

THE
FACTORY GIRL.

BY A FRIEND.

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DEDICATION.

TO THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN—ESPECIALLY TO THOSE WHO ARE,
AND TO ALL WHO THINK OF BECOMING FACTORY GIRLS,
THIS IS RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED BY THE AUTHOR,

A FRIEND.

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CHAPTER I.

THE "FEVER."

PROFIT and pleasure often triumph over conditions, and real happiness springs not from changeable externals, but from inward peace and contentment. The rocky soil of the Granite State has taxed the sweat and energy of many a farmer or early working son; yet this very necessity has been the occasion of industry, and the nourisher of virtue. And though the boys may mourn over the briars and thistles as the products of Adam's sin, and curse him again and again with all their might, they know not that it is better to be killing weeds than to spend their time in idleness or in mischief. But no place is wholly cursed. The "Switzerland of America" has its gentle slopes and rugged mountains, its meadows and forests, its shady streams and smiling lakes, its music-making waterfalls, and Edens of fruits and flowers. And though the inhabitants are compelled to labor, they love to *think*, and will be as independent and unfettered in conscience, speech and action, as the free winds that roam their foliaged hills, or sport in their spring-teeming vales. Their embrowned and toil-hardened hands are kind, and beneath their unpolished and unaffected exterior nowhere beat more generous and faithful hearts. And the deep snows and stinging blasts of winter, only irresistably persuade them from out-door employments and pleasures, to nearer and more social joys. Freezing weather cannot benumb thoughtful minds, or chill the heart fountain of kindness and love. And while snow and cold reign supreme without, farmers and their families enjoy the gathered harvests of their Spring and Summer care, and their warm gushing affections make mutual sunshine and gladness, as they form the home circle around the bountiful board or the blazing hearth stone. And the *long* winter lengthens the freedom and enjoyment of farmers' sons and daughters. The pleasant associations with books and class-mates, at the singing and spelling school—in merry sleigh parties or social gatherings—and the richer joys

of the long winter evenings spent in study or sweet converse with brothers and sisters at home—find a lodgment in the treasury of the heart. Home, with its friends and delights. O, blessed and fadeless picture of memory! Whose heart does not throb faster to look upon it! Time may have passed it roughly, death may have drawn over it the mantle of mourning, or here and there raised the grave-turf,—mother, the central light may be gone, and the friendly beaming faces of brothers and sisters may be sadly missed—but the place is hallowed by the related forms and associations of tenderly loved friends. The love planted rose blooms there, and the willow bends low over the tombstone: while the imperishable urn stands upon the mound to catch affection's tears at the frequent visitation. It is still the dearest spot on earth, and the dark picture yet cherished nearest the heart, shines with the light of other and happier days,—it strenghtens us for earth's duties or weans us from the world by winning our hearts and feet heavenward.

The winter of 184— had been unusually severe, but its days were now numbered. Mild Spring came like a ministering angel from the sun, before whose breath the chilly snows disappeared, and the ice-bound and frosted earth warmed to life, and activity under its sunny beams, and reassumed its own wonted mantle of verdure and beauty. The long confined flocks and herds walked forth as into a new world to enjoy the sweet new grass and odors. The young lambs frisked upon the green carpet—the birds made heaven vocal with their songs of gladness—and all things of life put on their youthful dress, and seemed to say, "bounteous Spring has again returned with its sunshine and its cheer." But the new buds opened into bloom, and May hung out her flowers and perfume as if careless who enjoyed them, or in so rich profusion that all might have enough. And away back in a quiet village of New Hampshire, environed by hills, stood a cottage half concealed by lilacs and the lattice-climbing bean—the home of the family circle and happy hearts. But one now was the light and joy. Sixteen winters had but added to the bestowments of as many gentle summers. Her dark hair fell in the honest ringlets of nature, and upon her brow rested the triple wreath of youth, beauty and innocency. Her cheeks crimsoned with the flow of health, were like the new-spread rose, and her soft black eyes beamed so deep and full of soul, that they made serene and joyous whatever their light fell upon. Radiant as the morning, did she appear, and mild as

the summer evening. Her artlessness of person and bearing, her ready kindness and cheering smile fascinated all beholders—won the esteem and love of all. And her many youthful friends—for such never lack friends—loved to be with her—to look upon her and hear her words, for she scattered so thick the flowers of friendship and affection, that the bitter of life was unremembered in the blissful hours of her associations. And her own young spirits bounded as free and melodious as the singing waters of her own native brooks. Beautiful, cheerful, obedient, and kind, spreading contentment and happiness wherever she went, no wonder she was the beloved in the circle of friends—the idol of home. Her full heart beat warm in the early sun of life, and her happy experience had filled her sky with more pleasant expectations.

Full-blown Spring affords some evenings peculiar to itself, and most grateful to the feelings. When the dusky veil of twilight deepens, objects recede into gradual obscurity, the earth and clouds seem to commingle, and the atmosphere is full of dreamy enchantments, or as it were some gentle spirit steals down from above to hush the noises of business and calm the tired mind for rest and repose. All is still, and soft and peacefully persuasive, and when heaven hangs out its evening lamps—the bright stars of the sky—we love to stray to some sequestered grove and spend an hour in communion with some congenial friend, with ourselves, or the broad and resplendent universe.

On such an evening did the door of that cottage open, and Mary came forth on her solitary ramble and musings. The zepthers made subdued music in her flowing tresses as she tripped noiselessly along, like a night fairy to her chosen resort. The bower gave its accustomed welcome, but she returned it not with her full and wonted smile; and a shade of seriousness lay, but lightly, upon her fair temples. Her eyes passed not joyfully over the familiar and diamond-sprinkled firmanent—her ears were shut to the melody of evening bells—her lovingly-tuned heart responded to no music of the dewy breezes—the rolled withered leaf fell from her rosy fingers—she is still—thinking—and what new thought, or subject? Trivials to maturer wisdom, occasion deep seriousness to inexperienced minds, and littles often germinate and reproduce till they determine abundant and pleasurable or unhappy fruit. But the stars shone on as bright as ever—the dews fell thicker and damper, and Mary returns to her ivy-clad home—and proceeds with her remaining duties, but

thinking yet. The quick seeing mother—for mothers soon know of change in the spirits of their children—noticed her soberness, and asked, "What's the matter, Mary?"

"O, nothing," she replies, "I was only thinking."

"What about—tell me, my dear?"

"I was only thinking about going to the—well there. I have n't got anything—I can't *appear* like other girls—I'm ashamed to go into company—my thick shoes—my dress is faded—and my old bonnet looks so. And father *never will* get me anything—he does n't care how I look. You know the Woodbury girls—they've got home—they were at the party a little while ago, and everybody was looking at them—they were *dressed* so richly and *looked* so beautifully. And I was afraid to stir, for fear I should be laughed at—and so I kept back out of sight, and did n't enjoy myself at all. And I'll never go again, looking as I do now. I think's strange I can't have things like other girls—I work hard enough."

"Now don't talk so, Mary, you know your clothes are quite good, and I mean to get you some more this summer, and fix you up real smart. How much better off are those girls? Rich clothing attracts at first, but the excellent character and deportment is *the* thing. These fashions have turned things round strangely—but that old proverb you have often heard me tell you, I believe, is yet true, "she alone is beautiful that *acts* beautifully." Do n't you believe it?"

"What think I care about the old proverbs; I wasn't speaking nor thinking about *them*."

"Did you think of going to the factory! Don't think of that—you know not what it is. Stay at home this summer, and help me—I shall have a good deal of butter and cheese to make—and a great many other things to do—my work will be hard—how can we get along without you? Do stay, and you see if I do n't get you something real nice."

"I dont want to," says Mary with considerable anxiety.

"Why," asks her mother with some earnestness.

"Cause I dont want to," was Mary's half complaining reply.

Here little Billy of three years, attracted by the conversation from his play with the kitten, leaned upon his mother's lap, asking "where's Mary going?"

"She says she want's to go to the factory," as she lifted him in her arms.

"Factory, what's he, ma'am?"

"It's a large brick house way down country, where a great

many folks—most of them girls, like Mary, make cloth such as father's shirts are made of."

"What she go down there for," Billy asks with a mouth just ready to cry. And then he went to Mary, and looking up into her face, said, "you wont go way off down to the fact'ry, will you Mary, cause I dont want you to."

Mary could not answer, but kindly took him to her lap.—But the evening duties were done and no more was said on the subject. The hour of retirement came; and the mother closed her eyes none too soon—and Mary slept not soundly, for her dreams were full of factory—fine clothes—appearing like other girls—a great many attractions—and she saw all sorts of visions, and not one advised her to stay at home.

The dreams of night are reals, but not always waking realities, or wholly true prophets of futurity.

But, Mary dreamed and saw, and murmured in her sleep. Bright morning came at last, and the household labors were helped on, as usual, by her skillful hand; and the mother hoped her evening thoughts had been obliterated by night and sleep. But not so. Mary had seen the Woodbury girls and heard their stories a little too long. "I can't have anything like other girls—I don't want to stay at home," was the only and continued reply from day to day. Mary was discontented—her feelings were too much excited by the thought of leaving home, and fine things—the dissatisfaction was apparent in her countenance and manner of working—that cheerful and contented spirit was gone—she was almost unhappy.

A week passed, and she seemed no better. The more she thought, the worse she grew—she had the "factory fever" real and high, which was too deeply seated to be allayed by a mother's advice or promises. And the mother soon learned the only remedy was to go.

"Won't you stay at home" appeals the mother, yet without much hope, "you are too young to go—I'll do by you just as I promise—you see if I don't get you something good. I would stay, won't you? come."

"I don't want to," whines Mary, "other girls go, and I can. I never went anywhere in the world, hardly—always have to stay here and work, and then not have anything like other folks."

"Well," replied her mother, I can say no more, if you will go you must, I suppose, but you'll be sorry, I think."

The light that sprang up in Mary's countenance did not

argue much for sorrowness. And when it was finally agreed that she should start the next Monday, she was herself again, the beautiful and happy Mary.

CHAPTER II.

THE PREPARATION.

The imagination is busy as well as the hands, when a journey is in view. Various future images come up in order, and the present feelings are new and peculiarly strange to one leaving home for the first time, to be absent any length of time—there is already a living in a new world of thought and activity.

It was now early in the week, but Mary was busily employed—there was much to be done to get ready. Her mother must buy her a great many things, she could not go looking as she did, and when one hasn't anything, of course, there is necessity for all the more.

So Mary thought as she went about the preparation. But when she *filled* her large trunk with her old and out-of-fashion clothes, she was really surprised—she did not know she had so many and so nice things. She had looked at them with prejudiced eyes and a discontented heart, and she was extremely poor and out of date. But when she brought them together, and brushed and folded up—and then with what her mother had bought and made, she really had quite a lot of fine things, and she felt considerably rich and proud.

The best gift of her mother was a Bible which Mary securely wrapped in some white paper and placed it among her most dearly prized keepsakes and treasures. And this was the richest of them all, thought Mary, for thus was she early taught.

And now she was quite ready. All things had been folded, and again examined and packed—there was nothing left she was satisfied. She had also visited her young friends, who were surprised to hear she was going to the factory—and in vain endeavored to persuade her from it—her mind was fixed upon it—she must go.

Her school mates had also called to bid her good by, and wish her good luck. And the little party of Friday afternoon was enjoyed with mingled feelings, especially by Mary. And her heart fluttered strangely, and her words trembled as she returned the good-by, and the kind pressure of the hands, for the friendships that spring up and grow with childhood are true and strong. And the youthful persons of mutually entwined affections, are tenderly and almost inseparably united, or the parting is tearful—and even the philosophy and experience of age cannot fully supply the absence of loved forms. But how such simple expressions of kindness and affection as Mary enjoyed, endear friends to us, and gladden our hearts long after the separation.

It was Saturday evening, pleasant and quiet, and man and beast rejoiced to lay aside their toiling implements of the weary week, and feel the renovation and cheer of rest; and all nature seemed to become less noisy and active, calming itself and all things to a peaceful and holy composure for the coming day. Hill and vale were alive with the soft and bewitching moonlight, when Mary strayed to her garden lilac bower to bid it farewell for a season. And as its many sweet associations crowded upon her mind while sitting pensive on the little seat, a rustling is heard and her mother is by her side. In her surprise she could not speak, and the mother commences—

“What a beautiful evening is this, Mary; and I have taken occasion of thy retirement, better to fulfill the duty of a mother to her daughter. You soon leave the home-circle for the first time—stepping without the paths and associations of home-friends—going beyond the watchful eyes and guardianship of a mother who tenderly loves you. You have yet the world to learn. Experience may be a faithful teacher, but is often a painful one—profit then by my advice. The outside is most and first exposed, and therefore most cultivated—it promises much to-day, but has no depth, or spring-watered roots, and soon withers. The universal endeavor is not *to be*, but *to seem*. Fickleness, deceit and broken faith have bowed many with heavy sorrows. Graceful bows and smiles are easily learned to conceal the worthless character or villainous purpose, and fair and well-spoken promises, when at last realized, have broken many loving and confiding hearts—words pleasant to hear, but arrows of death. Don't you remember beautiful Alice Grey? Educated, accomplished, and surrounded by many friends, yet how basely was she betrayed and ruined!

She mourned, and withered, and died like the flower blighted by untimely frosts—broken by unkindly winds. So the sun may shine, and the blooming flower invite *your* hand, but human vipers lie coiled in beds of flowers or environs of wealth to spring upon the innocent and unwary. Not your hands, but your character may be hopelessly stung. Many in the morning of youth and hope have perished like the serpent-charmed dove—thinking the roses by their path were natural, and the music they heard true as angels—perished at once, or piningly lingered in disgrace and painful seclusion. Be cautious, then—thoughtful, reflective. Danger is near when you least think—the unwatchful and thoughtless fall by the tempter's artful power. The characters of many youths have been inflamed and poisoned beyond recovery by corrupt reading—and vicious associates. Read good books—they will entertain and profit you. Have few intimate friends, and make them not hastily—the sacred rights of friendship have been secured but to be desecrated, and devoted to selfish and unhallowed ends. You will be often enticed to places of music and merriment, but consent not—the worthless, the base, and temptations are there—go not into their presence, not even once, one false step may prove fatal. *Only this once*, or, *'tis only once*, has opened the gate to the way of ruin. Remember the Sabbath to observe it properly—always attend meeting, and do not fail of going to the Bible Class—these will be powerful shields to you in the new scenes and temptations that await you. Read often that little treasure, I gave you, it is the treasury of knowledge and wisdom to the inexperienced, it will safely and happily counsel and guide you. Remember it was your mother's richest memento, and *her* wish that you should read it *daily*—some of its precious passages. I shall think of you as I toil, at morn, noon and evening. O, I shall miss you greatly! and, when I lift up my heart to our Heavenly Father, thy preservation and innocency shall be the burden of my prayer. Remember me when you are far from home and friends, and may Heaven keep thee safe." She ceased, and the tears of promise and love stood in Mary's eyes as the mother's hand silently withdrew from hers and she was left alone.

Again, it was quiet sunny Sabbath, and if you could have looked over the congregation in that village church, you might see Mary in her wonted seat, most attentively listening to her beloved pastor as he spoke of Christ and Heaven, and the only way to be happy: and her eyes would frequently moisten, for

perhaps it was the last time she would hear his solemn and affectionate words, at least, his voice would not fall on her ears for a long while. And when he spoke of youth, and the susceptible nature of young persons—how they were ever seeking for something to settle to rest upon—how easily they yielded to present influences—how their characters were changed, and shaped, and fixed by early cherished principles and practices, by the company they kept, and especially by the character of their chosen companions,—and that the principles of the Bible and a trust in God could only preserve young men and women from the snares that beset them when away from parental shielding and guidance, Mary deeply felt her own condition; and while the misty future sprang up before her, her heart beat in unison with her mother's prayer, that Heaven would keep her safe.

Interesting and solemn was the Bible Class at noon. The teacher was tenderly affected when she spoke to Mary of her leaving them, and hoped she would continue to study the word of God, and ever be found in the Bible Class where she attended meeting. And her faltering tongue told a full heart as she took Mary's hand and gave her good counsel. And Mary could scarcely control herself to speak when she parted with these dear class-mates. How many sweet and strong links bind one to the places and friends of early youth.

* * * * *

Subdued and yet earnest was the conversation of Sabbath evening at home. Father, mother, two younger brothers and sisters and herself, completed the linked family circle. And they seemed to collect nearer each other, and pause, yet wishing to speak, for the place of the circle's pride and joy would be soon unoccupied. The past was mentioned, and the present introduced—but the separation was near, when the future moves most and liveliest before the mind.

"Now you'll be sure and write, won't you Mary, as soon as you get there and go to work?" said the mother. "We shall all wish to hear from you, and how you prosper."

"Yes," said Martha, "write Susan and me a good long letter, and tell us all about the factory, and the girls working down there—who they are—and who work in your room—and where you board, and see if you live any better than we do—and all about it, how you like everything."

"O, do," said Susan, "we shall want to know so—and we shall be so glad to hear—tell us all you see there."

And Joseph must also say, "you'll write me a letter too

won't you Mary, 'cause I shall want to hear as well as Martha and Susan."

And little Billy's voice is heard, "write me a letter, won't you? I wish you would n't go way down there—what you want to leave us for; going way off where we can't see you—you won't hold me any more." These words rather renewed the sadder feelings, when the father remarks,

"Yes, I guess she'll remember us all to write—she can't help it—she'll think of us so often."

"Yes," replies Mary, "I shall remember you all—and I will write a good long letter, and tell you all about it, as soon as I get there and get settled. And you'll take care of my flower bed, Martha and Susan; and keep my little arbor neat, when I come home. And Billy must be a good little boy and I'll bring him something pretty. When it comes night and you all sit round here talking, how I shall wish to be with you—if I could only step in and see you once and a while it would be some consolation. I expect I shall want to come right back as soon as I get there, but I mean to go."

But the evening was spent, and the "good night" given and returned by that circle of friends, somehow lingered more sweetly on the tongue, and seemed more precious than ever before.

"Pleasures brighten as they take their flight."

The house was soon quiet. But night and sleep hastened. The expected Monday came. The family were all astir in season,—none would be sleepy this morning, for the stage was coming early. Breakfast was ready—eaten—though the appetites were satisfied with little.

A rattling is heard—"The stage is coming," cries Joseph. The movements and exchanged words are hurried. The father takes the trunk to the door—Mary puts on her *old* bonnet with a fast fluttering heart—the stage stops—the baggage is buckled on—"Come," said the father to lingering Mary, "the driver is waiting." Mary kissed her two sisters, Joseph and little Billy—grasped the warm and trembling hand of her mother who said, "Good by, Mary, be a good girl, and God bless you,"—and with as cheerful a face as possible (for the tear would steal down, in spite of her,) she said, "Good by, father," who kindly returned it, as she passed into the stage which bore her away. And the mother said, "Come in children, do n't watch the stage out of sight—'tisn't good luck." Those left behind went to their employments—but *that* day was a long one to them, and the evening was still longer.

"Where think Mary is to-night? I should like to know where she is—how long it has been since she left—I should like to see her,"—formed the conversation. And no marvel. * * * * A week went by, how long and lonesome it seemed. Mary was gone—her place in the children's circle, and at the table, was vacant—there was bereavement. And even puss would purr and shut her eyes, all sober, for Mary's hand *never* smoothed her coat. And the little pink and white lilies of Mary's flower-bed would seemingly turn away from Martha and Susan's care and hang their heads discontented, for they no longer enjoyed the gentle caress and speech of Mary. * * * * There was something gone from the home—and from the village. And where? Perhaps some of my readers may know—from having been there themselves.

CHAPTER III.

THE INTRODUCTION.

TRAVELING about sixty miles from that country home you will come to a large village, and on looking around you will observe a number of brick buildings, one of which, five stories in height, we would have you enter. Go in on the first floor and be not over frightened, or at all thunder struck, yet if you are a little shocked we shall neither wonder, nor call you excessively weak nerved, if you never visited such a place before. For I confess, the first time I had a real vision of the factory's inside, I hardly knew where I was. There was such a click, click, click, and incessant rattle-te-slam-banging; I could scarcely see, hear or think—but I soon collected myself sufficiently to take a survey, or at least some bearings. So if you, my reader, have found out where you are, just look about you and see whatever your eyes rest upon. Observe those wheels moving as if they meant it—those bands crossing and recrossing as if chasing the wind in a circle. Look at the machines sending their different parts back and forth or round and round, trying to see which could go the fastest. All is wide awake here, and going as if sent for: and then hear that heavy and perpetual rumbling and buzzing rat-

tle. Just take a general view of the confused labyrinth of apparatus, and velocities, and if you are not disconcerted, stunned, or crazed by the jarring thunders and clattering-tur-racket, you would make a brave and reliable soldier. But you haven't noticed the best yet. Don't you see those bright smiling faces turned towards you, as if welcoming you to their place of labor? or at least not abashed at all in your presence. What *other* ladies would wish young men to see them laboring? And does industry detract from character, depreciate in worth? Let others think so if they please. "And do you know the folks who own those pale yet cheerful faces?" Why they are *factory girls*. They factory girls, with heads so glossy, sparkling eyes, and appearance so smart? How the factory girls have been underrated and belied! Compare them with slaves! what an idea! I wish *that* southern man could look in here—his logic would be frightened into thin air. Yes, true, one's own eyes are the most reliable witnesses, especially if the reason is wilfully prejudiced. This is the weave-room—but go into the spin-room, carding or warp-room, and as soon as you enter, your eyes shall fall upon just such a good looking company as you see before you. There may be a little change in number, and possibly in quality, in some rooms; for they say that some overseers wishing to make *all* about them as beautiful as possible, will engage only pretty girls. If they do I think their superficial views and judgment may often get tremendously "taken in." What's outside a few unkind years may spoil. Pearls whose preciousness time only increases, float not on the surface, nor are woven into the dress. Perpetual beauty sparkles up from the depths of a mind enriched with knowledge and diamond thoughts—it flows out from a full and true beating heart of kindness, benevolence and love. Greatness and worth will shine through and beautify a plain exterior. This is to be, not to seem: and one seems what he is, by and by. So many wishing to *appear*, would be tenfold more successful, if instead of adorning the person, the unessential outside, they would cultivate and ornament the intellect and heart with precious and fadeless substance. But it is most difficult to break from the prevailing notions of etiquette, and popular practice, though the reward be so great. Yet not the beauty of color, form, or dress, but how the beautiful character and deportment win our esteem and love! But you are not listening to my philosophy—what are you looking at so attentively? "Do you know that girl way over there on the right hand?" Where? know her:—

let me think—aye, I recognize her now—that is Mary. I see the same bright eye and step, but paleness spreads down her countenance where once the rosy cheek was blooming. Perhaps the factory does not realize all or just her previous picture—a dark shade may have filled the place of an imagined light one. But see, Mary weaves away and sings that early childhood song—her bosom heaves—a long sigh now and then escapes, and the tear will stray upon her white cheek. Her eyes are on her work, but her thoughts and heart are absent—she lives, would wish to live, with the friends of her free and quiet home. And I read as much as this in her looks, *there is no place like home—no friends like the friends of home*. Ah, Mary, do you know now what you parted with when you left home? Would you not exchange the factory for life there, even if you had nothing like other girls, and your old clothes troubled you so? Would you think of appearing in company, if you could be with father, mother, brothers and sisters a little while? But weave on, sing on—drown the noise and enjoy as much as possible. Let not your thoughts linger too long at home—it will be harder to come back—brood not over the present too much—bear all things resolutely—a contented mind will make heaven of almost any place.

But let us leave Mary here to review a few of her introductory steps. When she first took her seat in the stage her mind was too much confined to its own thoughts to notice the other passengers. But sadness cannot forever press down the youthful and elastic spirits. The same increasing sunlight that robbed the flowers of their dew-drops to fill the air with sweet incense, also stole away her crystal tears and sorrowed countenance, and her heart gradually beat in unison with the songs of the morning birds. The vision of separated home and friends at last entirely faded, and the handkerchief no longer needed, she was attracted to the conversation of her fellow-travellers upon the various and beautified sceneries of nature. Modest, even to bashfulness, she listened in silence for a while; but her timidity was conquered by the habits of her artless country life and her own kind heart, and her mild voice contributed profit and pleasure to the mutual enquiries and remarks. For she had spent her life till now amidst the verdant hills, and loveliness of the country, and the changes and delights of both summer and winter were known by heart. The names and uses of meadow and pasture—of cornland and forest—of orchard and garden—the pleasures of morning and evening—the rill and waterfall—were described by her in the simple and

engaging manner of nature itself. And the company were exceedingly talkative and happy as they passed object after object—they could not use their eyes and tongues too fast—and evidently some were not every day acquainted with the fresh air and employments of farmers or farmers' daughters.

There were ten in all—four ladies—three gentlemen, and three children. Two of the ladies and the gentlemen seemed to be at home in conversing—but the other ladies with nice dresses and gold chains, stared at the names of many things, and much more at their uses—and were tenfold more distracted and dumb as the objects multiplied. And to them as they both suddenly almost hopped from their seat crying out, "O what *beautiful animals* are those?" Mary barely escaped replying, "you," instead of "*they* are geese." And she really did think that every child of three years ought to know more than they did. But Mary's turn came to stare and look vacant when these two ladies used words and phrases perfectly familiar and delightful to themselves. And Mary still further thought they must be *great* to be pleased with such nonsense as they were talking about.

And if you could have looked into the mind of that observing elderly man among them—I think you might read such as this. "And so where is the difference between the ignorance of city-folks and country-folks, of each others places and employments? That of the latter is often more pardonable, because the pretensions to know all things are less. The fact is, no one knows every thing, and should guard lest he prematurely call another *green*, and so by forestalling self in knowledge, make the exposure of his ignorance more full and sure."

There was one young man in the company of about twenty years—of good raiment and address—and rather of a studious bearing. He appeared to understand and appreciate the subjects of conversation and occasionally his voice was heard. But when Mary was particularly animated and beautiful in pointing out or describing any object or scene, his eyes rested not upon it but her. And she sometimes hesitated, but thought he meant nothing or was cross-eyed. And we leave the reader to judge which—that is, whether he thought more of the beauty of nature or the natural beauty. But time passed unconsciously as the stage passed—sometimes each would bethink him of his own as a pause was made for fresh horses. And now the meridian sun poured down upon them and they stopped at the public house. But the dinner table reminded Mary of home—and the crowding thoughts supplied the appetite or took it

away, for Mary ate but little. And while she saw the strange rooms and faces, the thought strayed into her mind where she was going. But the half hour was short, and they were again on their journey, save one gentleman who remained there. The conversation was still lively—they were all talkers—and the tavern and dinner table added to the topics. And Mary's own mind was most variously and busily employed, for she saw many buildings and things new to her—she had never been far from home before—and novelty is always engaging. At one place she saw a train of cars pass—and she was really afraid—"there never was anything so strange and fast." She had heard of the puffing, Iron Horse, but never had *heard* him till now. The examination was short—the whistle starting her from her seat—the bell—the chimney out doors pouring forth smoke—and some boxes following on wheels—she neither saw nor heard *any body*—and all was past. But one short vision let in materials for fancy to work with for a long time—and there were many curious buildings made.

But now the trees made long shadows—the sun gave a gentle brightness as he ever does on his departure to regain and preserve over night our friendship which he is conscious of forfeiting by his mid-day oppression—and with the evening the stage approached the village. From the window Mary caught the buildings, and her heart beat faster now. But she could not distinguish—it was dusky—she never saw so many houses so near together—"It must be a great place, and have a great many folks, and new things—and who were they? and what were they all doing?" At the dim sight of the place such thoughts were pouring in upon her when another was forced upon her, for the stage suddenly seemed to be rattling over a stone-road—or something very hard, unlike anything she had known before. But soon the stage was still—the door opened—she stepped out and felt that she was there. The driver took her fare, and showed her into a very large house. There were few in the room—but they took not much notice of Mary, and she was too busy with herself to examine them—at least no word was interchanged. After recovering a little from the revery of surprise—when one scarcely knows what he is thinking, or what to think about—she began to look around the apartment. "Such nice chairs and sofas—large pictures, and glass—beautiful tables, and carpet—and all things so rich," were employing her eyes and mind,—when the most terrible kind of a rumbling, grating, hammering sound occupied her ears. "It is not the car-whistle,

nor a bell, nor a trumpet—I can tell all them—what can it be, and what for?” She didn’t know whether “the house would soon tumble down or not, or whether to run or not,”—and she was trying to imagine with all swiftness—but never thought of a supper-caller till the idea flashed upon her, by the appearance of a queer looking fellow—with a black face, but white teeth and apron, who asked, “will you have some tea, Miss?” Mary waited not a second invitation, for she felt considerably supper-like—and was soon seated at a long table, full of folks. But the faces reminded her she was alone among strangers. No father was in his usual place—no kind mother to help her children, and no sisters or brothers by her side. And what cared she about *such* conversation? Is it strange she could not eat? Who feels like eating the first evening far from home? So after sipping a little tea, and often questioned by the white-aproned-black-man, “what will you have, Miss?” she left the table,—passed back to the room and sat down to think. And if any of my readers have been similarly circumstanced they can imagine or recall her feelings. We should not wonder if from the depth of her heart was sighed the “O dear,” or the handkerchief often passed her tear-moistened cheek. Such would have been natural—and real tears do not argue weakness—they may be the expression of a cheerless mind, or of a filial and loving heart. But Mary was called from her sad thoughts by the mild voice of a lady—who enquired as to “who she was? where from? and whither traveling?” Her kind face and words won Mary’s confidence, and she readily answered in part—but left it rather doubtful, whither traveling. The good lady made such enquiries about her country home and life, that in the animation of converse Mary forgot to sigh, her eyes assumed their wonted brilliancy, and her heart was happily cheered by the consolation and kindness of the stranger woman. The evening was short—and when she asked Mary, “do you wish to retire?” though it was not just the mother’s voice—none is—yet it was more like mother’s of anything—and she felt really glad.

There live in kindly spoken words,
A grace and power beyond all art,
Which steal away the tearful clouds,
And scatter sunshine through the heart.

Stranger to stranger may them give,
As friend the nearest friend consoles,
And none more timely they relieve
And bless than bowed homesick souls.

Mary was wearied by her journey and quickly assented, and passing up stairs the “good night” of the hostess was heartily responded to as it fell soothing upon her ears. But the closing door shut off again the sky of her heart, and alone in her chamber she felt lonely. It was not her bed room—strange things were there—and she “felt more like going right back home than going to bed.” She sat down, but that only made her feelings worse. “If I only had my trunk up *here* so I could look at some keepsakes of friends”—how dear seemed her youthful companions when memory poured in the past—how precious her brothers and sisters—and her own mother, “if I could see her only half a minute I would ask no more.”—And her thoughts became objects—persons, reals, before her, yet she was separated from them—they spake not, smiled not, but were images without life or friendship so far as she could *feel*—tempting but unapproachable and forbidden joys, and her condition was worse than even one alone in a stranger and uncaring multitude. But the appointments and ministrations of nature are great blessings—she felt sleepy and knew she must retire. Her swollen and aching heart softened and subsided till at last a more natural breathing evinced sleep. The night was fair, and the moon-beams stole through the window—played about the room—smoothed her tear-stained cheek—quieted her soul and whispered pleasant dreams. And the smile of love and joy alternated Mary’s face—she was at home with friends,—and happy. Again she was in the stage—sometimes sad, and then pleased with the scenes and conversation. Now far from home, in a strange place, sad and disconsolate—then the kind face of that woman beamed upon her, and she whispered “*one half hour* of light is better than all darkness.” But morning dispelled the night and night-visions, and Mary had enjoyed a little sound rest. The gong sounded; she went down to the sitting room. “The reality is before me, and I will be a little braver.” The breakfast table was a little more relished, and by the time she had finished, all her thoughts had returned from the country, to the village, and she commenced to think of the factory: “how shall I make my business known to get employment!” She had heard a number of bells quite early, and wondered what they meant. She went to the window observing if she could see any thing that looked like the factory. She saw some large buildings, and one in particular that somewhat satisfied her. “But how shall I get there? and what say when there? who will engage me?” The village

was large, and numerous folks passing and repassing, but her eyes were riveted upon that building. And she stood anxiously looking and thinking, when the kind lady happened in, whose pleasant "*good morning*" was sweet cheer; and Mary asked, "what is that large brick building?" "The factory," was the reply. And Mary felt some relieved that she knew she could see it, but she was perplexed and in trouble still. And to the lady noticing her anxiety, and making some enquiries, she told the plain fact that she came down to work in the factory.

The woman then fully understood her condition, and said, "there are many girls in the factory from all parts of the country—*some* did well; they were somewhat confined, and had to work rather hard, some thought; it was new work to many at first, but they soon got used to it; some made good wages, and all seemed to enjoy themselves quite well; no state of life has everything just as one would like it, but on the whole they were a happy lot."

With affairs thus tempered, Mary was hopefully pleased and almost longed to be a factory girl; and she asked, "how shall I find work, or where go first?"

The lady replied, "you had better wait this forenoon; I am acquainted with some of the girls, and at noon I will ask one of them to go with you to the man who hires. You wish to work in the weave-room, do you?"

"Yes, ma'am," said Mary.

"Well, so make yourself as contented as you can; it is now ten o'clock—I have employment in another room, and must leave you."

Mary could not sit now; she was all on tiptoe; she would watch the factory; sometimes look over the village as much as possible, then see who passed by; then again rock, read the paper, or watch the clock, "whose hands didn't and wouldn't move."

But it did finally strike twelve, and soon after on hearing bells she looked out and pouring from several buildings saw a host of girls; a few scattering men and boys; but the girls most like swarming bees from the hive; she could think of no other comparison, they were so thick; she never saw so many before in all her life. And she thought they looked pretty smart, for some passed near by her window; "but they differ so in all respects, faces, dresses, bonnets, gait, and all, it is quite a sight."

Now her own dinner was ready, and while she was eating

the kind lady had spoken to a girl of her acquaintance, who said she would call on her way back. Mary was soon through, and the girl came, who was introduced as Elizabeth, and they both started for the factory.

Mary was full of factory questions—"how, Elizabeth, do you like working here? how long have you been here? what room do you work in?" and "is the work hard?"

Elizabeth was in a great hurry, Mary thought, but she was a pleasant girl, and said, "O, we like very well, after we get used to it; you will soon learn about that, if you get work. I came from the town of ———, in New-Hampshire; have been here six months; work in the weave-room; I think possibly you may be engaged in my room; I hope you will."

By this time they had entered the factory; Elizabeth laid aside her bonnet. The girls were thickly coming in, and all was still. Mary was busily occupied in observation, for the factory richly supplies an observing capacity; when suddenly *all* things started, Mary thought, and the different mingling noises confused her, and she could with difficulty understand Elizabeth, who said, "the Overseer will probably be in soon, and I will speak to him."

Mary waited patiently, for she had enough to do in looking, and Elizabeth also stopped her looms and took her into some of the other rooms. Mary thought "there never was any thing so funny as the factory, but the perpetual, deafening noise didn't sound good at all;" but Elizabeth remarked, "things do look curious to strangers, but the inhabitants don't find it *all* fun." Mary scarcely knew which way she went, but she kept with Elizabeth, and soon saw her starting her looms again.

The overseer was now come, and Elizabeth asked, "do you want any more girls?" at the same time presenting Mary.

He made no immediate answer—looked at Mary, and then said, "I believe one of my girls quits to night, and you may try it in the morning, if you wish to."

"Thank you," said Mary, as her eyes brightened, and she was quite happy.

The overseer seemed to be a pleasant man, not very old, and rather of the beautiful kind. And a little talk with Mary is not at all disagreeable, as he asks such questions as these—"where are you from? how do you like the looks of things? and how long do you wish to stay?"

And Mary answered, "I like pretty well; don't know how long I shall stop; how long shall you want me, if I do well?"

"O, as long as you please, and I hope that will be some time," was the reply, as he walked away.

Mary watched Elizabeth as she went on with her work, and her explanation of machinery, and instruction were very timely, as Mary was to commence weaving so soon; she already knew something about a loom, but these were not exactly like her mother's. But Mary grew tired at last, with seeing and hearing, and Elizabeth remarked, "you had better return to the house where you are stopping, and get rested for to-morrow;" and beginning to like her, (congenial hearts feel each other's presence soon,) added, "I will call on you after I come out of the mill."

Mary thanked her and started; but when a few rods from the factory, she thought, "where shall I board?" and she came back to enquire of Elizabeth. But when she opened the door, she could not tell which way to go, to the right hand or left, and she stood confused, and almost vexed that she could not tell. Elizabeth, however, observed her, and was soon asking the cause of her return. And when Mary told, she replied, "I will ask the woman where a lot of other girls and I board if she will not take you."

Mary was again glad, and on her way. She noticed some new things as she passed, but hastened on, and it was quite late in the afternoon when she returned to tell the lady her success, who asked, "where are you going to board?"

"Perhaps with Elizabeth," Mary said, "I want to, she will tell me to-night."

"Elizabeth is a good girl, and her boarding place is a very good one—but there are some wild ones at most all places—and at some, the girls complained bitterly of their board—there was not enough, and that was poor stuff: and this was especially the case once at the corporation houses. But tea has been waiting some time, you had better eat something." Mary sat down with a better relish than she had felt since leaving home; friends and a settlement are favorable to the appetite, and she had found both; and she felt really refreshed on leaving the table. She took her seat near the window; the lady was close by, but both were silent. "Wild ones, what can she mean by that?" thought Mary, "what can they want of wild creatures at boarding houses, I hope there will be none where I board." And before she had really concluded to ask "what kind they were," the woman remarked, "Elizabeth's boarding place might be good, but it would not be like home: there was quite a number there, but you

had better go with Elizabeth, her associations will be pleasant and shielding." Mary almost said, "I can take care of myself:" her self-pride murmured it way down in her heart, but before it came out it was changed to "I always like good girls, and I know I shall love to go with Elizabeth; she is so pleasant and kind." It was now growing darkish when Elizabeth came, and said, "Mary, you can board with me, and you may now go to the place." Mary was delighted, but she had a little business first; and she felt considerably like herself when she took from her own purse the amount for her board here, and gave it to the lady who charged sparingly, and said the porter should bring her trunk in a short time. "Call and let me know how you get along," she added. "Thank you, I shall be pleased to," replied Mary as she happily proceeded with her companion, Elizabeth. The stores, the houses, the folks, were enquired of by Mary as they passed; and they were soon at the place, and in the presence of Mrs. A. who kept the boarding house. As good luck would have it Mrs. A. said Mary might occupy the same room with Elizabeth; which was equally pleasing to the two girls, as their sympathies were already warm and interchanged. They were soon in the room, which Mary thought was very good; "it was quite large, on the front side of the house; up one flight of stairs; a good clothes press; it was really pleasant, and we can have fine times." And now Mary's trunk came; she took out the things; Elizabeth helped her arrange and hang them; and all was in good order.

It was most time for retiring, yet they spent a little while below with Mrs. A. who seemed a kind woman when she asked Mary, "how she liked her room, and the village, and the factory, so far; and thought she would be contented, especially after her acquaintance with the girls, who were a jolly set, and had some good times." And there was a number present with whom Mary enjoyed a little conversation.

It is half past nine; Mary and Elizabeth are in their room, sitting in thoughtful silence. Elizabeth seemed to be struggling with opposing feelings. At length the better prevails, and while a calm and faithful smile rests upon her countenance she took a small Bible, with a silver clasp from her drawer, and said as follows:

"My dear Mary, you are mostly a stranger to me, and I was hesitating between self-pride and duty, or what you would think of me and a sacred obligation. I have no mother now; she was sick a long time with the consumption. There were four brothers, and three sisters of us. Mother's cough

increased; she grew pale and weak, but we labored each that she might have no burden of care or work, and hoped she would get well; for, O how we loved her, and we could not let her die. Yet day by day she faded and drooped, and at last took her bed. We gave her medicine and watched by her bedside; and she could still give directions about the work. We yet saw her face and heard her voice, and we became so accustomed to waiting upon her and being with her, that we thought she would always be spared to us. The physician told us she would not get well, but we put the day of death far off, and almost forgot his words. — I was the oldest, and the management of concerns rather fell upon me; and hence I was often found alone with mother asking her advice. One pleasant afternoon I was sitting by her side; she seemed unusually bright, yet I noticed her countenance was seriously shaded. At length she spake thus:

"Elizabeth, I have been waiting to talk with you; this is a fitting hour. I do not expect to get well; I cannot, and how soon I may leave you I know not. God may call me up higher in a few days; I am ready at his bidding, for my faith and hope are in Him. It is hard; I have sometimes thought so; to leave you; my husband and children bind me to earth. I would live with you longer to bless you, but 't is not our Father's will; and I have received grace to resign you all to divine care and love; God will be with you. You are the eldest, Elizabeth, and your younger brothers and sisters will look to you for guidance; you will take mother's place more. Ask wisdom and strength of God for your responsible position. O, I die thankful, and as it were contented, that you are a christian—I trust—it will be so much happier for you in future life whatever be your condition, and doubly blessed while at home. Be kind to father; comfort his bereaved heart and mingle pleasant consolation with his lonesome hours. You will find on a paper in my drawer the articles for each of your brothers and sisters; your name with the rest. When I am gone, read and give the children what I have specified. Tell them to preserve them as memorials of a dying mother's love—tell them all to be good—to be useful men and women, and meet me in a brighter world than earth, where our holy affections and society will never be sundered. But Elizabeth, I have a request to make of you. In the corner of my chest you will find a small bundle; please bring it to me."

I did as she directed, and unwrapping this small Bible, she continued:

"I give you this, Elizabeth on my dying bed. It will be to you a richer blessing than all gifts, if you know and do its teachings. Take it; cherish the love and realize the prayer of her who gives it; and my request is that you shall read some portion of it every day; do not retire till you peruse one at least of its holy passages. Will you promise me this?"

I could but do it, and my emotions barely let me say, "Yes dear mother, I will promise and I trust keep my pledge." A satisfied serenity seemed to cheer her soul as she said:

"Do so Elizabeth, and God will bless you and keep you from the evil that is in the world."

Shortly after I left the room. Days passed. The disease preyed silently yet surely upon her system—she wasted and whitened, and we knew it. But it was unexpected as we stood sorrowing by her bed as mother bade us farewell forever, and saw her die. And how lonesome and comfortless when we returned from the grave-yard—mother was gone—gone forever; and who could satisfy us! Soon after the family was scattered.

Circumstances known to myself induced me to come here. But I have never omitted the promise made my dear mother. And to-night I cannot lie down to rest in peace, till I have redeemed my pledge, as well as done my duty. I must read in this precious Bible, and I love to read." She paused.

Mary had been anxiously interested in her story, and the sympathetic tear often fell from her eye. And she thought of her own mother's advice, and that there must be something good in the Bible, or mothers would not so counsel their children to read it. And she could not refrain from getting her Bible and telling Elizabeth her story.

And then they read together, and how that sight would have made glad the heart of the sainted or living mother, as Mary knelt with Elizabeth while she offered to Heaven her evening prayer. Night beholds such pleasant and hopeful scenes rarely. How complete the preparation for peaceful and refreshing sleep!

CHAPTER IV.

FACTORY LIFE.

NIGHTS, like days, pass rapidly, when they pass pleasantly. Mary was suddenly aroused by the sound of the bell—it was early morning. Elizabeth remarked, “the second bell will soon strike, and we must then be in the mill.”

At the time they were in the factory. Elizabeth started her own looms, and then went with Mary to her's, which were at a short distance.

Mary had two looms, and being quite handy, and also having taken some lessons in weaving, she thought there would be no trouble. It *looked* easy to see Elizabeth work yesterday, but seeing and working are different things; she could not move, and tie, and fix, and keep in order quite so handily as she could see another. While she would mend in a thread, (that *old knot* was a vexation); replenish the shuttle, or put in place on one side, every thing would be jumping out and tangling up in another; and the more she hurried to do, the less she did. And she was almost stunned by the unmerciful noise; she could scarcely hear or see straight, and confused and discouraged, was just about to sit down. But Elizabeth came, set all things going regular; and while sweating Mary thanked her and said, “why can't I do it as well as you?”

Elizabeth replied—“O, we have to live and learn, practice makes perfect, you'll soon get used to it,” as she returned to her own work.

So Mary tried it again, thinking “no body was ever so good as Elizabeth.” The other girls only looked at each other and laughed, and she was so aggravated with them she couldn't give her mind to the snarled work.

But now the storm had subsided; kindness relieved the difficulties, and to know that she had a *friend* strengthened her. She was determined to succeed—“I will if it costs a great deal,” and she carefully worked on. But she was glad when the bell rang, and Elizabeth said, “it is breakfast bell.” And Mary went out like a bee with the rest, if work makes a bee;

she had been a busy one, and walking home with the others, she felt considerably like a factory girl. Breakfast had some relish now; there were fifteen girls with her at the table, and she couldn't imagine how they could talk so fast, and eat so quick, for they all got through before her.

The mill bell struck; Elizabeth was waiting; Mary must go, but she thought she might have time to eat; “I never was so hurried at home,” as she observed to Elizabeth on their way back. “Home and factory customs don't exactly agree,” said Elizabeth.

“Do they always hurry us so?” asked Mary.

“Its all fast here—work fast, eat fast, and some play fast, when they can,” answered Elizabeth, as she cast her eyes upon a couple of laughing, good looking girls, near by.

They now entered the *mill* as Mary learned to call it, and she went to weaving with a brave heart, for the new had not all worn off yet. She had gained much self-possession amidst the confusion, and was beginning to think “there is not so much *hard* work, as continual fussing about little things; and there is the constant expectation of trouble, whether it comes or not. If I could only set my looms going, and then set myself down, as I used to at home sometimes after getting the dinner under way, or as I went away by myself after doing chores for mother, there would be *some* fun in it. But I must be continually on my feet.” Yet it was some consolation that Elizabeth got along so well, she might in time. She was frightened when the shuttle almost hit her, and when her dress caught in the machinery, she thought—“I am gone”—and she found she must look out for herself, as well as for her work; and so cares and perplexities multiplied. Now her work went tolerably well, and she was attracted to herself; she thought, “it is about time to rest, I feel like it; it must be nearly noon.” And as she looked up, about ready to start for dinner, her eyes fell upon the clock which said only half-past nine. “O, dear,” thought she, “I can't *stand* it till twelve; I don't believe that clock is right.” It was right, however, and she would gladly not have watched it, but the constant and increasing monitor was very sensibly near her.

The opportunity for sitting down was not good or frequent, and she wished to *appear* smart, so she suffered, and was strong as circumstances would allow. “Circumstances alter cases,” and that forenoon seemed endless to that new factory girl. The time-keeper's snail-hands did finally point directly to the figure twelve, but “they wanted to point somewhere

else dreadfully," and nothing ever made so much relishable music as the dinner bell did upon Mary's ears, body and mind. But what an enemy was time! It stole away; hastened by like the wind, when a little pleasure or needful rest was being enjoyed.

And the bell that called Mary back to the mill, though of a far different tune, seemed to be in the same verse—a mighty discord for Mary, and "it has not stopped for me to go to dinner, to eat, or come back." And while she was just ready to enjoy a little, she found herself ready to start her looms again. And not exactly *ready*, she didn't feel altogether like it. But the fresh air during her short absence had strengthened her heart as well as body; her resolution still prompted her, and she went to weaving a little rested. She thought she "ought to have time to eat"—"eat fast," as Elizabeth said, "and now it is work fast, and every thing is fast but the clock when I am tired and hungry."

If the forenoon was the longest she had ever known, what was the afternoon? The more she thought of it, the worse it was. Brooding over calamities always produces more, and aggravates the whole, she knew, yet how could she help it? Applications are not so easy as theories, and while the better is seen, circumstances will make the worse a matter of experience; her reasoning did not smooth the present and difficult realities. Once she gained a little hope by seeing the moping clock hand nearing five, but the blasted expectation was worse than none; supper times at factory and home did not coincide exactly. Sometimes she would resolve to endure it, but "O dear, I am so weary I shall fall down; every thing goes worse and worse as I grow more tired; I am of good mind to let all things take care of themselves; my tears won't let me see to put in the quills; the threads break on purpose, that old both-eration knot, and incessant clitter-clattering. Elizabeth has helped me a number of times, but she is out now, and every thing has gone worse since her absence. No one cares for me."

The overseer came along once and asked, "how are you getting along?" and said, "I guess you will do well by a little perseverance; you will soon get used to it, only keep at it."

Mary thought, "I shan't keep at it much longer, and if I am not used to it now, I should like to know what *getting used to a thing* did mean? I ache *all over*, and am tired *all through*, and how can I be more used to it?"

Sometimes her heart would swell with longings for home—

that now sweet, but far-off place; and she was sorry she had come to the factory; then her mother's words were remembered, "you'll be sorry," and she said, "I won't be sorry;—the noise will split my head open, and I don't care!" Now she would cry, and then she wouldn't cry; would work and wouldn't work, and thus her thoughts alternated as she wearied and worried away the afternoon.

The darkest time is just before day; just as she thought—"I am all gone, I shall die at any rate, and won't try to live longer," she was attracted to the other girls who were washing, and combing up; and while she was looking and gathering some consoling expectations, the bell struck; a sunbeam of hope flashed into her mind; all things were stopping, stopping, stopped; the girls were pouring out, and she with them. While the joy of deliverance from looms was felt, she had forgotten her weariness, but had not travelled far before she found it some work to drag one foot after the other. It was wonderful how the other girls walked so swiftly, and in so good spirits; "I must have it harder than every body else."

When at last she reached the boarding house the other girls were at the supper table, and Elizabeth with them, who said, "rather late, Mary, I told you we did all things fast here."

"I should think you did," replied Mary, as she laid aside her bonnet, and sat down with them.

Before Mary had hardly begun to satisfy her good appetite, the other girls were through and gone, to stores, or walks, and other places; but she had more affection for a chair than any thing else.

"Don't you feel tired, I shouldn't wonder if you were?" asked Elizabeth.

"O no, not much," answered Mary; "I shall feel better after a little rest, I guess, though." And who would not guess so?

The sun went down; it was a delightful evening, but Mary cared more about herself than the rosy-clouded sky, or the pleasant things abroad. Elizabeth went out; Mary was left alone in the kitchen, (for she did not feel like going a great way from the table for the present,) and while the rays of day and night were struggling each for the mastery, when the departure of light makes one cling to past scenes or experience, and especially so if recent, Mary indulged in the following reflective thoughts:

"One thing, I know I'm tired. That old mill is a hard place; I don't see how the girls can work there year after year and live; I don't believe it is healthy; a great many of them

look pale and not well at all. The air is not good, and *that* noise; it's all hurry; if you come home to dinner, the bell strikes to go back before you get half enough; that old bell sounds enough to kill any body; and it's all work, and fussing, and confinement. I don't see what the girls come here for. Some make good wages and save their money, others spend it as they go along, that woman said. Some of them *seem* to be happy; I believe Elizabeth *is*, she is so good she can't help it, and others may be so far as I know. But I shan't be if it is always to be like this. Some girls may do better here, but if they all feel as I do, if they have a good home—no matter if it isn't the nicest, and they have every thing wished for, they had better stay there for all of coming to this place. I don't see why I came away down here from home. O yes, I couldn't have anything like others; those Woodbury girls set me into it; I wish I had never seen them. I don't think I'm likely to *look* much better; it will take all I can make for board. If I was only up *home* to-night, milking, working about house, with mother; could see father, brothers and sisters, how perfectly happy I should be. I can imagine them all up there so comfortable; I wonder if they think of me; O dear, I wish I had not come away. Mother said she would get me some nice things, but I must come; I can't help crying; but what's the use to cry? I'm here, and tears won't pay my way back. If I had some wings I would soon be home: but what's done is done; I haven't got wings, and what shall I do?"

And her tears would flow in spite of restraint, when Mrs. A., who had come in unobserved, remarked,

"Well, Mary, you have got through one day; I presume you begin to know what the factory is; how do you like it?"

Mary was surprised at her voice, for she supposed she was alone, but thinking if she had only *begun* to know what it was, the rest of the story must be sad; (wo, indeed, is in that whose end is worse than the beginning;) answered, "O, very well, I thank you."

"It is quite a noisy place for new hands," said Mrs. A., "how did you manage the work: some girls learn sooner than others; people differ in natural handiness."

"I could hardly hear myself think, at first," said Mary. "I got along very well, weaving, after a while; Elizabeth helped me and the work went right off. Isn't she the best girl there is here? I feel a *little* tired, working so all day, but probably to-morrow I shall feel better."

"Many girls complain the first day," said Mrs. A.; "it isn't just like home to them; but they soon get used to it. I should n't wonder if many wept tears upon their pillows, the first night here; and wished themselves home more than once, before they slept; but they are young; grief does not root deeply in their hearts. There is a great deal in the mill and and out of it to take their attention: some think they are too unrestrained: but when loose from factory confinement their spirits are bounding and mirthful, and one can hardly blame them; if they do nothing really bad or that will end in evil to themselves. They have peculiar temptations; so does each one: a great many go to lectures and concerts in the evening, and get some good and pleasure; do first rate, and are real steady. One wants to be pretty well fixed in the principles and practices of a good character and deportment to pass unharmed; and so one has to be firmly decided anywhere, to preserve an irreproachable name. And the truth is not told about every factory girl, there are those who look upon them with suspicion and distrust, and think it rather degrading to work in the factory, when they ought not to, for they have no just reason. We are prone to think ourselves the best and engaged in the most honorable employment. Not those whom their station honors, but those who honor their station are the most worthy, whether it is in the factory or somewhere else. But considering all things the factory girls get along very well."

Mrs. A.'s remarks to which Mary was listening attentively were interrupted by the opening door, and Elizabeth entered who said "Good evening, Mary, how do you feel after your day's work? got some rested hav'nt you? I wish you had been with us; I had a fine walk with Miss Angez; it was so delightful; the freedom and air were so pleasant. But I remember the evening after my first day in the mill; I didn't feel much like promenading; you'll soon get used to it, and then I shall like your company—we'll have fine times."

"I feel all over," Mary said, "isn't the mill a hard place? Hope I shall have fine times after I get used to it, as every body tells me; but I should like to know how long it takes: I may feel better to-morrow I hope."

It was now quite early in the evening, and they—Mrs. A. Mary and Elizabeth—enjoyed a while in conversation. Now and then a girl would come in, sometimes saying a word and sometimes not.

"There is nothing that will steal away one's weariness as

pleasant conversation," thought Mary, as Elizabeth said, "I guess we will go up to our room, Mary, as you are tired and we had better not sit up late." And what will invigorate the toilworn body or refresh the care-pressed spirit more than the exchanging sympathies of congenial hearts, in the kind enquiry, encouragement or wish: There is a soothing and joy in friendly words; and even the time of those not intimate friends may, pass most blissfully in the flowing and fluent waves of kindly converse.

Elizabeth and Mary once in their room, were shut from the world, within an atmosphere of friendship and purity. And was it not delightful for those two stranger yet tenderly united spirits to enjoy a season of communion with the Holy Scriptures and with God? Mary thought so, although herself unacquainted with the joy of piety: yet her own heart beating so near the christian heart of Elizabeth caught a little of its spiritual bliss and melody. The bed of repose soon calmed in sleep the wearied bodies of the two factory girls. The bitter of life was all taken away by some sleepless angel, and Mary had no dreams but pleasant ones.

The sleep of the factory girl is sweet, but often ends too soon. Pound, pound, went the bell, and Mary started up almost frightened.

"I do believe that old bell illustrates perpetual motion,—it was banging all day yesterday, and now it has commenced again before one has time to get up," said Mary as she hastily prepared herself.

"It does ring quite often," said Elizabeth, "to be sure, but it may perfect the habit of punctuality in some of us, and that's worth a great deal. I'm for making the best of all things; the worst then sometimes takes the appearance of pleasantness."

"Won't you fasten my dress," said Mary, "my arms, somehow; how did you feel the first morning after the first day."

"I felt all over as you said last night, and more so, but I got over it, you'll feel better, by and by."

"I hope I shall," said Mary, with a smothered "O dear."

"Come Mary let us hasten; the mill will soon start and the overseer likes to have us there at the time. We can get along much better to *keep in* with the overseers; when we want to be out a little while, or a half day, we can; and our overseer is very kind when he knows we attend to our work."

"Don't hurry so," said Mary, "we shall get there in season."

"I did n't know we were going very fast," Elizabeth replied.

Mary was too much *used* to it, to walk so. Yet she would not appear lame, she would keep up. But such an early start feeling as she did, didn't seem like home times.

They were soon in the buzz; and Mary's feelings were forgotten while she gave attention to her work. She was not exactly a new hand, now, and she was greatly encouraged from the better going of her looms. And to Elizabeth who stepped along a moment to enquire how she found herself, she replied:

"I have not thought of myself before since I came in; I feel a great deal better, and my work goes so finely. But Elizabeth," continued she, "how do they work; I mean, how much do they pay for weaving?"

"I will tell you some other time, I can't now," said Elizabeth.

"The breakfast bell came earlier, this morning, didn't it?" Mary asked Elizabeth on their way home.

"No, at the same hour; I guess you didn't watch the clock as you did yesterday. Time is just like doing a piece of work; the expected and wished-for end is most slow to come; but work right on with the mind engaged with something else, and the work is finished, or hours and years pass, and you hardly believe it."

At the close of this sentence they had reached the boarding place. Mary had learned to eat a little faster, and she finished her breakfast about as soon as the other girls; yet it seemed like "putting in."

The forenoon and the day passed, to the astonishment of Mary; two successive days of the same length really, but one so much longer than the other apparently, was to her unaccountable save by Elizabeth's comparison of time and work: yet she was by no means sorry; she felt she had done enough. During the day she had a little spare time to look around; observing the girls, and sometimes she had occasion to think of home; her eyes were certain to be fixed on her work when the overseer came along. She began to feel quite at home with her mirror and other personal factory furniture; and once she dared to hum with the rest, but stopped as soon as she heard herself; yet she would sing a little easy. At the supper table she was as good as any of them, and there is nothing so soon contagious as the customs of associates, thought she on rising with the rest of the girls. As Mary wished to make a few purchases Elizabeth said,

"I will go directly with you to the place where I do my shopping."

When they started the sun-rays still lingered round the favored hill-tops, and a few fancy clouds floated through the gentle sky; and free from the day's toil the hearts of the two girls mingled together in the fragrance and joy of summer. They were soon at the shop; but Mary hardly knew what to buy; mother had always been her commissioner, and she felt a little queer buying things for herself. Perhaps the reader may wonder at Mary, or more at the writer for noticing such little things in her story, but all such little events are thought of, and greatly estimated by the inexperienced. A shilling may seem more than a thousand dollars, and buying an apron of more responsibility than furnishing a large store.

Elizabeth made good selections Mary thought, but she was of the most importance because *she* paid the money; and owned what was bought. They came homewards another way that Mary might see the place, and passing a moment in silence she thought of her small purse and then of something else, and thus begins.

"You said you would tell me how much the girls make in the mill."

"O yes, I will," said Elizabeth. "Their wages differ. They work by the job. In weaving they give you so much a cut; a piece of a certain number of yards; and you can weave as much as you wish: the more looms you 'tend the more you can weave: some get more than others. It's rather curious when the cloth is woven just as good. You 'tend six looms and possibly you will receive only sixteen or eighteen cents a cut; but if two, you may get twenty or twenty-two cents a cut. It don't seem hardly fair; there may be corporation policy in it somewhere, if not factory girl policy. I presume they think it not best that the girls should make too much: and it may be some encouragement for new hands, when they can't weave so much, and thus girls may be induced to come and remain. And when they 'tend so many looms, they make pretty good wages; possibly the corporation make kind of a balancing, or average price for all in the administration of *their* economy. I have heard some overseers try to tell how it was; the justice there was in it, but I can't exactly see the justice in it. However we have no reason to find fault: we need not come here without we choose to; and we engage to work on *their* terms not ours. But I've heard father say that corporations were apt to be exacting and unmerciful, because they had the power; and those dependent upon them are at their mercy. The rich always have the advantage over the

poor, and the laboring and unfortunate are often cheated of their right. After you get under way you may make two or three dollars a week: some have made eight dollars; that is, they had to pay their board out of it. I make; well, more perhaps than I could at house work; they don't pay much for that; and then the wages are sure here. However this is not so much. Some girls receive considerable on pay-day, and before a week 'tis all gone, you can hardly tell for what. Yet others who don't receive so much, save more. Factory girls are always wanting, and without caution their pockets are soon emptied; and I have learned that it isn't so much what you get as what you keep."

Mary thought "I shall keep my wages; and yet I came to get a lot of nice things; but I shan't buy only just what I need." They were now home, refreshed by their walk, and ten o'clock found all things quite still.

The commencement of the next day was a sameness, and Mary thought, "new things grew old pretty quick." The work went better and better, and with less watching, or she knew *how* to watch; and she occasionally looked over to her nearest neighbor as if wishing to make acquaintance. The girl, whose name was Sarah, improving the opportunity, introduced herself. The "good morning" was returned by Mary, when she said, "How do you get along? you've been in long enough to tell something about it, how do you like?"

"A little better than I did the first day; I think I prosper quite well now, but that first day was a hard one," replied Mary, with a voice as if she knew it.

"We all think so," said Sarah, "and we feel so, but we soon get used to it. I thought I should die all day; such a noise; and the night wasn't much better. I was in the old mill all the time, and botheration; how I suffered! But I like well now. I have some good, lively acquaintances, and we do have some grand times going to the —; there are many places and things to interest one; *these* girls—there is one of them" (pointing to a girl not far from her looms,) "make it pleasant; we feel sleepy sometimes in the morning, but what of it: the factory will wake us up. I think we girls should enjoy ourselves the best way we can; we have it hard enough any way."

"Friends are a great blessing," said Mary, "any where, and especially here. I don't know what I should have done, had it not been for Elizabeth."

"Do you mean Elizabeth, over there?" (pointing to a girl on the right hand.)

"Yes," replied Mary.

"She is a little too sober," said Sarah, "too steady to enjoy much. I never see her out any where; I should die confined as she is *all* the time."

"She *seems* to be happy, and I think she *is*; I like her, she is so good; I board and room with her."

"You do?" said Sarah, "well, I've nothing against her; she may be good, but she is too dull; too old-womanish, somehow, isn't she? Don't let her govern you too much in some things, she'll deprive you of a great deal. Come out with us if you want some good times. We *must* have amusement, or we should all die."

"I should think we get exercise enough in the mill," said Mary.

"We get work and tired enough," said Sarah, in an assured manner, "but we want something besides work."

"How long have you been here, and how do you like," asked Mary.

"Some time; about a year; like as well as I can, like best out of the mill, we have such good times. Call over to my looms some time, I have a lot I want to tell you, and you'll go out with us, won't you? I know you will enjoy yourself."

And away she went, leaving Mary to new thoughts.

"Nothing against Elizabeth?" who could have? "Too dull and steady! Her lively acquaintances; their places of so much pleasure; don't let Elizabeth influence and deprive you." She could not resolve and shape all things satisfactorily. But the word *pleasure* made enchantment, and awakened desire in Mary's heart.

Three days of factory life were now passed, and one lives through a great deal in three days among strangers and new scenes, Mary thought; yet experience had given improvement, especially in weaving duties. Saturday was a sort of cleaning up day, and Mary's assiduity realized her wish that her looms should look as neat as any other girls: and her industry and good success interested the overseer in her, if nothing else had any influence. I presume he can tell best.

Saturday afternoon work is closed earlier than usual; and Mary with the rest bid the dusty and noisy mill farewell for a whole day. The sun was high and pleasant, when Mary and Elizabeth reached home; and after some little work of their own, went out to find enjoyment in the free and healthful air.

The sun was now down, and with Mary, in their room,

Elizabeth asked, "will you not attend meeting with me; it is often interesting; a number of the girls go, and it is refreshing; quite as much so, I think, as it would be to go to the dancing school."

"Where does Sarah — enjoy so much out of the mill?" asked Mary with a degree of earnestness.

"She goes with a lot of others where I wouldn't go; they think they enjoy a great deal," replied Elizabeth.

"Don't they enjoy, I should think so by what she said?"

"I couldn't," said Elizabeth, decidedly. "It is time, we shall be late, will you go to meeting?"

Mary could not refuse *Elizabeth's* request, neither was she at all sorry. After retiring, she was occasionally disturbed by some coming in, and she wondered what it could mean so late at night. She thought, however, it might be some returning from Sarah's enjoyments.

It was now bright and peaceful Sabbath morning, when all things persuade to worship and holy thoughts.

Mary must go with Elizabeth to the Bible Class; they had a good one; she heard a small class in the Sabbath School, but she would introduce her to the teacher, and she knew she would like. Mary did enjoy the morning exercise; "liked her teacher excellently; she is a fine, good lady."

When the forenoon service commenced, the minister did not preach, or "sound just like mine at home, but he was good," Mary thought.

The day passed with profit and pleasantness to Mary, but at the close of the afternoon service she would liked to have gone home. Yet the congenial hearts of Mary and Elizabeth found bliss in drawing from the sacred Fountain and in converse—the union of pure and loving spirits will make Paradise.

Mary could not help thinking of home sometimes; her own circle of dear friends made a pleasant picture; she could see but not enjoy with them; and now and then a feeling would whisper that seen and forbidden pleasure is worse than a presented blank. She thought she might write, and such communication with loved ones would be a pleasant outgoing of her own feelings, but her materials were wanting.

And she thus commences—"Elizabeth, I promised to write home, will you lend me some paper?"

"Elizabeth looked with a half-enquiring, surprised, favoring and dissuading expression, and while Mary was a little afraid, said, "you forgot it was Sabbath, didn't you? Were you going to write to-day?"

"What time can I write? It isn't wrong to write a letter to *friends* on the Sabbath, is it? I have known a great many christians do that. Business letters, of course, a professor would not write; but what harm for a factory girl to write home to-day, she is so confined all the week?"

"I know it is pleasant to write to friends," replied Elizabeth, "nothing more so when one is far from home, but I can find time during the week. I want this day for something else. However, I never dictate; each must answer his own conscience, and has that privilege. I used to write such letters on the hallowed Sabbath; it is not well for me now, or for those who expect better things of me."

"Well, I am not a professor, so I can write, can't I?"

"Does that make any difference about keeping the Sabbath day holy?" said Elizabeth, with a serious earnestness. "Is the command for the benefit of professors merely, or for all? A great many try to live upon the faults of others, but I have found it poor living. It is just like doing wrong to become unhappy, because others do so. The extreme is this, all will become self-murderers, because one commits suicide. I shall say no more. I have materials, do you wish them?"

"Well, I don't think I will write; perhaps it isn't right, *mother used to say it was not*; I'll let it be 'till to-morrow."

Elizabeth's smiled approval, strengthened and happified Mary in her decision, and they spent a silent and useful hour in reading.

In the evening they attended the lecture at the church, and Sabbath night seemed different from other nights. And why should it not, if the thoughts and work of the day determine at all the quantity or quality of the night?

Early Monday morning found Mary at her looms, radiant and cheerful as the summer face of nature. One day of rest in seven, brings universal blessings, and he who properly appreciates its sacred privileges is doubly blessed.

Mary's work went well, and she found little trouble, for she was careful, neat, attentive, and punctual, and by faithfulness she would accomplish over matter or the mind of her overseer.

As she seemed now to be *settled*, she thought again of her promise to write; but the day was full of business; to-morrow she would write; but to-morrow was crowded; it was going to the mill, or dinner, or time to go to bed; and so one and other day passed till Saturday morning, when going to the mill she told Elizabeth she had not written.

"You had better soon," remarked Elizabeth, "your friends will be anxious to hear. Perhaps you can to-night, you recollect we shall be out earlier than usual; you will find materials in my drawer if you wish them."

"I will," said Mary, and they were lost in the noise and labor of the factory.

To those who have worked three years there, the factory gets to be an old story, and they go about their work as familiar and undisturbed by the thundering or whizzing rattle, or any body else, as an heroic farmer's daughter to her wash-tub or churn; and a bawling nursery is a real turacket room compared to the quiet factory. Yet Mary in a shorter time had learned that there is nothing like *getting used to a thing*; it's all in managing circumstances. "I am determined to make the best of it;" hence the secret of her success; she was but making the old and true adage a reality, "where there's a will there's a way."

Saturday evening found Mary alone in her room with writing materials, and possibly the result would gratify our readers, and we inscribe it.

"My Dear Mother—It is a most busy place here, and you must excuse me for not fulfilling my promise to write sooner. I have a great deal to tell you. O how I wish I could be with you, so to talk; and I want to see you so! I was just a *little* homesick when I first came down, and I don't know who wouldn't be; every body was a stranger, and every thing looked strange. And I saw a great many strange things coming here, especially the rail-road—and that engine, what a thing; it went so fast! I wish Martha and Susan, and Joseph and Billy could see it; they would be so delighted! How I would like to see them; are they all well? I must tell you about myself. I think I like the factory very well; it isn't just like home, of course. The noise troubled me at first, and the work was new, but I soon got used to it. The overseer says I get along first rate, and I suppose he knows; he is very kind. I like my boarding place; the woman is very good to all the girls; quite a number board here, and we have some good times. And I have such a good girl to room with; her name is Elizabeth. O, I do like her so much; she helped me when I came down. I do believe she is a real christian, she *acts* so. I go to meeting with her, and to Bible Class, just as you wished. And we have pleasant seasons reading our Bibles every night. Her mother gave her one just like mine, but her mother is dead. She told me all about her death one night,

and what she said before she died, and I could not help crying with her. She must have had a good mother, she is such a good girl. I wish you could see her; you must love her she is so kind to me.

The girl who weaves next to me is Sarah; but I don't like her so well as I do Elizabeth. I wish you could look in here when we are all at work, it would be worth seeing.

The village is large, some great brick houses, and some stores a great deal nicer than Mr. Fenner's. I am well contented, not sorry now that I came. I don't know how I shall make it. I want to see you all. Read this to brothers and sisters: tell them I think of them often, and how happy they must all be there together, and I am way down here all alone. How do the girls get along in their studies this summer? Has Billy learned all his letters? Kiss him for me. Joseph must not work too hard. Do Martha and Susan keep my flower bed looking neat? How does father get along with his farming? Is *your* work hard? Do you miss me any? O could I be one of your circle just half an hour I should be perfectly happy. It is now nine o'clock; Elizabeth has just come in from prayer-meeting, and says I must send her love to you. How do Jane, and Harriet and Lucy and all my old friends do: give my love to them all. I find much pleasure in the memories of friendship, for I sometimes feel so bad I can hardly help crying. Give my love to our minister, and all the folks. I didn't think that going away from friends would make them seem so much dearer to me: any thing from home or near home would be precious and give me joy. Now you will write as soon as you get this, won't you? I shall be so impatient to hear. Tell me how you all do and prosper; every thing.

Much love to father and you and to all.

Your affectionate daughter Mary.

Three days later in a far away village was an anxious family; the children would watch at the door and window, and the mother's eyes were not always on her work. At length the father appears and enters midst his joyful children. He has a letter, he thinks from Mary. The mother unseals it; and reads Mary's letter. All were delighted, and their interruptions were of this sort; "how does she like? when is she coming home; is she well?" And even little Billy asks, "where is Mary? when will she come to take me, and play with me? I wish she was here now." The rest joined in this

wish. The father and mother shared their childrens' feelings for good news from a child is joy to a parent's heart.

"Think she isn't more than a *little* homesick?" asked the father.

"I shouldn't wonder," replied the mother, but I guess she keeps good courage, puts the best side out. Well I don't blame her, but I think she will be sorry yet. Now we must answer right off, she'll be expecting. So girls help me, and I think I can find time to write this evening after we get the work done."

Martha and Susan took hold earnestly; they were inspirited, Mary must be answered, she must know all they were doing.

It was evening now and all still, for the children must not make a noise, while the mother writes.

"My Dear Mary, Yours was joyfully received, and especially by the children. We were so delighted you liked and got along so well. We expected a letter sooner, but I suppose a great many new things occupied your attention: it takes some time to get settled. Isn't your work hard? Don't confine yourself more than you can help. Take care of your health; many factory girls become sick by careless and needless exposure. I am glad you have found such a friend as Elizabeth. She is a good girl. I love her on your account; give her my love: and Mary, follow her advice before that of other girls. And I was so rejoiced that you went to the Bible class and read the Bible so with Elizabeth: always do so and I shall not fear for thy safety; Heaven will preserve thee.

We are all well but Billy; he is not very sick; he asks after you often, and 'when is Mary coming, ma'am?' Father and Joseph get along well with their work. I miss your help. I have so much butter to make; the cows do first rate. But Martha and Susan are good girls, and help me a great deal besides going to school. They have a good mistress, and improve finely. Old Mr. Peters is dead. All your school mates are well. They call to enquire after you often, they miss you so much. And we all miss you: at first it seemed as if half of the family was gone. We all think of you. When we read in the family circle for prayer, your voice is not heard, but we remember you before our Heavenly Father. Now you must be a good girl and you will prosper. Don't go into bad company, you will become like it, as I told you.

Martha and Susan send their love and say you must not stay all summer at the factory, they will not enjoy so much if you do. And Billy says, 'I don't want her to: she must

come home and take me now I'm sick.' Joseph and father have just come in from work; they both say they want to see you, and you must not work too hard; and send their love. We all think and talk about you a great deal, and we long to see you though it has been only a fortnight. Now be a good girl and I know you will have friends. Now write us again when you can.

From your dear mother."

Mary's eyes moistened as she read this letter, and for a moment she was living with the friends of home. Was she not then sorry she had come to the factory? If my readers had seen her as she folded the sweet letter and resealed it with a kiss, possibly they had read in her heart-expressing countenance the mother's prophecy fulfilled, "you'll be sorry."

But though saddened for a moment as well as joyed, she was strengthened, she was missed at home, and her mother still prayed for her and she was happy.

It was nearly nine in the evening when she finished reading; she had been alone, but Elizabeth came in and she must know all in her sweet letter from home. Elizabeth rejoiced with her, and shared her sad feelings; and thus her joy was doubled and sorrow halved.

A few weeks passed when a second letter from home said little Billy was dead. "We should have sent for you" writes the mother, "but he died suddenly, we thought him not dangerous. Just before he died he lifted his weak eyes upon us and asked 'where's Mary, I'm sick, I shan't see her any more.' O how lonesome it is here now. But he is better off. He died so much like a flower plucked before stained from sinful earth to be transplanted and bloom forever in heaven. This comforts our aching hearts. Joseph could scarcely endure it; Martha and Susan wept as if their hearts would break; and we are all so bereaved and sad. But we should submit to the will of God who doeth all things well. We hope to meet little William again, a bright angel in the skies.

Do not mourn too much when you receive this, Mary; trust in God for comfort. Give your heart to Christ now, that you may bear the sorrows of earth and greet William in heaven."

Mary was bowed with grief when this news reached her, and Elizabeth with her christian love and consolation alone sustained her—deprived of this she had sunk beneath her too heavy burden. But to Elizabeth's persuasion to seek religion she hesitatingly replies, "not now, some other time."

But days and weeks passed. Mary was variously employed, in the mill and out; sometimes on an evening walk, at meeting, the Bible Class, or in her room with Elizabeth. She was no stranger, but acquainted with streets and stores, as well as with fashions and girls of the factory.

Pay-days allowed her to appear like other girls. She could now 'tend three looms, making good wages she thought, and was a little more saving than some, though she "didn't see why she couldn't spend her money as she liked; she had to work hard for it, and a little too hard she often felt." And her appearance spoke it as we looked in upon her as the lines of her face read thoughts of home, and her voice remembered that childhood song.

Yet no state or employment this side Heaven is all blissful, the bitter is mingled with the sweet. And she with other factory girls had a little sunshine, a few roses of life; man despairs and dies without. She was beautiful in person and manners, and was not only attractive to her own sex. She knew much, had been cautioned much, and thought herself safe, but like others must be taught wisdom by experience.

CHAPTER V.

THE WANDERING.

THE warmest days of the season were spent, and the evenings bringing the usual amusements in large villages were commencing. The girls where Mary boarded were of different characters, and courses, and according to her own nature she had become more or less attached to them. Elizabeth was still a little the dearest. Kindness will bind one to another when the affections are loosening, and persons of much association will gain the preference a long while. The bad will change about them as well as the good, and the former will accomplish more fully and sooner than the latter. The internal decision, and perpetual whispering of conscience, may side with right, yet the manifestation or actual choice is often with

the wrong. Strange is it indeed, to act against one's understanding and interest. Human nature is wonderful and more mysteriously developed. And, alas, that the human soul responds more readily to evil than to the good.

Let us now enter Mary's boarding house. The sun is just sending his good-night rays through the window upon a dozen girls at the table. It is supper time after the hard day's work, and they look sort of satisfied, or at least a gladness flushes their pale countenances, though the mill takes it off in the morning; a night of rest is valuable. But they seem to be in earnest conversation—let us listen if we can understand them.

"For my part I can't see the great harm in going," says one opposite Elizabeth, with a winning face and positive voice; "We are social beings, and it is to be such a splendid affair! I mean to go for one if I get an invitation, and I never was troubled about that," as she cast her eyes with pride about the table.

"You may not always be so favored," says one next to her, "beauty fades, and *beauties* sometimes meet disappointments. But who thinks there is harm in going to such a place once in a while; they haven't much there out of the way, and we factory girls ought to have some privileges. I think we have it hard enough. I shall go if I can get ready; my invitation is sure for I've got it; one ought to appear pretty well to go there that night, and if one can't, she had better stay at home. And I presume Elizabeth would say it is better to stay at home at any rate. Say Elizabeth, what harm is there in going to a ball once in a while and having a good time?"

"The harm is not all connected with the hour," replied Elizabeth, "the excess and result upon character is the harm. A contagious disease is at work long before it is manifest, and the more fatal is it when the poisoning process is long concealed. We are gradually changed like to associated characters. We are also excited, once will not do, a second good time must be had. And if *we* do nothing, we shall receive a stamp similar to our company; it is not all fun to handle the black coal. The expense may not be so much for the girls, but somebody has to pay it. Say, what becomes of your good time in the morning, after being out all night? I have seen some girls come into the mill looking as I shouldn't wish to feel. An hour of hopping up and down for a day of exhaustion and heavy hearts, I call a poor bargain; at least, I am determined not to be thus cheated."

"I don't call it any great cheat," says another, "I don't feel as if I had lost any thing. We soon get over it, and if we want to go again we can. And we have such a good time! at any rate we don't listen to the music of that old weaver-room."

"You are stolen from unconsciously," said Elizabeth. "What do you call a good time? *Good* is not ambiguous. Do you ever come from such places better and more satisfied with life? Do you there make any noble resolves, acquire benevolent habits, or learn any thing that will give you more ability and heart for the duties of life? Rather are you not all worn out physically, with desires more insatiate for such places, and a mind that will not be contented with the dull rounds of common and necessary business? If I thought it did the least good, why it would be some palliation. And about it's improving the manners, it's all moonshine to me. I would rather see the simplicity of natural appearance; it is more graceful and engaging than all your artistic flummery, your ball-learned etiquette, and Paris mincing. And I have heard some young men of good understanding say so too. Give me truthfulness, though it be unpolished, and the loveliness will *appear*. It is not learned at dancing schools, but attained by practically cherishing the christian graces, and following the music of a regenerate and truth loving soul."

"Well, I do declare," says one whose *pictured* face would fain conceal the lines of more years than agreeable, "Elizabeth is quite a philosopher, or she has preached a very fair sermon; but there's nothing so good as to attack one on his own ground; the self-condemned can't do any thing. Let *me* ask, Elizabeth, doesn't the Bible say there is a time to dance?"

"That is it," cried several voices, as their faces flushed with triumph, "now answer that if you can?"

One or two looked as if they favored and would risk Elizabeth, but they had not spoken. There was little excitement, and the old maid's voice as spokesman, increasing in victory, added, "and if next Thursday evening is not the time to dance, when is it?"

As the noise abated, Elizabeth turned with a gentle mien and assuredness, and spake as follows:

"The sacred Word has been often willfully misconstrued, and many have madly played their own death-song upon selected and misquoted passages. Anciently, dancing was one form of worship; the Psalmist danced acceptably before God. The spirit makes all the difference—the same words may be

used in profanity and prayer. If one feels to dance, it may be a healthy exercise taken moderately—let the dancing be alone, or with a few, and not too long. And the excess is so natural, a positive and full veto may be best. But such violent and protracted dances as occur at Balls, are forbidden by physical law, to look no higher. But your Bible argument. The wise man is there speaking of the mortality of all earthly things, all devices and pursuits must close. The word time is used in the sense of *end*. And your "time to get, to laugh, and to dance," becomes, there will be an *end* of laughing and dancing. It will be, when people cannot dance, even if they wish to. The passages are prophetic, the distant future was before Solomon, when man and his actions had ceased from the earth. The end of dancing has come to some while in the ball-room, and is that a desirable place to meet death? But sooner or later all must leave the labors and amusements of earth. And the words so often unwisely and fatally quoted, are to me solemn, and exciting to a faithful improvement of time while it lasts."

"Well," says one, (not the old maid,) "that sounds consistent, but I never heard it explained so before. But then I think man was made to be happy, and we think we have such good times." She could speak no more positively after what had been said on the word good. And she added, "you wouldn't have any thing against going once in a while; and especially we factory girls. You know what confinement we have. If we should do nothing wrong, and not stay late, what harm would there be?" This seemed to be a relieving question, and very fair.

But Elizabeth replied, "I have already said once will not suffice, and I call your experience to witness, and time is too precious to mispend once, or a single hour.

Each has the right to decide for himself, and if all would anticipate when they must appear before One who knows and records all things, and account for their many privileges for usefulness and becoming better—account how they have spent each precious moment of time, they would not as they say enjoy so many evenings in sinful amusement."

This was of serious import, and all felt it so; there was stillness, yet a manifest difference of opinion in regard to the whole subject. Mary sat watching every word spoken by all; she did not open her mouth. Her feelings alternated like opposing and by turns conquering waves; now affirming the truth of Elizabeth's words, she must be right; and now anx-

iously catching the opposite arguments. The deep conviction of her soul favored Elizabeth, but the specious language of the other girls was admitted to her heart. "We factory girls do have it hard, and only once in a while to have a good time," *was* quite excusable.

New words excite new thoughts, and the prejudiced evil heart will sometimes break the ties of love to be bound by a destroying enemy. We praise and prefer the sunshine, but play with the pretty clouds till they overspread our sky. And when the tempest breaks upon our unshielded heads, the elements of confusion and darkness reproach us for our folly. The external where those girls were sitting was now quiet, but the inward thoughts and feelings were variously and busily agitated. The past, present, and future flitted before them; but the present seeming more real predominates. By silent consent they rose from the table and went each one her chosen way. The next day Mary was at her work, when Sarah called asking, "How do you do to-day? how does your cloth weave?"

Mary returned the greeting and said "very well." But Sarah evinced something more at heart than Mary's welfare, and continued,

"That Ball next Thursday night is going to be a splendid thing: every body is going; the music will be the best. I'm going, I've had an invitation; I want to go so; but my dress is not exactly the fashion I like. Pay day wont come till some time. I wish I knew of some girl who had it—I would pay, the first thing after I got it."

Mary understood the indirect question, but hesitated to answer, and Sarah went on:

"Have n't you a little you could spare? the girls say you save as much as any body."

Mary had it, she could wait till pay day—the promise was sure, and her kind and unsuspecting hand unclasped her purse and reached forth the wished five dollars. Sarah took it saying,

"I thank you, I will pay you again and something for your trouble. Wont you go yourself, Mary? you will enjoy so much; we have such a good time, forgetting the dirt and noise of the old mill. Come go, only once if no more, that wont harm you."

Mary wanted no more to stir the cherished thoughts from that table conversation and the present persuasion almost placed her in equilibrio feelings. *Only once* weighed down the left

hand scale and she says "Do you think it will be really worth going? I never went to a real Ball, how could one get along?"

"O, well enough," said Sarah. "Can you dance? If you can't you need n't. You go, I'll tell you how to get along, I know. Come do, just this once to please me. You have nice clothes, and such beautiful hair—you will appear so well. I wish I was half as handsome, I guess I should attract some notice among the—well no matter who. You'll go won't you? I should think you would die, never to go any where. I should not live if I did not go once in a while to break the dull and hard factory life. Say you'll go, won't you?"

"I've been thinking about it," replied Mary, "I'd like to go just once to see what is there."

"Go and see if nothing more" said Sarah encouraged, there won't be any thing in that which even Elizabeth can find fault with; of course you would n't do any thing."

Mary sobered at Elizabeth's name, yet she could tell her she was only going *once to see* and never would go again. And memory whispered to her soul her mother's words, "they will entice you to places of music and merriment, but do not go *once*;" yet she hushed her conscious spirit that she was only going *once to see*. "One ought to see what there is in the world—and I can tell all about it to my country friends, and I shall be just as well off. I may go to see." And as she stood undecided like some rose in the changing breeze, Sarah said,

"Don't let Elizabeth deprive you of going just once. I don't know but that she is a good girl, but she never goes anywhere to enjoy herself. I shall expect you'll go," she concluded on departing to her own work.

Mary almost answered she would, if silence and an approving face give consent. But as she wove away more diligently she was troubled with "what will Elizabeth say? how shall I go against her wish? yet what can she have very serious against my going only once to see?"

And no one but herself can tell how busily her thoughts were occupied all that day. There were but two days before Thursday evening. A longer time would often save us, but driven up to the present we act not wisely because not ourselves.

The next day Mary was looking at her clothing more than usual, which Elizabeth observed, but spake not. Suspicions were awakened to which she could not yet give credence; she hoped the best; charity hopeth all things. She noticed

Mary had shunned her, and been silent more than usual for a day or two past, and that evening after tea as Mary soon returned to their room, she could not refrain from following, for her soul was watchful for her good. Mary was busily employed when she entered and Elizabeth just caught a half sight of Mary's eyes as they immediately fell upon her work. Elizabeth appeared to have some business in the clothes-room, but soon remarked as in pleasantry,

"What are you fixing up so for, Mary? Are you going to get married or going home? I should think you were going to look nice somewhere."

"O I was only fixing up a little, I should think there was need of it; one wants to look well any where," said Mary her eyes unraised.

"I presume a great many will think there is need of it before to-morrow night," remarked Elizabeth. "Many girls I dare say will trouble themselves greatly, will use up their own money and borrow never to pay again, just to appear at that ball."

"What Ball;" asked Mary with a surprised look which betrayed itself.

"To-morrow evening," said Elizabeth, "and I could n't imagine any where else you were fixing so smart to go."

Mary felt she was understood, it was no use to pretend, and she spoke right out.

"Do you think, Elizabeth, it would do any hurt just to go to one Ball to see; of course I should n't do any thing, and should come home in good season?"

"Mary, you know my mind already," as a tear stood in her eye which Mary observed. "Of course, you say; you do not know the *course* that will follow, that is likely to follow. I have told you that once will not satisfy. You will wish to go again, and my word for it, if you go once, you will a second time, and again," said Elizabeth with a trembling voice. Mary noticed and said,

"I never will go again, I'll never ask to. I only want to go just once to see what is there. I told him I guessed I'd go, and he is expecting it, Sarah said—she is to tell me how to do. You would not have me break my promise would you?" as she looked with some assurance into Elizabeth's face.

"How could you do so and not let me know it?" said Elizabeth in a sad and almost hopeless, yet tender tone.

"Have I not always been your best friend? I wish you the

most happiness, Mary, all through life, and therefore would not have had you gone once. Did not your mother warn you of the first false step? It may be apparently harmless, but the second is not innocent, and the last is ruin. Character is made or destroyed gradually, and the path of morning pleasure may end ere the noontide sun in irretrievable disgrace and misery. A reputation is soon blasted, and that gone, the character soon follows. What would your mother say? Is it too late to repent? Repentance before the evil is the more blissful."

These words deeply moved Mary's heart, but the subject had too deeply rooted in the affections, and been realized, and she wiped away her tears as the willful growing up in the soul made answer,

"I sha' n't do any thing; I'm only going once to see. I don't believe mother would care if I should go once and not be any injured. You are my best friend. I don't know what I should have done if you had not helped and cheered me. Now, Elizabeth, wont you let me go just this once?"

"I wish you would n't," said Elizabeth in a subdued voice. "I have plead a mother's love and solicitude, the fatal result likely to follow, and the truest and prayerful advice of friendship—what more can I say? Would my affections were wound so firmly round thee as would retain thee in the place of safety! But if you will go, you must; however treasure up my word, *you will repent of it.*" Mary could not answer but the determination was made, and Elizabeth too much overcome left the room.

That evening at their devotion Mary and Elizabeth were both solemn, and as Mary in her turn read, "If sinners entice thee, consent thou not," the truth was made an awful reality by the mild yet searching glance of Elizabeth's eye. And Elizabeth's voice trembled with earnestness and some faith as she asked the especial blessing of heaven to guide and shield Mary and herself from the evil in the world. Mary's heart seemed not to herself to go up so near the throne of God with Elizabeth's as usual, for there was conscious wrong. And the Spirit of Evil dared whisper to kneeling Mary, "only once, you will not wish to go again."

Strange and unwelcome visions hovered round Mary's dreamy pillow, but the morning light brought wakefulness, and the work of the mill gave a little relief.

Mary and Elizabeth were in their room a moment after dinner, and Elizabeth remarked,

"I suppose you are going to-night, are you?"

"I think I shall only once to-night," said Mary with but little emotion. "I feel quite dull to-day, it may make me feel more lively and better." Elizabeth could not respond.

It is night and let us enter yonder hall whose windows are brilliantly lighted, and whence the sound of music and merry steps is heard. Some of both sexes in the bloom of youth glide back and forth, while others are in groups conversing or watching the passing dancers. There is beauty of dress and person and a seeming pleasure of young hearts. The stirring measures are beaten by practised feet, and the ornamenting diamonds flash in the full beaming light. All is mirth and motion and an irresistible bewitchery, and dreamy forgetfulness of all things but the present, fill each mind and overspread the whole. Who are these? Mark, can that be Mary? Yes it is she in the ball-room. Sarah is near by and says,

"The next dance I shall try it; watch me and you will soon learn the step. You can't dance, can you?"

"No," said Mary, "I never tried to. Is it hard to learn?"

"O no," replies Sarah, "it is easy to learn in a short time. I would n't give much to go to a ball unless I could dance, I should feel too much like a spectator. But they are taking their places, I must go, you look and see," and she was gone.

Mary's eye followed her till the dance was through, and Sarah sat down exhausted.

Mary had some business with her own heart now and then, but the novelty and all persuasive power of music drowned conscience and she was engrossed with the things before her. She thought there must be a mistake when she heard it was after ten. She remembered she was going home in season, and Sarah coming along just then she asked if she would not go home with her.

"Go home now?" says Sarah surprised, "Never! That is not the custom at all—*stay till through* is my motto."

"When will it be through?"

"O in good season I guess, we make the most of such nights; we neither trouble time, nor let it trouble us?"

A feeling of regret stole over Mary, but all sadness is momentary in such scenes.

It was nearly ten when Elizabeth finished her scripture reading that night, and her compassionate and aching heart found some consolation, for the Bible is the supreme source of comfort and promise. She felt bereaved and sad like a lonely dove mourning for its gentle mate, and nought but the hope of return could satisfy. And her prayer went up to her Heav-

only Father too pure and earnest to be disregarded—and its burden was absent Mary's safety. And even while the kneeling suppliant urged her request, the Father seemed to send some guardian angel to temper the otherwise too strong temptations. And Mary was prevented from making many acquaintances which she sought but felt herself restrained—it was well for her that she did not.

It was three o'clock when Mary crept softly to her own room, and she felt estranged as she would gladly have laid her repentant head upon sleeping Elizabeth's placid bosom. The transformation to evil is rapid, and though our better reason revolts, still we are hurried on.

Think ye, Mary could sleep in quiet that night? The elements of peace and rest were not in her mind. Now the brilliant scenes of the Ball-room momentarily flushed her heart with seeming joy, then the guilty conscience made imagination fruitful in condemning sights, Elizabeth's spurned and pleading form, or the still more withering rebuke of her mother's apparition.

"The soul is its own awful world," and from the collected materials of day will start up accusing forms which no sleep can vanish or quiet. The sunlight which makes deeds manifest, is a terror to falsehood and wrong. Darkness is the nourisher of crime; and under cover of black night the spirits of evil brood thick around the human soul to beguile it into sin, or torment it already betrayed and stung with remorse. The stroke of the factory bell frightened away the avenging phantoms of Mary's dreams—she opened her eyes and felt relieved if not rested.

Elizabeth was already up and welcomed her with her usual smile and good morning, and asked, "How do you feel this morning? what did you see last night worth seeing? You did n't come in quite so early as you expected, did you?"

Mary had already realized some enjoyment which follows such scenes, but she replied, "O I saw a great many things—they all looked so beautiful—and such music! I feel pretty well—a little sleepy, but I'll soon make that up."

The conversation was not protracted, and Mary felt relieved when Elizabeth left her; and more so when she was occupied with her own looms. Before night she realized more of the physical effects of Ball-rooms; but in this she would suffer and be strong.

Late in the afternoon Sarah called with, "Did n't we have a grand time last night? I should like to go six evenings in a week."

"I was pleased," said Mary "every thing was so new and enchanting, but I should think once, or once in a week would be enough. Don't you feel sleepy and tired?"

"O dear," said Sarah with a laugh, "sleepy after such a dance? You would n't feel sleepy nor tired after you got used to it—been as much as I have. If you had known how to dance, you would have enjoyed more."

Mary at first started, or seemed to start at the thought of getting used to that, but the desire already cherished in her heart to learn to dance, overruled and calmed her. She had felt the embarrassment of not knowing, and they looked so pretty on the floor; she never saw anything so nice before, and the bewitchment still breathed about her soul; and she asks, "How long does it take you to learn?"

"O, a little while," said Sarah "it is n't much, any body can learn. You just go a term or two and you can dance very well. There is to be one in about a fortnight; you had better go. It is to be a select one, every body is n't going. They say the dancing master is of very good character, and I think he has been a professor. You'll never have a better chance. Come go, I'll go with you though I did n't think of going, but I want to help you all I can."

Mary was deeply wrought upon by such persuasion and replied "I'll think of it." Yet she did not know of what she thought. "I'll think of it," soon ends in "*I'll do it, or I have done it.*"

One step advanced in any path, a second more certainly follows, than the first recedes. The present is all deciding; it is all we really have, and it makes us what we are. And we are led at last to places and associations which we once turned from with shuddering, by allowing ourselves to go to innocent degrees. But every thing has its degrees; its ascending and descending scale, progression is the law of things and characters. We parley with temptation and feel conscientiously condemned, but habit will change and harden beyond all feeling or correction. The bitter will assimilate the taste till it is craved perpetually, and the poison of the soul is taken as a sweet thing of life. Facts are stranger than all fictions. It was some consolation to Elizabeth that she heard Mary's voice utter the words of truth, for they might steal to her heart and find a response: and her prayer was more hopeful that night for Mary knelt with her, and was not in the presence of so great danger. And she could not help remarking,

"Is n't it more pleasant to lie down to rest to-night than last night?"

Mary replied "I feel very well," and was silent. Elizabeth perceived by her tone the alienation from herself; she felt, she knew that Mary's heart was distancing and growing cold. She had anticipated it in time, for the sympathies and affections of friends must commingle without reserve or fear, to make them one; but she was not prepared for the sudden change. Her heart beat with sorrow to rest, and the tear of love guarded her closed eyes as she slept.

A week passed of mixed life to the two girls. They worked in the same room, but there was a girl who worked between them. Saturday evening, Elizabeth was pained on hearing Mary say,

"I think I shall not go to meeting; we have it hard enough all the week to have the evening to ourselves, you must excuse me."

Elizabeth went alone. But she did not go alone to the Bible-class and to meeting on the Sabbath, for Mary went with her, and she was thankful and a little happy.

Monday afternoon Sarah called at Mary's looms asking,

"Well what do you think about going to that dancing school?"

"I hardly know what to do," said Mary. "Is it as you say that every body is not going?"

"The circumstances are just as I tell you," answered Sarah, "positively; and I have learned that quite a number of professors are going—I could mention some of them here in the mill—of course we can go where they can. It will be a grand chance for you. Say right off, you'll go, then it will be done with—it commences next Thursday evening."

"Possibly I'll go just this term; I want to know how to dance," said Mary rather undecided.

"You will hardly learn so soon as that," said Sarah, "but if you go to one you will another, you will like so well."

"I think one will be enough," said Mary with a sort of satisfied tone.

"So many have thought," said Sarah, "but there was too much attraction and pleasure in it. Why I'd go ten miles through as bad a storm as we had last winter to a dancing school or ball! The more one goes the more she desires to."

Mary could not fail to perceive Elizabeth's arguments sustained by a personal witness of their truth, but the coloring changed them, *great pleasure to be enjoyed*. That which promises happiness blinds the eye by its speciousness, and then gains the faith, the love and action.

Pay-day came and passed, but Mary saw nothing of her lent five dollars; so the next day as Sarah passed her she said,

"Could n't you let me have that money?"

"What," said Sarah, "well there I forgot you. I was owing some others, and I *must* pay *there*—I thought you could wait a little while longer—you have money enough, won't you let it be till next pay-time? I had so much to pay and buy, I'm entirely out."

"You promised you know," said Mary.

"I know it," replied Sarah, "but when one can't fulfill a promise, it is excusable is n't it? And you are obligated a little for my favor:" with a satisfied smile that expressed great merit for kindnesses. "Come let it go a short time, you will see whether I shall be prompt next pay-day."

Mary thought, "what great favors have you done me?" but said, "I suppose I *must* let it go, but I shall depend upon it at the time you say."

"All right," said Sarah, as she was hastening away, for there was nothing like despatch in *such* business.

"Well Mary, I should think you were preparing for a dance," said Elizabeth, as she came into their room, which Mary had just entered, and observed a pair of suspicious slippers upon the table. They would have been concealed, but Elizabeth came in unexpected, and Mary appeared a little frustrated and guilty at first. However, she was soon emboldened by the thought, "its none of your business," and said, "I can wear the pumps besides at dancing schools."

"The design of the maker cannot be questioned, but secondary designs often differ from the original," said Elizabeth. "I heard that a school would soon commence, and I did n't know but that you were going."

"I believe you can tell what I shall do before I can myself," said Mary, with a little impatience. "I should have enjoyed that ball much better had I known how to dance. Now you won't have any thing against my going only one term; Sarah told me the teacher was a very good man; every body was not going, and it would be a fine chance for me."

"I told you once would not be enough," said Elizabeth, "and—"

She was interrupted by Mary, who said, "Well that was once to a ball—this is something else. In one term I can learn considerable."

"Satan deceives many with the argument 'only once,' and then slightly varying, says, 'this only once,' and thus he

gains each time, and all. Mary, I tremble when I realize whither you are hastening. I will ask you not to go: will you regard me at all? You will not be in the presence of evil one night as at the ball, but many nights: you will form many injurious acquaintances, and I fear for you. What would your mother say if she knew it?"

Mary's heart was touched at the name *mother*; but influences had already fixed the decision, and she replies, "I don't think mother would care much after it as all over. I think one ought to know how to dance, and Sarah says it *does* make one appear much better in society."

"Will knowing how to take a certain step give you knowledge to dispense light and joy through a household, or power to discharge the sacred duties of a mother?—fit you for death or the pure felicities of heaven? Call to mind our talk at the table not long since, as to the improvement of manners. What more can I say or do?"

"You talk about things a great way off," says Mary; "I'm for present pleasure. I don't mean to go only once; it is not as if one was going to spend a life-time."

"The future is made by the present; the choices and pursuits of youth determine for maturer life, and a harvest of joys or sorrows will be gathered in old age or eternity, from your younger planting, and in time. Would you pluck the fruit of grief and useless repentance? Go on, unmindful of your course and of life's great duties. Follow the paths of wisdom, scattering seeds of benevolence and love through a useful life, and you shall reap the joy of righteousness, and partake the fruit of eternal hope and heaven. Are you determined to go? will you go?"

"I think I shall this once," said Mary, which to Elizabeth sounded the knell of her own hope, and Mary's happiness, as she retired from the room.

Hope and pleasure gild futurity, otherwise it would be a dark and unpleasant picture, but its remote and approached objects differ, sometimes sadly, yet a few realize in part their pre-arranged experience.

Mary was a member of the dancing school night after night, but how could she be a member of the Bible-class at the same time? Sabbath schools and dancing schools have no sympathy.

When Mary went no more to the prayer meetings, Elizabeth's heart was made more lonely and sad, but her soul was pained to answer the enquiry of her Bible-class teacher, that

"Mary was not coming any more," and when asked the reason she could only say, "she is not coming."

The first Sabbath that Mary staid from meeting, was long to Elizabeth as well as to herself. One gets gradually used to a thing, and Mary went occasionally. But her eyes and thoughts were where? It was all "who or what is that?" and she saw not the minister, heard not the word of life. Change of character soon speaks in change of deportment, and how different was Mary in the mill and every where, and in the subjects of conversation. Could she read the Bible, her mother's gift, and kneel now? It was all pleasureless and mockery. Her heart and life were with Sarah, who introduced her to many of her chosen friends and places of pleasure; and her leisure hours were more gladly spent with the boarders of similar tastes. Elizabeth's heart grieved at the sundering of their once affectionate and happy union, but her trust was in Him who delights to shield and lead back the erring, unwilling that one of his children should perish. She prayed still, and hoping ever watched for the reformation,—her Father could not refuse to grant at last her daily petition.

Personal graces have their estimation, they may be of accidental if not essential value, but it is a misfortune for one to learn of their possession, without a corresponding grace of heart. And could the knowledge that she was beautiful be locked from Mary? She associated with those devoted to such things, and they delighted to whisper it to her, and not altogether flatterers to receive as much again. She learned too soon and far too well, and Mary was the proudest of the proud, the gayest of the gay.

And was one term enough? that place above all others where she could display and win? And aside from this motive, ask the intemperate, if one glass was enough? One sip at pleasure real or soulless, changes the lips and the appetite grows insatiate.

Dancing *schools* must be attended. Mary must surpass in this also. She was careful, studious, was mistress of the hall. But what has she improved in? Look at her and answer. What a sad change from the modest, nature like, gentle, and lovely country Mary, to the forward, boisterous, artful, haughty, and false coquette. Is such a change possible? It is possible—it has been personally demonstrated to the terrible loss of the demonstrator. And yet many love to demonstrate. The examples gain the more imitators because they win the present world.

What a mystery is man! Unfathomable human nature; and the sources of human character! By the exterior, the phenomena, we pass our judgment, but who will sound to the depth of the human soul! How varying and unreliable are the outflowing streams of character! And thence we suppose the fountain must be changeable, and is often changed by apparently light and trivial accidents.

Analogy and experience undeniably present this truth. *Rivulets are like their springs, and all fruit is after its own seed.* Hence the wise soul will perpetually seek supplies from the pure Fountain, and plant the tree of knowledge and righteousness.

CHAPTER VI.

THE RETURN.

THE paths of friends often lead apart, but time and distance are nourishers of friendly memories and true affection. The fortunes of parted friends may vary, but their interests are one. Let us visit the home of the absent but fondly remembered.

"Why think Mary don't write?" said Martha to Susan, one evening late in Autumn, as they sat near each other by the blazing hearth-stone.

"I wish she would," said Susan, "we haven't heard from her this long time. We kept her arbor and flower bed nice all summer, but she didn't come. I was out in the garden to-day. The green leaves had fallen, and the little branches seemed bereaved, and still more lonesome, for Mary had not seen their full summer dress. And the flowers were all faded, and the withered stalks trembled in the wind; and I felt real sad and could not help crying: not because the cold frosts had made the garden so desolate, but I wanted to see Mary so; and I've been thinking about her ever since. Do you suppose she ever thinks of us now, and how we all do?"

"Yes," said Martha, "I guess she does; she said she would remember us. May be her work is so hard; she said

it was, you know; and she has to work in the mill so long, all day, perhaps she can't get time, and she is so tired. We don't know how much she has to do, but I should think she might write just a word; we should be so glad to hear. I heard father and mother talking about it last night, but I couldn't hear all."

"I should rather she would come than send a letter," said Susan.

"I should too," said Martha. "O if she would only come! But how sad she'd feel; she wouldn't see brother William any more; he died and was laid in the grave-yard, and she wasn't here to see him for the last time in his coffin. How I should like to see brother once more and talk with him."

"Mother says his spirit is a little angel now in Heaven, a bright and happy place beyond the stars," said Susan; and we may see him again if we are good children. She told me all about it last Sabbath, and I saw her wipe away the tears; but I mean to be good that I may see brother again, won't we?"

"Yes, sister," said Martha, "we will try to be good, that we may be little angels with William. How happy we shall be—we can talk with him; and we can sing together, for angels can sing most sweetly."

"Can they," broke out Susan, overjoyed with the pleasant expectation, "O how happy we shall be, all singing together! Can we sing?"

"Yes," said Martha, "and we shall never die any more, and never be separated. I should think all little boys and girls would be good that they might be angels and sing in Heaven."

"I should too," said Susan, "why don't they?"

"I was down by brother William's grave this afternoon," said Martha,— "the roses were all gone, those we planted there, and the grass was all dead; it didn't seem so pleasant for him as last summer. But his body sleeps on and does not care for flowers or the cold winds; yet I love to see the roses and green grass breathe their sweetness upon his grave; but he is warm and happy in Heaven—singing while we are talking about him. I wish Mary would come. What a lot of stories she could tell us! She could sit in her place at the table once more, and in her chair by us, and we should be so happy."

"I don't see why she can't a little while," said Susan, and her wish expressed in an earnest voice, attracted Joseph, who was reading not far off, and he asked,

"Why can't who come?"

"Why don't Mary come," said Susan, in a louder tone.

"I suppose she will when she gets ready," said Joseph, "I should think she had forgotten home, and all of us—she hasn't written this great while."

The mother's attention was now called to the subject, nor had she been wholly unconscious of her daughters' conversation. And Joseph who sat nearest the mother, looking up to her, asked, "why does not Mary write?"

Martha and Susan now turned, and the mother was universally appealed to—"Do you know why Mary don't write?" was the enquiry.

"I wish I knew," said the mother, after a moment's serious thought, "I would tell. I don't think she has forgotten us; you know she wrote sometime ago. Her work confines her; she gets tired; and there is a great deal to occupy all her time and attention. It is quite a job to write a letter. I presume she thinks of it every day, but says, 'I'll write to-morrow.' But she'll write soon, I think, a good long letter, and tell us all about it. Perhaps now she is thinking of us, and wishing she was one of our circle—and it would be pleasant to have her here, to us and to her. But we must hope the best for her, and remember her still."

All were now silent. The mother thought too true, she had much to occupy her time and attention, but while she hoped the best, a deeper shade spake the language of anxious concern, if not uneasiness. Troubles are real enough—'tis well to hope the best, and ignorance is often bliss. Truly it lessened the sadness that pressed the mother's heart, not to *know* the experience of her beloved daughter. Man is inquisitive, and desiring in vain to know all that shall be, murmurs at the beneficent Hand that draws a more pleasant veil over the future. Be still, vain man, acknowledge the kindness of the great Father: Know the present *well*, and unveiled futurity will present knowledge and a blissful experience.

The home-circle love to pass the name of the absent member 'round in kindly converse—'tis prized by all; it lingers and sounds out with music to stir sweet memories; and *Mary* was the theme of that country home.

The mother's heart yearned after her far-off daughter; what good or evil near her, alternated in her mind. But while she thought, her trust was in the every where Present who cares to shield *all* from harm. And to Him that night she committed the preservation of her dearly loved Mary. It was ten o'clock—no mortal saw or heard the mother, but her voice

borne upward through the still night air, reached the sleepless ears of God, and the request was too full of love and faith to be ungranted; and ministering spirits do the kindly errands of the mighty King and Father. Mysterious are the ways of the Most High; yet He knoweth those who trust in Him, and reacheth down his heavenly hand full of blessings to man.

The clock strikes twelve; but the merry company heed it not—"no sleep till morn." Yet its last stroke sounds like the knell of death—too true the sound. Can death be there? Does the universal Spoiler spare either age or company? Yes, the pale Messenger breaks in upon the pleasure-loving dancers, and one of their number beats out the march of life. She falls into the arms of her companions, struck by the chilly arrow; the heart-fountain subsides; she grows pale and cold; a long, heavy sigh, and the separate spirit, pausing a moment on the scene of its departure, takes its eternal flight. All is hushed as the grave throughout that brilliant hall and mansion: and Mary with the rest, gazing upon the lovely form wreathed with flowers, in the silent chilliness of death, as it was borne away by other friends, went home mute and solemn. For what had they to say? there was but a step between them and the dead, and they shuddered to think of it. But how momentary are the feelings of the heart! How forgetful to treasure the lesson of death! Others must die, may die suddenly, but *we* shall always live or have a year's warning.

"Death will never surprise me," thinks each one; and so said Mary as the sad story was told to Elizabeth, who endeavored to impress upon her mind that she might follow next.

People will not lay it to heart, but dance over their own graves, singing, "to-morrow shall be as this day and much more abundant."

"We have but one life to live," said Mary, as she hastened away, "let us make the most of it."

"We have two lives to live, and the second shall be as the first, let us make the best of this," replied Elizabeth.

But Mary was too far gone to hear, and her heart was too full of her companions' merriment and the ball-room to admit the truth, if heard.

Elizabeth's eyes and affections followed Mary as she disappeared with her lively mates; she could not give her up yet: And after her evening devotion, she lay down more quiet and trustful in God—he would save Mary, she felt assured.

All influence of the death-scene had passed from that hall—why should the living retain thoughts of death? No stillness and sad faces here now, but brilliant lamps, and smiles, and merry hearts, and stirring music; and Mary is *the* beautiful of the beauteous, the happiest of the happy. But a strange feeling suddenly steals over her—she pauses—her heart flutters unusually—all things whirl about her. “Am I dying? save me!” she could just speak, and falls into the hands of those near by. “I cannot die, where’s Elizabeth, mother,” her lips just whispered as they closed, and she was pale and still as death. The sounds are hushed, all is fright. “Is she faint?” or, “is she dead?” was all each could say. She can’t be dead. A physician is hastily called; he loosens her clothes; the fresh air is admitted; the restoratives employed.

“She lives,” he said, “and may recover; let it be quiet. Where does she reside?” And the answer being made, “not far off,” he added, “she may be taken there directly.”

“A carriage is in readiness—she is partially restored, and already on her way, leaving them in the hall. And dare they still continue their music?”

“O yes, let us finish this excellent ball, she’s only fainted; wanted to appear too well; too careful or careless about her dress,” says one; and this opinion prevailed. “She is only faint, and will soon get over it,” went from lip to lip. “I guess she’ll learn better than to come to such a place so tightly laced again,” said another. “If she wants to be so proud, she may suffer for it, that’s all.”

And so the consternation retreated from their countenances; their pleasure-panting hearts caught the music once more, and the scene that made them pause soon faded and was gone: and greater diligence must atone for the interruption.

There is one whose face looks familiar—Sarah—who still tarries; yet her extreme carelessness is gone. How could such a scene sink from her soul to oblivion in an hour? There is a voice within that cannot always be stifled. When Mary said “I can’t die,” how it woke her slumbering conscience! “Did I not persuade her to commence such a course? and was it right?” The accusing witness glared in her very soul: and the stings of a guilty conscience cannot enjoy pleasant externals or be wholly lulled by the sound of the viol. But she felt bound to such society and danced on.

But where is Mary? The motion of the carriage brought her to some recollection—and she whispers “Where am I? Am I dead? It’s dark—help me Elizabeth.” She was de-

lirious. “Bear me from those dark fiends. They beckon with smiles and flowers and much pleasure, but I see their foul purpose. Their characters are black with hell and sorrow—Mother, you told me of them, but I strayed in their way—save me from their clutches and perfidy, and torments.” And she clung with desperation to her attendants, and was again silent.

When Mary next opened her eyes, Elizabeth was bending over her, fanning and bathing her faint and fevered temples. And a smile of serenity overspread her countenance as she said: “Is it you, Elizabeth? O I am with you again. I am safe. How light it is? Is it heaven? I do not see those black creatures with a white dress. Did you hear any thing of them? How they tried to devour me—but you came between them and saved me. O I am so glad they are gone!”

“Be quiet a little while,” said Elizabeth, and we will talk.

“I will; but I feel so strangely. Where have I been? But I am in my own room. I am so glad you are with me. If mother was—there I have n’t written home for a great while; what will they think of me?”

“Do be quiet, Mary, a short time, you will then feel stronger, and we can talk; and I trust we can be happy yet.”

“I will, Elizabeth, because you ask me to, you are so kind,” as she closed her eyes and settled to sleep. Her breathing became easy—her heart assumed its wonted beating—and all evinced the passing away of the fainting influence.

The clock had just struck two, and all were wrapped in refreshing sleep—no, not all. By the bed of the sick one, sat the gentle watcher, like a sleepless and guardian angel, communing with the blessed truths and spirit of the Bible, as the night hours passed—nor seemed they long. Her charge was gentle too, and the rose tints made beautiful contrast with the paleness—she lay a sleeping flower of white and vermilion. “Fair and lovely charge,” thought Elizabeth as she looked long upon her, “that smile wreathing thy lip betrays heart communion with pleasant dreams, or kind spirit-whispers. A brighter morning will beam for thee, at last; and thy path shall lead in more happy courses, for the angels wait to instruct and lead thee.”

And while her own soul beats with new joy, the sympathetic soul of Mary catches the song, and she awakes. She has revived, and feels strong.

“I feel well, do let me talk now, Elizabeth. I have done so wrong. What if I had died there like that other girl?”

What did I go there for at all? I never felt really happy *once*. I would think of something else: and then my heart was sad and my tears would flow, when alone; and often it has been so in this very room, when you little knew it. But every thing was so exciting—I could not help going—and yet I could, but they made me. If I had not gone the first time, as you told me. But I won't go again never with them. I'll go with you, will you let me? O Elizabeth, will you forgive? How kind you have always been—and when I first came down here. I have deeply wronged the kindest friend. But you are so good—will you forgive me?" and the tears poured upon the pillow in which she buried her face.

"Do not feel so bad," said Elizabeth soothingly, "you only did as you pleased. I was sorry to have you do so; but I forgive you freely, and most joyfully receive you to my heart. Let us be friends again, true and constant, and the sad past be forgotten—it was enough to experience it—we have all need to be forgiven."

"O I can never feel grateful enough," said Mary, rising up, "you forgive me! and we can be dear friends again! We have never been enemies, but our pursuits separated us, though daily together. Let us join right hands and hearts never more to be sundered." And her warm hand grasped that of Elizabeth who sealed the pledge upon her fair white forehead. All was now silent, while joy which is deep and still, reigned supreme.

Mary spoke first. "What book were you reading?"

"That sweet book the best of all—the precious Bible."

"O do get mine," said Mary. "I have n't seen it so long! Mother told me to read it every day—I have not written to her, what—"

"One thing at a time," said Elizabeth smiling, you confuse me. Don't be in a hurry, you'll get things right the sooner. Where is your Bible?"

"I have n't seen it this good while—it must be somewhere—look in that old band-box."

Elizabeth found it there and handed it to her, who received it with a kiss upon its cover, and said, "*If I had always read and followed thy passages, I had always walked in paths of peace.* Let us read together to-night, Elizabeth. What time is it? I think I am strong enough to sit up. I am not sick. I was only exhausted—it was so warm there—and the exercise was violent and protracted—I only fainted. I am well now."

Before she had finished this, she was in her chair. And how it cheered Elizabeth's heart to hear Mary's voice read in turn the Scriptures of truth. The verse was "Be ye also ready; for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of man cometh." Mary paused—"ready, ready for what, Elizabeth?"

"Ready for the second coming of Christ; or ready for death which often comes unexpected, as a thief in the night," said Elizabeth. "Do you feel ready for death, Mary?"

Mary felt she was not, and her heart made tender by her recent experience, says, "pray that I may be ready."

And as they knelt together—did not the nearness of other seasons unite their hearts? Elizabeth's voice was heavy with supplication in Mary's behalf; but there was the thanksgiving, the grateful praise to the prayer-answering Father: her tears and confidence were faithfully requited, and her long expected hope beamed full upon her heart—she was satisfied. There was light and joy in that room. And think ye the good spirits above were unmindful of that scene? The heavenly harping was not far off, while peaceful morning dawned at midnight upon Mary's repentant and returning soul.

It was late. Mary told Elizabeth—"You may lie down too, I feel well;" and thus they two happy ones soon slumbered side by side. Elizabeth slept soundly, but the morning task-bell awoke her, and she must go.

"You had better remain and not attempt to work to-day," said Elizabeth. "I will speak to the overseer, and he will excuse you."

Mary, who had already started, was thus persuaded: she was present at the breakfast table. The boarders had on sober faces, for they were not strangers to the scenes of the past night. And they ate in silence, excepting to ask Mary how she did. Mary's decision was made, and she said, "I feel very well, but I am done going to such places."

"I'll bet you'll go again to the Ball next week," said several voices. "You will be well enough by then."

"Time will determine," replied Mary. "I shan't go again while I am in this place."

"Why," asked a number, "you are not frightened are you? You'll be going soon with Sarah: she knows how to persuade. I'll warrant you'll go."

"I might well be frightened," said Mary, "but I am no coward; I don't think Sarah can persuade me while I have a mind of my own."

"That is true," said Elizabeth; "as long as the mind is

not like that of the persuader, there is no danger of going. Keep your *own* mind *such* as it is now, and I will risk you."

Mary does not go—the purpose of her soul was made: but she goes to meeting—to the Bible-class; many of her former class mates had gone, but the teacher welcomed her back:

Elizabeth goes no more alone to the prayer meeting, and with her, Mary shared the worship and felicity of religion. Mary could take her turn in devotion as well as in reading; this was real gain. Now their affections more sympathetically entwined, and their hearts were made entirely one, cemented by heavenly love. Religion purifies and intensifies the natural affections, and the ties of christian friends are dearer and more truthful. And if death take one away, their hearts are not sundered: their persons only are separated for a little season, to form a more perfect union in the society of the forever holy and happy.

The next Sabbath after that dawning night of better things, was a sweet happy day to the two factory girls. They found rest and joy in the services of God's house—received spiritual strength and grace for sore temptation, and were kept then and through the week, in paths of righteousness and peace, because their heavenly Father loved and led them, whom they trusted and obeyed.

"I wonder all do not seek and live religion," said Elizabeth, as they sat in their room after returning from church, "there is so much security and joy in it. It is better for us in our daily business, and does not take away one real pleasure, but enhances all. And it is not only good for this life, but the *one thing* needful in the last earthly conflict, and the future world."

"True," replied Mary, "but how slow we are to believe it. So averse is the human heart to piety, or so deceived between what *seems* and what *is*, we will neglect till compelled by the judgment of God, to come to our senses and to Christ. Religion is just the thing for youth. I thought I was very good before I came here—the influences of home shielded me—what have I been since coming here? The temptation proved too strong for me, for I had not the decision and grace of piety. But how much have I enjoyed within a few days—it is worth more than all the scenes of merriment I have shared, for it is real and satisfying,—the pleasure *then* was only seeming, and made me more unhappy afterwards. But I am resolved, henceforth, to walk the path of the christian, that peace and security and eternal life may be mine."

"We must trust in grace," said Elizabeth; "be watchful, and prayerful, if we are saved from the snares—thickly-set snares for the young—and reach the heaven of the faithful. The way of holiness is narrow, and difficult, but it leadeth to a blissful life above."

Mary was really changed in heart, and the happy effects of piety upon her character and deportment were visible to all. The innocent modesty—the mild and affectionate language—the placid, light-spread face—the ready sympathy and kindness, and the gentle bearing of the Christian, won the esteem of all; such an argument is irresistibly persuasive of the personal worth of religion.

Sarah noticed the change in Mary, and she could but admire it: there was a happy difference. Her own careless mind had been arrested by divine judgment—her heart subdued by the influences of the Spirit, and Mary's daily walk, and her penitent soul was ready to respond to the invitation of Mary to seek religion. She did seek—and they that seek find—and she realized the joy of the Christian hope—another trophy of the renovating and happifying power of Christianity. Sarah went no more to the *sinful* pleasures of youth—she had no heart for *such*, for she could find better; and through her influence, another of her former associates is persuaded to walk in the peaceful path of the pious. And yet another is won to the ways of truth, and a number of the factory girls made a christian circle—a happy band on the safe journey of life to the Paradise of God.

Mary had written home soon after her last Ball, and it was most relieving and pleasant to the friends to hear; the mother's heart beat with joy and thankfulness to heaven for Mary's decision, and chosen course of life. Mary had also received several dear letters from the friends of home.

Time passed on: she wanted to go home according to her mother's wish—the summer and fall had gone, the winter was almost through—yet she determined to "stick it out" till late spring. The set day to leave came too soon—she had dear friends there—but the parting must be made—and sad, she thought "we meet but to part." Enjoyed influences made it hard for Sarah to bid the good bye to Mary; and for Mary and Elizabeth to separate, was like the sundering of sister ties. But so it was. The promise to write, the grateful and farewell word, the dropping of friendship's tear—the last pressure of the hand, "perhaps I may come back"—and Mary is on her way home. The future is before her—what joyful expect-

tations filled her heart. She was again in the stage—it was blooming and balmy spring, and away from factory noise and dusty confinement, she felt once more free and happy in her own native air. But she could not go fast enough—she was going home, “The lazy horses—and the stage driver don’t care any thing about my getting home quick: it never will come noon, and the afternoon will last forever.” Impatience is reproductive and makes all things about it worse and more slow; and near hopes, long delayed, are a heart grievance.

But time will pass at length—it can’t help it. Mary did enter the well known village—not much changed she thought—and no wonder, her eyes were on but one building. How glad to see her home again—cross its threshold—to be met by friends, welcoming dear friends—to look upon father, mother, her sisters and brother, and grasp the warm hand of faithful affection. How blissful to feel one’s heart beat nearer the hearts of long parted and loved ones, and talk over the past at home and abroad—how various and sweet the converse! Was Mary the happier? or those who welcomed her? The absent is returned—the circle is made whole, save one little link which never will return; but this is suffered, for it tarries in a holier home.

But sweet home with loving hearts, is nearer heaven than aught else of earthly place—Mary was there once more. And did she not *tell* her mother *much* she had never written? And did not the mother’s soul beat with thankfulness to that guardian Elizabeth, and that watchful Heavenly Father to her absent and erring daughter? Did not Mary interest Martha and Susan and Joseph, by her wonderful stories of strange sights and labors where she had been? It seemed as if they never would exhaust their questions they had been storing for the last six months—and was Mary tired of answering? And they were all so busily talkative and full of happiness!

But little William was gone, and Mary was just ready to ask where? when memory answered “forever gone.” But the story when his sinless spirit plumed its wings for Paradise and left them weeping, must all be told to Mary; and she loved to hear it though it made her heart sad. And she must visit his little grave; and she there shed affection’s tears, like gentle dew-drops, upon the new rose buds and fresh springing grass; but there is consolation when the light of hope cheers the mourner’s heart. Every family has its bereavement; no home-circle is all whole; but broken—some pleasant blooming forms are missed, but remembered where laid away to rest. There

is joy in the sadness, for *little graves have no fears clustering about them*, there is bliss for them in heaven.

And Mary must remember her garden bower, kept so nice by Martha and Susan—it greeted her as she entered, in its full May-dress. And the flower bed sent up its welcoming fragrance as she passed to behold it once again. Such early places of association have sweet interest for those long parted from them—the heart entwines about the paths and seats and scenes of youthful and blessed experience. Time cannot deaden the affections for them, absence but strengthens the attachment. And then to enjoy them with the same friends—the soul is thrilled with present delight, and the stirred blissful memories add a double enjoyment. Was not Mary happy at home?

And was she not delighted to meet her old mates; her school friends, and in the Bible-Class; her minister, and all she knew? The friends *near* home, as well as *at* home, are best. How she entertained her childhood companions with her factory experience, and was happy with them! Her enjoyments with the dear ones of home and early life, make my own heart glad; and my pen joyfully confused, can not well trace them; they are not traceable in language.

Is it not strange that Mary left for the factory again, and one mate with her? How theories and facts love to disagree. She went—she would not be tired yet of the mill—so obstinate is human nature!

But the ruddy country cheek and lithesome step are hers when she returns; and she was good as beautiful. She walked no more with Elizabeth, she had gone to her native home. And many friends with whom she had shared rich joy were gone, but new and faithful friends were hers. Yet a little while, the second time, was sufficient; she knew enough of Factory, and bade it farewell forever.

CHAPTER VII.

THE HOME.

A short distance from the retired village of ———, far in the interior of New-Hampshire, on a gently rising ground, stands a cottage. The wintry winds bitterly murmur in vain to enter, and the cold, drifting snows desolating all things, at first, are soon smoothed down for the merry sleigh rides. The scenery and prospect in flowering summer are most delightful. Towards the north is the foliaged forest; on the right, the corn-land and verdant pastures; in the west, is the stretching meadow; and on the south, lays the sunny and busy village. The fences, gardens, shade-trees, shrubbery, out-buildings, and the white cottage with green blinds, make it a pleasant spot. Here is the home of plenty, peace and joy, for the members of the family circle dwell here. Three children in all: Little Billy of a year's bloom and beauty; the idol of his parents' hearts, as the youngest always is: just trying to walk and to lisp some little words, when babies are most winning. Lucy of four years' flowering, with her cunning blue eyes, and merry face: and Elizabeth is here of seven summers' grace; her eyes are sparkling black; her fair neck already flows with long and glossy ringlets; the rosy cheek—white forehead—the mild and lovely look for one so young. See you not the miniature of a former description? Whose home is this? Shall we find Mary here? Mark her well and you cannot mistake.

Though years have passed, they have touched her kindly: the pure country air and the influences of piety, have proved preservatives of health and beauty. A mother's solicitude has written some serious shades upon her countenance, and her step is more assured as she goes to the duties of maturer life—the duties of her household. Yes, this is Mary, no longer the factory girl, but forever parted with that noise and toil. Yet memory calls up many forms and scenes of the past, and she would not draw a veil over it all. Her heart still cherishes

pure gratitude and love for Elizabeth—the guardian spirit of her first experience of the world from home—though she has gone to a blissful reward on high. But she would keep her name on earth in the name-sake—her own dear Elizabeth: and she loves to take her in her arms; and her own little heart wonders and feels, while mother tells the story of Elizabeth, that friend so kind to her, and so good a girl, and that she named her for her sake, and hopes she will be as good when she becomes a woman.

But who is the companion and father?

Possibly you have seen him once before, a little while in the stage, amid the passing scenes of farmers' homes and fields, but more occupied with the passenger. The same is he, with his studious face and dress of black. His profession is Law, talented and reputable. His early life was on a farm and he could not sacrifice his sympathy. His farm is pleasant to him, and he delights in his family circle. He has competency and is still increasing. And he often loves to speak of that ride in the country stage, and the interest unfelt before, awakened in his heart, which had grown more pure and ardent by time; for duration but strenghtens true affection whose commencement *may be* dated from some little incident or casual meeting. And Mary still tells him how she *felt* to have him stare at her so, but thought he meant nothing.

"Well," said he, "how could I help it? If you could have seen yourself, you would not blame me for looking more at the describer than the beauties of nature described. How can we help preferring the more beautiful?"

"I have no reason to blame you for finding myself *here*—what can I ask better?—but I did think you were cross-eyed, or a little impudent."

"Not at all," replied he, "I did n't mean any impudence; and my eyes were both *right*, for they never served me better, as a pleasant experience has proved, and there is joyous hope for us in future."

"But how did you remember me, so long in the factory, and you absent and not seeing me?"

"Your form awakened sleepless emotions in my soul, and it is easy to remember and find the one we love."

"Well it was rather curious," says Mary. "But I am glad of it. I have reason to be thankful."

"I know not who has more reason for thankfulness," said he, with a satisfied look. "True, this is a curious world, and many things seem unaccountable. But 't is well that *we* met,

although I do not believe in such ways generally. Time alone can determine the depth and worth of such beginnings—the parties should not hasten, or they may find afterwards that one or the other, or both have been cross-eyed and more too. When the enchanting distance is removed a great many see far otherwise; and a seeing for the better is the secret of a happy union; true love is proved by much and near association. But we are helps meet for each other; so let the world conjecture on “heaven-made matches,” and philosophize on long or short *introductory* exercises, since *we* have gained the bliss of mutual and increasing love.”

I have often visited the family of Mary—I love to—there is joy in that home—the altar of prayer is there, and the atmosphere balmy with kindness and true affection.

Mary has told me her story—her homesickness, her toil, her temptations, her friends and pleasures, the factory life as she found and left it. She had realized it to be *not* just as she thought, and that experience often teaches one a better philosophy. But she never could speak of it and forget Elizabeth—her associations were interwoven as most pleasant threads of her factory days, and are now enshrined as sacred memories in her grateful heart. “Possibly,” said she, “I owe my all to her untiring watchfulness and love, for what is one without virtue and piety? What had been the factory without her? A school far otherwise—a preparatory place *not* for what I enjoy now. And her face still beams its blessed light upon me, and I hear her words of tenderness and prayer, though she has long passed to her rest in heaven.”

“But,” said I, as the little Elizabeth sat listening upon my knee, “would you not let your daughters go to to the factory? How would you like to go, Elizabeth?”

The little girl scarcely understood me, and her look towards her mother, asked her to answer, who said,

“Can’t you tell, Elizabeth?” and turning more directly to me, continued:

“She does not know quite so much about that place as I do. Yet it is not the worst place—I enjoyed myself there, making good wages, and finding some true friends. But habits are necessarily acquired there not exactly fitting for future spheres—it is not *the* place to form character and gather knowledge for the duties of a wife and mother—not just the scenes to step from to the centre of home and make it Paradise. The influences there, in the mill or out, upon the intellect and moral life, are known only by those who have felt them. And

the physical effects are not promising for health—yet every place of toil has its disadvantages. Many are there who by carefulness preserve their healthy constitutions; and some pure spirits like Elizabeth pass untarnished by the evil, through years of dusty toil and many strong temptations. “But,” and she seemed to pause, gathering strength for emphasis, “I should advise all girls who have a comfortable home—if they know when they are well off—to stay there, for all of going to the factory. My girls shall never go there if I can help it.”

“You speak as if you meant it,” I remarked, “you would not condemn all who go, would you?”

“By no means,” she replied, “it would be most unjust to judge *all* by *some* who have not sufficient strength of character and upright purpose of heart. There are some factory girls who, although sometimes disrespectfully spoken of, are of rare intelligence and worth. I have known such, and they would do honor and ornament to any position of a woman’s duty and influence. But taught by experience,—and I think I learned it well—I don’t want my girls to go to the factory; and they never will, so long as I have a mother’s heart or a mother’s hands, and strength to use them. Not merely for to-day, but I am interested in the future good of my children, when they shall live and act in other relations. Mothers are too negligent, or, as times and fashions now govern, often deceived in respect to that which is truly profitable and happyfying. If they would seek to give their daughters a good education, intellectual and moral—and among the first things, experience and skill in household labor and economy—a previous knowledge of a wife’s and mother’s relations and duties, there would soon be more happy families than now. And the mild and healthful influences constantly felt by youthful minds, around the domestic board, the fire-side and altar, would bear early fruit in a more contented and happy society. For in the family circle, are fashioned and strengthened the characters of males and females, for all the business and stations of life. And at home the mother sits as queen, and may dispense her love-light and benefactions, for which the world shall be grateful, and her daughters made excellent women by her wisdom, shall “rise up and call her blessed.”

CONCLUSION.

And now, kind reader, we have done.

Pardon and pass the faults. We would not deal with fictions. If any truth is seen, cherish it and we are more than satisfied.

Many of you called by the wisdom of circumstances, may lead a life, for a short time, not *all* desirable. No path of life is *all* pleasant; each has its trial and grief, now and then, as well as its sunshine. Cultivate contentment, it is the great source of joy. Make the *best* of all things; light will come from darkness; or, at least, the day must follow the night. Enrich and happify the *mind* with truth and good, and unpleasant externals will assume the dress of some pleasantness.

There are different paths in life, whose sides are strown with different sceneries, and whose end is widely separate; we take our choice. Follow the path of Elizabeth; you may do good and be happy like her; and may hopefully look upward for a blissful reward.

Choose not to tread *all* the paths of Mary. She wandered, because she mistook that which *seems*, for that which *is*—winning but fleeting externals, for substantial truth, and worth of mind and heart.

We wish you all well—many true friends, and as much *real* pleasure as you can possibly find.

And when the shuttle of time has finished your factory days of toil and confinement, may you enjoy—when it be your wish—a blessed retreat in some chosen spot of earth, and make some thrifty home as desirable and pleasant as that of Mary's.