are quite proud of him."

"So you ought, sir,—yes, sir—heart spoke out there, sir,—not always the heart that speaks in the court-room, sir, or Senate, either, sir,—the boy's got head and heart both, sir."

Young Clarence had passed over to the other end of the hall, to where Steele and young Reid, now a half-way lawyer, sat engaged in some argument. "Happy to thee you, Dr. Clarence; take a theat here. I wath charmed with your addreth thith evening. Indeed, I alwayth conthidered you a geniuth."

"Good evening, Dr." said Steele, with a warm grasp of the hand, "I congratulate you."

"Thank you," said Edward, seating himself, "but excuse me, I have interrupted an agreeable conversation."

"We were dithcutthing the propriety of card-playing, thir; Mithter Shteele thinkth it wrong, and hath retholved to denounthe it in the Laconia Gathette."

"What, when not played for money?" asked Clarence.

"Wait," said Mr. Steele, who, by the way, had laid aside the tall shirt-collar and his bashfulness together, long before he had emerged from college, "wait, and you'll see how long cards will be played here without money. Do you suppose that cunning Gamp ever took all this pains for nothing?"

"You are probably right," said the young doctor, thoughtfully, "on that as well as your total abstinence views."

Mr. Reid elevated his eyebrows. "Mithter Thteele, can you ecthpect thupport in thuch peculiar measures?"

"I have, I am sure, one or two supporters, even here, and in the village many. My little paper has already been made

the medium for several stanch temperance men to advocate their views."

"How strange it seems to me," said Edward, "that you, who were, only three years ago, as bashful a fellow as ever I saw, should so boldly stand out in the very front of the battle now."

"Oh," said Steele, laughing, "I was a very fresh Green-mountain boy, you know, and it took some time to wear off the rust. I have also labored earnestly," he continued, in a graver tone, "to cast aside anything that may lie between me and the work that God has given me to do."

A slight shrug of the shoulders was the only answer Reid vouchsafed; the young doctor looked earnestly at him for a minute, then exclaimed with emotion, "My dear Steele, I wish I were like you!"

"And I wish I were like you!" answered the young editor, with equal warmth. "If I had your talents and your heart to support my principles, I could accomplish anything."

"Better go into partnerthip," said Reid, with a half-sneer. "Thuch talents and thuch printhipleth shouldn't be wathted."

Edward colored slightly, but Steele calmly answered, "If I could persuade my friend to view things as I view them, I should have no fear but he'd bring Laconia to its senses after a while."

"I have respect for your sentiments, Steele, but really, I think it would be labor in vain to attempt stemming such a tide of popular feeling, as, in such a case, a man must always encounter."

"Well," interposed Reid, with as much earnestness as he was capable of assuming, "there come the oythterth; the latht dish, I believe; demme, I'm half thtarved, as the thay-ing goes."

The supper-table was spread with the most exquisite tact, the various methods in which the oysters were served being

pronounced by the *connoisseurs* present exquisite superb, capital. Wine and mirth flew around the table, while the grave judges and lawyers laid aside their dignity, and joined in the general jollity. Toasts and compliments enough to have turned the head of a less sensible youth, were showered upon Dr. Clarence and his maiden speech.

Mr. Pufton and his young friend walked home after the supper in exuberant spirits, and each entertaining a very exalted opinion of the other's powers. Mr. Pufton had, during the evening, frisked about so delightedly, spoken such witty little speeches, performed such comical little pantomimes, and made himself generally so agreeable and amusing that he had been, as he always was, set down as one of the cleverest, noblest-hearted fellows in the world. Of Edward's performances, his admiration knew no bounds. "He would be another Webster yet, or Clay—not the slightest doubt of it." The little gentleman even went so far in his excitement as to invite himself to the White House in the event of President Clarence coming into office.

As they again passed Squire Weston's house looking so calm and peaceful in the moonlight, a half pang struck to Edward's heart. He knew that he was slightly intoxicated; slightly, for his first disgraceful lesson had taught him caution, and he had learned to partake far more freely of wine than at first, without noticing its effects. He felt and loved the eager glow it had kindled within him; the wild excitement, the soaring fancy, linking itself almost to the spirit world. In the consciousness that he *did* feel and love it, lay that sudden misgiving of his power to resist its influence. But man, in the pride of an unrenowned heart, tramples down the fear of peril; the next thought planted the foot more firmly, and made the proud, beautiful lip curl scornfully at the remembrance of his momentary weakness.

CHAPTER XX.

"Ah, Clarence, my boy, how are you?" said Edward on the following day, as he entered the blind boy's chamber.

The sightless eyes turned eagerly towards him, and an expression of joy passed over his face. "Oh! I have been wanting so to have you here. It's so long since you came."

"Yes, Clarence, it is over a year now. I don't know when I've been so long away before; how you have grown; you are almost as tall as I."

"Yes," answered Clarence, with a sigh, "I shall be sixteen years old next week. I feel so wretchedly to-day; do you think I shall ever be cured of these convulsions? It almost kills me to have them so dreadfully, and I'm so nervous afterwards, oh dear!"

Edward looked pityingly at the pale, unhappy face. "Poor Clarence! I'm so sorry for you. Time alone can determine certainly whether your disease is curable. But," he added, in a more cheerful tone, "you are to forget all your troubles while I am here. That's what I came for, you know."

"And it *wasn't* a trouble for you to come?" he asked, anxiously. "Alice said so."

"Trouble, no! I was very anxious to come. The only reason I didn't come before was because my practice detained me."

"Well, that was it. They said you would not want to leave your patients to come to me."

"The patients may take care of themselves for a day or two," said the young doctor, cheerfully, with a gentle

motion of the hand over the boy's shaded forehead. "I want a little rest now and then; and I'd rather come to see you, my dear boy, than do anything else in the wide world."

The blind boy looked pleased. "Edward," he said—"would you just as lief I'd call you Edward yet?"

"Certainly, Clarence, rather; what is it?"

"I was going to ask you to sit down here and let me feel your face, if you have altered any."

Edward complied, while his young friend stood in front of him, and passed his hands over his face. "You've had all your curls cut off," he said, pausing abruptly at the forehead, with a look of blank dismay.

"Yes," said Edward, laughing. "Why, Clarence, don't look so shocked; I'm not like Sampson; my strength doesn't lie in my hair."

"But you won't look half so pretty," said Clarence, deprecatingly, passing his hand over the short wavy hair.

"Don't worry yourself, Clarence; it won't stay cut very long. A month will give me a chance to regain the charm."

"Oh, what splendid whiskers! You've got whiskers. How funny!"

"Clarence, I shall lose my identity if I stay in your hands much longer. Don't you like me just as well with whiskers?"

"Oh yes!" was the answer, "only"—

"Only what?"

"Only somehow it seems as though you were a man now, and I nothing but a boy; I'm afraid you won't think so much of me."

"Because my whiskers have grown. Ha—ha—ha! Clarence, you are a funny boy."

"No, that isn't exactly it, either," said the boy a little impatiently. "But you have so many older associates now. I'm afraid you'll forget me."

"Never!" said Edward, a tear starting to his eye. "You have," he added, passing his arm affectionately round the

boy's shoulder, and drawing him down beside him, "you have a tenderer claim to my affections than any of my older friends."

"Thank you, I'm sure," returned Clarence, drawing a sigh of relief. "All my companions have become tired of me since I was blind, I think. They scarcely ever come to see me now, and when they do, they haven't any patience with my helplessness and nervousness. But there, I hear mother and Alice coming up stairs."

"You stole a march upon us all, Clary," cried his sister, shaking hands with Edward. "How did you ever contrive to take possession of the doctor without our knowing it?"

"Don't lay it to Clary," said Edward. "I found the hall-door open, and catching a glimpse of Clarence through the door just at the head of the stairs, made bold to join him without ringing."

"How much you have altered!" said Mrs. Ainslie. "The last year has done more for you than the previous half-dozen."

"Oh, mother!" cried her daughter, "half a dozen is a good many. I've had the privilege of seeing him, however, since he commenced sporting that appurtenance to man's estate; vastly becoming," she added, smoothing down her own fair cheeks with a mischievous glance at Edward's beard.

"But how are they all at Laconia?" asked Mrs. Ainslie.

"All as well as usual," he answered. "Mrs. Weston talked of coming in with me, but it is next to impossible for her to muster sufficient resolution to leave home."

"We have been hoping for a visit from Kate," said Mrs. Ainslie; "but somehow she has absented herself for over a year now."

"Which no doubt accounts for the absence of somebody else," said Alice gravely. "For my part, I'm getting desperate. By the way, didn't you bring me a letter from Kate?"

"I beg your pardon, I had almost forgotten it," said Edward,

handing her a small package, that he took from his side pocket.

The young girl danced away to her room in delight, to read the precious epistle, while Clarence laid his head upon Edward's shoulder, and seemed perfectly at ease.

The mother gave him an uneasy look. "Clarence, do you feel unwell?"

"No, mother, only a little tired; how glad I am Edward is here. He's going to tell me all about the cricket-match out at Laconia, and the supper, and the Fourth of July celebration. He doesn't get out of patience with me as everybody else does."

"Clarence!" said his mother, reproachfully.

"I don't mean you, mother," said the boy quickly, "nor Alice, but all the boys. They don't like to be bothered, that's all."

"Don't you think Clarence has grown?" said Mrs. Ainslie.

"Very rapidly," answered the young physician; "rather too rapidly for his good." The eyes of both Edward and his mother rested for an instant on his face, then involuntarily met, and each read in the other's glance a death-knell to their hopes. The white face with its shadowy lines of suffering on cheek and brow, had totally changed its expression in the two years of his illness. In place of the firm, yet gentle smile about the lips, a nervous tremor indicative of pain and impatience played continually about his mouth, and a frown just between his eyebrows had taken the place of boyhood's early calm. There was a short painful silence, interrupted by Clarence,

"Mother, can we have Father's horse this afternoon? You will take me out to ride, won't you, Edward?"

"Perhaps Edward is otherwise engaged," said Mrs. Ainslie. "Not at all," answered Edward, "it would afford me much pleasure to go with you anywhere you like."

"I do love to ride so," said the boy, eagerly, "only when John drives me, he goes so fast, and rides through such noisy streets that I don't like it at all. I used to want to ride

just as fast as ever I could, but now it makes me nervous, because I can't see where I'm going."

"Clarence, my son," said his mother, "I think you had better lie down; you look wearied."

"I will come with you," said Edward, looking earnestly at the sightless eyes. The pupils were growing unnaturally large, and a bright rose-color was flushing up into the pale cheeks. He was hardly thrown upon his bed, when seized with one of those paroxysms whose painful nature was so much enhanced by the electric suddenness of their appearance. With fingers working convulsively, teeth ground together, eyes starting almost from their sockets, the unconscious boy struggled to free himself from the firm hand of Dr. Clarence. "I cannot hold him much longer," ejaculated the latter quickly, as the convulsion increased in violence, "can you call in help?"

Alice flew down after the coachman, at the same time dispatching a servant for their family physician.

At the end of ten minutes, the usual duration of his paroxysm, Clarence seemed more violent than ever. Even his young attendant, striving to calm the anxious mother, began to be seriously alarmed, while John, at length losing all self-possession, exclaimed half aloud, "He'll never come to—he was never so bad afore." Several minutes more elapsed before there seemed any reaction. At one time he had nearly defied the strength of both John and the doctor, but at length the muscles began to relax, the pain to abate, and a slight consciousness to steal over the exhausted sufferer. For a few moments he looked half vacantly about him, and then sank down in a total stupor.

When Dr. Currer arrived, Mrs. Ainslie and Edward were still rubbing the limbs of the patient, and using every effort to arouse him to consciousness. The elder physician approached the bedside, inquiring what had been the particulars of his attack. They informed him of its unusual violence

and duration, and also of the remedies they had administered. He said nothing, but gave him some drops of ammonia, and continued in concert with the others for some minutes, endeavoring to restore him by rubbing, chafing, and rolling him gently from side to side. At length Clarence opened his eyes, and moved his lips. Dr. Curren took from his pocket a vial whose contents he emptied into a tumbler, mixed with water, and immediately administered. It was some little time before he felt warranted in leaving; before he did so, however, he sought a few moments' private conference with his younger professional brother.

"This is a very trying case, sir," said Edward, with moist eyes.

"Very," answered Dr. Curren. "In all my practice, I have never had one similar to it. There seems some peculiar condition of the brain, rendered always worse by these convulsions."

"I presume," said Edward anxiously, "that you have little hope of effecting a permanent cure."

"No—no," said the physician, shaking his head, "this must destroy him in a few years; but it is our duty to alleviate his sufferings. The course adopted to-day will never do. His mother consulted me a few days ago on the subject, and I consented to her keeping ardent spirits out of his way for a trial. The trial has been made, and proved unsuccessful. He could not survive many such attacks as that."

"You think, then, that no stimulus but that would produce sufficient effect?" remarked Edward.

"Not now," was the answer. "It might have been prevented in the outset. It was not originally administered at my suggestion, you recollect; it proved successful, and although I had misgivings, I continued its use."

"I should think then," suggested Edward, "it would be advisable to restrain him from taking it at any other time than when threatened with a paroxysm."

"Certainly, you are right," answered Dr. Curren, "but how difficult in any case for such a habit to be overcome, and in no case so difficult as this, where the stimulus is not only craved but actually needed."

So Clarence went on in his old way, suffering not from his disease alone, but from the fearful inroads made by strong drink upon his temper and constitution. Growing every day more unreasonable and violent, suffering constantly from extreme nervous irritation, and craving, as time wore on, a stimulus more and more powerful, he became in a few years totally changed from the gentle, earnest Clarence of earlier years.

Late in the afternoon of the following day, Edward and Clarence returned from their afternoon drive. The blind boy safely deposited in the house, Edward turned to watch his horses for a moment, until John should make his appearance.

It was quite dark now, and the side-walk was filled with passengers passing to their respective homes, so that he did not notice at first a stout woman who was sitting on the steps next door, talking and laughing with a little child. As he leaned carelessly upon the railing, she rose and approached him, saying, as she extended her broad hand, "God bliss yer honor, an' how did ye lave all the folks in Laconia?"

"Ah! Bridget," rejoined Edward, smiling, as he returned her hearty shake, "you here? All as well as usual, I believe; I saw Kitty and the children a day or two ago, and when I drove by the house yesterday I saw somebody turning somersets on the meadow, so"—

"Och, yes sir, an' Mike will niver lave alone doin' that same, if he grows as big as the Giant of Fincool," laughed Bridget; "but how's your father an' all the family, and Miss Kate, bliss her swate face, intirely?"

"All well, I thank you," answered Edward, turning, as if to leave her.

"Plase, sir," she said quickly, "an' I've got a little kindness I'll be afther axin' you, an' all along iv remimberin' how good yer honor was to poor Ann Ryker a couple o' years ago. Poor Ann! sorra's the way she's getting along now; but as I was afther sayin', it's yerself'll mind the poor woman whose child you was good enough to take out to your sister in Laconia. Shure, an' meself'd niver know her, at all—at all, only she met me one day in the street, when there was nobody forninst us, an' didn't she catch howlt of my hand, an' kiss it, saying, all the time, 'God'll bless—bless you—bless you. You was kind to Maggie, God *will* bless you.' Faith an' I think the woman's been a lady some day, she has such a grand way, intirely; but she seems a sort o' crazy now, an' dhrinks too much of the *crathur*; but, axin' your pardon, sir, as I was a sayin', she walks up straight forninst me this afthernoon, lookin' as wild-like, an' she sez to me, 'Bridget,' sez she, 'you've got a kind heart, and I want you; there's somebody sick at —— Elm street. She's very sick, an' she's got no friends. I want you to sit up with me, an' take care of her to-night; can you?' Thim's jist the words she said, sir, an' so orderly-like that I didn't say a word, but, 'Shure, ma'am, an' I'll ax to come the minute Ettie's asleep.' She was going away, but she turned back again, an' said, 'Bridget, it's somebody you've seen before, so you musn't be frightened. Now I think, can't you bring a doctor with you? come early, and bring a doctor if you know of any.' Jist whiniver she said that same, she turned round, pulled down her vail, an' walked off like a queen. She's very-quare, intirely," continued Bridget, in an apologetic tone, "but if yer honor would"—

"Oh, I'll go with you Biddy," said Edward, glad of the opportunity to see again, and if possible, reclaim the strange wild being, in whose child he was now so deeply interested. "I shall be glad if I can be of any service. When do you want to go?"

"About eight o'clock, sir, if you plaze. I should like to go airly."

"Very well, stop for me then, and I'll be ready; goodnight, Ettie," said Edward, kissing his hand to the smiling little girl, as he disappeared inside the door.

CHAPTER XXI.

A BRIGHT fire glowed in the grate, but there was no cheer in it. The gaslight was streaming away over velvet chairs, silken curtains, Turkey carpets, statues and pictures, that seemed every moment starting into life; but the gaslight could not reach down into the ruined soul of that gray-haired man; the faint light of conscience, years ago almost quenched within him, was bringing out to his mental sight, mountains of unrepented guilt, looming up in gloomy relief all through the sinning and suffering past.

It was three years since he had disowned his daughter. He had wandered from place to place, striving to forget that she was, may be, suffering for his love, or even for his aid. Three several times he had received a note, on whose envelope he could trace too well the delicate hand that penned his name, and each time he had committed the harmless little missile to the flames. Poor man! did he hope, that, at last, Pride, so long invoked, would wash out all memory of his sins, and fill up full the void unanswered Love had made?

Hark, a foot passed quickly up the steps, a sudden ring at the door; he listened attentively, half-glad at any interruption. When the front door was opened he heard a female voice, and in an instant after a peremptory step passed along the hall; the door opened, closed, and a veiled figure stood against it. She threw back her veil. What, in that wretched, haggard face, sent the blood curdling to his heart? He neither rose nor spoke. Those wild fierce eyes wandered over the room, and then fell again upon his face, as though they would scorch his soul. At length she spoke.

"A palace for the father—what for the child? I shall have my revenge. George Dunn, I came to call you to your daughter; no, not I, but Death. I see in your paling cheek that you know me, but *I* am *nothing* now, for DEATH calls you; your daughter is dying in a wretched garret, and dying by your hand; if you would see her alive, come with me."

Then all was over; but he paused. "You are deceiving me," he said. "I know not how you came here, but you have some purpose of your own to accomplish. You know nothing of—of—my child."

She spoke not as a woman speaks, but with a stern command in look and tone. "Your daughter is dying of starvation and exposure; come with me, or you will never see her more."

Mr. Dunn rose without a word, and passed out with her. She walked rapidly and silently, but with a firm tread, while his steps tottered, and his heart grew chill. At length she stopped at a miserable dwelling in Elm street, entered the hall, passed up two pair of rickety stairs to a garret room, with bare floor, and blackened roof. His conductor did not hesitate, but walked straight in, and up to a miserable pallet where a female figure lay. She stooped, touching the white forehead with her lips, and turned relentlessly to her follower, "You are too late;" then, addressing Edward and Bridget, who sat at the bed-side, she added, "I did not think she could fail so soon."

"No," said Edward, glancing uneasily at the ashen face of Mr. Dunn, "I did not think so either, but a violent spasm, just after you left, seemed to take all her remaining strength."

No one spoke again for some minutes; the father, suddenly removed from his luxurious couch in the magnificent mansion, stood in the dark, cold garret, gazing speechlessly upon

a sunken face and rigid figure, to which he would have called one hour's life at the price of all his wealth.

"George Dunn," at length said the woman, with forced composure, "when you lured me to my destruction, and deceived me with a mock marriage, when you witnessed my despair at its discovery, when I passed from your roof to irretrievable ruin, do you remember the last words with which I addressed you—'*God and your own heart will be my avengers?*'"

"You did not think then, nor when you thrust away from you for ever the child whose first error lay in learning the lesson taught by you, that after that child should be an outcast from every home and heart, *mine* should be the hand to take her to *my* home;" here she glanced around the wretched room, "mine the heart to sympathize and weep, mine the voice to soothe with gentle words the spirit broken with anguish and neglect. Years ago I loved your child; notwithstanding the hard crust of pride and folly you had laid upon her heart, I knew there was a fount of love beneath. I never ceased loving her. Three days ago, when I found her lying senseless in the street at midnight, with the fierce storm sweeping over her uncovered form"—

"Have mercy—mercy!" groaned the father, sinking upon a chair.

"Mercy! mercy! Did *you* have mercy when I knelt at your feet, and prayed you, not that I loved you, but for the sake of my own innocent child and my dying mother, to give me the name of wife? Did you have mercy when you laid for Lester Morris the snare that dragged him to the grave? Did you have mercy when you received, time after time, from your own, your only child, prayers for your love and pardon. *She* had sinned slightly; you, how deeply, God and your heart alone can tell. She married a gambler and drunkard; from step to step she has been sinking lower, lower, until at

length, her *second* still-born babe laid her, one week ago, upon a bed from which she never rose, save to be dragged by her drunken husband from beneath the wretched roof that covered her, out into the raging storm, and left to perish in the open street. It was there I found her, lying as motionless as she is lying now; I took her to my home," and the speaker glanced again at the desolate abode. "All night long I labored to bring her back to life and consciousness; she revived at length, but I knew that she was dying, and I *would* not go for you, that *you* might be comforted in this bitter hour that I knew must come, with thoughts of tardy justice rendered, and pardon whispered by lips that were chilling fast in death."

"You can remember when I, too, wept the dead; when the cold sod lay fresh upon my murdered husband and my darling boy; when the cruel world of my happier days shut me out from their sympathy." Here there was a sudden break in the speaker's voice, as though she would have stopped, but she pressed both hands upon her heart, and continued, "I knew not then that *you* had instigated the murder of my husband for your own base ends"—

"Mary, you wrong me there," gasped her wretched listener, "I shrank in horror from the"—

"Then why," interrupted his accuser, with a convulsive sneer, "after you had so long plotted to drag down the husband, that the loving wife might be left with no fitting protector from your villainy, did you not shrink in horror from heaping shame upon the defenceless widow and her innocent child? Why did you welcome me to your roof, lure me on with the cheering wine to forget husband, mother, brother, until I consented to become your wedded wife. *Then* did you *dare* deceive me with a hollow form, and so ruin me, thinking that your reward would never come. You have it now in this world; you shall have more beyond. Said I not truly that God and your own heart would be my avengers?"

The woman stopped speaking, for the face of her powerless

listener grew fearfully pale. Edward sprang forward, but before he reached his side the man of the world had fallen forward in a swoon upon the floor.

A few weeks afterwards all Mr. Dunn's splendid carpets and curtains, statues and pictures were sold at public auction by his nearest relatives, some second or third cousins whom he had scarcely ever seen. Now, when years have passed away, there still wanders a fine-looking, gray-haired man up and down the long corridors of B——'s Lunatic Asylum, talking always in an undertone of Mary and his child. The keepers say that he is harmless, except during violent storms. Then he tries by persuasion, entreaty, force, to obtain egress from his prison, crying aloud on Mary to show him where his daughter lies.

God and their own hearts have been, and still must be, the avengers of men like him.

CHAPTER XXII.

LETTER FROM ALICE TO KATE.

"BLESS you Katie darling! I can imagine you sitting so demure in that old-fashioned chimney-corner, working away at those everlasting little linsey-woolsey frocks, while your mother every now and then looks complacently over her spectacles at the fairy opposite. Verily, Kate, if ever there was an angel, you are one. I don't believe there is a poor family within five miles of you that you don't know by heart. I should die in a week running round to all those horrible places; I never recovered the fright of our interview with Kelly's wife, and his bursting in so furiously just as we were going. If there's anything on earth I'm afraid of, it's an intoxicated man. I'm sure I'd rather meet a wild beast any time. But you! Well, you have more self sacrifice than I. Do you remember Louise Kepler; you are just like her, *mea carissima*. I told Edward yesterday it really did seem such a pity that he should have stepped in to spoil one of the greatest philanthropists living. Apropos of philanthropists, Sophronia and her husband, who have set up for philanthropists you know, have issued a small pamphlet on Woman's Rights, that is making quite a stir; some of our city papers have taken up the arguments and put a very plausible face upon them. I confess that I should be far more easily influenced if I knew less of the authors. I bother them sometimes by making all sorts of fun of their Woman's Rights Association, and expressing my surprise at the masculine grace of the present Presi-

dent. Cousin Sophy, who has become her devoted satellite, treats my astonishment and ridicule with queenly scorn. 'Alice,' she said this morning with an ominous shake of all the bugles in her head-dress, 'Alice, you will really excite my anger if you persist in traducing that lofty-spirited woman. Do you suppose that *any* private consideration would interfere with her public duties? She sees too many instances of the gross injustice displayed towards unprotected women, to allow inclination precedence to duty.'

"I did not want to hurt her feelings, but I couldn't help thinking she'd been taking lessons of that charming Miss Secretary Tolput, and longing to tell her so, she looked so comical. Unprotected women, forsooth! I should like to hear her opinion of injustice to unprotected babies; for I'm sure if it wasn't for Bridget that lady president's little Ettie would have been dead long ago.

"Well Katie, are you ready to come to my wedding? Don't be jealous now, that we are ahead of you. Arthur's salary has been raised to \$2,000 a year, and before long he intends entering business for himself. We are to commence house-keeping immediately, though I declare I can't imagine what's to come of mother when I'm gone; she's had such a hoyden to manage for so many years that I'm morally certain she won't know how to employ her time when I'm gone. I often wonder what *ever* possessed such a dignified, sedate young man to fall in love with *me*. I don't know, upon the whole, that it is any stranger than my falling in love with him. I never could bear serious people; mother thinks it's all providential, and tells me if I were to marry such another rattle-brain as myself, we should chatter one another to death in six months, a sad sequel to my history. Oh dear, it makes me sigh!

"I got a secret out of Aunt Sophy the other day, on condition that I wouldn't tell it to any gentleman. She told me that she loved Mr. Pufton dearly the first time he ever offered

himself to her, when she was only seventeen. And she said, (now you mustn't tell Edward) that she would not marry a rumseller. 'Why, auntie,' said I, 'wouldn't he give up his business for your sake?'

"I never asked him,' she answered.

"Well now, Aunt Sophy,' cried I, 'if that wasn't strange; if I loved any one I'm sure I would influence them to do right, even although they cared nothing for me, but when'—

"Well Alice,' interrupted Aunt Sophy with a smile, 'you know I am a little peculiar. The fact is, I would not give two straws for a man's change under such circumstances; principle alone is principle, and I could never marry a man whose *principles* were not opposed to spreading death and ruin all over the world.'

"Well, auntie,' said I, 'you are the closest-mouthed woman I ever knew; if I thought just so, I'd tell Mr. Pufton up and down, and fight a regular pitched battle every time I met him.'

"I am not certain that I do right,' said Aunt Sophy doubtfully, 'but I *cannot* be so open-hearted; it's not my nature; besides, it would be a very delicate subject for me to discuss with him, I don't think I could make the attempt.'

"Aunt Maylie is such a strange woman. Nobody can help loving her with that quiet dignified smile playing about her mouth; and yet sometimes you're almost afraid of her, when she *looks* at you so. She has looked my folly out of countenance oftener than I can begin to remember, but I know she loves me just as well, after all.

"But about this wedding: you are to be bridesmaid of course. It is to come off at New Year's, and I intend to cut *such* a dash; the idea of settling down into a long-faced, every-day old lady doesn't suit me at all. I'm going to be just as lively as ever, spite of mother, auntie and all. *You* know me, Kate, or you'd surely think me twice as bad as I am, but I have no doubt that you think, with all the rest, that I shall

get effectually sobered, by and by. Don't you believe it! if I don't bring down *somebody's* dignity now and then, far enough to frolic and laugh with me, I'm confident I shouldn't be fulfilling half my mission.

"But Kate, here I've run on just in my random way, when the thoughts of my poor brother should have made me sober. Dear Clarence has been very ill again, as Edward will tell you; he seems to-day again as well as usual, but he is a great sufferer. Write to me soon, and let me know how soon you will be here, and whether your own wedding is to be deferred later than next spring. Mother and all join in love to your father, mother, and yourself. Good-bye then, dear Kate. Be sure to write soon to your own

"ALICE.

"P. S.—Tell Rosy that she is not to forget to come down to make my wedding-cake."

CHAPTER XXIII.

"WELL, Mary, are you ready for a walk?" said Kate, entering the long sitting-room of Mr. Clarence; "pouting, as I live; pray what has come over the spirit of your dream?"

"Oh!" answered Mary, with a peevish sob, "father does get such ridiculous notions in his head; here I've had an invitation to one of the finest parties—and I mustn't go, forsooth, because they drink wine, or play cards, or waltz there, one or the other, I'm sure I don't know which, and I don't believe father does either."

"You wouldn't enjoy yourself much there, Mary," answered Kate, "laying her soft hand upon the frowning forehead; "I received an invitation, but have not the slightest desire to go."

"Well, it's different with you," pouted Mary; "you never care for anything but going to church, and being good, I believe. I like a little fun once in a while, but I must be kept mewed up here just like a prisoned bird, and it's been twice as bad since Ned went away; he used to smuggle me off sometimes."

"I didn't know he was so wicked," said Kate, laughing, "but really, Mary, I don't think you need take this so much at heart; you and I can practice the new music Edward brought us, and"—

"Oh, fiddlestick on the new music!" ejaculated Mary; "what under the sun's the use of practicing music, if we can't go anywhere to play it; just after I had my new buff crape made up, too; I declare it's too bad!" and the aggrieved young lady burst into a fresh shower of tears.

"Come now, Mary," said Kate, coaxingly, "nothing will make you forget your troubles so soon as a ramble through the fields in this bracing air; you promised me you'd go if I came up after you."

"I don't care a straw about going," said Mary with a pettish little toss of the head. "Laconia's a dull place enough without going out every day, as you do, to be reminded of it. We might walk from here to the other end of the village, and not meet half-a-dozen people."

"But I want you along to keep me company," persisted Kate; "if it is so dull I'm sure you won't condemn me to walk alone; then you mustn't break your promise, either."

"If you really want me to go with you, I'm sure I shan't break my promise," said Mary, rising to leave the room, "but I'm sure I'd rather not go," she added, rather ungraciously.

Kate knew well enough that her walk might do her good in more ways than one, and suffered her to prepare herself, notwithstanding her apparent unwillingness.

"What in the world are you lugging that great basket for?" asked Mary, as they sallied from the door.

"I'm only going to run up to Kitty Toole's with some little cloaks I've been making for the children; poor thing, she doesn't have a chance to do anything for them now."

"Well, for my part," cried Mary, who was still wincing from the effect of her ill temper, "I'm exactly of Ned's opinion. I think if people become drunkards, they've got no one to blame but themselves; and as for that good-for-nothing Teddy, I should like to see him just put somewhere that he wouldn't be impoverishing his own family, and making work for other people."

Kate sighed. "Mary, I think if you had seen as much of them lately as I have, you wouldn't think so hardly of poor Teddy, after all. He isn't very powerful to resist temptation, I admit, but"—

"I haven't a particle of patience with him," interrupted

Mary; "he's done nothing but drink for over two years; father kept him just as long as he could, but he had to let him go at last, and I really believe his family would have starved this last winter if it hadn't been for father."

"Well, well, Mary, you shall see," said Kate, "what you think after you go there to-day; you haven't seen them in some months, have you?"

"Not since spring," said Mary. "It's such a long walk up there; I generally send something by Eben Jones once or twice a week; I'm sure I can't conceive what possesses you to toil away up there so often through the burning sun; I'm positive I couldn't stand it."

"I think," answered her companion, "that my sympathy does Kitty more good than what I give her."

"Oh, do you suppose such people care much about sympathy?" asked Mary, with just the slightest curl of the lip.

"Why not?" asked Kate. "Do you suppose they do not feel?"

"No," was the reply, "not exactly that, but I imagine pretty much all their professions are for the sake of what effect they may have upon those who are foolish enough to be taken in by them."

"Oh, Mary, how can you say so?" asked Kate. "Where have you learned such opinions? I'm sure your father doesn't think so, nor Edward either."

"That's because father's got such a tremendous organ of credulity, that he'd let anybody run all over him, if they told a good big story, and Ned's just such another soft-head."

"Did you think so the other night at the town hall?" asked Kate with a sly smile.

For the first time since they started, Mary's face mellowed into a smile. "Oh, Ned can let his tongue run as glib as glass when he gets interested, but of one thing I am certain, he has a soft spot somewhere about his heart, eh, Katie?"

If there was any one thing for which Mary had a particular fancy, it was teasing somebody when she was certain of being successful; the flush that mounted to the face of her young companion was vastly encouraging, so she continued: "I'm out of patience with that silly boy, for actually since he went down to the village we see scarcely anything of him. I suppose he has so much business on hand—ahem."

"Certainly," said Kate, rallying, "I suppose his business is more pressing, now he has taken an office in the village; it was very inconvenient for people to come away up to your house after him."

"And yet I fancy he finds time to run up to see a certain demure little blue-eyed maiden; at least, so says report," laughed Mary, untying her hat, and swinging it on her arm.

"Nonsense, Mary!" said Kate, quickly, "you have wandered from our subject, we were talking about the power of resisting temptation."

"To be sure we were," said Mary; "but what's the use of arguing with you? you always come out right in the end, so that I might as well give up first as last. What a pleasant shady lane this is; I can't bear a hat on here."

"Nor I either," said Kate, also removing her hat, "and the view from the hill at the end is the finest in the neighborhood."

"If I were going to be married now," said Mary, "I should like of all things to have a little cottage right in among these trees; it's so romantic; don't you think so?"

"Delightful," answered her companion. "I've often wondered why there were not more houses built here. That old gable-roofed concern is the only one about."

"And that detestable Gamp lives there," said Mary. "There's something in that man's eye that makes me shudder; didn't you ever notice it, Kate?"

"Yes, I never admired his looks, certainly; I should be half-afraid to speak to him, I think. Strange, it seems to me, that

the gentlemen of our village should have patronized such a man at all."

"Oh, I don't know, Kate; men don't see anything; I believe women have a little something extra here," and Mary touched her forehead "that makes them *see*; why I can see straight through and through some people that father and Ned know nothing at all about."

Kate smiled as she answered; "Well, if I haven't thought that same thing now, a hundred times; I don't quite agree with you that men don't see anything; but there are some few matters of vast importance to the whole world that I'm *sure* would have been set right long ago, if women had been permitted to handle them. Take, for instance, the manufacture of ardent spirits; how long would it have been stopped—pushed down and kept down. I wish we *had* it in hand for a while."

"Bless me, Kate, you go to the very root of the matter. My philanthropy never shot beyond moral suasion, and the poor inebriates themselves; and not very often beyond their wives and children; why, that couldn't be done!"

"Well, I'm sure it *will* be done some day, Mary. Why not? It's worse to sell rum than to gamble,—does more harm."

"Oh, Kate, you don't mean so; look at Mr. Pufton; our darling little Pufton; nobody could call him bad."

"He labors under a great error, Mary. If you don't think selling rum is productive of more harm than gambling, just notice everything you see during our walk to-day, and see if you think so still."

"Here we are coming right upon the lion's den," cried Mary, laughing, as they approached a dismal-looking old house; "it'll be hardly safe to talk upon such dangerous subjects here, for I'm positive that man is double-eared as any Jesuit going."

"And double-tongued, too," said Kate with a sigh. "He

draws a good many into the net, that would be safe enough if his greed of gain could be satisfied with letting them alone."

It so happened, that just as the young ladies passed the house, Mr. Gamp himself was sitting before a table at one of the second story windows, conning over some old papers that he had taken from a dusty box beside him. Five or six lay scattered over the table, while he continued drawing more from the box, intent upon perusing their contents. The door was just ajar, and a sudden gust of air blew it open. He rose hastily to secure it, not noticing that the same breeze had swept an open letter out at the window. He reseated himself immediately, renewing his occupation.

"What is that?" said Mary, as the letter caught her eye; "a letter, Kate; let's see who's lost a letter."

"Father Benson," exclaimed Kate, as she looked over Mary's shoulder.

"Rev. Mr. William Benson, Laconia, New York." Mary read slowly, adding jestingly, "I suppose there's no harm in reading it; you'd think somebody had put it there on purpose, lying so wide open."

"Oh, I wouldn't read it," said Kate instinctively, laying her hand on the letter.

"You're not so old-maidish now!" cried Mary, half-laughing half-blushing. "I *shall* read it though; if it were for anybody but old Father Benson, I might be a little punctilious, too; but I know he'd read every letter he ever had to anybody."

"Why the letter's dated at sea, twelve years ago," she cried; "how strange! Come, Kate, let's sit down here on the grass and rest while I read it."

"Let us walk on slowly, Mary, a little further; there's a fine resting-place just on the hill above, where poor Father Benson used to sit and watch the boats as they came up the river, fancying that every one was bringing home his boy."

They sauntered along, Mary glancing over the closely written sheet, and Kate recalling the image of the bereaved father, sitting day after day upon the green hill, waiting for the coming of one that all others believed no more among the living.

"This must have been one of the last letters he ever received from him," said Mary, as she finished its perusal. "The son writes that he has been ill at sea, and is weary of a sailor's life; that he has lost his wife during the previous month, but feels thankful that his little boy is so strong and well. Poor fellow, he seems sorry enough for his wild follies. I've heard the poor old gentleman tell, over and over, every particular connected with his child, until I feel as though I had known him myself. Oh! how beautiful!" she exclaimed enthusiastically, as they suddenly emerged from the woods, and the blue river, rolling majestically along between the world-famed Hudson highlands, burst upon their view.

"Beautiful indeed!" said Kate, turning into an open field; "come here a little way, Mary, and we'll rest a few minutes."

They passed a short distance around the grove they had just quitted, ascended a slight eminence, and both stood for a few minutes without speaking. Immediately before them lay a long ravine, whose luxuriant woods were clothed in all the glories of an American autumn; hills covered with evergreens, and dotted only here and there by a crimson maple or a yellow birch, stretched away on either side; and there far below them the glorious Hudson swept onward, bearing upon its breast the children of the waters, from the skiff swelling its white sails in the fresh breeze, to the stately steamer walking the waters "like a thing of life;" far to the north the blue Catskills rested in their silent grandeur against the horizon, while the gorgeous clouds of more than an Italian sky overarched them all, as though exulting in their quiet beauty.

"It seems strange," sighed Kate, "that any sorrow can enter such a beautiful world."

Mary dropped in a half reclining posture upon the sward. "This is such a spot," she said, "as we often dream of, but seldom see; I don't know how I could have been so long without visiting it?"

"Isn't it because you think more of parties and dresses, and less of nature than you did when you and I were children, Mary?" said Kate frankly, laying her hand on Mary's head.

The color flushed into Mary's cheek; the remark recalled the thought of her disappointment, quite forgotten in the pleasure of her ramble. "I don't see any reason for shutting oneself out from all society; young people need excitement. I like everything spirited and wild. Wouldn't it be splendid now to see a fierce thunder-storm sweep over this landscape?"

"Magnificent!" said her companion; "such an one as Byron describes among the Alps."

"I can imagine it now," said Mary; "the sky black with clouds, those woods swept by the rushing winds, the vessels yonder pitching and rolling in the waves, while the 'live thunder' burst around them, and the lightning played among their sails, perhaps folding them in a sheet of flame."

"But what would become of the poor mariners?" asked Kate; "the storm would be less welcome to them."

"Certainly," said Mary, "such a scene would be dearly purchased."

For some minutes Mary lay watching the shadows of the clouds as they floated over the hills, while Kate, with her arm clasped around the trunk of a tree, gazed out fixedly upon the water; but something in the large, earnest eyes told that, rich as was the treat before her, she was not enjoying its beauty; the thoughtful, almost mournful glance, caught Mary's attention.

"What *are* you thinking of, Kate?" she exclaimed; "you look as though you had the cares of half the village on your shoulders."

"I was thinking," said the young girl gravely, "that we are all mariners tossing on the waves; I wonder if one human being that lived to maturity, ever passed through life without encountering any storms."

"No, I don't believe it," said Mary, half laughing, half pouting. "I'm sure I had to encounter a pretty stiff gale this afternoon."

"I rather think," said Kate, smiling, "that you sometimes brew your own storms, if you call that one."

"Well now, just tell me what terrible tempests whiz about *your* ears, that you should be looking so doleful over it."

"I didn't know that I was looking doleful, Mary; no, you and I are sailing on yonder river now; we haven't reached the broad ocean yet; sometimes I think I am very near it though; clouds, and winds, and waves gather around me, that seem scarcely like those of the peaceful river," said Kate, half talking to herself.

Mary was just about taking the opportunity to banter her again, but as she raised her roguish eyes to the transparent face, there was something so grave, so intense in its expression, that she dropped them again without speaking.

"Yes," continued Kate in the same musing tone, after a moment's pause, "fierce storms *must* gather, tempests of anguish, trial, and temptation, blacker and more dangerous than the wildest that sweep the great Atlantic in their fury."

Mary looked up again as though she hardly understood her feelings. "Oh Kate!" she cried, springing from the ground, "don't be conjuring up dire fancies so long beforehand. I hate to look at the dark side of everything so; I don't believe in them at all; where in the world are we to take refuge if we are going to be always surrounded by such 'storms of anguish'?"

"In Christ the Ark;" answered Kate; the expression of her face deepened in intensity, as she added earnestly, "would that we were all in it!"

"How serious you are getting to-day," said Mary, catching up the basket, and turning to resume her walk. "Come, we shall be a great while gone, unless we hurry."

"I should like to see Eben Jones's oldest girl, if I could," said Kate, "I have a place for her."

"A place for her! why, she isn't fit to live *anywhere*."

"Well, she is going to somebody that'll make her fit to live somewhere, I hope," said Kate. "Poor thing! she's had such an example before her; no wonder she's anything but good."

Just beyond a turn in the road they came upon the dwelling of Mrs. Jones, lying a short distance back, and entirely unenclosed, save by a few rough cedars, growing all crooked and one-sided, as if trying not to be out of keeping with everything else about the house. You might have seen a great many just such old, wood-colored houses, without shutters to the windows, but you could not have seen many whose surroundings were of such a motley character.

Two or three barrels stood on each side of the door; an old cart with one wheel off, towered, dirty and unpainted, almost directly in front; a great pile of potatoes lay, just as they had been thrown there, at a short distance from the cart; scattered around the door in untidy confusion, was crockery and tin-ware of every description, some whole, some cracked, some broken into fragments. A furnace stood at a little distance supporting a huge iron pot that was emitting an odor of anything but an agreeable character. A poor, lank cow was wandering about among the cedar trees, and a forlorn-looking baby crept around among the kettles and crockery; the little creature, by dint of dipping his fingers in the dirt, crying half the time, and rubbing his hands from his eyes over his face the other half, succeeded in so artistically managing the matter as to make it extremely doubtful whether he might not

belong to a mongrel race, half-black, half-white, but not decidedly to either.

As the young ladies came in view of the child, he was just dipping his hands deep into a jug of molasses that he had discovered. Upon seeing them, he gave a sudden start of terror at being caught in his larceny, that tipped the jug over, molasses and all, an accident giving rise to the most terrific screams on the part of the poor little doubtful baby. Suddenly, Mrs. Jones flew out at the door, apparently without seeing her visitors, and leveled a blow at the little creature's head that might have stunned a larger child. "There, you little wretch, for ever up to some mischief! Take that, an' that!"

Kate sprang forward. "You will kill your child! Mrs. Jones!" she cried in a half-frightened, half-reproachful voice.

The enraged woman whirled about in front of the child, "What on airth is that to you?" she cried. "Gracious, if tain't enough to drive a woman crazy, everything smashed to smatters by that 'ere young 'un, an' then some o' yer gran' folks a steppin' in to stop my whippin' on 'em. Who dares to say I shan't lick my own young 'un? To be sure, I wan't never nothin' but the wretchedest, forlornest crittur that was ever born into the univarse, nor I don't never expect to be nothin' else till I die, but that hain't no reason why I should give up my nateral-born rights over my own child."

During this speech, delivered with violent contortions of the cross mouth and ugly eyes, the doubtful baby had ceased crying, made quite a circuit on hands and knees to avoid the notice of his mother, and was pulling at Kate's dress. Both Mary and Kate perceived at a glance that she was intoxicated. The hard features were flushed with that purplish red that follows over-indulgence, the eyes glowered with unusual malignity, and the sharp figure, as it turned unceremoniously toward the house, swayed to and fro with an unsteady swagger that would have betrayed her without the disgusting hic-cough, or offensive breath.

As soon as she entered, the baby made its appearance from behind the girls, who had been really alarmed lest it should have received some serious injury. Kate stooped to examine its head, and Mary uttered an exclamation of pity. The little shoulder, looming up from its ragged dress, was defaced by a large blue mark, and distinctly traced upon the small arm were the marks of three fingers streaked upon the tender flesh. The ragged, dirty, frowsy-headed little fellow put up both hands to Kate, who tenderly lifted him in her arms.

"Well, I declare, Kate," said Mary with a retreating gesture, "you take naturally to petting rags and dirt! Poor little thing, I do feel sorry for it though," she added, as she came up again to examine the bruise upon its arm.

"I don't think of the dirt and rags," answered Kate, "so much as of the little human being that's in them. However, I think we shall have to wash these arms before we can see the bruises. There is water, Mary; in one of those tin pans, will you hand it me please, and soap—here, some of this soft soap in the barrel will do. There now, Ebby, I'm going to wash you, you mustn't cry."

The little fellow watched her proceedings very closely, and shied off as the pan came directly in front of him, but made no resistance to the ablution, performed with Kate's wonted gentle firmness. It was with him quite an unusual business, so much so, that when his face and hands were thoroughly clean, he seemed to feel rather awkward about it, hiding the rosy little cheeks on Kate's shoulder, and peeping cautiously at Mary through the plump fingers.

"Strange how such children live, and grow, and fatten," said Mary, clasping her fingers about the fat arm. "One would think all the neglect they experience would kill them, leaving alone blows and pinches like those. What can be the reason?"

"Free air, and the manufacture of dirt-pies," said her companion laughing.

"Then you think these alone counteract all the evils, so far as physical health is concerned; but these bruises seem to be several days old; it's a wonder that last blow left no mark, poor thing!"

"Oh, it's an old story to me," answered Kate, sighing; "this is nothing; sometimes it has made my heart ache to see the extent to which her furious passion will take her. The other day I saw her throw a stick of wood at this mere baby, and I haven't the slightest doubt but that mark on the shoulder is the result."

The baby had been watching the glances of tenderness directed towards him by the gentle speaker, and at this instant held up its mouth to kiss her. "Bless the little soul!" cried Mary, "how did it ever learn that?"

Kate kissed the red lips, tenderly murmuring, "Poor little Ebby; I wish I could take you away from here, Heaven help you with such a mother, I cannot;" then brushing a tear from her eye, she added in a louder tone, "Mary, that woman was always violent towards her children, but it is only since she commenced drinking, that she behaves so very ill. I don't believe she ever left a finger mark upon one of them before that saloon was opened."

"Well, Eben takes a drop now and then too," said Mary; "I've seen him quite tipsy when he came to work."

"Poor fellow!" said Kate, seating herself on an old bench with the child still in her arms, "he tries to stem the torrent of trouble his wife brings upon them, but it's an impossible thing. You see he makes quite a confidant of Lame Joe; and Rosy tells me everything. The other day I went over to see Rosy just at dusk. As I stood in the entry, I heard Jones's voice within. 'Tain't no use at all,' he said to Joe, 'I've done everything long ago that I could do. She will have her own way, an' them children's all goin' to rack an' ruin fast as ever they can

gallop. They ain't like her neither, an' though I say it that shouldn't, if it wan't for her, there ain't better children nowheres; better-natered, nor more willin' children.' Then I heard Joe say, 'Guv it up den, Eben; telled yer 'twan't no sort o' use; yer gettin' to look as full o' wrinkles; 'pears yer an old man aready; you's got excuse enough; might as well drink as anyting. Dis yer's de way, yer see;' and I heard Joe lay it all down on his big hand; 'ef yer gits drunk *every day* o' yer life, chillen an' eberyting is *all a-gwine*, an' ef yer *nebber* gits drunk, chillen an' eberyting is *all a-gwine*.'

"Here Rosy broke in, 'Now Joe, arn't yer 'shamed to setice de man; won't de Lord bring tings up, I'd like to know; guess He'd make her toe de mark, anyhow, ef He jest tuk it in hand. Don't you *nebber* drink, Eben; not widout you'd jest kill the chillen, out an' out. Noting's so ruinatious in all dis ruinatious earth. Ef I could jest once be sartin dat my Joe wouldn't *nebber* touch sperits again, I'd jest go down on my knees, an' bress de Lord for de rest of my life.'

"Comical scene, wasn't it?" said Mary laughing; "there must be a sort of fascination in drinking, that makes men slaves to the habit, but they are to blame for *beginning*, that's the thing."

Kate sighed, but did not answer. Just then, Rebecca Jones made her appearance around the corner of the house, with bare feet and uncombed hair. She walked shyly towards them, and entrenched her dirty feet behind a large ash-box directly in front of the young ladies.

"Rebecca," said Kate, "I came here to see you;" here a smile of pleasure fitted over the girl's face, "and I have two or three questions to ask you; have you ever learned to work any?"

"Not much," was the answer, "I work often for mother, but"—and she hesitated, with some embarrassment.

"But you haven't worked in ladies houses," said Mary, helping her to what she would have said.

"No ma'am, only two or three times to wash dishes, or something like that."

Mary could hardly help glancing from the baby to the eldest scion of this illustrious house, and wondering which deserved the most pity. A more forlorn, discontented looking being could hardly be imagined than the child who stood before her. Just at the age when the rushing life and buoyancy of youth casts a glow of interest over the dullest countenance, with a face naturally bright and expressive, large black eyes, luxuriant hair, and brilliant complexion, she united all the elements of beauty in her face and figure. But the wildest fancy could not make her beautiful. Her thick hair was tangled all over in such a mass that the knot in which it was gathered behind was almost undistinguishable. Her face was dirty, the even row of teeth yellow from neglect, and the large dark eyes had an expression of peevishness that totally neutralized their beauty. Ill-fitting and ragged garments rendered her figure unsightly, and her shy, awkward carriage proved that whatever might have been her faults, vanity was not one of them.

"Would you like to learn to work?" asked Kate.

"Suppose so, ma'am," answered the child, "don't know."

"Don't know?" exclaimed Mary, "you don't deserve to be taught anything if you talk so."

"I know that," was the reply. "I never *was* good for nothing, nohow."

"But you would be willing to *try* to be good for something, wouldn't you?" asked Kate, kindly.

"Yes, ma'am, if I could," she answered.

"If you could find a good place?" continued Kate.

A sad incredulous smile lingered on the lips of the girl. "I couldn't get a good place, I know,—and I won't go to a bad one, *won't*, so there. I might ha' gone to Gamp's or Dougherty's, or Tim Rafferty's, if I liked, but as long as I've

got to be bad, an' live with bad folks, I might as well live here."

"But if you had a *good* place," said Mary, "you"—

The girl interrupted her, "A *good* place!" she cried, and for a moment her fine eyes flashed. "I *know* I can't get a *good* place. Haven't I been trying two years now, an' much good's come of it. Who'd take Sally Jones's daughter, I'd like to know? I wouldn't if I was a lady, I'm sure."

"You shouldn't speak so," said Kate, gently. "It depends upon yourself to do anything in the world, not your mother. Remember your father loves you, and is anxious"—

"And what good is that either," broke out the child, while a curl of ineffable scorn wreathed her lips; "mother'd just as soon beat father as me, don't I know that. Oh, I *hate* her, if it wasn't for father, I know what I *could* do that would be better than living with her. I'd run away to New York, and beg or work or steal, or do *anything*."

Kate took no notice of this outburst, although her heart trembled at the fierce temper of the neglected girl.

"How would you like to live with my mother for two or three months? that is what I came to see you about."

Rebecca looked up quickly, and burst into tears. The doubtful baby, who had descended from Kate's knee, and was again examining into various matters always interesting to babies,—ashes, charcoal, *etc.*, scrambled round to his sister, pulling her tattered dress, and throwing up unnoticed kisses by way of consolation.

"What an affectionate little creature!" cried Mary; "do see it try to comfort her; look, it's going to cry because she does not notice him." The little one burst out into a grieved cry, and Rebecca, suddenly checking her sobs, and looking anxiously towards the house, lifted him in her arms.

"There, there, Ebby," she tried to say soothingly, "don't

cry, mother'll hear you; dear little Ebby, sister loves him, —sister."

The baby cast a terrified glance towards the house, stopped crying, and put both arms about his sister's neck, while the girl who had a moment before almost alarmed them by the energy of her passion, clasped him in her arms with the utmost tenderness.

"A queer compound," thought Mary. "A wounded heart," thought Kate, "that gentleness will heal." At length she spoke. "Then you do not want to go with me, Rebecca?"

"Oh, yes, yes," was the eager answer, "but it was too much; I never hoped so much; I will *try*, how I will *try* to be a better girl to you, and yet,"—she added, in a softened tone, "how can I leave poor Ebby?"

"You can't do him any good," said Mary.

"Have you any clothes besides those?" asked Kate.

"Yes, ma'am, father bought me a second-hand dress and bonnet t'other day, and I hid 'em, so mother needn't sell 'em for rum."

"Very well," said Kate, "you can come to see me to-morrow afternoon. Be sure to wash yourself thoroughly, and comb your hair, because my mother will never have any dirty girls about her."

"Thank you, Miss Kate," answered the girl, while an expression of real sweetness played for an instant over her face, "I *will try* to be good for something now."

"Good bye, Ebby," said Kate, rising and patting his head, "I'll come again to see you; want a cake?" she added, taking a large light bun from her basket, and handing it to the delighted child, who laughed and chuckled, and held up his prize for his sister's admiration.

"Good bye, Rebecca; then you'll be there early to-morrow afternoon."

"Yes, ma'am, good bye," said Rebecca, with an awkward courtesy. "I'll come before two o'clock."

"Kate, how long we have been here!" said Mary, glancing at her watch. "We shall have to hurry now."

The girls walked rapidly on until they came to the cottage of Teddy Toole. The house was so still that they half-doubted if any one was within. A change, indeed, had passed over the cottage during the three years of suffering through which its occupants had passed. It looked dingy for want of paint, the windows were stuffed with rags, the fence was broken, and the neat, tidy garden looked barren and uneven, as though it had been worked by an unskillful hand.

Kate was about to knock, when a peculiar sound from within arrested her hand. The door was ajar, and she could hear a hissing sound, accompanied by a faint moaning, as of one in distress. As they listened, they could hear muttered curses, groans, and cries that told too plainly of a drunkard's hour of extremity. Mary shuddered. "Don't go in, Kate, I wouldn't see him for the world. Come, this is no place for us."

Her companion stood for a moment, holding the latch of the door, then mournfully turning to Mary, she said, "There are those within who are less able to bear it than we are. We will go and see if it is not possible to do any good; come, Mary." As she spoke she took Mary's hand, and drew her in after her.

As they entered the comfortless room, now almost shorn of furniture, their eyes filled at the scene before them. Kitty Toole was sitting down upon the bare floor, slowly rocking backwards and forwards, with a low regular moan, while the big tears rolled down over her face. The three smallest children were cowering in a dark corner, all of them crying with stifled sobs, and the youngest half-beside herself with a terror whose very intensity made her silent.

The door of the adjoining room was open, and Teddy's voice, uttering bitter imprecations, or raving in the madness

of his despair, rolled into those hearts a river of anguish that no earthly power could stay or mitigate. Kate felt the vainness of her endeavors, but she stepped softly up to the heart-broken woman, and laid her gentle hand upon her shoulder. Kitty, now first aware of their presence, burst into a fresh cry of suffering that thrilled to their very hearts.

"Have you no one here to take care of him but yourself?" asked Kate.

"Not a one, Miss Kate, not a one. He was niver so bad afore; och Teddy, machree, how can I hear ye? an' the childhers! I'll die, sure, Miss Katie! Och! my poor childhers!"

"Where is Mike?" asked Kate.

"Sure, an' that's all I've got to thank the Lord for now. Mike's away up here to farmer Scott's; he was jist afther fetchin' home his wages a' Sunday, whin his father got so drefful. Faith, Mikey's my last hope now." A fresh shriek from the next room made the terrified wife start forward towards the door, and the shrieking children cling together with a convulsive grasp.

Kate sprang forward and caught Kitty's arm. "Wait a few moments, I beg of you. It is not right for you to go near him. I'll go for some one. He might injure you."

"Och! let me go; he'll make away with hisself, *sure* he will; hear him choke; he's afther gettin' worse ivery minute of this awful day," and, with a shudder, she again made a motion towards the door.

Kate held her gently but firmly, and turning to Mary, said, "Mary, I will stay here while you run back to Jones and find Jake. He must be about there somewhere. He will be better than no one, and he can stay until you and I return and send Edward to his relief."

"Will you stay *here alone*?" asked Mary.

"I am *not* alone," was the quiet answer, "Go, Mary,"

The tone was one from which Mary knew there was no appeal, so casting an anxious glance behind her as she left

the door, she flew swiftly back on her errand of mercy. But the clear glance of faith that looked out from those beautiful eyes, and the unshrinking tone in which those few parting words were uttered, created in the breast of the thoughtless girl a vague longing for the same trust, and love, and courage, that flowed out from that warm, dauntless heart, into the world of wretchedness around, like well-springs in a desert, or sunbeams in a dungeon. Even the scene of suffering which she had witnessed, was not sufficient to draw her mind entirely from that, to her, remarkable resolution that could prompt one reared in an atmosphere of the most refined gentleness to stay at the bedside of a man suffering from the worst of all forms of madness.

No, Kate was not alone! But it was not a thought of the heart-broken occupants of the gloomy room that prompted her answer. She knew that she had need of greater courage because they were with her, but she had that glorious promise of One who holds the whole universe in his Almighty Hand, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee," and without fear she applied herself to the work God had given her to do.

During Mary's absence, Teddy seemed less violent, and Kate had an opportunity of soothing the poor wife and children.

"Shure, Ma'am," says Kitty, "but you'd niver find a better husband than Teddy afore the dhrink crazed him intirely? an' would it be meself that'd lave him now, whin there's niver a sowl near to kape him from killin' hisself? He didn't do it; shure it was Gamp begun it, and Tim Rafferty finished him intirely. Och, Teddy, machree! Och, my childhers! What'll come iv us all? God help us! Holy Mother, have mercy on us!"

"God will help you," said Kate, with emphasis. "He says, 'Call upon me, and I will hear.' Oh! pray to Him, Kitty, not to the Virgin or the priest; teach your children to pray to Him; you would find your trials easier to bear."

Before Jake arrived, Kate had succeeded in inspiring the faithful wife with something like courage, and having first transferred the children to another room, had partially drawn their attention from their wretched father to a store of warm woolen gowns and stockings she had brought for them. Mary was surprised on her return to see little Kitty actually peeping out of the window with a subdued smile on her round face. So easily are childhood's griefs forgotten!

Having left Jake in the room of the sufferer, they hurried back to summon Edward to his assistance. By the time they reached the office it was almost dark, but the generous young doctor flew away to minister to his relief, while the two girls pursued their way homeward, with heads and hearts full of the day's adventures.

To Kate the scenes through which she had passed, with the single exception of Teddy's frightful disease, were perfectly familiar. She was in the habit of visiting the suffering poor, and she had acquired a strength of nerve that was eminently useful in her labors of love. But Mary, although always interested in the recital of suffering, had never yet seen and heard so much as she had seen and heard to-day. The afternoon's disappointment was entirely forgotten, and she was ready for a whole day to forego all parties, and leave her "beautiful new grape" for ever unsoiled, if she might only do good as Katie did. But one's own eyes and ears are the only true touchstone to human sympathy, and there is necessity for constant application. The heart that longs for higher aims than self-interest or pleasure, must gird on the armor of Christ, and throb warmly in his cause. Mary was not yet ready to go out into the highways and bye-ways of suffering, seek out the afflicted, pray with them, labor for them, give up to them the buoyant energy of youth, and win them to truth by the sacrifice of personal ease. Only those who have taken up His cross, Who was "meek and lowly of heart," Who "went about doing good," "healing the sick," "cleansing the

lepers," "forgiving the erring," "raising the dead," only these can so labor, and so achieve.

Edward remained with Teddy during a large portion of the night. He found him in a precarious situation, but by the blessing of God upon his unremitting labors, the poor fellow was raised this time from a bed of horror and anguish, to be for a few weeks a sober man, and then, alas! to return again to the course of ruin from which his naturally weak energies could not restrain a man of loving heart, and many lovable qualities.

CHAPTER XXIV.

EDWARD, as we must call him still, although a man of three and twenty, was sitting in his office when Judge Reid entered, and cordially extending his hand, exclaimed, "Why, Dr. Clarence, you *will* not disappoint us this evening; you promised me a full month ago to recite that beautiful historical sketch of Mrs. Hemans for us this evening."

"Aha, I had forgotten that," said Edward, with a smile. "Can you not excuse me to-night? Indeed, my professional duties are such"—

"Professional duties, be ye scattered to the four winds of heaven!" cried the Judge, with a pompous wave of the hand. "You have promised, sir, and you must perform."

"Well then," said the young physician, laughing, "from such a decision there is no appeal, as Lawyer Flip would say. I think, however, I shall cut rather a ridiculous figure, declaiming one of my school-boy pieces at a fashionable party."

"All friends!" cried the Judge, "and all anxious to hear it. I'd give \$10,000 down, if my boy had the same taste that you have. He is so fond of society, and so petted in it, that he has no time for anything else."

Edward thought to himself that time and taste were but a small part of *that* young gentleman's requisites, but he merely remarked, "All are not alike, Judge, '*Chacun à son goût*.' I was always fond of argument and oratory. I think if I had as many obstacles as Demosthenes to overcome, I should

labor to conquer them, although, of course, I can never hope for any such attainments as his."

"You are too modest, young man," said the Judge, throwing his head back loftily, as though there were indeed no appeal from his decision. "I am positive, that, had you studied law, there would have been no stopping-place to your progress. As you, however, did such a foolish thing as wed yourself to pills and blisters for ever, I shall do my best to divorce you by sending you to Legislature one year from next fall; so you may as well prepare yourself."

Edward started. "You forget my youth, sir!" he cried. "You forget my profession, my inability"—

"I never forget, sir," answered the gentleman, with a stately bow, as though displeased at his young listener's daring for a moment to impute want of foresight to *him*, Judge Levi Livingston Reid. "I *believe*, sir, I am not in the habit of forgetting."

Edward, with all his own conflicting emotions, could hardly forbear smiling at the grand displeasure of the learned gentleman. His dignity, however, unlike that of his exquisite son, was supported by considerable talent, so that it was only amusing, without exciting disgust. The young man hardly knew how to answer him, but after a pause, he said, "I cannot say that the thought *never* entered my mind, that I might yet have the honor of serving my country in some public manner; but when, at the earnest solicitations of my parents, I entered the medical profession, I resigned, as I thought, for ever, all aspirations of that nature. You cannot wonder, therefore, that I should be surprised at such an expression on the part of a gentleman holding a position so lofty as your own."

"Nevertheless," answered the Judge, his ruffled dignity somewhat soothed by this last remark, "I have resolved to send you to Legislature one year from next fall, and you know," he added, drawing himself up, "whatever—I—say,—

I—will—perform;" then changing his tone a little, he said, as he opened the door, "Then I expect you this evening. Good-day."

A giant, buried long, sprung up in an instant in that young exulting heart. How he had dreamed in boyhood of an hour like that; how the very words that he had just heard had fallen on the ear of fancy, years ago, when the school-boy, wandering by the pebbly stream, or poring in some forest nook, had fired at the history of one gigantic intellect that bore upon its mighty waves the lesser surges of a nation's destiny.

As he sat there, gazing into the glowing coals that heaped the grate before him, his dark eye kindled, and his cheek flushed. Why did that thrill stir up his heart, and sweep through the young blood coursing in his veins, till a glow of rapture lit up the glorious face. O Edward! was the eagle crushing out the dove within thy breast, or can they live in the same nest, mating in perfect unison? Sweet Katie! Was it *thy* image flitting in its purity before his wandering fancy, with hands upraised, and eyes upturned, that stole like a shadow over the dreamer's hopes? Love is mightier, but Ambition sings her syren song, pours out her countless treasures, points to her glorious pinnacles, until Love sinks trustingly to sleep upon her perjured bosom. O Love, poor Love!

Before the evening entertainment, Edward stole an hour to spend with Kate. Of course the subject uppermost in his thoughts was communicated to her the instant they were alone. A flush of pleasure sparkled on her face, a glance of mingled pride and affection flashed from her eyes, but almost at the moment followed a sudden sense of danger in the new path he was about to tread. But she could not,—how *could* she, cast a chill upon his buoyant hopes. Neither was her judgment infallible, nor her knowledge of the dangers of his

future career sufficient seriously to alarm her. It was but a vague presentiment of evil, and she would not trouble him at such a moment with a mere presentiment.

Young ladies stepped daintily from their carriages into Judge Reid's splendidly illuminated mansion: Gay horses pranced up and away before the door, liveried footmen strutted about, far prouder than their masters. Stately men, who had borne the cares of public life; matrons who had reared the fair flowers of beauty that now for the first time were blossoming in the hothouse of the fashionable world; young men, firm of heart, and strong of nerve were there, and a few, a *very* few faded and paled as our city youth fade and pale, through idleness and dissipation.

At the further end of a window-recess, Minnie Reid and Emily Myers were holding together a solemn consultation. The guests had mostly arrived, and a lively chat was buzzing away through the whole length of the sumptuous apartments. "Now, Emily, don't tell me any such thing," said Minnie, earnestly, laying her slender fingers on the jewelled wrist of her companion. "Haven't they always been just like brother and sister together? and 'tisn't at all likely they'll up and fall in love with each other now."

"But I think they've been in love a good while," was Emily's answer, "Mary has told me as much a dozen times."

"Nonsense!" said Minnie, shrugging her dimpled shoulders with an air of vexation. "It's too bad of you to discourage me so, when I made you my confidant. Next time I'll tell Anna Flip, so I will."

"Pray how soon will next time be, Minnie? How often do you suppose girls ought to bestow their affections upon some new gallant?"

"You're real hateful, that's what you are," said Miss Minnie, in no very amiable tone, "you think because I'm just

out, I don't know anything; that's just like some of the girls at school. You ain't one bit like you used to be before I went away."

"Oh never mind, *ma chère*, I don't want to discourage you, Minnie; Dr. Clarence has not seen you since you returned from school; use all your efforts and you may win him from Kate, though *if he does* love her, I don't believe *he'll* ever play truant."

"To think of that *splendid, noble, magnificent* fellow marrying that dough-faced little Quaker! She's pretty enough, to be sure, but I do hate a face without expression;" and the sparkling eyes glanced complacently at a mirror opposite.

She was a fairy little creature—faultless bust, shoulders and arms perhaps a little too much exposed; tiny hands and feet, and face vivacious and changeable as an April sky, she had already commenced her career as queen of Laconia belles. To-night she was arrayed in a white crape, whose soft folds set off the dazzling fairness of her complexion, and the exquisite proportions of her figure. A camelia was fastened at one side of her hair, and pearls were twisted carelessly among the glossy curls. No dress could have been more admirably adapted to the wearer's style of beauty. Emily thought, as she looked at her, that it would not be strange if the young doctor should forswear his allegiance to Kate for the sake of such dazzling beauty.

There was something fascinating in the dancing eye and rosy mouth, in the extreme buoyancy of her every motion, and in the faultless contour of her figure that won Edward's admiration. When did a young, enthusiastic, warm-hearted fellow, like our Edward, ever see a beautiful woman and not admire her. But somehow Dr. Clarence had a bad habit of measuring every one by Kate. If the eyes were bright "they would be glorious eyes if they only had the expression of hers." If the figure was fine, "it would be magnificent if it could glide along as airily as hers;" if the mouth was pretty, "it

would be a perfect rose-bud if it could but wear her gentle smile." Miss Minnie congratulated herself vastly upon her success, when she saw those admiring eyes follow her figure as she tripped like a young gazelle from room to room, attracting all eyes by her vivacious beauty; but if she could have seen the many "ifs" and "buts" that bounded her charms so powerfully in the estimation of the young doctor, her little jealous heart would have vowed eternal vengeance against her old friend Kate.

"You say you do not approve of dancing the polka, doctor?" she cried, whirling herself, very impolitely it must be confessed, out of the arms of her cousin in the very middle of the dance, and standing flushed and out of breath directly before him.

"I do not approve it, certainly," was the answer. "Kate wouldn't have done that," he thought to himself, as her discomfited partner turned away, and sought a seat with some embarrassment of manner.

"Then I'll not dance it any more," she cried jestingly, with an arch glance of her laughing eye. "Do you waltz?"

"Not often," was the answer. "I have inherited some old fashioned notions about such things, I believe. May I hope for the pleasure of dancing with you in the next cotillion?"

"Let me see," said Minnie, laying her head coquettishly on one side. "I believe I'm not engaged; you may have that exquisite pleasure, sir. There's Anna Flip, hasn't she splendid eyes?"

"Very fine, but I do not particularly admire brown eyes." Then turning his face admiringly upon her, he added softly, "I love best those

— Eyes

That have gazed on heaven till they caught its dyes."

He thought, even as he spoke, that other eyes he knew, not

those, had "gazed on heaven;" but Minnie took the compliment, and blushed so prettily that he was tempted to add,

"The richest tint
That e'er with roselight dyed a summer cloud,
Were pale beside thy cheek."

"Oh," cried Minnie, with a heart swelling at her imagined triumph, "a fig for your flattery; was there ever a gentleman who didn't flatter?"

"Or a lady who did not love it?" said Edward, laughing; "I know of one," whispered his heart.

"Nonsense!" pouted Minnie, "if a gentleman doesn't feel it let him not say it; that's what I think, don't you?"

"Certainly," he answered, smiling. "What lady is that?"

"The one that passed us in black velvet and swansdown! That's Bella Grey from New York. Hasn't she a pretty neck?"

Now Minnie knew there were not a pair of shoulders in the room to vie with those dimpled ones, at that moment exposed by the sudden shaking of a shower of glossy curls back from their rounded outline.

Edward did not notice the motion, answering, "I think her very fine-looking, but I never like low-necked dresses; they spoil the figure, I think." Kate never wears them, his heart again suggested.

Wasn't it provoking? Here was a young lady with a neck not rivalled by a Venus, standing to be told by the gentleman she had set her heart upon conquering, that "he did not like low-necked dresses, they spoiled the figure." She was certain they didn't spoil *her* figure, at any rate; but she recovered her momentary vexation, exclaiming, "there, I believe father's leading the way to supper with that majestic Mrs. Flip. Shall I introduce you to Miss Grey?"

"By no means; I prefer your company, ma belle," and he drew the delicate little hand through his arm; "I know you

will not desert me now. I know not what fairy has changed our bright-eyed little Minnie to such a perfect model of beauty in three short years. Why you are a very queen of my ideals, Minnie?"

Oh! Edward, Edward! A coquette! we didn't think it.

No, it was not coquetry. Youth is youth, Beauty is beauty, and Youth bows always at the shrine of Beauty. Ten seconds after Edward said it, he thought of another, not a queen but *the* queen of his ideals. He had little vanity himself, and he didn't think of the effect his words might have on the bewitching little bit of vanity beside him.

Minnie cast an exultant glance upon her friend as she passed her in the supper-room. Emily turned several times towards them as they chatted together in a little nook just at the end of the table. She saw Edward take a small rosebud from a vase on the table and hand it to her, with a slight bend towards her, and a whispered word. She saw Minnie's eyes flash suddenly, then saw the dark lashes droop upon her crimsoning cheek. "Is it possible?" she thought. "I'm sure Kate Weston is forgotten now."

Mistaken, Emily!

Presently Minnie started up, and flew by her to the table where the glittering decanters stood, surrounded by silver goblets and wine-glasses of the richest beauty. She looked among them, and seizing a small bottle, glided back to the recess. Then pouring out two glasses, she exclaimed: "This is some wine father bought before I was born, I was determined you should have some; there, drink my health now."

"Excuse me," said Edward, setting his glass upon a small stand beside them, "I will drink your health in a glass of water."

The young lady set down her own glass suddenly, and cast a bewitching glance of piqued vanity at her companion.

"Don't you think I can pledge you as much happiness in this?" said Edward, holding up a glass of sparkling water.

She had half a mind to be angry, but as she looked up, those dark eyes met her own, and their power was irresistible. She caught the water from his hand, and snatching the wine-glass from the stand, stood up before him, poising it gracefully in one hand, and looking up into his face so appealingly. Emily thought, as the motion caught her eye it, would have been a picture worthy of a Raphael's pencil; the dark back-ground of the window draperies, that noble figure, the flush of youthful manhood, looking down with an expression half amusement, half admiration upon the little Hebe, with her rosy lips pouting, and her eyes appealing with all their spell of witchery, as she held out the magic draught for his acceptance.

"Now, Dr. Clarence," she cried, "*can* you have the impertinence to refuse drinking with a lady, when she has threaded that human labyrinth to procure the draught, and when I tell you it is older (and sweeter of course), than I am."

"Not sweeter, Minnie," said Edward softly.

The rich blood mantled to her cheeks again, rendering her still more fascinating.

"Come now, I'm sure your compliments are all deceit if you cannot take a glass of wine with me."

To him it was a tempting chalice, held by a tempting hand. "Your promise," conscience whispered. "My promise did not involve this," he thought.

"I'll not move a step till you take this glass, and drain it, sir," said Minnie, changing her tone, and assuming a mock tragic attitude, "Twere vain to strive to break thy chain—"

"Which I would not if I could," answered the young man, taking the glass from her hand; "but, to release thee, fair tyrant, from durance vile, I yield to thy command."

Oh! Edward, thy first words had a double meaning.

CHAPTER XXV.

A DAY or two after, Kate and Edward were sitting in the old-fashioned parlor of Mr. Weston's house. The great wood-fire burned cheerily in the chimney. The high-backed chairs and huge mahogany side-board accorded well with its sparkling blaze. The only modern article in the room was Kate's piano, that looked almost out of keeping with its antique neighbors.

Kate was sitting at the piano, singing "The Ingle Side," and Edward, after joining in the first verse, stood over her, stroking back her hair, that she had curled that day to please his fancy. When she had finished, she turned round suddenly, and laying her hand on his arm, exclaimed, "Why, Edward, you don't sing at all to-night, it's time for me to give up, I think, when you look so blue over it."

"I wasn't looking blue," he answered smiling. "I was thinking of that day, more than three years ago, when you and I, Katie, sat out in your bower by the water's edge. Do you remember?"

"Do I remember? Edward!"

"I didn't mean that, darling; I know you remember, but I was just looking forward, and I hardly thought exactly what I was saying. You thought we were not old enough then, we are old enough *now*, Katie. I have half doubted your love lately, you delay my happiness so long."

"Father's health is so feeble, he could hardly spare me now; but if you will come here, Edward, and be content to divide my attention, then"—

"Then you will be mine, dearest, soon, very soon."

"Not before summer, Edward; mother will not consent; but you will have to be very generous if father keeps so ill; he can hardly bear me out of his sight for two or three hours."

"I'll try to 'cultivate the grace of patience,' as Father Benson would say, and not monopolize too much of your attention. I long so to come *home* to you, dearest, after the toils of the day, and to feel that I may seek you whenever and wherever I please, without observing these provoking formalities."

"But we are *sure* of each other's *love*, wherever we may be, and however often separated," said Kate, her eye beaming, and her cheek flushing, as Edward pressed his lips to her forehead.

"But that is not all, Kate, when mind and body are alike weary, it does not satisfy me to *think* of you; I want to see you, and hear your voice, and feel that you are my own sweet wife."

The blush deepened on Kate's cheek, the eyelids drooped, and the little hand he was holding trembled as it softly returned his pressure. He thought she had never looked so beautiful.

"Will you wear your hair curled always, Kate? I like to see you so, my queen of beauty," and he arranged the tresses over her face to suit his fancy.

She threw them back, and laughed, as she answered, "You will soon have a right to lay me under your marital commands, according to your own telling, so I beg of you do not compel me to undertake such a task as this every day at present. Why, it took me a full half hour to prepare these precious tresses for your admiration. Mother," she added, lifting up the golden curls, as Mrs. Weston entered, "don't you think it's a great waste of time to try pleasing Edward with these troublesome ornaments?"

"No waste of time to please Edward," was Mrs. Weston's answer, "but you must remember, my children, the rule of the inspired Apostle, 'Let not your adorning be the plaiting of the hair, and wearing of gold, and the putting on of apparel, but the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.' Edward must be careful not to let vanity creep into your heart, Kate. It is a weed that is hard rooting out again."

"I have no fear for *her*," said he, casting upon the sweet, glowing face, a glance of almost triumphant admiration.

"Thou art a young man yet, and a lover, at that, my boy. Wait till Time proves your treasure," but the smile that lit the gentle eyes beaming over the spectacles upon her child, proved that *she*, at least, was satisfied with the trial she had made of the noble girlish character.

"Come now, my daughter, tea is ready, and we must not keep it waiting," said Mrs. Weston, leading the way into the dining-room on the other side of the hall. Just as they entered the hall, Edward's steps were suddenly arrested by a rap, rap, rap upon the door, followed immediately by a thump, thump, thump, of a cane on the stone steps outside.

"Father Benson!" he exclaimed, flying to open the door. "You can never mistake his knock."

The old gentleman fluttered into the house, dropped package, hat, gloves and all, right down upon the floor, everything but the cane which he was holding in one hand, and a letter which he held aloft in the other. He did not stop for the usual civilities, but ran up to Edward, almost breathless with delight.

"My Willie is coming at last,"—rap, rap, rap, "he's in the vessel that's to bring him home; sing aloud, Edward my boy, kill the fatted calf, and make merry," rap, rap, rap, "my son that was dead is alive again; didn't I say it, after three years, everything goes by threes; he's got a boy too, to bring home with him," rap, rap, rap, "poor fellow, he's lost his wife, and

his poor mother," here the little old gentleman's voice grew hysterical, "but my boy is free at last—at last!" rap, rap, rap, went the cane, twinkle, twinkle, twinkle,—blink, blink, blink, went the eyes, and the aged father burst into a cry of joy; his cane went so incessantly, his feet danced about so nervously beneath the long skirts of his overcoat, and his whole frame was under the influence of such violent excitement, that it was not until Edward had drawn him gently into the dining-room, Kate had almost forced him into the old-fashioned easy-chair, and Mrs. Weston had used all her magical powers of soothing, that they succeeded in ascertaining fully the cause of his exultation. "Read that," he cried, at last, "read it, and you will be ready to kill the fatted calf; read it aloud, Edward, my boy; you see," he added rubbing his hands together, "everything goes by threes."

Edward read the letter aloud, as he had requested; his heart throbbed with a quick anguish for the poor old man, as his eyes fell upon the date. But he saw instantly that it would be cruel and unwise to dash this new hope so suddenly from his heart; so he read on, interrupted at every few sentences by the inspired cane, or the gleeful chuckling of the eager father. "I told you so, he'd break away at last, hear—hear, he's to be home in three months, everything goes by threes! ha! ha!"

When the precious document was finished, he looked round upon them all with the most triumphant confidence, bobbing his little head, all silvered over with the frost of seventy winters, and rubbing his hands in perfect ecstasy.

"Where did you get this letter, Father Benson?" asked Edward as he returned it to him.

"Mary gave it me just now," he answered, "as I was going by the door; Jeremiah wasn't in, so I read it coming along, well as I could with my old eyes and spectacles; but I only just made out that my boy was coming at last, after so long, oh! so long!"

"Let me see it a moment," said Kate, stepping up with her back towards Father Benson, and holding up her fingers significantly to Edward. "May I keep it for you, Father Benson, and then you can come here and I'll read it for you every day, if you like."

The old gentleman looked puzzled, but Edward, who had understood her gesture, explained the matter quite satisfactorily, by saying, "T. Gamp and Co. might get hold of it, you know, and then"—

"Oh! yes, I see, I see," cried Father Benson, in a half-vexed tone; "the hyenas always got everything away that had anything to do with my boy, even the model steam-engine he had taken such pains to construct. His poor mother cried so when they carried that away, after my Willie was gone" (his voice trembled again here), "and if they knew," he added, in an excited whisper, "that he was coming back in three months, they might lay traps to get him before me, mightn't they?"

"You had better leave the letter here, at any rate," said Edward, taking a seat at the tea-table, in obedience to Mrs. Weston's gesture. He whispered to Kate, as she seated herself beside him. "He might never notice the date, but it's better to be careful; he is unable to bear much now."

Mrs. Weston was called by the village ladies, a "tip top housekeeper." The arrangements of her table were conducted in a manner that would have done credit even to a Yankee housewife. The white, light bread, the golden butter, the exquisite honey, the tender chicken, and the crisp crullers were perfect in their kind. Added to this, the snowy cloth, the antique silver tea-service, the polished knives, and more than all, the attractive courtesy of the hostess, made a meal at Mrs. Weston's more agreeable than a feast at many homes. Father Benson was won at last through Kate's unremitting endeavors to pay some little attention to his supper, but excellent as it was, he forgot himself every little while, and fell to

rapping on the table with the handle of his fork, calling upon the whole company to "kill the fatted calf," and asserting emphatically that "everything goes by threes."

Edward had hardly commenced his supper, when another knock came at the outer door, and a moment after Rosy's yellow turban was thrust into the room. "Lawsakes, Massa Edward, nebber you mind noting bout dem remaginary people. Jest stay and include your supper."

"What 'remaginary' people, Rosy? you haven't told me yet," said Edward, with a smile. "Does anybody want to *exclude* my supper?"

"Dem 'ere Stetsons, ober t'oder side ob de river. Dey's ollers 'larmed bout noting at all. Shame to send arter you, anyhow, sich an orful night as dis yer. 'Pears dey might a' gone fur Dr. Higgins to-night."

"Excuse me a moment, I will step out and see," said Edward, leaving the table. A man, wrapped in a large overcoat, stood at the door. "Please, doctor, Mr. Stetson's youngest child has been taken with the croup, and he wanted me to bring you back with me, if you were at home. They are afraid it won't live till you get there."

"I'll go with you directly," answered the young doctor. Just warm yourself by the fire. How will you cross the river?"

"There is a boat waiting, sir."

Edward stepped into the dining-room, at the same time drawing on his overcoat, stated to the family the cause of his sudden summons, and flew out into the hall. Kate snatched his cup, followed him, and made him swallow the remainder of his coffee. He looked a little disappointed, and she saw it. "Never mind, Edward, we'll take our sleigh-ride to-morrow night. "Here's my shawl; nay, you *must* wear it; crossing the river will be terrible; take care of yourself, you reckless boy; not on your own account, but mine, you know."

Edward smuggled a sly kiss as the driver passed down the

walk, and in two minutes was rattling away on his mission of mercy. They drove rapidly until they came to a spot upon the road where a perpendicular cliff at the side overhung a rocky chasm of fearful depth below. Here they came suddenly upon a crowd of men who had gathered close to the edge of the precipice.

"Stop one moment," said Edward to the driver, "let us see what is the matter here."

One of the men turned round as he leaped from the sleigh, and went towards them. "There's no use o' you, doctor," he said, as he recognized him. "Nobody could topple onto those rocks and be alive five minutes afterwards."

"Has any one fallen *there*?" cried Edward, the blood chilling in his veins.

"Some woman was staggering along in front of Jonathan Meeks, and all of a sudden we see her go right over. We warn't near enough to help her, but the moon and snow together was so bright, we see her plain as day."

His listener shuddered. "And didn't you know who she was?" he asked.

"No sir, we got no chance to see her, she was so far ahead of us. Jonathan Meeks and Big Sam's gone round arter her. There, they's coming up the hill to the side yonder."

"You'll have to wait a moment," said Edward to the driver. "I must stay and see if there is any hope of restoring life. How terrible!" he murmured, as he looked from that giddy height into the chasm below. "There *can* be no hope."

As the men neared the top of the hill, he advanced to meet them. "You're here just in time, doctor," said a man a little in advance of the body, "wan't it lucky ye happened along just this minute? We sent one man right off arter you, and another arter Dr. Higgins, but we hadn't no idee either one'd get here afore another half-hour."

"Who is it?" asked Edward. "Is she alive?"

"It's Sally Jones, sir; she ain't dead yet, though I guess

she's mighty nigh it. She's orfully smashed, though—it's drefful!"

When they reached him, they stopped, and laid her on a buffalo that Edward had taken from the sleigh. It was a horrible sight, that ghastly bloated face, distorted with violent passions, turned upward to the pure moonlight. The tangled hair was literally drenched in blood, and every few moments a fierce spasm contorted the upper half of the figure. The young physician, although with a sickness at his heart, stooped over her, and used every method to restore her to sense. But after a few minutes' effort, she started up, cast up her arms, fixed upon his face one long look of anguish and remorse that haunted him for years, and fell back stiff in death upon the ground.

There was nothing further for him to do; he left the men to carry home their ghastly burden, and hurried on to his destination. The wind came with a chilly sweep down the Hudson; as they crossed the water in a large row-boat belonging to Mr. Stetson. "Taint no sort of a night to be dragging you over here, that's a fact, doctor," said the boatman, as he tugged at the oar. "But Mrs. Stetson's powerful nervous, and she's took a fancy nobody can't serve her but you. Howsomever, Master Charlie is mighty bad to-night, anyhow."

The little boy's illness had excited great alarm. As Edward rode up through the grove surrounding the noble mansion, lights gleamed through the leafless trees from almost every window. When he reached the door, he was eagerly drawn within by Mr. Stetson, who was pale with anxiety, and conducted immediately to the suffering child. The scene was one that is always terrifying in the extreme to an inexperienced parent, and even one which the best physicians cannot look upon without serious alarm. The little fellow was struggling for breath; it was evident that some effective remedy must be used immediately. Edward took a small box from his pocket, mixed a powder, and administered it to the sufferer. Then

stripping up his sleeves, he proceeded to bathe the little feet with his own hands. Active and sympathetic, he was not contented with performing the stated duties of his profession, and could never see his patients suffer, without taking upon himself half the duties of nurse.

It was some hours before the little creature was in a condition that warranted the warm-hearted doctor in leaving him. He was urged very strongly by Mr. Stetson to pass the night, but he remembered another sufferer whom he had promised to visit that night, so he was firm in declining his invitation.

"Your little one is out of danger for to-night, Mrs. Stetson," said he, stooping over to listen to the infant's breath. "If he should be worse to-morrow, you will have to send for me again."

The tears sprang to the eyes of Mrs. Stetson as she shook his hand in parting. "Excuse me, sir," she said, "but I have never seen a doctor who seemed to *feel* so keenly for suffering before. We should not have sent for you to take such an unpleasant journey to-night, but that I *could* not trust to another physician."

Edward colored at the compliment uttered by the lady in a half-apologetic tone, and said laughingly, "Oh! Mrs. Stetson, I'd never choose a profession unless my heart were in it, and wherever so stanch a patron as Mr. Stetson is concerned, it would certainly be for my *interest* to take a little trouble. Good evening."

"Nonsense!" exclaimed Mr. Stetson, as they passed down the stairs; "I've known you too long, doctor, for any of that palaver; interest alone wouldn't have brought you over here to-night, unless your heart had something to do with it."

"You seem inclined to flatter me this evening, at anyrate," said Edward, taking his hat from the stand in the hall.

"Stop for a few moments, doctor, I beg of you," exclaimed his companion, laying his hand on his shoulder, and half-forc-

ing him into the dining-room. "You did not think I would allow you to return at midnight without refreshment."

At this moment a servant entered with a tray containing some sandwiches and cold chicken, and Mr. Stetson unlocking a small closet, drew out a bottle of wine. Edward was *very* tired, for his day's labor, previous to his evening journey, had been wearisome, so that he enjoyed his late repast exceedingly. A flitting thought of Kate's warning for an instant stayed his hand as he was lifting the wine glass to his lips, but the next moment he thought of his exciting ride, and bodily fatigue, and felt convinced that it was not for *such* occasions that her caution was intended.

The draught certainly refreshed him, body and mind, rendering him in a measure impervious to the cold blast that swept the river, and the terrible shadows that seemed hovering about the spot where he had that evening seen Death in one of its most fearful forms.

Yet—yet—it was unsafe.

CHAPTER XXVI.

ALICE AINSLIE's wedding was over. The affair was not essentially different from other weddings. There was the usual amount of white satins, French laces, and orange flowers. There were little cakes and large cakes, temples of liberty made of sugar candy, and grottoes of candied nuts. The world said it was a very pleasant wedding; probably *they* referred to the white satins and sugar candy; but once, for a wonder, the world and the parties interested agreed. Not one of the whole family but were pleased with the match, except, indeed, poor Clarence, who fretted so much over it for a month beforehand, that he looked very miserable indeed on the eventful day.

Judge Ainslie, in tremulous tones, had spoken the parting blessing—the mother had offered the parting kiss—Aunt Sophie, in her gentle, stately way, had given the parting advice, and the children had cried till their eyes were red, and their faces swollen, totally unmollified by the promise of the entire ruins of the temple of liberty, and the grottoes of candied nuts. Mr. Pufton had whisked about jollily enough, with his little face all of a blaze (“a regular nice Liverpool coal fire,” as Alice afterwards told Aunt Sophy), sending out cheer and warmth all over the room. Edward had offered his congratulations, not so much with the lips, as with the true brotherly feeling beaming out from those glorious eyes. Kate had offered her soft kiss without speaking, but the gathering tears said more than words. Sophronia, in a more than ordinarily glorious head-dress, had taken a queenly leave of the charming bride

and noble groom, and they were off and away to share heart and life together, so long as heart should beat, or life should last.

At Mrs. Ainslie's earnest request, Kate had consented to stay for a few days after her daughter's departure. It was sorely against her inclination to leave her invalid father, but Edward urged that she was suffering from confinement, and her mother said, “Go, Kate, thou must get back thy roses, or I shall have both thee and thy father to nurse before spring.” So she had yielded, and Edward suddenly discovered that he had some important business in the city, although he could not make out at all to anybody's satisfaction, where the importance lay.

The morning after the wedding, Mr. Pufton was ambling along towards his warehouse. Few people were as yet astir, for he was always up betimes, so that he might get through sooner; he said, he “liked plenty of time to play.”

“As he passed James Slip, he saw a crowd of men gathered out at the end of the dock about some object of apparent interest. He advanced towards them, and elbowed his way through, until he could see the cause of the disturbance.

On the ground before him, a woman was sitting, with her head down, and an old hood over her eyes. A little further on, a little girl knelt with her back towards him, leaning forward with arms folded, and extended above something that lay beneath them, while stifled sobs burst out from the little bosom that bent brooding over the object of solicitude.

A tall stout gentleman, with one of those peculiarly bland countenances that finds instantly the path to every heart, was talking to one of the two policemen.

“Can nothing be done for the child?” he asked, “nothing?”

“No sir, 'taint no use,” was the reply. “The child's dead as a hammer, and all we've got to do is to see to the woman. Come, get up, won't you?” He had hold of her arm, and was trying to rouse her. “You see, sir,” he added, turning again,

"we are so used to such sorts o' things, we don't feel so tender like over 'em as you."

As he continued endeavoring to draw the woman from the ground, she at last lifted her head and looked around her with a stupid stare. Puf-ton stood directly in front of her, and as he met the expression of those blood-shot eyes, he turned suddenly round, as if he would escape. But the crowd hemmed him in on every side, so he flew round to where the little girl was kneeling, and looked in under the brooding arms. There lay a little figure, but half-clad, and a little face that he had seen before, motionless as now, with a black stain around the mouth and eyes, that told of the dread death-agony. It needed not the cry that burst from Lucy's lips, as her eye fell upon him, nor the look of living anguish on her face, to make the little gentleman lose all self-control, and sob and cry like a suffering child.

This time he was totally overcome. He forgot the crowd, the observation he was attracting, everything but those three human beings upon the ground before him. One of the policemen at last succeeded in getting the intoxicated woman to her feet, and leading her away. The other advanced to the child. "Come, my little one," he said in a softened tone, "I will carry away the baby for you."

Lucy bent lower over her treasure. "No, I'll take care of him," she sobbed, "leave me alone."

The man stood for a moment irresolute; then he stooped, and laid his hand gently on her arm. She uttered a scream, and turned wildly towards the benevolent gentleman who was looking on with tearful eyes. "Oh, don't let him take Millie away; don't—sir. I'll watch here, I'm going to lie down here and die with her."

"My child," he said, tenderly, "you shall go with her; we don't want to leave you here in the cold."

"I can stay where Millie stays. Oh," she cried in a fresh burst, "Mother wasn't so once; she used to love us, and take

care of us before father died, but now she has killed Charlie and Millie, and she'll kill me some day, I'm sure she will. I'd rather lie down here and die with Millie," and the child actually stretched herself down upon the ground, and pressed her arms tightly over the little stiff figure.

"You'll find it harder'n you think for to die there," said the policeman, rubbing his coarse sleeve across his eyes. "Jingo, I've seen many a human crittur wanted to lie down and die, but I never see one so little as you before."

The benevolent gentleman bent on one knee beside her. "Suppose, my child, you get up and carry Millie to a nice bed that I'll find for you, and then you can lie down by her, if you like. Do you think you could carry her?"

The child looked up into his face, then rose without speaking, allowed him to lay her little dead sister on her arms, and tottered away, almost falling beneath the burden. The gentleman was walking beside her, but he was stopped by Mr. Puf-ton. "Wait sir,—one minute sir—I *must* speak, sir,"—

"You can take them up to — in that hack yonder," said the gentleman, turning to the policeman, "I'll follow directly." Susan turned round with a doubtful glance, but he reassured her by saying, "Go, my little one, I'll come in a few minutes, don't be afraid."

"You see, sir," began Mr. Puf-ton, wiping his eyes, and striving with all his might to get breath to speak, "I wanted to tell you, sir—I did it, sir—I smothered that baby, sir—Rick Ryker, sir—my porter, sir, his wife, sir—fact is, sir—I ought to be hanged, sir—give me your card, sir."—At every other word, poor Mr. Puf-ton swallowed a big sob, and tried to crowd back the tears with his handkerchief. It was of little use though, for he could barely make himself intelligible.

The gentleman took out his card, and handed it to him.

"Thought so, sir—clergyman, sir—I'll call on you, sir, this evening at eight, sir—meantime—sir—here—sir—I can't

do it, sir—take care of them, sir;”—and fumbling a bill out of his pocket-book into the gentleman's hand, he trotted away, rubbing his eyes, and talking to himself, before Dr. D. could recover his surprise sufficiently to follow him.

He talked away all the way to his store, without knowing when he reached it, if he had passed anybody on the way. He entered, sent away the porter, closed the door, locked it, and seated himself deliberately to think for a whole forenoon. It was tough work though. Every few minutes he was out of his chair, running up and down the store, bobbing his head, and shaking his arms; then down upon his seat again, where by dint of drawing himself close to the counter, he could manage to keep still for ten minutes or so; then back went the chair, and the big heart sent the little body adrift again.

That evening he kept his appointment with Dr. D. The reverend gentleman was sitting at his study fire, as Mr. Puf-ton was ushered into his presence. The fine large head was bald on the top, except a small dark lock just over the forehead, and his little daughter was rubbing her hand softly over it. As Mr. Puf-ton entered, saluting the clergyman, and shaking hands with the little girl, her father made a motion, and the child withdrew.

What was passing between them was a subject of speculation to Biddy in the kitchen, who was waiting to let the visitor out, for the poor girl sat trying to force open her sleepy eyes until twelve o'clock that night before he departed. Once or twice she went softly to the head of the stairs to listen, but she could only catch, "Yes sir—'pon my word sir—think so myself, sir—half thought so long ago, sir," uttered in a quick puffy manner, or the deep low tones of her master's voice, flowing forth in their accustomed melody, but so attuned to the place in which he was speaking, that she could not distinguish a sentence. Her eyes, however, were wide enough open, and her mouth too, when she stood hold-

ing the front door for the stranger's departure. She stared first at the slender limbs and feet, then at the funny little ball of a body, then at the round head with its bobbings and twistings, until they were all fairly out of sight.

"Good-night, sir—I'll do it, sir—you've finished the business, sir—I honor you for it, sir—never mind expense, sir—bless me, I ought to be hanged, sir;" and away went the little head, body, legs and all as fast as they could paddle.

Biddy rubbed her eyes, and looked with some terror at her master, at this alarming acknowledgment, but as he only turned away with his usual benevolent smile a little heightened perhaps, she contented herself with marching off to bed, muttering to herself, "Shure an' what's the use o' such folks bein' afther kaping dacent people up out o' their beds the whole blissed night intirely."

The next day Mr. Puf-ton was up at five o'clock in the morning. He swallowed one cup of coffee, but left the juicy steak and light roll untasted, and hurried off to his place of business. There was an elasticity in his motions, and a steady light radiating over all the rosy face, that told of something uncommon in Mr. Puf-ton's life. He reached the store in advance of the porter, and expended all his stock of patience in perambulating the sidewalk before that personage made his appearance.

As soon as they were inside, he locked the door, and turned with a confidential half-whisper to his porter, "Patrick! do you think you could dig a drain from this window to that sewer in the yard?"

The man gaped in astonishment. "Yes sir, I suppose so," he answered with a perplexed air.

"Well, do it Pat, and here's two shillings if you finish it in an hour."

Patrick took a spade and commenced work outside, while Mr. Puf-ton mounted the high stool at his desk, and watched operations. He tried to sit as still as possible, but various

nudgings and elbowings showed how great was the self-control necessary. At last, letting himself down, he flew out, and snatching the spade from Patrick's hand, exclaimed, "There, sir, just get another spade, I'm going to work myself to-day, so I am, sir."

The man looked puzzled again, but went off after another spade, leaving Mr. Pufton hard at work, panting and puffing all the time, and finding his rotund little body vastly in the way of his novel occupation. When the drain was completed, Patrick stared harder than ever, for his master pointed to a small cask of his very finest brandy, saying, "Bring that here, and set it on the window; there now, knock in the head."

Patrick looked stupidly at the beaming face, and paused, but the ecstatic twinkle of the little gray eyes convinced him that the gentleman was in earnest; so, striking a severe blow upon the head of the cask, he watched the bright stream sparkling in the light, with a rueful gaze, wondering what could have caused such a revolution in his merry little master.

When that cask was emptied, another was brought, and another, Mr. Pufton assisting to lift them to the window, or poising them upon the sill, watching with that same ecstatic twinkle the streams flow fast and free, without noticing the taciturn porter's dismay as the business proceeded. As the little gentleman advanced in its prosecution, he became more excited, seizing and emptying wine bottles, upsetting demijohns, breaking decanters outright, and holding unlimited conversations with himself. "Pufton, you've been crazy all your life, so you have; this might have been done before. I see it all now—bless me, so I do. John, hold that demijohn straight, sir—I see it—*straight* sir—can't save poor Ryker, though, too late now, sir. Patrick," with vast vehemence, "I charge you—I command you, sir"—

"What, sir?" asked poor stupid Patrick, with a blanker stare than ever.

"Never to drink a drop, sir. I'm convinced now—at last,

sir; it'll ruin you, sir; *I'll* never drink or sell a drop again. Heaven help me; never, sir, never!"

Poor Patrick was half-convinced as well as his master by such energetic words, although he ventured no further answer.

It was five o'clock in the afternoon before the work of destruction was completed. Patrick had dispatched his two leviathan slices of bread and butter at twelve o'clock, but Mr. Pufton could not eat; his whole frame was so under the influence of his exciting occupation, that he felt neither hunger nor thirst, heat nor cold. When the last cask was empty he sent Patrick away, settled himself down in his great easy-chair, and drained a goblet of *water*. How strange it seemed, swallowing that draught of water in the place of his accustomed beverage. There was a longing within, that water could not satisfy; but Mr. Pufton, once convinced, was firm as the Eddystone Lighthouse. The deed of his life was done; he had thrown up a thriving business, destroyed many thousand dollars' worth of stock, laid himself open to the animadversion of all his brother rum-sellers, as well as of the fashionable world in general; but any one who knew him, would as soon have thought of seeing the rocks of Eddystone return to their primitive mountains, as the new *principles* in the breast of that impulsive little gentleman recede before the power of old and long-cherished habits.

The most violent excitement is sure to bring a corresponding reaction; it was, consequently, but a few minutes after Mr. Pufton had seated himself before he was in a sound slumber. He looked comical enough, too, sitting there so cosily in his high-backed chair amid the broken decanters and empty casks, like a monarch amid the ruins of his kingdom. But the dimpled smile on each fat cheek, and the peculiar glow of satisfaction that lit up the rosy little nose, spoke of anything but dissatisfaction with the ruin he had

wrought. The plump hands (pincushions, Alice called them), were folded complacently upon the round stomach, and the feet were comfortably stretched upon a small keg before him.

Slowly the twilight gathered, like a mist rolling in at the window over the disordered room; creeping over the curious little body that God had made the casket of a noble heart. The hum of business died away upon the crowded streets; the lamps were lit outside, and the twilight grew deeper about Mr. Pufton in his lonely slumbers.

A light flickers about the room; not the holy twilight, nor the ray of the rising star, but a lurid glare, like the blaze of a subterranean fire. Tiny figures, clothed in the fearful light, take shapes of terror, and stand out in the darkness. The smile fades from the sleeper's face. The fiendish forms gather upon the broken casks; they come towards him. They light upon his hands, his knees; they cover the keg that forms his footstool; they cast threatening glances towards him; they scowl frightfully and beat upon his breast; their hot breath floats into his very nostrils: their eyes come close to his; their bony fingers touch his cheeks. Still he has no power to stir. Motionless he sits, as though a chain had bound him hand and foot, watching the terrible figures, and listening to their shrieks.

Suddenly the light that envelops them grows fainter; they gnash their teeth, but slowly recede. A sound like the rustling of angel wings falls upon his ear. Down upon the starbeams float two figures, clothed in a light purer than the twilight, brighter than the sunbeam. In at the window, over the broken casks, just above and on either side of the sleeper. From the extended wings fall showers of light that bathe him like a glorious halo. He smiles again. The soul, roused from its long error by the silent appeal of two marble infant faces, knows that those pure spirits, enfran-

chised from poverty, pain, and sore temptation, have come back again to smile upon his high resolves. The fiends fall back; they cannot enter within that vail of purity. A groan like the wail of a suffering demon, and Millie and Charlie, glorious in angel garb, are alone with the slumberer.

CHAPTER XXVII.

MR. PUFTON was awakened at seven o'clock by the bell of the Old Brick Church, which stood but a short distance from his store. He rubbed his eyes, and looked about him. It was all dark, except the starlight coming in at the window. He groped his way out and locked the door. He walked up town in a quieter mood than he had ever done before. The light falling from those angel wings had shed a soothing calm over his spirit. He felt the effects of that blissful dream, as truly as though the illusion had been reality. And who dare say that those two beautiful spirits came not down upon the star-beam to shed blessings on his head, to whom their departure from earth had been God's way of bringing truth home to the erring heart?"

Edward was the first person to whom the important deed accomplished must be known. So away went Mr. Pufton to Judge Ainslie's, refreshing himself by the way with an oyster stew, and a cup of coffee. As he entered the parlor, Edward, Kate, and Mrs. Maylie, were cosily chatting together before the fire. He shook hands vehemently with his namesake and Kate, and very faintly with Mrs. Maylie. For a moment her presence restrained him from uttering the exclamation that was on his lips, but before he was fairly seated, out it came.

"It's done—Edward Pufton Clarence—all over—finished up entirely."

They all looked inquiringly at his contented face, and Edward asked, "What have you done, sir?"

"I've broken up my establishment, sir—knocked in the rum casks, sir—knocked out the brandy barrels, sir, knocked to pieces the wine bottles, sir, and forsworn all meddling with the wretched business *for ever*, sir." As he concluded, he looked a little fiercely round upon the company, and his rosy face grew rosier as he saw Mrs. Maylie's sudden start and flush at his announcement.

"Why, Mr. Pufton," exclaimed Kate, "what 'change has come o'er the spirit of your dream,' that you've done such wonders without letting us know a word about it? I half believe you are joking now."

"No joke, I assure you," exclaimed Mr. Pufton, rubbing his hands delightedly together. "Anything but a joke, ma'am," he continued, addressing Mrs. Maylie; "the whole concern's blown up; no starting it again, either; fact, ma'am, I'm speaking Gospel truth, ma'am."

The lady whom he was particularly addressing was sitting at the table, with her head reclining upon her hand. As Kate's eyes encountered hers, there was something shining out from them, that drew her attention from the more animated figure of the dapper little gentleman performing all sorts of expressive pantomimes in the excess of his delight. She said nothing, but her heart recognized the going forth of that other woman's heart to the being for whom her best life's love had been sealed till now. The little gentleman, himself, however, didn't see anything particular, except that Mrs. Maylie looked very much pleased, a circumstance of course, which tickled him exceedingly, as did everything that pleased anybody, more particularly that lady herself.

"Why, my dear sir," exclaimed Edward, "you are affirming impossibilities. How many times have I heard you exhaust every argument in favor of your business to induce Byng to enter Mr. Dunn's establishment."

"Facts, sir, are stubborn arguments, sir. No thrusting aside facts sir. Remember Ryker, my boy, poor Ryker!"

and Mr. Puf-ton's fat hand went hastily up to his eyes, and as hastily back again.

"But I thought you were at rest on that point," said Edward, "since the widow's reform."

"Reform, sir—bless your heart, sir; that's a different sort of reform from what I bargained for, sir—bless that baby, sir!" and he mopped up his eyes with his little fat fingers again.

"Come now," said Edward, "tell us what has happened; you only aggravate us with such hints; we are all anxious to know."

Mr. Puf-ton glanced again at Mrs. Maylie, and commenced a history of the last two days' adventures, related in a characteristic manner, broken up by sobs and chuckles, and all sorts of interjections, and concluded by an avowal of abstinence from the sale and use of anything of the sort for ever. "Fact is, Ned, my boy," he exclaimed, jumping up, and paddling up and down the room, with a very indignant countenance, "fact is, I ought to have been hung long ago, and then *this* wouldn't have happened at all. No, sir, I've been a fool, sir—all my life, sir, but am determined," here he strutted pompously and resolutely, "to be a fool no longer."

They had all shed tears at some parts of his relation, but there was a quiet smile more within than upon one face, in which Kate read a world of hidden meaning, and when Mrs. Maylie rose to leave the room she understood as perfectly the message conveyed to her in that single glance, as though it had been spoken in words.

"Good evening ma'am," exclaimed Mr. Puf-ton, bowing reverently, as though to a stranger of high rank; "had hoped to enjoy more of your society this evening, ma'am, but"—

For one instant he caught a strange light shooting from the eyes that had been his load-stars for fourteen years; his face flashed, and his voice failed; but the next instant, the long eye-lashes shaded the eyes again, and with a graceful cour-

tesy, Mrs. Maylie disappeared. For a few moments Mr. Puf-ton stood still just where she had left him, profoundly contemplating the floor. Edward and Kate were greatly edified, but looked grave enough when he turned round with a half-guilty look, and recommenced his self-denunciation.

"You see this, sir, I was old enough to have seen things before, sir, there's the trouble, sir, don't think I'll ever get over it, sir, those two little angels being sent out of the world, sir, and in such a manner, sir."

"The world is full of trouble and temptation, sir," said Edward, looking with a half sigh into the fire.

Kate sighed too, as she watched the shadow on his face, but after an instant she said softly, "Jesus says, 'Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the Kingdom of Heaven.'"

The round face brightened. "Yes, suppose they're better off—no doubt of it—and, God help me, I'll take care of the one that's left—so I will;" then turning suddenly round, he exclaimed, "you did it Edward, you know you did—remember the day you took me up into that garret?—one gone—the other just going—that wretched mother! ugh! 'twas murder, murder outright—and this one—the fat Dutchman, too—that buys some thousand gallons a year of *me*, sir—*bought*, sir—*bought*—he'll never buy again—no sir—NO!"

Having finished his sentence with a tremendous emphasis, he inserted both hands in his pockets, and took two or three more warlike marches up and down the room.

Edward still gazed sadly into the fire, and Kate, her eyes fixed upon his face, felt the "shadow" that had crept and crept, until "it was looking over the shoulder of the sunshine" in those happy hearts, so young, hopeful, and loving. She could hardly define the feeling, but it was there, stirring the gentle heart, and looking from the gentle eyes; the dread of *that* which could so desolate one home, humble though it were, came upon her spirit, as she watched the face so manly,

so beautiful, so full of the varied expression of a generous, unchanging heart.

Presently she thought of Mrs. Maylie, and suddenly rising she said carelessly, "I'll be back directly," and flew up to that lady's room. The door was locked, but she called softly, and Mrs. Maylie opened it. She was enveloped in a capacious wrapper; her curls, which Kate had always seen carefully looped with the back hair, hung in luxuriant carelessness about her face. Kate could not help noticing that they were rather more carefully arranged than her dishabille would have indicated, nor thinking that the flushed cheek and sparkling eye were more the index of what merry Sophie Ainslie *might have been* than what the stately Mrs. Maylie was. She knew her companion too well, however, to allude to anything of the sort; she merely said, toying with a little china basket on the table,

"Edward and I are going out for an hour or two; I promised him that I would step into the Academy of Design to-night; you had better come down and entertain Mr. Puf-ton. Clarence, you know, is asleep poor boy, after his last night's wakefulness, and my favorite will be fidgety, I'm sure, if he's left alone." There was the slightest mischief in the world in Kate's tone and eye, but Mrs. Maylie saw it, and her cheek flushed deeper than ever.

"I will come down after you are gone; but," she added, hesitatingly, "don't tell Mr. Puf-ton so."

Kate smiled as she answered, "No, certainly, if you do not wish it; we shall probably be out for a couple of hours; Edward is so fond of painting that he never can be persuaded to leave until the last minute. Is your patience equal to the task?"

Mrs. Maylie didn't raise her eyes as she replied with apparent indifference, "I think so, my dear; if my patience becomes exhausted, I shall take the liberty of leaving him to entertain himself."

"Come Edward," exclaimed Kate, as she entered the parlor, equipped for her walk, "we were going out this evening; Mr. Puf-ton, you know we would be delighted with your company, but I have been writing a letter home, and I want you to write a page or two, just to bear testimony to our good behavior."

"Certainly, my dear; write to your mother, my dear,—noble woman that, my dear—don't believe any testimony is needed though,—*she* knows that, my dear—daughter's a chip of the old block, that she is, my dear—beg pardon, my dear, for using a vulgar expression, my dear—most appropriate though, my dear;" and the hearty little face looked oceans of admiration on the fair being through whose blue eyes so much of the soul's beauty was poured upon those who had the purity to feel and appreciate its power.

"I think Mr. Puf-ton will dance when he reaches home to-night," said Kate, as soon as they were fairly off the steps.

"Why, darling?" answered Edward; "that would be winding up in comedy fashion, sure enough; I should think he would feel like anything but dancing."

"Don't say a word about it now, if I tell you a story, will you? It's no use asking you that, though, because I know you will tell the first chance you find. But you'll use every effort to keep it to yourself until we reach home again, won't you, dear?"

"I suppose I shall have to promise to satisfy you, if you think me such a tell-tale," said Edward, laughing.

"Well, Mrs. Ainslie told me one day the whole history of Mrs. Maylie's marriage. When she was only sixteen, she saw Mr. Puf-ton at a party which had been given by the young ladies of the boarding school with which she was associated. In the course of the evening they entertained the company with some *tableaux*, in which Mrs. Maylie represented Night. She wore a heavy black robe and vail, spangled all over with

stars, and on her forehead, above a magnificent coiffure of natural curls, rested a new moon, all setting off to the best advantage, her peculiar style of beauty. After the tableaux were over, the young ladies mingled with the guests without doffing their fanciful costume.

"It was in that tableau that Mr. Puf-ton first saw her; and that very evening an acquaintance budded which afterwards ripened into a real affection."

Edward laughed; "Mr. Puf-ton wasn't so fat and rosy then as he is now, Kate. But I'm sure I can't remember the time when he wasn't as peculiar."

"Oh well, I suppose everybody that ever knew him loved him a great deal better for it; it's the peculiarity of a heart so full of goodnature, that it boils over on all sides, making the greatest sputtering that—but there, I'm getting away from my story. Sophie Ainslie had engaged herself to Mr. Puf-ton before her father knew a word about it. He had somehow formed a prejudice against the eccentric young man, and being a very stubborn man, he prevented the marriage. Sophie was quite unhappy for a while, but, as the disappointed suitor had striven to forget her by leaving the country, the wound was partially healed at last, and two years after she was induced to marry a wealthy widower with one child."

"None of that seems at all like her!" exclaimed Edward. "I should have thought she would have persisted in never marrying any one else but Mr. Puf-ton, at any rate. Her sense of duty would be too great for her to marry against her father's wish, but she is the very *last* person I should have thought capable of yielding her hand where her heart was wanting."

"Sophia Ainslie," answered Kate, "was not at all like Mrs. Maylie. Mrs. Ainslie told me all about it. She said that the change in her character is actually remarkable. Sophie Ainslie was a warm-hearted, affectionate girl, and having lost

her mother when she was quite young, all her respect and love were given to her father. He really made her believe that she loved Mr. Maylie, so, although she sighed at the mention of Edward Puf-ton's name, she became the wife of another. For two years she lived with her father, and she, simple-hearted girl, didn't see but what she was about as well off as ever. She walked, talked, read with her father, just as she always had; Mr. Maylie was away all day, and often all night, on business, and little Sophronia was in charge of Miss Maylie, an elderly sister of her husband's.

"But when her father died, then her trials commenced. Oh, Edward, how dreadful it must be to wed an uncongenial spirit! there is"—

"And how delightful to wed a congenial one!" exclaimed her companion, pressing her arm closer to his side.

"Never mind, don't interrupt me, sir," said Kate. "You can imagine what Mr. Maylie was, when I tell you that Sophronia is almost his fac-simile in character, except that he was more stern and precise, as a man must be, than his daughter. What sort of sympathy could there be now, between such a man, and a frank, warm-hearted girl, whose soul poured out every sorrow and joy the instant she was conscious of its existence. As soon as her father was gone, her heart yearned for sympathy and companionship; she turned now to her husband; but he treated all her outgushings of tears, smiles, and gentle words of love as the caprices of a child, soothing her, not by gentle reasoning, and an interchange of sympathy, but exactly, Mrs. Ainslie says, 'as one would manage a spoilt child.' If she expressed a wish for anything, however important, or however trifling, he was sure to get it for her. But he would smile suspiciously at her pretty fancies; and when she had been pouring out tearful yearnings for a love such as her father had rendered her, he would put his arm about her waist, and stoop to kiss her, saying, 'Oh, my dear, you cannot *always* be a child; throw off

that childishness now, I admire dignity in a woman, and it would so become you."

"So the young wife crowded back her love, and smiles, and tears, praying and weeping only when alone. In time she became the dignified, stately lady that *we* have known. But Mrs. Ainslie says the old love and buoyancy is yet in her heart, and that she doesn't think it at all impossible that it should break away that hard crust of reserve which has been so long in forming."

"Why, Kate, her history is a perfect little romance, only wanting her union with Mr. Pufton to complete the tale. But Mr. Pufton would make a funny hero of romance, wouldn't he?"

"Wait, wait," said Kate emphatically, "you'll see what sort of a hero he makes by and by. I saw the crust breaking to-night. Dear Mrs. Maylie! I always loved her; I saw the love down at the core of her heart, at any rate, and felt it too, long ago. She has shown her affection for Mr. Pufton a hundred times by a glance or tone; I've seen it."

"Oh, Kate, you're so observing; why in the world wouldn't she marry him then; I'm sure he's been utterly devoted to her for his whole life."

"You'll see,—you'll see why before long; If Mr. Pufton doesn't dance the Virginia reel when he reaches home to-night, I'll be a false prophet forevermore. But here we are; why, I had actually forgotten where we were going."

What had been going on at home all this time in that pleasant parlor where a noble little gentleman had seated himself to write, and in the boudoir above where a beautiful woman was struggling with a newly-startled heart that throbbed and quivered as it had done seventeen years ago in the cherished home of her childhood's love?

Kate had no sooner left the room than Mrs. Maylie again locked the door, and dropping the loose wrapper from her shoulders revealed a robe of black, thickly studded with

golden stars. Uncovering a box that stood upon the chair, she took from it a crescent, and stepping to the glass, adjusted it carefully above her curls; then, fastening within it a long, black veil, also dotted with stars, she stood for a moment before the glass. One instant her lip quivered, and she leaned against the table for support, pressing her hand upon her heart, as though to hold back the wild gush of feeling that could not be controlled.

The fragile girl of sixteen was far less lovely in the dress, that, although carefully preserved, had dimmed the lustre of its gold, than the stately creature who stood there in the perfect symmetry of womanhood. The crescent above her forehead, the flowing veil and robes sending back in a thousand places the lustre of the radiant lights, the dark curls, all served to set off perfectly the pure complexion and perfect contour of the face. But the beauty of feature was nothing to the mellow radiance that beamed from the lustrous eyes, and over the flushed cheeks. There was something too, in the figure, less majestic, but infinitely more charming. The head was erect, the foot firm as usual, but there was a *something*, like a *shadow of light* that made her seem more like the tender, loving child of earlier days, than the unapproachable woman of maturer life.

Mr. Pufton had seated himself at the centre-table with Kate's writing desk. Taking out a sheet of paper and pen, after essaying several times to sit down composedly before it he at last succeeded in settling himself abstractedly to the task. Now came a new difficulty; there was only a small quantity of ink in the stand, and every insertion of the pen only brought out a blot upon his paper. After various exclamations of astonishment at the unaccommodating ink-stand, he at last succeeded entirely to his satisfaction, by poisoning one edge upon a small book, and commencing operations in earnest. He went on writing a full half page without stirring from his position. A side door softly opened, and the God-

dess of Night glided up to the mantel. But the writer was intent upon his sheet. For several minutes his head bent over the desk, and his pen flew along the page. The clock on the mantel struck. He looked towards it;—there stood the vision that had haunted all the life of love within, since first he came to man's estate. There stood the Sophie of his early love, one hand shading her eyes, as like to the moveless statue he had first seen her as the dream he had so often conjured through the years of hopeless love. For an instant he seemed petrified. Then suddenly giving the desk a little jerk that sent the ink soaking through velvet cover, embossed paper, envelopes and all, he jumped up, and flew towards her, with such a hope-light beaming from the round, bright eyes, as made the jocund face, rosy nose and all, actually beautiful. Suddenly he paused;—the figure did not move;—the color of the cheek deepened, but the eyes were still shaded with the hand;—he spoke softly, as though afraid the vision would vanish at his voice;—"Mrs. Maylie—Sophie—Madam—pardon"—

The hand dropped;—eyes, filled with tears, and further back, shining through their crystal vail, with woman's quenchless love, looked into his face. He started forward, catching both her hands in his. "Mine at last, Sophie?—God bless you, Sophie—Time has gone back, Sophie—Sophie Ainslie!"

Not Youth, nor outward Beauty winneth woman's love; but youth of heart, and the inner beauty that maketh of the sinful human breast a shrine where dwelleth Faith—Hope—Charity.

Didn't Mr. Pufton dance when he reached home that night? Didn't he wheel in all sorts of unimagined pirouettes up and down the floor of his solitary chamber? Didn't he tip over the pitcher upon the velvet carpet, and knock down all the chairs that happened to be in his way? Didn't he put on his flannel night-cap wrong-side before, and get into bed with

his boots on? Didn't he have dreams of goddesses in starry robes, and eyes that seemed like suns rising out of the darkness? Didn't he see little winged cherubs and empty brandy casks, and a fat little gentleman in an easy-chair sailing blissfully through the air together? Didn't he work harder and feel happier in his dreams than he had all day, and wake up in the morning, feeling equal, if necessary, to do battle with the world for the remainder of his mortal life?

When Kate returned, she smiled through her chagrin, at finding the half-finished letter on her ruined desk, and said laughingly to Edward, "Here is a proof that my prediction will be fulfilled, at any rate, but it is rather hard that *I* must pay a penalty for its fulfillment."

The next day, however, Kate felt herself amply repaid for the destruction of her desk, by receiving one of five times its value, inlaid with gold, and supplied with perquisites of the finest quality. Another proof, she thought, that my prediction was fulfilled. She carried it up to Mrs. Maylie for her admiration. Somehow that lady seemed more approachable than usual, for Kate said archly as she kissed her cheek, "I wonder if Mr. Pufton deserves *all* my thanks for this beautiful gift?"

Mrs. Maylie blushed, but there was not the slightest displeasure in her voice, as she answered softly, "*Nous verrons.*"

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THREE years vanished in the mists of past Eternity. New graves were scattered in the church-yard. New altars had been erected to earthly love. New flowers of immortality had blossomed in many homes. New thorns had torn the feet of weary pilgrims in a world of suffering and toil. New temptations had loomed up in the way of the unwary. New tears had been wept above the early dead, and souls had gone to be tried at a new tribunal for the deeds done in the body.

Change is floating ever in the wake of Time. The hoary spectre presses on, unceasing in his flight, and Change, vigorous in unending youth, scatters from one hand life, beauty, blessing—from the other, suffering, decay, and death.

There was one vacant chair in the Westons' home. A widow struggled hard to bow to His decree who had taken to Himself the noble heart he had lent to cheer the path a Christian treads to Heaven. A daughter, beautiful in the flush of womanhood, had taken her first great lesson in the school of trial through which has passed every saint of those around the throne "who have come out of great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."

Other trials, too, had left their impress on the gentle brow, and purified the inner soul. The warm love of woman's heart springing up in infancy, growing with her growth, and strengthening with her strength, mourned over one foot that many a time ere this had erred from the path of rectitude.

Alas for Edward! Temptation was too powerful for one so flattered and caressed in early youth. He had been sent to the State Legislature at twenty-four, and now at twenty-six he was talked of as a candidate for the State Senate. Society had laid out all its charms for the beautiful and talented youth so keenly susceptible to its influence. The class of society, too, in which he had mingled, was different from that of his earlier years. Piety and intelligence were the passports to his father's home, and in their atmosphere the frank ardent youth had breathed the pure air of holiness and truth.

But the giddy world, with a new standard of worth, new motives for labor, new rewards for success, had been drawing him slowly into the whirlpool of its pleasures. Not that he *disbelieved* the heavenly lessons of his earlier years, but he had forgotten them, or when recalled by an anxious father's pleadings, or by Kate's loving words, he thought of them as the mariner who loves the swelling billow, thinks of the quiet land, with a half-pity in his heart for those who so peacefully repose upon its breast.

Yes, Edward loved the "great wild billow" on which his bark was tossed. He enjoyed the eager battle for precedence, the glory of victory, the whirl of worldly pleasure. Was it strange then, that Kate, yet robed in mourning for her father, should bear always in her heart that last broken murmur of a father's voice, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world," or that her eyes should often dim with tears, that for him in whom her whole heart's hopes were centered, she must weep and pray *alone*?

The period first designated by the young physician for their union was occupied in smoothing the way of a suffering parent to the grave. When winter came, and Edward was so immersed in the pursuit of Fame, then first Kate's heart began to feel truly startled for his safety. She knew that perils are strewn all along the way of the ambitious, unknown

to those who walk meekly "all their appointed time, till their change come." But she had not been aware of the peculiar fascinations such a life would bear to the object of her love.

She saw him almost worshiped by many of his admirers. She saw him intoxicated with the excitement of constant activity in an occupation that had always been his chief delight. She saw him yielding often to the power of wine, and conscience told her as she softly said, "Lead us not into temptation," that if she were to enter the world of his pleasures, she would no longer have a right thus to pray, when she had cast herself, and was encouraging him in the midst of temptations whence few come forth unscathed.

Mr. Pufton was not much altered, except that his face was a little less rosy, and his manner, perhaps, a little less abrupt than in the days of his bachelor-life. Mrs. Pufton had taken back much of the frank buoyancy of her early youth, so that her dignity served to render more winning the gentle frankness of her heart. Judge Ainslie's family had passed through no very important changes, except that a rosy-cheeked boy sometimes asserted his supremacy at the table by appealing from Alice to "Ganma" for anything to which he happened to take a fancy. Little Ned was a vast favorite too, with poor blind Clarence, who carried him about on one arm, indulging every whim, and listening to every murmur. Poor Clarence! to his little nephew alone was his voice always gentle now, for sickness and intemperance had so grown upon him, that each had made vast inroads on both mental and physical faculties. It was a piercing thorn within a mother's heart, the result of that son's blindness. Her cheek grew pale and wan, her eye sunken, but when the wound was sorest, she remembered that "there is balm in Gilead and a physician there." Often when sleep was brooding on the eyelids of every other member of her household, did that mother kneel at the bedside of her inebriate son, and pour such prayers as only mothers can.

But the night was long and dreary. No light to the darkened eyes or heart. All night, in which the tempest of fierce passion howled, and moon and stars refused their light. Should there be no morning? Often through that fearful night of years, went up the cry of anguish from the unwearied love of a mother's breast. "How long, O Lord, how long?"

Sometimes the soul rebelled. She could but remember that of all the children given her of God, Clarence was the gentlest, most loving, and most appreciative of her own affection. She could but think, as the figure matured to manhood, of what he would have been without disease or its terrible results. It was to him that her eye had looked for the chief solace of later years; but now, he was adding cares many and hard to bear, to those already laid on her by an all-wise God. But, pressing back these murmuring thoughts, she kept her eye fixed on one great object—the final salvation of her erring son; and to this her best energies were ever directed. She strove to remember that "weeping endureth for the night, but joy cometh in the morning;" and she would not believe that no morning should dawn upon her sightless boy.

Mary had become the wife of Mr. Steele, whose growing reputation had won for him an honorable place in Laconia. Maggie, faithful and patient as ever, had taken charge of the district school, showing forth in the monotonous course of daily life, the power of that grace which was able to keep her even unto the end, and remaining, ever since that first earnest endeavor to lead a soul to Jesus, a faithful co-laborer with the young clergyman and his unselfish wife.

* * * * *

On a warm afternoon during the Indian summer, Edward was walking from his office towards Mrs. Weston's. That misty haze peculiar to the season, had cast over the landscape its softening charm; but there was something in the young man's eye that gave not back an answering glance to

the calm gaze of nature looking down reproachfully upon erring human life.

The full, dark, eye was not a whit less fascinating, nor the fine profile less classic than in his boyish days. The thick curls, defying all attempts of the barber's skill, curled as bewitchingly as ever. But a look of weariness and anxiety was settled on his brow that spoke of riper manhood. Nor was that all. A flush lay on either cheek that seemed hardly natural, although adding to the brilliant beauty of the intellectual face. As he strolled thoughtfully along, a shadow ever and anon flitted over his brow,

"Like that by a cloud in a summer's day made,
Looking down on a field of blossoming clover."

Memories, hopes and fears were thrilling within his bosom with strange, almost painful power. He had listened to words of adulation, he had made hearts throb, and pulses quicken, even in the halls where statesmen were gathered to pencil out their country's destiny. He had taken part in the gay revel, where bright eyes grew brighter, rosy cheeks rosier at his coming. Yet he felt, down in his heart of hearts, that one deep changeless love was more than all these to *his* spirit. Why not thrust them from thee then, young, noble heart, and take nestling to thy breast the dove whose meek eyes should charm away the demon of unrest that already tortures thee with unceasing murmurs.

God help the child of Fame! no mortal can.

As he passed up between the fragrant artemisias, Mrs. Weston came down stairs and advanced to the open door.

"Does thee prosper to-day, Edward? come in."

"So so—a little headache, that is all."

The old lady's calm eyes looked anxiously over her glasses at his face; she heaved a gentle sigh. "If I may be so bold, Edward, I'm afraid thee is getting too fond of late hours. Thee is so dear to me that I must tell thee."

Edward's cheek colored with a deeper flush. "It's neces-

sary just now, Mrs. Weston. I hope some day to be able to return to my old habits again. Where is Kate?"

"She has gone down to the grove with her book; it was so pleasant to-day that I thought it would do her good. Thee can go right down there, my son."

The calm eyes were fixed intently upon the figure of the being who, to that tender mother's heart, was dearer now than any living soul save one. Her face wore an expression of anxious thought as she watched him, which deepened into intense melancholy, as he disappeared among the trees. "God bless the boy, for He has given him too broad a heritage for his own managing," and she walked slowly into the lonely sitting-room.

It was Kate's especial delight to have roses blossoming in autumn when the wealth of summer was scattered. The entrance to her favorite retreat was bordered on either side by a number of monthly rose trees in full blossom. One, however, which she had taken special care to cultivate, this year had not repaid her efforts. It was a white moss rose, Edward's favorite, because, he said, it always reminded him of her. During the whole summer it had not borne a single flower, but now at last, one bud shot up its slender green, and was ripening to perfect beauty. They had both watched its gradual opening from day to day, and each, unknown to the other, and almost unconsciously, had linked its fate with hers who had so cherished the tree through years of prosperous growth.

As Edward passed it, he paused for a moment. A spider had strung its web over the half-opened petals, and across the leaves about it. He carefully removed the web, but as he pulled away a portion that clung around the stem, his finger scratched against a thorn, and the beautiful flower broke short off, still, however, adhering to his hand. He stood motionless for a few moments, looking ruefully at the broken flower, now stained with the blood that oozed copiously from

the wound. Then carefully extricating the thorn, he opened his bosom, and with an air of tenderness, as though the innocent little bud were a living, feeling creature, he laid it next his heart. As he turned again towards the grove, there, between the trees, at the water's edge, stood Kate, watching his movements, her cheeks blanched, her lips apart, and her eyes full of something half between love and fear. He stopped for a moment as though she had spoken a reproach, then hurried towards her with the very same glance of tenderness with which he had regarded the broken flower.

As they stood for one instant there, they would have seemed, to one who could not read the heart, true types of true man and true woman. He, with the tall figure, lofty carriage, eagle eye, and intellectual face; she with woman's and a christian's heart, stamped on the slender figure, and on every feature of the fair, pure face, gazing on each other with a sort of tender terror that pierced to either soul.

Before Edward reached her, she had sunk down upon the grass, and burying her face in her hands, was weeping bitterly. A chill struck to his heart; he laid his arm about her, and strove to raise her from the ground. But the tears flowed faster, the sobs burst forth with keener anguish in their moan. He looked alarmed. "Kate, *dearest*, why do you weep so?" and he fairly lifted her unresisting figure and led her to the same little rustic bench from which they had first gazed into the limpid stream, that gave back two faces in one sweet picture, the unchangeable emblem of their future destiny.

Kate was a true Christian, but suffering had not yet perfected the rebellious human heart, and this time she could not submit to conscience without a struggle. The very tenderness of Edward's voice as he strove to soothe her caused but a keener pang, and rendered it more difficult for judgment and duty to triumph over affection, as she had resolved they should when she next met him.

"Edward, leave me for ten minutes, and I shall be able to

tell you—nay, you *must* leave me, or I shall have to return to the house."

"But, *dearest*, who but me should soothe away your sorrows? You know that I would gladly devote"——

"Leave me—leave me," cried Kate in a sort of agony. "I cannot bear that you should talk so; go to the parlor for ten minutes, please Edward."

He looked doubtfully at her, then kissed her cheek, and turned towards the house.

Kate dropped upon her knees to pray. How hard it was, *there*, on the spot hallowed by the precious dreams of years, to give him up. She had not meant to meet him there. But he had come to her bearing the broken flower, an omen of her fate. How the heart, still clinging to an earthly love, struggled with its own throbbings, and prayed for strength to quell them. It was harder, too, to dash *his* happiness away, than to feel her own was gone. Such tasks sometimes are ordained of God to try His children's fidelity to Him. But the Spirit never forsakes those who call aloud for Almighty aid. When the wild storm of feeling was hushed in prayer, God sent his Comforter with words that rung through all the chambers of her soul, "As thy day, so shall thy strength be."

When Edward returned, she was sitting there, with her hands folded on her lap, and her face calm; but her cheeks wore a hectic flush, and her eyes were fixed upon the water.

"Well, Katie, tell me now why you wept so bitterly? Was your rose of such vast moment, or have I offended you in any other way?"

As he spoke, there was a tremor in his voice that told his listener of the reproach his heart was uttering for worse than the accidental breaking of a rose.

"Edward," said Kate, in a low, quivering voice, and without raising her eyes, "you have thought me wanting in affection to defer the period to which we have both looked as the hap-

piest moment of our lives." She paused to gather breath, for her voice almost choked. Edward's face flushed almost to scarlet, but he said nothing, and Kate continued: "Events have occurred which have led me to feel that our mutual happiness would never follow our union."

"Then you have ceased to love me, Kate!"

The quiver that played at the corners of the lovely mouth was answer enough; but she said in a still lower tone, "I shall love you Edward, and you only, till the day I die; but I *know* that under present circumstances, I should not add to your happiness."

"Kate, do you not believe that I would give up anything for you?"

"I do not ask it. I shall only pray"——

"Pray what, Kate?" this with an eager tremor.

"That you may learn at last to give up all for Christ."

"But I will leave all to-morrow, if you will be my wife."

The speaking eyes were for a moment upraised. "Your chance in the Senate!"

"You do not wish *that*. I mean all my associates, and—wine, if you wish it, Kate."

Her eyes fell again. "There is *no* safety out of the Ark, Christ Jesus. Oh! Edward, give up your nomination, leave all your old acquaintances and temptations, and let us fly to some place of refuge."

"I have pledged myself to stand by the party I represent, and you, Kate, would be the last to induce me to violate a pledge."

"It cannot be!" sobbed Kate, again bursting into tears. "We must part. I can never be yours, Edward. Go, and forget me."

"Forget you, Kate!"

She pressed back the tears, and stood up, pointing to a linden tree in the garden, just visible between the shrubbery.

"There is the tree that was to be like you, Edward. It has

been drooping for two or three seasons, and now you see it has become leafless before any other tree in the garden."

"And you would thrust aside the withered branches, to be nursed by no fostering hand, nor nourished by any sunlight," answered Edward, with some bitterness.

"No, Edward, it is not that; I would spend my life in trying to restore its beauty, did I not know that so to do were sin, and could be productive of no happiness. I only spoke to tell you this; no power but that of God, no sun but that of piety, can bring life to the heart so mixed up with the cares and pleasures of this world as to forget Heaven."

Her voice had gathered strength, and she looked, as the red autumn sunlight streamed through the foliage on her figure, like a beautiful prophetess giving forth the oracles of God. "No, Edward, I can *not* become your wife; but I will pray for you as you pass on your way of peril, and I *will* believe that, at some far distant day, perhaps, when ambition has ceased to lure, and you have achieved a temporary victory over that mightier tyrant, wine, you will be brought to the feet of Him who will sustain in suffering, shield in temptation, and deliver from evil all who come unto Him."

She paused for an instant, then stepping nearer to him, she said tremulously, "And now, Edward, you must not see me for some time again; we could not bear it, until we had learned to think of one another as dear friends, but nothing more. My *heart* is yours till death. Good-bye." She pressed her lips to his forehead, and two or three hot tears dropped upon his face.

He put out his arms to detain her. But she was gone. He watched her gliding swiftly up the path, and it seemed to him that the angel of his life went with her from his presence for ever.

CHAPTER XXIX.

"Room, there—room! I hain't got my vote in yet. Faugh, you smell as strong here, as though you'd been pouring down raw brandy by the pailful," and red-whiskered Jonathan Meeks blustered his way to the polls through the half-drunken crowd, with as much ease as a man might scatter a lot of monkeys on either side.

"Nebber seed nuffin like yer, dis nigger didn't, nohow!" shouted Lame Joe, rolling his eyes, and showing his teeth. "Since dat mem'able 'casion ob yer refferation, 'pears yer's a smellin' eberyting under de sun. Tink yer's sniffled yer own bref some time back, dis nigger does now." Joe looked very philosophical, and scratched his head accordingly.

"Jonathan's *cold water* man now," exclaimed Tom Brown, looking ten years older than we last saw him. "Better turn Methodist, Jonathan, like friend Jones. So happy to get his freedom since he's been bachelor, went and turned sarm-singer on the strength of it."

"Don't say nuffin," said Joe in an undertone, grinning from ear to ear, "reckon somebody'd sing hi-lorious sarms if he'd a got a wife at all; 'pears quare now, don't it?"

Brown turned redder in the face than ever. "I thought Joe, you know'd your place, sir"—

"Hi," said Joe, with his arms on one side.

Brown turned up his cuffs, and squared himself. Joe burst into a guffaw, and two or three of the bystanders, who had laughed before, shouted, "Give it him, Joe; give it him."

"'Pears now, dat ain't fair play, nohow; I could throw yer

out doors, in a half a minute, don't yer know dat now? Lawsakes, don't know nuffin 'bout Joe yet, don't mean nuffin 'tall, jes' little fun, dat's all."

"*Polls closed!* Seven o'clock," shouted Jonathan Meeks, returning through the crowd. "Guess Clarence'll get it for Senator; what, Teddy, you here?" The huge, whiskered fellow stooped and lifted Teddy Toole from a low bench where he had fallen from sheer want of ability to keep himself upright. "Save us, can't you do nothing but carry on this way. Why, man, you're dead drunk already, come along home."

"Dat feller can't stan' noting noway, han't regested no more'n ole Joe; 'pears Rosey'd look quite smilin' if I didn't imbulge no farder."

"So much the more shame for you, then," answered Jonathan, at the same time making an effort to draw Teddy after him. "Great, strong chaps like you never does show the drink so quick. But it'll show after a while; wher the horrors comes again, Joe, you'll be worse nor poor Teddy is now."

"Dis nigger ain't afeard ob dem yer, noways," laughed Joe, "plenty ob de article keeps off de horrors. Guess dat's what frightened brudder Jonathan now, 'pears quare he's so stiddy, don't it?" The drunken negro looked round upon the bystanders with a grin of ridicule, but Jonathan, totally heedless of his fun, almost shouldered Teddy, and marched slowly out, saying as he went, "Now you all know that I don't care a straw for your bantering; when Jonathan Meeks does a thing, its done, and no half-way work about it. Come, Teddy."

"Well, I suppose we might as well clar out, too," said Joe, moving with a slight swagger to the door. "Dey won't let us stay here now; let us trable on to Tim Rafferty's."

"Tain't often we get leave to stay so long as this *here*; said a fellow in a red flannel shirt, and blue pantaloons.

"Gamp gets custom enough, now-a-days, without poor devils like us. Let's have three cheers for Dr. Clarence, before we go, anyhow."

"Three cheers for Dr. Clarence," shouted Joe. "He'll carry ebery ting, so he will; *nebber* seed nuffin like him."

"Three cheers for Dr. Clarence, boys. *Hurra! Hurra! Hurra!*"

The room rang with the repeated shouts, and before the echo had fairly died away, the intoxicated group had nearly deserted the place, shouting and cheering on their way to a lower den of drunkenness and ruin.

In the saloon above were gathered a company of a very different character from that congregated in the lower apartments. Judges, lawyers, physicians, merchants from two or three of the neighboring towns, had dropped in to ascertain the respective chances of their favorite candidates, while the anxious candidate who had received the almost certain majority for Senator, lingered with fevered anxiety, lacking both inclination and ability to leave the charmed spot until his success was decided.

Edward was sitting at one end of the room, receiving congratulations and assurances of victory from his friends. But, to those who knew him well, an expression of painful unrest told of keener suffering than the most triumphant success could have inspired joy. There was a fire in the eye, and a dark red spot in each cheek, that seemed deeper in its intensity than even the excitement of such an hour would indicate. He was suffering severely from a violent headache, and the hot blood coursed wildly through his veins. Wine, as usual, was circulating freely, and the young man partook recklessly of the only stimulus that could render him able to meet the exigencies of the occasion.

"Calm yourself, young gentleman," said Judge Reid with a pompous bow, "there is not the slightest danger of your

defeat. Look upon it as decided, go home and to sleep, and all will be right in the morning."

Lawyer Flip glanced at Edward, saying, "I have no more doubt than you of the result of the election, but I haven't much faith in putting *that* patient to sleep, until the crisis of his disease is past."

"Really," said young Reid, "one would thuppothe that thome other cauthe of ancthiety exthithted for Dr. Claranthe. He wath quite thelf-pothethed latht time he wath a candidate."

The peculiar tone in which these words were uttered, caused both Edward and Judge Reid to look up for his meaning. There was an expression of triumph gleaming over his face that puzzled the Judge, who turned away again to discuss his champagne. But to Edward's mind there flashed a sudden memory of his having seen Reid several separate times entering or emerging from Mrs. Weston's door, and that during the two months of his absence from the house. He had never, for a moment, lost his faith in the purity of motive that had prompted Kate's conduct, but now a flash of something between terror and indignation shot through his fevered brain. How should Reid know of the cause of his deepest anxiety? Why should he visit there so often? how could he *dare* to cast that glance of triumph upon *him*, unless he had received *some* token of favor?

The flush grew deeper on his face, and the pang keener in his heart. Once he would have scorned the thought of such suspicion, but he had mingled much with a fickle world, and he was losing hold of his fresh faith in the true hearts of his childish love. Reid was wealthy, aristocratic, and generally considered fascinating to an extreme. He himself had been less attentive for many months, ever since that peace-destroying election had been talked about.

He hardly cared now, if he won or lost the prize. But still, if he did *not* win, into what channel could he throw his

desperate feelings. He pressed his hand upon his brow, laughed, talked, and used every effort to mingle in the gay flow of spirit around him.

They stayed—Edward, Judge Reid, lawyer Flip, and a few more of his friends, until ten, eleven, twelve, waiting for the last returns. At length the news came from N—and R—, two of the remotest towns, that it could not be decided until the following day. So they were obliged to leave, one, at least, of them, completely worn out in mind and body, but doomed still to suffer from newly-awakened suspicions, and prolonged suspense.

Little that passed under Gamp's observation but was remembered by him. He alone of those present had read the purport of those two glances passing between Reid and Clarence. When they had all left him, he sat musing by the lower fire. His blood was cool, his step firm as usual.

A low knock sounded at the door. As he opened it, Dr. Higgins, lank and forlorn as usual, only a little more so, pushed into the saloon.

"What the —— brought you here this time o' night?" said the gentlemanly proprietor, looking cornerwise at his visitor. "You are getting dissipated, old boy. 'Tread the mill steadily.'"

"Hush," said Higgins, in a whisper, closing the door, and looking round with a frightened air. "More's in the wind than you think for, Gamp. Are you alone?"

As his visitor was speaking earnestly, and without his drawl, Gamp was a little startled, but he locked the door slowly, and led the way to a seat by the fire. "What is it then?" he asked, a little impatiently. "Out with it, Higgins."

"Are you *sure* you are alone?" asked the cadaverous doctor, with his eyes peering into every corner of the dimly lighted room. "Why don't you keep lights burning? this fire doesn't give light enough, nor half."

"What's in you, fellow?" answered his companion, looking

at his blanched face. "You're liker a ghost than ever, I declare. Here, take this," and he pushed over a goblet of wine. "Nobody's here, out with it, man."

Higgins drank off the goblet without a word, then drawing his chair close to Gamp, and lowering his voice, he asked, "Do you know what ever became of Mary Morris?"

"I don't often lose track of anybody with whom I have had such dealings as I had with her," was the answer. "'Twouldn't be safe, I imagine; when you drive skittish horses, you must keep hold of the reins, or nobody knows where you'll steer to."

"Mr. Dunn always thought she was in Australia," said his visitor.

"The more fool he! If he had looked after her a little, he might have been well enough yet. I never forget old friends so easily."

"But you don't know that she is Maggie Terry's mother," whispered Higgins.

"Well, Higgins, you *are* a cove! Couldn't *you* see it, the minute you laid your eyes on the girl. I'm expecting every day to receive a visit from that respectable lady. She was always wild over her brats, and she's been out here half a dozen times already, but *they* don't know it."

The doctor started. "I've never seen her since"—

"That's because you've lost your wits, man, or rather, because you've never had any. You're all heart, Higgins; whatever good deeds you've accomplished, your head hadn't much to do with them, anyhow. But say," he added with an impatient sneer, "is that what you've come to tell me; that's an old story, hardly worth repeating. It seems to have taken a wonderful hold on you, though."

"But she's been writing letters to Dr. Clarence. She's told the whole history of our doings with her and her husband; more, by a long shot than *I* thought she ever knew."

"And what o' that? She's not like you. Her delectable mode of life has sharpened her eyes. She's one o' the keen

'uns, is she, but if she couldn't *prove* anything against us when she was a decent woman, you don't fancy she'd do anything now the story's such an old one, and she—, you're a fool, man! you don't suppose *she'd* be believed on oath *now*; I took good care of that, years ago."

Higgins's lank figure shivered, and he peered into the darkest corner of the room. "Fact is, Gamp, I ain't over easy any of these days. My constitution's so impaired, that it affects my spirits wonderfully. I'd be willing to live in a hut on bread and water all my life, if I could take back the wretched deeds of my past history."

"You're in the wrong box when you come to *me* with any of your cant; keep a stout heart, man; you know the devil'll run off with you at last, don't let him get your soul for nothing; get all you can out of him first. That's *my* policy."

"But she writes other things that I know nothing of. Some man that started a porter-house in Catharine street about the time you left, has told some strange stories about a Timothy Murphy, that she seems somehow to be certain is you."

There was the slightest perceptible pallor on the listener's face, and he cast a sidelong glance at his companion. Something in the black depths of those evil eyes must have struck Higgins, for he turned away his gaze with a shudder, saying, "A hard story she tells, too."

"How the — did *you* get hold of all this precious information?" cried Gamp, with a forced laugh. "I didn't know you were on such intimate terms with your old friend Clarence."

"He didn't make me his confidant, by any means, but he commenced quizzing me in a roundabout way; that led me to suspect something, and I've been trying to find out what he meant ever since. I knew there was no way but to get hold of some of his letters, so I kept a strict lookout. One day the boy that carries up the letters stopped at the office with one or two for me. I sent him after a pitcher of water, and

slipped one letter from his bundle. He's a careless chap, and nobody'd think but he'd lost it."

"You've some sense left, at any rate," laughed Gamp. "And what was in the letter?"

"Allusions to the affair in which we were so mixed up, and this new story about Timothy Murphy, and a young Benson who had died at sea. She seemed to think that Billy was his child, but wasn't certain of it. Then there was something about a mutiny and a murder, and Murphy's escape in some mysterious manner from the hold of the ship where he had been confined, while the vessel lay at some port in Europe. She said that she had so managed that no one knew, thus far, of *Murphy's identity* or *existence*, save herself, but when Dr. Clarence should visit *Shroeck* as he had *promised*, it would be necessary to reveal all that was known. Of course I knew nothing about *that* affair. The letter was signed 'Maggie's Mother,' but I understood the allusions to her earlier years too well to be deceived."

Either the flickering fire or some sudden sickness spread for a moment a deathly paleness on the face of the attentive listener, but he stooped over, as if to stir the fire, saying with a forced sneer, "And so that is the bugaboo that scared you, ha? What on earth is all that to me or you either?"

"She seemed," said Higgins, hesitating, "so certain of your identity with Murphy, that I thought when *that* affair was searched into, perhaps"—

"Perhaps some other affair might be brought up along with it, and *your* name might be mentioned in connection with somewhat equivocal company. I feel myself," he added, raising himself with a mock bow, "under eternal obligations for your disinterested friendship. There wasn't such vast occasion for alarm, however. Women's whims are not worth minding."

"But she spoke particularly of Billy, and of a package of papers which she had got from the porter-house keeper in

Catharine street, and sent about a month ago to Dr. Clarence. She mentioned your eyes too, and that scar on your left cheek, as marks spoken of by *Shroeck*, and I thought"—

"You thought the evidence was conclusive, ha?" Gamp rose suddenly from his chair, his face livid with suppressed rage, and coming close to Higgins, he doubled his fist close to his listener's face, "Harkee, sirrah, do you know where I got that scar? The captain of a ship struck me with a marlin spike, and I throttled him with this hand till he was dead. I was put in irons, but I escaped. The devil couldn't keep me if I was bound to get away, and no mortal man shall thwart me, and live. Now, sir, you know your man; ever lisp one word of what you have said to me, and by — I'll throttle you like a dog. I'll follow you night and day, and drink your life's blood out, as I have done others before you. And if I come to the gallows at last, I'll promise that you shall keep me company." He wound up with a hoarse oath, and a flourish of his clenched fist, while his companion, trembling with terror, edged away his chair, and kept his eyes fixed glassily upon the fiendish face and squinting eyes that shot fire from their depths.

As Gamp turned round, his eye fell upon a figure but dimly seen in the fading firelight, standing in the doorway at the foot of the stair-case leading to the upper saloon. "What ith the difficulty here?" cried young Reid, walking up to the fire; "I wath athleep up there, and I heard thuch a deuthed noithe, that I woke up in a hurry. What'th the quarrel, Doctor?" He walked straight up in front of the paralyzed Higgins, while Gamp doubled his fist behind him, and brought it suddenly to within one inch of the head of the unwelcome visitor, then, as though by a mighty effort, he let it drop again, forced away the fierce glance of revenge that had fallen unheeded upon the innocent young puppy, and walked away to the upper saloon.

The eyes of the poor doctor followed him until he was out

of sight, then for the first time were allowed to fall upon his interrogator. "Matter?" he muttered, "oh, nothing of any consequence, it's all right, I'm agreeable to anything, I'm sure."

"What on earth wath he making thuch a hurrah for, then? I thought you were going to fight, 'pon honor; you look thick, doctor, alarming, really. Better take thomething."

Gamp was absent but a moment, and when he returned, his face wore its usual bland expression. "How came you to escape my observation, sir?" he asked with a searching glance from under his black eyebrows at the young man's face.

"Fact ith, I was deuthed tired, waiting tho late for the returnth, and concluded to take a nap, while guv'nor and hon'ble talked politicth. Bleth me," he added, rubbing his eyes, "but I never thtirred till I heard you quarrelling here. Gueth you're like me, took a drop more than you needed. How did election go, ha?"

"We haven't found out yet, sir," answered Gamp. "News from N—— and R—— there was no telling till to-morrow. Oh, Clarence'll get it fast enough, no fear o' that; but he looks bad, worn out."

Reid smiled knowingly. "He hath troubleth of hith own; I imagine; but thuchtheth, I hope, will drive them away."

"I have heard," said Gamp, blandly, still keeping his gaze upon the young man's face, "that Mr. Reid was robbing him of some other honors."

Reid answered with a gratified expression, and a toss of the head. "Have you? indeed! I didn't know that any thuch agreeable reportth were about. Thenatorth are not alwayth the moht irretthithible." He stroked down his fashionable mustache, and Gamp would have liked at that moment to pull it out by the roots; but he answered in his most insinuating tone,

"Some men have complete control over the ladies; Dr.

Clarence would hardly hope to conquer alongside of you, sir. Your name is spread far and wide, sir, as a lady-killer."

"You flatter me," answered Reid, with a smirk; then, as though recollecting that he was compromising his dignity, he assumed his own ludicrous hauteur, and rose stiffly to leave.

"The doctor," continued Gamp, "is considerably indebted to you, for I believe I should have given him a thrashing, if you had not come in the moment you did. He brought me in such an enormous bill—you *know* he's a sharper, sir."

"I am very glad," said the young man, haughtily, "if I wath the intrument of tho much good. I fanthied I heard thomething about the gallowth, and wath quite alarmed. Good evening, doctor. Good evening, thir."

Half an hour after, Higgins was on his way home, and Gamp sat with clenched hands looking into the fire. "What a fool!" he muttered between his teeth, "to let that conceited jackanapes have a chance to hear such precious secrets. Thanks to his idiocy, though, I don't believe he knows anything that was said. Yet—if he were but to mention the incident, and Clarence were to get hold of it, it would sound queer, best way I can fix it. Something must be done, that's clear."

He sat for an hour without speaking. There was no *motion* of the face, yet there was a something changing ever in those terrible black eyes, and on that fierce brow. Hatred—doubt—triumph—scorn, but never fear—gleamed by turns from the daring soul within. At last he broke the stillness. "That's it; when did my wits ever forsake me; I've come nearer the gallows than this, more than once before; guess I'll have to try a bold game this time too. Settle Reid and Clarence, then there's the hag, something'll have to be done with her—and Shroeck—and that Bill—if *he* crosses my way,"—he grated his teeth together, and ground his heel hard upon the hearth. After a few minutes' pause, he added

with a low laugh, "Ha! *fools*, not *knaves*, are the ones that swing. I'll manage it."

Five minutes later, the great room was left alone. The clock ticking on the mantel,—the casks ranged along the wall,—the decanters glistening in the starlight that glimmered in at the little top-window—the great fireplace whence the wind whistled up through the chimney. Strange sounds mingled with the ticking of the clock and the sighing of the winds. Strange gleams, not made by the starlight, flashed along the laden shelves. The dark, still solitude was peopled.

CHAPTER XXX.

THE next morning Kate Weston was up with the dawn. Her cheek was pale, and her eye sunken, as though she had not slept. All the morning she wandered restlessly to and fro, as though incapable of going quietly as she was wont, about her domestic duties. Now to the front window, now down to where Rosy and Rebecca Jones were working in the dairy, then back to her room to take up her sewing and leave it in five minutes to listen to some fancied murmur in the street. Her mother watched her restless step, and listened almost as anxiously as she to every passing voice.

"Dar now, sweet soul," muttered Rosy over her churn, "but it make *dis* heart ache, anyhow, to see her trabbling about so oneasy all de time. God bless her! she looks jes' like an angel wid de consumption; 'pears she's growin' to noting at all dese yer times. She's mighty 'stressed 'bout dat 'lection; lawsakes, ollers thought Missie Katie didn't like Massa Ned to be 'lected, anyway; an' here she's jest a gwine

an' gwine up an' down de house, as dough her life was impending on it; nebber seed nuffin like it! Wish Joe'd come an' tell us, jes for her sake. 'Taint right fur me to ask what fur de Lord Almighty let de debil loose to vex poor old sinful Rosy, but can't see now what eber was de reason he wouldn't keep him out de way ob Mass' Edward an' Miss Katie."

The great yellow turban quivered a little, and two or three tears were stealing over the honest black face, as she turned to open the door for Joe. As he entered, a little soberer than usual, a light footstep was on the kitchen stair, and Kate, holding fast to the latch of the door looked speechlessly towards him.

"Dr. Clarence beat dem all hollow; dis nigger *nebber* seed nuffin"—

"Lawsakes, my darling!" cried Rosy, starting forward and putting her brawny arms about the slender waist, "do sit down here; you are pale as death. Joe, bring me some water."

"Never mind, Rosy, I'm better, now," said Kate, rallying. "Give me a glass of water; a little faint, that's all, I'm not well to day; there, I'll go up to mother, you need not come, Rosy, I'm well enough now."

Rosy watched her all the way up-stairs, and turned back to her churn, without deigning to cast a glance at Joe.

"Well to-day, sweetheart, nor won't be well neider, nor Rosy neider, till dem renimical rumsellers gets away." The churn rattled away all the time, and the big tears streamed down over the face. "Dey's talkin' about stopping dem selling sich tings; wish dey could, anyways; sign de pledge; great 'fair dat! Joe's done it tree times, but de fus ting I know'd, dere he was cuttin' up hicumflorious agin and trabblin' like a whirlwind right ahead to de bery place"—she dropped her dash, and whirled suddenly round in front of him.

"Joe, *ain't* dar no way on all de earth fur you to do *nuffin* to save yerself? 'Pears like ye might do suthin' if ye'd on'y try. I'd tote way off down South, and tear up all dem free papers ob ours; I'd go to prison right off dis minute, ef I was only sure ye'd never touch anoder drop ob de sperrits as long as you live. De good Lord knows," she cried, with streaming eyes and brawny arms outstretched, "I'd lie right down in de grave, ef dat would save you from de drefful way you're a gwine."

When Kate went up to the little sitting-room, she knelt right down at her mother's feet, and buried her face in the folds of her dress. Mrs. Weston did not speak; she knew exactly to what tension the chords of that young heart were drawn, she felt the quiver of the frail figure, she knew why the sobs rolled out from the heaving bosom, as truly as though her ears had heard the tidings. She knew, although the thought was unspoken, even scarcely acknowledged by her child, that up till that moment, the hope had sustained her drooping spirit, that failure in this scheme might restore the wanderer to the peaceful walks of his early life, and open his eyes to the vanity of earth's renown.

Now the last link that bound her life to his was snapped asunder. *She* felt it, kneeling there with the hand laid upon her head, whose touch had soothed away her griefs from infancy. *She* felt it, the quiet mother, whose soul went forth to that less disciplined in trial than her own. Not for one instant was she cast adrift from the anchor, sure and steadfast, to which years of joy and sorrow had fixed her bark of life. Mingling with the anguish floated into her spirit's ear, "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee," and she knew that each earthly blind falling from her daughter's vision would but reveal to her clearer gaze the glories of the only changeless One, "The chiefest among ten thousand, and the altogether lovely."

But the younger heart had not learned its lesson of sub-

mission. In the petty ills of life, when no great cross had been laid upon her, she had been tried, and by prayer and watchfulness, had proved the conqueror. But now, for a season, there was darkness,—thick darkness, through which the heavenly sunlight could not pierce. She was only twenty-two, but for six years she had been shringing in her heart an earthly love, twining how many of the sweet fancies that only youth and love can twine—glorying long in the consciousness of his soaring talents—slowly, mistily, catching glimpses of the peril that lay in his pathway, realizing at length the terrible sacrifice that the relentless voice within demanded at her hands—the lingering hope,—and now the dread despair!

At about six o'clock, in the afternoon of the day following the election, young Reid stepped into Gamp's saloon. "Thend me a dothen bottleth of that new champagne, will you, Gamp," he said, throwing himself into a chair, "and hand me a glath now; I'm tired," he added to himself, "and thith'll keep me four full hourth, I am pothitive. Buthineth *ith* a bore. However, I'm hoping to gain thomething by thith."

Gamp handed him the wine, and retreating to his desk, apparently engaged in writing, took special note of his customer's appearance. Reid was dressed with most exquisite taste, and his hair, usually kept combed with maidenly sleekness, bore marks of more than usual care. A package of papers peered pompously from the side-pocket of his great-coat, with some writing visible, but from the desk it could not be distinguished. When he had gone, Gamp called to his clerk, bustled about for a few minutes, and left the saloon. Reid was out of sight, and the shadows were falling, but the rumseller followed the direction he had taken. As soon as he had cleared the village street, he leaped the hedge at the road-side, and commenced running. In a few minntes he caught sight of Reid's figure, and, slackening his pace, kept within sight without making himself visible. On, on the

young man went until his pursuer saw him enter Mrs. Weston's dwelling. Then retracing his steps, he walked slowly back, concealed entirely, as well by the thick hedge, as by the gathering darkness.

"No time to be lost," he muttered; "to be sure, 'tishn't likely he'll think of much beside his own affairs for a few days, at any rate. I'll set the train going anyhow, and trust to the devil to finish the business for me. Higgins said he had *all* the papers of Shroeck. Blast it, if I could get hold o' *them*; even Clarence couldn't prove anything without them. I must get *him* settled anyhow, if he's going to ferret out what doesn't belong to him. He's a smart chap, but not hard to bait—by no means. Something like Higgins, more heart than head—only brighter, and his heart's on t'other side too; pooh, I'm worth a dozen such!"

He reached a certain corner in the hedge, and as though struck by a sudden fancy, snapped a jeweled finger and thumb together, and with a low chuckle bounded into the road, muttering still, "Spill your life's blood, ha? Han't looked quite close enough after that model boy of yours. Old Benson, too—where's Bill? I'll have to look out for *him*, wish I'd killed him out and out, long ago!" This whole colloquy had been uttered in a tone so low that it was scarcely audible to the speaker; but as he concluded, he turned cautiously round, and looked about him. Apparently satisfied with his scrutiny, he passed on to the office of Dr. Higgins, where he found that gentleman just preparing to leave.

"Come doctor," he said, "defer your tea for a few minutes, and make a call with me; I want to step in to Dr. Clarence."

"To-night?" said Higgins, "after"—

"After what?" interrupted his visitor. "I want to stop about the official returns; and I want you, sir, to assist me in bringing in something about Reid and Kate Weston. He'd hardly take it from *me*, but Dr. Higgins is entitled to attention."

Higgins looked for a minute into his companion's face. "You don't mean it"—

"I mean what I say," interrupted Gamp impatiently, "and there's no time to lose. If you can't make out my meaning, ponder over it at your leisure. You and I generally understand one another."

The submissive doctor caught one glance of those serpent-eyes that could charm anything once within their power, and followed him out of the office. "I hope," he added, in his usual doleful tone, as they walked away, "you'll be careful for your own sake, Gamp, as well as mine; I'm not afraid of your prudence, by any means, but I'm nervous lately," and he looked earnestly behind him.

"I thought you picked up again always about this time o' year, when the shakes left you, Higgins; why you're shaking now; don't be a fool, fellow."

"I feel chilly to-night," was the reply. "If I hadn't picked up in winter, I shouldn't have been alive now; I've attended rigidly to business, notwithstanding; can't stand it though another summer; shall have to try change of climate if I come down next year."

A low, scornful laugh was the only sympathy vouchsafed to the afflicted doctor, and they walked on in silence.

"Now, then," whispered Gamp, as they neared the office of Dr. Clarence, "you have had time enough to make out my meaning; gather up your wits and give some sharp hints; but look out what you say, walls have ears, and you know you're no match for me if anything comes out."

The door was unlocked, so they walked directly in.

"No one here," said Higgins, turning with a somewhat relieved air to his companion.

"Just wait a few minutes; he's close by, or his door'd be fast," said Gamp, stepping past half a dozen chairs to get one from the left corner at the back of the room. Casting a sidewise glance to the right where a fire-screen interposed

between the fire and the room, he caught a glimpse of the young man leaning back in his chair, with his head hanging down as though buried in a heavy slumber. A sardonic smile of satisfaction gleamed on the rumseller's face, as he cautiously set down his chair opposite Higgins, and with an expressive gesture of his forefinger, indicated to that melancholy gentleman the discovery he had made.

"These are the returns, as near as I have been able to make them out," he said, in a low, unemphatic voice, "but there are some hard cases that I can't make out in this county clerk affair; we'll let the doctor have a look, I reckon. What a vast majority he got for senator, Higgins?"

"Yes, a vast majority; he's one of the fortunate class of human beings, although not very persevering in business. Tread the mill steadily, sir, is my motto, and he veered about considerable while he was with me; but for us less favored portions of our race, there is but one motto to ensure success. Tread steadily—steadily." The poor, bony, seedy, "portion of our race" looked as though he had trodden, trodden without stopping, from the first moment of his existence.

Gamp laughed, and answered in the same subdued tone he had formerly used. "You forget that some are poor, unlucky dogs at everything they lay their hands to, and others become masters of everything within their reach. However, according to Reid's story, the tables in one quarter, at any rate, have turned against the doctor." No change in the stolid countenance of the speaker, but a slight increase of the moody shadow on his companion's forehead.

"Why," said Higgins, confidentially, with a tremor in his drawl, "the election hasn't been disputed?"

At this moment, a large bottle with which Gamp had been toying, fell with a crash upon the floor; there was a little start behind the screen, but it might not have been heard by the visitors, for Gamp suddenly let down the three legs of his chair which had been swaying in the air, saying,

"I mean that affair about Miss Weston. When is Reid to marry her, eh?"

Edward, startled from the sleep into which he had fallen through sheer exhaustion, was arrested in starting forward by the words he caught. His head was aching severely, and the intense excitement of the past few days had unstrung his nerves. He paused a moment, not because he intended to listen, but because he was powerless to move.

"I don't know," said Higgins, with an uneasy glance towards the screen. "Are they to be married?"

Gamp cast a threatening glance at his companion. He was not coming up to the mark he had intended. Higgins cowered a little, and paled a little. Gamp continued,

"Are they? you know it as well as I;—perhaps not, though, for I heard it, or what was just as good, from his own lips, the other night."

Edward was rooted to the spot. His brain whirled. The throbbing of his heart was almost audible.

"True," was Higgins answer, "I have heard reports of the kind; but not being much acquainted with either Reid or Miss Weston, I had acquired no certain knowledge of the fact."

"I think," said Gamp, with a sneer, "the lady missed it mightily in changing the doctor for that little dandy. He hasn't much to recommend him besides his money and moustache."

"But *money* accomplishes everything," answered his companion, with a sigh. "I needn't have been doomed to a life of single blessedness, if I had only been blest with money."

"Ha—ha!" laughed the rumseller, "you *would* have made a comical bridegroom. Better start now, just let out what scanty savings you *have* scraped together, and you might cut out Reid and the doctor both with Miss Weston. Eh, Higgins?"

Edward was on the point of rushing out to avenge the

profanation of a name so sacred, but he suddenly recollected that *he* had no further right to guard its purity.

"I should have thought," said Higgins, "that Miss Weston would have been the last lady to be influenced by such considerations. I am sure Reid must have used some deception with regard to his actual character."

"Pooh, pooh! who doesn't use deception in such cases? I don't believe Clarence used to inform her every time he went home half seas over, or every game of billiards he played either."

Edward winced in his chair, but listened on.

"The best of it is," continued Gamp, "Reid's an out-and-out fool, gambler, libertine, everything mean by *nature*; takes naturally to such things, as a fish does to the water; but the doctor plays or tipples occasionally more for the sake of the good it brings him, and the jolly company he meets, and here she's jilted *him* for Reid! But come," he added, rising hastily, as a quick motion behind the screen suggested that they might find some difficulty in pacifying their involuntary listener, "we can't wait any longer. I'll show him these hieroglyphics when he's down to-night."

Before the sentence was finished, they were out at the door, and Edward half-way across the office after them. A second thought, however, arrested him, for he paused an instant, returned, and threw himself, with an air of utter abandonment, back into his seat by the fire.

He did not believe that Kate was to be the wife of Reid. But the bare possibility crazed him. For her to tear away his life from hers, had broken the tenderest strings of his heart. But he felt that hers was no common motive, nor her standard of action a common standard. That she should so soon forget their years of mutual hope to cherish another love, was harder still to bear. But that *Reid* should be the object of that love, was a maddening thought. It burned like a hot iron into his fevered brain. It brewed into a storm of hatred

the ineffable scorn which the lisping lawyer had always inspired. And she—did not *know* the viper she was cherishing.

He sprang forward, seized his hat, and rushed into the street. A few minutes later, his sister Mary was startled from the lullaby she was singing at her cradle.

"Mary, is Reid on intimate terms with Kate?" The hectic face and uneven voice alarmed her.

"No, Edward! at least—I don't believe it. What has happened? You are ill, brother."

He laughed strangely—so strangely. She was on her feet in an instant. "Edward"—

"Ill!" he groaned. "Yes, dying—burning up!" Then suddenly remembering himself, when he saw her look of terror, he added, more calmly, "No, Mary; I'm well enough, except in mind. Tell me, *do* you know anything of Reid and—*and* Kate?"

"I have heard," said his sister, hesitatingly, that he has been visiting there more than his law business with regard to Mr. Weston's property required, and that he had said"—

"What had he said?" asked Edward, eagerly, but with forced calmness, as she paused doubtfully.

"Why, that he had boasted of her preference for him; but I do not believe it—not a single word of it," she added indignantly; "the conceited puppy! I could see him thrashed with a good relish; talking as he does about Kate!"

"How does he talk about Kate?"

His sister saw the gathering ire in his countenance, and hesitated again. "I don't know exactly, to be sure," she said, in a quieter tone, "William heard him make some foolish speeches—when he was half-tipsy, I suppose. My opinion is, that he is persecuting her with unwelcome attentions, and that his insufferable vanity blinds him to the repugnance I'm sure she must entertain towards him."

"Where is William?" asked Edward.

"Up stairs, in his library. There—he is coming down; hark."

"William," said his brother-in-law, as Steele entered, "what have you heard Reid say about Kate Weston?"

"Some things that no *gentleman* would say of a lady for whom he professed to entertain regard," was the answer.

"And by what right does he *dare* do this?" cried Edward.

"By the right, he says," answered Steele, without looking at him, "of victory over Dr. Clarence."

"The villain!" exclaimed Edward, "if"—

"It is your own fault, Edward," answered Steele again, gravely.

"Yes, Ned, I declare it's a *shame*," cried Mary, who had dropped again into her seat by the cradle, "that good for nothing braggadocio linking Kate's name with his, in that clique of *roués*, and boasting of his conquest, as though he had just broken a colt, or was chuckling over some common ballet-dancer. And she, poor darling, has no father now; so I suppose she will have to die of vexation, as I'm certain she must, if she keeps on growing so pale and thin much longer. And *you* are running about here, winning honors, and making all our hearts ache with your neglect and the habits you are forming. Father's almost as bad as Kate. I declare, his face isn't rosy at all now; his cheeks are growing hollow all the time, and though he doesn't say much, I'm sure he would a great deal rather have had you stay just as you were five years ago, than to see you what you are. It's too bad; it's a *shame*, Ned; and I don't see where it's going to end!"

By this time the little lady's foot was swinging the cradle at such a prodigious rate, and her voice had gathered so much energy, that baby started from its slumber, and totally refused to be pacified. Edward's figure, therefore, escaped her notice, standing stiff against the wall, with his hands clenching the back of a chair, and every feature of his face working with excitement.

He stood so for a few moments, then, turning to the door, said hoarsely, "That is all, then, you have to tell me."

The tone attracted their attention. "Where are you going?" asked Steele. Mary left her baby, and flew towards him: "Edward, forgive me! How could I be so thoughtless, and you ill, too?"

"You only said what I thought myself, Mary. I know it. It's driving me mad. But say, is that all you know?" He had his hand on the latch of the door.

"That is all, brother. Stay; where are you going?" she asked anxiously.

"To see about the election; I promised to go up to-night. Oh, that I had left *pleasure—honor*—for ever untouched!"

There was a bitter emphasis on the words "*pleasure—honor*," and the voice choked as he opened the door. Mary clasped both hands around his arm, and cast an appealing look at her husband.

Steele started forward. "Edward," he said, brokenly, "my early friend—brother, come back; you are not fit to be out, you are ill; let me go for you."

Edward paused, for Mary's grasp detained him. "Impossible, William, I have promised to be there, and I may hear more about this wretched affair."

Steele's eyes filled with tears, and a flush crossed his face that gave him something of the old boyish look of the days of the tall shirt-collar. "Edward, brother, it is not too late; break up your old associations; leave pleasure-seekers and honor-seekers; stand out before the world a free man; call back the smiles and sunshine to Kate; take the stoop out of your father's shoulders, and make us all happy again, as we once were, in you. You are fairly in the whirlpool now, but not so far but a vigorous counter-stroke will save you. Come, begin to-night."

The yearning in his tone, and the tears, mellowed the wild look on Edward's face, but he shook his head sadly. "Not

now, William, not now;—there is no *honorable* escape now." Gently, but firmly untwining Mary's hands, he flew down the hall and steps without turning at her tone of entreaty, "Brother, come back."

Mary returned to the cradle, where baby, seemingly conscious of some trouble, now lay quietly watching their movements. William walked up to her, and put his arm softly over her shoulders. She looked up; both burst into tears; the manly eyes glistening silently, and the quick sobs bursting out unchecked from the impulsive woman's heart. Baby seeing its mother cry, drew down the corners of its little mouth, and cast its share of unconscious sympathy into the common fount of sorrow.

Bitter as were those tears; keen as were the self-reproaches of a too indulgent father, that night envied by the many, pitied by the few; painful as was the struggle of a young spirit laboring hard to bring her all meekly to the Savior's feet; wild as raged the tempest that was drifting away every fragment of hope to which, on life's rough ocean, he—so envied of the world, might cling:—angrier would have waxed the tempest—fiercer would have grown the struggle—keener would have been the self-reproach—bitterer far the tears—could they have read the record entered by the sorrowing angel, at midnight, when the doings of that day were sealed for Heaven's eternal judgment.

It was after eight, when Edward reached the saloon. The instant he appeared there was a shout of welcome, and Lawyer Flip, being a tall, muscular man, with a great want of professional dignity, seized, and tossed him triumphantly in the air, catching him dexterously on his descent. The feat was followed by shouts and cheers; the overjoyed constituents crowded about their successful candidate, loading him with congratulations. He was compelled to answer them; he was, in a measure, considering his former habits, and the character

of the company, compelled to drink wine with them, until his fevered brain reeled again under its subtle power.

They could not see, beneath that more than usually brilliant exterior, the worm that was gnawing at his heart. They attributed to overflow of joy the strange lustre of his eye, and the ring of his musical voice. Old men that night wondered at his eloquence; young men at his glorious beauty; not one but was proud to have been partially instrumental in sending to their State Senate one who would so nobly represent their interests.

He knew that but a step was between his burdened soul and madness. He knew that his whole frame was quivering beneath the influence of violent and protracted excitement; that his nerves had been unstrung by too free and constant use of wine; that his spirit was staggering beneath sorrow, remorse, and indignation, that no honor or success could obliterate. He knew all this when he entered the saloon; but as the wine rendered fiercer the fire in his bosom, he became oblivious to the fact, and, at length, wholly overcome by its power, and his own mental suffering, abandoned himself totally to its influence.

They had a glorious time that night. Stern men unbent from their dignity, and mingled in the general hilarity. Toasts were given; wit, anecdote, repartee, keen and sparkling, flew around the charmed circle. Brilliant lights, exquisite wines, exulting hearts, threw about the meeting of convivial spirits every attraction that forms a link in the chain by which such society is girdled.

Towards the close of the evening, Mr. Gamp took advantage of an unoccupied moment to speak to Dr. Clarence.

"There were a few returns for county clerk which they had some difficulty in making out; would Dr. Clarence lend them his assistance for a few moments?" He "knew it was rather informal, but they really needed it."

Edward descended to the lower saloon. Gamp had omitted throwing it open that evening, out of respect to the company above stairs. Reid and Myers, however, with two or three of their cronies, were cosily seated at a remote corner, comfortably partaking of an oyster supper.

"You see, doctor," said Myers, "we only arrived a few minutes since, and concluded to stay here for our refreshment; out of no disrespect to the honorable, though," with a bow and smile.

"The gentlemen above are tho dignified," said Reid, jocosely, "that we frolicthome young bloodths feel hardly worthy of enjoying their thothiety."

The young men laughed at the exquisite witticism, and Edward bent upon the speaker a glance of the intensest scorn.

As Gamp led the way to his desk, he stopped, as though accidentally, beside the counter. "By the way, doctor," he said, turning towards him, "I heard you speaking, the other day, of purchasing a revolver. I happened to have half a dozen that I bought at auction some time since; so I brought them down. I thought, perhaps, some one else would purchase."

"You bought them at auction, eh? Are they good for anything?" said Edward, taking one from the owner's hand and examining it.

"Have a care, sir," said Gamp, as Edward's nervous finger touched the trigger; "it is loaded. I have tried them; they are in excellent order, and I will sell them for half the retail price."

"Are they all loaded!"

"Yes sir, all. I thought perhaps you would like to try them."

"Not to night, I should think," said the young man, laying it down. "I'll see them again."

"Take it along, doctor, and try it to-morrow. I'll warrant it's quality. Its no trouble to try it; if you do not like it,

return it. I believe you have side-pockets, sir." The very blindest smile, and softest tone accompanied the bow with which he again presented it, and immediately hurried on to the desk, saying, "Excuse the detention, we will immediately proceed to business, if you please, sir."

Edward put the revolver in his pocket, and followed him. A heap of poorly written and misspelled names were produced by Gamp, which, had there been no presumption as to the probability of their having been intended for one of the three candidates for the clerkship would have defied all scrutiny. It was a mere mockery, Edward's helping decipher the names. The words swam before his eyes; he was scarcely conscious of what Gamp was saying, as he quietly assented to his remarks."

"Yes, sir, that is Fuller. E. R. Foo-l-e-r, meant for Fuller, at any rate," said Gamp.

"No doubt it is Fuller," said Edward mechanically. He was glancing at the party in the corner.

"And this," said the other, "this is so dreadfully written that there is no making it out; first letter's a W, so it must be Wood. Shall I put it Wood?"

"I suppose so," was the answer. Edward moved a little uneasily; he thought he heard something Myers was saying.

"Yes, yes, here's to Kate Weston, and Reid's success," said one of the young men in a subdued tone, looking over at the desk.

"Oh, *they* cannot hear," said another, "where they are, and they are too busy to notice, if they did." He did not know what power sharpened every sense of the eager listener.

"And here's to the disappointed honorable," said Myers, who had always felt a little jealous of Edward's superior talents. There was a half-laugh among the dandies.

"Oh, gentlemen, I really do not feel tho much elated; I do not know that I shall marry Mith Wethton, after all; thucceth with ladieth ith quite an old thtory; I am moht

tired of it. It would be quite a novelty to fail when I onthe commenthe an undertaking." The important flourish of dignity accompanying his words was irresistibly suggestive of the puppy's crown, even to his exquisite friend Myers, who laughed as he answered.

"Never mind, Reid, we'll make all allowances if pretty Kate should jilt you after all; you know she has jilted our young senator yonder, and after that, you might consider such an occurrence an honor to yourself. Edward Clarence, you know, was always our village model, par excellence."

"I have no fear of that," answered Reid, adding to his ridiculous hauteur by erecting his head, and inserting his thumbs in the armholes of his vest. "If any jilting ith done, it will not be on her thide."

Myers laughed again. "I understand you, Reid, perfectly. Do you remember Miranda, Hamlin's pretty *danseuse*?"

"You are very tharcathic to-night," said Reid, with an offended air. "I never cared a thdraw for her. What do you mean, Myerth?"

"I was thinking," said his friend, "that you had the benefit of *novelty* there, and you *might* find it here; that is all."

"Thir, I will lithten to no thuch inthinationth. You are very"—

"Pooh, joking is joking, and nothing more," said Myers, tipping back his chair. "Everybody knows you are utterly irresistible to all feminine hearts. If I were Miss Weston, I should fall in love with you myself; 'pon honor now, Reid."

The remarks mollified the young man's anger extremely. He smoothed down his ruffled plumage, and was presently enjoying himself vastly with his companions, tipped back in their chairs, with hats poised at the usual angle of tipsy uncertainty, and smoke curling about their heads.

Gamp went on appealing in his blindest tones for Edward's confirmation of his opinions; but for all the assistance ren-

dered by his answers, he might as well have asked them of the desk at which they were standing. He went on, however, apparently absorbed in his work, until a motion was made by the young men in the corner to leave. He then closed the book, saying, "Our business, I believe, is completed. I think, sir, you will like that revolver; return it, if it does not please you."

Reid, in his half-tipsy state, had been relating a pretended account of Edward's "taking the mitten," as he called it; they talked in a low tone, but laughed immoderately, and Reid, turning half-way round as they started down the saloon, said pompously, in a loud whisper, "Yes, sirs, the lady ith an arrant coquette, but I have conquered her; at leatht, I flatter myself."

"But you have left no stone unturned to do it," said Myers.

"The — he has," whispered Gamp, as though involuntarily, close to Edward's ear.

The glance of half-concealed merriment with which the young men regarded him as they passed to the door was not lost; but it was not *that* that galled him. Myers came to settle the bill, while the others stepped out upon the piazza. Reid stood in the doorway talking to those outside. Edward stepped unsteadily towards him.

"I speak truth," said Reid to one of his friends outside, as though in answer to something the other had been saying.

"You speak falsehood, sir," cried Edward, in a voice hoarse with passion. "You have uttered nothing but falsehood. How dare you, sir, profane a lady's name by taking it upon *your* lips, in such a place, and such a connection?"

"I wath not aware," said Reid, mockingly, who had taken just wine enough to be insolent, "that you heard my remarkths, neither wath I aware that you had any further right to guard that lady'th name from the pollution of my tongue." There was an audible titter outside.

"I have the *right*, sir, of a gentleman and a friend, neither of which you possess." He advanced two or three steps towards Reid.

Reid gave his cane a little flourish. "The hon'able ith carried away by hith jealousy. He forgeth that I am a conthtant vithitor of the lady in quethtion."

"Persecuting her with your attention, and then linking her name with that of a danseuse."

"True, she hath been a difficult thubject, but I flatter mythelf that the thweet creature ith caught at latht."

"You are a villain, sir!" shouted Edward, seizing him by the collar, and hurling him down the steps. Reid caught by one of the posts to save himself from falling, and in a moment the sword-cane, which he always carried, was unsheathed. Quick as thought, the revolver was held aloft in Edward's hand. The young men on the piazza sprang forward and caught an arm of each. Edward shook them off like grasshoppers. The next moment there was a flash—a report—and Reid lay weltering in his blood.

"It was all over, the deed of that fearful night. There was a rush from the upper saloon. Edward heard a confused murmur of voices, saw a crowd of familiar faces, with a world of terror in their glance, a figure bathed in blood—Kate's pale face seeming to rise through the outer darkness. Then the solemn stars, the bleeding figure, the terror-stricken faces, all reeled like a horrible nightmare before his frenzied vision. Alas! alas! that that fatal dream was real!"

CHAPTER XXI.

You might have heard the rustle of a sparrow's wing in the crowded court-room. So intense was the interest manifested through the whole course of the trial, that it was actually painful now, that it had reached its culminating point. There were many reasons why an unusual degree of excitement should attend the whole proceeding. The prisoner's family had sustained for years an unexceptionable position in society. The name of the prisoner himself had scarcely died upon the lips of hundreds who had just elected him to an office of honor and trust. It was of no common crime that he was accused, for the charge was of assault with intent to kill. His beauty of person, extraordinary talents, and wonderful precocity of intellect had been admired, nay, even gloried in, by his personal and political friends all over the country.

On the other hand, the young man whose life for months had been suspended by a thread, in consequence of the assault, was the son of an eminent judge, who had always befriended the young senator. His pallid face, as he was supported to the stand to give evidence against the prisoner, had some influence in turning the tide of sympathy that all along floated with the accused.

Mr. Jeremiah was bending forward with both hands clutching tightly the red bandana over the back of the seat, and eyes painfully straining at the little door whose latch was clinking the suspended doom of his idol-boy. Mary was bowing her head forward, trembling so that her husband was obliged to support her with his firmer arm. The young pastor and his wife were sending silent prayers to heaven.

Mr. Pufton was winking his round eyes, unconsciously elbowing his innocent neighbors, and quivering with anxiety from head to foot. Rosy, in the back-ground, was stifling great sobs that heaved her broad bosom in spite of her self-control. The prisoner alone, pale and motionless, retained apparent calmness in that moment of suspense.

Slowly those twelve men walked in, and filed one by one into the jury-box. Then followed a moment's pause. There was a slight tremor even in the judge's voice, "Your verdict, gentlemen?"

"GUILTY—of assault with intent to kill."

There was a burst of feeling through the whole court, as though the straining chord of sympathy had suddenly snapped asunder.

"Has the prisoner anything to say why sentence should not be passed upon him?"

Edward rose slowly, and stood a moment silent. When he spoke, his voice was low, but so distinct that it could be heard to the remotest corner of the room.

"Gentlemen, your verdict is a just one. But with regard to the latter clause, in my case you are mistaken. Guilty I have been, more guilty far than those who have enjoyed fewer advantages, and less powerful incentives to all things pure and good. But I had no more intent to kill than any gentleman of your number. My brain was on fire; there was indignation, frenzy, violence, but not murder, in my heart. Your sentence, whatever it may be, will be as nothing to the agony of suspense endured during the eight long weeks that the man I wounded lay lingering between life and death. Nor could a total acquittal have weighed as a feather in the balance, had his life been the forfeit of my madness.

"Still, your decision is a just one. But while you have publicly performed your duty, disgraced, humiliated as I am, I cannot neglect the performance of mine. Gentlemen, there is a wrong in our laws, a grievous wrong. While nearly every

crime is committed under the influence of ardent spirits, no restraining law prevents the temptation from being spread out in an infinite variety of forms before men of all ages, temperaments, and stations. Time was, when I should have laughed at the idea of a law like that which has just passed the legislature of Maine. Experience has taught me—how bitter the experience, both to myself and those I love,” here for the first time his voice trembled, “some here may imagine—experience has taught me that no temporal blessing God ever bestowed upon our country, not even the liberty that is its greatest pride, could equal the universal adoption of a law for the suppression of the sale of intoxicating drinks.

“I do solemnly aver that had I been free from the influence of wine, no insult could have prompted me to a deed like that for which I am condemned.” For an instant he paused again; then raising his head, as though he had forgotten where he stood, his voice swelling in a solemn peal to the core of every heart not altogether warped by passion or prejudice. “Your Honor, and Gentlemen of the Jury, there are thousands through our country pouring into our prisons and poor-houses, filling the murderer’s grave, and more who are destroying inch by inch, lives that they have sworn to bless. The fault is yours. The judgment of Almighty God rests at your door; it rests at the door of every freeman who labors not for the total extermination of so huge an evil.

“While, in my case, there was greater sin than in hundreds of similar ones, you will remember that to those who have never been taught to eschew the evil, those who have received no Bible instruction—attended no Sabbath-school—listened to no faithful preacher, the temptation is accompanied by no misgiving, the indulgence with no remorse. These form the great body of our criminals. They are tempted beyond what they are able to bear, they fall because they are maddened by the poison with which you see them fed. You seize them, visit upon them the heaviest punish-

ments of the law, and yet lift not a finger to save others from the same pit where they have fallen.

“Crime must be punished; justice demands it; the peace of society requires it; God’s Holy Word enjoins it. But, that with your sanction, criminals should first be fostered in such a hot-bed of passion as the drinking-shop must inevitably be, and then thrust forth like poisonous herbs to perish in our prisons or on our scaffolds, is an injustice almost too vast for belief.

“Much has been said of the unconstitutionality of such a law. Upon that, I have only this to say. I do not believe a single person who has no self-interest to serve, ever thought the law unconstitutional; nor do I believe that any one human being who knows, and *all* do know, that alcohol is a poison, has not the certainty in his heart that such a law is in strict accordance with our constitution. Excuse me, your Honor, and Gentlemen of the Jury, if I have seemed too earnest. Self-defence and conscience both prompt my words. If I speak the truth, your hearts will receive the truth; if I speak not truth, your hearts will reject the falsehood. God judge between you and me.”

There was a hush like the hush of midnight when Edward paused. Then the grave voice of the judge broke upon the stillness. Few words were said and the sentence, so far as duration was concerned, was lenient. The prisoner was conducted from the court to a solitary cell, there to work out a bitter repentance for the sinning past.

So perished ambition in that manly breast. So, in the flush of youth and genius, sank one of earth’s bright stars from the sky of political life. Men sighed, and women wept his fate. But there was one young heart that throbbed for him alone, pouring up from a couch of suffering prayers that might have called choicer blessings on the stricken head than earth with all its wealth could offer. Where the sunlight streamed across a gentle mother kneeling at the bed-side

of her child, a stronger hope-light poured in upon their trusting souls. "Thy ways, O Lord, are not as our ways, nor thy thoughts as our thoughts. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so are thy ways above our ways, and thy thoughts above our thoughts."

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE morning after the trial was over, William Steele was sitting in his office, surrounded by newspapers, manuscripts, and all the usual litter of an editor's sanctum. He heard a step at his side, and turned to look at the intruder. A tall young man, with a fresh, energetic expression of countenance, and full, dark whiskers, stood before him. He did not speak at first. Steele looked puzzled, as though trying to recognize the stranger.

"You do not remember me, sir?" said the young man, at the same time dropping his shoulders and head forward in a peculiarly drooping position.

"Why, Bill!" exclaimed Steele, starting up in the utmost surprise. "Where have you dropped from? How you have altered, to be sure. I should never have known you but for"—

"For my giving you a glimpse of my old self, eh? Yes, I have altered some," he continued, in a firm, bright tone, and with a proud straightening of his fine figure. "Nothing like a free spirit, and plenty to do, sir—nothing."

"And where are you now?" asked Mr. Steele, giving him a seat.

"Up at Niagara, playing farmer just at present. But before I answer any questions, I want to ask some. Mr. Edward is condemned? I'm too late?"

"Yes," said Steele shaking his head sorrowfully, "he is sentenced to nine months' imprisonment. It has been a terrible stroke to all of us. It was so sudden, so unexpected."

"And was he to blame? Could he have attempted murder? I will not believe it."

"He was to blame," said Steele, sorrowfully, "so far as this. He was flattered into excess in drinking wine three years ago. He did not break the chain that was binding him until it became too much for his strength. He fell into gay, worldly society, and became like them. Further than this, he was innocent as you or I would be, should we accidentally take an overdose of morphine, and kill a man, while we were delirious under its influence."

Tears started to the open blue eyes of the listener. "I knew it, sir, I knew it, and I hurried on the moment I returned from England, to be present, if possible, at the trial. To tell the truth, I was haunted with the suspicion that Gamp might be at the bottom of the affair. I hoped that something I could testify of him might materially affect the case, but I am too late—too late! Had he any hand in it, sir? I do not mean openly, for that would be totally foreign from his nature; but nothing that could have been taken hold of?"

Steele shook his head, but looked very intently into the air before him, as though trying to shape a vague something that he saw without a shape. "I don't know," he said at length, hesitatingly, "it was strange, the conversation Edward overheard, and the offering him that revolver then, just then. Oh no, there was nothing that could have been adduced in evidence"—

A dark shadow crossed the listener's face. "He offered him the revolver, eh? Well, there was *something*, whether it could be adduced in evidence or not?"

"You are too late," said Steele, coming out of the vague mist in which he seemed wandering; "besides, you could have done nothing but conjecture, and that would not have bene-

fited my poor brother at all. Come, tell me about yourself. I never saw a man so changed in four years in all my life."

A vision of the blushing face and lofty shirt-collar flitted before the visitor's memory; he had not changed alone, at least, he thought. "Some men change sooner than others, Mr. Steele. I had been so crushed all my life before I left here, that no faculty was developed. So there has been a rapid unfolding of mental and physical life since I saw you. I verily believe, if it had not been for *him*," the tears started to his eyes again, "I should still have been the slave of that man's hatred."

"But what have you been doing, and how are you prospering. During the last year I have heard of you through Edward, but I had no idea of so great an alteration."

So the young man commenced with his departure from Laconia, and told his history. How he had struggled at first with difficulty, temptation, and fear of discovery by his tyrant master. How, when the last shilling Edward had given him was gone, he had found employment in a steam-factory to sweep the rooms. How he had become interested in the wonderful machinery, and studied night and morning when he was not at work, until he had obtained a thorough mastery of its mysteries. Then he detailed, step by step, the long, earnest ascent to the higher knowledge of the art; the development of inventive powers within him; a new discovery for which some English manufacturer had offered him three-thousand dollars. "And now," said he tremulously, "when I was coming back, after purchasing a pleasant little home on the banks of the Niagara river, to pour out my debt of gratitude to those who, under God, have been the means of my success, I find the brave spirit that infused courage into mine"—He stopped, and bowed his head upon his hand.

He had looked for years to the period of his return as the triumph-moment of his life. With the exception of Maggie,

there was no being whose image he had so cherished as that of Edward.

There was a long pause. Both seemed wandering in spirit to the cell where one they had mutually loved was wearing away in disgrace and loneliness the days of his glorious prime. At length Steele spoke.

"But you have friends left here still, to whom it will be a pleasure to impart the news of your success."

"A few," was the answer. "Yourself, and two or three others. I have ascertained something during my visit to England, that has opened light upon my birth and parentage. I am the only child of Father Benson's lost son. My name is William Benson."

Steele held up both hands in astonishment. "You? Father Benson's grandchild? He will go beside himself!"

"I was told by one of my father's old shipmates. He recognized me by my resemblance to my father, and proves the fact by a birth-mark on my left shoulder. He described Gamp, too, so that there was no mistaking him. But that is not all the history; there is something mysterious in the fact of Gamp's having so egregiously deceived me. I never believed him exactly; but he must have had some powerful motive to induce him to venture in making a story out of whole cloth about my relation to him."

"Did the man you met seem to know anything about your father?" asked Steele, with much interest.

"Well, he had made two or three voyages with him, and he said that my father, who was second mate of the vessel, always seemed quite independent, so far as money was concerned. I have thought," he continued, with a thoughtful air, "that money might have been at the bottom of it all. It would be so like that man. But that doesn't account altogether for his treatment of me."

"No," said Steele, "if he had been kind to you, he'd have been much safer from detection; it's plain there's a mystery

somewhere, but how it's to be cleared is more than I can see. How are you sure your father was old Father Benson's son?"

"This Ellis, the man who gave me my information, had heard the whole story from his lips just before his death—the running off to sea, the grief of his parents, the habits of intemperance he formed, his marriage, reformation, and resolution to return. It seems he was on his way from China, when the cholera broke out, and both my mother and father fell victims to its ravages. He said that Gamp, or Murphy, as he then called himself, had used every means to worm himself into my father's confidence, but he never could guess his motive."

"And your mother? did he know anything of her?"

"Only that she seemed gentle and well-bred, and died some time before my father."

"And didn't you try to get some other clue through him? Some of his comrades on the vessel at the time might have thrown more light upon the subject."

"Oh, I tried, of course; but he left the vessel when he reached Liverpool, and never came across any of them afterwards."

"And what are you going to do? tell the old gentleman of it?"

"Certainly. It is the least I can do in honor of my father, to soothe the sorrow he caused the poor old gentleman, and to be a faithful grandson to him. I always liked him, and if I really look so much like my father, I don't fear any want of a cordial reception from him."

"Well, well, strange things do occur in our every-day world," cried Steele, starting from his chair. "Come then, Bill—no, Benson I must call you now—you must go home to dinner with me, and then I'll go help you open your relationship with your new-found grandfather. By the way, did you know your old friend Maggie was teaching our village school?"

"Yes, sir," answered the young man, slightly coloring. "I have never entirely ceased corresponding with her since I left."

"I thought she knew more about you than any one else, but for a wonder, my sister-in-law, Mrs. Terry, kept her secret from all the rest of us, though I am certain she knows everything in Maggie's heart."

"When I left," said the other, "Maggie promised me to let no one know anything about me, I was in such mortal terror of Gamp; lately, I suppose, she hardly thinks me worth telling about. I haven't heard from her directly in six months. I suppose she has almost forgotten me by this time."

There was a pause, filled up with two or three sighs by the speaker, and an unspoken surmise of Steele that such careful silence in a woman was an indication of anything but indifference.

"I thought, perhaps," said the young man, with a blush and some hesitation, "that—Maggie was going to be married." He waited earnestly, eagerly, Steele thought, for an answer.

"Nothing of the sort, I can assure you," he answered, with a meaning smile. "Pooh, how could her letters reach you while you were wandering all over England? Come, we'll start again, or we shall keep the dinner waiting."

Maggie was the only person who recognized her old friend at first sight. But somehow there was no such outgushing of emotion as had accompanied the parting. Only a glistening of the great dark eyes, more than half hidden by the drooping lashes, a flush of the noble face, and a timid courtesy that was very unlike her usual quiet self-possession. William thought she had altered very much; there had been a charm to him in the childish, loving heart, greater than the beauty of matured womanhood could bestow. The classic head, with its looped ringlets, and the lofty expression of the face, were so different from the flying curls, the eager mirth or gushing sorrow that he had loved to watch in childhood. Her man-

ner seemed so cold, almost repellant, that he hardly dared revert to the past.

Foolish Will! Was he coming back so very different from his boyish self, with his heart fluttering so that he could hardly speak to her, and expect to see her flying in her little check apron, and tossing curls to hang about his neck, and kiss that great black moustache. Fy—fy! for shame!

Quite a little formula of preliminaries had been arranged for letting Father Benson into the secret of William's relation to himself. Mr. and Mrs. Terry, Mary and her husband, and Maggie were present. Quite an elaborate explanation had been prepared by Mr. Terry, for there were many apprehensions lest the old gentleman should not be able to comprehend the peculiar state of affairs. His monomania had so grown upon him, that although perfectly sane upon other points, they hardly believed that he would accept any other version than his own of his lost boy's story. Every year he was growing increasingly certain that his boy would return in three months, and never omitted enjoining upon all his friends to "kill the fatted calf" the moment all things came to their inevitable happy issue.

They might as well have spared themselves all trouble and anxiety upon the subject, for he interpreted the affair in his own fashion, and exceedingly to his satisfaction. They were all seated in the long parlor when he ambled in as usual in his long-skirted over-coat, making his ordinary salutation of three affable little bows, and decisive little thumps. Mr. Jeremiah strode up to him with his old cordial air, subdued of late by sorrow, flourishing his red bandana in one hand, and his delighted little friend in the other.

The old gentleman had always been partial to a shaking by his early friend. So hearty, so full of brotherhood was each swing of the grasping hand, that every titillation always infused an extra sparkle of good humor into the ecstatic gray eyes. When the shaking was over, he stepped briskly to the

table, deposited hat, gloves, parcel, and taking his silver-headed cane proceeded on his accustomed tour of salutation. They were not at all prepared for the unceremonious performance that followed. Father Benson stopped at Mrs. Terry, administered his three bows and thumps, then at Mary, then at Steele, then came plump before his unknown grandson. For one moment he looked in his face, uttered a wild cry, dropped his cane, fell upon his neck, and wept aloud. For a full minute there was not a word spoken. Then the old man dropped upon his knees right down before his grandson, pouring forth incoherent sobs and cries of praise. "Lord, I bless thee for my boy, O Lord, I bless thee! Now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, since mine eyes have seen thy salvation.—Thy salvation—O Lord *my* God! I bless thee!—Bless the Lord, O my soul!—Verily, thy mercy endureth for ever! My son—my son! God bless thee, O my son."

For five minutes he knelt there, the young man's hands clasped in his, pouring out broken cries of gratitude and joy. There was not an eye in the room but overflowed with tears, and for some time after he had risen from his knees, there was no voice that could trust itself to speak.

After a while, Mr. Terry attempted an explanation. But Father Benson did not understand; there was no convincing him. He would look with a face beaming with fatherly love upon the youth, and account for everything himself that did not quite agree with his preconceived ideas. Mr. Terry went on very smoothly until he came to an account of the cholera breaking out on the vessel. He was congratulating himself upon his success in being so well understood, when all at once the old gentleman, who had forgotten all about his cane, gave William three tender little thumps upon his shoulder, saying compassionately.

"And so you lost your wife, Will, and your boy? You know your poor mother's dead. Oh, my boy, you've suffered

as well as me, but the Lord's brought you home at last. I got the letter three years ago, about your coming home, and your poor wife and all. Three years, everything goes by threes," then, suddenly gathering into one concentrated thought, the anticipated rapture of his life, he gave his grandson three more rapturous thumps, and looked triumphantly round upon the company. "Rejoice! for the day of rejoicing is come; bring forth the fatted calf; let us eat and be merry. For this my son was dead and is alive again; was lost and is found."

He looked as though he expected the fatted calf to make its appearance immediately in honor of his happiness. A meaning glance passed from William Benson around the whole circle, and the delusion was suffered to remain unbroken. He was never undeceived, for two very good reasons, first because it would have been impossible to make him understand the truth, and second, because nobody wanted to make him understand it.

The next day, Mr. Jeremiah, putting aside his own great sorrow, did, indeed, kill the fatted calf, and invited his aged friend to come and make merry over the prodigal's return, indulging him in his request that the dinner should be served at three, "because, you know," he whispered mysteriously, "*everything* goes by threes."

There must have been some mistake in William Benson's opinion, either of Maggie Terry, or of his own fancies, for when the early summer came, there was a wedding at the parsonage, a wedding of two hearts, each rescued by care and sympathy from a life of wretchedness, a death of despair. Gems, too, were those hearts, that would have lain for ever buried in the rubbish of a sinful world, but for kindly hands that drew them forth, and polished them through years of watchfulness and labor. There are more such gems hidden in the dark byways of our world. Go thou and do likewise.



Amid all the hilarity, none saw, within a thick copse at the side of the pleasant forest-path, a face peering out upon the bridal pair as they passed its hiding-place. A look that the serpent might have worn while gazing on the bliss of Eden, distorted the dark visage, and the squinting eyes looked hatred out upon the prey that had so completely broken from their charm. P. 405.

It was a gay bridal day, quite after the olden time. All Maggie's scholars came to the picnic in the grove, directly after the ceremony, and the path down which the bridal party passed, was strewn with summer-flowers. Father Benson appeared upon the ground without his "standard library," in such a tremulous condition of delight, that his long skirts were in imminent danger of being detached by every brier with which he came in contact. If he had danced a hornpipe, he could not have made a greater number of evolutions, or afforded more amusement to the company than his unbounded happiness produced.

The fact of only a little over three months having elapsed since William's return, was one source of unfailing satisfaction. "Three—three—everything goes by threes—you see at last, that everything goes by threes," he whispered ecstatically to Mr. Jeremiah in the morning, to Mr. Terry in the afternoon; and when the company came, and the party started out on the rural excursion, his time was about equally divided in advocating this particular portion of his creed, convincing the credulous that he could write a first-rate sermon, and, notwithstanding the thing had once been accomplished entirely to his satisfaction, calling upon everybody he met to "kill the fatted calf, and make merry," at the prodigal's return.

Amid all the hilarity, none saw, within a thick copse at the side of the pleasant forest-path, a face peering out upon the bridal pair as they passed its hiding-place. A look that the serpent might have worn while gazing on the bliss of Eden, distorted the dark visage, and the squinting eyes looked hatred out upon the prey that had so completely broken from their charm. And when, after they had all been ranged around the bountiful table, the clergyman raised his voice in praise; when, from his distant concealment, he saw the once jaded, hopeless, cringing victim of his hate, now standing in the strength of hopeful manhood, with a face lighted all over

with devout gratitude to the God who had redeemed him; a deeper intensity of hate settled in the fiendish eyes, and a curse unspoken struggled in his heart.

But there was another watcher there; a fierce, haggard woman, closely veiled, who looked from the sheltering branches of a laurel upon them, as they swept by with their train of laughing children and maidens. Oh, the eager gaze of those fiery eyes, as they drank in at one glance the ecstasy of that moment. There was a depth of gratitude in that scathed bosom, that would have prompted her to lay down life as a worthless reed for the noble hearts that had saved her child.

When the scene of hilarity was over, when the grove lay still and dark beneath the straggling stars, that ruined woman fell upon the ground where the bride and groom had knelt, kissing the trodden grass, and weeping frantically from excess of joy. Joy!—joy like hers was a lightning glance, shooting across a sky terrible with storms, above a landscape desolate as death.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

THE flower must be crushed to shed its fragrance. He "who doeth all things well," had crushed the flower of the Westons' home, that it might scatter sweetness over gardens unblest with flowers so rare.

Kate had been very ill. The cutting asunder of those ties that had so woven themselves into her being, had left her spirit faint and weary. We need hardly say that the attentions of Reid had been annoying in the extreme, nor that Edward, unless rendered blind from wounded feeling, would have stoutly disbelieved anything he could have heard to the

contrary. The suspense with which she had awaited the result of the election had increased her weakness, and the news of Edward's rash assault had completely prostrated her in both mind and body. Mental suffering had so preyed upon her frame, that there seemed too little strength to resist any disease that might threaten her. When an attack of lung-fever followed almost immediately upon Edward's fall, it seemed as though no skill or care would restore her health. It was not until after the trial that she was able to leave her bed, and the soft airs of spring were toying with the flowers before her cough gave way, and her cheek recovered something of its bloom.

Her mother folded her to her bosom, as one given back to her from the grave. Rosy's yellow turban rustled with satisfaction as the light foot once more sounded with some of its old elasticity on the kitchen stairs. "De Lord be tanked," she would say to Beccy Jones, as she watched the slender figure glide away, "He's spared one of his angels to bless dis yer wicked world. My heart was nigh a breakin', all de time she lay dere so pale an' sperit-like. 'Pear'd she would go home to glory, and den I tink ole Rosy would ha' followed arter; 'pears Missie Katie only comforter now. Lawsakes, never 'spected to see her so peart again."

Rebecca Jones, now a bright, handsome girl, said little, but the sparkle of her eyes as she brought her daily offering of wild flowers during the invalid's convalescence, spoke eloquently to the heart of the young, untiring teacher who had led her by gentle steps from ignorance and misery to self-respect and happiness.

There was not a morning during the whole period of her illness that Mr. Jeremiah's red bandana did not make its appearance before Mrs. Weston's door. At first, during the greatest danger, it only flirted nervously back and forth, before the broad benevolent face, as a sort of screen, probably, to its expression of anxiety and sorrow; afterwards, when she

was pronounced better, it ventured upon a subdued flutter, and when Kate herself first appeared at the door, holding out her white, thin hand, it actually burst into its old flourish of unmixed delight.

The other members of his family, too, to whom Kate had long been dear as one of their own number, now felt an additional tenderness towards her. Not one of them but guessed quite accurately the circumstances of their brother's separation from her, but they could not blame her. Mary, indeed, with her less lofty standard of duty, thought sometimes that mere fondness of company, and occasional excess were scarcely worth such notice as they had received, but the impetuous nature was hushed at the sick couch of her early friend. She would leave her baby and her household cares to come and relieve the mother for a season, in watching beside her child. She learned many lessons there of faith and patience that were treasured afterwards amid the petty annoyances of life, and that future trial should sanctify to a more immediate use.

At the time of Maggie's wedding, Kate's strength was not quite equal to accompanying them on their excursion to the grove. But they came to see her before they left, in company with Father Benson, for the home William's care had already provided.

When Kate was again able to take her accustomed daily walk, she had greater faith, purer love, and holier piety than anything but trial can bestow. A fountain but charily playing before, now opened forth its treasures to send new life into trees broken by the storm, and flowers withered with the scorching heat. Sorrow alone can teach the depth of other sorrow. When Kate was able to walk again in the green fields, her heart yearned over the suffering ones she had so often relieved. They, too, to whom her sympathy was given, felt the change that had stolen over her. Before, they had valued her kindness, but now, there was a charm in the

expression of the gentle eye—a something; they could not tell what, that made them open out their sorrows to her gaze, as though she might be a better part of their very selves, to feel with and for them in their suffering.

"And where art thou going to-day, my daughter?" said Mrs. Weston, looking over her glasses, as Kate entered in her walking-dress.

"Oh, mother, I am going to take a long walk to-day," she said, coaxingly, "over to see Kitty and the poor little crippled girl."

Her mother shook her head. "Too far, I'm afraid, child, and without company."

"Don't say no, now, mother, for I feel so strong to-day, and the air is bracing; it will do me good."

"But you shouldn't go alone, child; why didst thou not find some companion?"

"I tried, mother, but failed in the attempt. If you were only a little younger now, I need never go alone. What a precious mother God has given me." She stooped to kiss the placid brow, shaded by its silver waves, and the chastened light of her sweet face seemed radiant to the mother as an angel-vision.

Before Kate started, she went down to the bench by the water-side. She went there every morning now, to pray. She gathered there fresh strength to "suffer and be strong." She carried from there faith and sympathy to impart to those weaker than herself in the strife of earth, and she brought back a heart soothed in soothing others. But this was not all. As Jacob wrestled at Peniel, so that sore heart wrestled for him to whom her love clung the firmer for misfortune and disgrace.

When she reached the turn where Mary and herself had paused on the same mission many years before, she turned again into the grove, and threw herself upon the grass to rest. The majestic river flowing on in its unceasing tide, the moun-

tains, the blue sky, brought back like a dream the dim forebodings of that day. "Christ the Ark." There was no safety out of that shelter—she had known it then—but she *felt* it now. While she mused, the hope swelled strong within her, that at last, when the terrible ordeal was over, he for whom she hoped, would rest safe within that refuge, from the temptations of the world. Laboring not for the treasure that perisheth, but for "an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away."

Kate knew that a vast change had come over the outward estate of Eben Jones, but she was scarcely prepared for the sight that greeted her as she approached his dwelling. Broken crockery, rusty tin, the old cart and barrels, the lank cow, and the forlorn little doubtful baby, had given place to shrubs and rose-vines, neat flower-beds, and narrow gravel-walks, all enclosed by a pretty white fence that looked somewhat out of keeping with the still dingy house.

A fat little fellow of four years or so, with roguish eyes, and very rosy cheeks, sat on the steps munching a huge piece of bread and butter. When he saw Kate, his rosy cheeks dimpled, but he retreated behind his bread and butter, only venturing a sly peep at her occasionally from his mischievous eyes. She did not wait for an invitation, but sat down by him on the stone, and bent her face to look into his.

"Here, you little rogue, so you don't care anything about me now I've been away so long, eh? Give me a kiss."

The little boy peeped coyly at her from the corner of his eye, but when she drew him upon her lap, he buried his curly head in her bosom with a musical laugh that gave full assurance of his delight at seeing her. In a few minutes the shyness wore off, and he had such a host of questions to propound that it quite puzzled her to answer them. "Where had she been so long? What was the reason he couldn't see her when he went to see Beccy? What made her send him such nice papers of candy instead of bringing them herself?"

Did she know that he went to Infant School, and knew every one of his letters, and could sing, 'Children go—to and fro,' all through? Didn't she want to see his fat mamma? That father had brought him such a nice, fat mamma—and he didn't be dirty any more—and she was so good—she made him a new kite every morning, and gave him just as much bread and molasses as ever he wanted."

"No, she hadn't seen his mamma yet; not since she was his mamma. Would he take her in to see her?"

"He guessed he would; he was sure she'd say that was a good mamma; she laughed so, and made father laugh too."

So in they went. Kate sat down in the front room. Her little friend disappeared for a moment, and came back pulling the skirt of our old friend Biddy, and shouting, "Here she is! isn't she a nice mamma?" The new Mrs. Jones came bearing down upon her visitor, with all sails set, and a face beaming like a full moon within the wide ruffle of her cap.

"Shure, an' it's happy I am to say you, Miss Weston. Faith, but we've niver had a minute's pace wi' de young spalpeen for the frettin' afther Miss Katie. An' ivery blissed day he'd beg his father to fetch him over to see her. An' how's your health now, Miss Weston? for you're afther being very sick all the winther."

Kate looked at the tidy room, the shining curls of her little favorite, the bride's stout, wholesome figure, and her immaculate white apron, with more pleasure than she had ever felt at anything in *that* place before. She was quite weary, and reclined for nearly an hour in the great Boston rocker that Mrs. Biddy had drawn up to the window for her.

There was something in the young girl's manner, that without any direct questioning, attracted the confidence of the poor and simple-hearted. There was something too, in the good-humored frankness with which Biddy recapitulated her many blessings, touched upon poor Teddy's delinquency, and

uttered cheerful hopes for the future, that was quite refreshing to her visitor.

"Shure but it's mesel thinks he'd be afther lavin' this same for the state o' Maine now, if he jist had the money to fitch them there. Och, Miss Katie," she said earnestly, flapping her white ruffles in the eagerness of her feeling, "but didn't I know Ameriky would stritch out a helpin' hand to the poor, good-natured sows that could niver help theirselves. Ameriky's a glorious counthry, but whin the crathur is dhriven away, it'll bate all the counthries on the face o' the airth!"

By and by, as Kate sat looking out of the window, she saw Michael Toole come running at full speed up the road. Mrs. Biddy opened the door, and stood comfortably filling it to await his arrival. Something must have happened, she was sure, for the ecstasy of his delight was such, that he had to topple off the superfluity in a full half-dozen somersets before he reached the gate. "Whisht, Mike, an' will ye never lave off tumbling till ye're tall as the giant o' Fincool."

The fat, overgrown boy did not take time to breathe, but shouted at the top of his voice. "Father's promised to go to Maine, an' Mother's a cryin', an' the young ones is a' dancin, an' little Mary's a singin', an' there's such a blowin' around that I cleared out over here to tell you—so, Aunt Biddy, all you've got to do is to pack up an' go along; you know Eben said he'd go, if you would, an' you'll go fast enough now—the only thing is, we got to wait a while till we scrape together fifteen dollars more—Mother's afraid Father'll get upsot, I can see that plain enough; an' I wish myself we could start off to-morrow—but I'll foller your advice, Auntie, an' hope for the best if"—

There's no knowing how long he might have kept on, but his running, tumbling, and talking had all been like the trotting of a race-horse; so he was absolutely forced to bring up a moment for want of breath. His aunt caught the opportu-

nity of ushering him into Kate's presence, and going through with the ceremony of introduction. He seemed to think that he must have looked a little awkward coming up the road, for he blushed and stammered, managing, however, to shoot off a bow, bending his head, making a tremendous flourish with his right hand, shuffling his right foot backwards until his lower limbs were almost at right angles, and then dexterously poising himself fair and square upon both feet.

Kate could not help smiling, but she entered with such kindly interest into his plans, that he felt quite at ease again, and related over, with a little less energy, the same particulars he had been detailing to his aunt. The two poor ignorant souls never stopped to question for a moment whether a Prohibitory Law could be sustained on the ground of constitutionality, or to doubt that, once under its sway, the veriest drunkard would find an unfailing refuge from his infirmity.

"There's niver a fear but Eben 'll go along wid ye," said Biddy, with her mellow, complacent laugh; "he's afther axin' me, yisterday, if I'd be continted there. An' I sez til him, sez I, 'Now I'd jist be continted intirely, if I could fitch along poor Teddy wid' me; but shure, an' I could hardly have me own mother's son to go back til his misery, an' maybe cripple *all* his childher by and bye.' You see, Miss Kate, Eben's worried about Jake, he be's so wild an' difficult like. Faith, an' I'm sure he comes home half drunk ivery blissed night of his life."

Here the rosy-cheeked little boy, who had looked very much interested ever since the appearance of Mike, interposed, with, "Yes, Jake a'nt good to me a bit now; he wont ride me pig-back any more, nor let me go to the lot and chop wood with him. Will he be better, if he goes to Maine? what is going to Maine, any way? will we buy oysters and candies, and have a lot of bells on the horse, and get another fat mama?"

Biddy's face grew broad with delight. "Faith, Miss, an' it's Christmas he's afther remimberin', whin his father brought him down to New York in the sleigh, and traited him til

goodies; an' it was that same day we was married, an' that's why the rogue's a thinkin' of another mama."

"Well, Ma'am," said Mike, after awhile, "I believe I'll bid you good mornin'. I was just a mendin' up the fence a bit for 'em home, an' I hope to see you well another day." Having again executed a bow that would have shuffled a less dexterous tumbler flat upon his face, he started to go. Kate called him back.

"You can tell your mother, Michael, that I was coming over to see her to-day on that very business, and that I think I can help her out of her dilemma, so that you can all start next week, if you like."

The boy bowed again, and walked down the road at a moderately quick pace, but before he was out of sight he broke into a run, and Kate hadn't the slightest doubt that he repeated his somersets, for his mother's benefit, as soon as he came within hailing distance of home.

As soon as Kate entered the door, Kitty Toole came out into the hall with streaming eyes. "God bless you, Miss Katie, that you niver forgot us through all your long sickness. An' glad I am til see you comin' back like a ray o' sunshine wid yer sweet face again."

"And how do you all do, Kitty?" asked Kate, pleasantly, following her into the room.

"Shure, an' we're well now, an' happy afther our troubles, though little Mary keeps poorly yet. Its a sorry time she's had of it this eight weeks now, and it would have been a sorrier, barrin' yersel' was so careful sindin the new doctor over, an' the nice quilts an' gowns for the poor child."

"You must tell me all about it now," said Kate, "for you know I haven't heard exactly how it happened."

"Well, the way of it was this. The childher heard their father comin', an' they run away til hide theirselves; he never bate them nor nothing, but he's always had a way of jist catchin' of thim up, an' swingin' 'em round, or jumpin' 'em, till he

hurt 'em pretty bad sometimes; an' when he was dhrunk, there was niver a haporth o' sinse in him to kape him from desthroying thim intirely. Little Mary was a' running away afther the others, but he spied her, an' jist run afther her, an' caught her up by the arm, an' whirled that little thing, that an't nothing but a baby, roun' an' roun', till I thought I'd die with fright meself. Then he laid her down on the floor; I wint up til her, an' shure, Miss Katie, I thought she was dead. I carried her up in the garret, for fear her father'd come afther her again, an' laid her on a bed, an' sint Kitty straight for Biddy. It wasn't till she come, an' put her in a warm bath, an' rubbed her little body iver so long, that she opened her blue eyes at all, at all.

"When the doctor came, he said her shoulther was out of joint, an' she was hurt otherways pretty bad, an' we must watch her close, or maybe she'd niver git over it. The nixt mornin', whin Teddy woke up, an' come in to see how pale she looked, he axed what was the matter. So Biddy jist up an' tould him the whole story, crying an' lamenting all the time. When she got all through, he jist dropped right down into a chair fornenst the bed, an' begun crying without spakin' a word. Shure, Miss Katie, an' he's niver dhrank a single dhrap afther that day, an' he sez he niver will; but I'm afraid he can't kape his word. Och, an' its thrimbling I am ivery day, now the little hinny's so much betther, for fear he'll begin again; an' thin—" she shook her head, and the tears ran down her face.

"Never fear, Kitty," said Kate, in a cheerful tone. "If you think Teddy would go to Maine, I know of those who will help you along so that you may go next week, if you like. I suppose you haven't much here to hinder you."

Kitty glanced around the meagrely furnished room. "Och, ivery thing we have, house, an' land, an' tables, even till the big feather bed I brought from York, is pledged for rum. But I haven't a bit fear, but if Teddy's oncot away from the crathur, he'll niver see one of us wantin' bread. God bless his soul.

but he's been like a lovin' mother iver since little Mary was sick; it was nigh breakin' my heart to think such a father'd iver be like to take to the dhrink again. Faith, Miss Katie" (here she clasped her hands and stretched them out, in her earnestness), "an' I'd be thankful to go away wid jist enough to cover us, an' not a morsel to ate, nor a penny o' money, if I was shure Teddy'd be safe out o' the way of that dhreadful crathur, an' I'd niver have a bit fear for meself or the childher, but he'd take care of us all."

"Very well, Kitty, don't have a bit of fear, then. I know a Maine gentleman who can advise you where to go, and if you have Biddy along, you and she can keep your husband sober till you arrive. Tell me, how did you manage while the little one was ill? for I suppose you had to give up your washing, and Teddy had no work."

"Teddy stayed an' minded Mary an' the other childher, an' I got more time nor I had in a long while before. An' what wid yerself, an' Mike, an' Biddy, an' the doctor, we was very comfortable. The new doctor's a nice man, but he isn't like Dr. Clarence. An' wasn't it hisself that niver refused to come til me in the darkest night, when any of us were sick, no more'n we were the grandest people in all Laconia, an' would niver take a penny of me since iver he begun. Och, it was a mane shame to say he was afther wanting to murdher. Didn't he say hisself that there was niver such a thought in his sowl, an' sure I'd belave him fast as the Blessed Virgin herself."

Poor Kitty had touched a tender chord roughly in her ignorance, and it vibrated painfully. It was almost too much for Kate. She turned her head to look out at the window, and struggled to regain her self-possession. It was well for her that at that moment the back door opened, and Teddy entered, carrying Mary tenderly in his arms, with the whole troop of children following at his heels, and Michael bringing up the rear.

It was a pitiful sight, that small, pale, crippled girl, scarcely

four years old, sitting so quiet in the little chair, where he carefully placed her. Kate had not expected to see her so much altered, and she was shocked to think that the little creature must be deformed for life. But if the curse had fallen, a blessing had come with it. Only the deathly hue of that small face as it looked deprecatingly to his, could have had sufficient power to draw the repentant father from his haunts of evil.

The father did not stay except to thank Kate for her kindness to them, and ask his wife to give Mary something to eat. As soon as he was gone, Mrs. Kitty apologized:

"He feels ashamed like, because he thinks you're afther axin me about it. Mike's home again, an' it's glad I am, shure. Hisself was one of my greatest comforts in all my throuble. He brought me his wages ivery Saturday, an' I don't know what I could have done widout them, at all, at all." As she concluded, she cast a glance of motherly admiration on the awkward, overgrown boy, who stood laughing and twisting his thumbs.

"I know," said Kate, with one of her sweet smiles, "that Michael is a faithful son, and an honest boy. I always had a high opinion of him, his conduct has been so manly and kind to his mother and the children."

Mike blushed, and not knowing how else to acknowledge the compliment, shoved off another of his astonishing bows. Kate relieved his evident embarrassment by speaking to the younger children, taking poor little Mary on her lap, and drawing out the story of her sickness. How she did not know at first what it could be; how she had felt so bad and sick; how she wasn't afraid of father any more; how she *liked to be sick*, so she needn't have to run away and hide, and so he would carry her in his arms away out into the woods to get flowers, and have Johnny along, and Patrick, and Mag, and Biddy. The little pale face softened into a smile, as she saw Kate's look of interest. Still, the young

girl could not help thinking it very pitiful that that mere baby should be made a cripple, and by a father's hand.

In less than three weeks the two families, with the help of Mrs. Weston and Mr. Jeremiah, were on their way to Maine, and Kate had the satisfaction afterwards of hearing from time to time, through Rebecca Jones, who had positively refused to leave her, that Teddy was at last thoroughly reformed, and rejoicing very much that he lacked the power of returning to his former evil habits. That the little cripple improved in health so rapidly, that they hoped she might recover altogether, except that the deformed shoulder was very weak. That the nice, fat mamma grew nicer and fatter every day, now that all her worry was over. That Mrs. Kitty came to be quite a notable housekeeper again, and at the last accounts had a new rag-carpet on her parlor-floor. That Jake was steady now, and Eben Jones one of the happiest men alive. That Mike hadn't left off turning somersets, and that the whole tribe of Tooles and Joneses, particularly the rosy-cheeked Charlie, the doubtful baby of years gone by, were thriving like a lot of "splendid cabbage roses."

There were many families in Laconia to whom Kate's ministrations came as dew to the thirsty flower. Widow Brown, worn and wasted almost to the grave, poured into her ears the tale of her sufferings, and felt always stronger after she had listened to her words of sympathy, and joined in her earnest prayer. Yes, with the weary and suffering, the young girl could kneel and pray in a strain that accorded better with their feelings than the petition of their pastor. They *knew* that her prayer was prompted by love and sympathy, the low musical voice floated so earnestly upwards; the broken voice, the starting tear soothed their anguish, more than eloquence of words, or wealth of charity.

God bless thee, Kate! It seems strange that hearts like thine must suffer. But the purer the diamond, the higher

must be the polish, and God was polishing away the crust of earth to make thee one of the fairest jewels in his crown of glory.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

EXTRACT from a letter written by Edward to William Steele:—

"The light dawns at last. The trial has been severe, but nothing less could have reclaimed me. As I look back to seasons when I resolved and re-resolved to give up the dangerous society with which I was mingling, and the dangerous habits which I was forming, I can plainly see how it came that all my efforts were of no avail. Trusting to my own strength, every renewed resolve, like a foot planted on the quick-sands, slipped away with the first wave of temptation.

"First, on my coming here, came the bitterest portion of my cup. *All* the life-hopes I had cherished dashed at once and forever. Ambition struggling with Despair. My family disgraced, my reputation gone for ever, and happiness, holier and deeper than *any* honor could bestow, irremediably lost. Then came the questioning of a rebellious heart. Why must this be? Murmurs at a decree so terrible; fierce temptation (I must acknowledge it) to destroy a life divested of every charm. Then I went back in memory to the days of my early religious instruction. I heard my father's clear, full, voice in the prayer he was offering for me. I saw a vision of *one* sweet face, that I shall never have courage to look upon again, as it has haunted me through these past years of folly.

"Do you remember, William, that maiden speech of mine. That night I first knew the glory of *her* character. Her face was saint-like in its purity as she plead with me to relinquish the habits that have been my ruin. And I promised her solemnly as we stood together in the moonlight that I would never again give her occasion to fear for me. Oh, what infatuation has separated us by a barrier strong as death? This subject is too painful. I cannot dwell upon it.

"At last, slowly, and with many struggles I have found the cross. I thought when I came here that pride was humbled. But I see now that pride hindered me from opening my heart to our pious chaplain until his benevolent soul drew me almost imperceptibly into a confession of my feelings. I have learned at last, that, though all worldly sources of preferment and happiness are closed to one humbled as I have been, a work is still mine to perform, a victory to be won, whose reward shall not be in this life. Had I learned the lesson, as I could have done, years ago, I might have labored, with gentle hands and a heart whose worth I can hardly measure, to strengthen and sustain me. Now, I must toil and suffer alone. Alone! no, that I could not do. *He* is my helper who has redeemed me by his blood from everlasting death. My heart swells with gratitude, that even through such an ordeal *He* has led me to Himself. Yet, the soul that dwells on earth yearns for the love of earth, amid all its aspirations for the love of Heaven.

"God bless you all, and grant in mercy that I may be the only great sufferer for my sins. In a week I shall be free. You and father must come on to see me. I cannot return to Laconia, I have not courage.

* * * * *

"It's of no use father," said Edward, as they sat together in Mr. Pufton's parlor, two or three days after his release. "There are too many reasons why I should not return. I do not wish to be continually casting the stigma of my disgrace over my family. My power to do good would be there extremely limited after what has occurred. I should naturally be continually reminded of my sin by the conduct of Reid and his clique of associates. But more than all, I could not meet Kate Weston, feeling that I had ruined her happiness, and that she could never love me more."

The red bandanna fluttered nervously, and the great, sonorous voice trembled. "Edward, my son, you are mistaken, not one of us but longs to have you back; and Kate—I do not believe your sin and suffering have made any difference in her feelings."

"But you do not imagine for a moment, that I would offer her to share *my* name and position, father!"

"Pooh-pooh, my boy; she would not share it when it was likely to place her among the first circles in the country. You know her reasons, and how little weight the consideration of your outward condition had then; why should it not have just as little now?"

Edward paused a moment, and shook his head. "No, father, it cannot be. Her generous nature might lead her to make such a sacrifice for my sake, but I do not ask it. I shall carry out my original intention of going to visit William Benson, for I have important information connected with his history to impart to him. After that, I shall return to New York, and then, I think, leave for California. I am sure if you set aside, as I have done, all prejudice upon the subject, your judgment will approve my plan."

"What's that, my boy?" exclaimed Mr. Pufton, who had just entered, "California, sir? what do you mean, sir?—I'll never consent to it, never, sir—all stuff; that nonsense about Kate, sir. She's got the truest heart that ever beat, sir; and if you don't go right down on your knees, sir, and beg her pardon for doubting it, sir, you don't deserve her, sir!" He folded his hands behind him, and strutted indignantly about the room.

"I would not take advantage of it," said Edward, sadly, "to wed her to a life like mine."

"Fiddlesticks, sir,—I beg pardon, sir, but you put me out of patience, sir. She'll never be happy any other way, sir. Go on your northern tour if you like, sir, but when you come back, sir"—The round gentleman bobbed his head and winked his eyes by way of explanation, and Mr. Jeremiah's handkerchief gave a little hopeful wave on the strength of his faith in Mr. Pufton's power.

Alice had been paying Kate a visit of some length, and on her return would listen to no reasons why her darling should not accompany her. After much persuasion, in which she had coaxed Mrs. Weston's co-operation, she succeeded in carrying off her friend in triumph, and her tongue rattled with

satisfaction all the way from Laconia to New York. Her husband was half-jealous, for she persisted in making twice as much of Kate's compliance with her wishes as she did of meeting him after their separation.

It had been Kate's intention to return previous to the day of Edward's release. There was a greater self-control requisite than she felt herself capable of exercising in meeting him, or even spending the day of his liberation away from the only being that thoroughly sympathized in her feelings. But a sudden and dangerous change having occurred in the character of Clarence's illness, she had waived, with her usual self-denial, all personal feeling, and consented to remain with Mrs. Ainslie for a few days longer.

The excessively nervous temperament of Alice prevented her from being an appropriate companion in her mother's arduous duties at the sick-bed of her brother. There was a subtle magnetism of spirit, too, between Mrs. Ainslie and the daughter of her early schoolmate, experienced only by those who have suffered and found consolation from the common fountain of a Savior's love. It was for this that the weary mother appealed so earnestly for Kate's presence and sympathy in this crowning hour of her trial.

For two or three weeks Clarence had been confined to his bed. The convulsions, which, previous to that, had been unusually violent, had ceased altogether, leaving him weak and helpless as a child. His craving for the stimulants that before had seemed almost necessary to his existence, was gone, and he would lie for hours in an apparent stupor.

More than ever that mother's heart yearned above her child. As she watched for hours beside him during the interval of dreadful calmness that preceded his death, her soul was wrestling constantly in prayer. And when, for a time, the invalid appeared able to listen to her, she spoke gently to him of Jesus, or read the story of some portion of *His* sufferings Who "hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows."

How her heart leaped one day, after he had been lying for

an hour, motionless as a statue, to catch a glimpse of the workings of the soul beating under that lifeless exterior.

"Mother," he said softly, without moving.

"Well, my son?" she bent to listen.

"Shall morning ever break for me?"

"There is light, Clarence, if you will only *look at it*."

He extended his hands with a sigh as though groping for it. "I cannot see it. The night is *very* dark, just now."

Mrs. Ainslie looked into his face with some alarm. "Why, my child, are you worse?"

"Only thinking, mother, how you have been so patient with me, all these long years of darkness, and how I might have found light long ago, if I had listened to you. That makes it darker now."

"The darkest night is just before the morning," whispered the mother.

He shook his head sorrowfully. "My sin has been so great; against you, mother, and God, and all I love. I believe I have almost worn you out. My gentle mother!" He put his hands on her thin face, and burst into tears.

She kissed him tenderly, and calming her own feelings, said gently, "Clarence, be quiet, and I will tell you how you may make me glad that you have suffered, and made me suffer."

"How, mother?"

"By letting your suffering bring you to Jesus."

"That is what I have been thinking over during all this last illness, but I can't, mother. I *cannot*."

"Why, my son?"

"I have rejected him so long, that he does not hear me now. I have been so violent and wicked, that I am in despair. Once there seemed a glimmer of light, but all is dark again now."

"*Whosoever* cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out," whispered his mother, with a strange feeling thrilling at her heart.

"But I cannot *come*, Mother! Oh, if I could come!"

He was becoming too much excited. Long experience had taught her the danger of the least mental over-exertion, and she had learned to be very calm under the greatest press of feeling. So she said soothingly, "There, Clarence, you must lie still now, for a while, and I will sing to you. Let me raise your head a little." She adjusted his pillows, and sat down close beside him.

Mrs. Ainslie's voice was peculiarly sweet. To Clarence, in his most violent moments, there had always been a soothing influence in its soft music that nothing else could supply. She was singing now the hymn,

"Come ye sinners—poor and needy,
Come in mercy's gracious hour;
Jesus ready stands to save you,
Full of pity, love, and power.
He is willing—He is willing—
He is able—Doubt no more."

An eager look on the pale face of the invalid showed that he drank in the meaning of her words. He closed his sightless eyes, that had never lost their beauty, and opened them again earnestly, as though looking for the light.

She sang again,—

"Come ye weary—heavy-laden,
Bruised and wounded by the fall,
Mercy's touch alone can heal you,—
Jesus bled and died for *all*.
Not the righteous—Not the righteous,
Sinners Jesus came to call."

When she had finished the hymn, she went up to him again. He lay quiet, with his eyes closed, as though asleep. Kate entered the room, and Mrs. Ainslie motioned her to watch a little while beside the invalid, then went to her own room, and knelt where she had so often knelt, to pour her soul in prayer.

While she bowed there, praying for light to beam at last upon the darkened vision of her child, he lay, listening to the Spirit that struggled with his soul. Going backwards over his years of violence and pain to the days when he knelt at his mother's side, and spoke his evening prayer; when her loving eyes beamed upon him as she told some simple story, or read some childish lesson. Then he wondered if her soft eyes had altered any during the period of suffering he had brought upon her; then came back with tenfold force the terrible self-reproach. "How have I wounded her with my passion, and how much more with my scorn for the lessons of meekness and holiness she has patiently read from the Holy Bible! And now the days of my struggles are ending; when I might have found the light, I turned to the darkness of my sinful heart, and now—the shadows of life are changing for darker shadows, and—there is *no light*."

Softly—softly—softly—the tones of his mother's voice still echo in his ear.

"Not the righteous—not the righteous;
Sinners Jesus came to call."

Faint as the earliest ray of morning twilight, a gleam of light steals to his spirit. The first prayer flutters like a timid bird from his heart. "Jesus save me, give me light—light—light!"

When his mother returned, his lips were moving, and a smile played about his face that thrilled her with joy. A few minutes, and he spoke.

"Mother!"

"What, my son?"

"I thought you were there. Will you come to me?"

She went to him and took his hand. "Mother, I believe—I am—beginning—to see." He raised his head a little, with a look—half hope, half doubt—as though the light flickered before him.

"Bless God! my child," the mother cried in a burst of feeling, "the morning is breaking at last—at last."

That night, soon after Judge Ainslie had left the sick chamber, he was wakened from his first slumber by his wife. He followed her to the bedside of Clarence. There was no word spoken, but the father and mother looked in the face of their son, then into each other's eyes, each reading the answer to their own fears.

"Clarence," said his father.

The invalid turned his face towards him. "Yes, father, it is growing clearer; where is Edward? I'll show him"—

"Show him what?" his father whispered.

"The light yonder; he hasn't found it?" A look of inquiry rested upon his face.

"I don't know, my boy. Have *you* found it?"

"Yes—yes—how bright it grows! Go and tell mother." A look of radiant joy glowed for a moment upon his face, and he stretched out his hand. "Where's Edward? Isn't he here? Quick, or he'll be too late." He sank back exhausted upon his pillow, but the radiance lingered on his face.

Judge Ainslie hurried from the room, dispatched a servant for the family physician, and went himself to Mr. Pufton's house. Only that day Edward had been released, and had intended visiting Clarence on the morrow.

"Mother," Clarence said, a few minutes after his father had gone.

Mrs. Ainslie had gone for Kate, but the mother's ear caught his murmur. She hurried to his side.

"Don't go, mother. I have been wayward and cruel; you have been *very* patient. Watch with me a little longer, mother—not long now."

The mother crowded back her tears, and laid her hand on his forehead. "Are you happy, Clarence?"

"Yes—happy—now."

"What makes you happy?" She stooped eagerly for his answer.

The dying youth smiled.

"Not the righteous—
Sinners Jesus came to call."

"Sing again, mother—*that*—will you—just once more—and then I must go. But where is Edward? There's the light." He pointed up with one hand—"Edward."

"Edward is not here, my son," the mother tried to say calmly, but her voice quivered. "Your father has gone for him."

"If I'm not here when he comes, tell him—there, mother, there!" He started forward eagerly, and pointed up again.

"Quiet, Clarence—there—yes—I will tell him."

He seemed satisfied with her answer, and sank back, murmuring, "Sing—that again."

Kate entered at that moment. The mother *could* not sing.

"Kate, will you sing 'Come ye sinners?'" she said.

The young girl stole in behind the curtains at the back of the bed, and commenced singing. He lay very quiet until she was through, his mother watching every motion of his face.

"Thank you, Kate," he said, when she was still again. "You have been very kind to me. Tell Alice about the light. *You* know. You never had a night—nor mother—except mine."

"But the day is breaking, now, Clarence, for *you*," said Kate.

"Yes,—the night has been *very* long—*very* dark, but the morning is—it is—at hand."

In a few minutes the doctor was there. He shook his head as he looked at the strange radiance of that pale, quiet face. "Nothing—nothing," he whispered, in answer to the mother's earnest glance. He saw by her look that she was ready for his answer.

"Clarence, how do you feel?" he asked.

"Oh, doctor, I am—going. Good-bye—Kate—good-bye. Mother—where are you? Kiss me—I am going. Wait! where is Edward—and father—and"—he started again.

"Keep *still*, Clarence, for a few minutes, and you shall see them," said the doctor, in a low, firm voice, laying his hand soothingly upon those of the invalid.

Mrs. Ainslie and Kate both understood him. Kate drew quietly within the shadow of the curtains, and Mrs. Ainslie passed her fingers gently over the damp forehead. He lay still, and seemed to sleep. Mrs. Ainslie looked a little alarmed, but an imperative gesture from the physician kept her quiet.

A few minutes more, and the father came in with Edward and Mr. and Mrs. Pufton. His sister lived so far away that she was not yet with them. The physician whispered to him: "Do not call the children, unless he asks for them. He will be better quiet. Too much excitement will make his mind wander."

"Is that Edward?" said Clarence, stirring again.

"Yes, I am here, Clarence," said Edward, softly.

Kate's heart thrilled at the sound of that voice, but it was no time to think of self, nor to allow him any intimation of her presence. She shrank further behind the folds of the muslin curtains, and Clarence said in a tone of relief:

"They told me you would come to-day, but I was afraid you would be too late. I want to tell you"—

"What, Clarence? my dear Clarence." The young man bent yearningly over the pale, eager face, and the tears stood in his eyes.

"Have you found the light?" the blind eyes turned almost wildly towards him.

"Which light?" he asked.

"There!" He pointed up again. "Jesus—the Savior—mine—yours. 'Not the righteous—Sinners Jesus'—Yonder, see! The sunlight coming at last!" His head sank



"There!" He pointed up again. "Jesus—the Savior—mine—yours. 'Not the righteous—Sinners Jesus'—Yonder, see! The sunlight coming at last!"

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upon the pillow. The physician stepped forward. "Quiet, Clarence," he said softly, "or I'll have to send them all away."

"No, I am going now," Clarence whispered, with a smile. "Say, Edward—the light, find it."

Edward's voice trembled. "I *have* found it, Clarence."

An expression of ineffable beauty passed over the blind boy's face. "Pray then, Edward—pray. Here, mother, hold my head once more. Oh, father, mother, precious mother, morning is breaking, at the cross; tell them *all*. Wait, Ellie, Carlisle, Alice, Mr. Pufton, little Ned, where are they? Aunt Sophie."

They came with tearful eyes, and kissed him without speaking. Dr. Currer said, "There, Clarence, Alice is not here, and the children, we will tell them for you, lie still, and Edward will pray"—

"Yes, tell her the night has been so long to me, but day is coming now, pray Edward."

Edward knelt beside him, and the others stood around the bed. Judge Ainslie, with his stately figure bowed; Aunt Sophie, with her hand pressed over her eyes; Mr. Pufton, quivering with suppressed feeling, and the physician, gravely watching the strange glory of the paling face, as the accents of that prayer floated through the silent room. And Kate, sinking on her knees behind the sheltering curtains, strove to join in the prayer with no other thought than of the dying, and the glory he was entering. But with the solemn sympathy accorded to others, there rushed through her own being a tide of joy and hope that swept away the doubts, and griefs of years.

Light was dawning; light to the living, passing from the night of sin to the morning of salvation; light to the dying, passing from the night of time to the morning of eternity.

The tones of the pleader's voice grew deep and strong; swelling upward from the holy room to the holier heaven.

opening to the blind boy's vision; so powerful was the mellowed voice, in its trembling earnestness, that the parting spirit might have floated upward on the pinions of that prayer.

The mother saw the radiance of the face brighten until a look of holy triumph settled on the stiffening features. She felt the head she held upon her breast grow heavy. She heard the breath come fainter, but she sat there quietly, yielding up the soul for which she had wrestled through the long night of his earthly sin and suffering, into the hands of a pitying Savior.

When Edward ceased, they gathered closer round the bed. The father stooped to listen, and drew back with a strange look upon his face.

The mother's prayers were heard!—the morning had broken.

CHAPTER XXXV.

NIGHT again in the saloon. The guests had departed, and the proprietor was sitting in his large arm-chair, with his feet stretched out upon one of the marble tables. Two or three of the lights in the little chandelier were still burning, and the profusion of bottles, dishes, and glasses lying about the counter and tables, spoke of an excellent day's profit.

But Mr. Gamp seemed totally indifferent to everything except some profound thoughts, which were anything but pleasant, judging from the frown that contracted his brow. The front door and windows were closed, but the back door was far enough ajar to let in the cool air; he sat with his back towards it, so that he did not notice it slowly open, and the figure of a woman standing there did not hinder the vexation that at last broke forth in words.

"What does this mean now? Out of prison, and away up

there with Bill. If I could — the whole lot of them I wouldn't say it, but do it. Much good it's done, the business I helped along so smoothly. Given me nine months' swing, and now I'm as bothered as ever. One thing's plain, I'll have to clear out from here as soon as possible. That infernal land speculation that I chuckled over'll have to slip, and five thousand with it, or I'll have to trust to luck and my patron-saint, ha—ha—to help me out of any scrape I might happen to get into. Believe I'll try the last. My saint doesn't need much praying to either. Goes on the principle, 'You tickle me, I'll tickle you!' All fair and square, old fellow, but I ain't satisfied with this caper, anyhow.

"Cleared the gallows, eh? Wish he'd tumble over the falls, and Bill with him." He clenched his fist as he uttered the concluding oath; but a moment after started, as a soft hand fell upon his shoulder.

A woman with a face stamped with the lowest kind of dissipation stood eying him steadily. "Good wishes to your friends, certainly," she said, in a low scornful tone. "One would think your nephew would command different feelings."

With another oath he exclaimed fiercely, "What are you here after? and how dare you steal in, in that way? do you know I could have you arrested on suspicion of burglary?"

She answered with a mocking laugh, "I didn't come to be arrested; wait awhile, and I'll tell you what I came for."

"Strange time and way for a lady to enter, anyhow," sneered Gamp, "not much to your credit; but what's come over you; you're mighty calm, and what are you here for, now your girl's off?"

"I did not come for credit; there'd be none of that in visiting you. Shame is dead within me, and hope and joy; but revenge remains, and I have come for that."

He drew his black eyebrows down, and glared upon her from under them. "Do you suppose I haven't found out

what you've been up to? Don't I know how you've been ferreting out everything I ever did, and sending out the information, fast as you caught it, to that Clarence?"

"Yes, I know you've found it out; I know you managed to get him to prison for it too; much good's it done you."

"Well, suppose I'd got him to the gallows; that's what I tried to do, my gentle charmer. Who'd ha' been the wiser? But come, it's getting late, and I'm sleepy; tell me what you are here after?"

She laughed again. He uttered an imprecation. "— you, how queer you act; sober and calm—declare I believe it's another phase of your madness." He looked with a sort of wonder at her as she stood there with that smile of irony on her wild face.

"I've kept sober for a whole week, that I might accomplish my purpose. You killed my husband," she said, in a low, hoarse voice, fixing her eyes upon his face. "Higgins tried, at your instigation, to poison him, but failed."

"Well," he said, in a tone of scorn, "and you have eaten all the fruits without giving me a taste, or Higgins either, except" —

"And you did more," she continued, without paying any attention to his interruption, "you tried before he died to render him incapable of protecting his wife from the insidious advances of a man, who, though respected of the world, was as much a villain as yourself."

"Get me in the asylum, won't you?" said Gamp, cocking his head to one side. She did not notice him, but went on as though he had not spoken. "And more, you killed a sea-captain, and escaped from the hold of his vessel. You would have killed William Benson if you had dared, for he married the girl you wanted, and the five thousand dollars that you coveted; say, where is that five thousand dollars now? He and his wife are both dead, and you had charge of the orphan boy—a pretty charge you made of it, too. Just tell me, will

you, where is the money?" She paused, with a gleam of irony shooting from her eyes.

Gamp scowled at her; a terrible scowl that made her recoil a step, and draw a pistol from her bosom. "Ha," she laughed, "do you think I am a fool to come to you with such facts as these, and unprotected. Life is anything but agreeable, but I care for no further favors from your hands."

"I suppose you are ready to swear to all this, soon as Clarence is back from Canada," said Gamp, with an oath; "but you'll have to find your proofs first, I'm thinking."

She stepped to the door. He watched her with a fiendish sneer, half hate, half wonder upon his face. The sneer gave way to a sudden frown of defiance as a man followed her into the room. For one moment Gamp looked at him, as though trying to recognize him. The next, he started from his chair glowering fiercely upon the intruder.

"Fine way to welcome an old ship-mate, Murphy," exclaimed the man. "I only stepped out on this woman's invitation to make sure it was you. By George, if we didn't all think that the devil had run away with you that time you got away from the ship; the old tars told it for years after—for one of their best yarns."

"What are you here for?" growled Gamp, from between his set teeth.

"To see you," said the other. "Carl Shroeck doesn't so easy forget old friends. But, to tell the truth, though I don't profess to be very good, I came to see if I couldn't see poor Bill Benson's boy righted. Though you got in with him before he died, he gave me a heap of his papers, and the boy's got 'em now. I'd have done something with 'em long ago, only I didn't know how."

Gamp gnashed his teeth. "And how soon may I expect to be honored with another visit?"

"Soon as he comes on. Have to settle up your affair pretty soon, old boy. Don't think you'll stay in Laconia

much longer;" the man tipped his hat on the back of his head, and looked about with an air of easy nonchalance.

Gamp clenched his fist, and his face grew purple with rage; he would have rushed upon them both, but the woman raised her pistol. "I defy you!" he hissed. "If the devil did help me once, he can again. Do your worst." He seated himself doggedly, and his visitors, without further ceremony, walked out as they came.

He sat for half an hour, then rose, locked the place carefully, gathered a few articles from his desk, deposited them in his pocket, took a heavy walking stick from a corner, and went out at the front door.

The maid of all work looked deprecatingly at her master, as she caught the expression of his face that night. He passed her with scarcely a glance, merely asking if Dick was abed yet. Upon being answered in the affirmative, he passed up stairs, directly to the young man's chamber.

"Dick, Dick," he called, as he opened the door. The only answer was a sort of sleepy grunt. He entered the room. "Dick, Dick," he called again, shaking the sleeper's shoulder, "I want to see you directly, get up, will you? How hard he is to wake!"

Having at last succeeded in fairly rousing the boy, he ordered him to dress, and come down stairs directly, then turned away, and called the trembling girl as she was stealing up to bed, to escape the gentle reproofs he was in the habit of administering when things had occurred to ruffle his serenity.

By the time the sleepy clerk had dressed and descended to the sitting-room, Gamp had made up a small package, abstracted from two or three locked trunks in his own apartments. A heterogeneous mass, too, it would have seemed to an uninitiated observer, as he gathered them together.

A small roll of dirty papers, a revolver, a bushy wig of red hair, a tarpaulin jacket and cap, were packed tightly in a

small portmanteau, which he locked, placing the key in a side pocket along with a great wallet, and buttoning it in with two or three buttons, so that, by no possibility, it could be lost.

He made no preface to his remarks when he returned to the clerk and servant awaiting his return. "I'm going on a journey South to-morrow, as far as New Orleans. Expect to be gone a month. But I don't want a confounded — in Laconia to know I'm away. Dick and Elspeth—you know me. If I'm odd in my way sometimes, you never knew me say a thing I didn't *do*—did you?"

The boy, awake at last, mumbled wonderingly, "No, sir, no," and the girl shook her head.

"Well, I've got just this to say to you. Do as I tell you for a month, and I'll give each of you a hundred dollars down. Let the cat out of the bag, and I'll follow you with"—a black scowl finished the sentence. "You see," he continued, "there's a good deal to save or lose by this journey, but I don't choose to let people know I'm taking it. You two are to stay here just as you always have. Dick goes to the saloon in the morning, gives out I'm sick—bilious fever, say, and if anybody comes here but Dr. Higgins, I can't be seen. Keep the doors locked, and you've both got the cunning to walk straight enough for a month to keep my absence secret. When the doctor comes let him in; he's the only one to understand. Do you hear?"

Both listeners assented with inward surprise to the proposition, and Gamp dispatched them to bed, telling them that he should be off in the morning before they were up, and casting a keen glance of inquiry upon each as they passed up stairs. He seemed perfectly satisfied with his scrutiny, for in five minutes after they were gone, he slipped out at the back door with his portmanteau, muttering, "*They* are well settled, now for Dr. Higgins—then all to luck and the —."

He found Dr. Higgins up, although it was nearly two o'clock in the morning when he knocked at his office door. When

the doctor opened it, a man with his face completely concealed by a muffler, peeped into the room, then, with a muttered, "Higgins, what are you up at this time o' night for?" walked in.

"Have they been to your place to-night?" asked the doctor, when he had closed the door.

"Yes, blast them, that hag's got more in her than I gave her credit for; they've been here, eh?"

"They were here three or four hours ago. I had no business with the man, but, Gamp, I wish I'd begged my bread before I attempted to drug Morris, ugh!" The lank figure shivered as he spoke. "Swearing you off, too, with that testimony of mine that I thought he killed himself. I don't believe anybody thought so, then. I wouldn't have done it but for you and Dunn."

"Pooh, Higgins, what's done's done, and no help for it; you sold your soul for money, what most of us do, I suppose; to be sure, you took a little more coaxing, but it's the same in the end. You've done penance for it ever since with that long face, but it hasn't cured you of 'the root of all evil' yet. Better give all your money to the poor, Higgins, it might ease your soul, eh?"

"That woman's visit's upset me," said Higgins, with a contraction of his haggard face, and an accent of lugubrious despair. "Believe I'd do anything"—

Gamp interrupted him with a low, mocking laugh. "No matter now what you *would* do, you must do as I tell you, and you know it. Business is business, and *this* business mustn't be delayed. I came for your horse, Higgins. They've told me something that'll take me off directly. But it's to be kept a secret. Dick's to keep store, Elspeth's to keep house, I'm to be very sick, and you're to visit me *every* day, and keep a look out on them. I'll leave all my affairs in your hands to settle for me, and you'll make a good round sum for your *professional* services if things go straight, and I get anything like all that belongs to me."

"Where are you going?" asked the doctor; "I don't understand."

"I don't *want* you to," was the ungracious answer. "All I've got to ask is that you'll keep mum, whatever you may hear. I am dangerously ill for a month, and if that's blown up, I've gone on sudden business to New Orleans. You settle up all my affairs, and I'll manage so as to let you know how

to send the money to me. Sell everything but the saloon; that might excite suspicion. You understand and agree?"

"Yes," said the doctor, hesitating, "but am I *never* to get out of this tangle. I thought I'd run off to some foreign country to get clear of my sickness and that woman's haunting face."

"Ha, ha, I'm ahead of you; just what I'm going to do myself, but I'll keep about if I can till I get the fifteen or twenty thousand dollars I got here, and then I'm off. If you do well by it, that is, the best you can, for you must 'hurry up the cakes,' you'll have two or three thousand to add to yours, and get off before the chills come on next spring. You know me, that's always been my policy, pound wise and penny foolish. But come, I can't be tom-fooling with you here. I want your horse, how much do you want for it, two-fifty?" he pulled out his pocket-book. The doctor's dull eyes brightened. He had paid just half that sum for his horse three months before.

In half an hour the bargain had been made, the \$250 paid out of Gamp's capacious wallet, the horse taken stealthily from the stable, saddled and bridled, and Gamp mounted on its back, with his portmanteau girded behind him, was making his way swiftly and silently through the darkness. As he gathered up the reins, he stooped towards Higgins, and the gleam of his eye struck like cold steel to his companion's heart. "Now then, secrecy or death!" and as the horse's hoofs sounded on the road he muttered again, "All now to luck and the —."

CHAPTER XXXVI.

KATE WESTON was sitting down close by the leaping waterfall below her bower. Her work lay upon her lap, with her hand buried in the folds, as though she had dropped it carelessly. She was watching the sunlight sparkling in the diamond spray as it came tumbling over the rocks almost to her feet. Now and then, two or three drops splashed over on her face or dress. But she did not heed them; her

thoughts were wandering away from the bright waterfall and sunshine. A pure light was in her eye, and a slight flush upon her cheek.

"Katie, what are you thinking of?" said Mary Steele, softly, touching her lips to her cheek. "It seems almost sacrilege to disturb so sweet a reverie; but I have come on a special errand, Kate." There was a sadness in her tone that her companion interpreted; for she returned her kiss without answering her.

"I have written my letter," continued Mary, "and used every plea I could think of, and father has written too, but if you" — She hesitated. Kate looked up, and the flush deepened on her cheek; still she did not speak.

Mary began again. "I may as well say it at once, Kate, and you must forgive me if I wound your feelings; but," with a little burst of tears, "Edward is so dear to us that we cannot let him leave us without—here Kate, read my letter, it's a long one, but a word from you will be more than all. If you cannot say it, I must be content. I'm going up to see your mother while you read it."

Kate took the letter without looking up, and the instant Mary was gone, gave vent to a gush of tears. "Too dear indeed; Oh, Edward!" The letter was written in a strain of the most earnest entreaty, begging him to return to Laconia, and adducing every possible argument to induce him to do so. Among other items that startled Kate, was the intelligence that Dr. Higgins had been seized with a fit of paralysis on that very morning, from which it appeared impossible that he should recover.

Worn down at last in body and soul, he had sunk beneath the accumulation of remorse and suffering. As we shall not again revert to his career, we may state that the poor man lingers still in a state of imbecility, while his mind wanders always to the past, and conscience harrows his soul through unoccupied days and sleepless nights.

When Kate had finished, she let the letter fall, as she had done her work before, and looked off to the waterfall again. It was a delicate matter to decide. The world's praise or blame was little to her; but would Edward come to her now, with the same trust that he once reposed in her affection; had not absence and her conduct towards him changed the current of his feelings? She could not write as her heart dictated without the risk of sacrificing all her woman's pride.

That rose strong within her then. She could not stoop to urge his coming back to her, and be disappointed. Yet it was not what *men* call pride that struggled in her bosom. It was mixed with holier emotions; the fear of giving Edward pain by a request with which his own pride and manly feeling would not allow him to comply; of subjecting him to a series of annoyances most trying to him by inducing him to return to the scene of his sufferings.

This last had almost decided her, when the words of his prayer came fresh to her memory, words uttered by the bedside of the dying, "Lord help us to care *nothing* for the vain opinions of men, to look to *Thee* for all things, and to make thy truth all in all to our hearts, that the faint light Thou hast given to guide us here may increase more and more unto the perfect day." After some minutes she rose and returned to the house. Going quietly up to her room, she opened her writing-desk, and simply wrote the words, "Edward come, I must see you. KATE."

When the letter was handed to Edward, he was sitting by a table in William Benson's pleasant little sitting-room. Father Benson himself ambled into the room in his long skirts, and, without noticing his grandson and Maggie, who sat reading from the same book, he made directly for Edward, and, after the preliminary three knocks of the cane and shakes of the head, he held out the precious missive with one of the cheeriest smiles in the world. "My boy," he exclaimed, "you'll *never* learn to exercise the grace of patience. Here your letter comes the very first time you wish for it, while I must wait—Oh, ever so many threes for mine. But then I got it at last, and my boy too, and a new daughter into the bargain." He put his cane upon the table, glanced lovingly towards his grandchildren, and clapped his hands ecstatically. Then, as through suddenly recollecting something, up he quavered to William, "My son, did you remember to water the grape-vine to-night?"

"Yes, father," the young man answered, "I watered it enough to satisfy you, for Maggie was at my elbow, and you know she's for drenching everything more than you are."

"Yes, my dear," the old gentleman exclaimed, looking delightedly at Maggie, "you'll make a better gardener than Will; he used to be tolerable when he was a boy, before he went to sea, you know, but all his new machinery has turned his head. I always thought," he continued, with a rub of

the hands, "he would do something at that some day. I can tell you that little steam-engine the rumsellers carried off was a model. I've—no—doubt," he accompanied each of the last three words with a decisive thump on Maggie's shoulder, "he'll make one of the *first* engineers in this country—in three years, you know—everything goes by threes."

"If we hadn't you here to work our garden, half the pleasure of our pretty cottage home would be spoiled," said Maggie, with a pleasant smile, "for I am sure William would never do it."

He looked more delighted than ever. "I can make a first-rate garden now, or write a first-rate sermon. To tell the truth, I like it too, Maggie. I don't think," he added confidentially, "that between my boy's return, and the garden, and my colportage of Tracts and Bibles, there's a happier old man within a hundred miles than Father Benson."

"Or a happier young man than his son," said William, casting a glance of mingled love and pride from his fine eyes upon Maggie, then turning them in real affection upon the amiable old gentleman. The young people made a point of always humoring him in his peculiar fancies, and the old man who had trudged about through so many lonely years with his "Standard Library," cheerful and hopeful in his loneliness, had now arrived at the very acme of earthly content.

"Well, my boy," he said presently, ambling back to Edward, "how are things going at Laconia? I thought a minute ago nothing could make me a grain happier, but positively now it would do me good to have a nice shaking from Mr. Jeremiah. So hearty is Mr. Jeremiah with his old friends, specially in days of trouble. 'Twould be a great treat now." He shook his head, and gave one of his little ecstatic smiles, as though actually revelling in the delight of a shaking. Edward, who had finished his letter, and been startled from an absorbing reverie by his approach, took advantage of Father Benson's pleasant little fancy to recover his self-possession.

"Everybody that we love is well there; but poor Higgins is prostrated, I fear for life. He has been struck with paralysis, and given up all his practice. I have any quantity of messages for you, for none of them forget you there."

"Trust Jeremiah for that," cried Father Benson, rubbing

his hands. "He *never* forgets old friends; but what's that about Dr. Higgins? given up practice? Poor man! he'll have to exercise the grace of patience now, at any rate. But he may be better in three years. The disease may work itself out by that time. They want you back, again, don't they?" He turned his little eager eyes inquisitively upon Edward.

"Yes, they want me back," answered the young man thoughtfully, "they think there is a good field open now for the practice of my profession; but I don't know."

"To be sure," exclaimed Father Benson, seating himself beside Edward, and patting him three times in the consciousness of a bright idea, "Providence has opened a way for you. Somebody'll have to take Dr. Higgins's practice, and you'd be happier there than anywhere else, now you *know* you would."

"But I—after"—Edward hesitated and sighed.

"Now won't you believe me, Edward?" said the old gentleman, patting him again; the Laconia people are vast friends of yours yet. Why, Mr. Stetson told me himself the last time I was there with my Standard Library, that if he had a choice of fifty doctors, he'd take you in preference to them all, and he insisted that it was so with twenty families he knew. Fact is, they all sympathize with you there, and Jim Reid has a cold shoulder turned towards him nowadays."

"I believe," said Maggie, "that he is actually more blamed than you are. Mr. Myers and a few of their associates seem to be the only ones that take his part at all."

"That consideration would have less weight than the call of *duty*, Maggie," said young Benson, glancing towards the noble face whose expression was so fraught with thoughtful doubt that he scarcely seemed to be listening to their words. The last sentence, however, roused him. A flash, as of some new light, glowed for a moment in Edward's eye. The next moment he pushed his chair from the table and walked to the window. "The moon is just rising," he said as he returned, "I believe I will walk towards the Falls, and think over the matter quietly. Duty has become a word of stern significance to me. I had almost forgotten it in my sensitive dread of returning to Laconia. I thank you, William, for reminding me."

As he stepped out from the luxuriant bushes about the door, a man's figure crouched noiselessly into their shadow

Edward walked up the road. For a moment the strange figure followed him. Then it returned again, and crept round to the back of the house, still concealed by the bushes. Edward left the road, and walked along the bank of the river. There was a bright spot in the horizon, heralding the moon's advance. The dark waters of the Niagara river rolled majestically past, and above the meaning of the autumn wind swelled the roar of its mighty cataract.

As the moon arose, a line of spray was visible below, and Goat's Island, in the centre, lay dark against the sky. A strange mixture of solemn feelings were swelling in Edward's bosom. All this wonderful work of God wakened more than admiration, more than awe in his chastened heart—worship, mingled with the childlike trust of a new believer in a Savior's love. God's power but added to the confidence with which he rested in his love, and cast himself upon his infinite atonement.

Presently, mingling with those thoughts, came the earnest pleadings of his father's and his sister's letters; the arguments they had adduced, the inducements they had urged, the yearning love they evinced—after his guilt and his disgrace. But, above them all, before them all, the simple words traced in Kate's delicate hand, "Edward come—I must see you," wakened a thrill of the hope he thought he had crushed away. He seemed to hear them in the music of her voice; he seemed to see her pure face in that moonlight as it had beamed upon him years ago, when, and how, his bleeding heart too well remembered.

He walked on rapidly, absorbed in his reverie, until the roar of the falls called him back to the consciousness that he stood close beside the mightiest wonder of the physical world. Directly above where the vast mass of water, rushing, whirling over those eternal rocks leaps into the bed below, he sank down upon the bank, overwhelmed for a season with the intensity of awe. But by-and-by Kate's words mingled again with the voice of the many waters, and the heart, attuned as it was to the melody of all glorious tones, went traveling back to feeling, loving life.

Still he shrank from returning to those upon whose name his deed had cast a stain. Welcome him warmly as they might, he knew that *some* eyes would be averted at his approach. Could Kate Weston, in her young purity, forgive

the sorrow he had already heaped upon her? Ought he to lift his heart one moment to her now? To swerve from the course of self-sacrifice, he had imposed? Duty! What was the path marked out by God? He pondered earnestly and well before he went from the presence of the mighty waters.

When he turned a lingering glance upon the everlasting sea of spray rolling beneath him, he had resolved. Communing with his soul, he had found there still the remains of that fear of man's scorn, and love of man's applause, drawing him away from all that earth could offer of love and happiness, father, sisters, friends. He would return to them—he would resume the practice of his profession, praying and toiling to bear meekly the reproaches that might fall upon him, catching, at least, some sunlight of earth's affection, but looking to fame or honor—never.

He would see Kate, but his heart should be crushed before her. *She*, at least, should be spared the humiliation that he might have to undergo. In the course of years he would learn to love her as a sister. It would not be hard. Why, he could fancy her sweet face smiling upon him now, and her sweeter voice ringing in his ear, and feel no thrill of agony that a year ago accompanied each thought of her. There was already a soothing power in the image thus evoked that years must increase and strengthen.

Ah, Edward! Experience was thine, and a bitter one, but the frank, boyish soul, credulous in all matters of affection, was in thee still, creating a peaceful mirage in absence, that time and presence should scatter with a breath.

When the muffled figure returned to its hiding-place among the bushes, a muttered curse went up. "No use; take them altogether; it's the safest way," and the speaker crept close up to the window of the sitting-room. Looking in, he saw William and Maggie sitting together at the table, their faces beaming with the perfect content that only love and happiness can give. Father Benson was sitting near them, busily engaged in sorting over some books and tracts which lay in a large paper he had just unfolded beside him. Presently William closed the book, and turned with some animation to speak to his young wife. Then he rose, took from a cupboard a small wooden box, set it down before her, and reseated himself. Opening the box, he took out a package of soiled papers, and both bent eagerly to their perusal.

The man at the window strained his eyes eagerly to catch

the heading of the first paper taken up. After standing some time he glided away, and entered a cellar, the door of which was already open. A pile of something just discernible in the glimmer of the rising moon, lay beneath a small window. He lit a dark lantern, and commenced a cautious search. The heap consisted of a lot of old packing-boxes and barrels, that from the dust and cobwebs gathered upon them, seemed to have lain undisturbed for months. He went round behind them, and at length, seemingly satisfied, set his lantern down so as to let the light fall directly upon an uncouth looking triangular box, so disposed under a lot of others, that its removal would cause no disturbance. This he drew out with a motion dexterous and noiseless as that of the Hindoo Thug strangling his unwary victim. He drew his lantern forward, looked into the aperture thus made, put his hand stealthily in far as he could reach, and succeeded in drawing out several smaller articles.

After closing his lantern, he left it there, crept out stealthily as he came, and made his way, ever through the shadow of the bushes, down to the water's side. A boat lay completely concealed beneath some trees, from around whose roots the ceaseless tide had washed so much of the bank as to leave their trunks bending in an almost horizontal position above the water. He stepped into the boat, and lifted out a small keg, seeming from the manner in which it was carried, very heavy for its size. Once—twice—thrice—he bore one of the kegs towards the house, going and returning with a step so noiseless that a listener would have strained his ear in vain to hear anything above the sigh of the rustling trees, and the roll of the distant cataract.

At length, after re-entering the cellar for the third time, he proceeded to uncover his lantern. First one keg, then the second, were placed close together far within the aperture he had previously made. Before depositing the last, he deliberately took a gimlet from his pocket, made an aperture in the bottom of the keg, and scattered out a dark-colored powder all the way from the interior of the aperture to the edge. Then, after drawing from a huge side-pocket a ball of some substance resembling stripped leather, he made one end fast to the remaining keg, which he proceeded to place close beside its two companions. Unwinding the ball, he laid the strip all along in the powder, and secured it where the powder terminated with a half-circle whose sharp points he fixed firmly in the ground.

Replacing carefully the smaller articles he had removed, he returned the triangular box so accurately to its place that no one could have suspected its removal. Still unrolling the ball, he softly lifted the window, passed it through, bored a hole in the very corner of the sash, and closed the window, allowing the string to pass through the gimlet opening.

After taking a careful survey of the place where he had been operating, he put out the light of his lantern, passed to the outside of the window, lifted the ball, and made with it a continuous line to the water, fastening it finally to a branch of the over-hanging tree.

When all this was done, he returned to the little side-window, and peeped into the room. Father Benson had left them. William was lying on the sofa, and Maggie was stroking the hair from his forehead. The pile of papers was returned to the open box. Every appliance of comfort was arranged so as to convey that inexplicable idea of home, that carries always a charm to the happy circle within its bounds. He turned away, and looked anxiously up to a heavy cloud that was spreading towards the moon. Leaning back in the very centre of a clump of tall lilacs, he drew the muffler a little from his face, and stood for a full half hour watching the cloud as it gathered strength, and floated upward to the zenith.

Slow, majestic, as though fraught with destiny, was the march of the rising cloud. Nearer, nearer it advanced towards the moon, flinging its pall above the rolling waters and the moonlit shore. A gleam of satisfaction shot from the fierce eyes of the watcher. But when the black mass had overtopped the zenith, it began to veer slowly round, as though impelled by some adverse current in the air. Floating off, with its silver edge receding from the moon, it passed her by, and soon broke its heavy mass into smaller ones, fringed and flaky, swimming about through the clear azure, like white sails upon a distant sea.

The man uttered a low oath, and, after detaching the line he had lain along the ground, close to the gimlet-hole in the window, wound it up again, untied it from the tree, and stepped into the boat. He seated himself in the centre, and commenced plying the oars. "Confound it!" he exclaimed, when well away from the shore. "I'll have to wait now till to-morrow night. That — cloud has spoiled the whole affair, breaking up in that fashion. I never knew my luck

fail so before. Might as well hang myself as fire a house such a night as this, and sail away under that blazing moon. Moon's up an hour later to-morrow; I'll be in time then anyhow. Blast it, hope I'll catch Clarence in, too. Curse that Bill, his father cut me out twenty-five years ago, and I've hated everything that belonged to him since. And the boy—he's thwarted me, feared me, hated me, tried to kill me, and now he's going to try the hanging game, I suppose, with those precious papers. By —, but I'll break up his cooing and billing to-morrow night. Bah! the dog! I'd like to send him adrift into yonder caldron."

Soliloquizing thus, the muffled figure rowed away, until he came to the opposite side. He pulled his boat into a sort of cavern formed by projecting rocks, secured it, took a small bundle in his hand, and walked rapidly away. * * *

The next evening, long before the moon rises, the quiet waters of the cavern are stirred again by the rocking of the boat. Silence rests upon the jagged shore, and sleeps upon the dark waters that lie beneath the rocks. Only the solemn monotony of the cataract below answers to the glance of the far stars, whose rays quiver in the tide. Still as midsummer up among the trees. Not a leaf stirring; not a squirrel startled from his slumber by the stealthy splash of the oars below. Not a footstep nor a breath in the dark solitude. The muffled figure drops the oars, and pauses, as though in doubt.

"Yes," he mutters, "half a dozen of them looked after me, as I came down the street from the hotel. If I'm seen over there, I'd be safer in t'other rig; believe I'll change now."

He proceeds to remove his clothes, substituting in their place a sailor's jacket and pants, and a red flannel shirt. Then he places a bushy wig on his head, and completes his attire by tipping a tarpaulin hat over the false luxuriance of locks below. Tying up the clothes he has removed in a tight bundle, and attaching a heavy stone, he rows a little way from land, and drops them in the river. "Satisfactory that," he murmurs again, "gone to the —, I've no doubt, where they belong. Think Bill wouldn't know me himself with these fixin's."

Steady with desperate energy is the hand that plies the oar. Calm, unflinching is the heart to whose beat that even plash answers momentarily, as the boat sweeps along the waves. The holy stars looking down upon the stream, see only a frail

bark, moving onward, with a dark figure sitting upright in the centre, guiding himself through the dangerous rapids with a firm, true hand. The angels, looking down into the heart, see there the fierce storm of unbridled passion, hatred, jealousy, murder, nerving the strong arm and steady hand to secret deeds of horror.

He is more than half across. The stars shine on. The cataract rolls on. The banks lie still and dark. Earth, sea, nor sky, cry out against his progress. But, there is a God in HEAVEN.

Softly, so softly that he scarcely hears the sound, his boat scrapes over some sharp substance beneath the surface. It veers over to one side. He tries to push it off, but it is caught firmly upon the snag. He fixes his oar into the hooked branches beneath him, and pushes hard to free himself. He takes both oars. In vain. He tries the other side. At length, with an impatient jerk, he braces himself in the stern, and with one violent thrust sends the boat suddenly adrift. He falls backward; the boat rocks with his motion. But he starts up, and resumes his place at the centre with an oath upon his lips.

Hush—there is a bubbling sound under his feet. The water is rising about him. He stoops over, and puts his hand into the bottom of the boat. A plank is loose. In three minutes, there is a sudden plunge, a closing together of the waters, and a human being is struggling for life. He swims towards the shore. Dashing away the waves, his sinewy figure battles mightily to achieve an impossible labor. Long before he reaches the shore, his strength fails. He fixes a firm grasp upon the oar which he has been pushing before him, and floats helplessly down the stream. The stars are twinkling still, the roar of mighty waters rises still to his ear, but a mightier voice, at last, is swelling above the nearing cataract.

At last! The long years of that hard, desperate life record no qualm of fear, no quivering of energy before the bloodiest purpose. They are floating before his mental vision now—a youth of reckless adventure, a manhood of fierce, unrepented crime. The waves gurgling about his ears seem fraught with life. Eyes, wild and despairing—lurid with revenge—triumphant in demoniac scorn,—look into his from the plashing waters. Whispers, distinct and terrible, rise above their murmur. Death, in whose very teeth he has flung taunts of

defiance a hundred times before, is smiling ghastly upon him now. Eternity, like a vast, vague mist, spreads about him, peopled with figures and faces from which his sick soul shudders. The demons that have played in fiery wreaths about the dying victims of his lust of gain, seem tearing at his heart. They compass him with chains; they draw him down beneath the waters. They laugh hideously in his ears. They swarm upon his face, crowding the warm life-breath back upon his heart.

Hush! There is a pause in his headlong descent. Something resists his advance. Unconsciously his hand clutches at a support. The touch calls him back to life. A few quick grasps, and his head is above water. For a few moments he clings fast, and strives to remember where he is. Then, with a few more efforts he is seated upon the crotch of a huge snag jutting from the water. With returning consciousness, hope steals back. He peers out towards the land. The banks lie still and dark against the sky. The stars shine on. But the waters at his feet whirl wildly by. A sound as of many thunders, roars up the river, and he almost fancies that his resting-place is floating onward to the brink of the falls below.

In an hour the moon rises. He sees distinctly now the island cutting apart the long white line below;—the trees, standing so motionless upon the banks. The white cottage, far above him, to which he had bent his course. He looks down. His weight is too much for his frail support. The water is nearing him. A chill creeps to his heart. He looks again towards the shore. Is there no help—no refuge. He shouts aloud. No answer. He sends forth shriek after shriek—the roar of the cataract booming through the night is his only answer. The snag is lowering slowly—surely; the tide is bubbling about his feet.

The stars are fading, but the moon is marching up. The banks are bathed in light. But human ears hear not the echo of despair leaping among their rocks, nor see the lonely figure clinging desperately to life, while a death of horror seems rising up around him.

The sun is coming up over the Niagara river. Its banks teem with human life. Men hurry to and fro with wild, strange looks upon their faces. Women cry aloud, and children strain their eyes out upon the waves in wondering terror. A fellow being clings to a short, thick snag shooting above the water. When the first man came to the river's

brink at dawn, his cries poured clear and shrill to shore. Now they hear but a faint wail, as though the conflict were almost ended.

They have thrown ropes towards him. They have sent out boat after boat with cords attached to the shore, hoping that they might float near him. In vain. The rapids whirl one bark within a few yards, but it passes on to the Falls below. Hours pass by, and he clings with frantic death-grasp to the hope of life, growing frailer with each rushing wave.

How the spray sparkles in the sunlight, flashing along like a sea of liquid diamonds. How the solemn voice of the cataract calls up to its certain victim from the vast abyss below. How the sea of human life swells upon the banks, as the day goes by, and no rescue reaches the man whose power of endurance seems a miracle to the anxious watchers. The excitement increases at each repeated failure of their efforts for his salvation. His cries have ceased altogether now, but his hand seems a part of the blackened snag, so convulsive is his tightening hold.

At length, just before noon, two young men come hastily towards the crowd. A few words pass between them and the immediate bystanders. The elder of the two pauses a moment thoughtfully, and leaps into a boat to which some men are tying a stout rope. Several voices murmur about him. "You shall not go; it would be certain death," "One victim is enough." "The water is full of snags." "Those ropes would break like rotten cords." His companion lays his hand persuasively upon his arm, and addresses him in a few low, earnest words. Those standing nearest hear his answer.

"To you, to you"—pointing back to a graceful female figure coming down the bank, "but not to me." He shakes his head half mournfully as he hurriedly ties a rope about his waist. Two or three outstretched hands would deter him. He puts them back with a gentle firmness, fastens about his waist a life-preserver, some one has thrown him, and seizes the oars. Several stout arms are holding the rope which is to steady his boat, others, that which is fastened about his body.

The female figure has reached the bank. Her face grows pale as she sees him, and she cries out, "Oh, come back, you will surely perish." The light in his eye, and the high glory on his brow, as he looks towards her, make the men who still strive to hinder him recede as he pushes from the shore. "Maggie, there is a God IN HEAVEN."

As he rows rapidly out into the torrent, and the assembled multitude catch an idea of his purpose, a simultaneous shout goes up, that infuses strength into the heart of the man grasping now almost unconsciously the only link between himself and life. Rolling, whirling in the rapids, the little boat with its gallant oarsman nears him. Now half buried in the eddying waves, now leaping upwards like a bird, it pushes on to its destination. It is within a few yards. The pulse of teeming life upon the shore, stands for a moment still. A few more strokes, and it will have reached him.

All consciousness seems to have worn away, in that weary, desperate struggle for life, for the man does not notice the approach of the boat that at length may end his labors. Only that instinctive clasp gives evidence of life. The young man shouts aloud. With a convulsive effort, the figure rising and falling with the motion of the waves, turns over. The youth in the boat starts with a quick scream. The man in the water fixes his glaring eyes upon him. For the first time the motion of the oars is a little unsteady. But the young, strong arm commands itself, and pulls once, twice, vigorously towards him. He can almost reach him now. He drops one oar into the boat, uses one, and bends eagerly forward to seize his prize. One stroke and he can touch him.

Hark! a gurgle from the livid mouth—a contortion of the face—a convulsion of the figure—the hand loosens its hold, and a whirling wave carries him within half a yard of the outstretched hand that strives to rescue.

One groan from the banks swells above the roar of waters. The young man, heedless of his own peril, gazes motionless as though turned to stone, upon the body shooting along the swift waters. Down, down, almost to the brink—lost for a moment—leaping up at the very edge, and whirled over into the soundless depths below.—

* * * * *

It was many months after, when house-cleaning time came round, and all the old pile of lumber was removed, that William and Maggie discovered the mine of ruin that had so nearly sprung beneath them.

Standing then in the light of the little window, looking up with pale face from the uncovered kegs and well-laid train, to the paler face of his young wife, William murmured, scarcely above a whisper, "Maggie, there *is* a God in HEAVEN."



Down, down, almost to the brink—lost for a moment—leaping up at the very edge, and whirled over into the soundless depths below.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

On the morning of the very day in which that fierce, remorseless soul went to stand before the tribunal of an angry God, Alice Byng was startled, on descending from her room, by an exclamation of terror from the girl who had just opened the front door.

"Oh, Missus, see here!" she cried, retreating to the hall. Alice stepped forward. The tall, thin figure of a woman was drawn up in an abject, cringing posture on the broad stone at the top, with her face turned down upon the step, against the door-sill. She spoke to her. No answer. She came closer, and laid her hand upon the head. No motion. The bony hand was closed tightly about a roll of papers.

Alice stooped over, and touched the hand. She started back, stood still a moment, and returned to summon her husband. He came down, took the hand in his, tried to raise the head.

"It is no use, Alice," he said, softly, "she is gone. Her head is heavy as lead. Wait, let me turn her over." He stooped, turned the body carefully over, and looked into a face whose last expression was one of bitter, despairing penitence. His own turned pale as death. He placed his hand as if for support, high against the door-casing, leaned his head upon it, and gave way to an uncontrollable burst of tears.

His wife came forward in alarm. Strange to see that grave face so convulsed with emotion, to hear great sobs burst up from the broad, strong breast. He bowed his head upon her shoulder, "My sister Alice," was all that he could whisper, and her tears mingled with his own.

Presently he crowded back the sorrow, lifted the gaunt figure in his arms, carried it in, and laid it tenderly on the parlor-sofa.

The next day there was a quiet funeral there. The coffin was closed, and a plain silver plate bore the inscription:—

MARY BYNG MORRIS,

BORN

JULY 15TH, 181-

DIED

OCTOBER 8TH, 185-.

When Edward Clarence returned to New York, he was accompanied by William Benson, who brought his wife to weep at the grave of her mother, and win a place in the affection of her new relatives. The cordiality of their welcome was only equalled by their gratitude to God, and the generous hearts he had employed to rescue the child from sharing the fearful destiny of her dead mother.

The discovery of the powder, and the almost certainty of Gamp's terrible intentions, were never revealed, except to Edward and his family. All necessary steps were taken, however, to prove that William Benson had been defrauded by him of his father's property. With the aid of the man Shroeck, and all the valuable papers in William's possession, they had little difficulty in identifying his claim, and, after many years had elapsed, during which Gamp had retained the money, the jury awarded to him the whole of his claim, with the accumulated interest.

Having then means and leisure to pursue his favorite study, rather as a science than a mechanical trade, he resolved at once to make himself master of its highest principles. Although Father Benson's three years have not yet elapsed, his prophecy that his boy would "make one of the first engineers in this country," is in a fair way for fulfillment. By the power of energy and perseverance, the young man has already conquered difficulties that for years have baffled the skill of older minds.

But not in these matters alone does William Benson shine pre-eminent. Both himself and his young wife have suffered;—have tasted life's bitter waters, and in the precious Bible have found the antidote to their bitterness. Wherever a soul is struggling in the darkness of unbelief, wherever a frail form is sinking beneath poverty or shame—wherever a weak spirit flutters in the baneful influence of a bad man's will, their hearts and hands are ready with sympathy or more substantial aid, to feel and do for others what others have felt and done for them.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

KATE WESTON was sitting at her bedroom window. The changeable foliage of Autumn lay spread away before her, down a long slope to the valley where the pretty village nestled amid hues of gold, scarlet, green and brown.

The season had been one of prosperous and abundant growth, and the sun, on that Indian Summer afternoon, looked down upon an unusual wealth of that gorgeous season of the year.

Kate's cheek had been bright all day, and her voice tremulous with a strange music. Her light foot bounded through the house with a nervous energy totally foreign to her gentle nature. But now her eye was kindling with a deeper light, and the white roses in her hair trembled as though shaken by the wind. A snowy muslin robe, fastened at the throat with a single ruby that Edward had given her years before, two or three rose buds in the bodice, and a wreath twined in her back hair, completed her attire. Not in "brodered hair, nor pearls, nor costly array," lay the charm of *her* adorning. The roses were white, with a delicate straw-colored centre; she had gathered them that afternoon from her favorite bush, the same whose single bud, a year before, Edward had unconsciously broken.

Every few minutes her head turned nervously to the road leading from Mr. Jeremiah's dwelling. Presently three figures, dim in the distance, came down towards her. One very tall and stout, one very short and puffy, another, a little shorter than the first, but straight and elastic as an arrow. Kate drew back into the shadow of the muslin curtain; a moment after she heard Rosy calling up to her, "Missey Katy!" She looked out. "Dey's jest a comin' down de road. 'Pears Mas'r Edward walks mighty peart now; walks as straight now; guess dat renimical tumble into de Niagary Falls didn't hurt him much, anyhow, ef it did break his boat to pieces. Lawsakes, he's pearter'n he ever was, do look, Missey Kate." Rosy put up both great black hands to readjust her

yellow turban, and fold the three-cornered shawl becomingly across her broad bosom, as Kate drew again into the shelter of the curtain.

What a wild gush of music that young heart was pouring out, discordant, but melodious to the listening angels as the harmony of their native heaven; like those matchless minor discords that entrance the master-spirits of music in our fallen world. One solemn peal of triumph, strong as a trumpet-tone, at the rescue of an immortal soul precious as her own, mingling with the notes of woman's perfect love, and all subdued by a soft undertone of fear.

Did he love her still? Would he think it delicate in her summoning him to her, without the slightest intimation of his desire to come? Would honor prompt him, if affection had grown cold? Kate—Kate—unworthy of you. He had resolved to lose you, but he had no *such* fears.

She sat quite still, trying to calm her feelings. She could generally control them—what was the matter now? The greater the effort, the faster rang the mystic peal of that throbbing soul. They were coming nearer; she did not see them, but she could almost count their steps by the motion of her beating fancy. She could hear her mother's even step in the parlor where she waited them below, and Rosy's voice muttering away in exuberant delight beneath the window.

"Gwine to come roun' right at last, arter all;" murmured the ebony lady, in a half-indignant tone. "Lawsakes, didn't I *know* de good Lord'd bring him round. 'Pears Missey Kate don't care nuffin for that yer fix Mas'r Edward got into, nohow. No more she ought. Don't dem renimical rum-sellers deduce everybody'd like to know. Nebber see'd nuffin like 'em. But dere's a good time a comin'; dat comforts Rosy. Dis yer gran' law's jest a gwine to comboberlate de whole lot ob 'em into buttermilk. 'Pears now, I sees it a risin' up, like de cloud, no bigger dan de man's hand, a spreadin' and a spreadin', till it trabbles all ober de sky, an' rains down happiness all ober de world. De Lord can do it all, an' ole Rosy's gwine to live till Joe gits *clare out* de snare ob de fowler. Lawsakes, they's a'most here already."

Kate's quickened ear caught the distant sound of footsteps, but she sat quite still, pressing her hand upon her heart (as though she *could* hush its unwonted riot.) Nearer—nearer came the feet—she could hear voices now—there, it was *his* voice!—she started up like a frightened fawn, flew down

stairs, and away out into her bower, before Rosy's span-new turban had finished fluttering its welcome at the front gate.

It was full fifteen minutes after they had entered that Mrs. Weston, with one of her own gentle smiles, came back from a second unsuccessful search for the missing fairy. "Prithee, my son," she said, in the yearning tone of years gone by, "go and find her for us. She has vanished, but I think thee can find her. I left her in her room but a little while before you came. Thou knowest some of her hiding-places, and I shall have to send thee for her."

Edward rose with a slight embarrassment of manner, and walked away without speaking. Mrs. Weston returned to her seat at the back window of the sitting-room, and a moment after they saw Edward's lithe figure descending the slope that led to the tiny waterfall, whereupon Mr. Jeremiah's great red handkerchief acquitted itself honorably of a triumphant flourish; Mrs. Weston's mild eyes looked complacently over her spectacles at the retreating figure, as she made some trivial remark upon the favorable season; Mr. Pufton threw his little round head back, rubbed his hands in a perfect ecstasy and shot off half-a-dozen answers. "Think so myself, ma'am—quite favorable, ma'am—uncommonly favorable, ma'am—highly delightful, ma'am—*perfectly* satisfactory in *all* respects, ma'am." It didn't seem to strike Mrs. Weston that he was at all extravagant on such a commonplace subject, for she looked as much delighted as himself, with those large blue eyes, that years and sorrow had no power to dim, fixed upon the narrow path that led to her daughter's sanctum.

Edward's glance, as he passed along, was arrested by the hallowed linden-tree, heaped with the foliage that rustled in the sunlight. A flash of something that he thought darkened long ago, beamed out upon the mirage that, in absence, he had mistaken for reality, and a mist was dimming its clear outlines. He walked on. Somehow the calmness he had labored for, until he thought that he was perfect master of his feelings, was ebbing away. Strangely enough, he began to linger, and wonder what he should say, and how he should meet her. He had resolved to ask her friendship still, but in what words should he couch his request. Presently he stopped short for a minute, then, as though ashamed at his own emotion, hurried on again.

A few more steps, and he came to the rose-bush, with its

wealth of flowers and bursting buds. Another flash of that strange light; the mirage was growing fainter. The bright water rippled along by the narrow opening down which he was passing. His foot rustled among the falling leaves, so that the fairy figure upon which his eye rested, as he turned the great tree at the end of the path, must have been conscious of his approach. But she did not stir. She was standing with one arm clasped about a sapling, bending over, with averted face, and looking down into the water.

Her bright hair looked golden in the sunshine, and the half-blown roses were trembling, trembling, more than that light breath of wind could shake them. Except for that, and the flutter of the white robe, the contour of that matchless figure might have seemed the work of some master-sculptor, so steady was the quiet with which it clung to the slight sapling beside her. Edward advanced to within a few feet of her. His heart was throbbing, his strong will flickering; the mirage had almost vanished. He stepped a pace nearer—she did not move, but the largest rose in her hair quivered more than ever. For a minute he stood still, then—"Oh, Edward, what were you doing?" With an involuntary motion he stepped forward, and bent his head above her shoulder, until both faces were reflected in the water.

She started, let go the sapling, and turned towards him. There was something in the soul-light of those eyes, that scattered the mirage, and poured back in its full power the resistless love he had fancied conquered. How radiant was that pure face, glowing with the inner beauty that outvied the sunlight.

The next moment resolves and fears were all forgotten. His young, strong arm was about her, her face was hidden in his bosom. The angels listened to the added melody of another heart, and the full, rich tones rising in one triumph-strain of love and gratitude, pealed now, at last, in perfect unison.

Together—in the Ark.

THE END.