

BERTHA PERCY,

OR,

L'Espérance,

BY MARGARET FIELD.

"REJOICING IN HOPE; PATIENT IN TRIBULATION."

NEW YORK:
D. APPLETON AND COMPANY,
346 & 348 BROADWAY,
M.DCCCLX.

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TO
REV. J. M. RICHARDS, D.D.,
OF PHILADELPHIA,
THIS WORK IS AFFECTIONATELY
Dedicated,
AS A TRIBUTE OF RESPECT AND GRATITUDE,
BY MARGARET FIELD.

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PREFACE.

—o—

DAISY MINE—It is done at last. Are you not glad, friend of mine—for your own sake that now I shall harrass you no more with my fears and doubts, my needs and my prayers.

For my sake I have a certain assurance you rejoice, even with all the love of your heart you are glad with me, Daisy.

For my own thankfulness—my song of joy—my anthem of praise—I have no words, my heart aches with its trembling joy—half hope, half fear.

My trust is, that there may be found some, who will be willing for sweet pity's sake, to forgive the errors, and love the little good there may chance to be in this my first endeavor.

I hope for a very slender meed of praise, though each word of kindness will fall like dew upon my thirsty spirit. I know full well, I have only a gift for the humble things in life—my fancy takes no lofty soarings—my way lies in the valley—not up the mountain as your own does, my Pearl,—my sight grows dim when the sunbeams, which your own sweet eyes bears so unflinchingly, shine upon me—your way is ever up and on—your resting-place will not be gained until the summit is won—your ken is near the sun.

Mine only lies at the mountain foot, amidst the humblest flowers, where only an occasional gleam of light, from the temple can reach me,—and then its warmth is almost gone, its brightness almost spent.

But midst the joy which fills my heart, a shadow falls deeply and sadly—the shadow of my mother's grave. Oh mother! darling, tender mother! do you know it now? can you from your present glory, bend down a loving look, and see this wish fulfilled—the long, weary night talks realized at last,—our book, which while I wrote, you smiled upon—completed?

I have striven to keep up a brave, true heart, Daisy, my friend, since God, in tender kindness to her, but bitter woe to us, took my mother home—I have never given this weary grief—the pain of unshed tears—its way, but with all my strength kept it crushed down—and gone forth with smiles, striving to do my duty with a cheerful will, hoping that thus God would reward me, and He has, to Him be the praise.

I seem to stand upon a new place—nothing seems quite the same—I have reached a new era—my work thus far is almost done—but only almost, not entirely—when this book shall have brought forth some fruits, wherewith to wreath a chaplet for my mother's resting-place, then will my hopes be all realized, then will I take my rest—when that will be, if ever, God knows the best.

Yet Daisy, my pearl, I will keep ever hopeful, and trust He who has so gently lead me will care for me still.

Sweetest good-night, pray for my *Espérance!* my Percy!

* * * * *

And now to my reader, I should offer some word of apology—dear reader be lenient towards this my first effort—pass with gentle forbearance over the many faults—accept the little good.

My preface should say something of the matter of my book, but what? Reader of this my preface, read the book and you will know what it contains far better than I could hope to tell you here. If I have succeeded in teaching the good I meant to teach, you will find it—if not, the fault is neither in your heart nor mine, but in my blundering.

I think, in my own experience, I have proven that, even in the darkest night God cares for us—that if we trust, with a full assurance, a perfect faith, He will succor and sustain us—thus I do not deem my heroine's trials, and the bearing them unnatural, or the care of a good God over her and her's, overdrawn.

With an earnest prayer, I will look forward to the time, when the present clouds of doubt and uncertainty will be reft by some beams from the sun of popular favor, which falling upon my heart shall warm and gladden it.

PHILADELPHIA, 1860.

BERTHA PERCY.

CHAPTER I.

HENRY HOTSPUR.—No Percy thou art dust

And food for—

PRINCE HENRY.—For worms brave Percy, Fare thee well great heart!

Henry IV., Act 5, Scene 4.

PERCY'S CLIFFE *August 1.*

ALONE, all alone—Father have mercy upon me—what is to become of me—Oh! weary heart. Oh! dreary future, hopeless, rayless, forever in the shadow—henceforth to walk alone over the rough and thorny path of life—Alone! No matter how torn my weary feet may be, no gentle, tender hand will be outstretched to smooth the way—no strong sustaining arm will lovingly be clasped round me, to ward away the dangers of my daily life. I must learn to meet and bear henceforth all ills alone!

Walter!—my husband,—my darling, tender husband! how could you leave me—how can I live through all the coming years and you gone. I am very, very helpless, God pity me.

That weary plaint of Marion of the Moated Grange, comes over me with every breath, this livelong day.

"I am aweary!" she sighed, "aweary!

I am aweary! my heart is dreary!

I would that I were dead."

God pardon me that thus against His will I rebel. I will try not. But alas! it is a weary time, and if I long wickedly to die, to be at rest, it is because heaven seems such a blessing, and the hope of its nearness a joy. Walter is dead! it is not wrong to die, but oh, it is very sad to wait,

to watch, to listen out ever, and yet never be able to catch one glimpse of the death angel, or hear once the waving of his wings as he sweeps past you.

Understand it well—say it over again, and again, Walter is dead. He whom you loved, poor heart, who was as the glad sunlight unto you. Dead! dead! Do you comprehend it in all its length and breadth, that dreadful word? Lay the truth, open, plain, and clear before you. Write it in deep letters, like those which are graved in living, burning characters upon your inmost heart—your weary stricken heart.

God is my Judge, and knowest the secrets of my heart, and seest its sinful mourning and rebellion against his chastening. Yet "Jesus wept" for his friend, therefore for his sake God will not condemn me, poor broken-hearted, if in my sorrow I weep, that I am desolate.

Walter, my husband, am I to live ever alone! Even now as I look upon thy calm, pale face, the shadow comes between.

They tell me to come away, to leave thee here, my darling. I will not! I will not! I will stay by thy side, my noble husband, my glorious one, until they bear thee hence. Thy face looks comfort to me, even now a calm smile rests upon thy pale, cold lips. Oh I have striven in passionate anguish to warm them back to life in vain! in vain!

A peace, a joy, a holiness lies upon thee now, my husband, but it hurts me, to see thee thus, so calm and full of peace, when I am weary even unto death.

Oh I am desolate beyond all earthly things, and weary, oh so weary, I can no longer weep—Alone! Alone!

AUGUST 4.

This day I have consigned my happiness this side of heaven to earth—henceforth I know not joy—only hope! only hope!

All is past, is over. I have looked my last upon my husband's face. Now and ever my duty is very plain, so to live, no matter what comes, through all trials, all griefs, through lonely dreary nights, joyless weary days—that at the last, when God in goodness takes away this burden of life I may meet at the gates of the eternal city, my treasure, who has gone before—"where your treasure is there will your heart be also."

My poor little children are very well, one of my great griefs is, least they should grow up in life with but a passing remembrance of their father. Of all his gentleness and goodness.

It shall be the duty of my life to make them know in some measure, him whom I now mourn. Whom they with childish grief now weep for—knowing some great trouble has come upon us all, a sorrow which the bright beams of a few summer days will chase away, as does the bright sunshine efface from the earth all traces of the last hour's clouds and showers.

Alas! it is such deep, dark gloom, sad thoughts oppress me, my path is sunless, lying so deeply in the shadow, it will take much prayer, much watchfulness, much weary care to get us all home; through the dark rayless night to the glorious brightness beyond. Help me O Lord!

I have just seen my poor little fatherless ones and kissed them good-night. They said their simple evening prayers, with the usual "God bless dear Papa," upon each loving lip.

Could I tell them of the open grave—the coffin resting there! My darling, my husband, my heart is broken, the deep dark grave is ever round me,—it walls me in—it stifles me—I can not breathe for it.—The clods they threw above the heart against which I've lain so trustingly these many years, bright happy peaceful years: fell on my own heart like a leaden weight, and lie there still, oppressing me.

Oh! it is lonely for thee, my love, lying away out in the dim sad moonlight alone—I here—and thou there. So near and yet so far apart,—divided for life—sundered by

worlds. Oh how long will life last? What a weary thing time is. I would it were Eternity now, I cannot wait!—I cannot wait!

My head aches wearily—earth seems so wide—so full of space, so empty. This whole house, nay the world, the very stars seem drearily vacant—naught is filled but heaven, and it is so far off!

I cannot see it—I cannot penetrate this thick cold shadow so like a pall that surrounds me. Come to me my love, no clods, no grave can part us.

CHAPTER II.

This just decree alone I know,
Man must be disciplined by woe.
To me whate'er of good or ill
The future brings—since come it will,
I'll bow my spirit and be still.—ÆSCHYLUS.

SEPTEMBER 10.

I HAVE been sick—very sick, even unto death, since my husband's funeral. To-day sitting in my easy chair for the first time, I have assumed what henceforth shall be my life garb.

I am grieved, this sombre dress and all my sufferings have done so little to make me look older.

"Your face is too childish to wear this widow's cap," nursey tells me over and over again.

I wish it was not so; they brought me a mirror to-day, and I sicken of my fair girlish face, looking younger than ever, now they have put back my hair. But how wicked I am, how fretful I must be, when my looks annoy me.

This must comfort me, just as I am Walter Percy loved me. Is not that enough to make me *almost* love myself?

It is a bright, warm autumn morning, just the kind of a day he always prized. The forest leaves all brown and golden and crimson-tipped, sigh softly in the wind. They used to sing a pleasant song, but now their notes are

changed, and they sigh forth a requiem over departed hopes. The voices of the wind are all sad voices now, they float to my casement in the night and the sound of weeping is in their tones.

They have rolled my chair into this deep bay-window, where we have so often sat and watched the sun go down, behind those dark tall mountains, which stand like sentinels about our home, guarding it from the fierce north winds. Oh, we have had many a happy blessed time, filled with long sweet talks within this window's depths—watching the shadows come and go like smiles upon the broad green lawn, and broader river which skirt our home, and lose themselves in the beaming sky.

It is very beautiful here, the same fair scene stretched out before me, the river runs as gladly, the sky glows as brightly, the mountains o'er-topping each other, and covered with foliage of a thousand varied hues stand as stern, and frown as loweringly upon us.

The lawn has scarcely less of fresh bright green, and its border of flowers bloom in brighter, and guadier colors, even than when last we sat at eventide together,—never more! never more!

How can they all look the same, why do they so carelessly wear the same bright garb, how can they thus gleam and laugh one with the other so gaily? They weary me so—it tries me sadly, sitting here and seeing all these happy together, when I am desolate.

They must take me back to bed again, and draw the heavy curtains darkly about me, I can not bear to look upon beauty and brightness now. God forgive me, that I do not prize his gifts sufficiently, in my sorrow I cannot.

SEPTEMBER 12.

A few days have passed, I am better, my baby is not well, she pines for me poor little one. I have not treated her tenderly in my selfish grief, poor birdie, wee baby, Walter's baby, whom Walter never saw,—sad wee thing, never to have seen him, never to have had the light of his eyes shined upon you.

What a desolate little one, how my heart pities you poor

little stranger, because this great happiness, the crowning glory of my life was denied you. But I will tell you always of him pet.

It is a sad world a weary world, my little one in which to dwell—beyond is a home so fair, so peaceful, so full of joy, and but one step would carry us through the dark angry waves of the river of death into the brightness beyond.

Shall we go now daughter, and let papa see his little one for the very first in Paradise? Not yet, we may not go yet, we must wait, some weary years. They will not open the golden gates to us now, if we go, those bright majestic seraphs who guard the way, to the beautiful city, but will turn their faces sadly from us and say,

“You should have waited until our Father called you.”

And then, they will shut us out from glory for ever. No, no we will not go, but we will wait a few sad years, it cannot be so very long. And then when we have grown too weary with much watching, we will close our eyes and the angels will come and carry us gently up to God, and thy father my little one, will be among the throng—the redeemed throng. O Espérance! O Percy!

SEPTEMBER 14.

I have been too weak to attend to any kind of business—to do aught but sit and nurse my frightened heart with its load of grief—to try and get used to this strange desolate life which stretches itself out before me.

I have seen none of the many who have called, what could I say to them—how talk to strangers of my sorrow.

I know it is very wrong but even the children distress me, but I must strive against such an unnatural wickedness as this, they are my all, the only things throughout the wide world that claim the same lineage as myself. We used to talk much of it, and congratulate ourselves upon it, that being both of us only children of only children, we had not to our knowledge any kindred near or remote among the living.

We said it was an especial Providence which brought him to my far island home, in the blue waters of the Mediterranean, and that in the beginning of our lives it must have

been ordered, we should make each other's lives. And we rejoiced to have no other love come in to share our own most perfect whole. Save only those gifts God sent us and which each loved more dearly for the other's sake.

But now I fear me much it was a selfish living from the world, and glorying in our own infinite content. We should have known some cloud would come. I feel now some kinsman, some one who was a part of me, would be most precious.

I am very young and inexperienced in the business affairs of life, to be left with so many children looking to me for guidance, and all this great property to manage right for them. I almost wish some one had been associated with me in their guardianship, it is such an awful responsibility, but my husband knew best what was good for us all.

In his short suffering illness, when death came quickly, with scarce five hours warning, he had only time to say just at the last, when life was ebbing away, and his breath came short and suffocatingly, with fearful struggles:

“I have made no will, I leave all to you my wife, for our children—my darling bring them up as you know I meant to do—as we have talked and planned—a thousand times—”

After a brief space he turned to Mr. Marstone and with a great effort said.

“All is right sir, do just as Mrs. Percy desires, be her friend as you have been mine, most true and faithful—all my life—I leave you darling to his charge.”

And then what followed left me a widow, stricken, smitten of God. Next week is my birth-day, that day which has always been a bright glad festival, the anniversary of my wedding-day as well.

How can I drag out my weary life and meet these days, which will now only be mile-stones cold and bare, which chronicle how long since we were parted. It seems a sad but fearful dream. I am a widow!

Seventeen years ago, I was a bride, a happy child, but still a bride. Now I am upon my thirty-third birth day, a widow with a housefull of young children looking to me for guidance.

Do not people die of broken hearts?—No I feel they do not, else would I not have this strong redundancy of life, wildly surging within me now.

It takes a long, long time, I have heard it said to die of a broken heart, we look and wonder to see it, yet God orders it thus, let me be patient.

We can endure whatsoever God sends. We need never sink 'neath the crosses, and burdens of life, which his hand lays upon us. We learn through much suffering to grapple with our fate, to live with it ever about us—this deep dark mail of woe, pressing close and tight upon our inmost hearts, and yet we live and endure even unto the end.

SEPTEMBER 15.

There is a comfort for me even in my affliction. Last night after I had lain me down to rest, not to sleep; my brain tumultuous with a thousand sad memories, and dreary lookings forward into the dark unfathomable future, I heard my door open and ere I could unclasp my fingers from over my burning eyes, two soft arms were flung about my neck, and a pleading sobbing voice said.

"Let me stay with you oh mamma, I cannot bear it alone—do not send me away, please do not. Let me be your comfort now, and you mine. Oh it is a weary time, has God forgotten us mamma? And left us alone, poor sick mamma, poor fatherless children!"

My Marion, my sweet one, my first-born child, very near my heart lie ever, ever. Even as your loving arms clung round me henceforth be my nearest friend, my aid and helper.

Even as your sweet mournful voice plead with me in my night of doubt, and sorrowed with me in my sorrow, will we two bear together—never again apart—our great life grief.

We two, better than any others, know each other's heart-thoughts, and appreciate as none others can, what we have lost. Upon us its weight falls more heavily and with a more crushing force than on any of the rest.

And my frail dove-eyed Marion, is as a new found treasure unto me. Her thirteen years are scarcely flown, a

child in form, she has already found in sorrow her woman's heart. And henceforth I am no longer quite alone in this wide world.

I have had many kind and thoughtful messages—not only from our immediate circle of friends, but from the best and noblest men this country produces. Men who for years have been my husband's associates, and round whose names will be entwined as there is now about his own, unfading wreaths of fame. The grateful offerings of the people of this land, to the true and tried, who amidst strife and outrage, through evil and good report, have kept unwaveringly their country's good and safety ever before them. A wreath of ever-living flowers to the true and brave.

The Legislature of which Walter was a bright and shining light! send me a notice of their adjournment, upon the day his death was announced to them, also a paper containing a tribute to his memory, "his great worth which they once prized and honoured, and of which they now mourn the loss."

Beautiful, heartfelt words they are, welling up from the pure lofty hearts of these his compeers, noble men, whom he loved, whose friendship was ever a precious thing to him.

The members of the Bar also send me their condolence for "my irreparable loss and theirs."

I have also many obituary notices, some by unknown hands, and others whose breathings of love and sorrow, I recognize with gratitude.

All of these I will keep very sacredly, an heir-loom for my children. Through these they may learn in part, the reason they have to glory in the name they bear. And my young son, whom God in his infinite goodness and mercy guide and protect, as I with all my watchfulness and care may not hope to do, my glad merry boy, may have ever before him the honored name of Walter Percy, a name which Howard Percy must strive with heart and will to emulate. A beacon light to guide him on to do and dare all things for the right. A goal only to be won through much striving, desperate battles with the thorns and briars, which hang over and smother up the pathway of life making the good and right way rough and tedious.

CHAPTER III.

"The faint sickness of a weary heart."—BECKFORD.

SEPTEMBER 22.

How quietly I sit here—how still I feel—how cold—how stunned. Is it because my one great grief has swallowed up all sensation? Or what is it which makes me regard so little this new stroke, which made even kind old Mr. Marstone tremble as he told it to me. We are not only alone in this great cold world without our guide—but we are portionless, homeless beggars.

I do not understand it, Walter told me with his dying breath that all was right—and so it must have been. Something has gone wrong since which he knew nothing of. My husband is not to blame for this—it comes from above. "God knows best," perhaps it was needful, we must not murmur. "God moves in a mysterious way, his wonders to perform." I wonder if I needed more chastening. Through much affliction, grievous trials, He draweth us to Him, taking away all our comforts to make us come to Him for rest, overshadowing all our joys, to show us joy in Him, prostrating to the earth all our supports, and making us lean upon Him alone. Oh in all our woes these thoughts comfort us, what could be more restful;

"God's greatness
Flows around our incompleteness—
Round our restlessness His rest."

On account of his public duties my husband had but little time to devote to his personal affairs. He knew his estate was valuable, he lacked nothing that his life required, for his own wants, or the need of a friend, there was abundance always. And all was secured to his children after him.

This much he knew, the minutia of the matter was all transacted by an agent in whom he had unbounded confidence.

This I knew, and never doubted but it was right. But now I think even Walter would say it was not. For by one mis-step and a system of fraud carried on for years, the man he trusted, has squandered our whole fortune, and left us

(18)

beggars. I do not quite understand the matter, save, that by a series of unfortunate speculations each meant to retrieve the other, all that we had in the world is gone.

Walter was blinded to this state of affairs, because he never suffered a moment's inconvenience from it. It was kept from him, and his requirements always anticipated by money raised by mortgage upon mortgage, fastened upon the property.

A few days only before the death of my husband his agent made one desperate venture more, by raising a few thousands upon the furniture, stock, etc. of our home, then while he waited the issue in feverish agony, came first the news of his employer's death, then of the failure of the enterprise in which he had staked his and our all. Then with a letter full of bitter repentance to Mr. Marstone, he ended his misery and his sins, by one more dreadful than all the rest, suicide.

All is gone, all we have known and loved for years. Not one thing left us, not one foot of ground upon which to place our feet and say it is my own. Not one, sweet flower to raise its little head and call itself ours. My own property which to my sorrow was settled unreservedly upon myself still remains, but this and all that I can raise upon my wardrobe and jewelry, must go to pay the debts which yet remain.

Mr. Marstone good old friend seemed frightened by the steadiness and calmness, with which I heard all these details.

He thought at least to see an outbreak of tears,—he has known me always so childish, so dependent, that this new phase of character, which seems to have grown up within me so suddenly, alarms him.

I am changed I know and feel it every moment of my life, this woe has awakened feelings within me, unlike any thing I have ever known before.

Kind friend he must not fear for me, because I cannot weep, this quiet is not the semblance of despair, but the natural numbness of a stunned and torpid heart, lying cold and dumb within me,

"I want a heart to pray,
To pray and never cease;
Never to murmur at thy stay,
Or wish my sufferings less."

Mr. Marstone is bitterly opposed to my giving up my own property to pay what he calls unjust debts. I know it could not be demanded of me, but better poverty and a clear conscience, than comparative wealth with the knowledge of wrong doing.

It shall go every iota of it, for Walter's memory must be free from stain. He who strove so earnestly to live at peace with his fellow-men, must have in his death no unkindly words spoken of him.

If there are troubles or sufferings to be endured, brought about no matter how remotely by his instrumentality, his wife and children must bear them. He would have said so, and so do I, let Mr. Marstone say what he will, God taketh care of His own, He provideth good things for all who love Him. We will trust ourselves to Him.

Henceforth we must go forth and battle with life, and these poor hands so wickedly ignorant of labor, must gain for us all, a daily subsistence. It will be very dreadful I know, I am not rushing blindly into utter poverty, much misery, many and bitter trials, are before us I doubt not. Yet must they be endured, else that glorious house wherein my husband now dwells may be lost to us forever. Oh we must strive to do right even if it be very hard to endure.

God is my Father, he will care for us all, His goodness never fails, His loving hands are always outstretched to sustain his stricken earth-bound children, who in their faithlessness, see not the mercy hid behind the grief.

"Judge not the Lord by feeble sense,
But trust him for his grace,
Behind a frowning providence
He hides a smiling face."

Please God strengthen me to receive all thy promises with a believing heart, to remember "whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth." There is a great comfort in that, "He loveth," God loveth, even me.

SEPTEMBER 28.

I have had one or two interviews, within the last few days with those who hold claims against the property, all have been most kind to me.

I am only doing my duty in thus giving up everything, and yet the praises I have had lavished upon me, would almost make me think I have done some great and praiseworthy thing in doing right.

Why is it I wonder, is it extraordinary for people to be honest? ought we to receive praise when we are only just?

One of these gentlemen said to me, when I explained how I intend to liquidate the debts which remained:

"My dear lady if you give up all in this manner, what will become of your children? what will they have?"

Oh I was very glad to be able to say as I did quickly and proudly:

"Their father's good name sir, untarnished, pure as he left it. An heritage more priceless than house or lands, and thank God their very own, inalienable forevermore."

Mr. Marstone's stern disapproval of all this has been most hard to endure. I am only doing my duty, plainly and obviously my duty. If it is foolish to pay our debts I cannot see it.

If there is any merit in all this, there is no praise due to me. It is my husband's spirit working in me. Oh I never could do without his aid. It makes me glad to think perhaps, this feeling, this sense of duty and responsibility, which has sprung up thus within me may be his spirit, directing me, my guide even now!

Yes it is noble, it is generous, I doubt not, to thus make myself poor that others may not be defrauded, and I am glad I was firm.

That I did not appreciate all this before, shows how unworthy I am of the spirit which directs me. Walter it is blessed to know that even now thou art with me. Husband do not leave me! I will always trust to thee now! in death, as I ever did in life!

I am grieved to have gone so contrary to Mr. Marstone in everything, especially in the sale of my jewels, but he was thinking more of our comfort and ease, than of Walter's good name, therefore, though it was hard, I withstood him, but I will be very obedient henceforth.

SEPTEMBER 29.

I have put them away, all the bright fair gems, I have loved so well, round which so many fond remembrances linger.

Most of them gifts of a precious love, a few the tokens of remembrance from dear friends in distant lands, dearly prized for the pleasant associations I have with those old times.

But almost all are Walter's choice, and have a word of love, a tender blessing or wish clinging to them.

"I love these bright things dearly," he said, "and I will cover my jewel with gems, because like my love they are pure and imperishable, ever her very own."

Oh Walter, Walter, your words were prophecy. They have gone, like your love, they brighten no more my path-way.

I will for old remembrance, keep some little piece a ring, a bracelet, or a brooch out from each set. I could find it in my heart now to portion each of my fair daughters a piece. This lava pin to Marie, because her intense admiration of the "angel face," carved upon it has oftentimes made her father smile.

This ring of diamonds, to Leanore, because papa has often promised when the little lady's eyes danced with delight at the jets of light which shot from the casket where with its accompaniments it lay, that

"My princess shall have just such bright diamonds on her wedding-day, a coronet of gems to deck my Layde Percy's brow."

And my little bright-eyed Coralie, shall have this bracelet of cameos, for when she was born in Florence her father gave them to me.

And pearls and mosaic for the others, but while I write, the thought comes over me, perchance we will need them to buy us bread.

Who knows it may be so, and if it is they will not have been reserved in vain. I have spent a long while talking of these bright things, and a longer still in looking at them. I have worn them so often in gay scenes, amongst the beauty and nobility of other lands never dreaming of to-day with its clouds and darkness,—hopeless on earth but not in heaven,—for there the comfort is if we endure unto the end, through great and sore trials we may hope for crowns of brighter rarer gems, for golden harps, and glad songs, and sunshine and gladness evermore. No clouds, no shadows, no sorrow, no weeping, for "God will wipe all tears from their eyes."

I have told the servants to-day the change which has come upon us, and I receive their offers of service most gratefully.

"We will go with you and work for you without any pay, the rest of our days," said old James the butler.

"That is far better my lady, than living our old age out among strangers," says Lawton as she wipes her eyes, and clasps her basket of keys tightly in her arms.

But of course we need no house-keeper or butler or indeed servant of any kind in the humble home which must receive us. It was hard to make them understand this, but at last I did.

"What your dear pretty hands do all the work? you would die, why you cannot toast a piece of bread without scorching your little fingers," cried the cook.

"Then I must learn to bear the pain, until I learn to be less awkward, good Betty," was all the answer I could give.

I must learn the hard lesson of self dependence, henceforth these hands must be the workers for others, I must labor for my children's bread.

Milly troubles me, my dear old nurse hardly says she is sorry to part with us, but I will not complain, her heart like my own, is in her master's grave, all other griefs are trivial now.

Loisette my poor little French maid weeps incessantly and wearies me with petitions to go with me.

"Ah Madame, que pourrais je faire sans vous.—Madame ma chere madame cela me perce le coeur—je vous en supplie ne m'abandonnez pas."

But of course she cannot go with us. Walter's valet is a good and faithful fellow, I will send her under his charge to their "La Belle France." It is all I can do for her.

The rest of the servants I will endeavor to get places for, among the families whose seats surround us. And with whom I hope my recommendations will have due weight.

I have received scores of offers of service, the largest amount of sympathy, but I only ask of them that they will take my scattered servants into their houses, and be kind to them. Thoughtful of their welfare, keeping a watch over them, remembering they are the children of the self same Father, who being more burdened with the cares and work

of life need the more a gentle restraining hand to direct them.

I have selected out a few books which are very dear to me because of the marks they bear of that dear hand.

Some French and German works are among them, and these the children can use when they are too poor to buy books, but not too poor to learn the little their mother can teach them.

I have also kept a couple of cabinet sized pictures of myself and husband, executed a few years ago, in Italy by Pazi. The large portrait of Walter which hung in the drawing-room, I have sent with a statue of Niobe which he always loved to Mr. Marstone, it was all I dared claim, from this multitude of beautiful things. But a whole heart-full of love and gratitude go with them, this he knows full well.

Also one or two things which were expressly bought for him, I have sent to the house of my husband's beloved guardian, which stands a few miles back of us. And when Mr. Andley returns to his native land, he will find these mementoes of his "dear boy's" love awaiting him. Thus I have striven to do all I ought to do, ere I leave this spot forever.

CHAPTER IV.

SEPTEMBER 30.

I have taken leave of all the friends of my happy married life, and they are many even in this quiet valley home. How thankful I am our homestead lay here instead of in some great city with its turmoil and hurry, its ever changing scenes and faces.

Here in these our ancestral lands we have made us a pleasant home, amidst dim old forests, which by their darkness and gloom make all beside, fairer and more beautiful. The sky seems nearer and of a deeper blue, when we look up into it, from this dear spot. The sunshine falls softly here with a balmly tenderness that speaks of heaven. A quiet reigns everywhere. The far off surge of the great

ocean of life is too far away to reach us never so faintly, but the murmuring of the river falls sweetly upon the ear, and the voices of the wind among the forest leaves sing always an answering song. We have lived here so quietly and peacefully, these many years, taking no note of the busy world outside of us, free from all knowledge of its storms and calms.

Now although we leave all behind, we can look back upon our home, and know it for years the same sweet spot unaltered. My home, my dear home, beloved Percy's Cliffe. My home of sorrow too, what bright fond dreams cling round you, every spot within your wide domains has some fond memory clinging to it, some memory of the loved and lost.

Here, with naught but the stars for company, we have, within this rose decked bower, pictured out our future. A bright glad picture.

No storms, no clouds, no darkness, all was beauty and gladness, merry songs and gushing laughter, filled up the picture.

Or if perchance some storm did come, not hard to bear, because with hands closely clasped each in the other, we would meet all ills together.

Foolish hearts never to see the shadow of the grave between, or the weary waiting of one upon the shores of time.

Often at eventide when the soft grey shadows were gathering slowly down over the earth, we have strolled among these flower-girt walks, talking of many things, of how in coming years our children happy in other homes and we grown old, would sit down in the twilight of our lives and watch the shadow of the unknown draw on apace.

A quiet old fashioned couple, with old timed notions but happy hearts, the one with his pipe, the other with her knitting, conning over "old times and the way times had been," waiting patiently until God should reap the full ripe shock, until the golden bowl should be broken—the silver cord loosed—and we depart together. Oh Walter! my own it could not be. We never thought "one would be taken and the other left," could be true in our case.

And yet I say we, when perhaps I alone was deceived, for now I remember; Walter was oftentimes grave after these

talks, and when it grieved me to see him thus would kiss me tenderly and putting back my hair with gentle loving hand would bid me :

"Not to mind his cross look if there is any trouble to come upon us, we would wait until it did, before we grieved over it."

And once when we were reading Tennyson's "Miller's daughter," he frightened me by passionately dashing down his book, and clasping me in his arms, saying in a hushed quick tone :

"My darling—my bird," and for an instant held me tightly to him. And then as if speaking to himself, as if it was something he found comfort in :

"God is our Father, I can trust him, he will care for her if"—and he was quiet.

"If what Walter? if what?" I asked; "what is the matter?"

"Not a thing, my pet, which I shall tell you, only a cloud came for an instant between me and my 'sunshine,' making me feel as though I wanted her locked up safely in my arms out of harm's way."

"But what kind of harm?"—I began to ask, but the look in his eye which I never disobeyed silenced me.

Then he began to repeat over again what he had just been reading, in a low musing voice, and his arm went closely round me again and he said as if half ashamed of some feeling :

"Pardon me love, I cannot help it." This was when he read :

"Yet fill my glass, give me one kiss,
My own sweet Alice we must die,
There's something in this world amiss
Must be unravelled bye and bye.
There's somewhat flows to us in life
But more is taken quite away,
Pray Alice, pray my darling wife,
That we may die the self-same day."

He repeated it with touching pathos. And though it spake no knell to my heart of coming ill, it made me weep I knew not wherefore, save that it was beautiful and affected him. Then further on he read again :

"Look through mine eyes with thine true wife,
'Round my true heart thine arms entwine,
My other dearer life in life,
Look through my very soul with thine !
Untouched with any shade of years,
May these kind eyes forever dwell !
They have not shed a' many tears,
Dear eyes since first I knew them well."

And turning my face up to his, he looked tenderly into my eyes, saying in a low tone :

"It is so Bertha, my darling, they have not shed a' many tears, dear eyes since first I knew them well? I have not neglected to cherish my flower. I have guarded her tenderly from ills, have I not?"

Oh Walter, were you dreaming of this time? were you bearing the dread of this and alone, least I should be pained—it must have been so, tender thoughtful husband.

Oh I was blessed beyond all other women, all these years, and now—thank God their memory is left me.

And now I sit and wonder that I did not understand that the severe and sudden attacks with which my husband was at intervals taken, were premonitions of a fatal disease, which would some day snatch away his noble life, close his dark eyes upon the light,

Beyond all human sorrow, care or fear, above all clouds or stars, he dwells in the very presence of his God. His high intellect, his great all-faithful soul knows no longer the strifes and weariness of this humanity.

The very peace of Our Father rests upon him, and with thankful hearts and eyes ever upon the mountain of hope, we will strive to reach his home in safety, and there find rest.

Walter it is no more hope with thee now, but fullness of joy only for us who remain, is the old watchword needful—still with eyes and hearts raised above we must cry "O Espérance."

CHAPTER V.

OCTOBER 1.

A great mercy has been vouchsafed us, it cometh from the Lord, as do all our mercies. And with hands outstretched to heaven upon my knees I say, "thank God."

Instead of everything which we have loved for years, esteeming them our very own, being sold and scattered by the hammer of the auctioneer, the whole property with all its appurtenances has been bought by one person.

Even my own belongings, my wardrobe, my jewels, over which I have mourned so grievously, have been stayed in their sale, and are to abide here even when we are gone.

Now we can go forth, very poor, it is true, but owing no man aught but love and gratitude.

And Mr. Hartly, a strange, eccentric old man, has become the purchaser. We have always esteemed him a severe, cruel man, and thought that living alone always, his heart was withered and feelingless. But now, with this act before me, I cannot help but think that, down in the depths of his being, there lives a spring, bubbling eternally, which though he wots not of its existence, because of the weeds of evil which choke it, yet makes him sometimes do right noble deeds.

He has sent me word to have the servants all discharged, save old Humphrey and Jessy, both of whom we long ago thought too old to work, but whom he sharply affirms,

"Are the only fools, beside myself, I want upon the place."

Perhaps it is as well, for they are faithful, and will care well for the place, as long as they are permitted to remain upon it.

To night Mr. Hartly came here and told me I need be in no hurry to remove, as he did not mean to move in for a month.

I thanked him, not noticing the cross quick tone in which the words were spoken, but added:

"Everything is prepared for our departure, and we will leave in the morning."

"Pish! nonsense," he replied, "make a fool of yourself; that's the way with the women always." Then he added, "Where are the keys?"

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I called Lawton to bring them, taking them he said:

"Come show me the house will you?"

Involuntarily I drew back and would have sent Lawton with him.

"Oh if you're too dainty to wait upon me, I can go alone," he said harshly, "but keep away that fool of a housekeeper, I won't have her blubbing round me, telling me a pack of lack-a-daisical stories."

Without waiting for more, I went with him. I think if he had known the hard trial it was thus to enter and expose the beautifully arranged apartments of my lost home to a stranger eye, even he would have pitied me.

But it was as well, it broke the charm which hung over me. With a stern face he strode into the centre of each room, then after one glance around it, he would say as he came back to me—

"Lock that door, will you, and hook the key to this ring." Thus it was we traversed every room, and this command at each. When we came to three small apartments, one above another, in the small south tower, which have never been used because of the inconvenience of their construction, he said:

"Give me the keys of these rooms, they are mine hereafter."

"But sir," I returned, "they are very unpleasant and but partly furnished."

"That's why I like them, what do you care whether I am comfortable or not. It is no one's concern if I choose to sleep in the stable."

His harsh words frightened me into silence, and we went on until we reached the nursery where the children were all assembled. Before this door I paused, I could not bear the last thing my innocent darlings saw before they slept, should be the stern face of this fierce old man. His bitter words, and cruel voice, the last sound their ears should hear.

"What are you waiting for, do you think I am a bear, and mean to eat your children?" he said.

His words were unkind, but his tone and look less so than at any time during our interview. Without another word I opened the door.

I felt the scene we stood and looked upon in silence, must seem beautiful and holy even to his stern heart.

We had been very proud of this room, and furnished it with great care. And we had endeavored to gather in it as much of beauty and grace as could be, because here our children's days were for the most part passed. Here with their nurses they always slept, or at least the little ones did. And the older ones had pretty rooms opening in upon it. Now over all there was a soft mild light of roseate hue, shed from a pastil lamp which hung high over head.

Marion with an anxious look upon her sweet face, sang a lullaby to the babe, which she carried up and down the room.

Adèle and Gracie, with their plump arms clasped round each other, were already fast asleep, the very picture of rosy health and beauty.

Howard and Coralie with closed eyes knelt at their sister Leanoire's side and said their simple evening prayers.

The old man's heart was touched, I saw it in his face—I have heard it said he is always kind and gentle to children, as long as they remain such.

Marion in her walk came to where we stood, and when she saw us paused. Mr. Hartley stepped up to her quickly, with a gentle look upon his face, such as a moment before I had deemed impossible for it to wear.

"Poor child—poor little Marion"—and he patted her tenderly upon the head, "this must not be, I"—and he paused, then added, "well, well, it is better perhaps now—but after a while, but after a while."

Then turning from her abruptly, without a glance at the others he said as he left the room:

"She is like her father, just what he was once, I was worthy then," I just heard these words muttered, the rest I could not distinguish. After a word of comfort to the children I followed him, to the hall door.

"What's that girl allowed to drag that baby round until this time of night for, I should like to know?" he said with the same stern look and tone, as I came up to him.

"Because sir," I answered quietly, "the servants are gone, and her mother is engaged."

"What! gone! have you kept none of the regiment who have harbored here for the last dozen years?" he asked.

"None sir but the two you engaged to wait upon you."

"A pretty go to be sure, a pack of ungrateful hussies, to go off at the first notice, and leave you alone, that's the world's way, afraid you could not pay them as much as their lazy worthlessness requires, I suppose."

"Not at all sir, they left me very much against their will, and only at my earnest command, I thought it better they should go."

"Why was it best pray? I do not see," he said sharply.

"Because to-morrow your authority begins here, and therefore mine ceases, consequently I desired to have every thing settled to-day so as to have no unnecessary care or hurrying in the morning."

"Humph a good reason, you leave in the morning then, what time pray?"

"I have ordered a carriage at eight sir."

"What carriage, which one?" he said quickly.

"Mr. Marstone's sir, which he kindly offered, else I should have been obliged to beg the favor of one of yours."

"Humph I suppose so. Where is my new servant? What is her name did you say?"

"Jessy sir shall I bid her come to you?"

"Yes, I must give my orders to my servants, both of them."

I went in and called them, poor old couple, with their sad hearts pictured upon their faces they came to greet their new master.

"See these keys? take them you Jessy, and let me catch you letting any one in the rooms which are locked, can you keep them clean think you?"

"Ah yes sir," sobbed Jessy, "there'll be no trouble in that for there'll be no body to make them dirty any more, with the childrens all away, alack what shall I do!"

"Hold your tongue" said he testily "and attend to your business. Keep the house fresh and clean, just as it is now, don't dare to move a thing, and now sir for you what is your name?"

"Humphery sir at your service," with a low bow of fear.

"Well you get some men to attend to the gardens and grounds, but not to come into the house remember, you take care of the young ladies' flowers and pets yourself, and mind I tell you, it will be worse for you if any one steps

their foot inside of this door but you two and myself, without a written order from me, after to-morrow that's the law remember."

He passed down the steps making the marble ring with his quick sharp step. I stood watching him an instant as he went down the gravel-walk. When suddenly turning he came up to me again.

"Can they keep the house and the place just as it now is, for several years, think you?" he asked.

"I think they can, if they live so long sir."

"Well give them their orders how they are to do will you? I won't be much trouble to them; if they let me alone, I will not interfere with them, I want every thing to stand just as it is, may be for years, until my heir comes, to take possession."

"I will give them proper instructions. I think you may trust them sir, they are—"

"Trust!" he interrupted, "trust! I trust! know that I trust nobody, no not even myself," and he walked fiercely away.

In a moment he came back to me.

"How many children have you Bertha?"

"Seven sir," I replied.

"Seven! whew! a pretty good family for one woman to support, how old were you when you were married?"

"I was married upon my sixteenth birthday sir."

Oh how the memory of that scene beside my mother's dying bedside came over me as I answered him!

"How long were you married?"

"Seventeen years sir, wanting about two months," I replied with an aching heart, but he went on careless of the pain he inflicted.

"Humph then you are thirty-three, why you don't look twenty-three, how old is Marion? fifteen I suppose."

"In four months she will be fifteen."

"In six years then she will be twenty-one, well we will see." He said this in a musing tone walking up and down the long verandah.

"I have a notion to let her marry my heir if you will give her to me now, to be my own," he said.

Then, as with a shudder, I was about to refuse such a thing:

"Never mind now," he said, "wait until you have had a taste of poverty, then, when you see her sick, for want of the luxuries she has always known, then you can think of my offer. I will wait for my answer until then."

Walking up and down with his eyes fastened upon the marble floor, where the moonlight cast strange weird figures as it crept softly through the trellis-work, he seemed buried in deep thought. Watching from where I stood with the full flood of moonlight over me—over all the scene—lighting all the surroundings with witching beauty, I thought of him who was wont on such a night, to walk up and down this moonlit piazza, master of all.

How like and yet how unlike the pictures; this, has the same fair gleaming towers, white and tall, standing above it in the moonlight, the same dark mountains guarding it, the same waving trees that sing a song of love one to the other.

The rushing of the streams down the mountain's side, and the roar they make when they leap into the river which flows and shines a little way off, are just the same as of old. But the change is in the two who stand with the moonbeams silencing them. This is the master it is true, but with moody brow, he paces up and down alone, and in the doorway with clasped hands and weary eyes a small woman, in robes of night, stands watching him.

In the old time he who walked had his arm wound round that little figure, and her garments were shining white, and her face glowed with a glad happiness, and she was never weary. Alas for the days that are past!

Alas! for the days to come! who can abide them!

CHAPTER VI.

"THE GRANGE," OCTOBER.

We have broken up all our old ties at last, now we have left us but the memory of the dear old life.

Yesterday we came to Mr. Marstone's where we are to stay for a little while until we find what is best to be done.

Our kind friend declares:

"This must henceforth be your home, Bertha, be content to abide beneath my roof henceforth."

But I know this may not be. I know that I must not subsist upon the bounty of any man, even this one who is our kind and tender friend.

Oh I have need to lay fast hold upon the promises and to bless my God they are so sure, "no chastening seemeth for the present joyous, but rather grievous, but it worketh out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."

Oh weary desolate widow, it was hard to part with all,—to sever the thousand ties which bound you to that spot. To leave the home of your happy married life never to see it more.

To leave all the brightness and beauty behind, to tread a cold gloomy path leading you wist not where.

But it is worse missing the strong sustaining arm, which once you called your own. Poor widow! poor fatherless children!

The promises are sure, are very precious, abounding in graciousness, for what is beyond, if I could accept them as I ought, and wear them ever as a shield over my heart, but I cannot always, sometimes it is hard to remember all I should, to see the "hand" behind the cloud.

I pray God will put it into Mr. Hartley's heart to be a kind landlord and master, to the many whom He has given to his charge.

The night before we came away I went down to the village, and with Marion and Leonore, took a tender farewell of all those over whom we have so long held an almost feudal sway. Their honest, heartfelt expressions of love and sorrow well-nigh broke my heart.

Every thing which I have brought away from—"Percy's

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Cliff,"—which consists of our wadrobe, some plain cottage furniture (I purchased long ago for the use of my governess Fenton, but which she died before she saw) some bedding, table linen and a few other necessities which I have reserved, I have had stowed away in Alison William's attic.

Of these things, there is a good supply, and it is some comfort to know, with care they will last us many years, so that we need spend none of our earnings, in this way at least. Those dreadful earnings! how they haunt me!

People may talk of the pleasure of independence, of the sweetness of bread bought by your own labor, but I confess, I have no desire to experience these delights; dependence was never a galling chain to me, never anything but blessed.

I have also a few books, the pictures I saved with a few other mementoes before the appraisement. All these I will leave until we are settled in that home, the location of which as yet we know not, and then Ally will send them all to us, so I have arranged with her.

Mr. Marstone gave me one hundred dollars to-night saying:

"It is the proceeds of a claim, which has been overlooked."

Although I know almost, the claim exists only in his own kind heart, I could not grieve him by refusing to take the money. He will not miss it from his abundance, kind friend, and alas! we need it, this and the few dollars I chanced to have about me are all we have to start in life upon—God help us!

OCTOBER 10.

Our sorrows are innumerable, another stroke, one more of the few friends gone. It is a dreary history, death following death. The third day after we came here Mr. Marstone was attacked late in the night, in a most alarming manner, with what the physician upon his arrival to our horror pronounced apoplexy.

We watched him day and night for five days, but after the first night he never spoke, and then only to say,

"Bertha my child do not be alarmed, go back to bed I shall be better soon I trust."

After that although he strove continually to speak he was never able, but only produced a strange guttural sound most

distressing to hear, and then when he became aware we could not understand him his anguish seemed beyond endurance.

I endeavored in every way to assist him, repeating a list of things I thought might have among them the right thing, but in vain, and in despair I desisted from what was alike a torture to us both.

To night he sank to sleep, and in that sleep the angel of death laid his chill finger upon him, and he never spoke again, but went from earth to heaven.

My last earthly friend gone, the only one to whom I could look for guidance. And now he lies shrouded before me, and as I write I keep my last vigil over him, and I weep that he is gone. But only for myself—for on his aged careworn face, round which the thin white hairs lay like a halo, there already rests "that peace which passeth understanding."

I wonder why all I love die? can there be aught in my love to wither their lives? to dry up their hearts' blood? why do they drop away from me one by one, all my early friends, my beloved ones!

OCTOBER 12.

We have buried our last friend from our sight, a good man gone to rest. God will receive the friend of the fatherless and widow.

By a will which is dated five years back, his whole fortune is left (with the exception of a few legacies to his servants) "to the son of my dear and only sister."

Perhaps it is wrong, but I cannot help wondering if his desire to speak had not something to do with leaving us something, or recommending us to his heir, but such thoughts are worse than useless now.

To-morrow we will start for the city of B——, there to commence far from our old friends and associations our struggle for bread.

This is my first step alone,—pray God it may be right. A bitter thought strikes me; next summer when the city of P—— sends forth its citizens to their pleasant homes in this neighbourhood, how many will mourn for us, who

will shed a tear of regret over the early death of the master of 'Percy's Cliffe' and the scattering of his family from their princely home. Who will sorrow that I am an exile, and that Walter sleeps out yonder in "God's acre."

But what right have I to repine thus? I have ever received kindnesses and pleasant greetings from all mankind, surely I of all women have the least reason to judge the world harshly. I have read often that poverty embitters, and causes us to look with jaundiced eyes upon all who come in contact with us.

I pray this may not be my case, for surely love is better than hate and I will nourish a loving heart.

CHAPTER VII.

One by one thy duties wait thee,
Let thy whole strength go to each,
Let no future dreams o'ertake thee,
Learn thou first what these can teach.
Poem entitled ONE BY ONE.

OCTOBER 16.

It was hard to leave all that we had known so long, that cold grey morning, but we did it, and after three tedious days of travel are at last in B——.

I am strongly oppressed with the weight of responsibility which rests upon me; it is a new thing for me to have the care of others, and it frightens me. But still there is comfort in thinking how much worse it might have been, for if upon the journey any one of us had been taken ill what would have become of us.

As it is we have need for thanksgiving that we are all so perfectly well. Marion and I divided the care of baby between us, and although her light weight became a sadly heavy one before the journey ended, yet we have no right to murmur, for she was a darling good little one.

Leanore took her two little sisters under her own especial charge, and we had no trouble concerning them.

The other two took care of themselves, or one another, and enjoyed the journey hugely.

We arrived here late in the night, and were brought to this Hotel by a hackman, who fortunately for us, judged from our one trunk, I suppose, we were scant of funds, and chose a cheap one for us.

But a Hotel be it never so reasonable, is not quite the place for a family of eight with only one hundred dollars in the world, so to-morrow I must try and find a lowlier home.

Poor little children, they are completely worn out and wearied with novelties, "Want to go home to dear papa."

Our only room, with its two beds and lounge, scarcely serves to accommodate us, but we are learning to do with less each day.

I have cut out a few advertisements of boarding houses. In the morning I will seek out some of them, for we must not stay here much longer, or we will be penniless.

OCTOBER 17.

At last this weary day is ended—how tired I am—how bruised my heart feels. It is very desolate to be poor and friendless, in this great wilderness of stone, yes stone, that is it stony hearts cold and hard.

This morning with the advertisements I had chosen, I went forth but, very soon my inability to choose for myself was forced upon me. For of all the list of places I had selected not one was within my means. Some of them would have taken all I had in one week, even the very meanest were not to be thought of, for an instant.

Oh where shall I go, what can I do, I have traversed this great city, until I am footsore and weary. I have talked and bargained and even begged for a home with coarse rough strangers, in vain, in vain.

How fearful the future looks—if there was only some one to whom I might go, just once for advice.

If I were only rich there are hundreds in this and other lands from whom I would without a moment's hesitation seek counsel, but now I am poor, it therefore cannot be.

Well it will only be for a little while this pilgrimage of woe, beyond, it is very bright, but it is weary waiting.

Perhaps if I were to ask some of the servants here they would assist me. I must not be proud, they know more than I of the ins and outs of city life. I will wait until morning then try this seemingly last resort.

Oh Mr. Audley where are you in this our grievous time of need, we are "your boy's" treasures, you would guard and direct us, vain hope, vain wish! in some foreign clime, far away, so far, I cannot reach you, you abide, as totally cut off from us, as though it were worlds that severed us instead of seas, I must not wait and hope for your protection—but strive, and endure.

OCTOBER 17.

At last we have found a place of shelter, a place where we may abide until they carry us to the home for paupers or that safer, happier home, the grave.

It would be a fine thing truly, if we Percies who boast so proudly of our lineage, and noble name, who are wont to tell with brightening eyes, and raised head of our descent from a race of kings, a brave thing if we ended our days in an alms-house: it is nearly that now at least!

Early this morning I called the girl who has waited upon us since we came, and with a quickening heart asked,

"Can you tell me of any room, or rooms suitable for a poor seamstress and her family? I am making enquiries for a person who needs them at once, but as I know nothing of this city, I am at loss where to search."

"Is it for a very poor woman, ma'am?"

"Yes," and the truth struck me drearily, "yes a very poor woman."

"Because ma'am if she is willing to live in an out of the way place, with a nice decent woman in a poor sort of way, why maybe I do know of a place, but you will think it too poor."

"At least let me see it, I will be obliged to you whether I take it or not," I replied.

"Well ma'am, Jane one of the other chamber-maids was a-telling me yesterday, how her mother had two rooms to let, and could find no nice body at all to take them, shall I send her to you ma'am?"

"No, no," I said quickly, dreading to talk with another of these strange girls, "you can find out all about them for me, the price and every thing and then come and tell me."

In a little while she came back, saying,

"They are in the upper part of the city ma'am, and rent for five dollars a month."

What a price! they must be poor indeed! was my first thought, but the next, gratitude at this partial ending of my troubles.

"Jane can go show you the way, ma'am, if you can go before breakfast, it is all the time she has."

We started at once, and following my companion, a tidy looking Irish girl, it seemed to me for miles, the houses growing smaller and the streets narrower as we progressed. At length we turned into a court upon either side of which were high frame houses, narrow and dirty looking.

Before the most decent of these Jane stopped and knocked, saying with a smile:

"This is mother's house ma'am, and a douce decent body ye'll find her to be."

The door opened, and the clean old woman within made her words good.

She showed me the rooms upon the third floor, and from their appearance as well as that of the rest of the house, I felt sure this woman had the crowning virtue of cleanliness, and she is a kind motherly old woman as her hearty welcome of her child testified.

I have taken the rooms for one month, a few days ago I would have scorned them, but after yesterday's experience I am only too grateful for them.

I have paid the rent in advance and also given Mrs. MacKay five additional dollars with which she has promised to make the place tenantable by to-morrow.

The front is the smaller room of the two, this we will have for our sitting and dining room, the other with two bedsteads in it will be our sleeping apartment. Truly "necessity is the mother of invention."

When I returned to my little folks I found them sadly hungry and tired of waiting for breakfast, and very indignant with Marion because she made them,

"Wait until Mamma came back."

I had no words for them, but could only pray them in

piteous impatience to leave me alone awhile, the darkness of that hour weighed down all other care.

I rang for Jane with whom my long walk had made me friends, and sent the children under her care to breakfast.

Then I laid me down beside my baby, and I remember the thought came to me:

"Poor little baby, how she sleeps, free from care"—and ere I had thought it, I was wrapped in dreamless slumbers, which lasted for hours.

Too much mental and physical exertion had done their work, and even while I suffered most severely, the dreary fate before me, my exhausted faculties were locked in a quiet restful sleep, the first I have known for weeks.

The good it has done me is past counting. Marion says she found me stretched beside baby, with the sun streaming into my face, when they came up.

Then she sent all the children under Lela's care to the drawing-room to stay until I awoke. She with Jane's assistance procured some food for baby, and when she slept again, laid her beside me.

Then while she kept watch over us, her nimble fingers packed our trunk ready for the start.

When I awoke it was as from a quiet sleep on my own bed. I lay in the dim light which Marion's care had made, and thought it was early morn, and with my eyes closed lay listening for the sound of the chimes which always rang at sunrise from our little hillside church.

When suddenly the loud clashing sound of the gong for dinner, startled me to life and its realities once more.

A kiss was all my darling needed as a reward for her care of me. After a brief toilette we sought poor Leanore and her charge, who we found were cross enough at being kept so long "playing good" in a public parlor.

At dinner the spirit of *finesse*, was upon me, and I insisted upon the children eating heartily of every thing, although Marion and Lela looked surprised and grave.

At last Lela asked.

"What has changed your ideas dear mamma about the children eating every thing they wish to? and so much too, I thought you considered it hurtful."

"Necessity knows no law, child," I said with a laugh, "better let them have it while they can get it, after this they

will perhaps have to live upon the remembrance of the good things of to-day, and serve it up with the additional delicacy of dry bread and water."

I should not have spoken so, for Leanore is strangely sensitive, and I fear will not accept our lot with meekness. The color sprang to her pale face in torrents though she said nothing, but her pale haughty face had a look upon it the rest of the day I did not like to see.

After dinner I paid our bill, and gave Jane something for her trouble. This and the carriage which she engaged for us leaves me sadly out of funds.

From the window where I sat I could see the park. The leaves are just turning and falling off, every thing is beautiful as a dream, the soft mild summer with its birds and flowers, and its soft balmy breezes, seems loath to depart, and lingers, keeping off with winsome smiles, cold winter with his fierce stern frown, almost as stern as poverty's own.

After tea just at dusk with a farewell to Jane we left the hotel and came here, I was thankful the darkness hid the squalor and misery of the place, until my children's eyes have grown more used to poverty. Our rooms looked more cheerful than I had dared to hope. Kind Mrs. Mackay had evidently done her best to make us feel at home beneath her humble roof.

Thus far the little ones enjoy mightily the eating milk porridge off of a deal table, and would hardly go to bed for talking of,

"The fun of having no carpets, and only wooden chairs, and above all of every-body's sleeping in two beds."

Poor children they little knew this same fun is breaking their mother and sister's, heart.

Leanore's quiet unnatural manner distressed me all this afternoon, and I felt she was regretting though in silence our change of fortunes, and with exceeding bitterness.

But to-night all the restraining barriers have been swept away, and she has added to my sorrow ten-fold by the fierceness with which she rebels against our lot.

I was utterly unable to compete with her passionate weeping and wild lamentations, and left her after a few vain attempts to soothe her, to the care of Marion, whose exceeding gentleness always subdues and quiets her.

Leanore is proud and sensitive, morbidly proud I fear, I must guard her most zealously lest her encounter with the world wound her and cause the already too prominent evils in her character to become more developed, I must not have my little daughter grow up with her haughty Percy blood ever ready to start and take umbrage at every slight, for I fear me much the ills we will have to bear, will cause her to learn very early in life the unpalatable lesson of endurance.

"The spurns that patient merit,
Of the unworthy take."

Coralie is so bright and merry, so used to throwing all thought and care away, such a very bird, shaking damps and dust from her wings and soaring sunward, that even were she older I should not have very much fear for her character being injured by the rough rubs which poverty gives. She is a glad merry child, bringing sunshine even into this humble home. The others will give me no trouble save for their bread.

Since I have been writing Lela has come to me humble and repentant, and with down-cast eyes said in a trembling tone:

"Darling mamma please forgive my wickedness, I did not think how wrong it was, or at least I felt so bitter and hateful I did not care, but oh I am very sorry to have troubled you who have so much to bear, with my naughtiness, but I did try indeed I did to be good and quiet all the while until we came here and then—and then it seemed so dreadful I forgot. Oh mamma, I did not think it could be like this. I was not prepared to have everything so changed."

"Nor I darling, I could not realize it for a long while, not till I was obliged to, I was as rebellious at first as my little daughter. I do not blame you pet, for it is only natural you should feel so, Marion is the only saint among us, although she feels the stroke, as keenly as we, she bears it without a murmur, and strengthens us."

"She does, oh she does," said the weeping girl, "she has told me such things to-night, things I never thought of.—Mamma will you promise me one thing?" and her face glowed with earnest feeling.

"Yes dear, anything I can."

"If I ever forget or grow proud and wilful, please put me in mind of to-night, will you dearest?"

I gave the promise with a kiss, and ere long my weary penitent who has thus early taken up her cross, fell into a sweet sleep.

I think this discipline may be a good thing, and prove that to her at least, poverty has come "a blessing in disguise."

Thus even the greatest evils we meet in our pathway may if we use them aright, be turned into stepping-stones, to aid us in our upward journey. It is well to remember God is our all and above all, and that all things come from him. And oftentimes what seems most evil, is just the thing we needed to turn our faces up the mountain.

OCTOBER 28.

With a few more dollars from our scanty fund we have after a week's time, succeeded in making our rooms more tenantable.

"It is just as well we have no more furniture," says Cora, "for there is no place to put it, after we are all in our places."

I am so entirely a novice in the actualities of life that I scarcely know how to begin. But it will not do to wait, tomorrow I must go forth and search for employment, I dread exceedingly to commence the battle of life.

I have read often of the sad weary days spent by poor women seeking work. Pray God such may not be my fate, it will be hard enough to have to sew day and night, without having ever before me the dread of not being able to have it to do.

But I will hope better things, I have still some resources left, for I have a great many beautiful articles of clothing, which should the worst come, we may be able to sell. Some linen, elegantly embroidered, some infant's robes, and also some beautiful dresses which belong to Adèle and Grace, poor children they can never wear such fine things now, even if we kept them, for French needle-work, and third-story alley rooms are sadly at variance.

These things will provide us I trust with some necessities.

Last night, and indeed for several nights I have been distressed beyond measure, by the almost unceasing cough of some one evidently far gone in consumption.

Mrs. MacKay tells me it is a poor widow woman, who has been occupying a room in the back building, for some time, and who is killing herself by hard work, even now when she is so ill, she sits up the greater part of the day sewing.

Perhaps I may be of some use to her, I will ask tomorrow, for the very poorest have a kind word to give if nothing else, and that helps us on our way.

There is that fearful cough again, there are worse lots than mine, and yet I murmur so grievously.

OCTOBER 30.

I have been out all day seeking employment, but without success, for though I have sought untiringly in every direction, it has been in vain. Some had nothing to give, others a kind I could not do in a month, and such prices! can men have souls, and thus oppress their fellow-men, grinding the face of the poor. Building up fortunes for themselves upon the foundation of widows' and orphans' tears!

And last night I said we could part with our clothing, our laces and embroideries, it was a foolish idea, like most of my other schemes, we can do no such thing.

Therefore it is, after walking for the greater part of this day without any food, I sit here to-night writing, and wondering with a desperate kind of calmness, how long fifty dollars will keep a family of eight from starvation, or public charity.—

Later in the night.

I must write because I am too restless to sleep, my poor neighbor has become already one whom I, even I can comfort and assist.

While I was writing in the early part of the evening, I was startled by a shriek of alarm, from the room next mine.

To spring up the short flight of stairs and into the room was the work of an instant, what a sight greeted me!

In a room smaller than mine, but rather better furnished, by a dim light of a candle, I could see the death-like face of an old woman, whose attenuated form lay extended upon

the bed. And beside her knelt a boy who with frantic violence strove in vain to staunch the blood which flowed in a dark stream from her lips.

A moment's inspection showed me the state of the case, the poor invalid had been attacked by hemorrhage, and had fainted.

Hastening back I dispatched Marion whom the noise had awakened, and who was dressing when I came in, down for Mrs. MacKay.

With her assistance and such restoratives as I possessed, we succeeded after repeated efforts in stopping the flow of blood, but she still lay for hours in a death-like trance.

But when I saw she was reviving I sent her son from the room fearing his presence would excite her.

Suddenly she unclosed her eyes, saying.

"Poor Stuart do not be"—

But I placed my hand over her lips saying,

"Stuart is very well, a little frightened, but if you will be very quiet for a while I will call him, to speak to you."

I had told Marion to warn him against exciting her, for fear of renewing the hemorrhage.

As soon as with Marion's aid he had removed all signs of the blood stains, he came in, walking gently across the room and stooping over her pressed a tender kiss upon her brow, saying in a low tone.

"I am very glad you are better," and as she moved, "no, no you must not speak or I shall have to go away."

So her eyes had to look the love her lips were forbidden to speak, while he sat beside her, gently stroking her hand. And thus soothed she has fallen into a quiet slumber from which I trust much good may arise. The dawn has just peeped in at the window, and yet the faithful boy sits motionless, with her hand clasped in his own, fearing to move lest it should arouse her.

I stood but now and watched them, she is an old lady, sadly worn, by too much care, her soft grey locks lay above a white face, where the fears of to-day's actualities, and to-morrow's possibilities have carved deep lines, but the hands are fair and delicate, and look as though they were not always used to labor.

The boy is I should judge about sixteen, and although very poorly clad, has that indescribable look of nobility and

refinement, which makes one know he is above the common herd, and will always command respect. It is a very handsome face, indeed one of the handsomest boy faces I ever remember to have seen, only now wearing a look of anxiety and fatigue, which is pitiful to see. Poor boy, I fear his troubles are very near. God be with him and guard his bark securely over the billows of life, when he shall have to breast them alone.

CHAPTER VIII.

NOVEMBER 20.

It has been several weeks since I have been able to write anything. Since then I have passed through much, working almost unceasingly night and day, for I have work now, thank God. It seems to me a year since that night, when I in such sorrow learned to know my neighbor.

When Mrs. Aldrich awoke we found her, although very weak, much revived, and for a few days we hoped she was better, but this was a vain hope, she was never able to sit up but a few hours at a time. When she grew strong enough for this, I noticed often an anxious perplexed look upon her face. At last she asked:

"Have you provided yourself with work my child?" My tears started at her words and I answered:

"I can get nothing to do, I have tried so hard everywhere but in vain, God only knows what is to become of us," and the fear of what might, brought my head very low in my clasped hands.

"Do not despair my dear child," she replied laying her thin hand upon my head, "God always provides for those who trust him."

"I know, I know, but I cannot see my way clear now"—

"Let me help you. See how our want of faith has kept us anxious. Here have I been worried, because I have some work which I promised should be done long ago, and now you can do it in my place."

And she showed me a set of shirts partly made, but they frightened me. Time and again as I had sought work, was this kind offered me, but I dared not venture, although starvation lay in the refusal.

"I cannot do them," I said bitterly, "oh, why did I not learn to do such things long ago."

"But it is not too late yet, poor young thing, you must keep up a brave heart, and please God together we will accomplish wonders: only do not let us say cannot, but try."

And so we did, and we *have* done great things, for the whole work is done satisfactorily, and we have more to do.

And I have such a hopeful heart, for Marion and I, now we have learned how, can I trust always get work to do.

I know not how to be sufficiently grateful to this friend who was raised up to me in my greatest need, and who until God sent for her, never ceased giving me instruction in all necessary things, and I think her kind lessons are not lost to me.

What strange things poor folks have to do, how Mrs. Aldrich has enlightened me as to ways and means, and how economical I have grown.

Marion and I have to work unceasingly through the day, and a part of the night, to keep the wolf from the door.

I wonder if there was ever a child so unlike a child, so firm in her forgetfulness of self, so enduring, so full of everything which makes a patient, loving being, as my little daughter, my low voiced, dove-eyed Marion. Oh I thank God for her.

And softly, and gently, the sands of Mrs. Aldrich's life went out, I was not wrong in thinking her days were numbered; and when we were alone she spoke calmly, and gladly of the coming change. One day she called me to her side.

"Have I been of use to you dear?" she asked.

"Indeed, indeed you have," I said earnestly, "I know not how to thank you dear friend."

"Shall I tell you, how you may? By adding another care to this already care-worn face, poor little face," and she stroked my cheek, "I have been so sorry to watch it growing thinner, and thinner all these weeks, to see the shadow of an ever-present grief, growing deeper in your weary eyes.

And yet I am about to add another burden, for a little while, only a little while, after that an helper to you, and the little ones."

"Anything I can do I will do gladly," I said.

"Kneel down," and as I knelt before her, she took both my hands in hers, and said in a solemn voice:

"Promise by all you hold dear in this or the world to come, that in sickness or health, in poverty or wealth, until death divide you, you will be the guide and guardian of my poor boy. Promise me wherever your home may be, he shall share it with you."

"I do, I do, God knows I do, and God deal with me and mine, as I deal with him," and as I wound my arms about her and laid my head upon her bosom, I registered my vow on high.

"I believe you my child, I believe and thank you." And then she told all their sad history.

I was mistaken in thinking them mother and son. Mrs. Aldrich is Stuart's grandmother and their story is thus:

Years ago they were wealthy and prosperous, living in this city. Mrs. Aldrich, her son, his wife and three children making one happy home. One summer in the year 183—, Mrs. A. with Stuart, the youngest child, left home to spend a few weeks in a quiet village in the north. After a couple of weeks absence they received a letter from home, saying:

'Do not come back there is danger, and death all around us. The yellow fever has broken out in our midst, and hundreds have already fallen victims to it. I look round and count nearly forty of my own near relations, and intimate friends who are gone. It is fearful, our little girl is sick, but not, we hope with the fever, as soon as she is better we will fly from our home, as thousands of others are doing. Pray my mother for us in our hour of danger.'

And she did pray with an aching heart, waiting each day for more news; but it did not come, she never heard from or of them again. They were all swept away whom she loved, and none were left to tell the tale.

When after months of suffering she ventured back to the city, she found not one whom she once knew to bid her welcome, nay even the very house was gone. For it had with many others, been consigned to the flames to eradicate the

seeds of the fell pestilence. Nothing remained of all the friends and comforts she left a few months back save a smouldering heap.

Friendless and almost penniless, she was a stranger amidst the scenes where her life had been past. A new generation seemed to have sprung up, occupying the places which but a year before, were filled by those whom she had known from her childhood. The distant friends or relatives of those who had fallen victims to the pestilence, came from afar and claimed the inheritance which they had left.

Thus in her own native place she was a destitute stranger,

"Even the very name *she* bore
A name to them unknown."

By a world of trouble she realized a small sum from the sale of the ground, upon which had stood so proudly their home.

And with this pittance safely put away, for the time she feared might come, when she should be taken away, and her little grandson left destitute, she has plied her needle day and night for their support for six long years.

Love can endure much, and her weary labor has been for the dearest love—and he for whom she toiled was worthy. It has been the ambition of both, that he should be educated for the law—his father's profession—and with that end in view they have borne all things unshrinkingly.

By their one poor candle, while she sewed, he has studied, and now, though encompassed with difficulties, stands first in the classes of the public school which he attends. For the last two years too, he has been employed in the capacity of a kind of sub-bookkeeper, by one of the directors, a merchant, who was attracted by the boy's remarkable aptitude and indefatigable industry. The small salary he receives has been of great moment to them, especially during the increasing illness of Mrs. Aldrich.

And poor boy it was hard work for him, for after school hours until dark, he was engaged in writing letters, and posting ledgers, and then through the evening must study, until late in the night—getting ready the morning's lesson; yet he never complained, but was as light of heart, and came in with as bright a shining face, as if care or fatigue never came nigh him. And when we had learned to know

him, the children waited anxiously expectant of his merry whistle, or gay ringing song, which he ever sends before him as a token of his coming, and they thought it the gladdest hour of the day, when Stuart came at eventide.

And his poor old grandmother shaking off the langour which crept over her, welcomed him with a loving smile.

Thus it was for many days, but though we never strove to hide from him what was coming—he seemed not to dream of this shadow of death which lay across his pathway, yea was even then over-shadowing, the dearest thing the earth held for him.

He was always saying in a glad certain tone:

"I am sure she will be soon well, dear grandmother, she looks better than ever to-day."

No sad looks, no sorrowful words, could dim his hope—even to the very last he was deceived.

One night we were alone waiting for Stuart to return when she called me to her:

"Is not Stuart late to-night Bertha?" she asked:

"No dear madam, it is hardly time for him to be from the counting house yet."

"Poor boy," she sighed "how he works, but doubtlessly it is best."

We sat silently a little while, each busy with sad thoughts, then with a restless look she said:

"I fear he will be too late, I fear he will be:"—

"Too late for what?" I asked, "we will wait supper until he comes, even if it is ten o'clock, for it is so much pleasanter having his handsome face beaming upon us, it makes our frugal meal much more savory," I said trying to be cheerful.

"I did not mean that dear child," she said with a sad smile, then after a pause, "are you afraid of death Bertha?"

"No, no I have seen too much of death lately to fear it."

"Because," said she sweetly, "to-night I will meet your husband in Paradise, I am dying dear child, do you fear to be with me in my hour of agony?"

"Fear! fear! no," said I with wild energy clasping my arms about her, "I envy you, your joyful expectation. Oh why may you go and be at rest, whilst I must stay and toil. See Walter! my Walter! to-night, and I may not! Take him my kisses and tell him I—" of a sudden the wicked

thought which hung upon my lips was still as she laid her hand over them :

"And tell him you are ready to stay years if it is needful, to be with, and guard, and work, for his little ones, to wait until it is time, God's time," she said earnestly.

Her words subdued my rebellious heart, and I was willing it should be so, though I could not speak. After waiting a little she said :

"Is it not so ? will you not endure until the end, and win a crown at last ?"

And I gave her with my eyes the message my lips refused.

"I knew it would be so Bertha, and if in that unveiled future to which I go, it is permitted for mortals redeemed and glorified to hold converse, to talk of those whom they have left standing upon the shores of time, I will witness to your husband, of all I have seen and known of you in these few short weeks—of all your firm endurance, and fidelity to your charge. And remember Bertha, remember my boy, renew your promise to me now."

And I did with earnest truth and love. Love to the dying friend who in my poverty I had found, but more than all to the being who in so short a space, should behold face to face my lost one, in all his unveiled glory, that angelic majesty in which he is now forever clothed—and which because of this clay, I may not behold, not yet !

Suddenly in the midst of this communion we heard Stuart's springing step mounting the stairs, and his voice singing some gay roundelay. Then as he neared the door, Marion came softly out of our own room saying, gently :

"Please do not make a noise Stuart, and come in here :"

"What is the matter ? how pale you are Marion," said he quickly, "is grandmamma worse ? why may I not go to her ?"

"Come with me just a little while," said she, and they closed the door.

"Dear Marion her quick discernment has discovered to her the near approach of the last hour," said Mrs. Aldrich. "Go Bertha and prepare my poor boy as tenderly as you may, for the stroke which awaits him this very night, for by the morning light he will be alone on the earth without a kindred."

I went slowly out, Leaneore at the request of her sister had

taken the children to bed, and I found only Marion and Stuart alone.

He was sitting with a white haggard face upon the settee, and Marion with her soft hand smoothing back his dark hair was talking in a low tone. As soon as Stuart saw me he buried his face with a groan in the folds of her dress, and a quick tremor ran over his frame.

"Mamma dear, may Stuart go in now ? he knows all, I have told him, he is quite prepared to be calm now."

Oh Marion my precious child, thy father's own spirit is over thee—thus does she gently and tenderly ever shield me, warding away with her little frail hands, but firm true heart, every blow or evil, unmindful of hardships if I am saved some grief.

This thought came over me as the tenderness of the action of my child came before me—her exceeding thoughtfulness, and for a moment I could not speak.

"Is she then already dead ?" said Stuart springing up terrified by my silence, "shall I never hear her voice again ?"

"No, no," I answered hastily, "as soon as you are quite calm you shall see her. Marion must go and keep watch over her until I can trust you dear Stuart," then seeing her hesitate, "what is it ? you do not fear my darling ?"

A sweet smile overspread her face as she laid her head down upon my arm saying.

"Oh no not afraid, I could not be you know, after that, other time," and then drawing my ear down to her, she said,

"I heard what you said just now, may I send just one kiss and one word of love to papa ?"

"My darling, my precious daughter, why do you ask me ?—you know you may."

"Please may I say," she asked in her simple earnest way, "may I say I have tried to be faithful to you and the rest, and will until I die give up all things for you all, as I promised him that night I would—may I mamma ?"

"What you will my daughter," was all I could say. After a little while as I sat with my arm about the suffering boy he raised his face from my shoulder, and said in a low constrained voice,

"I think you may trust me now, if you please let us go." His face was very pale and he gnawed his under lip

in deep agony, but his hand which held mine never trembled, and his voice was as firm as usual.

I went in and drew Marion from the close embrace in which she was encircled, saying as I bore her out.

"Stuart is here dear friend, I will leave you awhile."—Then half carrying her, I led my daughter from the room. How beautiful she looked, making the dim place bright.

For a little space she did not speak only clasped her arms closely about me. Suddenly springing up with outstretched arms.

"It almost too great a happiness—God has heard my vow. I know he has, I feel it here, here! in my heart!" And overcome with intense emotion, she sank at my feet murmuring, "Papa, papa, I will remember."

She had fainted, and in my affrighted state I was too weak to raise her light weight from the floor, and could only cry feebly,

"Leanore, Leanore, come oh come!"

She sprang in at the door and seeing what was the matter, lifted her sister up and laid her upon the settee, and then quickly brought some water. Her calm quick movements restored me almost immediately, I drank some of the water she brought, and tried to bring consciousness back to my fainting child.

"Better let me do it mamma dear, if you will only be quiet a while you will get better yourself," and taking the water she began to apply it to her sister, talking to her the while.

"Dear little sister—papa's little May, will you not speak to poor Nora? will you not open your blue eyes and look at me?"

After a time with a kind of sob Marion's eyes unclosed, winding her arm around her sister, she said:

"Lela darling, do not be frightened, if I tell you something will you?" and her voice was very earnest:

"No Marion, not if I can help being."

"You are not a child Lela any more than I, although we are both so young, so we must both strive to be good and firm, Mrs. Aldrich is dying, do not start so sweet sister, are you afraid of death?"

"Yes, oh yes," said the poor frightened child, "so afraid!"

"How can you be, I cannot think what makes you fear, it is not a thing to fear," and her tone was reproachful, after a moment she said:

"But I was not going to tell you that alone—just now Mrs. Aldrich held me in her arms, while I bid her good-bye and—and I did something which you could not understand—but while I knelt there, I saw, I saw papa, oh indeed I did, and he said 'remember your promise my daughter, you and Leanore take care of mamma,' and then—before I could say yes he faded away from my—forgive me oh mamma, I did not know you was here, poor suffering mamma," and she looked beseechingly into my face as I knelt beside her, and clasping my arms about them both, said:

"My good children, my kind little daughters, I have nothing to forgive, bear with me, and if in the coming days I am not always faithful, pardon me for papa's dear sake:"

And as I ceased Stuart came in.

"Will you please come now, she wants you," and we went—she greeted me with a smile, saying:

"Call Mrs. MacKay, I want to bid her good-bye." And then when she was come and stood weeping near the door, Mrs. Aldrich said in a clear voice:

"Marion, dear, will you read the one hundred and third Psalm?" In a low soft voice she began the beautiful words, "Bless the Lord, oh my soul, and all that is within me bless his holy name," and read it through never faltering, while all around her were in tears save the dying woman.

When the Psalm was done, Mrs. Aldrich turned towards the door and said:

"Mrs. MacKay you have been very kind to me, I thank you, be good to yourself hereafter, and remember the words: 'Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him,'" and then she added, "Marion read the thirty-fourth Psalm for me." At the words, "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them," she laid her hand upon my head as I knelt beside her, saying softly: "Do you hear that my child?" And after the reading was through, she said: "Remember all of you, when I am gone, what Marion has just read, and let it comfort you: 'The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart.' Will not some one sing? 'How firm a foundation,'" she asked. After a pause, Lela began it in a quavering tone, but as she went on her

beautiful voice gathered strength. At the words 'When through the deep waters I cause thee to go,' at Mrs. Aldrich's bidding we all joined in and sang the rest. As we ceased she raised both hands and with a bright smile said: "Now the God of peace which brought again from the dead the Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory, forever and ever, Amen," and with the last words still lingering upon her lips she sunk into a sleep from which she awoke in that brightness beyond the river.

"We watch'd her breathing through the night
Breathing soft and low,
As in her breast the wave of life
Kept ebbing to and fro."

All through that night Stuart sat silently upon the bed, but when the dawn looked with its gray light into the room, showing too plainly that she had another 'morn than ours,' his well assumed composure failed, and throwing himself beside the corpse he gave way to the wildest abandon of grief. I knew his feelings must have vent, and left him for a time alone with his sorrow.

The funeral, which was the next day, was as respectable as the small sum which she had left would allow, for we felt we might thus appropriate a part of this sum, which she had hoarded so long, in the hope that by and by they could add enough to it to send Stuart to college. Without it we could not have buried her even in the most ordinary manner, and Stuart would not hear of its being kept for his benefit. It was but \$200, and with the half of it we bought a small lot in the yard of the church where she used to attend, before she moved here.

The remaining sum we will keep for Stuart's use one way or another. After the funeral he was attacked by a fierce fever which was so terrible we feared his life would be forfeit. In his ravings he would recount with painful distinctness, the taunts and jeers of his school-companions, and in piteous accents beg them:

"Not to treat him thus, but only to let him rest," and then he would add in a low voice: "If my coat is thread-

bare, and my shoes old and worn, I do not complain—only let me alone boys, let me alone, it is unkind thus to annoy me,"—then he would whisper—"How can they do it when I strive so? I desire nothing of them now, but bye and bye, if my clothes are mean and shabby now, and fit subjects for their jeers—they shall be proud to acknowledge they ever knew me—I will live to triumph over those who scorn me—" and his eyes would sparkle, and his cheeks glow with enthusiasm. Then changing his tone, "But do not tell them, these cruel relentless boys that I feel thus—it is hard; it is unfeeling but they must not know it, ofttime when faint and hungry having had only a crust of bread and a glass of water for my morning's meal I walked from my distant home, only to be the butt of some idle jest, I have felt though I turned away with a smile as though it would be such a comfort, to lie my head upon my desk and weep before them all—but would not for very shame,—but this is a secret do not tell grandmother, it would grieve her so."

Thus he would ramble on talking ever to some imaginary person—never knowing any of us who watched beside him,—but after many days and nights of much anxiety, he sank into a quiet healthful sleep from which he is just now recovering sufficiently to be able as a great feat to sit for a few hours each day, propped up in his grandmother's easy chair.

We have given up Mrs. Aldrich's apartment, for even the luxury of a third room small though it be is not to be thought of, if we can do without it—and we can by turning one corner of our small sitting room into a sleeping-place for Stuart, and Howard, now the former is better. Oh the ways of poverty are wonderful!

The rest of us get along some-how in our little back room—we have made ourselves quite comfortable with Mrs. Aldrich's furniture which is so much better than our own. So please God for the time we are doing right well.

We have plenty of work, Marion and I at shirt making, and the two younger girls with our occasional aid at some common kind of sewing, which Mrs. MacKay has procured for them, and which she calls by the queer name of "slop-shop work."

So, though we grow sadly weary ofttimes—our feeble hands unused to toil giving out utterly—our tired eyes long-

ing for sleep and our weary bodies for rest—yet I do not wish to murmur, or repine, or indeed complain. I am thankful to have work to do, still as I sit sewing I often draw my needle sadly to the monotonous notes,

“Stich, stich, stich.
From weary chime to chime.
Work, work, work
As prisoners work for crime.”

While we sew Cora is our busy housewife, and a very Will-o-wisp she is. Still with our occasional aid she keeps our small menage in “apple-pie order” according to her own words, looking at her hands the while and shaking her head ruefully declaring,

“They will not be fit to be seen, after I have swept, scrubbed and washed the dishes a little while longer.”

But nevertheless, spite of her words she keeps up a brave little heart and is the only sunshiny thing in the establishment; for while the little ones pine for fresh air and more play-room, she is as blithe as a bird, scolding, petting, and taking care of every one in turn, although she gaily shakes her curls and declares “it is her firm belief indeed it is,

“That do my best I shall never get all the smoke and dust out of them.”

My poor babe, is a most churlishly used little one, although she has Cora’s best attention, and yet Marion says truly.

“We never have had a baby who was so rugged and healthy.” Howard rebelled a little at the first, at having such close quarters, but now Stuart is able to sit up he gives him regular lessons and he is quite contented.

We are not very rapid sewers and it takes longer than it ought to get through our work, so that we are obliged to labor very late at night, but we hope to improve in this respect. My health bears up wonderfully under this confinement, better than I dared to hope. And Marion and Lela, are the most enduring of assistants, although I do strive very hard to save them, especially from night work, my good little daughters.

CHAPTER IX.

DECEMBER 25.

“It was the birth-night. A thousand, almost two thousand years have the hearts of men clung to that day.—Who does not love it? Around it clusters the holiest associations of youth—the holiest memories of old times when pleasant stories and happy songs made the fire-side glad, songs and stories told by voices that are silent now.”—“OLD HOUSE BY THE RIVER.”

We have passed a quiet Christmas, we elder ones spoke not much of its approach, for fear of the change striking with a chill upon the hearts of our little ones. Oh the difference with the last time!

Last Christmas Walter gave a dinner in honor of Gov. B——, it was not his custom to have strangers in his house this day which he usually devoted to his children’s pleasure. But this time he was compelled to pay respect to one whom he loved and revered, and upon this day. There were twenty five distinguished gentlemen bidden to meet him, and give him farewell, ere he left the country as a minister to some foreign court.

Oh I remember, my husband was so pleased with the arrangements I made for their entertainment, and pronounced the appointments of the *cusiné* faultless, and the arrangements of the table *recherche*.

How proud I was of him, and of his praise that day!

In the evening the children were to have a party, and many of the gentlemen were pleased to remain. It was only an entertainment given to the village children, and of course my little ones had no rivals.

Leanore was permitted to display for the first time, in public, her wonderful vocal powers, and with papa’s accompaniment, sang some choice pieces very sweetly.

“She is a true Percy,” whispered Judge L—— to me as he watched her standing proudly and coldly in her childish grace, listening to the compliments lavished upon her.

And then she sang “Spirito Gentil,” and when she was done—

“My very, *very* best, dear papa, not because they like it, but to please you,” and her arms were clasped tightly round his neck.

And papa kissed the blushing eager face, and would not let her sing again, because—

"Her sweet artlessness must not be tarnished by compliments." And thus we passed one year ago, the happy, happy time! and now——but no matter for now.

JANUARY 1.

A new year broke in upon us quietly and sadly, our festivals were—a long walk in the fresh cold air, and gleefully the children enjoyed it. When they were well tired out we came home, where Marion and Lela had cooked us a dinner.

"The first real dinner we have had in a long while," said Cora. It is the first piece of extravagance we have been guilty of this many a day, and I think with Marion: "Even if we do have to work a little harder it has done us good."

After dinner, was spent by the busy little folks in making "the most elegant" candy from a quart of molasses presented them by Mrs. MacKay, for that especial purpose.

Such charming candy so sweet (and so *burned*) was never before known, there was surely nothing in the annals of pleasure to excel candy making.

And in the evening we sat round the fire and sung sometimes a song, but more often a hymn, and told each other tales by the fire light. And just such beautiful stories as May and Stuart told were never before heard.

"It is good to be learned like Stuart, and have a soft voice like May's," said Howard admiringly.

And he was not alone in his admiration, Marion has a strange faculty for weaving a romance, and to-night she exerted it to the entire satisfaction of all.

To the story and the songs of Lela, and Cora, good Mrs. MacKay listened with intense admiration, for she was the children's guest, invited to partake of the candy treat.

One of Marion's stories was after this wise.

"Once upon a time" upon a Christmas time, two bright Angels came to earth, and when they reached the verge they wound their arms round each other—pressed their lips together, and said "Good-bye sweet sister we part here."

Then one gentle and beautiful, whose name was Celeste

said to herself, "I will go and watch by the couches of dear children and give them good dreams," And so on, and on she went and when she came to a house she would enter, and if there seemed to be no other kind Angel watching round their bed, she would kiss the little ones and say a prayer to them, and as they slept they would smile—and say some happy words. And this good Celeste would leave them with another sweet kiss and stand by another bedside, in some other house. And thus she went on and on through the great city, and left a blessing upon many a child's head. And bye and bye she came to the sea-side and in a small cottage she saw by the glimmer of a candle placed in the window, a fair young mother sitting with her baby upon her knee, rocking it to sleep, and singing softly a lullaby, and as the Angel listened to the song she smiled, and bent down and kissed the little baby, who smiled too. But listening to the song, Celeste soon learned what made the fair young mother's face wear so sad a look, and more than that, why the candle sat on the window-sill shedding its bright light over the dark angry sea, which never seemed to heed the poor little ray beaming upon it so warmly, and so kindly, but went on moaning and roaring, talking angrily and fiercely to itself. And at the noise it made the poor mother's face grew paler than ever, and she clasped her babe more closely to her heart, but yet she sang over and over her song, and the words she said which made the Angel smile and kiss the little one, and then made it smile back an answer were these,

"A baby was sleeping,
Its mother was weeping,
For husband was far on the wide raging sea,
And the tempest was swelling.
Round the fisherman's dwelling,
And she cried Dermot, darling, oh come back to me.

"Her beads while she numbered,
Her baby still slumbered,
And smiled in her face as she bended her knee;
Oh! blessed be that warning,
My child thy sleep adorning,
For I know that the angels are whispering to thee.

And while they are keeping
Bright watch o'er thy sleeping,
Oh pray to them softly my baby with me,
And say thou wouldst rather,
They'd watch o'er thy father,
For I know that the angels are whispering to thee."

And the angel listened and smiled for a while, and then saying over the child a little prayer, flew away far o'er the sea. After a while she saw the husband of the pale woman, the baby's father, rowing in a small boat, through the dark night, and though he did not know whether he was going right or not, for the thick clouds round him, he kept up a cheerful heart, and said ever and anon, an earnest prayer. But the angel to whom the darkness made no difference, saw sitting in the front of the skiff, her sister angel, all bright and fair, who was with gentle care guiding unseen, and unknown, the bark of the poor fisherman to his home; and after Celeste had kissed her sister, they sat on the prow together, and told over what had occurred to each through the night, and the other angel said she had gone out on the broad ocean to guide and comfort the poor lost mariners and had found many an one who needed aid, "and this one she was bringing home with her."

In a little while the light of the candle in the cottage home, beside which the pale mother still sang her lullaby—broke o'er the sea, and the lonely mariner bowed his head and said softly (not too softly for the angels to hear.)

"Home! home! Thank God my home is near."

And the angels clasped their hands and said, to one another
"It is pleasant to see him so glad."

In a little while the day broke and just then they touched the shore, and as they stopped, the poor young wife came out to look once more, and oh it was a very good sight for those dear angels as they flew towards heaven upon the first beams of the rising sun, to see how the paleness was all kissed from the cheeks of the (no more) sorrowful woman. And ere they left the earth they paused and looking back saw the baby clasped tightly to its mother's breast, as she sang words which a gentle breeze, wafted up to them where they stood, bending forward now with their outstretched wings all plumed for flight glowing brightly in the

warm sunshine, which was spread like a sea beneath them, and the words of her song now were,

"At dawn of the morning,
Saw Dermot returning,
His wife wept with joy, her babe's father to see;
Oh blest be the warning,
My child thy sleep adorning,
For I knew that the angels were whispering to thee."

Thus do God's precious angels bring happiness to this and many another home because they love mankind so kindly, and because God is very good and bids them come.

"Is it really true sister?" asked Gracie softly after a little.

"I think it may be, pet," replied Marion, "it is very good to think it may be, ask mamma if angels love little children."

"Do they mamma, do you think so?" questioned Gracie.

"I will give my little children and my big ones too, a verse for their morning text, which makes me think it may be true every word of it."

"Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven."

"Dear little children it is always a happy thought to me, that while you are locked in the arms of sleep, good angels are watching over you."

"I think they are good, so very good, I will always try to remember to say good-night to them before I sleep, and think they are kissing me over again," said Adele.

"Then I know one angel who will never stay away from us, poor little children, do not you mamma?" asked Howard.

"Yes, my little son if guardian spirits are round us, dear papa is blessing us now and ever."

"Dear papa," sobbed each saddened voice, and for a long while we were all very quiet. Then Marion said, "Lela dear sing papa's favorite hymn before we say good-night."

"I would not live always, I ask not to stay."

CHAPTER X.

JANUARY 20.

WE are all quite well. Stuart's health gradually improves, and I feel assured could he have the proper kind of food nourishing and invigorating, he would soon regain his wonted strength, but alas this is not within our means, and the thinking of it does no good,—and besides this there is another great drawback to his perfect recovery,—his feverish desire to be up and doing—the horror it is to have us work for him—ill as he is, he can scarcely be restrained from going out and seeking employment.

But in the meanwhile he studies untiringly, and with what aid I have been able to give him has made such progress, that he says:

"I am almost sure that I can pass the examination for the High School, if they will let me try."

He is schoolmaster to the little ones, and reads to the rest of us, and we are very glad God sent him to bear life's burdens with us.

A real sunshine came to us the other day, though the form was darkness personified—Milly, dear old blessed Milly has come—has found us out, and come "to take care of us."

One night we were sitting sadly enough, talking of, and trying to look bravely into the future, when some one knocked at the door, and a scream from Coralie as she opened it, made us drop our work:

"Oh you dear old darling, where did you come from?" and in an instant we were about her laughing and crying in a breath. When she found voice after a mighty groan to answer the myriads of questions which were rained upon her on all hands, it was to send forth such a torrent of blessings, and upbraidings, greetings, and reproaches, as made Stuart who is not used to such familiarity start up indignant. But Milly is a privileged body, and we would willingly take ten times the amount of scolding which she lavished upon all of us, especially upon my devoted head, for the sake of a peep into her shining black face, was it never so cross.

"Oh you pretty dears! oh you poor children! do I see you for sure? are you every single blessed one alive and whole? oh my! oh my! I think I should live to see my bressed, glori-

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fied young massa's folks, a living in a nasty old alley-garret, not fit for a nigger—young misses you a born fool sure as you live, how you 'spect to inherit the kingdom? putty plight you'll be in to go up when yer Hebenly Father calls you, what you mean by bringing my poor fadderless chicks to die in this cussed place?"

I knew the best thing was to let her have her say, and I allowed her to go on until she grew ashamed as I knew she would.

And now let me explain how she came. I remember how unhappy her apparent indifference at parting with us made me, but it seems it was only because she did not mean it to be a parting.

When we went to kind Mr. Marstone's house in the village, she was left behind to take charge of, and see safely packed away in Alison William's cottage, the furniture, bedding, linen, and so forth, which I had reserved before the sale for myself. During this time our friend was stricken down, and the good old woman knowing there had been no definite arrangements made for our departure, supposed we would stay a month or so where we were—and feeling sure I would forbid her coming with us, she did not visit us, for fear we would have suspicion of her intentions, letting a couple of weeks go by without seeking us at the "Grange,"—but when she did to her dismay, we were gone no one knew whither.

All her rage and sorrow—and I can well imagine how she acted—were useless, and she was fain to wait for some clue to our whereabouts, which came at last, in a note I addressed to "Thompson," Mr. Marstone's late housekeeper, in reply to one she sent me the day before we left the Hotel, asking what should be done with the books, pictures, and other things which had been sent to her old master, from 'Percy's Cliffe' and which his nephew said he could not conscientiously appropriate, as they were meant for his uncle. I began an immediate answer, but in the anxiety and trials which succeeded our removal here, it was forgotten, and a couple of months elapsed before I remembered to despatch my directions to Thompson to have the articles removed to "Ingle side," the country-seat of my husband's guardian, Mr. Audley.

Upon its arrival Thompson was gone, and my poor letter

lay for another month unopened, until her return for a short space to her old home on business—then she kindly sent the letter to poor old Milly—and upon examining it I find it has the name of the Hotel from which it was commenced stamped upon the top.

From the Hotel, by the means of Jane, she at last found us out—and now we have her, we can but wonder how we could have done without her so long, and are infinitely content to have her to scold us once again, as she does not injure us thereby.

Milly at first looked unkindly upon Stuart as an interloper, but now that she has had some trouble nursing, and worrying over him she loves him cordially.

"Her own boy, a full-blood Percy," she calls him, "is worth all other boys the world knows of."

We have been fain to enlarge our borders, since Milly's arrival, and although with some doubts as to the expense, have taken Mrs. Aldrich's old room, which by some management of curtains made of coarse muslin, and strung across—devices only known to the poor I believe—Milly and Mrs. MacKay have made two comfortable sleeping rooms, into one of which we inducted Stuart and Howard.

Although this is an additional expense, with Milly to the fore I do not feel much fear.

"Why Milly," laughed Coralie the other day, "you are almost as good a housekeeper as I am, which will be something to be proud of."

"You! you! go 'long child, you can't do nuffin," laughed Milly.

"Can I not, that is all you know, why I have baked, brewed, swept and done divers other things too numerous to mention,—have I not mamma?" cried Cora.

"All but the baking and brewing," said I with a smile.

"Oh that was speaking in a figure, but indeed Milly I am a grand housekeeper, you do not know how much I can do all alone."

March 1st.

Milly has been with us two months, and we look back surprised at the three months we passed without her, and

wonder how it was possible for us to have lived at all, with nothing but our own hands to do all there was to do. She is just the best and dearest of helpers.

Marion and I are still kept busy at shirt making—while Lela, and under her instruction Cora (who although only ten years old can sew quite nicely,) do quite a creditable amount of the coarse work which Mrs. MacKay provides for them.

Stuart growing daily stronger helps Milly, teaches the children, and reads to us from our small stock of books and an occasional newspaper which Mrs. MacKay loans him; then his school books are histories, and other things, which interest us. Besides this we are teaching him French, and as Milly understands it from her long residence with us abroad, we speak it altogether, for his sake as well as that of the younger children whom we fear will forget.

But now I must write down what I have been unwilling to think of, another trial. To-day Mrs. MacKay came to me with a face in which joy and sorrow were strongly blended, joy for herself, sorrow for us.

"Me Jane is to be married to a worthy man who lives far west, and they mean to take the old woman with them," she said.

And so the whole of the matter is, that by next month they desire to be gone, and we must lose Mrs. MacKay, and submit to the incoming of a new family into this small house, or else seek a new home, the latter will be better.

MARCH 7.

For the last week Milly, Stuart, and Mrs. MacKay, have been house or rather room hunting. With Milly to take charge, I have felt far less anxiety this time than before, but still it has been a dismal prospect.

But now, all is bright and certain, and we tell Milly over again,

"You good old thing you are our good fortune."

In her travels over the length and breadth of the land, she accidentally came across a daughter of Allison Williams—who we knew lived in this city, and for whom Milly has constantly been looking out, "Because she heard before she

left the village, that Margery's husband had left her and that she was letting lodging rooms to support herself."

And the best thing we could hope has come about from their meeting, for we have secured a pleasant home with an old friend.

Margery lives far away from here, on quite the other side of the city, in a pleasant old house, of which she has the whole. Her husband a worthless drunkard has deserted her, after making her endure much suffering, and she supports herself very comfortably by letting out the rooms of her house, all the front of it, comprising nine or ten rooms, (for it is an old fashioned mansion built when land was plenty and is a double house, with large airy halls running through it,) all of this part is rented out as offices.

"But the back-building is cut up into five or six of the most comical looking little rooms, you ever saw and is entirely vacant," says Stuart.

"Yes, and the best of it is, it has not a particle of connection with the front part, save by one door, which you reach after many twists, and turns, through a small dark entry, which leads from the immense oaken stair-way in the front, you need never go that way at all for there is the nicest way through the garden to the side street," declares Lela whom the idea of thus being able to seclude ourselves from observation rather pleases.

"And then mamma," broke in Cora, who had been one of the party of inspection, "and then, there is a splendid great garden, with a high stone wall all round it, and a summer-house in the centre, and it reaches away back, not the summer-house, but the yard you know, to a little street, and Elm street lies at the side of it. And there are all sorts of nice fruit trees in it, and we can make a splendid garden in the summer, for it will be all our own, because the windows that look out on it are never opened, have not been for so many years indeed that the grape-vines of which there are a dozen, have grown thickly over them, so you could not get the shutters open if you were to try ever so hard. They get their light in those rooms from the side street on the east, and a little side yard on the west, for the house stands all alone. And the great hall door at the back has been barricaded for ages, Margery says, and has shelves built across it on the inside. So you see nobody can have this splendid

old garden but us, and we can work and play in it and climb trees and all sorts of things, and no horrid old men can be peeping at us at all, I think it is grand."

"Especially the climbing trees," says Stuart laughing.

"Oh I dare say you will be glad enough to climb them next summer, when they are hanging full of all kinds of good fruit, looking for all the world as though they were saying, 'come and eat me,' and wont I!"

And from Cora's wild talk, and Nora and Stuart's more reliable accounts I think it will be a happy exchange.

"So to-morrow I'll jist give them rooms a taring down washing, and you 'rite a letter for Ally to send on them ar things, and by the first of May we'll be all fixed the best kind," says Milly.

So now Marion and I work early and late with thankful hearts trying to finish the work we have on hand, for of course we will not be able to take any more from here, when we move so far away.

The children are wild with delight at the idea of the garden, which Cora paints to them so gloriously.

"Not because it is pretty at all, for it is barren and grey, but because it is so immense, and will be a place to run in and breathe fresh air, whenever we like," she says.

But still they are in a perplexed state of mind as to whether it is right to be very glad, over what is to take them away from kind Mrs. MacKay.

CHAPTER XI.

MARCH 25.

WE have been settled nearly one whole week—have bidden good-bye to Mrs. MacKay, Marion and Stuart going to Jane's wedding for a while.

Then, while Marion and I still worked steadily finishing shirts, Milly with the aid of all the rest, unpacked, cleaned and put in their places, the furniture which Allison forwarded.

And then, when all was ready we had such a glad home-coming—tears and smiles followed each other closely, but they were tears of—"Joy which never hurts one at-all," quoted Cora.

And I am fain to confess now when there is a remedy for the evil, how often it has given me the heart-ache to know my children were pining and fading, in our close, uncomfortable quarters.

I could see the color becoming fainter and fainter, in their faces, and that grave quiet look upon brow and eye, which seems like the shadow of poverty, and ever follows her very closely. That same grave hopeless kind of drooping of the whole figure, which one so often sees in children brought up in the lanes and alleys of great cities—a want of sunshine.

Thank God we are where we have plenty of fresh air, and where the beams of the sun can shine full and free upon us, and not creep in once in a while, in slender straggling beams, as though it only came to mock us by a reminder of how very bright it shone elsewhere.

This gradual fading away was more entirely true of Marion and Cora, than the others. Of the latter because she needed the sunshine as verily as the flowers do. Although she was merry and saucy the livelong day: for a long while I have felt as though her gay talk was from mere force of habit, and then her smiles were fewer than they once were.

Dear child the old weed-grown garden, will be a very good thing for her. For the forest has been her home and the green lawn her play-ground almost all her life, and the birds and flowers her companions, and the winds which swung her in the tall trees, or blew her curls over her eyes when she ran races with it, the play-fellow she loved best.

Indeed Walter's pet name for her was always "Birdie."

And Marion has had so much of the care of our lives upon her, although I have striven very earnestly that it should not be so, yet she seems to know by intuition all that troubles me. I could not bear to have my darling's life so saddened and still I could not help it.

She has kept so smilingly cheerful a face all day, and at night I have been so wearied, that of late I have forgotten to watch her as I ought, but now as I write she is stretched upon the lounge, every limb relaxed and her whole figure having a look of utter weariness about it, that it breaks my

heart to see. And as the rays of my lamp fall upon her face it looks so changed, so very pale!

Now that she is unconscious of mamma's gaze, the smiles are all gone. There is a grave wearied look resting upon the brow—the mouth has a thoughtful exhausted look in the lines that are drawn round it, and the lips are compressed as if in pain.

She lies in a deep sleep, with her little hands clasped lightly over her breast, and it seems almost as if death had stolen in while we sat here, and when I did not know it stolen my darling away. It can not be, God will not so crush me!

I have carried her like a little child and laid her upon her bed, and so deep is her sleep she scarcely was disturbed.

Leanore has never uttered a complaint since that first night, but I think I could better bear her bitter words than see the tightly closed lips and know she does not complain because she has vowed she will not.

She has the stern proud will which seems to belong like an heir-loom to the Percy blood, and she will endure the worst henceforth in silence.

But her cheek grows white, and her eyes larger and more intensely black, and almost startle you now they have lost the dove-like look which was the one thing in her like Marion, although even that was so utterly different.

The mild hazel light of the one told of a meek spirit within, while the other's only looked lovingly upon those they loved.

Now they have a defiant haughty look which is not right. But I know if we can once get her to sing as of old, all will be right. I did not think the saddest thing would have power to still my Leanore's voice, we used to say her father and I—

"If our queen could not sing she would pine and die," but now she never of her own accord sings one note.

I wonder whether the new comforts and the pleasantness of this old house will not win her back to gentleness once more.

It is a queer old rambling house with odd gable ends in which are perched quizzical little three-cornered rooms, there are six of them surrounding or rather jutting off from the one large room of our establishment. With the front of the house we have nothing to do.

Our own part is in the back building, and from the garden which is on every, or at least three sides of it, it presents a strange appearance looking as though it was running off from the square solid front building, which stands frowning upon its oddity.

On the front stairway you are obliged to push away a pannel in the oaked wall before you know there is any getting into the back building, this leads into the dark crooked entry of which Lela spoke, and this we mean to keep always closed.

The room you enter from this entry is our one large room, and is a low ceilinged hard-finished wall, painted what was once rose-colour, but is very faint now a days.

This room looks gay as possible filled with the pretty furniture which I took such pains to choose long ago, for my poor old Fenton.

The covers are chintz decked out with moss rose buds and green leaves, and the carpet is a beautiful ruby with green acorn cups all over it, and Walter declared the day we bought it, laughing at me,

"Such a treasure of a carpet never was seen before, for it suited everything else so exactly that we had no difficulty choosing the furniture or curtains after we once lit upon it."

And the best of it is that as the rooms it was purchased for, are large, this carpet covers nicely every one of our apartments, save one, and that we mean for kitchen and dining room, because it is almost as large as our sitting room, and goes the whole length of all the rest, at the back of the house, very long and very narrow. We are getting quite grand with so many rooms, if they are of the most miniature size. Then we have upon the walls our two pictures.

Our pink window-shades with neat mull veils, cast over all a pleasant hue which is "*colour de rose*."

On the mantel shelf are some pretty statuettes and a set of chess-men, upon the little stand between the windows a set of books in rare old English bindings, they are the writings of four poets in their original tongues, Tasso, Dante, Goethe and Schiller, hanging beside them is Lela's guitar. All of these which are now our only ornaments, were the last gifts of papa "to his dearest children," given the last time he came home from Washington,—to return never more! this was why we kept them.

But the telling o'er these things, makes me forget my good resolution to put away the past, and go bravely on.

Oh they are such welcome holds upon departed happiness, that spite of my best endeavors, they spread open wide the flood-gates of memory, and cause a mighty surging wave from the by-gone to sweep ruthlessly over me.—

There are six three-cornered rooms all of them surrounding this larger one, and all but two opening directly into it. To get to some of them you mount a couple of steps, to get to others, you descend two or three equally crooked ones.

One, looks as though in the olden time when this house was the residence of some lordly owner, it had been used as the place where the huntsmen's instruments were kept.

One opposite, must have been my lady's pantry, where her good things were stored away. This room, fixed with some of our third-story attic furniture and a bit of our bright carpet, is the home of Marion and one of her little sisters. Stuart and Howard have the other. Then in a rather larger room, which has poor Fenton's furniture, a cottage set, (and so pretty,) I and baby and another of the little ones sleep. Lela and Cora have their room one step down out of mine, and Milly has made a trade of our wardrobe for which we had no room, and gotten instead a nice iron bedstead for them, Milly and all our luggage are stowed away in a loft over head.

So that spite of our large family and little rooms, we have still two to spare, but no matter, better too much than too little. We are so comfortable, we can scarcely be grateful enough for so much mercy.

At every window there is a small verandah, which, Cora says, exultantly,

"Shall be so full of beautiful flowers in the summer." From these we have a full view of the garden which is really immense. It was a matter of exceeding surprise to me, how it was possible for this old house to have stood untouched save by the finger of time, which has turned it grey and mossy, in the heart of a great city, where land is sold by the foot, at such vast amounts. But Margery says,

"It is a suit in chancery, and likely to be for the next hundred years, it is said. And as nobody can claim it legally, no one is authorized to ask rent for it."

And so, some of the lawyers or judges who have it in hand rent it to Margery for a merely nominal sum.

Thus the old country mansion with its moss grown stones and solemn grand old garden, stands the sole memento of a forgotten age.

At the very entrance, at each side of the great hall door, there are two very small rooms, which I suppose in the old time were the waiting-rooms of the house. One of these Margery tells us,

"Is rented to a doctor, and the other one I have myself, because it is within call of every one, though it is so small."

Thus we are fixed most comfortably we trust for many years. We have now only to be anxious for work with which to support all this *style*.

MARCH 28.

My fears for Marion were not entirely unnecessary, she is indeed quite sick, paying the penalty of her unnatural life for the last few months, now when a relaxing of labors and strivings has come. It seems to be nothing alarming, only that entire prostration of the nervous system which is often the result of long continued and unusual exertion.

Darling, she looks the fairest thing on earth to me, as she lies with her hands meekly folded on her breast. We hope very careful nursing will soon restore her.

The rest are all very well, Stuart is already much improved, and the children have the wildest of romps in the dear old garden.

"The trees are all fruit and the vines are all grape, so we will have lots of good things in summer time," prophesies Howard.

Poor Margery's ill health is a sad sorrow to us all, and the requisite cleaning and keeping in order the various rooms of which she has charge, is almost more than she is able to endure.

Poor girl I wish she could go home to the village, but this she is unwilling to do.

"I do not want to see my old companions and home, until I go back to die," she says.

It makes my heart ache to see my pretty village belle,

the "country beauty" they used to call her, so sadly broken down. Oh it is a sad thing to be a drunkard's wife, and must wear the heart out of one, especially if it is the elected of our early love, who has grown to be that loathsome thing.

Milly is a very fairy, although not of the Titania order, and keeps us in a state of wonderment as to where her resources come from, she always was a famous manager, but now I know, although it would break her heart to let her think I suspected it, that she is spending her own hard savings to help support us.

APRIL 1—8.

Marion is much better—able to sit up. Our troubles, thanks to Him who beareth the burden, seem for the most part past.

We are so nicely fixed in our new home, which is such a "little heaven," after the horrors of the last.

Then too, our anxiety in another way is over, for we have work now, which Margery, who from her long residence in the city and knowledge of its ways, has procured for us.

"If you only had some embroidery finished, such as you used to have, it would sell so," she said.

"I have, Margery, a quantity, some entirely new, and others but little worn, if you think they"——

"Oh! ma'am you are not going to sell your own things! oh no, please not, that's worse than all," said she in great distress.

"Why my good girl," I answered, "poor folks must not dress in purple and fine linen, and besides if I could afford it, a widow's dress does not allow laces and French work, the plainer it is the better."

"Oh yes ma'am, to be sure, but the young ladies could"——

"Yes, yes, we will keep as much as poor sewing girls will ever need to go out in," I said.

"Oh dear lady do not talk like that, it breaks my heart."

"But it is true nevertheless, Margery, they will most likely always be too busy to care very much for the fine things their mother once wore."

But the end of it all was, Margery took some of them to a friend who is a fashionable modist. I have given up too many things, to feel pain for the loss of these.

It was a week ago she took them and they have not only met a ready sale, but she has brought back an order for an embroidered skirt, with the promise of pretty steady employment. As long as this lasts we can do very well. However I will not work at this fine work after daylight is gone, but rest my eyes and give Stuart and the three older girls a lesson in German every evening. The others have their regular lessons through the day.

CHAPTER XII.

APRIL 20.

I am so engaged I have hardly any time to write down our daily life, as I had intended. Stuart has been going to school for nearly a month, but before he goes in the morning he does a great deal towards making a garden. And the children most vigorously employ their spare time through the day in finishing what he has commenced; weeding, and stoning the particular bed which Stuart has dug up in the morning, constitutes their very important business after study hours.

We are very systematic and have an hour for every thing, and in this way get along nicely.

We are early risers too, and eat our breakfast, almost as soon as the sun bethinks to warm the noses of the far-away mountains; or over them to peer with his just opened eyes, into our humble grey old garden.

And through the day, that my daughters may neither of them be over wearied with sewing, I make them in turns, become the instructors of the younger ones, then for a while my assistants, then one at a time to aid Milly in her multitudinous duties.

Thus an hour at one thing and then at another, nothing grows very monotonous, and they work like a hive of cheer-

ful bees, not one single drone in the hive, save only baby, who has a right.

We speak French all day, and in the evening after the children from Howard down are in bed, we learn German for a couple of hours—and then until ten which is our invariable hour for retiring—while we knit or do some work which does not try our eyes, Stuart reads us some instructive book, which he has brought from the school library.

We have but one thing to trouble us, that is Margery's failing health, which makes us fear she can not much longer endure the labor necessary to the charge of this house.

She is very desirous that we should take it off her hands and allow her to do something which will require less exertion than this.

"It is only the walking about and sweeping which hurts me," she says. I do not know what would be best to do.

We have all felt badly about one thing—and that is, Stuart's being obliged to still go so poorly appareled to school.

I have thought much about this, for although he never hints such a thing, I am very sure the slights he receives on account of his shabby appearance, not alone from the boys, but I fear sometimes from the teacher, depresses his spirits, although he strives, earnestly, and manfully, against such a feeling: still he would not be human were not such taunts and sneers sufficient to sting him, even though he feigns not to regard them at all. I know were his mind free from all this petty vexation, he would improve even more rapidly than he does now.

I had intended to keep the remainder of the little sum left by Mrs. Aldrich, as a foundation upon which in the future we might by strict economy and great endeavors, raise a sufficient sum to send him one year at least to college. This was her cherished scheme, nourished amidst bitter poverty, and it shall be ours.

But now, because this present want seemed more urgent than anything in the future could, I have taken the money and am going to give it to Milly to purchase an entire suit for him. Dear boy how proud I will feel; how proud we shall all feel to see him dressed like—what he is, a true born gentleman.

This is to be a secret, for did he know we dreamed of

using this money for him, he would never submit, Milly is to take his measure and make the whole purchase.

It seems a little thing to talk so much about, but our lives are made up of little things, and this like most others is important even in its littleness to us, for we are sadly poor now-a-days, but not so poor but we can lift our hearts up to the Throne, and say to Him who sitteth thereon. 'We thank Thee for many tender mercies, to us.'

The examination for the High School is to come on shortly and Stuart is working day and night hoping to be able to gain admittance.

We are very sanguine all of us, as to his success, save himself. I hope he will accept his new dress as an happy omen.

APRIL 30.

This morning with the first peep of the dawn Milly stole into the room where Stuart and Howard sleep, and

"Tucked up dis old rubbish of his'n, and laid the span new black suit, jist whare dese lay."

Pretty soon after there was a great talking in their room, then out ran Howard half dressed, with eyes bearing a resemblance to saucers.

"Oh mamma! Oh Milly! all of Stuart's old clothes are gone, and such a splendid suit of black put in their place. It is just for all the world like the Father in 'Beauty and the Beast!' is it not? what shall he do?"

"Put them on of course, and let us see them."

"Oh he will never do that, he just sits up and looks at them so, and never says a word," and Howard assumed a ludicrous expression of astonishment, a good imitation I doubt not of poor amazed Stuart.

"Tell him mamma lays her commands on him to come into her presence immediately, little son," I said.

And in a short space out came Stuart with such a lugubrious face.

"Looking for all the world as if he had a whipping, instead of such a handsome suit," declared Cora.

And foolish fellow instead of standing up to be admired, he threw himself at my side and burying his face in my dress said with a half sob:

"Oh Bertha how could you do it? Oh I wish you had not."

For a while I could not speak or do anything but smooth back his clustering curls.

"Get up you great fellow and let an old soul look at you," said Milly, the tears of joy streaming down her black cheeks, and then as he never noticed her: "Can't ye 'have yerself, what she do it fur, so you may be some credit to the folks you 'long to fur sure. Get up I say."

Her droll way of putting the matter did us more good than anything else could. And with an earnest silent kiss, Stuart stood up to be inspected.

"So you have been ashamed of me, Aunt Milly," said he, winking away the few tears which spite of the unmanliness of such a thing would come, and looking at her with a merry twinkle in his eye, which showed spite of him how very glad he was for all. I know it was a pleasant thought he need not be ashamed of his dress.

"Oh ye go 'long wid yer imperence, and let me call up my chicks to see this grand show from the tailor's shop," retorted Milly, as proud of his appearance as it was possible to be.

Then such a time as there was, exclaiming, praising, and wondering over him, but indeed his handsome looks warranted the full amount of complimenting.

"Let me see," said Cora, standing him in the middle of the room, and then walking deliberately round him holding a pair of scissors to her eyes for a quizzing glass. "Let me see, a full suit of black, vest and all, a very handsome turn down collar, which, however, needs a black ribbon to make the true Byron style, handsome pair of patent leathers upon a very—handsome foot, a profusion of nut-brown curls round a remarkably handsome face, rather like my own, which is saying a good deal for it. Altogether quite a credit to the house of Percy, I think I will take a kiss if you please."

"Certainly my young child if it will make you happy, but only one," was the gay reply, although it was a multiplied one he gave.

While Birdie was delivering her *opinion*, Marion had stolen from the room, and now returned with a scarf of

embroidered silk quite narrow enough to make the desired neck-tie.

"A very good idea sister mine, I am glad you have acted upon my words, entirely original with me dear friends you will remember," cried Birdie, as she caught sight of it, "I am glad to see your stock is still supplied."

"Shall I put it on dear Stuart," said Marion with a little nod to Cora. Then while her arms were round his neck she said her word of congratulation in his ear, and gently kissing his cheek added:

"Birdie's tongue runs as though it was hung in the middle, and worked at both ends. Suppose you were to give Lela a chance to say a word now."

"Well, having said my say, I am mute," said the gay girl, "every one must have their turn you know, in such a large family, else some poor bodys would never get a chance to say their say. If I have taken queen's turn I beg her pardon, I did not know she would deign to make a speech."

Lela who is quite used to her sister's saucy talk only pulled her curls over her eyes as she went up to Stuart, and laying her hand tenderly upon his shoulder, "Dear Stuart," she said, "dear brother, we are very proud of you always, because you are so good and true and work so hard, spite of so many difficulties, but now we are more proud than ever, is not mamma good? the very best of fairy watchers?"—her love for me the uppermost always.

"Indeed indeed she is sweet Lela, how can I ever be grateful enough, how let her know how much I feel all she does for me?"

"By always being the good son you are now I suppose, is it not so mamma?"

"Yes dear, I need no other reward, be my brave true hearted boy, and your grand-mother's God, and mine too I trust, will bless you."

"Dear Stuart I want to do something for you too, but now-a-days we have less to give than once," and Lela's lip curled for an instant bitterly. "Marion has given you something, so will you be good and take what I have for you? say yes," and she turned her bright eyes up to his face.

"Hold him fast that's right Nora," cried Howard in great glee, at Stuart looking into her earnest face irresolutely.

"But I have taken so much already"—he began.

"Make him promise or I will make him the sorriest fellow," cried Cora.

"Birdie I give you, sorriest fellow, as used by a young lady to a young gentleman to parse," said Marion.

"Oh dear my unfortunate tongue, I will bite it off, it gets me into so much trouble all the while."

"Oh your heedless brain which makes you such a careless girl," said Marion. "Such a very careless little sister."

"Little hear her mamma," cried Cora, "little and I am a whole inch taller than her."

"Than her!" laughed Lela who being secure in a whole foot or more of stature says little with impunity "than her," my little sister put that down to parse to me when I have charge of your education, this afternoon."

"Unfortunate me," said Cora, raising both hands, "I will talk no more."

"But all this while I am waiting for an answer Stuart," said Lela holding both his hands.

"Well I promise," he said, "though I am burdened with favors now."

"That is a good boy, then wear these studs, they are plain gold you see, and have Marion's name engraved upon them. It is a good name to wear upon your breast brother dear, take one for her sake, the other for mine," and with a grace which always dwells in her every action she gave him a kiss, which—

"Is worth more than the gold, from its rarity," says Howard.

"How tall are you Stuart?" broke in Cora.

"I do not know I am sure Birdie," he answered.

"Well you are such a steeple for a boy of sixteen I think I must measure you," she replied.

And she did, and found him five feet five inches.

"Quite a respectable size, if you do as well as you have been doing you will be a six—oh my," and she clasped both hands over her lips.

"What were you going to say?" said Stuart holding her fast.

"I shall not tell you, else Marion will give me more parsing."

"No I will forgive you this once," laughed Marion "what was it?"

"A six-footer," said Cora blushing, "as Milly says."

"Yes but Milly does not study grammar," explained Howard.

The children have always taken a walk under Milly's care, but this morning our long talk, brought us to breakfast and worship time without it. After breakfast we are all very busy until dark brings a resting time.

This afternoon we had a visit from the clergyman of C— church, which is the one we have been attending since we came here.

The attraction to it was, that it is the one which Mrs. Aldrich attended when she lived in this part of the city and where she is buried.

Mr. Raymond is a young man, very agreeable, indeed, I have been much pleased with his preaching, and am very happy to know him. He passed an half hour with us. He seems much interested in his 'little church,' as he calls it, and talks as though his whole heart was in his work.

He has given us the freedom of his pew, which he says is never occupied.

"It will give me great pleasure to see it always filled with these bright faces," he said looking with loving eyes at the children.

This is a great comfort to me, for as I told him, as yet we could not afford to pay for a pew, and it has caused me much uneasiness to have no settled place to which we might go.

He has engaged us all to enter the Sabbath-school, some for his Bible class, and others for younger classes. I have promised to teach also, so Cora thinks she knows whose class she will be in.

This visit has done me a world of good, I feel anchored in a safe place, what a comfort one's church is. I wonder how they get on in our little church at home,—home! well it was home once.

Dear old Mr. Balstone what a good thing a letter would be from him, but I must not dream of that, for he is already too much burdened—and it would be cruel to tax him one iota more. I must not let my desires make me selfish. Our schools, I wonder if they have fallen into good hands.

Dear Walter how his whole heart was in that little school, and how he had their whole heart's love in return.

"No one is like Mr. Walter at the great house," they

used to say. What a resting place and bright spot, Walter's church and Sabbath duties were to him, after the turmoil and anxieties of the days of toil which were past: how entirely he knew the blessing of a 'Sabbath-day's resting from toil.'

Oh blessed sacred day—God's day—our Saviour's day—could it be I was too cold, too negligent in those happy times, did my earthly sunshine blind my eyes to the mercies from above? I fear I grieved my husband sometimes by my careless using of what he esteemed so very precious a gift.

SUNDAY EVENING.

When we arrived at church to-day, we found Mr. Raymond had most kindly waited to escort us to his pew. It was very thoughtful, and spared us the embarrassment we should have felt in taking possession of the minister's seat in the face of his whole congregation. We had a very quiet peaceful time, and I think the peace remains with us still, or at least some of us.

Mr. Raymond again came to us after church, and went with us into the little church-yard to visit for a moment Mrs. Aldrich's grave.

Although it was not right to think of such things I could not help but see how much attention my three daughters attracted, but our deep mourning and Mr. Raymond's kind attention made us noticed perhaps.

Mr. Raymond is a young man, tall and slender, with a face which seems to have a kind of halo about it, the sanctifying of a pure spirit, and a good life shining upon it, the kind of a face which in a woman we call 'an angel face.'

In the afternoon I heard some of those to whom Mr. Raymond introduced me, making very particular enquiry as to who, and what I was.

"Are they relatives of your's sir?" asked one.

"Not at all madam," was his reply.

"From New England I suppose since you are acquainted with them?"

"I think not—they reside at the corner of Elm and C— Streets."

"In the old Gleason property! indeed? I suppose then they are related to the old family, perhaps the heirs?"

"I did not enquire into the particulars of their family history," he said quietly:

"Of course not, but," with a sigh of resignation, and a look at the rest of the group, "I suppose we must call upon her."

The answer to this I lost in the thought which came across me, that they must do no such thing. A little while afterwards when we were going home, Mr. Raymond came up to us.

"Mr. Raymond will you excuse what I am going to say, I just overheard some of the ladies say they intended calling upon me, please do not let them, I cannot receive visitors, tell them so for me, I earnestly desire to do what is right, I will teach in the Sabbath School, I will work in the societies of the church, but I cannot receive strangers into my home, even in my happiest days this was a trial to me, now it is impossible." As I paused I noticed his look of embarrassment, and added quickly, "Pardon me for imposing such a duty upon you, but it would be very unpleasant to refuse your friends when they were at the door, but I should be obliged to do so, indeed I should. Our recent affliction must by my excuse for this seeming rudeness. You do not dream Mr. Raymond what a sad weariness a stranger's face is to me. And moreover we are too poor to spare the time, from our sewing, it takes up much time visiting and receiving visits, and ours is very precious now, for it is our bread." I believe I spoke very earnestly.

"Please Mr. Raymond," said Marion laying her hand quickly upon his arm before he had time to reply, "please understand mamma to mean your congregation, not yourself, you are not a stranger now, she had so much comfort from your one visit,"—dear daughter thus she always like her father explains and makes straight, whenever my vehement temperament would do me wrong; thus she watches over me.

"Oh certainly," I said quickly, pained by the thought, "surely Mr. Raymond understands that he"—

But a look into his face told me he had not understood at all. Marion's quick perception of anything likely to cause annoyance to another, was right as usual. Giving him my hand, I said:

"Dear friend if you knew but half the infinite good your visit was to me, if you knew the balm your words of to-day

have poured upon my wounded heart, you would not thus misconstrue my words, please understand me, I own frankly that I feel it will be long years before the presence of strangers under my own roof will cease to cause me exquisite pain, but this is casual acquaintances."

"Is this quite right?" he asked very gently.

"For the present I trust it is not wrong. I do not mean to condemn my children to a life of solitude, but now my first duty is to provide for their wants, and attend to their education, and while they have also like duties to perform, can we do these things well if we attend to other calls foreign to them? When the time comes they will find me no barrier to their enjoyment. Now the days are but half long enough to do all we have to do."

"Doubtless you are right, pardon my question."

"All this is for those I do not know," said I smiling.

"We have given you a place in our hearts, henceforth we will count your visits as one of our pleasures."

"Thank you kindly, your pretty room with its bright little faces," placing his hand as he spoke on Cora's curls, "has a charm for me, beyond what you can imagine. I have thought of it as a very pleasant thing, often since."

"Please come often into it sir," said Stuart heartily.

"Thank you, but take care you do not rue the breadth of your invitation, I may come too often," he said gaily.

"I do not fear your too often," I answered.

And so we feel sure we have gained a friend, worth having, and I know he will save me, if possible, from an invasion of the threatened visitors, whom I dread beyond expression.

CHAPTER XIII.

MAY 1.

STUART has passed a very severe examination and come home nervous and anxious, and completely exhausted. Poor fellow he will not know his fate until to-morrow.

I have felt sure of his being admitted, but now the time has come, I dread least there should be some reason why he cannot pass.

It will be a great thing for us all if he is successful, and we pray very earnestly for it.

I have at last decided to take the house, and Stuart and Margery together have made all the arrangements, this lessens our expenses wonderfully, for the rent is more than covered by the price paid for the offices.

It makes more work for Milly, but Stuart, the two oldest girls, and myself aid her in the early morning before the occupants arrive.

Margery had the opportunity of opening a store for the sale of fancy work, under very favorable auspices, and as this would make us quite sure of work always, I have given her one of the two diamond rings I saved from the wreck of our fortune. With the money raised upon this and her own savings, she has opened her little store in a central and fashionable part of the city.

We have been working very assiduously for her this last two weeks, making all sorts of things, from toilette cushions and purses, up to embroidered dresses and opera cloaks.

The girls have been round playing customers this afternoon, and declare everything looked admirably.

"Beautiful, and beautifully natural," said Cora, "I had seen them before."

Margery is very sanguine of success, and we see no reason to doubt it. So this month we have accomplished wonders, set up a store, or at least helped to do it, thus making ourselves more at ease upon the score of constant employment. Then become landlords—or ladies—to a set of strange gentlemen, whom we have as yet never any of us seen, with the exception of Stuart and Milly, and we trust we never may unless to do them good in some way.

"Our tenants, it sounds very grand to say it once more, does it not make you feel more Percy-like?" said Cora.

L'ESPERANCE.

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MAY 3.

How could I doubt Stuart's entire success. He has not only passed, but passed first upon the list. Oh we are so very glad!

And he does not have to wait, as many do for his turn, but can go in at once, and with high recommendations from the "board of examiners."

Thus we have another blessing added to our many. We are in hopes we will not have to give up German, for Stuart is making such rapid progress, it would be a shame, but he must not attempt too much.

He is in the highest spirits, and every thing is *couleur de rose* to him.

"A new suit makes a world of difference, I am quite a good fellow at school now," he said, then added, "Oh new clothes, new clothes, I must be very tender of you, or I shall become a nobody again."

"Do not talk so, even in jest, dear boy. I do not like to hear you, let us think as well as we can of all our fellow-pilgrims, besides I would rather believe my noble boy has taught his comrades to respect him, against all odds."

"Thanks, dearest friend, but I do not care for their praise, so I have yours and May's," he answered earnestly.

If we only had a piano now, I think we could scarcely desire aught beside. Lela pines for one I know, although she never mentions it, and I had hoped her musical talents would have been a source of advantage to her bye-and-bye, —her guitar is some comfort however.

Coralie has a passion for painting and more fortunate than Lela we have materials enough for her to exercise her talents.

"I mean to be a great artist and make all our fortunes, besides winning a great name for myself," she declares.

Marion and I would be content to sew for our livelihood, but we do both of us wish very much Lela may not have to, for she is too frail to bend long over her needle, and could she only cultivate her music, she might be able to teach, and thus maintain herself, but there is no prospect of such a thing at present.

Margery is doing an astonishing business, and keeps all of us busy; even Coralie is at work on some pretty worsted articles for her. She has taken every bit of lace or embroidery I possessed, and finds a ready sale for them.

MAY 8.

The strangest thing has happened—I can hardly credit my senses. Ever since we have had the entire house, Milly has been provoked beyond measure, at always finding the door of the physician on the lower floor locked; a short time since she learned,

"He sleeps there too, so as to be on hand if any one wanted him in the night. Pretty lookin place he keeps I 'spect, and there a'nt no use of his stayen thar, he gits nuffin to do I guess any how, day nur night," she declares.

But to-day she was down at the front door, and he came in:

"I never thought 'bout lookin at him," she says, "'till he passed by me and then turned round and stood stock still a lookin, so I looked too."

That was the last until with a face green with fright she burst into my room,—

"Lor save us missus, thar's a ghost in the hall, as sure as yer born thar is."

"What is it Milly, what is the matter with you?" I asked.

"Why I was jist a standin thar when up comes somebody I tho't, and I looked over my shoulder to see what they might look like, and thar stood Mr. Ernest Wilbur's ghost—lookin for all the world"—

"Ernest Wilbur!" I interrupted, "you are crazy Milly, why he has been dead nearly two years, what put such an idea in your head?"

"That's what I tell yer, dont I 'member the day my blessed massa 'cived that letter tellin him the poor young gemmen was a shipwreck, dont I tell you 'taint him a standin thar, but his speerit, fixed up in that doctor's clothes?"

I waited to hear no more, I do not know what told me it was he, but like a flash I went down the stairs and stood breathless at the open door. Oh it was he, my husband's chosen friend, my more than brother whom we had mourned as among the treasures of the deep. One glance told me that it was he, how he came hither, I cared not, all I knew there was a blessed certainty of his presence.

Before he saw me I flung myself beside him, crying,

"Oh Ernest, it is good to see you once more!"

"Bertha, dearest Bertha have I found you at last, thank God," and lifting me up he clasped his arms about me.

"Oh my troubles are well nigh past, with you to protect me. I will fear nothing, nothing," saying which my strength failed me, and I remember no more until I awoke with Marion bending above me,

"Then it was only a dream," I said sadly, "Oh Walter I dreamed you had sent me Ernest."

"And he has, dear Bertha," he said coming quickly forward, and throwing himself on his knees beside me, he could say no more.

"Oh I am so happy, safe, safe, children do you not know your Uncle Ernest, we are not alone now, we are safe are we not Marion?"

"Yes dearest," she said, "now you are better, I am glad, so very glad, oh God is very good to us mamma," and her arms were clasped tightly round Ernest's neck. He wept like a child as he embraced them all.

After we had grown more composed, Milly's exclamation of,

"And all dis time we been liven in dis bressed house together," made us inquire in the same breath,

"Can this be true, is it possible it can be?"

And it was, for the last three or four months this roof has sheltered us. And day and night all this while Ernest has been seeking for some clue of our whereabouts.

Oh it is passing strange. All this evening we have forgotten our German lessons and only talked over our strange sad histories, since we parted years ago.

First I recounted our griefs and sorrows,—told as briefly as need be, of the night in which suddenly and darkly the shadow of a never ceasing woe came thickly over my life,—then of the other and lesser misfortunes which followed after that great one. And I told him how bitterly we had mourned, when we had the news of the loss of the ill fated steamer P— with all on board, and among them the names of E. Wilbur and family, which we never doubted included himself.

"Now tell me Ernest, how it is that you, whom we deemed lay fathoms deep beneath the waves, are yet alive and here in this very house with us?"

"Let me begin at the very beginning dear Bertha, as you did," he said, "and tell you all."

And he did, from the very day nine years ago when we left

him in France, we to embark for America, he to wend his way towards the Holy Land.

He was gone a long while, seldom hearing from home. When he returned to Paris a sad reception awaited him, his father had been dead three years, and his mother was living alone, desolate and almost beggared.

For some time he could not find her at all, and when he did, it was in the house of a servant, the only faithful friend in that great heartless city, the only one of all the hundreds who thronged her hospitable mansion in her time of plenty, who had a kindly word for the stricken, childless widow.

I cannot realize this change for her: Mrs. Wilbur has always been connected in my mind with a superb hotel upon the Boulevards. The queenly hostess of an admiring throng, amongst whom she moved elegant and gracious, arrayed in the richest silks—decked in costliest laces and jewels, the courted American lady, whose invitations were sought after with avidity by the most distinguished,—now—but wait a moment and I will tell you what her now is.

It seems that after two years and more had gone by without Ernest's return, his father who had lived for many years abroad, suddenly conceived the idea of returning to his native land. He grew weary of the great heartless capital, and as he went down the hill of life, yearned for the pleasant scenes where his journey had begun.

Winding up his extensive business he started for America, to prepare a home in which to pass the evening of his days. At her own urgent request Lillian, his only daughter came with him. Before they sailed he transferred the whole of his property to this country and invested it in some way,—but when the noble bark with her freight of human souls went down forever, all traces of the disposition of his affairs went too. When it became certain that none of the passengers were rescued from the steamer, inquiries were instituted into the affairs of Mr. Wilbur but in vain, the strictest investigation could discover no clue as to the manner in which his property had been invested, and his friends were at length forced to the conclusion, that every proof had gone with him to the bottom of the deep.

Thus bereft by one fell stroke, of husband, child, and fortune, a broken hearted widow, Mrs. Wilbur found herself deserted by the hundred dear friends of her summer days,

without resources, and too old to work, she was fain to sell everything which remained to her, and seek refuge beneath the roof of an old and faithful servant.

When Ernest came back, he again renewed the search but in vain—and from having been the coveted and fêted Ernest Wilbur, he found himself a beggar, insolently cut, or coolly patronized by those who for years had fawned upon him.

Disgusted and heart-sick he determined to come to America where he was almost unknown, and seek Walter's aid and advice.

What was his dismay to find upon his arrival at our old home, that his friend was no more, his property in the hands of a stranger—his family scattered—gone no one knew whither.

"Oh Bertha," he says, "I think that was the worst stroke of all, I almost cursed my Maker, who had laid such horrors upon me. If it had not been for my poor old mother, I should have killed myself," and he shuddered, then starting up suddenly, he exclaimed, as he strode back and forth. "What am I to do! a stranger in my native land, without any means of gaining a livelihood—oh Bertha I have been a desperate man since then!"

And I knew he had, one glance at his wild haggard face told me that. Only desperate in sorrow not in sin. The pure light of his dark eye makes me sure he is too noble to do evil that good may come.

"When we returned to this city I made every possible enquiry, in every direction for you, but always in vain," he says:

"But how have you lived all this while, you who never did any thing?"

"I cannot tell, the whole of this time has been so full of horror and toil—I found in one of my trunks the diploma you used to have so much sport over," he said with a sad smile.

"It gave me the right to practice you know, but you used to say I was too lazy to make it useful; then if I had expressed a wish I could have had a score of patients, now I cannot find one."

"But you must have had some success or else how could you and your mother whom I long to see, have lived all this while?"

"Not a paying patient have I attended in all this time. I took a small room in an humble street for my mother, and

by the advice of an acquaintance made at the hotel where we first put up, I engaged the little room at the foot of your stairs, he assuring me in so central a situation I could not fail to gain a practice.

"We have managed to exist so far, upon the money raised upon clothing and valuables with a small sum I receive from a daily paper for which I have been writing.

"But men are only willing to pay for what is done by those who have names established, as well as ability, so I have been paid the merest pittance."

He spoke very bitterly and is evidently well-nigh hopeless. He has not the stay of that sure foundation, that shelter in storm and tempest—the Rock of Ages.—

Oh Ernest! it makes my heart bleed to see you, poor Ernest!

The last time we spent together, what a merry party we were!—four happy favored mortals; now two have passed the ocean of time, into the brightness of Eternity, and the others wait and mourn, and toil upon the shore, weighed down with the dust of earthly cares.

Oh who could have dreamed of our present fate who had sat with us that last evening at Marseilles—how freshly the memory of that night brings up the old town with its stately hills before me. I can see it now lying half hidden at the base of the long tapering hills covered by forests of Italian pine, which forming shadows of dark green foliage, contrasted so beautifully with the pale hue of the olive trees growing near them. It was the afternoon of the Sabbath, when like the rest of the citizens we sought refuge from the heat of the city, beneath the roof of one of the pretty country houses which everywhere stud the hills about Marseilles.

The magnificent forests around, were the chief theme of our talk, and Walter showed us the difference between the Ilex, the Orange, and the Citron trees, which throw their shadows far into the depths of the blue Mediterranean which sparkled at our feet, and which lay before us for miles skirted by a belt of high rocks. And while we sat and talked, the sun went down, and all the scene was lighted by its crimson rays, and the gray rock upon which we were gathered sparkled in its light.

And then the young moon rode pure and silvery through the dark blue ether, and when it was three hours high, we

ceased our talk, and in that place of beauty said our farewells, some of us, alas! never to meet,—never more upon earth!

We have been reviewing the past very sadly to-night, yet there is infinite comfort in being together once more. Very dearly do I love Ernest Wilbur, for years he was our daily companion. In his father's house we always have received a kindly welcome. And now in her age and sorrow, I must prove my gratitude to Mrs. Wilbur, by striving in some degree to act a daughter's part towards her.

Ernest shall take me to her to-morrow, and henceforth we will cast in our lots together, she will be no longer lonely,—and we will have an older and wiser head to direct and guide us.

It seems so marvelous, I can hardly realize all this, even now I have written it. The Wilburs and I both beggars—two or three years ago we had the entrée of any society in this or other lands, now we can scarcely name a friend.

But we will cling more closely together, now we are so few.

MAY 9.

This morning I went with Ernest to his mother—dear old lady, the sight of me so unnerved her, that for a long while we could do nothing but comfort her.

I knew how sadly my presence brought up Lilly's sunny curls, all tangled now with the sea weed in which her light form floats, sweet Lillian!

But after awhile we had a long explanation, and I proposed she should come at once to us.

"May I? oh have you indeed any corner you can give me?" she cried.

"Yes, indeed, the very nicest of corner rooms, which will just hold you and your things," I said smiling.

"And I shall be in the same house with Ernest, and need not lie awake night after night, filled with a thousand fears, for him, who is the last earthly treasure I have," she said.

"Have you done this, my mother?" said Ernest, "then indeed this finding Bertha is even a greater blessing than I thought."

"God is our friend, dear Ernest, and often sends unasked the very blessing we needed most."

"Perhaps so," he said bitterly, "I wish I had your faith Bertha, you always look for brightness to spring out of darkness."

"Not always, Ernest, I wish I did," I answered quickly, the praise making me feel so keenly how often I wickedly forgot to trust everything to God.

Through the course of the day Ernest moved their furniture, which is much nicer than any of ours, and this evening Mrs. Wilbur is comfortably settled in one of the largest apartments our citadel (as Cora calls it,) contains. The other is my own. She has so many pretty things, and is such a grand old lady, that Marion declares:

"Our rooms look quite brilliant to-night."

At Milly's suggestion, I took a survey of Ernest's quarters; poor fellow, he has owned that he has slept all the while either upon the floor with his valise for a pillow, or upon a chair his head upon the table, the table and chair being all his room contained, and the room is about the size of a table-cloth, Milly says:

"No wonder he kept his door shet. I'll clean it to-morrow I guess, and we'll spare him some carpet and put his mother's lounge down there, we'll fix him."

CHAPTER XIV.

MAY 20

OUR days are busy and contented—Ernest has no practice yet, but makes something by his pen. The children get along nicely with their studies—Stuart works very hard, too closely I sometimes fear, but he thinks not.

Ernest is a so much better teacher than myself, that we are all his pupils; our evenings are very pleasant. Now for the first hour Ernest gives the four young students a Latin lesson, because it is of more importance to Stuart than all the other languages put together, he thinks. This is a great advantage to him in school, and he makes great progress.

"He and Cora keep us alive, they say such comical things," says Adele. "First I think Arty is funniest, and the next minute I am sure Cora is," declares Howard admiringly.

"Oh I beg your pardon How!" says Cora, "it is not 'Arty' or I who are funny, but a certain person whom I heard ask yesterday, if the Rocky Mountains were like a cradle or a large chair, and if you had to push them to make them go."

"It was not me said that," declared Howard in a towering passion, "it was Gracie asked me that and I laughed at her."

"Oh!" said Cora quite crest-fallen, for she likes to plague Lela and Howard mightily, but the little girls, she is very tender about.

"Ha! my lady fair," said Stuart in a mocking tone, pulling her curls over her eyes. "I fear you burned your fingers that time."

"Burned my fingers!" looking very innocent of his meaning, "Oh no, I did not, the *sparks* in this room will never set fire to any thing worth burning."

And Stuart subsides, acknowledging a defeat.

Margery has met with such entire success in her neat little store, that we are kept constantly employed, and now even with Mrs. Wilbur's help and sometimes Cora's (who although so young is learning to sew nicely,) we can hardly supply all her orders.

And then the girls' Polkas, Nubies, etc., meet a ready sale, and they enjoy knitting them of evenings.

Mr. Raymond has spent several evenings with us, and I hope great things for Ernest from his influence, they are mutually pleased with each other. Already Ernest has consented to take a class in the Sabbath School, providing Mr. Raymond will go over the lesson with him through the week.

"For I fear," he says, "my theology is not very sound."

"I will trust you, yet it will be pleasant for us to go over it together."

The motive by which we induced Ernest to become a teacher was an unworthy one, but this time I feel, the end of getting him to attend regularly upon religious duties sanctified the means. For Mr. Raymond held out the hope:

"That as there is no practicing physician in the church, at present, you may establish a good business among the members."

This was an inducement and Ernest consented at once.

"Why do you not teach Bertha? your eyes cannot endure that interminable sewing much longer, they are paining this moment, I know from the look in them;" Ernest said as I sat busily engaged finishing a piece of work for Margery. I have resolved over and over again not to do this trying work at night, but sometimes I have to, if it is wanted immediately, as nearly everything is.

"Yes they do ache very much, but I shall soon be done this collar and then I mean to close them up entirely."

"But why do you not teach instead of sewing yourself blind?"

"Teach what, Ernest?" I asked, "what shall I teach?"

"Why music, or French, or almost anything, for you know everything."

"Thank you for your good opinion, whom shall I teach?"

"The members of the church," he replied laughing, "can she not, Mr. Raymond?"

"I think she might find a good many to be taught, if she would try."

"Do you really think I could procure any scholars?" I asked earnestly.

"Indeed I do, I know of several I think I could procure for you, if you are really willing to take charge of them, in music I mean."

"I am much out of practice now, but I think I could teach, for I do not forget easily. Oh I would be so grateful if I could get them."

"If we could only manage to get a piano," said Ernest, "I dread Lela's losing all her knowledge, and indeed the other girls too, they are so young."

"I can obviate that difficulty if you will permit me, by sending you mine."

"Oh no, Mr. Raymond, thank you a thousand times, but we could never accept such a sacrifice, no never," I repeated as he began to remonstrate.

"But hear me dear Madam, it would be no sacrifice—the obligation would be all upon my side, for then I should have the pleasure of sometimes hearing it played upon, now

it is scarcely opened from one year's end to another, and serves me in place of a book case," he answered.

"But why? do you not play?" said Ernest.

"I love to hear music so dearly, that I even am willing to listen to my own, but, playing and preaching do not go well together, I do not quite like the reputation of a musical minister, so it has been one of my crosses, to give up my playing," he replied.

"I can not help thinking your reason a poor one, dear sir, for music is surely a heavenly gift," I said.

"When music, heavenly maid was young," he said smiling. "Well perhaps you are right, but the family with whom I board would be scandalized, should I indulge in such a light unprofitable amusement."

"They must be strange people then."

"They are very strange people indeed, dear Madam."

"Is not your home a pleasant one?" I asked.

"Very far from it, I am sorry to confess," he replied with a shrug.

"What's the reason, can you not get rid of the unpleasant part?" said Ernest.

"I fear not, at least without a good deal of generalship. The chief cause is," and he laughed striving to hide a blush, "there are unfortunately too many unmarried daughters in the house."

"Oh," laughed Ernest, "besieged by the fair sex! I appreciate your suffering, I have gone through the whole ordeal of anxious daughters and manœuvring mammas, have I not Bertha?"

"Indeed you have, poor fellow," I replied, "never was man so put upon as you, when you played 'beau par excellence' to half the belles of Paris."

"Othello's occupation gone," now, at all events, no fear of any more nets being spread; the fish is not gilded—not worth catching!"

"Better worth now than ever, the gold has been in the fire and the dross has been burned off, and it is purer now than ever before," I said.

"Thank you, I am inclined to believe you would find yourself solus," then turning to Mr. Raymond, "Why in the name of common sense don't you change your quarters—if they do not suit you?"

"Because I know of none better which I could get, for you know a poor minister must not be too particular."

"Get Bertha to let you have her vacant room," said Ernest.

"I do not dare to, although it would be the greatest blessing."

"What vacant room?" I said in dismay.

"The one on the opposite side of the hall from mine," said Ernest.

"Oh," said I relieved, "that would be rather small for Mr. Raymond."

"I will tell you how we can manage it, if you are willing," said Ernest, who would not see I was not at all willing.

"I only want my room to sleep in, suppose we go into partnership, and turn one room, mine because it is the larger, into a sleeping apartment, and the other into our office, what do you say? it would be small quarters, but we might manage on a pinch, especially as our evenings we can spend up here, and my *immense* practice will take me out all day."

"It would be just the thing. I should like it beyond measure, if Mrs. Percy is willing to have me about," said Mr. Raymond.

"I am entirely willing to have you as one of us," I said, "but I fear our small quarters and frugal fare, would hardly please you."

"I shall be satisfied with anything if you will only let me come; it will be a happy change for me in every way."

And so after some more talk it was arranged he should come, on Monday. I do not know whether I half like this, but I could not help myself.

"And then his board, even if it is not much, and his piano will be a great thing, beside the good he will do Uncle Ernest," says Marion.

So perhaps it is best, but we are getting to be a rather extensive family. If I am able to get some pupils we shall be quite made up.

When Mr. Raymond and Ernest were gone, I went into the room where Lela and Birdie sleep, to tell them, Lela heard nothing but that a piano was coming.

"Can it be true!" she said, clasping her arms around me. "Oh I think I shall never want anything more. Birdie, are you not almost wild with joy?"

"Oh the duetts we will sing, and the waltzes we will have!" cried Cora.

And long after I had retired, I heard the laughing voices of the happy pair. Poor children, it is worth a great deal to see them so cheerful.

JUNE 1.

Mr. Raymond is a most delightful addition to our family, and we are now only too happy to have him with us. Then his piano, which is a most excellent one, is a treasure beyond my pen to tell of. And there are so many of us to use it that hardly an hour from five in the morning until evening is unemployed. While some work or study, another practices an hour, then Lela gives the younger ones a faithful lesson every day.

Through Mr. Raymond's kind efforts, I have already five pupils at a moderate price. This adds considerably to our income; and by a very systematic using of not only my own, but the time of the rest, we still continue to do almost as much as usual for Margery.

Milly gets along famously in her household duties, and the care of the offices. Dear Mrs. Wilbur, or as the children call her "grandmamma" is just the grandest and best of old ladies. I often smile to think what her *spé disant* friends in Paris would say, could they see what a happy contented life she leads in our humble home. The truth is whatever she does, is done with her whole heart. She takes the entire charge of my poor little neglected baby; besides doing the whole of our mending and divers other things.

Yesterday was the birth-day of our twins, and they enjoyed it mightily, for in the evening they sat up until nine o'clock—sang "Chick-a-dedee" and ever so many little songs, to the great amusement of Uncle Ernest and Mr. Raymond, and ate cakes made expressly for them by Milly, to their own satisfaction.

Stuart and the other two gentlemen have taken to gardening most zealously, and declare very wisely:

"Next year with a few dollars outlay, we will raise every thing in the vegetable way you need."

"And this year we have fruit in abundance, no thanks to you," says Cora.

We are very happily circumstanced indeed, in the midst of this hot dusty city, we have fresh air, and pleasant cool shade. God has taken good care of us, and we have need to thank him, and praise his name continually.

We have our perfect health, and strength; our hands are always so busy, that our hearts have seldom time to mourn over the never forgotten past. Save that a pain must always have its dwelling place in our hearts for one forever gone, we are strangely cared for.

JUNE 10.

If it was not that I am sure sewing very steadily does my eyes harm, how much more willingly would I endure the pain it causes, than go out among strangers to gain my bread.

I have little to complain of, all treat me at least civilly; but it is the dread of day after day meeting strangers, it distresses me beyond measure, but I must not complain, it might be much worse.

It is a blessed change after I have been shuddering for hours under the discords made by my pupils, to come home and have Lela sing me some glorious Cavatina, or a gem from one of my pet operas. I am sure if I begin to count the good things I have, they would put to shame the evil.

Marion has begun to give Stuart lessons, he has a very fine voice,

"And is so attentive and determined, he makes astonishing progress, I am very proud of my pupil," she declares.

The garden does the workers therein a world of credit—not one of the old weeds to be seen, and considerable planting done, late as it is.

Stuart has introduced Ernest to the gentleman who has always been so kind to him, and at his request he has given him a set of books to keep, now Stuart can do it no longer. This evening a letter came from this gentleman addressed to Dr. Wilbur, asking, "if his time would allow, if he would undertake the translating and revising of some German chemical works." This was because Stuart had mentioned Ernest's capacities, not to this gentleman only, but two or three beside, who are directors of his school and men of high literary ability.

They, it seems, were very glad to meet with a responsible person to whom they might entrust the work they have in a state of preparation, and immediately closed in with the propositions Stuart made for Ernest.

This is a great piece of good fortune, as it not only will pay him well, but will introduce him to those who may be of service to him; we are all very grateful for it. We will assist him every evening in translating, instead of learning our usual German lesson. This will be of great benefit to Stuart, who will thus get an insight into a new field of study, that of chemistry.

We are surely a very prosperous, contented, busy community, and I humbly trust from our inmost hearts we thank our kind Father.

JUNE 10.

To-day I have finished embroidering a very elaborate bridal dress "for the daughter of a gentleman named Major Watson," Margery tells me.

I remember so well seeing this girl in Washington, a beauty and an heiress, but so cold, so inanimate, so heartless. I cannot imagine how it is possible for her ever to have taken the trouble of preparing to be married, but I suppose there are others taking it for her.

I like to remember the time I saw her first, it was in the "House," and Walter had just finished his first speech. It was an half hour after he was through, at the very least, before he could reach my place in the gallery; so many crowded round him to congratulate him upon his success, and I sat wishing they would cease shaking his hand and making him talk, when he looked so pale and exhausted.

And when he did come, it was a long while before we could get home—and then only with the promise of attending the ball at Major Watson's house, which was to be given in honour of his daughter's debüt, "Le-Lis," they called her, because of her pale, haughty beauty.

Walter told me, she had been promised in marriage since her childhood, to her cousin, the son of her mother's brother, and that he had been educated abroad, so that they had never met. He was to return when he arrived at his major-

ity, and by the consummation of this marriage, fulfil the desire of his family, that two old and valuable estates should be united.

And this marriage was to take place on their twenty-first birth-day, so I suppose the time has come. This was six long years ago. Oh! there have been weary, weary days since then.

How very strange it is, that to-day, I should here, in this small back room, surrounded by grey shadowy walls, and with this tulle upon my knee, be listening to the winds sighing sadly and sobbingly through these dark old trees, which could they speak would tell perchance of other wooings and other weddings within reach of their shading branches. Of some who have whispered their sweet, low, love tales, 'neath the dimness of this old garden, and of others who beneath this roof-tree stood up cold and proud, pronouncing the solemn words which were to make their pathways henceforth lie very nearly to each other, but which need no soft tones and tender glances, because alas there was no love to give.

Even so, old trees—dear old trees, even so is it with these of whom I now mind me, oh! I fear for them it will be a very weary life if there is no love. And yet Isadore Watson, cold and heartless as you are, you cannot have known that glad free heart against which it will soon be your right to lean, and not feel some womanly tenderness go forth to him. You cannot have looked upon his noble handsome face—into his dark passionate eye, and had no thrill of love enkindled in your nature; even you must love him, I will hope good things for you.

We met him abroad a gay wild youth, with a noble but undisciplined nature, but he was very rich, his own master, and because he was so frank a favorite with all, pray God he has withstood so many snares.—

This dress is very beautiful and I have chosen to take great pains with it,—great pains, and pleasure too, in expending upon it my utmost skill. Although they will never know it, these old friends of my better days, who will assemble at this wedding feast, never guess that the hand of their once courted friend Bertha Percy, wrought the wreaths entwined around this robe and veil, yet for their sakes I have woven them.

Lilies I have laid there because she who wears them is

queen of the lilies, thus I do her honour. Mignonettes and rose-buds, types of my wishes for her. Upon her bridal eve I wind about her brow and form, emblems of constancy, and true and faithful love, proud girl who would spurn me did I approach her, cold bride who would wither me with a glance from her dark eyes did I seek her presence.

These recollections and musings have been a strange pleasure the while I worked and now that I have woven the last shining bud into its silvery ground-work I will fold away these dreamy thoughts within this mazy robe, and turn me back to life, and present things once more.

Oh Walter! a few years back I was a bride, a merry loving bride, and I thought naught could harm me because I was thy wife, but I forgot the death angel in his terrors, oh I forgot him, and his icy breath. But I am thy wife still, as sure and as truly now, as when we were walking over the gardens and bright places of the earth. Only now thou walkest in a cloud of glory, I in darkness yet—but let not go thy hold of me.

CHAPTER XV.

JULY 7.

WE have been getting along so calmly and contentedly of late. The skies seemed bright above us—the air pure and health-giving, I seemed almost to have forgotten the clouds which might be gathering,—I never heard the moaning and heaving of the breakers which might be even then ready to sweep over me.

But now they have come—the clouds and storms—the breakers and waves—and it will be a time hard to endure without murmurings.

One day it seems a long while ago now—Howard complained of a severe head-ache, but we tried to soothe it, and he went to bed, but all night, Stuart says,

“He moaned in his sleep and seemed in pain, so that I could only quiet him by bathing his head with cold water.”

But in the morning he was better, and when I went to give

my lessons at ten he seemed only a little languid and was at play.

I have more scholars now, and I am always out until after four in the afternoon, and we never take dinner until five. This day when I came in Marion met me with an anxious look.

"Howard does not seem well at all mamma, I have taught him no lessons—and this afternoon poor Lela has had to do all the work alone, I could not read as usual to her, he seemed so restless and easily vexed, I have been able to do nothing but amuse him."

He came to me and laying his head in my lap began to cry.

"I cannot help it, indeed I cannot, I am real sick mamma," he said.

And indeed he was, so that I undressed and put him to bed, then waited anxiously for Ernest to come in.

"What is it, my little man?" he asked when he did come, but his playful tone gave way to an hurried one, as he asked, with an anxious look at him, "How long has this been? not long I hope."

"The pain all night you know, but this fever has just come on," I answered, "but why, there is no danger I hope?"

"I trust not, but the rest of the children must not come near him."

"What is it, of what are you fearful?" I asked, a chill running over me.

"Can you bear to have me tell you dear Bertha, poor little Bertha, will you be able to endure it with only me to help you?"

"Oh Ernest what is it, tell me? I have borne worse things than this can be—only do not keep me in suspense."

"He has scarlet fever Bertha," he said stooping his lips to my ear.

"I thought so, I felt it from the very first, and it is a very bad case is it not? you consider it of a very malignant form, is it not so? oh do not deny it, your looks confirm my words," and I threw myself upon my knees and in my folly said, "God has lain his hand very heavily upon me. I am sorely tried."

"Not beyond what you can bear. Oh Mrs. Percy do not

condemn God," said Mr. Raymond who had come in unperceived laying his hand gently upon my arm.

For a while I knelt speechless—rebellious, but with prayer came a calmer frame, and before I arose I could see the "Hand within the cloud," and I turned round to them.

"Forgive my wilful words—even as I trust my Father has forgiven them. Remember he is my son, my only son, and I am a widow."

"And God has ever been tender to the widow's son, Mrs. Percy," said Mr. Raymond in a low trembling voice.

"I know, I know, I thought of that, yet the blow came very heavily, it hurts even with that to comfort me. Oh Ernest I am very weary," and I laid my head down upon his arm.

"Bertha, Bertha, do not despair, it is not so bad yet, while there is life there is hope," he answered.

"But you think it very bad, I saw it in your face, and see he does not know me. Oh Walter's boy, Walter's little Howard!"

"Can I do nothing for you dear Mrs. Percy?" asked Mr. Raymond, gently.

"Do not call me Mrs. Percy, I cannot bear it, please do not say that name again, I do not know why, but now it makes the pain worse than ever, please call me Bertha."

"May I, dare I?" he said quickly, and when his suddenness made me look up his face was all aglow. I thought perhaps he was displeased.

"Certainly if you do not object, it will come a little strange at first but Ernest and his mother, and Stuart do, you know, will you try?"

"Willingly, gladly," he said so softly I could scarcely hear him.

"What is the matter Ernest?" I asked for the arm upon which I leaned trembled though he held me almost convulsively, and his face was very pale when I turned to look at him, "you are not going to be sick too?" and I brushed back the black mass of curls from his brow.

"No dear child, do not think of that, I am only tired."

"Poor fellow, and here have I been selfishly making you stand and hold me all this while," and I attempted to rise.

"No, no, sit still," and he held me tightly, "I like it so, I think," he added with a sad smile, "it would take a long while before you could weary me."

Kind, dear Ernest, thus like a brother does he seek to share my burdens, so gentle and tender, always watchful of my every care.

It was too late to save the other children from contagion, first Coralie, then Gracie, and last of all Adele sickened. These three lay for days in separate rooms very ill. It was a happy thing there were so many of us to take care of them. Stuart has been round to all my pupils telling them the reason of my non-appearance, and of course all agree that with a pestilence in my family I need not come. How unweariedly has Stuart watched beside his little brother's couch—never son could be more tender and zealous than he has been to me.

Ernest hopes that the danger of Stuart and the two elder girls taking the fever is over. I trust it is.

I have not seen my babe, poor little nameless one, since that night eight days ago, when Howard was taken ill, but Mrs. Wilbur is very careful of her, and assures me she is well.

Now when I write sitting in the silence of the night beside the bedside of my boy, I know not but that tomorrow's sun will shine on the white, dead face of one of my beloved ones, perhaps not only one, but God may call more away.—Oh let me not murmur, prepare my heart, this wicked rebellious heart, to receive in humble, uncomplaining silence, whatever thine hand may send upon me, grant me strength oh Lord to bow and kiss the rod.

JULY 9.

Coralie and Gracie are both better, but the former is still very weak. Howard and Adele have been the worst all along, but now our prayers are turned into thanksgivings because we think we have every reason to believe his danger is past.

But Adele—little darling has lain in a stupor for days—only interrupted by flashes of delirium more violent it would seem from the quietude which precedes them. She is still very ill, and Ernest seems more anxious every day on her account. The scarlet fever is raging in every part of the city, they tell us, especially in this locality.

Ernest cannot now complain of a want of practice, he has scarcely time to eat or sleep, for besides his anxious attendance at home, he is constantly engaged with other patients.

It has been a very anxious week—what a life we have led all this time!—One night we thought Adele, Howard, or Cora might any of them die before the day break.

What a night of terror it was—what a time of prayer, for strength and hope—Adele in a high fever calling in piteous tones:

"Gracie, sister Gracie, why will she not come to Adele, who loves her so?" And then she would say in glad tones:

"Oh Gracie! papa says we are such good girls, he will let us sail on the river with him, in the little 'Wave,' and the wind will blow cool and make my head stop aching, for oh it hurts so bad, so bad!"

Thus hour after hour, she would moan, always calling for her sister, whom when we brought to the bedside she never knew.

And during all this night, Stuart taking turns with Mr. Raymond carried Gracie up and down the sitting-room hushing her cries, by singing in a low voice to her.

And ever and anon, came a startling cry from Coralie's room, breaking in upon the stillness of Howard's, where through the whole night, Ernest sat with scarce a thought for the others, so imminent was his peril.

Hushing the moanings of Gracie, or the wild talk of Adele, that voice of Cora would ring through the house. Then I would steal from Howard's side and go to her for a while—pausing by the way to know from Marie and Mrs. Wilbur, what was Adele's state.

With her eyes bright and sparkling—her cheek crimson, Cora would be sitting upright in bed, her golden hair hanging in profusion over her neck. Lela and Milly were almost all the while with her—save when one of the rest of us changed places with them for a while—so strong and quick were her movements, that either Mr. Raymond or Stuart were needed constantly to keep her fast in bed, and they could scarcely do it.

She would sit quietly for an instant, then suddenly spring to Mr. Raymond's arms and clasping him tightly, cry with a merry laugh,

"There, you naughty papa, I have you at last. Oh I am so tired, what a chase I have had," and she would put her hand to her heart, "how it beats, and I am so warm, I have run so far in the hot sun."

Then she would think she was flying over the hills—her native hills—upon the back of her own little pony, and she would clap her hands and throw her hair about and shout —

"Nora, you shall have papa's first kiss to-night, if your black 'Prince Hotspur,' beats my nimble white 'Fairy,' to the foot of yonder mountain. Now mind my pretty one do not let them beat you," thus would she go over in imagination the many gay races she and Lela have had.

Then she would burst out into songs, but when her mirth grew too boisterous Marion would come softly in, and whisper ;

"I would not talk so loudly, Birdie, Adele is so ill you know, try to be quiet a little while."

And with implicit obedience, all the children, but she above all, always give their gentle sister, she would lie down quietly, saying ;

"Poor Adele, I forget her, in the morning I will bring her bright flowers." Then they would call me back hurriedly to Howard, thinking he had breathed his last, or to warn me that a change had come,—and it did come thank God, that very night, a change for the better—and now although he cannot speak, he is better, much better, and will sit for hours with his hands in one of his sister's, or sink into a quiet sleep while Marion sings to him in a low voice. Marion is his angel—her meek little face, he says is the most beautiful thing in the world, Lela is his pride, she is his ideal queen—Coralie his merry play-fellow—but Marion his comfort.

JULY 13.

I also in my turn have had the fever, and badly too, although now I am much better, yet still unable to do much beside sitting quietly alone, trying not to give trouble to the over worked nurses who have been so busily employed night and day, for these many long weeks. We have to be very thankful they were not stricken, what should we have done had the rest of the older ones been as susceptible of disease

as I have proven. I sorrow much that this sad necessity of being so burdensome has been put upon me, just when I was most needed. When I could have done the most effective service I was obliged to give way, and not only leave the children in the hands of my good assistants but add by my own danger to their anxiety and labor. But I must not murmur—it was not of my own free will, and doubtlessly it was best and right, for He who sent the trial "doeth all things well," that I above all have proven.

I am able now to sit up a little while, and attend to Gracie and 'Baby,' at least keep a watchful eye over them, to prevent colds and so forth.

I am scarcely able to do much attending or anything else, Gracie does the amusing part of the performance, for her little sister's benefit.

Howard they tell me is much better, at least out of danger, although he does not rally very rapidly, or gain strength as quickly as Ernest could wish, still care is all he needs at present they declare, and he has plenty of that I am certain. Cora is so much better, that although under other circumstances we would have considered her unable, she has taken her place as nurse, and takes care of me assiduously. Adele is still lingering in a very precarious situation, it has been more than a week since I saw either her or Howard, how I long for strength to go to them.

JULY 16.

At last I am sitting calmly alone looking this great misfortune firmly in the face. It has been a weary time ere I could give up hope.

During the week of my own illness, I noticed, at first only Ernest and afterwards the others, or at least some of them, looking at me so strangely and sorrowfully, that it alarmed me, but they would always lull me into peace again.

But yesterday I arose and dressed myself, with the determination of resuming my place in one of the sick rooms again, for I felt so much better.

When I went in they all started, and looked alarmed, as they stood around Adele.

"Why good people," I said smiling, "do I frighten you?"

"No mamma, but I was just coming to you to tell you something, which it is best you should know," said Marion in a low voice.

"Well tell me now, then," I said.

"No we will go to your own room," and she went out, I paused to kiss Adèle whom I had not seen for over a week, but her eyes were closed and I deemed she slept, and went softly out.

When the door was closed I noticed how very pale Marion was.

"Are you sick, my daughter?" I asked anxiously, and wearily for the thought that we might have another siege of suffering and pain, to pass through unnerved me.

"No dearest, I am quite well, sit down here upon your bed,—do you think mamma, you could bear any thing God sent?"

"Yes, yes, what is it?" for I began to see there was something dreadful coming, "tell me what is the matter?"

"Oh my poor stricken mamma—do you remember that first night I lay within your arms after our sorrow, and you said I should always be your comforter and friend?" and she knelt beside me and buried her face in my dress. Then she said in a stifled tone—

"They said I must tell you, that you would hear it better from me."

"What is it, Marion, my child?" I said, her agony making me grow calm that I might quiet her.

"Is it death?" I asked after a pause—"or only a new sickness?"

"No, but Adèle"—and her voice failed.

"Adèle, what of her?" and I clenched my hands tightly, "you all said her danger was over—you have deceived me, I will go to her," and I sprang up, but she clasped her arms tightly round me.

"No, no, she is better, be patient with me and I will tell you." I sat very quietly waiting now, and taking her poor little quivering form in my arms asked:

"What is it darling? what about Adèle?"

"Adèle is—is blind, oh mamma! dear mamma! do not look so, it breaks my heart," she cried.

She laid me gently down, and although I knew all that passed around me, for hours I lay, never caring to speak or even to think.

"Lela," I heard Marion call from the door, "I want you, stay here a moment until I come back," then while Lela stood beside me smoothing my hair gently, I heard Marion in the other room:

"Howard mamma is sick again, and I want you should let Stuart put you to bed at once. Then I will send Gracie to take a little sleep on your bed, I want her out of the way."

Then opening the door she said:

"Uncle Ernest I have told her, will you please come now?"

"Poor mamma, how is she?" said Cora's sobbing voice.

"Not very well now, but you must stay with Adèle a little while, until I call 'grandmamma' and tell Milly.

Ernest came in, then Stuart, they spoke to me, gave me restoratives—but though I was sorry to give them trouble, and to know they were distressed about me, yet I felt no desire to relieve them, I seemed simply a looker-on—in no ways a participant in the scene.

After a while Marion came in, saying with a quiet authority.

"I think if you please, we will leave mamma entirely quiet, she will do better by herself, no one but papa can comfort her in this new trial, she will do better alone."

"Will you not stay Marion?" asked Ernest, as they went out:

"No, I shall shut her up alone," she said with a sad smile, "mamma always does better alone, with only God and his angels," she added solemnly.

I lay upon my bed in the gathering twilight with scarce a thought, for hours, I felt so stunned, so cold and numb.

After a while as I lay, I heard them assemble for worship, and I could hear the voice of Mr. Raymond in prayer, and the thought came to me, "they will pray for me."

Then the children read their verses around in their turns, and suddenly these words came to me.

"For a small moment have I forsaken thee, but with great mercies will I gather thee.—In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment, but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy upon thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer."

Then even while I thought it, came the voices floating in from the other room, and bearing on their wings the words,

"When through the deep waters I cause thee to go
The rivers of woe shall not thee overflow,
I, I will be with thee thy sorrow to bless,
And sanctify to thee thy deepest distress."

And then although with returning consciousness came back the terrible import of that one word 'blind,' yet the bitterness was past, and I could kneel and say, "not as I will, but as thou wilt oh Lord."

Then I called Marion, and she came to me and told me, of the horror it had been to them, when Uncle Ernest first hinted his fears; and of the anguish with which they had watched day after day, until at last hope died and certainty came, and they knew their sister must henceforth walk through the world, without a ray of light to shine upon her pathway, in shadow ever more.

It was a sad weary sorrow to us all after that, to make Gracie comprehend all this, to make her understand that Adèle would never look into her eyes again. Poor loving Gracie!

And one day Adèle said, sadly,

"Why do you keep the room always dark, I want to see the light once more, and mamma's face too, let me see the light."

And then I told her all, that she would never see the light again. She laid her head back on the pillow, without one murmur.

CHAPTER XVI.

JULY 20.

My poor Adèle, she bears her burden of darkness, little child though she is, better than the rest of us, far better than I do—oh it makes my heart ache to see her little white face so quiet, and yet so wistful, as she sits patiently stretching out her thin hands towards the sunshine—never seeing it—and I can but weep, to watch the vain looking out in her

darkened eyes—poor eyes which are not yet used to their fate—and the shadow of anything, even of a cloud over the sun, makes her start, and a painful look of uncertainty as to what is coming, shows itself in her face.

And yet she is very patient, never murmuring that the shadows have fallen over her—a little child a bright eyed laughing child she used to be—her grave resigned ways which would sit strangely upon one double her age—teach a lesson of long suffering and endurance. Thank God there are many loving hearts, and ready hands, to help her through her clouded way—oh she is a love-girt child—we will watch, and guard her, all her life long, with never wavering fidelity. And the earnest look in little Gracie's face, says plainly enough—what she is too childish to understand, but what is in her very heart. "Whatever else betide her I am her friend!"

We turn away and weep oftentimes, to see the touching weary striving to see, which looks out from Adèle's face,—and with all her patience, she has not learned as yet, to let others do entirely for her, we must try to teach her to trust us in all things.

Lela grieves bitterly over this dispensation—for Adèle has always been her darling, almost from her birth she has been especially hers. Indeed the older girls have taken almost entire charge of their younger brother and sisters always, this was necessary with us, for there is so little difference in their ages, that two or three of them always seemed babies together. Thus it came, that when Howard was little more than three years old, Marion, to use her father's words, adopted him, because his little twin sisters were in his way, or he in theirs. And Howard to this day, holds his gentle sister in high reverence.

When Adèle and Gracie, where a couple of years old I spent the winter with Walter in Washington, and during my absence Adèle and her nurse, were left to Lela's particular supervision. While Cora took upon herself to patronize and amuse the rugged, healthy little Gracie.

From that time, following Marion's lead, they have each made a darling of what they call their "own particular child."

Thus I was not much surprised to hear from Marion,
"That Lela longs so to have Adèle in their room,—but does

not like to mention it for fear Cora will think she does not want her."

"Then what do you mean to do?" I asked.

"Oh if you please, mamma," said Marion, "I will manage that, I will just take Birdie with me. To be sure my room is not quite so pretty as theirs, but I know she will like it all the same."

"But suppose we see what Birdie says herself," I said.

"Yes that will be better, but I think she will choose to come."

She called Cora, who answered from the kitchen, where she and Nora were busily engaged in the mysteries of '*le cuisne*,' under Milly's instructions.

"Yes, yes May, in a moment, as soon as I have finished this painful of cakes, eight—nine—ten—and this little bit of a cake—now I am done. Lela mind you do not let them burn on the bottom—and I shall be back in a little minute."

Then we told her of the change,—putting her arms quickly about Marion's neck, with an impetuous way which always reminds me of my old self, she said with her ever ready tears,

"Oh I shall be so glad, if I may only come to you once more. I hope Nora will not think I do not love her for I do dearly, dearly, but always at night I wish it was May's arms around me instead. And oh, mamma, I can be so much better if I have May to talk to me, and put me in mind of things. How' and I both can, Marion seems like a piece of papa, and makes us good."

"Very well Birdie," said Marion with a quieting kiss, "then it is settled, but remember you will have to make up your mind to do a great deal more studying in the morning—for I shall begin to kiss your eyes open as soon as the sun kisses the tops of the mountains. We are very smart people in my room, Gracie and I are always through our morning's work, and down at our lessons, before you open your eyes."

"Oh I will hold you down fast enough, my little lady sister, and keep you tight in my arms until I take a nice snooze," said the laughing girl as she went out.

Nora was delighted with the change, especially as thus she feels there is something more for her to do. It is astonishing to see the change which poverty has wrought in the

once indolent dreamy girl—from deeming herself "too good" to stoop to the slightest employment, which might seem unfitted to her rank and station—she comes to be mainly desirous to make herself useful, by doing any and everything. If she is sure she is taking upon herself any burden which would otherwise fall upon some of the rest of us, she seems contented; surely this is a great blessing which poverty has brought us.

It was strange to see how differently this little household arrangement, (while it gave the greatest pleasure to both,) was received by them.

While Cora like an April day was all smiles and tears, and thanks; Nora, no less glad, was outwardly only a little affected by it,—her eyes were bright, and her cheeks flushed, but with a quiet smile, the one thing about her like Marion, she said:

"It is very good of you to think of such a thing, but will Birdie like to be turned out of her pretty room? Suppose May and Birdie go there, and Adèle and I take May's room, I would as leave, and it will make no difference to our poor Adèle," and her lip quivered as she spoke.

"No, no, Nora, my room is just nice for plain little me, and Birdie will be my prettiness. Our beauty must have the fairest things about her. Oh do not blush so, you know you are our beauty, are you not glad to have papa's own face and form. Oh mamma, what should we do if we had not Lela to look at? we would lose our old grandeur, if our bit of Percy was gone, and only the bright laughing Howard blood left. Oh Lady Percy, dark-eyed queen, we must be very dainty of you!"

I used sometimes to doubt if it was quite right to talk to her in this way, of her beauty, but Marion has convinced me:—

"She is so exceedingly beautiful, mamma, she will find it out from others and her own observation if we do not tell her. And we can learn her to be thankful, not that she has such glorious beauty, but that it is papa's look in her face which gives it its charm." And this is really far the best for though she is so very proud, it is never of her appearance, she is too noble a spirit to be vain.

The thing with her to be especially grateful for, is that she comes of a royal race. It is wrong to have this pride of

birth, I know it is, and yet I know not how to chide her for it.

Time will check the wrong in it, I trust, and her own experience will teach her better than I can, how much of this feeling is unworthy, and to be cast away.

Alas! it is the only thing left us of our old estate, and perhaps that is why we love to think of it, however it is a harmless folly, for we work just as faithfully and untiringly, as if we had no name and ancestry to boast. And we fling it in the face of no one, as we cherish our pride among ourselves, and exult over it secretly and quietly, clinging to our family watch word, "espérance."

Marion and I are doing a very elaborate piece of work which will take several weeks to complete.

Our long siege of illness has made sad inroad into our savings—for during all that time none of us could do anything but attend to the sick, and only Ernest was earning anything. Now, too, as it is summer, of course I have no pupils, to teach until the autumn.

Nora and Birdie do some little things for Margery which sell pretty well, but still we have to be very economical to get along.

This is a sorrow, for we had hoped we might be able next year, to let Stnart go to college, for at least half of the year, that is if he passes his examination at the High School, which we are quite sure he will. But now this hope must be given up, there is no prospect!

CHAPTER XVII.

JULY 23.

LAST night we sat as usual in our little sitting-room, the table drawn into the middle of the room, and on it burning the brightest of astral lamps, which Milly came across, in some out of the way shop, and bought "for a mere song,"—and which she keeps alive in the most marvelous fashion. "With de skimmings, and odds and ends of ebery ting," but which gives us an abundance of light.

The table spread with books and work—and our German and Latin lessons waiting, until eight o'clock sent the little ones to bed.

In the most comfortable end of the sofa, where the shaded light is brightest, Mrs. Wilbur sat, making a ball of amazing size and variety, for Howard, who still weak from his illness seated beside her gravely discussing the propriety

"Of making it all blue and orange, or red and green."

Mrs. Wilbur looks still the "madame" a lady of the old régime. Her rich brown silk, hangs in the same graceful folds, as of old,—her little French cap, with its bright ribbons, sits as jauntily upon the dark hair, where age has as yet, left but few tokens. With her versatile, happy temperament, she is as free from sorrow or care, as though the husband of her youth, the daughter who was at once her pride and joy, and the wealth which has always been her own through life, slumbered not in dreamlessness beneath the dark cruel waters of the Atlantic,—surely it is a blessed thing to be able to make a happiness in other hearts, now those she loved are gone from her forever.

In the larger of our chintz covered arm chairs, sat Ernest with baby in his arms, her pretty head laid ever and anon upon his breast, Birdie says:—

"She is a born flirt, because she always likes the gentlemen so much better than the ladies!"

"No, she is just like all other babies, and loves those best who pet her most," says Marion.

A little back in the shadow, sits Lela with Adèle upon her knee, telling her in a pleasant loving way, some pretty story, or else singing some merry song, for her ear alone.

Marion just through helping Milly, curled up in the other arm chair, and with her head upon the arm, lies deeply en-

grossed in "Queechy," which Stuart has brought her from the "Library."

Gracie and I had been at the piano, trying to master an exercise with just as little noise as possible.

The room looked so pretty and bright that we could but be contented. At the other end of the table sat Mr. Raymond and Stuart deep in a game of chess, while Cora with her elbow upon the shoulder of the latter, intently watched them, her eyes bright with excitement.

How bright and fairy-like she looked, her golden curls in thick profusion lying over her flushed cheeks, Marion's pride these same curls are.

Marion lying in her arm chair seemed no older,—a very little child, her form half buried in the depth of her seat, her brown hair "put up" in a knot at the back, is the only womanly thing about her. She is as neat and nice as possible in her black chintz wrapper, and linen cuffs and collar.

Thus we were sitting, when suddenly the quiet hum of the room was broken, by Coralie's exclamation in a pettish tone,

"There, I expected nothing else, my poor queen! how could you play so stupidly Stuart, I declare you shall give her another chance," and she caught Mr. Raymond's hand between her own. "Uncle Harley you shall not do it, give us another chance," and with but the thought of keeping the piece upon the board, she held on to it with both hands.

"Oh my poor neck and shoulders," sighed Stuart comically, this *petit encontre* going on over him.

"Why Birdie are you in arms against me, to-night?" said Mr. Raymond, laughingly relinquishing the contested queen.

"Oh I did not think about either of you particularly, only I got in with the reds when I first came," she replied.

"Well, shall we try again with your queen, since Birdie has set her heart upon her, Stuart?" asked Mr. Raymond.

"No, no, I acknowledge a fair beat," answered he.

"And while you are at your confessions, own to having played most miserably," said Birdie crossly.

"You shall give me some lessons, my dear," laughed Stuart.

"Indeed I shall do no such thing, I would not be bothered with such an ignoramus for any thing; may I play a game with you Uncle Harley?"

"Not to-night, Cora," interrupted I, "it is time these little folks were in bed, and for us to begin our lessons."

"Well, to-morrow night then," she said, "come 'baby bunting.'"

"Wait a moment," said Ernest pulling her down on the other knee.

"Bertha, when are you going to give this child a name, or have you concluded to let her grow up without that article, on the principle of 'what's in a name?'"

"I know it is too bad, Marion and I have been having a serious talk about it, and have decided we will bring her forward next Sabbath if Mr. Raymond thinks best, for baptism."

"What will you call her, or have you decided?" asked Mrs. Wilbur.

"Yes, Marion, Lela, and I, have chosen her a name."

"Oh have you mamma, what is it? is it pretty?" cried Adele.

"Yes pet, I think it very pretty, moreover it is a very dear name to us all."

"What is it?" asked Cora eagerly.

"Ernestine Lillian, after two of the dearest friends your father and I ever had."

Mrs. Wilbur burst into tears, and Marion rising went quickly to her.

"Not without you like it, dear 'grand-mamma,' if the second name makes you sad, we will only call her for Uncle Ernest."

"No, no, it is very good of you, too good," she said rising and going out.

Ernest sat during this time with his eyes covered, when suddenly coming toward me, he said,

"Thank you, dear Bertha, this is a kindness I little dreamed of, but my whole life shall show how grateful I am, and I can ask no greater blessing on your child, than that she should grow as fair, and good a woman as my lost Lillian, my precious sister!"

"Nor I, dear Ernest, than that with Lillian's goodness and charms she may always have as true and gentle a guardian, as Lillian ever found in her brother Ernest," then turning to Mr. Raymond I asked, "and will her other Uncle, give our little girl a right to her name?"

"I will with pleasure," he answered. But I cannot think why he was so very pale, surely he is more delicate than he will own, for several times in the midst of a conversation I have seen him look thus, but he always seems annoyed when we notice it, so I passed it by this time, though he looked so badly for a while.

"So at last she is to have a name of her own, and baby is baby no more," cried Cora, tossing her little sister into the air.

But what shall we call her? both these names are so long for such a little thing," said practical Gracie.

"Oh Lilly would be beautiful," said Howard.

"But 'Tiny' will be so nice for the very littlest of us all," said Adèle, "will it not mamma?"

"The very thing, Adèle has the very name" said Stuart, and so thought all, and it was decided it should be 'Tiny.'

Then when they were gone, while Ernest finished a letter for the P—, Journal, and Mr. Raymond wrote on his sermon, Stuart and Lela practiced a duett. Then when Marion and Cora came back, and it was half-past eight, we translated, or the learners did, Foqué's Poem of Consolation, it is like a psalm so filled with solemn grandeur,

"For my misdeeds if Jesus pleads,
Who then condemneth me?"

That is the comfort, though for our evil deeds all men with ruthless harshness may upbraid us—yet before the throne of God stands the Mediator—the man, Christ Jesus, who knowing our weakness—pitieth us, and pardons too.

Though from my inmost soul I pray for strength to bear this newest sorrow, with meekness, yet one look into my helpless child's face, drives away all my striven for endurance. But this I know, even in this rebellion, Jesus pardons, nay, pleads for me. To Him be praise and thanksgiving evermore.

CHAPTER XVIII.

JULY 24.

TO-DAY has been a very important day—this morning Ernest came in, hurriedly saying:

"Bertha I have just been startled out of my seven senses by—"

"Seven senses, Uncle Ernest!" interrupted Cora, "why I thought we only had five, when did you get the other two?"

"An hour ago," said he, paying no heed to her query, "I was called to see a lady in L— St. who was reported to be dangerously ill. As soon as I could get off, I went to see her, and to my utter surprise discovered your old friend, Estelle De Lancy.

"Estelle De Lancy! oh Ernest is it possible! is she very ill, can I not go to her?"

"I have just come post haste to take you, for she is lying at the point of death—alone, and as far as I could ascertain in utter poverty. An old man who seems to have the sole care of her, and who came for me, says, her husband died a month since, in the South, and that she has been very ill almost ever since."

I found her tossing in a high fever, but immediately upon seeing me she laid her head back quietly, saying,

"I knew you would come, Bertha, I have been waiting for you."

Poor Estelle! from her servant's account, and her own ravings, I have learned the most of her sad story since we parted.

We were school mates and dear friends for years,—the only child of a gay fashionable man, at her mother's death he gave her into the care of a sister of his wife, with whom she lived until death separated them.

Then, to her after sorrow, she went to live in her father's house, and saw the gayest, most fashionable society of the Continent, until her father deeply embarrassed with gambling debts, compelled her to marry his chief creditor, a noted roué and gambler.

Of her misery and unhappy fate since then, I dare not

peak. Before they left Paris, Ernest heard, Mr. De Lancy had been killed in a duel; and I have often shuddered to think what poor Estelle's fate must be, with even the little protection her father's presence gave her, gone.

Now I learn that Mr. Harrington becoming involved in some gambling debts, fled from his creditors to this country.

Since their arrival here he has wandered from one city to the other in the South and West, gambling, always gambling. Sometimes the winner of thousands, and again so poor as to be obliged to sell her jewelry and his own, to gain sufficient to commence again. But one night he came home fearfully intoxicated, and in his frantic ravings, dashed himself at her feet and with all his sins upon him, died.

Since then she has wandered half crazed from place to place, knowing no one nor caring to. The money she had was nearly gone, and she knew not what was to become of her.

She has written to me, her servant says, over and over again, but of course her letters have never reached me.

Poor desolate, stricken friend of my girlish days. I will watch over her and take her to my humble home, we have plenty of room for her, and enough of the necessities of life, thank God, for all of us. Mrs. Wilbur says,

"Let me share my little room with this poor stricken one. Poor child, her fate is more sad and desolate than mine, or any of the rest of us. Oh Bertha, we have many hearts left to love us even in our poverty, she has none, or at least but this one faithful servant."

"And so," says Marion, "if dear grandmamma makes that arrangement our poor little three cornered room the last of its race, will still remain vacant. I was just thinking how nicely it would be filled."

"We will keep it until some other desolate body comes along, homeless and needy," says Cora.

"What a housefull of beggared grandees we are, to be sure, poor and proud," Lela declares.

"But such warm hearts, full of love and hope, and contentment," added Marion, "our 'espérance' holds firm as ever."

"Thankful above all for our May flower," Lela replies, tenderly.

JULY 28.

Poor Estelle has no pleasant memories to comfort her, a widow and childless, no hopes for the future. Poor friend, we must cheer her—and strive to fill the desolate places of her heart with our most tender love. For her entire restoration to health, we have great hopes; already she is able to set up: and now relieved from the dread of dying alone, she is making rapid strides towards health and strength.

She has been with us for several days; they brought her in a close carriage one evening, it was a risk to move her while she was so very ill, but Ernest declared:

"The chances are all in her favour, if we get her here, but if she stays in that close damp room, where she now is, I can do nothing for her."

And the experiment has proved he was right, for our quiet healthful home, has been of the greatest benefit in aiding the means taken for her restoration.

Sandy who has been her humble faithful friend, was at first a source of trouble to us, as to where we could bestow him. But Milly full of expedients suited to every emergency, has fixed him up a bed room of the little summer house, how they have made it water-proof, is a mystery known only to themselves. We are very grand forsooth with our servant man. Milly declared from the first.

"I'll make him do the *work*, and earn his salt."

And so she has,—giving him the charge of the offices, and making him man of all works. The garden Sandy has taken under his especial care, he used to be a gardener in the old country, and loves it dearly.

"Th' lot's o' braw likes I'll ha' nicht 'year, for ye a, 'twill joy the' vary heart of ye," he declares.

And he laughs slyly at the "laddies wark," but he need not for this same old garden, tilled by unexperienced hands, has been a staunch supporter to us.

CHAPTER XIX.

"It cometh not again. Bright visions flown—
Love's withered roses o'er its pathway strown—
Hope's cherished idols shattered and decayed—
Rainbows of promise, given but to fade—
Harpstrings of friendship broken and unstrung,
Gone the sweet music which around them hung!
What bitter anguish, what intensest pain,
To tell the heart it cometh not again." WALTER.

ONE year ago to-day, since Walter died—one whole year, have I striven to bear the burden of life! oh for rest! I wish it were twenty or thirty years, or whatever time is to bring me to my journey's end. If I could but push this slowly dragging time, with its measured beatings on and on, until Eternity and rest had come!

One year ago I laid my head down upon that breast just stilled in death, and said,

"It is finished; my husband has left me," with a breaking heart.

But he has not: this whole year, though unseen, his spirit has been round about me. They always said I had a very simple faith, and I thank God for it now; for this faith in my husband's guardianship and guidance through all this dark, sad time, has been a blessing, a comfort and a support unto my untried strength.

We have had many blessings—and yet one overwhelming sorrow, but the Hand which sent the blow has sent a sweet comfort, even with it, for last night Marion said to me.

"Mamma, Adèle has told me something to-day, which I want her to tell you, but she fears it is a wrong way for her to feel, surely it is not."

"What is it, little daughter?" I asked.

"Only that I do not mind being a blind girl so very much, mamma, I have so many more to care for me, and show their love for me, they scarcely let me miss my eyes."

"Dear child," I said with my arms clasping her closely,—"it is not such a dreary world to my little Adèle?"

"Not at all, every body is so good to me," but her face lost

its brightness, "I only feel very bad when I hear mamma's tears and know she is grieving for my poor eyes."

"Then my darling shall hear them no more, can she hear me smile now?"

"Yes, but it is a sad smile, mamma, and not at all like Cora's or Arty's." This talk is why I say God has tempered even this sorrow to us.

With the kind thoughtfulness, which is ever in the hearts of all for me, I have been left entirely to myself to-day;—nothing has jarred upon me, no sound has reached my ear to torture me; all is as silent and solemn as though death itself were in the house instead of one sad memory:—as if our dead lay shrouded in another room, instead of in a far away grave yard mouldering.

Oh! that this night I might, for one single hour, lie and weep upon that grave, with no eye save the One, to gaze upon me, in the dim twilight.—But the relentless hand of an iron fate cries, "nay," to my wild wish.

AUGUST 4.

This is the Sabbath day. One year since, upon this day, at sunset, they heaped the heavy earth over my husband's form. It seemed a fitting time in which to present our little one to the Lord.—It must make us more zealously watchful of her—we must see to it that the vows we have taken this day for her, be performed.—

She is a bright happy child—and we will hope her future may lie through a peaceful shaded pathway,—and that her heart like her name may be earnest and pure. "Ernestine Lillian," earnestness—purity—that is its type, a fitting name for our little one.

Our days vary so little, there is scarcely anything to write.—Our garden, old and grey though it be, has been a staunch old helper to us, and has done a world of service in eking out our small means. We almost live upon the fruit from its trees, and now we begin to have an overwhelming quantity of grapes, of the most delicious kinds.

And all this in the heart of a great city; we are strangely favored, God cares for us. We are all enjoying this holiday very much, although it does not pay well, except in

laying in a stock of strength, upon which to work when working time comes.

Next month we hope to be busy once more,—I have a large number of pupils to instruct, at an advanced price too—and we still work for Margery, at least Marion and Nora do. Ernest has had a steadily increasing practice all through the summer. Stuart takes no rest, but has spent his holiday in posting books, and such employment as he could procure to bring money.—So altogether we are prosperous, and content.

AUGUST 10.

Estelle sits before me, very pale and feeble still: but nearly well and so happy, so grateful to be with us.

We have told each other, our sad stories, and with many tears have agreed henceforth to dwell together, to help and comfort one another.

She is an interesting and agreeable companion; her troubles have not been heart-troubles, or at least not those which leave an ever present shadow over her life: for while she has suffered much, she can hope still.

For her husband, a debauched infidel gambler, whom she married by compulsion, she could have but a moiety of regard.

Her father, she never knew in childhood, when her heart might have gone out in love to him, spite of his sinfulness: and in later years, he was always her enemy, sacrificing her happiness, for his own advancement, and therefore though the awful deaths of both, must cause her horror, she has no need to grieve—she has no shadow on her face, but already, with returning health, come back the merry smile and playful ways, for which I loved her in the days of yore.

Then too she is a neat and rapid sewer, so ready and apt at everything, that she will be a wonderful assistance. She has no musical talent, but as the nuns at the Convent where we were educated, used to say:

“Madmoiselle Estelle can do any thing with her pencil, that any one else, can think.”

She has a marvelous taste for painting—and Cora, whose desires all lie in the hope of being some day an artist, is half wild with joy to have some one to teach her.

We are constantly employed from half-past four in the morning until ten at night.—Practising, embroidering, studying, fill up every moment of the entire day.

Last evening we were surprised by a visit from an old gentleman, one of Mr. Raymond's members—whose visit was of so much moment to us, that I must note it down amongst the rest of my dotting.

The will of a wealthy member of the congregation lately deceased, has just been opened, and Mr. Ostend came to inform Mr. Raymond of its contents. First, a sum bequeathed to the church for the purchase of an organ, together with a stated salary to maintain a good choir.

“And further” said the kind hearted bearer of pleasant news, “a clause to which I trust Mr. Raymond, you will in nowise object, the sum of one hundred dollars to be added yearly to your salary.”

“No objection, I assure you,” was the cordial reply, “I shall bear the burden with the utmost equanimity.”

“One other thing brought me here to-night, my dear Madam,” said Mr. Ostend turning to me, “I am left sole executor of this will, and I know of no one to whom I would so gladly trust the leading of our praises as yourself, and knowing you to be a teacher of music, I thought I might induce you to become our organist.”

“Thank you kindly, for the thought, dear sir.”

“Thank you yes, or thank you no?” he asked pleasantly.

“O yes, with all my heart!” I replied, answering his smile.

“Well, then it is settled—and can you not form the rest of the choir from your own family? I hear you have some fine performers among you?—What do you think?”

“Easily, if you are not fearful of trusting our inexperienced corps. I think all would be willing to try,” I said,

“Well, taking that for granted, where would you begin?” asked Ernest,

“Well, for the organist, to commence at the foundation, Lela could fill that post,”

“Why Bertha, ridiculous!” cried Ernest, “who will sing then?”

“You pay the rest of us a poor compliment *mon ami*. Birdie, young as she is, sings as well as the generality of church singers; but I will not tax her young lungs, I will

be the soprano, although you question my ability, and May and Birdie shall assist me, and sing contralto, then Dr. Wilbur will be our basso, and Stuart the tenor, there, is not that "a very grand quartette?"

"Excellent! especially the basso," laughingly rejoined Ernest.

"What a pity there is no having Uncle Harley to sing with us: we will scarcely know how to get along without him now," said Marion.

"Thank you dear, I prefer the other end of the church."

"And I prefer having you there, sir, as you cannot be in both ends at the same time," she replied with a smile.

"But, mamma, it will be hard work for Nora, to set there Sunday after Sunday, and never sing," broke in Cora—

"I hope not—but she shall sing sometimes to keep her in heart, but Lela's voice is our greatest treasure, therefore we must be very tender of it."

"That is quite right, Mrs. Percy, do not let her strain it," said Mr. Ostend. "I have no doubt these little ladies will do charmingly."

Then at his request, we allowed him to hear many songs from our family party, both singly and collectively, and the tears in his eyes told better even than his hearty thanks, we had given him pleasure.

When he was gone, we talked a long while over our good fortune, and were as proud over the prospect of earning three hundr'd dollars among us, as if we had chanced upon a gold mine.

This morning, Mr. Raymond (who, by the way, in our home-conclave, has in the most natural of manners, slipped into Uncle Harley—as the result of our daily intercourse,) told me the organ will be put up this week, so by Sabbath after next, we will be ready to assume our new duties, as we are to have the freedom of the church at all hours of the day, for practising—oh! will it not be a treat, to touch the keys of an organ once more? I could fancy myself at home!

Milly or Sandy will perform upon the bellows, so we will have quite a family affair of it! This shows us a hope for Stuart and college, in a couple more years, if we do not touch this church money until then.

CHAPTER XX.

OCTOBER 1.

"No more German or pleasant evenings, for me for the next two months," said Stuart coming in one day this week, and giving his strap-full of books a toss into his room.

"Why, what is the matter now?"

"I have entered for the prizes, and shall have to work like a slave this next quarter, if I mean to come out ahead."

"What will you have to do? you must not attempt too much at once, your lessons are very difficult already," I said anxiously.

"Oh! it is not so very bad, only I shall have to keep pretty steady, I am to write the lives of Euripedes, Pericles, Demosthenes, Cicero, Quintillian, Socrates, and any six of the modern poets and orators I please. Then I am to compare them, write a treatise upon the style of each, and after that—the most troublesome thing of all—to construe one hundred lines of each, in whatever two other languages I will, only one must be ancient, and the other modern, and the more variety one has in the latter, the higher the prize will be,—if I only knew some Italian!"

"And do you think it possible to do all this without giving up your other lessons?" I asked in dismay.

"I hope it is, I need only work a little harder and later, and I am pretty well grounded in languages, ancient and modern; thanks to my kind home teachers."

"And you own untiring industry my fine fellow," said Ernest. "What are the prizes to be? Worth trying for?"

"The honor of winning them, would be that. The lowest is a set of books, to the amount of twenty-five dollars; the second, fifty dollars worth of books, to be chosen by the gainers of the prizes. The third and highest is, the freedom of the professor's library, for a year, fifty dollars worth of books, and a silver medal of good scholarship, and besides all this, should the good behavior and scholarship continue an opportunity to graduate next year. Is not that worth trying for?"

"It is indeed, and you are determined to try?"

"With might and main, and win too," he said, emphatically.

And we feel quite sure he must be successful, for he has such a will, such indomitable perseverance, and untiring industry, and such hope too.

"He has such a vast amount of hope, he ought to have been a Percy, and borne our motto 'ESPERANCE,'" declares Lela proudly.

OCTOBER 8.

This has been a beautiful summer, and the beauty and brightness linger long, loath to depart, it seems.

This Autumn-time has always been the most dear of all the year to me. There is such a fullness of beauty, such a mellowed glory over all things. We see the hand of God, a tender loving God so plainly, so fully, so untiringly over all.

The shadows lie longer, more deeply and more gently, making the sunlight more bright and precious. To-day has been a real glimpse of the days that live only in my memory, I could have closed my eyes and dreamed I was in Italy. I longed to do it, the desire was strong upon me, and I wrestled firmly and continuously to subdue it, I was tired of work to-day, I was cross at it, I wanted to forget it in toto, to lie down some where in the shade and shut my eyes tightly, and clasping my hands over them to dream, dream. With the balmy air of this Italian day about me, to think over "the days that are no more," gone forever: lost in that vast and turbid sea of memory, that surging, restless sea, ever in motion, with each wave casting upon the shore of the Present, some shattered spar, some gay bright shred, from the wrecked and long lost Past.

But in this by-gone—as far back as to-day has borne me—there are no weary and unhappy memories, all is goodness, and unparalleled mercy, each hour is marked with a white stone. For every day, in memory's book I find a leaf turned, a passage marked,—a flower pressed—I remember nothing of evil in all that time; no thorns, no ruts in life's pathway, but garlands of roses, and sweet blossoms, singing birds, bright skies, and pleasant glens covered with soft unwearied green.

To-day, all Nature seems resting in thankfulness, after

past endeavors, and gathering strength, after the burden and heat of the summer day, for the winter of strife and cold unkindly labors to come.

I seem now to myself—thinking of this dreamy, balmy day, of the sky blue, fair and sometimes golden—to be sitting in the calm and quiet of *my* autumn, the bright spring—the glad summer gone, the winter of old age near.

OCTOBER 15.

Stuart works incessantly—takes no recreation or exercise, save the walk to and from school, and a half hour's work in the garden when it is too late for him to read by day-light. I am fearful that such unceasing application will tell upon him, but he says—

"I am all the better for hard work, and take my pleasure upon Saturday evenings, when we practise at the church."

But although he says so, Mr. Raymond always has to take his place for the greater part of the time. He will not tell us how far he has got, or what he has done, but laughs and declares,

"I mean to keep it a secret until it is finished."

We have given entire satisfaction, as far as we can hear, in our church music, Mr. Raymond says,

"You created quite *une grande impression* the first Sunday, I am congratulated and complimented upon every hand."

We have sent Howard to school at last. It was a great trial, but it is done, and I am glad. He is such a frail, delicate boy, especially since his illness, and so sensitive, so keenly alive to any slight or unkindness, that I could hardly make up my mind to send him out into the rough, unfeeling world of school-boy life.

But I know it is right he should go out and struggle and strive, and endure the ills and crosses of life, mingling with those of his age and sex. A household of girls is not the very best place to develop the greatness and manliness of a boy's character.

And moreover, he will learn better, now he has a stimulus to make him strive to excel; that is, after the strangeness of being all day among boys instead of his gentle sisters

has worn off. I trust he will catch the spirit of emulation, and strive not so much to be first as to be best, to be more honorable, more wise, and as learned as any of his comrades.

To-day was his first day—my precious boy, my only son, he has come home weary and disgusted with the whole race of boys, and a perfect horror of the school, to which his Uncle Ernest this morning introduced him. He stood at the window looking out upon the fading day as I came in from giving a lesson this afternoon.

"Well, how does my little son like school?" I asked.

"I do not like it at all. I hate it. I wish every old school was—I do not know what."

"But that is very wrong, my dear boy."

"I do not care, I mean to say what is the truth, I hate it. I hate it as badly as possible, and I will never like it, I know," and he stamped his foot down fiercely.

"Howard, Howard, my dear son, you grieve me!"

"Forgive me, mamma, dear mamma," and his arms were around me in an instant, "I did not mean to, I am sure, but oh! that hateful school, if you only knew what great, ugly, disagreeable boys there were at it—how can I ever go there?"

His tone was one of such heartfelt dismay, that I saw it would require much patience and gentle counsel to reconcile him to his new life. So in my own room, with the shadows of the old trees darkening over us, I talked to him a long while—telling him of all the struggles and trials of his father's boyhood, when he, an orphan, had no mother's hand to soothe his trials, but at foreign schools and colleges was obliged to battle his way single-handed.

And then too, of the noble, determined way in which Stuart, in the depths of poverty, in a shabby dress, had endured everything during his earliest school days—such trials as, please God, my little boy should never know, He giving me health and strength. Then I bade him remember how much was expected from his father's son, this will I know be his chief stimulus, for like Nora, although he is such a little boy, he is proud beyond measure of his name.

Then I told him to remember—that now his sisters and I worked to provide him with necessities, but that bye and bye, we would expect he and Stuart to do the like for us; that though we toiled now, then they must be our support, our consolation and our protection.

I think, little boy as he is, he understood all this, and that he will endure his daily path with more patience.

Perhaps it is wrong for me to nourish this feeling of family pride in his heart, I hope it is not, I do not want to do wrong, but this pride will guard against evil associations, I hope; and we have so few safeguards now, alas! that I cling to this the more fervently, and breathe an earnest desire to guard him aright, my ESPERANCE—my Percy!

CHAPTER XXI.

OCTOBER 20.

ANOTHER addition to our family and the last, the very last, now every nook and corner of our *citadelle* is crowded, and no matter who comes, what occurs, and under what form admittance to our commonwealth is sought, we will cry "no! no!! no!!!"

One evening last week as we were sitting together, doing just as we liked, as we always do, during the first hour after tea, Ernest suddenly looked up from his paper and cried:

"Here is a letter for you, Bertha!"

"Give it to me then," answered I, smiling, and holding out my hand to receive it.

"I mean there is one advertised," he replied laughing.

"You forgot who you were talking to, evidently, Uncle Ernest. You forgot mamma considers as head of the family she must set her face against anything which savors of exaggeration," said Lela quizzically.

"But did my remark?" opening his eyes as he asked.

"Thou saidst, fair uncle, 'here is a letter,' when lo and behold, upon cross-examination, no letter was there to be found; so you see, according to the strictest sense of the law laid down by mamma, your remark should have been rendered thus—'Bertha there is among this list of letters advertised, one which bears your name.'"

"Hark at wisdom, sitting in the curls black as ebony of

a nobody of fourteen. I make you my humble bow, and own myself extinguished," and he made a grand salaam.

"But about mamma's letter?" burst in curious Coralie.

"Yes, if you please, Ernest, were you speaking truly or in jest? For it seems a marvel indeed for me to have a letter now-a-days."

"Well, for once believe me, or at least believe the evidence of your own eyes, there"—pointing to it, "'Mrs. Bertha Howard Percy,' is that plain enough, my lady fair?"

"Well, I am convinced, but who could possibly write to me?"

"A great many persons, if they could possibly find you out."

"Yes, I suppose so, but who has? That is what I am wondering at. Who could possibly have written to me, when no one knows where I am living, or whether I am living at all."

"Well, I will walk round to the office, and see, for it is certainly your ladyship's letter, spite of your scepticism, upon the subject."

"It does seem as though it must be." I answered.

"Certainly," said Lela, laying her cheek against mine, "as if there could be another Bertha Percy in this whole world."

"But who can it be from?" I replied.

"I cannot tell, I am very sure;" quoth Ernest, "but I will 'gang an' see." And he began to make preparations for departing.

"No, you need not go; we cannot spare you, Uncle Ernest, I will send Sandy," said Marion, rising and going out.

And so in a short time Sandy returned bearing the much wondered-at epistle.

"From home," I said, scrutinizing the post-mark as I took it quickly, "but the hand is strange!"

"The *hand writing*, if you please," laughed Ernest.

"Exactly, and if, as is said, hand-writing is a type of character, what a queer crooked personage, the writer of this letter must be, judging from the envelope!"

"Have mercy upon us, Bertha," said Estelle, "and do not sit there, conning over the superscription, when *sans doute* the inside will explain all you desire to know. You can moralize over the possible character of your correspondent, after you have discovered who he may be."

I tore away the envelope and took out two letters, the one addressed to myself, the other, bearing a foreign post-mark to my husband.

The first of these I opened, and found it written in the same hand as the outside. It was from Mr. Hartly, and I read it aloud.

"This letter came to me yesterday, I suppose it is from some-one who does not know you are not living here. I inclose it to you, directed to the city of B—— I do not know your address more explicitly, and so most probably you will never receive it; but that will not be my fault. I wish people would not plague me with other people's letters."

"How characteristic!" I sighed, when I had finished.

"How like a brute!" said Stuart fiercely.

"Quite my mind, young friend," answered Ernest.

"And not one word of home, or how things look, surely he might have just said a little, ever so little, about the way things are looking," said Lela, drearily.

"Or told us how the flowers in the *conservatories* were getting on, for they were always prettier now, than at any other time. And all our pets, poor darlings, and our ponies, cruel, wicked man, he might," and Birdie looked very cross.

"Perhaps he was busy, or did not think how much pleasure it would give us, to hear about home," said Marion.

"Yes you have all judged harshly, but Marion, and she is the only one who really knows how cross he can be," said I.

"But I know he can be kind too, mamma. No one has seen him in his lonely home, but papa and I, so no one could ever forgive him as much as we, and"—turning to her sisters—"with all his faults, papa loved him, and he loved papa, and *only* him in the whole world: so we ought always to think as kindly as we can of him."

"Marion deserves a reward for her good pleading, and here it is in this postscript," said I.

"Give this note which I enclose, for a hundred dollars to Marion, and tell her an old man's love comes with it. There is not much love in my heart, but what there is she has. I want her to take it and go to school with it. Tell her not to go fooling it upon her sisters, because it

is all she need expect from me. I am not often soft hearted as I am to-night."

"Well Daisy, what do you think of that?" asked Stuart.

"Is it not good, splendid! too good!" said Cora.

"Are you not glad Marion?" asked Lela.

All this and much more was said simultaneously by a chorus of glad voices, but Marion sat with her hands clasped softly upon her breast, her gentle head drooping forward, just the way, so pretty and winning, which from a little child, has been natural to her, she sat quietly, saying never a word to all the torrent of questions rained upon her.

"Are you not glad, May?" repeated Nora.

"Glad, *glad*, to have money given me, that I may only use for myself! how selfish you think me! No I am not glad to be thus treated, to be singled out thus, oh it was unkind! he is a cruel old man; and yet, mamma—why is it?—Mr. Hartly always does or says something, which redeems all the rest, poor old man I thank him more for the love than the money," and her eyes were full of tears.

"Yes daughter, and you know we decided long ago, he was a kinder and better man than he chose to own. He was very kind in one thing to us, my Marion."

"Indeed, indeed he was, we owe him a heart full of blessings and I do pray every night of my life for him, but oh! this money!"

"Will be charming" said Nora, "do not look at it so piteously, will it not be delightful to go to school *mignonne*?"

"What, *alone*?" said Marion in dismay, "no indeed, it will not. I could not endure it!"

"Well, but all this time there lies the other letter unopened and unread," interrupted Ernest.

"And I pronounce that one shame," replied Stuart, "nay two shames, and more, as it was the original cause of all this good fortune to May."

"This is not for me, but for one whose hand lies mouldering in the dust. Walter Percy, a name no longer; only a memory."

Marion's head was buried in Nora's lap, as she sat at her feet, and Coralie hid her weeping eyes upon Stuart's shoulder, and thus they sat while I opened, and read the letter.

"It is from Mr. Audley," I turned to Mr. Raymond and the others who did not know, "he was my husband's guardian, and like a father to us both."

Here Nora's counterfeited composure gave way, and with both hands to her face, she buried her head upon the arm of the sofa.

"Where is he now?" asked Ernest in a low tone.

"Oh if he were only here?" said Nora with a stifled groan.

"Alas! that is an old worn-out wish, my dear, but listen and let me read what he says. How long it is since it was written."

GLASGOW, April 20.

"DEAR BOY.—Like everybody else who ever knew you, I am about to request a favor of you. And because my letter must be, as all my letters necessarily are, brief, I plunge at once into the heart of the matter. My only sister, for whom your little Coralie is named, died in the south-eastern part of France eight weeks since. She has left me an only child, a boy of over sixteen, whom I named at his birth (you remember) after the dearest and truest friend I ever had, your father, Clarence Percy, the brother of my soul, and for whose sake I took into my heart at the first, you, my noble boy, his only son, who are doubly dear to me now, for his sake and your own. This boy I have not seen for three or four years, but his mother wrote of him most enthusiastically, and described him as being like his father, a child of the south, full of wild fervor, of brilliant talents, a born artist, destined, her loving heart believed, to be a great painter. Of this, however, I know nothing.

"It is strange she should have desired it to be so, for you know the early death of my brother-in-law was caused by too close application to his art, and the disappointment experienced by the rejection of a picture, over which he had spent days and nights of sleepless toil for months. The mode of my life renders it impossible for me to keep the boy with me. It would be a miserable, unsettled, unsatisfactory life for him, and a sad trouble and inconvenience to me. I am under engagements to visit St. Petersburg in a few months, and will most probably be detained there for the greater part of the next two years. After that I hope to come to Amer-

ica for a short time. Russian snows would never do for my nephew, born and nurtured as he has been, in the sunny south.

"So I am obliged to seek a home for him elsewhere, and I know of no one in this wide world with whom I would so freely and gladly leave him as yourself. Therefore I come to you and ask that you will take him to your home for me, and watch over him and direct him. Make him like yourself. I desire no better future for him. I do not ask you formally to assume this charge, and give an asylum to this orphan boy, because I know you will do it, not alone for my sake but his poor mother's whom you knew and loved in your boyish days. As for my little Bertha she likes a little trouble, always providing she has some one to bear the brunt of the battle for her. Poor child, how would she do, were she to be left, as my unhappy sister was, without a cent, with this child to think and care for? Poor little impetuous Bertha could never weather such storms; it would break her heart. Thank God while she is so surrounded, she need dread no such fate.

"I hope Clarence will not be a source of uneasiness to any one. They describe him as a quiet gentle boy, very much such a child as Marion promised to be when I last saw her; quiet and retiring, passionately fond of his books, and his art. With a loving heart I imagine, like Marion's, ever seeking and hoping for love. I remember the last time I held her in my arms she said in a soft whisper as she laid her little face on my neck.

"If you are going to be my grand-papa, please love me,"

"Dear little gentle Marion she was a very Howard in look and deed, but though I loved her, Nora is my darling, the apple of my eye. I want to see my haughty little Percy, when she is a woman, and watch her eye flash fire, and her head toss, and see her curl her pretty proud lips into a scornful smile, when some poor deluded swain, is duped into suing for the possession of her charms. Then I should enjoy mightily to be behind some door, and see the poor crest fallen suitor flee from the haughty Percy, as she curves her beautiful neck like a proud war horse, and declines to mix her name and fame with a less noble race.

"Tell my little queen to keep clear of the beaux until I come home to help her enjoy the fun.

"And my 'bonnie wee birdie' with her sunshine and flowers and her gay mocking laugh, when I left her six long years ago, (or rather when she left me,) she had just come to a consciousness of her own charms, and very gravely asked me one day.

'Arn't I the prettiest 'ittle thing 'ou ever did see?'

'Not by a long shot,' quoth I, as I tossed her up, remembering the day you brought *our* pretty Bertha home a shy, witching young wife.

"Howard was a great crowing baby, your heir, and mine too, I thought then, but this Clarence's helplessness has touched my heart, and changed my plans. Your boy gave promise of looking like Nora, I hope it is so, for the only heir of the old Percys should bear their true stamp. And no matter how lovable the rest may be, a full blooded Percy, will always be nearer my heart than any other thing which breathes. A letter which I had from you a year ago tells me you have twin daughters, whom you have tried to name as nearly as possible for me. Thank you, Adèle and Gracie are pretty names, and I dare say the children are as handsome, but I shall not like them, I give you warning, I never could endure twins. Give little Bertha a father's kiss for me, dear child; tell her, your last letter was doubly precious, because it came partly written in her hand. It has followed me half round the globe, and at last found me nearly two years after it was dated in Brussels. It did me a heap of good.

"I will keep Clarence with me the few months I remain in Scotland, then I will forward him under the care of some safe person, to my bankers the Messrs N. of B—— where he can remain until you can find leisure to go for him.

"I will also send them an order subject to your demand for a hundred dollars a quarter, which I suppose will cover his school and clothing bills, whatever else you expend upon him, I will settle for when I come.

"God bless you my noble boy, and my little Bertha, and all the children. Make my sister's son, (mine now) as true and as good a man as you are, and I will ask no higher boon for him. God bless you.

GRACIEN AUDLEY.

This dear and tender letter was not read without many outbursts of tears. After I had finished, Ernest said,

"What is to be done now? here is nearly a year gone since this letter was written, and of course the boy has come."

"Perhaps not, he may not have arrived yet, at all events, not long since; we must send to B—— and inquire."

"And then, what will you do?"

"Write to Clarence, explain our loss, our present situation and our poverty, and beg him to come to us, if he thinks he can endure to brave life as we have to."

"Whew!" said Ernest, "we will have to enlarge our borders soon, I am thinking."

"Oh no, we have just room for this one, and then we will lock the doors, and keep all the rest of the world outside."

"It seems as though our little vacant triangle was waiting for him, we have had such a time to fill it, and now we are glad it is empty," said Marion.

"Stuart, will you not be glad to have this new brother come among us?" and I pushed his curls off from his face, "Why do you not join in our pleasure?"

"Because I do not feel any," he replied, truthful as ever, looking straight at me with his earnest eyes.

"Why not?" I asked surprised.

"I cannot tell," he answered almost sullenly.

"Will it not be a pleasure to have a friend and companion of your own age, to be with you always, to whom you can confide all your secret thoughts and aspirations?"

"I want no better place for them than I have already found," he answered tenderly, "none can ever know; to none could I ever tell, every thought and desire, as I have to you; and I want no truer or kinder friends, than those who are around me now. I, for one, do not pine for new faces, the old are the best, and the older the better."

"Foolish boy, you are jealous; do you not know none can be dearer to us, to me especially, than you, my boy, who have braved poverty and ills with me, nothing knits us more closely together than sorrow, such a feeling in you pains me, it is unworthy of you, unlike you, Stuart!"

"Forgive me! Oh how unworthy I am of all your kindness and teachings, how little credit I do all your care, are you glad this stranger is coming?"

"Very glad Stuart, in many ways."

"Then I am glad, too, and shall do my very best to love him, see if I do not."

After that, we all talked a long time over the strange 'haps of the evening, but we did not come to any definite conclusion, save that in the morn I should write to the Messrs. N——, Mr. Audley's bankers, and make inquiries concerning Clarence. Mr. Hartly's gift I accept most gladly, and by extra exertion and a little more economy I trust we will be able to let Marion and Nora too, attend some good school, we can spare enough for that, now Marion is provided for.

The next day I wrote to the Messrs. N——. Two days after I received the following note.

MADAME, We were exceedingly relieved by your letter which came to hand yesterday noon. Mr. Audley's nephew has been with us upwards of a month, during which time we have made constant but ineffectual search for your residence. We are not aware what Mr. Audley's plans for his nephew would be, did he know of the death of the friend, to whom he had entrusted him. We have no possible means either, of discovering any thing upon this subject, as from Mr. Audley's uncertain movements a letter would probably not reach him for months, if at all. If you will be kind enough to send some one under whose charge we may place Master Clarence, we would esteem it a favor. This will be necessary inasmuch as he knows nothing of the English language, save the little he has learned since he came to us.

Hoping to hear from you at your earliest convenience we remain with respect.

MRS. PERCY.

N— N— & Co.

"What does he speak, then, I wonder?" asked Cora.

"French I suppose, or most likely Italian, as his father was born in Italy, and they have been living for years past, just upon the Italian border of France."

"Who can go for him? Whom will it be best to send do you think?" asked Mrs. Wilbur.

"Stuart, I think, if he will go." I said.

"Oh, he cannot, he is so busy about his prizes, and this week they have a number of extra lessons to prepare, for the next quarter's examination," said Marion.

"I think we can arrange matters so he need lose no time, and, poor over worked fellow, he needs a little relaxation."

"I cannot stay away from school without losing place

and marks, and it will be hard pulling to work up again, even with the rest, if I get behind just now, when so much is to be done," said Stuart.

"But are you quite willing to go, if we can settle matters so you need lose no school time?"

"Quite, I shall enjoy it hugely."

"Well, if you will start in the three o'clock train on Friday afternoon you can get to B—, about nine; then you can return by any of the morning or afternoon trains on Saturday and lose no time from anything but your prizes."

"So I could, bless your sweet heart, for the best and dearest manager in this whole world," said he, with a shout which showed how great a pleasure the little jaunt would be; particularly when it would involve no neglect of duty. Good boy, true, faithful heart.

So it was arranged, Stuart only making the bargain, that if he was to go, he should make up the lost time, by extra night work. Now our anxiety is, first, how to bestow this new comer, and again to do everything within our power to make him comfortable. Poor lonely fellow. At first, none of the family except, the two elder girls and myself, seemed to feel pleasantly about his coming; but now that we have talked of him and thought of him so much, I think there is a warming towards him. "Pity is very near akin to love," they say, and so I am sure poor Clarence will have every thing to hope on the score of heart winning. Who could help pitying the lonely orphan child, not we truly who one and all have been so sorely tried ourselves, already therefore he is creeping into our hearts.

OCTOBER 28.

The Saturday night has come and with it our travellers, weary and dusty from their journey. How long the day has been—how much longer the evening. We delayed our rehearsal as long as possible, hoping for their arrival, but were finally obliged to go to the church, leaving only Mrs. Wilbur and Milly to welcome them. In what a little bustle of curiosity and hope, of anxiety and half sadness did we come home to find both there. Stuart upon the lounge, intently listening, he said, to the conversation.

"But tight asleep all the while," stoutly insisted Birdie.

Mrs. Wilbur with her kind face full of interest was listening to our stranger's account of his voyage across. As we entered a frail, pale boy, dressed in the deepest mourning advanced to meet us, a look of anxious expectation, earnest longing, and irresolute hope, sweeping over his sweet face. Stuart springing up presented him to us.

For an instant he preserved his self-command, and returned our greetings gravely,—but before our warmth—the impetuosity of the boy, the tenderness and longing of the lonely orphan burst forth, and with all sense of strangeness gone:

"Ma mère, ma mère, vous l'avez aimé, Madame?" in a half-sobbing tone came from his lips, as he seized my hands.

"Beaucoup, chère enfant," I said, pressing my lips to his flushed cheek. The elder children received him cordially.

My haughty Nora, with her usual economy of kisses gave him her hand. Marion kissing his forehead, said gently:

"Nous vous aimerons, chère frère."

But Coralie with her wonted impulsive tenderness, threw her arms around him and cried, her bright eyes glistening with tears,

"Je t'aime! ah, que je t'aime!"

Poor desolate fellow with what a proud humility—yet eager longing—he received all these welcomes, from those he had approached with almost fearful trembling—strangers who might look upon him as an intruder, the invader of their home circle—but who opening wide their arms to him bade him find welcome, home and friends within their midst. I know it warmed his heart. For a long while we talked—Stuart having ensconced himself upon the lounge with his head in Leanore's lap.

It was thoughtful Marion who remembered our travellers needed rest—and so, spite of their denials of fatigue, we bade them good night, I taking my little Howard, and giving Clarence his place with Stuart, for the nonce.

As soon as the first remittance comes from the Messrs. N—, we will furnish the opposite little room for him, so daintily and comfortable, that he shall feel at home in our midst.

It is a very good habit my young folks have of confiding

everything—the passing events of the day—to me ; whether they be good or evil. How light this makes my heart concerning them—how firm it keeps my faith in their rectitude and right doing—what a comfort it is to me, that even the most secret thoughts and interests, of their youthful hearts are poured unreservedly and fearlessly into mine—they love me so well they have no fear to let me judge for them.

This evening Stuart at his accustomed time came to give me an account of his journey, of his acquaintance with Clarence, and of the new vigor and energy both have given him.

“I like him so much, poor desolate fellow,” then quizzically, “I have suffered innumerable sharp pangs of self-reproach all day, because of my folly in not liking the idea of his coming, now *carissima* what penance can you design, by which I may extenuate my offence—shall I go back to my attic room, and be denied the light of your sweet face, and the merry voices of the rest, to make me more thankful for my blessings ? or shall I seek those far-famed dungeons, supposed to be to Spain, what the catacombs are to Paris, in extent, sacred to the memory of Don Luis Gracia, as we read the other night, and within their solemn depths, midst intensest gloom mourn over departed joys—or shall I let you write my name upon an oyster shell and banish me to the desolate snows of Siberia, after the style of Elizabeth the Exile,—anything my *precieux*, choose you, I will submit.”

“Foolish boy,” I replied, as I put him out of the room, “as the sin was a very natural one—and so soon repented of—I only condemn you to a good night’s rest, and a happy waking, with a heart full of love for your new friend and comrade.”

NOVEMBER 25.

We all like Clarence very much ; he has been with us a month, and each day we see something in him more endearing. He of course can never be as dear, as entirely one of us, as Stuart is, but he will always stand next. He has made for himself a home in our hearts.

He has commenced to attend school ; an English classical academy which the Messrs. N—— recommended, where

boys are fitted for college. It is very expensive, but they have agreed to advance whatever extra amount shall be needed to defray expenses, leaving him the hundred dollars allowed by Mr. Audley, every three months, for his board, clothing, and spending money. This school, I have no doubt is very excellent, but I would rather have all the boys go through a course at the High School, before entering college. But I have some doubts as to whether Clarence could undergo the hard work to which Stuart is subjected. For although he is as well informed as the generality of boys, and stands high already in his classes, yet he has not Stuart’s abilities or application. The one is a dreaming poetical nature, half in the clouds, devoted to painting, thinking everything should give way to his beloved art. The other eminently practical in everything, full of life and vigor, strong to endure whatever overtakes him, overcoming all difficulties by indomitable perseverance, and determination ; always conquering by hard, indefatigable endeavour ; scorning to be defeated in anything.

Clarence would lie for hours and gaze upon a beautiful landscape or painting ; or with his eyes full of tears listen to sweet music, his whole soul carried away, his whole nature filled with it ; neglecting everything, for the gratification of these passions, never dreaming it possible they are wrong when so indulged. Stuart loving music and paintings and all beautiful things, listens and looks, but only when no duty is being neglected or slighted in so doing. And his strong firm will is always on the alert, to keep back whatever may unfit him for the realities of life. Gentle and tender as a woman, in his judgment of others, he is a fierce, cruel tyrant with himself.

I cannot but feel, that these two natures so unlike, brought thus into such intimate communion, will do each other good. Clarence Beaumont’s dreamy, indolent nature will receive a spur, a new impetus from our hard working, earnest student. While on the other hand Stuart Aldrich will learn from his artist brother, to look more leniently upon the beautiful in life, and treat himself more kindly.

We have furnished Clarence’s room most charmingly ; and, strown with the scores of pretty things he brought with him, it is a perfect *bijou* in the midst of our plainness. His mother’s portrait, and various other pictures line the wall ;

and his table is thick with knick knacks, which he treasures as mementoes of his early home.

If Coralie had cause to rejoice in the advent of her Aunt Estelle, she has a double cause in the proficiency of Clarence. But not alone is Coralie benefitted by his coming, Lela is quite enraptured with him, she declares :

"Now I can learn Italian, and no longer fear to sing my pet songs incorrectly, but be sure I have the pure pronunciation from a native ; and then dear Clare, if you can teach me to bring just half the sweetness from my guitar, you do from yours, I will never be done thanking you."

And now every spare moment, (and I am sorry for their sakes, these are so few,) Clare gives Lela a guitar lesson, and she and Marion, a scrap of pure Italian to learn. And they enjoy it wonderfully, although it is more work for them all.

CHAPTER XXII.

NOVEMBER 30.

"How much do you love me ?" asked Clarence of me the other day in his pretty fondling way. "How much do you think you love me ?"

"A very great deal, dear boy, what our little blind girl here would call a 'mountain high, and an ocean-full.'"

"Sufficiently to grant me a very great favour ?"

"Try me, and see."

"But I want you to say 'yes' first, please say 'yes.' I will do just what you say," and he put his arm round me, and laid his head upon my shoulder.

"What is it, Clarence, which takes so much petting and begging to win ? foolish fellow, tell me."

"Promise me first," said he wilfully.

"No, I never promise first, for fear I promise wrongfully, and thus commit two sins."

"Oh dear, then I am afraid to ask," and he looked up piteously.

"You need not be, I will try very hard to grant whatever you desire."

"Well, then here goes ; I want so badly to be really and truly one of the family, just as Stuart is ; not as I am, a stranger, only living here by suffrance."

"Why Clarence ! what makes you talk so ? it is not true ; you know we love you dearly, and would be very, very unhappy to have you go away from us. If we seem to love Stuart better, you must remember he has been with us longer, and shared poverty and sorrow with us, and been an invaluable and earnest son to me. You must not wonder that I seem to lean on Stuart, more than on any one else, for even had I known and loved you equally long, he is so much the stronger, I should always have relied upon him, do you not understand that ?"

"Yes, oh yes, please do not think, I imagine for an instant, that you could give me the love you do him, he is so noble, so good, such a brave true-hearted fellow, oh, I do love him," he added with such frank vehemence, that little Adèle, who was on my knee started and looked frightened enough.

"But this is what I mean, I wish you would use my means as you do his. If Stuart makes a little money, as he often does, he brings it to you, and you accept it, as a matter of course. While here am I in receipt of one hundred dollars a quarter, and you are as scrupulous about using a cent, except my board, as if I was an entire stranger. It is not kind, Aunt Bertha."

"But my boy, it is surely enough, that you are compelled to live such an humble secluded life, a life of poverty, both of society, and means, without our depriving you of the pleasure you can buy with your quarterly allowance."

"Now, that is not kind, and besides I must tell you something ; you know although Uncle Graclon is so very rich, my father was a poor artist, and while he lived we often suffered because, he was too proud to let Uncle know he could not support us, by his dear art. And then, when he died, we were so very, very poor that my mother had to forget her own and my dear father's pride, and send to Uncle for some of his abundance. He is good and generous, you know him ; he sent us a very large sum of money, but my father had left many debts and mamma thought it right to

pay them all, and so we were poor again, for it took the greater part of the money; we lived very plainly and saw no one, mamma and I and one servant, in that old house alone; and mamma taught me to paint, and to sing and to play on all the instruments within our reach; poor mamma, oh we were very happy then! I was too young to feel sad at our poverty, and too glad to have mamma always with me, instead, of seeing her beautifully dressed, going out night after night, as she used to. I tell you this because I want you to know I am used to poverty, and then I am used to trying to earn something, to keep it away, for I may tell you what we never told any one else, least it should reach my uncle's ears and offend him, I played the organ in the city of Valentia—for two years before mamma died, oh!—” and his eyes kindled and his face flushed, “it was such a grand old organ, there are none like it in this country, for they took me to hear the “great organ,” (they called it) in B—and the Messrs N—— said it was the finest instrument in the United States, and it is poor, nothing, nothing, to compare with the organ in Valentia. Now this is what I want to ask you to do. To take the money which remains after my school and painting-master's bills are paid and let Nora and Birdie go to school with Marion, will you? please do, oh you will make me so happy, if you only will, it will seem like mamma back again; please say yes, beg her, Adèle, help me to make her say yes.”

And then they begged with kisses and tears, until I was fain to consent; only I stipulated that he should keep for his own private use, a small sum.

This will make all that has distressed us smooth and easy, and now every spare moment must be spent preparing them, making new dresses out of old ones, and using our small means to the best advantage. Estelle has a wonderful faculty for bonnet making, and has been rejuvenating some of our better day bonnets, so that they look as good as new.

DECEMBER 20.

After a world of discussion, we have at length decided, that the girls can be spared, and that they shall begin school

at the commencement of the new year. We have at last concluded that for many reasons, the advertisement of “the excellent and *fashionable* establishment of Madame Degrade,” will suit us better than any other.

It is not very far off, which in bad weather will be a great consideration; and then it is the only school we can hear of, where the French language is used exclusively. The “fashionable” part of the advertisement was somewhat of a drawback at first, but I think I can trust my darlings even into a fashionable atmosphere, especially as they have no means of entering into competition, with those with whom they may be thrown.

I have arranged with Madame to take my daughters for a year, lessening her charges by paying her in advance, and excluding all accomplishments which were enumerated as extras, informing her that they would have private teachers for these.

My days are so engaged out of the house, I have little time to attend to any thing in it, therefore Mrs. Wilbur is to be our housekeeper, Estelle seamstress, teacher of the little girls, and general assistant.

We have found so many of our old dresses available for the girls, that between us all they are well supplied.

A couple of Sabbaths ago, I had a severe cold and Lela sang in my stead, while Stuart made his first public attempt upon the organ, and a very creditable one it was.

It seems there was a gentleman present who has charge of the choir of the “exclusive church,” upon L—, st. up town.

He was so charmed with Lela's voice that to-day I have had a visit from him, with an offer to engage her at an exorbitant salary to sing in his choir.

At first I most unequivocally refused to listen to such an arrangement, but this evening we have talked the matter over, and she is so solicitous to accept the situation, and Ernest says it will strengthen her lungs, instead of injure them as I had feared, that I have decided if Mr. J——, will agree to my terms he shall have her.

If he will dismiss his present choir and engage with Lela, Marion as contralto, and Stuart as tenor, I will let her go.

Cora's voice is much the stronger, and suits Lela's in duetts much better than Marion's, but I cannot feel it safe

to trust my giddy girl without either Marion or myself to keep her in order, so Marion will have to suffice.

Then we will have left for our own choir, Cora, Ernest, and myself, and Clare will play for us, sometimes, until Howard or Adele are far enough advanced.

It seems almost too hazardous a thing for such very young people to take charge of a choir, in such a large church, but Mr. J—— is an old established musician and if he is willing to trust them, I imagine there is no cause for the rest of us to fear for their success.

I have written all this to Mr. J——, and to-morrow will expect an answer from him.

This will be such a lightening of our troubles, that I hardly dare to let myself think it will succeed. It will add several hundred dollars to our income, should he accept all, and we need use none of it but save it, lay it away for the time when Stuart is ready for college.

It is a silly thing I know, to sit here appropriating money which is as yet only a perhaps, and which is not earned; but just the little glimpse I have had of this possibility, shows me how despairingly I have been nourishing the hope.

Oh! if Stuart may only be enabled to get a collegiate education, I shall feel as though half of our difficulties were at an end. I know he will be horror-stricken at the idea of our working for his benefit, but I think I have the ability to make him do what I deem best, even though he may shrink from it, and refuse it at first.

DECEMBER 24.

It is all settled with our new friend Mr. J——, just as I desired, with two changes. The evening after we talked the matter over, Clarence went to Mr. J——'s residence, and after playing for him, offered to engage as organist, if he concluded to accept my arrangement.

I knew nothing of this, until the next day when Mr. J—— made his appearance, although Clarence in his nightly confiding said:

"I have been doing something to-day, *carissima*, which must be my own secret until to-morrow, and then you must grant my request; indeed, I know you will, for my poor heart would quite break did you refuse me."

When Mr. J—— came the mystery was explained, he was delighted with Clarence's performance.

"Why, Madame," he said, "he plays as well as your daughter sings, and I can give him no higher praise."

"Then are you willing for the sake of securing such stars," I asked smiling, "to take the others?"

"If they are in the least endurable, I will do anything within reason," he replied.

After he had heard them sing, he declared his entire satisfaction, only as he himself sings tenor, Ernest is to be substituted for Stuart, who will therefore take Nora's place at our organ.

I am so pleased with Mr. J——, and feel the girls are quite safe with him, especially as Ernest and Clare are to be with them.

The salary will make us rich indeed, and by close economy, and strict industry we can live without touching one cent of it, so it will be clear profit.

We were talking the matter over to-night, when Ernest said: "This money will just pay Stuart's way next year at college, if he gets through his examination successfully. I suppose he will if hard work will help him. Then he can take this money, and as much more as we can save and go."

"Only he will never, *never, never* take it, how dare you think me such a dastard as to allow you and all the rest, to be working night and day while I am sporting at college. You are unkind, Uncle Ernest, to think me such a selfish heathen, I will never do it I tell you."

"My! what a fine rage his lordship's in," laughed Ernest.

"Oh you may laugh, but I will be a shoemaker or a blacksmith, before I will go to college under such circumstances," said Stuart, still in a vehement fury.

"You might be a worse thing," said Mr. Raymond.

"Yes and I would be a worse thing, if I so forgot my manhood as to allow, my frail, sweet sisters to work for me," he replied.

"Your *manhood* is a budding thing as yet, I would not mention it too prominently," said Ernest mockingly. "Nevertheless to college you shall go next year."

"I will not, I vow I will not," he said angrily, "I would not mind if you and Clare were going to give me the means, but not the rest."

"Oh dear! we are not going to give you the means if you please, do not be so fast, we are only going to loan them until you become a celebrated lawyer, and then we will demand them with an enormous per centage, will we not?" and Ernest threw a laughing glance around the circle.

"Yes, indeed we will," answered one and all.

"Nonsense," said Stuart half laughing, but looking more like crying, "that is a poor get off, you shan't cheat me, I will never take the old money, I tell you."

"Do not say so," said Marion as she came up behind him and laid her hand upon his shoulder, "for you know you will do exactly as mamma says, after all."

"So I will, but she will never be so cruel or unkind as"—

"Mamma is never cruel or unkind, you saucy boy, how dare you insinuate such a thing," cried Birdie boxing his ears so fiercely, that for a while all protest was at an end.

When he began again, I silenced him by saying,

"My dear boy, it is hardly necessary to get into a dispute about something which will not happen for at least a year, as it is not likely you will be able to pass so severe an examination, this term at least; indeed I do not think it right you should try, eighteen will be quite young enough for you to commence a college career."

I saw Stuart give Marion a quizzical glance, which she answered by a low laugh. I suppose by that he means to try, even if he fails.

"But mamma," said Lela, "papa graduated, at 'Harvard' when he was only eighteen, did he not?"

"Yes, my dear, but the circumstances were different."

"Oh, of course, no one else could be like dear papa," she answered "not even Stuart although he is so talented."

We are satisfied with our present state, we have a thousand things each day of our lives for which to thank our Father.

He has brought us safely through much tribulation thus far, and surrounded us with many and manifold mercies.

Save that the loss of sight must ever be a severe cross to my darling Adèle, she is as happy as the day is long: every one attends to her first of all.

Gracie studies all her lessons aloud, so that Adèle may learn them too, and Lela gives her a music lesson every

day, so she will be by no means deficient. And then like almost all other blind people, music is her inspiration.

When I see her seated at the organ, and listen to the strains her little wandering fingers woo from the keys, I clasp her to my heart and weep over her, saying,

"Muriel, Muriel, I cannot spare thee, even for such a fate as Muriel's."

JANUARY 1.

We have had a gayer Christmas holiday this year than the last; first, because time has softened the grief of the departure of our beloved one into a sad but fragrant memory, for the younger ones at least, and again our hearts put on a lighter guise, because the ways of life are less covered with the clouds of poverty, and our hopes for the future seem more certain;—then too we are such a large family we could hardly know the quiet of the last year.

Even in our poverty, we have exchanged love tokens—for where there are fond hearts to contrive the way—willing hands can weave some bright nothing, for the dear ones, who prize the gift more for the care which wrought it, than if it were ten times the value,—thus it is ever, even the feeblest life has some flower to gladden it.

Stuart's present came nearer to my heart than any of the others;—it was his long worked for prize, and the very first offered for competition, a veritable surprise to all of us, save Marion who is always his confidant.—and such eulogy, as was lavished upon my dear boy by his examiners.

"He can do any thing," they write at the end of a letter filled with praises of his indefatigable industry and determination.—"God has endowed him with rare gifts—has given him emphatically *the ten talents*—it will be his own fault if he is second to any one, in anything."—This and more made our hearts full of gladness for our noble, great hearted Stuart.

The congratulations and praises which were rained upon him on all hands, made him declare as we sat together a happy family party upon New Year's eve,

"I vow there never was a fellow so happy and so blessed as your humble servant, or with such a host of friends to be

happy with him," then suddenly springing up from the stool at my feet, "May, you are real glad it is all over at last,—we have been anxious enough all this while, poor little May it was too bad to make you share the anxiety so long."

"I do not think I am at all the worse for my share of the uncertainty, for I had no fear for your success, you could not help but win," and she pushed back his brown clustering curls, "but oh I am glad, now you shall have some rest, you proudly humble victor."

He had given Adèle as much pleasure as the rest although she was longer telling him of it. Later in the evening as he sat with his head leaning upon my knee—half listening to the rest—half dreaming of his hard won victories—Adèle said:

"Call me, Arty," this is always the way in which she asks if she may come in safety. The trust evidenced by it, is so beautiful we are very careful naught shall break in upon her confidence.

"Come pet," said Stuart, when the way had been cleared; silently, and fearlessly she walked to him, nestling closely in his arms, and passing her hand over his face—

"How happy you are to-night, Arty, your face is full of smiles—and your voice sounds as if you wanted to be saying all the while, 'I am glad.'"

"And I am happy, *mignonne*, very happy."

"And so are Gracie and I, we always are, when the rest are glad."

"But you and Gracie have not told me you were glad, or kissed me either."

"We are so little, we cannot tell all we mean, but," and she laughed merrily, "we can kiss equal to any one, can we not, Gracie?"

Gracie came in her shy, blushing way, and added her kisses and praises.

"Why did you not come before little one?" asked Stuart.

"I have half a mind to think you do not care for all this fun of making a grand, to-do over the prize fighter, as How does."

"Oh yes, indeed, indeed, we do," was her earnest protestation, speaking as usual for both herself and Adèle, whom she does not think it possible can be separate for an instant.

"We are as proud and happy as possible, and have been saying how we liked to hear all the voices have a quiver of

joy in them, especially mamma's and May's,—and how much we wished you, or Clare, or How, could win prizes every day, but then May and Nora teach us," she added gravely, "that it is not proper or lady-like, for little girls to scream out what they think first of all, for May says the modest hidden flowers are always the sweetest and dearest; so now we always wait until we are asked, before we speak."

"A very nice reason, and you did quite right, now I must show my present to my good little sisters; Gracie, shut your eyes until Adèle sees it first."

"Oh Gracie, it is a book, is not that good?"

"And such a beauty, right new, Adèle," cried Gracie.

"What is its name, Stuart?" asked Adèle.

"No, I must not tell, you told Gracie what it was, so she must tell you its name; turn and turn about is fair play you know; there Gracie, read its name."

"Oh! what a nice name, 'Blossoms and Berries,' what does it mean Arty? What kind of blossoms and berries?"

"We must just peep into the inside and see, shall I read you something?"

"Oh please, please do," said both in one breath.

So with Adèle upon his knee, and Gracie's arm tightly clasped around his neck, he read piece after piece from this gem of a child's book, and I doubt whether the children found more enjoyment from the reading than their elders evinced.

I am quite sure could the author have seen the ecstasy of delight, into which his "Kitten Gossip," threw old and young, he would have thought it worth the pains of writing, and would have declared "I am glad I wrote it."

The inimitable and startling manner in which Arty rendered the lines

"The kitten's heart beat with great pit-pats,
But her whiskers quivered, and from their sheaths
Flashed out the sharp white pearly teeth.
R——r——r——rats."

Set his audience in a roar, and caused Howard, such exceeding delight, that according to Gracie—

"He really and truly stood on his head when 'Arty' did the R—— part, forgetting what his feet were made for."

CHAPTER XXIII.

FEBRUARY 1.

WE are getting along in our quiet way contentedly and cheerfully, all as busy as bees. Our life, day after day, presents the same active sameness. Now Mrs. Wilbur and Milly, have the whole of the housekeeping to themselves. Sandy is already beginning to be busy about his garden, so that, with the numerous requirements made upon him as errand-man, carrier, and general assistant by Milly, keep him "wi scarce a breathin' while, the day lang."

Estelle has set out for a teacher too, and through the endeavors of Stuart and Mr. Raymond, has succeeded in engaging six pupils for drawing and painting lessons, at five dollars a quarter. Not a very high price, but we are all satisfied and pleased with it for the present. She gives three lessons, an hour each, every day, so has plenty of time for home, and home duties.

I still give my lessons, being out from nine in the morning until four in the afternoon. Ernest's practice is now all he could ask it to be, as far as constant occupation is concerned, although, the paying part might be more profitable; still he feels, he is establishing a name for himself, and a more lucrative business will follow bye and bye.

Stuart has his room, and almost all the others, well filled with his prize books. He is very busy at present preparing his speech for the public meeting of the school, at which he was appointed one of the speakers. He is also very much engaged, studying—studying, night and day.

Clarence has made pretty good progress at school; his teachers are well satisfied with him, but he is too fond of painting and music ever to become a thorough student. Still, Stuart's example is a great help to him. The girls have been going a month to school, and are much pleased. At first it was a dreary time, slow, painful work enough, but now the strangeness has worn off, and the routine of the school is an accustomed thing, they like it very much, particularly as they are all together. The first day was the greatest trial, being introduced to their new teachers and companions. They laugh now at the horrors of their first day. After Uncle Ernest left them, the terrible *mauvaise honte* to be expected in girls so long secluded from all

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intercourse with people outside of there own homes, was upon them "taking" Marion declares "possession of them, flesh and blood for a while."

"We sat" she says, "up in one end of the room, huddled together, oh! how I wished the floor would cover me from the stare of all those rows, and rows of girls. I looked at Lela, she sat with her head erect, looking at a map upon the wall as though she cared no more for our awkward position, than Madame herself, but I knew she did: she might deceive others but the two bright spots on her cheeks, and the way she kept her lips tightly together, told me plainly as words, my proud sister did not relish the being made a show of, any more than poor, trembling me, or blushing Cora, who sat looking, as if she was not quite sure whether she should laugh or cry, and kept my hand between both of hers. Suddenly Madame's voice from the raised desk where she sat, sounded through the room, and oh horrors! she was talking to us! Although the tones of her soft voice had nothing terrible in them, I nearly jumped off my seat as she said in French, looking straight at Lela.

"Will Mademoiselle please tell me what she has been studying, lately?"

"For a moment there was a dead pause, then I heard a titter near us.

"I speak to Mademoiselle Percy," added Madame, "if you cannot answer in French, try English this once."

"Lela looked up this time, and saw Madame was addressing her. With perfect composure and in a clear tone she said:

"Pardonnez moi. C'est ma soeur qui est Mademoiselle Percy."

"Vraiment! Eh bien! Mademoiselle?" turning to Cora.

"Poor 'Birdie,' you should have seen her face, mamma. I wish Clare had been there to have sketched it. She was speechless, so I answered as calmly as I could,

"Madame ne sait pas, que je suis l'ainée?"

"Vous! par exemple! Cela ne peut,—vous avez beau dire—Mademoiselle!" and she raised her hands and eyes in incredulous amazement.

"But I assured her it was true. I am sorry, mamma, I look so very young, so much younger than either of the others, for I am sure I do not feel so. Well, at last Madame

was convinced I was Miss Percy, and then I had to undergo such an examination. Oh mamma, how I did wish for you, but that was foolish I knew, and I also knew it was right, for us all to submit to this examination, so I tried very hard not to be frightened, and Lela says I answered quite calmly.

"Quel âge avez-vous, Mademoiselle?"

"J'aurai bientôt seize ans," I answered.

"C'est une merveille! et votre sœur?" pointing to Leonore.

"Elle est dans sa quatorzième."

"Et l'autre?" she enquired

"Elle aura douze ans, le dix du Juin prochain."

"Then she examined us upon all our studies. Lela is far above me in every class, except German, and Cora below me in all but drawing. Madame declares she never saw a young girl so finished an artist." She does Aunt Estelle and Clare credit, if she does not the rest of her home teachers.

"You may think, mamma, how frightened we were when Madame assigned us our seats in different parts of the room. Lela walked calmly, with unfaltering steps, to her desk, which was half way down the room, but I saw the two little red spots deepen, and you know the quick way she has of shutting her upper teeth over her lower lip, when she is annoyed, or distressed; however, I did not fear for her composure. "Lady Lela is always composed," I thought. But in a moment Madame said:

"Mademoiselle Coralie, asseyez-vous ici."

"It was very far from either Lela or I, quite in the other end of the room, not even near Madame's *estrade*,—poor 'Birdie,' I felt her tremble. I could not bear she should be so frightened. So calling up all my strength I asked permission to have 'Birdie,' sit next me. Madame did not quite understand, nor quite like this apparent interference with her commands. I did not know what I should do, my courage was all gone, when good Lela rose quickly and going up to Madame, said in a low voice:

"My sister desires very much to have Cora sit next her; please Madame, if it is not against your rules, be so good as to permit it. Cora is very timid, and will never get along by herself, while she is strange; and afterwards, if she

is seated by any one who is willing to talk with her, I fear she will give you trouble. Marion will keep her in order for you, if you will allow them to sit together."

"Madame smiled and said:

"But suppose I do not, what will Miss Coralie do?"

"Cry all day, Madame, until she has made herself sick; not because she desires to be naughty, but because she cannot help it, she is so very timid."

"You speak beautiful French, ma belle," replied Madame, who, I could not help thinking, had been paying more attention to the accent than the words of her petitioner. However she sent Lela back to her place, and gave 'Birdie' and me, a couple of desks near the foot of her *pupitre*, at the head of the room. Then we began, in good earnest, to feel we were in school. For two or three hours, it was quiet and orderly, nothing loud or out of place, and no moving about except the different classes coming in, and going out to their recitation rooms. At recess time we all sat very quietly in the deep window near our desks, and after school we hurried on our things and came out dreadfully afraid of our school companions."

This was Marion's account of the first day, after that it was much better. As I have a full account from each, every night, I know pretty nearly all that transpires. A day after at recess, as they sat in the window aforesaid, all huddled together looking out at nothing in particular, this interesting employment being preferable to meeting the gaze of thirty or more strange girls, a voice behind them said, gaily,

"This will never do, if you mean to inhabit this window always we will never be able to become acquainted with each other. I am Ada Lawrence, will you be friends with me?"

They "looked round into a sweet laughing face not beautiful, but very lovable," says Marion.

Her cheek was flushed and a slight nervousness in her manner, showed plainly, she had not made this advance without some difficulty.

"Most willingly," said Lela. "Will you take a chair, and sit with us?"

"Thank you, let me see, you are Lela, this bright eyed thing with her golden curls is Clara?"

"No, no, Coralie if you please," said Lela.

"Ah! Coralie! what a lovely name!" and then added, "this is Marion, do you always say Marion?"

"No," answered Lela, who was spokesman, "we call her Marie, and May, and all sorts of things."

"May, that is soft and sweet, it suits her gentle face, and quiet soothing ways. Will you let me call you May, please?"

"Gladly, if you like it," said Marion "or whatever else suits you best; as Lela says, I am used to all sorts of names, good, bad, and indifferent."

"You are very good," this was said with a short vehement tone and flushed face, "I know you must be very good."

"No, I am not, indeed I am not," answered Marion.

Instead of receiving the hurried denial of goodness, as if she was convinced, with an impetuous movement, their new friend sprang from her chair, and kneeling down by Marion, clasped her hand tightly in both her own, saying,

"Love me, May, only love me, will you?"

Marion much astonished at this sudden proceeding, said after a pause during which she was trying to conquer her embarrassment.

"I think I will, for you look very lovable."

"I am not, I am not, if you cannot love me except I deserve it, I am sure you will not do it."

"You do not look very bad, does she Lela?"

"No, she has a very deceptive face and voice, if she is what she says she is," answered Lela smiling.

"Thank you both, but," and her face was very earnest, "I am very careless and thoughtless, I want some one to help me grow good. Say 'I will try to help you,' May, please do."

"I will try, indeed I will, but, then you must promise to help me too," and Marion smiled.

"Call me 'dear Ada.'"

"Dear Ada, pretty Ada, my friend Ada."

"That is so good, so kind of you, now kiss me and I will not plague you any more."

Marion leaned over her and pressed three or four tender kisses upon her brow.

"Ada mine, it was good of you to break the ice, and make friends with the young ladies—but we did not agree you should take possession of them utterly," said a voice behind them.

"This is Dora Gleason, young ladies," said Ada spring-

ing up, and turning quickly to a young lady who had approached unseen. "She is very lovely as you see, and as good as she is lovely."

The new comer was indeed just what her friend pronounced her, lovely—tall, slender, with a gentle tender face, from which look forth such soft sad loving eyes, dark as—well, dark as her own raven tresses which lay in great waving folds above her pale pure brow,—such a wistful pleading look, those dark eyes send forth from their silent depths,—and her voice has a mournful cadence in it which tells of some sorrow, untold perhaps, but ever present.

As for the other, the first friend of my daughters among these strange girls, she is such a nondescript,—magnificent in stature, faultless in form, with auburn hair, grey eyes, a nez retroussé and the most charming mouth and chin,—just one of those redeemable features that one often sees—not alone in outward, but inward semblance,—when though every other thing may be common-placed, or ordinary, this is so bewitching and heart-taking, our only thought is "charming," and in admiration of the one feature we lose all sense of the faults of the rest—just so it is with the perfectly rounded chin—the full ripe lips, the pearly teeth which show beneath their perfect curve—just these which make Ada Lawrence the charmer, amongst so many who have ten charms to her one—she has about her a something, a *je ne sais quoi*, in her whole mien, which is irresistible.

But I left them in the school-room while I make this digression, but I have seen the fair "ladies"—and could not forbear to dot down just what impressions they made upon me.

"Ada is a flatterer," said Dora, smiling.

"No, I am not, you are good," looking round she added, "where are the other girls?"

"Waiting for you to invite them forward."

"Is that all," stepping gaily out into the middle of the room she cried.

"Mademoiselles, Jennie, Mary, Louise, et Clara, Venez-ici." Three or four girls, from a neighboring window came up to where she stood, and threw rather a shy glance towards the company she had just quitted,

"Courage! 'mes amies,'" she said.

Drawing near the window, she said pleasantly,

"We six are a circle who being about the same age,

somewhat the same taste, and ditto in ability, generally find it most agreeable to spend our time together for mutual benefit."

"Not much benefit, I fear," said Dora smiling, "this is Mary Lea," and she took the hand of a quiet pale girl, plain, but for the beauty in her brown eyes, and browner curls. She held out her hand, saying,

"We will be glad to have you join our set, but not with the hope of benefit, as Ada here says."

"This little witch," said Ada, "with rosy cheeks and dimpled chin, and laughing eyes, and pouting lips, is a good-for-nothing cousin of mine, from far away beside the blue waters of the Potomac; one of the F. F. V's, you understand." And she drew towards her a gay laughing girl, *tres petite et tres belle*.

She laughed, and blushed, as she held out her hand, with the words half shy and half saucy.

"Please only believe half Ada says, and then when you know me, perhaps—I think you will like me."

The rest laughed, as this speech was finished.

"How characteristic!" said Mary.

"Yourself over again, Louise," laughed Ada.

"This damsel so tall, so proud, is Clara Robbins, pale, cold, tranquil, we call her icicle."

The girl so introduced, bowed gravely and proudly, but did not make any reply, save by a smile.

"Then, last not least is our merry winsome Jennie, oh she is a very darling, very good sometimes, and sometimes very naughty, but take her as a whole, she is worth your while to know, Jennie Chalton."

A pretty girl, not a beauty, with hair inclined to what we call red, a pensive face, when quiet, but with a winning sunny smile.

"Now, let me tell you, Jennie, Dora and Clara, are the prize scholars; and Louise, Mary, and your humble servant the best boon companions."

"You understand, you are not to place confidence in all Ada says," said Jennie laughing.

"We understand," said Marion, and then quietly added "you are very kind to come to us, for we were feeling very strange; I hardly know how it would have been possible, for us to have sought you, for Lela is very proud, and Cora and I very timid."

"Lela looks proud," said Dora, "but I do not fear her, I think it is a good pride."

"Do I, Miss Dora?" said Lela, smiling, "I am sorry, I am sure, to show so plainly I am disagreeable."

"Not disagreeable, only you look a queen."

"And Coralie is like a fairy," said Jennie, "is she not, girls, with her golden hair, and eyes peeping out beneath them?"

"Very like a fay," said Ada.

"Did you ever see one, Miss Jennie?" said Cora with a quick blush at her own temerity.

"Never had the pleasure until now, but I recognized you, by the description," she answered laughing.

"Never saw a fairy! you poor distressed, neglected girl, why you maun gae hame wi' me some simmer day, and I will show you where they dwell, and if you chose to stay alone all night, you shall see them dance within the ring, we call the fairy's dell; after twelve, they dance by moonlight, so the country folks do say."

"Have you ever seen them, Mary?"

"As if I would live where they live, and never see them?" laughed Mary, "and I a womanite too!"

But the bell rang and in a trice the school was quiet again. Since this time Marion and Lela have passed their time very pleasantly, while Birdie, sometimes with them, and oftener with the younger classes, has what she calls,

"Just the best and gladdest of times."

MARCH 1.

The impetuously expressed desire of Ada Lawrence, for Marion's love, was no momentary fancy, they have become fast friends; Lela says it is strange to see how, already, Ada obeys a look or gentle word of Marion's.

Coralie, Louise, and Jennie, are a very loving trio of graces, and always together.

Lela, with her usual reserve, was long in choosing a friend, but now Dora and she are *coeur et coeur*.

For her second beloved friend, Marion has the pale cold Clara; and Lela, the plain but agreeable Mary Lea.

These are real school girl loves, yet they make my darlings very happy, they say,

"Mamma and Aunt Estelle were school friends, and have been faithful ever since, why may not we?"

And sure enough, why may they not? These new friends, may not be all they seem, yet all have their faults, and I dare say they are as free, as any others.

Lela comes to me often, telling me of some new thing, which charms her in Dora, or some kindly act which has caused a warmer glow for Mary.

"But you first, you best, you ever, mamma, precious darling!" she will whisper.

And I know it is so, not alone with her, but the others.

"How good it is to have you to talk to, mamma, and to know you understand all I mean," says Cora.

But Marion's kiss says more than all, although her lips rarely speak the words.

Stuart is hard at work, both at his lessons and speech. Estelle's pupils increase, and we have so little leisure at home save evenings, that we very rarely have time to do a piece of work for Margery.

Clarence progresses much more rapidly than I thought possible. Stuart is a great assistance to him.

CHAPTER XXIV.

APRIL 25.

ONE day last month, as the girls at Madame's school, where gathered round the register at recess, laughing, and talking, about divers important and unimportant affairs, Marion putting her hand quietly over Ada's mouth, who at that moment was talking very rapidly, silenced her with the remark,

"If you will only be still for about ten minutes *ma chere* and let me talk, I will be your debtor."

"Certainly, I am mute," answered her friend, "attention for Miss Percy's speech!"

"Hear! hear!" said some of the others.

"Well, I do want to make a speech, or at least a proposition. First I want to know why you all come here—I mean what makes you come to school?"

"Because every one else does," answered Clara.

"For the simple reason, that my mother makes me do that thing, and for no other," replied Louise, dryly:—

"Both remarks are full of originality, and force, young ladies, I make you my prettiest courtesy," quoth Ada.

"Now, for the rest," said Marion, "Jennie; what is your reason; for being here?"

"To learn of course, why should I attend school if not for that?"

"Those are my sentiments, that friend speaks my mind exactly," said Mary Lee.

"And mine," said Dora.

"Well that is partly mine also, to learn my lessons, improve my mind, my voice and my dancing, &c., &c., for further particulars, please consult the circulars of the fashionable pensionnat, of Madame Dugrade. Then, beside all the various reasons aforesaid, I like to make pleasant acquaintances and think that in after years, they will be my friends; that is one very potent desire which keeps me here, shall you not be my friend bye and bye, as well as now, May, dear? Will you cast me off when I cease to be a school girl?" and Ada's arm was round the waist of her friend and her eyes were very earnest pleaders for her.

"No, dear Ada, I think we will always be just such friends as we are now."

"Damon and Pythias," said Jennie.

"Orestes and Pylades," said Cora, "but what were you going to say, Marion dear?"

"Yes, to what point did these wise remarks of yours mean to lead us, sister mine?" asked Nora.

"Why, I was thinking as we came here to learn, we certainly should try to do it."

"Do we not?" interrupted Jennie. "I am sure we most of us study hard enough—at least speaking for myself I study as untiringly as I can."

"So you do, dear Jennie, but that is not what I meant. The chief thing with many of us, is to perfect our French, and for that reason we are not permitted to speak a word in English during school hours, but at recess, we let loose our tongues, and give free scope to our Anglo-Saxon proclivities."

"In plain words, speak our mother tongue," said Ada.

"Well, what is the objection to that, Marion?" asked Cora.

"That by so doing, I think we undo all that we have been striving to obtain during school hours, a free, fluent style of French conversation."

"What is the remedy? I for one admit the fault, and a grievous fault it is," said Mary Lee.

"Suppose we bind ourselves not to speak a word to each other, for the next three months out of school, except in French."

"And inflict a forfeit on those who forget," said Louise.

"Agreed," said all the rest.

"But how will you three Percy girls manage at home? will it not be inconvenient?" asked Dora.

"We will promise not to speak English at all events," said Lela, "for that we rarely do."

"What then?" asked Jennie.

"We used always, or at least for more than a year past, to speak nothing but French, except after eight in the evening, but now since we have practice in French at school, we always use the German after we get home."

"Who teaches you?"

"Mamma, Uncle Ernest, and Aunt Estelle, so you see we have plenty of help to keep us straight."

"And is it possible you can speak German well enough to hold common conversation?" asked Dora in amazement.

"Ja wohl, meine Freundinn," laughed Coralie.

"Oh dear! if I am ever able to speak one language beside my own, decently, I shall be charmed," said Louise.

"Why Lela speaks a little Italian too," said Cora, "or at least she is learning it, taking an half hour's lesson every day."

"Does your mother teach you that, also, Lela?" asked Jennie.

"No, my brother Clarence, Jennie."

"Is he a good teacher? does he speak correctly?"

"He was born and raised in Italy," said Cora laughing, "he ought to be a pretty good Italian scholar I think."

"Your brother educated in Italy!"

"He is only an adopted brother," explained Marion, "but we know no difference."

"Why it would not be so very strange if he had been born there," said Coralie, "I was born in Florence myself, and I am sure I look just like other folks."

But the bell began to ring and they had only time to renew their promise before the recess was over.

CHAPTER XXV.

MAY 1.

LAST week we one and all, accompanied by our old friend Mr. Ostend, went to the M——, Hall to hear the speeches of the High School boys. Stuart was the second speaker, and I must confess I trembled, when after a most excellent address from the Principal, my boy arose. He looked flushed and embarrassed for a few moments, as he came to the front of the stage, and made a slight bow, but that was the only sign of consciousness he exhibited. Taking out his address, he laid it out before him, and tossing back the lock, that "will get in his eyes," he began by announcing his subject. "The destiny of man." His tone was clear, his declamation distinct, and his manner as gracefully composed, as if he had been accustomed to public speaking for the last ten years. I confess I was amazed at his *nonchalant* manner, I am certain he did not tremble one half as much as Clarence who sat next to me. My brave boy, how handsome he looked. His destiny it seemed to me was written upon that broad, white brow, circled round with the brown curls, I have for these last two years, each night smoothed back with tender, loving fingers, as he, seated at my feet has poured into my heart his hopes and fears, his strivings and longings, his earnest endeavors, and many failures. I saw, as he pictured out the perils and dangers, of school-boy life,—the difficulties he had passed: and as with kindling eye and flushed, excited face he told the way to combat them, of the proud happy feeling of a victory won, of the triumph of right over wrong, I wondered if any other, of all that vast crowd knew it was his own life experience, he was pouring out in

eloquent words, (not *boy* eloquence;) that it was his own heart which spoke to them. And then, my heart swelled, with a song of thanksgiving, as he pictured in words of pure gold, in glowing sentences of radiant sunshine, the future of one who thus strove, with might and main, for the right.

"Who, with eye fixed above, ever went on, and on, never looking down to his torn and bleeding feet, which the rough pointed way, through which he had trodden, was wounding, but, kept his steady gaze fixed above, to the highest and loftiest; and this not because it was the first and highest place, not because there he might look down upon those who had started with him at the beginning, those whose feet had passed with him the first round of the ladder of fame, but, whom in his earnest endeavors, with his stern, determined will, he had left long ago, far behind—not that all this might be, but because it was right; not first and highest in the world's way, but best and greatest in God's way.—Using the talents, which God had given, not for self and the world's service, but as thank-offerings laid upon God's altar, ready to present pure and fair, with the answer, 'Here Lord,' when He should ask. 'Where are the talents I gave thee?' Oh! it is true, it is certain, he continued,

'Life is real! Life is earnest!
And the grave is *not* its goal,
Dust thou art to dust returnest,
Was not spoken of the soul.

Not enjoyment, and not sorrow,
Is our destined end, or way,
But to act that each to-morrow,
Find us farther than to-day.

Let us then be up and doing,
With a heart for any fate,
Still achieving, still pursuing,
Learn to labor and to wait.'

"And, next to God, and God's service, it warms the heart, it nerves the arm, it adds new strength and vitality to the brain, if before you, looms above all else one pure, earnest hope, one bright true light, which your endeavours may brighten—a mother's love! Oh! the beacon of hope and

promise!—the cheer, the comfort, of that thought, it is for her!

"When the brain is over worked, the heart weary, the strength well nigh gone, the end seemingly so far off, so hard to gain, so long to wait for, then comes the precious restful thought, it is for her dear sake, the mother of my love, she whom my heart and life, have elected from among all other women, to be a shield, and guide, to my oftentimes futile efforts after the right, all things seem easy then, God is nearer, and more kind, our mother is his friend, and he is her sure and faithful helper; then hope comes,—he may for her dear sake, in answer to her fond prayers be ours, and with quickened pulse, and new found strength, we go on and on, never wearying, firm and true, our feet planted on a strong foundation, our eyes fixed above, never swerving, never turning, but pressing towards the highest point of yon mountain, in our right hand, our banner unfurled, and upon it written as, the poet has sung, one word, the word 'Excelsior.'"

This is but a faithless record of Stuart's words. He sat down pale and exhausted, amid a burst of hearty applause, and while the band played a grand march, the professors came forward and shook him heartily by the hand.

After the music, another speech was made, indeed three or four others, and Stuart came to us, to receive our congratulation, and loving speeches, dearer than all the rest. And seated between Marion and myself, I know my noble earnest, true hearted boy, was well content.

CHAPTER XXVI.

MAY 10.

JENNIE CHALTON is the only one of the girls, whom my daughters number as their friends who has anything approaching a home in this city; the rest are residents at madame's *pensionnat*. Jennie, however more fortunate than the others, has an Aunt living here, with whom she resides, and attends the school as a day scholar. Well, Jennie is

going to have a party, and Marion, Lela, and Cora, are invited. "And are to bring their uncles, or brothers, or any one else."

"The 'any-body' else in our case, being Sandy," said Cora.

This there first party, except at home long ago, is quite an important event, and very much talked of.

"Lela is outwardly, superbly indifferent but I think at heart likes it right well," says Clarence.

"Well, Cora here, makes up in extras for any deficiencies upon 'queen's' part, for oh such cachinnation as she has been attempting, these last two days, are astounding; I really shall feel it my duty to put her in a cage, or she will commit some terrible deed, which will render her unfit for anything like parties in the future," said Stuart.

"My dear young man, I recommend silence and propriety of deportment, or I shall forbid speech-making in the future, as it evidently has a pernicious effect upon your manner towards your elders," answered Cora.

"Ahem! hear! hear! attention for Mademoiselle Coralie the great! (humbug)," under his breath, said Howard.

"Little boys should be seen and not heard."

But Stuart is right, Cora does indeed make up by her exclamations and antics, for any deficiency upon the part of the others. Her first *real* party is a *real* treat.

Adèle and Gracie with two beautiful birds from Clare "which do sing so sweetly," and a dog given them lately by Stuart, and called "Bueno," are at present above all parties.

MAY 20.

The grand party is over, and such a time, so much pleasure was never before enjoyed. I for my part am very sure there were no fairer girls among the assembly, than those we robed and sent forth.

They had little to make them noticeable in the way of dress, although we made over to them the most appropriate of our old party dresses and ornaments, but they needed none. Marion's pale sweet face, required no outward adorning to win its way to the heart; and Lela's starry eyes,

and beautiful face would have shamed the brightest gems. Then what could have set off our Birdie, better, than her golden curls, and sunny witching smiles.

Clarence and Stuart were their cavaliers, and very proud they were of them.

"Oh mamma!" cried Birdie, "there was not one single gentleman in that whole crowd, I would have changed them for, and that is saying a good deal, for there were some very handsome men there, but 'Arty' looked so dignified and noble, and Clare was so attentive and gentlemanly, that I was real proud."

"I am glad you were so well pleased," said I, amused at her raptures. "Yes, and so were all the rest of the girls, they all thought them elegant: at first Stuart was real mean and would only dance with Marion or Lela, but after a while he behaved better; but Clare was a darling all the while, and asked every body to dance, even the little bits of girls."

Then followed a long account of Ada's splendid dress, of her diamonds and so forth, and of what a favorite she is with every one, how the gentlemen flock round her, and how saucily she treats them.

Then of the dress and doings of all the others, until Clare declared:

"Why Birdie seems to have done nothing but take an inventory of the belongings of every one of the guests."

"Mamma you must forbid those boys speaking until I am through my account," replied the saucy girl, "Marion sang, but not well at all, because she was almost frightened to death, but Nora made up for all deficiencies; I never heard her sing so well in my life. And you should have seen the ladies and gentlemen crowd round her, and beg for this song and then that. I should have been so frightened, but Lela never changed colour even, but sang just whatever they requested her to, looking all the while, as if she was the especial sovereign of every one in the room, and only deigned to amuse them."

"Oh Birdie!" interrupted Lela, "for shame!"

"It is true, believe me mamma, she had the extra Percy haughtiness on, for this especial occasion, and looked for all the world as if she was saying, 'do not attempt to be familiar with me, I am a poor Percy, but nevertheless I am

a proud one.' And I confess, she looked none the less beautiful for it."

"No, indeed," interrupted Clare, "Lela is one of the few to whom a haughty look adds a new grace."

— But Lela gave him a pinch to silence him as she left the room.—

"And then," continued Cora, "there was a gentleman so elegant and handsome, named Livingstone, oh mamma you know him, Marion says, or I mean, used to. I never saw anything half so glorious as his face, oh he must be so good, he looks as if he was something more than a man, like one of the gods of the ancients, come down through ages to us, oh I think such a man as that could hardly know how to do wrong, and his eyes when he looks right at you, as he did once at me and called me his 'dear child,' have a look in them, which almost takes one's breath away, so beautiful!"

"Foolish Birdie! as if good looks could prevent a man from being evil, why they only add to his temptations," said Ernest.

"Does Dr. Wilbur speak from experience?" laughed Marion.

"Judge for yourself, my dear, my modesty forbids a reply," and he drew up his fine form, and smoothed back his hair.

"Oh fiddlesticks," cried Cora, "I wish you would stop interrupting me. I have the floor, ladies and gentlemen, remember. Well, this Mr. Livingstone who has the most hateful looking wife you ever beheld, just as disagreeable as he is agreeable, came up to Ada and begged an introduction to, 'the beautiful nightingale,' and you ought to have seen the aforesaid nightingale arch her neck, and do the condescending. A bashful man would have been extinguished."

"Which, of course, your Apollo was not," said Estelle.

"I believe not, but just as I was watching them, Louise wanted me to waltz with her, and so I saw nothing for a long while in the music room, for oh dear! I do love to dance so."

"Indeed you do, verily, I can testify you do," said Clare "you rather out-do any thing in the dancing line I ever saw."

"Papa used to call me the poetry of motion, Clare," said she, "I never get tired, I think if I should dance all night I should be just as fresh in the morning."

"Well, Birdie, let me take up your story where you left off," said Marion. "Just as Ada introduced one gentleman, another approached and asked,

"Will Miss Ada extend her favors to me also, and present me to her friend?"

I looked at Lela to see if she remembered who this gentleman was, I knew she had the other. She nodded her head quickly—as if to say "yes, I know them both."

"Let me introduce you to Mr. Marstone, Lela, one of the few gentlemen whom it is worth one's while to know," said Ada casting a saucy glance at Mr. Livingstone as she went away.

"Thank you, Miss Ada," said Mr. Marstone.

"You naughty coz," said Mr. Livingstone, who it seems is a distant relation of Ada's mother.

As soon as Mr. Livingstone had been introduced, he asked for a song, but before Lela could notice his request, Ada presented Mr. Marstone. You know how we must both have liked him mamma, for being our dear old friend's nephew, even if for nothing else."

"May I tax you to sing one more song, or are you weary with the demands already made upon you?" he asked.

"Not at all, sir, what shall I sing?" said Lela with quite a gentle face.

"*Ah non giunge* if you permit me to chose."

"Always ahead of me, Marstone," said Mr. Livingstone, with a half laugh, "always able to obtain without effort, what I sue for in vain. This song belonged to me by right, if the young lady goes upon the principle of 'first come, first served,'" and he moved to the other end of the piano and stood with folded arms, looking down as though he was far away in some other place, thinking of something very different from the scene around him. Just as I was thinking this and wondering such a little thing should have annoyed him, Lela went quickly towards him, and said in her frank earnest way.

"Forgive me sir, I had forgotten you asked me, Mr. Marstone's name had a charm for me, from old associations,

and brought up some old times so strongly, that I think my politeness has quite left me."

"Of what did his name remind you?" he replied, leading her back in a very graceful way to the piano.

"Of a great many things, but especially, how pleasant it was to be singing for a Mr. Marstone once more."

"And that it was not especially gratifying, to be singing for a Mr. Livingstone. Was that it, my bright eyed lassie?" said he looking down pleasantly into her face.

"It will be a great pleasure now, sir, if you like to hear—and will ask me," she added archly.

"That I will, and right humbly, as soon as you have sung my friend's song."

"Oh I can wait, Rolf, you know I studied patience long ago, in every thing that concerns you," laughed Mr. Marstone.

But Lela sang "*A non giunge*," and then turning said:

"And what shall I sing Mr. Livingstone?"

"You shall choose for me, sing your favourite."

"I will sing one of my favourites," she replied.

"But not the one especial and particular pet?"

"Oh, no sir, I could not do that, I could not give what I love best to a stranger, among strangers too," said she, quite earnestly.

"True, true, I was forgetting I am not even so much a friend as Marstone here, although I was presented first. You know his name and did not know mine, I remember you said."

"Oh, no sir, I did not say so, for I knew your name also, indeed I suppose I ought to know you the better of the two, as I have often seen you before, and never saw him until to-night."

"Seen me, where pray?"

"I would rather not say where, it was so long ago, and I was such a little girl, you would not remember me."

"Then if I am an old acquaintance why did you like to sing for Marstone, rather than for me?" he said keeping up the conversation for the sake of plaguing her I thought, or else because he had nothing better to do with himself.

"Because I loved a person whom I once knew, very dearly who bore his name, sir."

"And did not love me, whom you also knew, at all," he said, "was that it?"

"Yes sir," Lela answered coolly.

I thought it was so rude of him to talk as he did, that I went up then to them, and said:

"Lela, Clara wants you to waltz with her, will you go?"

"I have promised to sing this gentlemen a song, this is Mr. Livingstone, Marion, you remember."

"Yes dear, I know."

"And this is Mr. Marstone, would you have known who he was?"

"If I had looked in his face, and heard him speak, I think either would have told me. We knew your uncle sir."

"Yes, so I supposed from your sister's remarks," he replied.

"And did you once know me?" said Mr Livingstone.

"Oh, yes sir, and you used to make great professions of friendship for me too!" I replied.

"Will you not solve the problem and tell me when, and where, and how? My memory quite fails me."

"Come Lela, Mr. Livingstone does not care for your song, and Clara is beckoning very impatiently to you to come."

"No, no, little lady, that is not fair to leave me in the dark and cheat me of my song as well."

"What shall I sing, Marion? Mr. Livingstone will not make a choice," said Lela,

"He used to like German music best," said I, laughing at his perplexity, "sing Adelaide."

"*In der Deutschen, liebes Schwesterlein?*"

"Certainly, Nora dear, as it is to please this gentleman."

Then I need not tell you how she sang it, mamma, you know what pathos she can put into this and every song. When she was through, Mr. Livingstone said, with a sad smile which made him seem more handsome than before,

"Thank you, I did not think any thing in the world would come so near making me feel subdued."

How strange it is that, broken off as we are, from every part of our old life, almost the first persons my daughters

met in society should be in some way connected with that severed life.

This Mr. Marstone is the nephew of our old friend, and the heir who was expected when we left. Oh! the white towers of our beloved home, cast their long shadows in at the very windows of the house he now calls his own, and yet it never gives him one joy or pang, to have it so near him, and we would live upon the sight for days.

And the other one is Rolf Livingstone. I know alas too well, from the account of this one evening that Isadore Livingstone has not belied the promise of her youth, and his life is a weary one. His warm heart is cheated of its happiness. How unsatisfying he finds a life passed at the side of this cold, heartless woman, his bitter words too plainly tell.

And I do not envy them, their lot although they are surrounded with every luxury that wealth can purchase, they cannot with all their countless gold buy that precious gift of peace and happiness, nor wedded love,

Oh! better poverty with the memory of a dear love, than a cold selfish heart next your own, which never knows one glance of tenderness for you.

I am very glad the girls did not discover to either of these gentlemen, who they are, or where they have known them, indeed I scolded them for letting them know it at all.

"But mamma," said Lela, "I should have been telling an untruth had I pretended I had never seen him, when he asked me so distinctly."

What could I say to that? Nothing but that it was as it should be, and agree with Mr. Raymond's fervent

"God bless you, dear child," as he drew her to him, "and keep you always as pure of heart as now!"

But Lela started away from him with a quick earnest look into his face.

"You are not praising me Uncle Harley, for not letting him think a story, I hope you are not?"

"No, dear child, I will praise you for something which gives you more trouble," he replied somewhat abashed.

"Thank you, I should not like to be commended for not having told a falsehood," she replied quietly.

One thing I must put down here:—in searching among some things which have been undisturbed since we left

home, I discovered an old ring which has been an heirloom in my husband's family for ages. I never have seen any thing like it in any other place. It is composed of six links which are so curiously wrought that when woven into each other they form one solid ring with no crevices preceptible; and besides this, there is upon each of the separate links a small amethyst which when it is united, forms a *pensée* upon the top.

There is a legend connected with the flower which says, that in the olden times this was the troth ring of the Ladye Alice Howard and her lover the brave Harry, Lord of Percy, and that each wore upon their betrothal finger just such a ring as this, save the stones of his were red.—

And when he sent her messages of love from the far off land of the crusade, he would send her as a token of his faith, one of these links, which she would weave into her own and send him back with many a love word, a blue-eyed link as a token of her truth.

And the people who served the Ladye Alice in her castle bower, wondered to see the ring of blue which was a type of love, change stone by stone, to blood-like red. And they said:

"It is because she pines for brave Harry who is afar, and weeps o' nights, and pressing his troth ring oftentimes to her lips, washes the blue out with her heart's blood."

But in the land of the Saracens, Lord Harry's comrades watched his wonderful ring change color, with angry eyes, and swore he had learned of the Turks the necromancer's art; and then they whispered he was in league with the powers of darkness. And when at last they lost a mighty battle they vowed he had sold them to their enemy, and with fierce rage they fell upon him, and slew him: but when the king who was his nearest kin heard of the deed, the wicked cruel deed which had been done, he was very wroth, and sent and told them the secret of the ring, which only he beside the two true lovers had known.

And then they wept and mourned for the brave true soldier many days, but that brought not back to life and hope, bold Harry Percy. Nor did it banish the woe of the fair Ladye who wept for him in her grim old castle, until kneeling one vesper-time before the image of the Virgin, she died, saying an *ave* for the peace of Harry Percy's soul.

And when they strove to remove the ring which had been Harry Percy's from her taper fingers, her hands were clasped so closely together they could not part them. And so they buried the ring of fire within the grave of the fair Layde Alice Howard, who had died for love of her dear lord.

And thus it came, that only this with its Pensée flower was left, and because of the memory of those two faithful ones, it was ever after treasured among the heir-looms of the house, and was worn to this country by a fair descendant of a brother of Harry Percy's who fled (when the martyr Charles was beheaded,) to this land of refuge.

I have often heard my husband tell the legend and the children knew it by heart long ago.

I have a strange fancy to bestow it upon my little fatherless Ernestine, and so Marion and I have made a case of kid, and sewing it tightly therein have hung it about her neck. And Clare with a world of flourishes has written "Lillian" upon the outside of the bag.

"So we will let her wear it as an amulet about her neck, until the time when our Lilly-bell is a woman grown," says Lela.

"And has found her faithful Harry Percy," adds Howard.

"Oh my Lilly-bell must never know any of those naughty love-aches, which are always getting folks into such a world of trouble, making them groan and pine and die," says Cora, tossing her up, "Tiny and I beg to be excused from having the fever of love, so the faithful Harrys may stay in the land of the Saracens for all we care."

"Oh no danger, little goose, no one will ever take the trouble to come a journey after you," said Stuart pulling her curls over her eyes. But his loving look told another tale.

Ah Cora's merry words have set me thinking of the time, when one by one my flowers will be plucked away from me.

CHAPTER XXVII.

MAY 30.

"AUNT BERTHA, Pliny the younger, says, 'Ad connectendas, amicitias, tenacissimum vinculum est movum similitudo;' which can be translated, 'For cementing friendship, resemblance of manners is the strongest tie.' Now I hold that to be false, for look at Stuart and me, do we not love each other? I think there is nothing in this wide world I would not do or give up, that his happiness might be insured, and yet how dissimilar we are, why there is nothing about us alike. He has a fair complexion, brown curly hair, brown eyes, with a roguish twinkle in them, is tall and well developed, although he is so young. While I am slight and boyish in height and figure, with sallow face, straight black hair, and dull black eyes. And then how much more unlike are we in temperament. He is stirring, active, full of life, never satisfied until he has come to the foundation of every thing; possessing not a particle of faith in any thing, until he has fully proved and tried it; while I am lazy, willing to take everything for truth and right, rather than have the trouble to explore it. Then he is brilliant and talented, full of acute and versatile wit, while I am a dull plodding uninteresting fellow; and yet, for all this difference we love each other dearly, and I am sure Stuart would prove my friend and champion, no matter what came. Now is not the famous Pliny a false witness? Does he not speak unsound and foolish words? Am I not right in thinking, that opposites form closer attachments than those who are alike?"

"Who is this fellow who dares talk in this wise, forsooth! he must beware of his words," saying which Stuart with one powerful grasp wheeled Clarence into the centre of the room and held him there. "You young limb of a Latin, how dare you talk in my presence thus of my dear friend and comrade; calling him dull and ill-made. Oh! that I could shake sense into you. Now listen while I tell you how this same Clarence whom you have been calling such hard names, appears to me. I hold him at arm's length and gaze; I see a tall slight figure, every movement of which is grace, a face not very handsome, but good, a brow lofty and well developed, with long black hair shading it. Eyes, you dared

just now to call them dull ! Dull ! so is a star, dull ! no never, even in their calmest moments, they are filled with a beautiful light. Oh ! I said this fellow was not handsome, I recall the words, no one could have such eyes and not be handsome. They are like a cloudless night ; away down in their depths, they tell you there is a brave true heart. I would trust that heart with my best treasure. The light of these eyes is precious to me. Never dare to talk of this friend of mine again not being talented, not being brilliant ! Why he is one of God's chosen ones, upon whom great gifts have descended, the gifts of art, of poetry and music. He is my David, I his Jonathan, our love is like unto the love of woman. Is it not Clare ? ”

And he wound his arms round the boy and looked down with his brother's love into his face.

“ My brother Stuart ! ” in a trembling tearful voice was the reply.

“ My brother Clare ! ” the firm clear answer.

Thus the gay words of Clarence showed the depth of love, the tender yearning love each had for the other. Brave boys ! noble boys ! God love them ! God bless them ! these good true hearts. It comforts me strangely in all my trials and griefs that these hearts are mine so really and entirely. Their hopes and fears, their strifes and victories mine as well.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

JUNE 20.

ANOTHER party on the *tapis*, and quite as pleasant as the last.

This time, not only the children, but the older members of our household are included in the invitation.

It being the custom of Madame Degrade, to close school during the warmest months of summer, it is likewise her habit to give a farewell party to her scholars. This year at the request of the pupils the entertainment is to be

varied by a coronation. The last days of school were devoted to the distribution of prizes. Lela had two of the highest, those for music and the languages ; for the former she obtained the first prize, an elegantly bound volume, containing, one hundred pieces of choice music, for the latter she also obtained the first gift, a handsome writing-desk, inlaid with pearl. Coralie had the first prize for painting, which was a handsome easel-stand, and box of colors. Ada and Leanore contested for a long while the palm for dancing, but at last it was decided in Ada's favor and she was presented a beautiful statuette of Terpsichore. Dora had an elegant writing-desk for the best penmanship, and Marion one equally as fine for the best composition. Jennie received the prizes in all the English studies over all the rest. Leanore and Mary Lee, coming in equally for the second over the others. Coralie was much chagrined by my telling her, I would rather have had the honor of being the best English scholar than any other, and vows she will try next year. Poor little Marion who was never made to shine, is quite satisfied with her report which gives her the honor of having behaved with the most lady-like deportment, during the term, and also of having stood in all her classes above the average standard ; Madame declaring, it is far preferable to be good in all, than to excel in a few and leave the rest entirely unattended to, and I quite agree, with her. “ We are all well pleased with our treasure's report.” I quote Stuart's words.

Indeed I think we have no cause to complain of either the ability or application, of any of the girls, I feel sure they have done their best, and their improvement has been most gratifying. Indeed it could scarcely be otherwise, for girls so situated, they feel the importance to them and all, of every moment being improved, and every advantage which is afforded them being untiringly pursued, so as to be made of use hereafter.

The steady income we receive from our church music is a great assistance in every way, especially as it leaves their minds entirely free, from any dread of ways and means, and we have so few things to draw them from their books in the way of amusement, that I think they have every hope and inducement, and assistance, both in friends and circumstances, to enable them to become able scholars. We used to

think our needles would be our chief means of subsistence, now however, we aspire to the height of sometime establishing a school, in which we can all find more or less employment. Having this motive ever before them, the girls study with a will, particularly Leanore, whose nature it is to take the lead in every thing. The earnest untiring industry and determination with which she has pursued every advantage this year held out to her, has caused me to have serious fears lest her health would give way, but thus far she has stood hard work as bravely as Stuart himself.

CHAPTER XXIX.

JULY 6.

THE school party has passed off with the greatest *éclat*. It was held upon Thursday last, in a mountain gorge, a few miles out of the city.

They say it is a beautiful place, the rocks covered with thick soft moss, and overhead a canopy of forest leaves, casting a pleasant shade.

Lela was queen, and Cora, Flora, goddess of flowers. Then there were a long train of other dignitaries. The pieces were well learned, and the whole scene had been rehearsed well, so, to use Cora's words:—

"Every thing went on as merry as a marriage bell, and no one was out of time or out of place."

Estelle says, (she, as well as all the rest of the household, save Tiny and myself, being among the guests.)

"Lela acted the regal ladye to perfection. Even I, who know her so well, was astonished at her graceful dignity, so girlish and yet so becoming. I did not wonder at the various notes of admiration which went round among the elder portion of the audience. I saw the two gentlemen of whom the girls have spoken so frequently, and I am not surprised at their admiration. Ernest and I both exclaimed in a breath, when we saw Mr. Marstone, 'How like his uncle!' and oh Bertha! I think nothing else in the world is like

Rolf Livingstone's face. You know how handsome he was, as a boy, but you can never dream of him now he has the gravity of years upon him. I could not help but think Cora's description 'like the most beautiful of the gods,' was extremely *à propos*."

"And did you see his wife, you used to know her, I think?"

"Indeed I did, and she gave me a chill. They look like the warm bright glowing summer, and the cold icy winter united, no not united, for I never saw any couple so little united, or who took such small pains to hide their indifference."

"Did she know you, Estelle?" I asked, amused at her fierce description.

"Know me, no indeed! she did not seem to know any one, it evidently required more exertion than pleased her, to look at the people around her, but to know them! impossible! After the coronation was over, Lela appointed in a very regal tone and manner, certain of the gentlemen to attend her maids of honor, and suite, to the festive board, and created a good deal of amusement among the group, by reserving Mr. Marstone's services for herself. I heard Mr. Livingstone say,

"Always in luck's way old fellow, even among the children you have your pick."

"Why there you make a mistake, Rolf, for in this case I was picked," said Mr Marstone laughing.

Just then, Lela gave Cora in charge of a boy about her own age, saying,

"Will this young gentleman escort the goddess of flowers?" When to the dismay of the young gentleman aforesaid, and also to the queen, the goddess of flowers, sprung from her place beside the throne,

"Indeed, he will not do any thing of the kind; if I may not have whom I will; what is the use of being a goddess?" and catching hold of Mr Livingstone's arm, she cried, "I want you, please sir, will you not escort me?" and she looked up with her prettiest smile into his face.

"Birdie, Birdie, my dear!"—I cried, but before I could say a word of reproof, Mr Livingstone was walking off with her.

"To be sure I will, pet. I will escort you to the end of

the world with the greatest imaginable pleasure, if you ask me,"—I heard him say as they passed on.

"I am glad enough he is a married man, and she is a child," declares Ernest, "for I vow such evident admiration, upon both sides, might come to something serious in time."

"So am I then, Ernest," said I, shuddering at the idea. Oh and so indeed I am. I can think of nothing more dreadful, but what a foolish thing to talk about, an impossibility; I will not moan over what could never by any chance occur.

I am glad the children have had so much pleasure, it will serve them for many days, poor dears, they have at least the rarity to make their enjoyment more keen. And they can go on in the freshness and spur this day's pleasure has been to them, for many other days to come. Thank God for bright things

JULY 10.

After the excitement of the green-wood, the girls had one other, before they settled down to the old quietness, and this was a tea party, and their six friends, were the guests. There was of course a grand fixing of things before-hand.

The kitchen end of our dining room made it hardly a presentable tea room, and Aunt Estelle's furniture was carried into another room, and that made to serve for a supper room *pro tem*. Milly did her best, as she always does, such coffee, such cakes, and indeed such everything was scarcely ever known before!

"And Sandy was the very *bijou* of waiters," declares Cora, to his infinite delight.

"It was a great satisfaction, to be able to do the thing so genteely,"—said Mrs. Wilbur, with a sigh of complacency, after all was over, just the same kind of a sigh as she would have given long ago, after a grand *fête* had been given to some dignitary of royal blood, which she felt had passed off well, and given satisfaction.

And so thought the girls, Lela especially, who was somewhat nervous as to the impression her home would make upon her wealthy friends, although she would not own to it.

Every thing looked nicely, the garden was charming, and

the gay girls enjoyed it mightily, judging by the merry songs and laughter, which were wafted up to me along the moonbeams.

"Have, you always lived here, in this dear old place?" I heard one of them ask Marion.

"Not always, dear, we have lived in two or three other places."

"Oh! yes," said Louise, "Birdie I remember said she was born in Florence, so you must have been abroad, where were you born, in Europe, May?"

"No Lou; I am an American, answered Marion," and was born a little south of here."

"And Lela?" was the next query.

"Is a native of 'La belle France.'"

"Why, you must have lived a great while abroad."

"Yes, six or seven years, Ada."

"But how come you to?" asked Louise. "Did not your father and mother like their own country, better than the land of tyrants?"

"Yes, a great deal, and always were pining for home, Lou, but papa was serving his country better abroad, than he could at home, at least it was needful for him to be there, so they gave up their own pleasure; but we came back very gladly as soon as we were sent for."

"But what was he?"—I heard Louise ask as they moved from beneath my window.

What was he?—oh the child's question brought him up before me as he was then, so brave, so true, so earnest, such a firm good man, a leader among men; never false, never mistaken, always the high souled patriot whose word was law.

My husband! my Walter! what art thou now?—a spirit redeemed, glorified, oh I will not mourn for thee, but only for my weary lonely self.

—But I was recounting the events of the evening, putting down a morsel of the haps.

"We have so longed to see you, dear Mrs. Percy," said Ada Lawrence coming out of the moonlight into the dimness of my quiet room, "we have come to think you were hardly mortal, hearing the praises of your daughters, and seeing what you have taught them to be."

"Thank you, dear, if I were worthy such good children

as God has blessed me with; I should indeed be worth seeing."

"But you are, indeed you are," was the reply of the warm hearted girl, who evidently judges by her first impulsive impressions.

During the evening, Dora Gleason came and talked with me a while very sweetly, making me love her.

"I am afraid these pretty eyes study too hard;" I said as she arose to obey the calls from the garden, "they have a weary look in them, which if you were my child, I should be very loath to see."

"Oh that I were!" she ejaculated quickly. "It would be so peaceful," and she hid her sad eyes for a moment upon my shoulder, then rising she said:

"No, it is not study—but tears, and weary heart-aches."

"Poor child," I said, brushing back the dark hair and kissing her tenderly, "so young and yet bearing a cross," then I whispered, "do you know the sure comfort, the Balm, God gives the weary tried hearts of his children? even the Blessed Saviour's love?"

"No, no," she said under her breath, "oh that I could only feel it as I ought!"

"You can if you will, God is our Father, and of such great and tender mercies, he never sends any empty away. Ask Him, my child, and he will send peace to your heart; only seek him, and he will be found of you: do not doubt or fear, only go. I have found him a very present help in every time of need, and you know my troubles have been neither light nor easy to be borne."

"I know, oh I know they have not, poor Mrs. Percy."

"No, not poor, dear, rich in that I have a bright spirit ever waiting for me, just the other side of the death-barred gate." And then we sat quietly a moment or so until the impatient voices in the garden summoned her, and with a sigh she went, saying as I gave her my earnest blessing and a kiss:

"I wish I might stay and have you tell me more of such a blessed hope."

When they were going home, under the protection of our four escorts, she whispered with a grateful kiss:

"Dear Mrs. Percy, I will remember your kind words and will try,—thank you."

"Then you will conquer, only try, that is all; they never seek in vain who seek to find their Lord."

"If Dora has a kiss, may not I?" said Louise, half shyly half saucily.

"Certainly, my dear, as many as you desire," said I, pressing my lips to her fair white brow, "they are a free commodity."

"My dear madam, if I had as many as I liked, you would give me them at least every night and morning while I live, for you look the most kissable person I know."

"That is Louise, all over again," laughed Cora.

"Do any of the rest think me kissable enough to desire one?" I asked.

"I do," said Clarence springing forward before any one could reply, and flinging his arms about my neck, "I want as many as you have to give away."

"Saucy fellow, you get more than your share always, so clear away and let me bid these young ladies adieu."

And so in merry mood they departed, with many a promise of remembrance and letter-writing while absent, for this was to be the farewell meeting, and on the morrow they were all to start for their far away homes, for the summer months. But I gave Dora into Mr. Raymond's charge, thinking her spirit this night better attuned to his grave gentle words, than to the gay rattle-brain talk of the rest.

Clarence expresses himself delighted, with the whole party,

"And I have lost a minute particle of my heart with each one of the fair damsels."

"Which worthless thing they will shake out of their handkerchiefs as soon as they discover it," retorts Cora.

Stuart says as he looks up from his lexicon, over which he is hard at work punishing himself for having had one evening's pleasure—

"If it were not for the home constellation, I should think them stars of the planetary order."

For which speech, Cora boxes his ears most vehemently.

Now that we have grown quiet again, the girls are doing up a world of sewing for Margery, beside making over some pretty organdies and summer silks which Estelle and I have bequeathed them.

Stuart still makes a slave of himself by studying unceas-

ingly, even this warm weather he shuts himself into his room at nine and studies far into the night.

But Clare who keeps at it steadily through the day, "courts a cold," Cora says, by lying out under the trees, in the moonbeams weaving fairy dreams. We have all come to the conclusion that it would be as useless to strive to turn a mountain torrent up, as to win Clare to be aught but a painter, and so although we make him study, it is with no thought of making any thing else out of him.

JULY 15.

"If ye wi' only list me speech mi leddy," says Sandy, stopping me in my inspection of his garden, "I wi' tell ye a bit o' mi mind."

"Certainly Sandy, what is it?"

"Do ye ken the bit o' ground that lies nixt our ain bit, jest across this puir fence, mi leddy?"

"No, good Sandy, I must confess I do not," I answered.

"I thot not, will, if ye dinna, I ken ain that does. I ha' no my eyes gin me for naught."

Then he went into a long explanation of the long range of buildings next us belonging to the same property, and there being used only for a ware-house, and that 'they say' the back windows have not been opened for years, that the garden was a wilderness of weeds, and no one ever went into it or indeed would, until the much talked of suit was settled.

"What I no' ask o' ye is, to hire the bit o' ground and let me till it. Oh! it wi' make a braw garden."

"But, Sandy, surely we have enough to take care of now."

"Ah naugh, naugh, we ha' na', if ye wi' do what I ask, I will put it under, and get it ready, and come nixt spring, an' it please God," raising his hat and looking upward, "in heaven to spare me, I will plant a' me vegetables in there, an I will ha' sich a bonnie bed o' strawberries in here wi' the young lassies' flower beds as wi' make yer een sparkle to see."

And so with many potent arguments he decided me, it would be advisable, for beside the farming or tilling part of the arrangement, Sandy has promised to "gear up" a sort of stable and barn yard.

"For the horse, Mister Ernest is a talking o' getting himself, now his trade works so well, and I will raise sich a mony fowls, me little leddys shall never want for a fresh egg, morn or eve," he declares.

And so with the entire consent of the rest we have gone largely into the *farming* business, to the infinite delight of Sandy.

CHAPTER XXX.

JULY 30.

Oh! I have been made so sad, so grievously sad, and in a way I little dreamed could ever come to me, in a way which made me almost think the world had all gone wrong. It shames me so, that I scarcely can endure to write it, only that I have promised to record here every event of moment in my life.

Last evening through the kindness of our old friend Mr. Ostend, who often visits us, the whole family went to some floral festival, given in the C—— Hall.

I had just laid Tiny to rest, and was sitting full of divers half sad, half pleasant memories, in the window seat, watching the moonbeams court the flowers and pale their brightness, and thinking of other beams and other flowers, when the door opened and Mr. Raymond came in.

"Why, what is the matter? I thought you had been enjoying the flowers and music for an hour and more," I said,

"No, I excused myself, I have had a headache and I did not feel in the mood for flowers and music," he said.

For a while we sat in silence after that, or else talked for a moment in a quiet manner, looking out upon the garden below us.

"There comes the moon, is it not beautiful? what a soft sweet light it shades over you, Bertha, fair pale Bertha."

"Not fair, but pale," I said smiling.

"Oh yes! fair, beautiful beyond all other women to me, Bertha and moonlight, they mean the same to me; whenever I hear your name, a vision of a soft sad moonlight falls across my heart!" for a moment he stood beside me in the shadow of the wall quite silently, then he added in so low a tone I had to bend towards him to hear his words, "Can you see my face?"

"A little," I answered surprised by the question and the tone in which he asked it, "Why do you ask?"

"Because—because shall I tell you something Bertha? then turn your face to the window, and let me tell you what I cannot help, here in the dim moonlight, only promise me this, you will not hate me when I have told you what will break my heart if I keep it longer."

"I promise," I said, a strange dread oppressing me, as swiftly the thought came over me, what has he been doing, oh what can it be, and will it dishonor his holy calling? and I nerved myself to hear a confession of some terrible deed, "only trust all to me, I will promise to love you through all."

"Love me that is it," and he seemed to catch up the word half eagerly, half sorrowfully, "that is it, love me, only love me Bertha, my Bertha, my dream, my fair pale dream love, God above seeing my heart," he went on passionately, "knows how I love you, how I have striven day and night for a year with this passion, which to night is mastering me, I know my gentle Bertha of the shadow of a never forgotten love which lies ever upon your faithful heart, I knew it from the first, I know all other loves must be but the faint echo of that pure holy first love in your heart, that you can sing no other love song, but I have dreamed you might let me bear your burden of sorrow with you, oh I will mourn for your lost love whom I never knew, I will join the solemn requiem you chant over his memory; only be my companion, my angel guide, throughout life's weary pilgrimage, speak to me, only one word Bertha, speak to me!" and with the moonlight streaming over his passionate face pale and quivering with emotion, he stretched his hands towards me and stood waiting.

But I shrunk away, now he was done. From the first to the last of this appeal, I had stood quiet—never striving to stop him by word or motion, only saying as I clasped my

hands tightly over my poor tortured heart, saying in voiceless agony:

"What have I done! what have I done! that my Father should lay this heavy cross upon me?"

Then when his tender passionate voice rang no longer on my ear, I waited one instant to gather strength, and then went to his side.

"Hear me, my friend, listen to me. Years ago—for I must take you away back with me into the shrouded, buried past—years ago, I was a little girl scarcely fifteen years old, far away from my home, being educated in a convent.

"One day, oh that day sends a thrill to my heart even now, one day there came one—so grand so noble, more like our childish imaginings of a God, than a mortal. He came and carried me home to my native isle, amidst the blue waters of the Mediterranean,—home to my fair pale mother who was dying, and had sent this, her far away cousin to bring the daughter of her heart to receive her blessing.

"I had loved him dearly from the first, but as we watched together day after day, beside that bed of suffering; and I saw all his goodness, my heart went out to him with a wild passionate love, for which even he in after years would gently chide me.

"Who ever saw him that did not love him! who ever looked into his face or heard the matchless melody of his voice, who did not call God's blessing down upon him? And this noble man, beloved by all, loved me, loved me! deigned to call me his darling, to encircle me, poor frail weak thing with his inestimable love.

"Oh how I loved him! God pardon me how much, and by my mother's death-bed we were betrothed, and a year afterwards we were married, and ever after I was by his side ever! ever! my right was there. We were very happy for many, many years, we were all in all to each other, for, save our little ones no other love set up a claim for us, or took from our one great happiness.

"I saw the noblest bravest hearts, which the royalty of Europe gather round them,—and none were so brave, none so noble, or so true, as the heart where I had found my resting place.

"How happy I was then, how impiously happy God alone knows. I loved and worshipped him, first, above all other

things, yea, I made my Creator second to my peerless husband.

"He used to tell me so, to reprove me tenderly for my idolatry, but I never heeded him. I who did his bidding in all else could not in this, but made him the shrine, whereon to offer the fervent incense of my undisciplined heart. God from on high, saw my sin, saw that his poor weak child was wandering far away from Him whom she had vowed to love and serve, and—and God took him.

"See how calmly I say it, see how quietly I stand here in this soft moonlight and tell you all this, do you think I have forgotten, do you think I do not remember the bliss, and then the agony?

"Remember how I told you just now—he was noble and brave and true, he was methinks like that one of whom the good 'Book' says, 'There was none like him among the sons of men.' Were others good and true—his goodness and truth out-shone theirs, as does the bright sunlight of a summer's noontide shame the pale rushlight, I tell you this, and then I tell but that other word, 'God took him,' my God, my Father, who ruleth all things, who 'doeth all things well'—took him away from me, he was shutting out my heaven-light. I could not see the beauty of the hereafter, save as it made a halo about him: and so the flaming sword came down swiftly between us, and left me stranded and lonely upon the shores of time, while with a clang the gates of Eden shut him from my sight. And yet, it was done in mercy, I know it now, although at the first I could not see the 'Hand' of a Father, in the avenging one which wielded the sword of death, but now I can say it was best, God knew!

"But oh! my friend, do not take the one only comfort my poor life knows, away from me, the blessed hope, that afterwards, when life's trials are past, and the gateway to the Eternal City is parted for me, the hope that my husband's arms will clasp me, as he bids me welcome home.

"Oh! you know not what you ask when you bid me love you!—I said God took him, but it was only the casket, the noble manly form,—every night since that one night, has his spirit been with me, every day it walks beside me, my guardian, my helper.

"Tell me not with your vain theology, it is not so. It is,

it is! ten thousand times I assert it, I have proven, I know it for a truth.

"Oh Harley! could I so forget myself, did a dread of the weary days which stretch themselves, so long and drearily in the future before my view affright me.

"Could I so loose my sense of the right, as to stand before God's holy altar, to take other vows upon me, than those I made with my arms clasped round my unburied dead, even there my husband would part us, standing in his noble beauty between me, and him who had dared to allure me from my duty.

"I love you very much Harley, more than you can ever know; you have been a kind true friend to me, but I think that night, the angel of Death came into our happy home making it desolate, with his cold breath extinguishing the light, whose brightness was our joy:—

"I think he took my heart within his icy fingers, and held it tight and hard, until it was numb and lifeless; not chilled so that another fire might warm it back to life, but dead, dead, cold and feelingless.

"I have but a sister's love to give, will you have it Harley? a sister's tender, watchful love," and I laid my hand upon him.

I could feel him tremble though he spoke not, but sat as he had been sitting since I began to speak, motionless, with his head bowed upon his clasped hands. I unlocked his pale fingers, and laying my cheek upon his dark hair for one moment—

"Shall it be so, my brother Harley, henceforth the arm of a faithful brother stretched out to help me?" and I looked down calmly into his white face.

With a sudden uprising he clasped my hands one instant within his own, then in a hushed tone said,

"God love thee my sister! my sister!" and went quickly out.

Sitting in the moonlight, I have wondered over all this. I have grieved for him and for myself, but then there is a comfort in the thought, I have gained me a friend, whom Walter would have prized.

I remember now a thousand things, at the time unnoticed, which show me how this love has grown up within his heart, and the endeavours he has made to subdue and crush it, un-

til this night, when it could be borne no more, it gained for a short time the victory.

But I rest me upon the thought this is over now, he will put it away forever, and I have gained my brother.

JULY 31.

As I came in this afternoon from my day's work, Harley met me at the door, and as we stood in the quiet light of departing day, he took my hand tenderly in his, and stood for a little while silently looking out upon the long shaded walk of our old garden. Then turning suddenly round, he said in a low tremulous voice, so low I scarce could hear him:

"Has my sister Bertha forgiven me my wilful madness, my wicked presumption of last night?"

"My dear brother!" was all I said.

"Oh Bertha, the agony of last night after I left you; the terrible ordeal I passed through in the dark still night, wrestling with my ill gotten passion, ere I could conquer it, forever! If the struggle and sufferings of a loving heart crucifying its own hope, can atone for the grief I must have caused you in stirring up your old remembrances, touching with my rude, ruthless hand your Shekinah, you may have the assurance that I have fought such a battle, as please God may come to a man but once in a life-time, I have fought and conquered. Henceforth, I can say humbly and gratefully, Bertha Percy is no more to me in the way of earthly passion, than an angel standing in the 'Presence.' But she is my sister, my little sister, whom I will protect, God giving me strength, as long as life lasts."

I leaned my head upon his shoulder and gave way to a burst of tender grateful tears, for all the mercies vouchsafed to me.

CHAPTER XXXI.

"Do not linger with regretting
Or for passing hours despond!
Nor thy daily toil forgetting,
Look too eagerly beyond." ONE BY ONE.

AUGUST 1.

I HAVE passed it, another mile-stone is my life-path; the second record is made—alone waiting and watching two whole years.

It seemed so long in the perspective—but is so short in the retrospection. I have done so little in the right way, lived to so little purpose—acted so feebly the drama of life, doing so many things I ought not to have done, leaving undone those that I ought to have done, oh I may well join my hands and bowing head and heart before my Judge, confess, there is no health in me.

It is so hard always to do right, so very easy to do wrong. I wish it were not so, when "I think I will do well, evil is ever present with me."

Alone in my own little room to-day—this day which renews my sorrow and loneliness, I have laid bare before me my inmost thought, thinking long and painfully of my many short comings, and with my whole heart I have wrestled with my God for strength to be faithful, earnest, and true.

Walter, dear Walter, have I done very wrong? have I missed many things you would have done? am I too selfish—too easily wearied—too prone to make others bear my burdens for me?

Pray God for me, darling, that He will grant me more light, and strength to do my duty to Him and to thee.

How short a time it seems since I sat at his feet a gay thoughtless thing, a very child, loving only the bright fair things of life, yet like many another child, worshipping the pure and holy—with my whole soul.

I know I did, else I could not so entirely have appreciated the noble manhood, which was guiding and guarding me ever. I had such faith in that strong right arm—such entire dependence upon the firm clear mind that made its law, oh I loved and honored him so reverently.

Too much, too much, alas! alas! I made his image to stand between my soul and God's eternal love; I loved him first, he weaned me from the worship, the love, the duty, I owed my Maker; therefore am I desolate. I prayed—in words never—but always in fact, to be let alone in my happiness, to live ever afar from heaven, with the idol I had reared, but God loved my soul and would not hear me, and so to-day, He raises my love and hope unto himself through my buried dead.

AUGUST 25.

We are a somewhat broken family this month past, and even this short separation makes us dearer to each other. All write (who are absent,) of the joy it will be to come back to the old house, and the old ways once more, although they are having merry times abroad.

How, even these few brief days parting makes me feel, what the parting with one of my loved ones would be—it seems a type of that long last farewell upon the shores of time, where one goes on and on, over the waters alone, but fearlessly—while the other stands shivering and weeping upon the shore. Oh I will not sadden my heart by these thoughts—but verily, I shall rejoice, when all the birds are winging their flight to the old grey home-nest, once more.

Mr. Raymond, or as it is always now, "my brother Harley," has his six weeks vacation, and has gone North to his boyhood's home, carrying Howard with him, and they write many a pleasant letter from the quiet New England village, where only an old man, a very old man, Harley's grand-father, still lingers beneath the stars, of a long line of kindred the last, and he is very near the confines of the better land.

Harley writes: "I could not live here, although I loved the village dearly once, for all about me the records of the loved and lost are strewn, a tree, a house, a purling brook, to which some memory clings, meets me at every turn. And the violets and ivy in the old church-yard, grow over the hearts of my nearest kindred."

But Howard says: "It is splendid, I make hay, and ride home on the top of the hay-load every evening. Every time

the sweet fresh smell of the fields comes to me, I think of home, and stand still, and take an extra 'snuff' for every one of you, and I shall bring them to you Uncle Harley tells me, in my rosy cheeks."

Then adds, "please do not think I only remember you when I smell the hay, for indeed I think of you all every minute in the day, and dream of you by night."

Dear son, his rosy cheeks will indeed be a whole heart full of freshness and beauty to me, my poor pale, studious boy.

We were rather astonished by an invitation from Louise and her mother, for all three of the girls to pay her a visit, and the hesitancy we were under as to whether it should not be accepted by at least one, was put to flight by the "descent" of Ada, into our midst, with the word that she had been sent by express, for fear of a refusal.

So Marion and Birdie went with her, but Lela was carried off by Jennie, to spend the remainder of the vacation with Mary Lee, in her beautiful home, upon the borders of Lake Erie.

Then this last week our kind old friend Mr. Ostend, sent Stuart and Clare upon some collecting expedition for him, in the western part of our beautiful State.

So Mrs. Wilbur, Estelle, Ernest and I, with the three little children are a quiet party enough, doing nothing especial, but read letters, write letters, and expect letters the live-long day.

"And dream letters the live-long night," Ernest declares.

The boys are to make it convenient to come home by the way of Louise's Virginia home, (a long way round by the way,) and escort the girls back.

I am glad to have them away, especially when every letter is brimfull of the joyous times they are having, some North, some South, but all happy. I say I am glad, and so I am, yet now that the time draws near when we must expect them, my heart bounds swiftly towards them, reaching out to meet them—and I know how I have missed them, how we all have.

"There," says Estelle as she directed a letter to Marion to-day, and another to Lela, "there is the last package of love and kisses I mean to send by a white winged messenger.

The next will be eye to eye, and lip to lip. Oh! I shall never weary of hearing their sweet voices."

"Or of feeling their kisses, or holding them closely in one's arms, Aunt Estelle," says Adèle.

And so we will build no more paper bridges, whereon to pass our loving remembrances, but will stand side by side again.

CHAPTER XXXII.

SEPTEMBER 9.

I WONDER just what one would do if they knew the future, and the events that future was bringing them. The good, and evil in our short lives are closely interwoven, so closely that oftentimes the shadowy darkness of the threads of sorrow, casts a gloom over the golden line that lies next them.

But this thing, the advent of which has set us into a maze, is a very golden cord, where upon, I trust we may hang many a jewel of promise in the coming days.

It is even the verification of our old hope, nay more than we had dared to expect could ever be, even after long years of careful effort;—for here we are endowed with an established school, the revenue from which will set all our doubts upon many things at rest, and that without one endeavour upon our part. The work of establishing and popularizing this school has all been done; and we have only to accept, and be grateful.

But I run on, in my congratulations, when facts would be much more to the purpose.

A few days since I received a note from the lady to whom the girls go to school, requesting an interview; thinking it related to some new studies for them, I went at the time appointed, and to my amazement received the offer of the entire establishment.

Madame Degradé who is a handsome widow, is about to bestow herself and her neat little fortune, upon some happy suitor.

And "mon mari," who is at present in this country upon a visit, desires to carry Madame back with him to "La Belle France," as his bride.

"And what can I do? mon ami is determined and can wait no longer than a month, and I am in despair. What is to become of the school? Mes élèves for the next year all engaged, and in two weeks they will be here, not a seat is vacant!"

Then with a thousand and one apologies for her presumption as she named it, she remembered that I gave music lessons and thought perhaps under the peculiar circumstances, "I would be so generous, so good, as to overwhelm Madame with obligations by taking the charge of the school."

"It will be such a favor that I will do what I can to show my sense of your goodness."

So I was given to understand the furniture of her school-room and dormitories were mine at a nominal price.

Of course I expressed my obligations for her offer, and asked but one day's deliberation with my friends before I gave my final answer.

I left her trembling, wondering, half-blinded by hope and fear; could we do it? dare we attempt it? oh if we could!

After a long talk with Estelle and Earnest, we decided to wait until Harley and Stuart should return the next morning, and then come to a definite conclusion with their aid.

They came the next day, and after the greetings were over, we made known to them our expectations.

I knew pretty nearly what the word would be, so did we all, but it was a good thing to know we were all of one mind, especially as all will have some part of the work to do.

"Oh," Stuart said when it was decided, "it is worth thinking well of, if for only one thing, that now you and Aunt Estelle will have no more out-door work to do."

And so it is, although we have said little of that, but it will be a relief to live henceforth at one's own home.

And then, what is better than all, Stuart can go to college for a certainty, oh will we not work with a will, for that good end, he is sure of it now, God bless him!

There has been so much to do, so many changes to make, so many letters to write; so many people to see, both by Mad-

ame Degrade and myself, in order to feel assured the change would be satisfactory, that we will not begin until October. In the meanwhile we can hear from all who are interested in the change, and explain to them.

SEPTEMBER 18.

Of course before we could make any arrangements towards school-keeping, we were compelled to give the occupants of the offices in the front of the house, notice to quit, I dreaded this, but Ernest says:

"It did not seem to annoy or distress any of them, half as much as it did you and Marion."

For Marion, and indeed all the rest but Leanore are at home, and such a world of cleaning, moving in of furniture and arranging it after it was once in, as we have had this last two weeks, would be past relating, but it is all done at last.

The rooms in the front of the house are as square and as large, as the ones in our part are little and crooked.

Of two on one side of the hall, down stairs, we have made school-rooms, of the others, dining room and kitchen, then we have turned our once kitchen up stairs, into a bed-room for Ernest and Harley, and their two little rooms, which stand at the front door, into class-rooms.

The old barricaded windows and doors going out into the garden, have been besieged and overthrown, and this pleasant autumn day, the house looks so clean and cool, that methinks the old owners will walk over it to-night, and find the ancient lordly days renewed.

But still the little sitting-room which has been our home room so long, will be our home room still, our sanctum sanctorum, and only such as have especial favour shall gain admittance, for there is a neat little parlor below for company.

Estelle is to take charge of one dormitory, and poor little gentle Marion the other, I will abide at home still.

In a letter which I had from her, Nora says:

"I had a note from Mr. J——, saying the church in L—— St. was undergoing some improvements, and would not be opened until October, so I need not hurry back; if you

think best for me to do so, I will accept Mr. Lea's invitation to travel with Mary, Jennie Chalton, and himself to the White Mountains, and wherever else we will, for the next month."

CHAPTER XXXIII.

OCTOBER 2.

DURING the last week in September, came bright-eyed Louise Dutille, then in the afternoon of the same day Ada Lawrence, and Clara Robbins, with whom she had been spending the last week of her vacation. Dear warm hearted girls they could not say enough concerning their delight and gratitude at the change, particularly Ada who grows so enthusiastic and demonstrative that "Marion is obliged to come forward and quiet her down," says Louise.

We had just got this party quietly settled, and somewhat domesticated, when, Dora came with her sad face and dreamy eyes, which now are not nearly so sad and weary looking as they used to be, and this is the reason:—

The evening of the day upon which she arrived, she came into the room where I was standing by a window looking out, and busy pondering over many matters; so engaged indeed I did not notice her, until coming up she laid her cheek upon my shoulder, and said softly and gently:

"I have found the pearl for which you bade me seek, I think, I hope I have."

"I thought so, dear Dora, soon as I saw you, these sweet eyes have more peace, if not comfort and happiness in their look."

"Oh, it is so sweet, so restful, dear Mrs. Percy, the 'Great Rock in a weary land,' oh it is such comfort to rest secure from storms and tempests, beneath its shadow."

"Thank God that you have found it so at last, 'in all troubles a sure help,' I am glad for you."

"But it was all blackness and darkness, until that night I stood here with you; your words somehow seemed to

make it lighter and easier, and I have tried so very hard during my dreary vacation, to find out the right and best way, I think I have at last."

"Was your holiday a dreary one Dora?"

"Oh very, very," and she shuddered, "they always are."

"Then why did you not accept one of the many invitations I know you had, from your school friends and spend a more cheerful time?"

"Because the vacations are the only time I have, to spend with my poor little Agnes."

"Who is she?" I asked.

"My sister, the only near relation I have in the world, and she is a cripple unable to walk, or scarcely to sit up."

"Poor child, and no mother or sister to care for when you are away."

"None, none, oh is it not dreadful? do you wonder that I am always sad when this poor little suffering sister in her lonely room is before me?"

"But has she not kind friends to take care of her in your absence?" I said, greatly touched by her sad tone.

"They are strangers, or at least not friends."

"I will tell you my sad history," she said after a pause, "if you are willing to hear it."

"Indeed I am not only willing, but anxious, if it will not hurt you to tell it," I replied.

"Thank you, dear Mrs. Percy," then with a sad smile she began. "I am a 'ward in chancery,' my father and mother were both of them, being cousins, engaged in the same suit. Indeed almost as far back as we can trace our family, this has been our sad fate, all from generation to generation, for nearly a hundred years have been fighting with the law, for or against each other. Until my father and mother's time the two contending branches of the family who are contesting for the inheritance were bitter enemies, but when they found that not only all the means but the lives of their race were being squandered in the struggle, it was decided by the elders of the families on both sides, that all enmity should be buried, and the whole claim made one by the marriage of the only two remaining children, my father and mother, thus making their offspring the heirs of the whole. This was done, the old people of the family passed away. My parents had several children but all died, save

myself, who was the oldest, until one sad night, nine years ago my mother gave up her life, giving birth to a delicate child whom we named in memory of her, Agnes. I was only about eight years old then, but I remember so well the change that came over the house, how sad and gloomy it grew, how changed papa was, growing stern and cold, never noticing me or indeed any one but the poor little baby, who as soon as it grew old enough he would have in his own bed, and at night when it would cry, I have crept along the cold passage and crouching at the door heard him weep over it, and with deep groans call it,

"Little Agnes, his little darling, his motherless little Agnes!" and hush it to sleep.

"Oh how I used to pine to go to him, and help the baby comfort him, but I dared not, and used to go weeping bitter tears back to my cold little couch."

"All through the day he would sit pouring over law-papers, and I heard him tell a lawyer once, he was trying some way to get 'this fearful law-suit settled, and my children provided for ere I leave them forever.' But it was in vain, and he pined, and grew pale and weak, and at last one of the servants came hurriedly to my room in the middle of the night and wrapping me in a shawl, carried me to his bedside. He was propped up and looked very very white. The baby was laying upon a pillow by his side, its little hand shut over one of his thin white fingers."

"When they had put me upon the bed, cold and frightened, with being roused out of a sound sleep, and brought to this strange scene, he said:

"My poor daughter, my little neglected Dora, I have not been kind to you, poor lonely child, in my own selfish grief I have forgotten you, and now you are afraid of me, my daughter."

"Oh no papa," I said quickly, "not now, when you are so kind, papa, papa, I love you so," and I clasped his hand and kissed it over and over.

"He drew me to him with all the strength he had, and for a little while said not a word, but kissed me so tenderly. Oh, Mrs. Percy, it is such a blessing to think of now, for I loved him dearly, and it would have been so dreadful had he died without letting me see he had a little love for me."

"Then after he had gained strength and could trust himself, he said:

'My Dora, I am going to leave you to-night, and before I go I want to have you say you will always love and be kind to your little sister.'

'I will, indeed papa I will, dear little sister,' I said with an earnest tone.

'Thank you dear child, always remember this promise made by your father's death bed. Now listen, next week you will be sent to school, this house will be sold by my lawyer, and Wilson will take Agnes to her own home, every vacation you are to go to her.'

"He had not told this without much difficulty making many pauses, at last he found he could say no more; turning to Wilson (who was our housekeeper) he said:

—'Tell her the rest—now—so I can hear—'

"And she began, saying, 'the money for the house—was to be used to pay, for Agnes's board. We would both of us be henceforth 'wards in chancery,' and our maintenance would be provided for.' This and other charges which he had left her, about his funeral, etc., were hardly told me, when I saw a change pass over the face so white and thin upon which I was gazing; a grayness came upon it. His lips moved quickly, his eyes stared wildly and then settled with such a look upon Agnes's face. He made a gurgling noise. I stopped Wilson's words with:

'Hush, papa is going to say something.'

"But just as I spoke the arm which held me, fell away, the eyes closed, I did not know what it was, I thought he slept.

'Hush,' I said, 'he is tired, he will go to sleep.'

"They carried me back to bed;—bye and bye as I lay with wide open eyes, in the dark, Wilson came in, laid Agnes by my side, and went away again. I lay very quietly but sleeplessly thinking over papa's words, until the sun began to peep in through the windows, then Wilson came in again, and coming round to where I lay, said:

'Poor little Dora, poor child, papa is dead,' and burst into a flood of tears.

"I lay for an instant perfectly still, then with a wild shriek fainted away. For a long time after that, I was very ill, so long that it was months before I could be sent to school. Since that time, I have passed my life first at one boarding school then at another, but always spending my vacations

with Agnes. About two years after papa's death, Wilson died: she had been very kind to both of us, especially to Agnes. When she died, she gave my sister, with a solemn charge, to her daughter's care; but she is married, and has children of her own to care for, and perhaps she is as kind as we could expect. When Agnes was about three years old, and a short time after Wilson died, they carelessly left her alone, she fell down a pair of stairs and injured her spine; since then, from neglect and other causes, she has been a constant sufferer, and when I was at home a year ago, the doctors pronounced her case hopeless, and said she will be lame for life. The only gleam of sunshine the poor darling knows, is when I go to her, therefore, of course, I never go anywhere else."

"But why, if they are not kind, do you allow her to remain there? as her board is paid you should remove her immediately."

"But where? there is no other place."

I thought for a moment, and then drawing the poor girl more closely to me said,

"Here, with you, is the proper place for her, bring her here and we will nurse and care for her, and with a mother and sister to watch over her, she will pass a happier life, poor child."

"Oh, Mrs. Percy, you are too good, too kind, you are an angel."

But I laid my hand over her lips with:

"Not so, dear Dora, but an erring mortal."

But the strangest part of Dora's history (which is not indeed strange, but unutterably sad,) is, that this very property upon which we now live, and the half square which surrounds it, is the estate to which she is heir. There are so many intricate law questions involved, apart from the original point at issue, that now, although all argument as to the rightful heirs is over (Dora and Agnes being the sole representatives of both contending parties) nevertheless the case is still unsettled, and the proper owners kept out of their property, which could they gain possession of, would make them among the richest persons in the city of B—.

So, rightfully, we are the tenants of Miss Dora Gleason, the heiress of one of the most valuable estates in the state, but she says sadly:

"Too many lives have been sacrificed in the futile attempt to win it, for me ever to hope to gain without effort, what so many brilliant intellects and earnest hearts have been crazed or broken, in striving to possess, this last half century."

And I tell her most likely she is much happier now than she would be, did she wake up some morning and find herself a millionaire. For now, we trust, she has found more enduring riches, laid up for herself treasures in that storehouse, 'where neither moth nor rust can corrupt or thieves break through and steal.' Already, dear child, her face looks less sad with the thought how soon she may clasp her poor little suffering sister to her heart, not only for one night or a few nights, but always.

Marion, with ready thought for the comfort of others, says:

"Dora and dear little Agnes shall have my room to themselves, away from the noisy dormitories."

To-day came Lela, and with her Mary Lea and her sister Laura, a pretty child of six years. Also Jennie and her two young sisters, Meta and Maud Chalton.

They have had a joyful summer, under kind Mr. Lea's supervision, 'having' been hurried by steam-boat, and railroad to and from so many places, that they can hardly keep still even now.'

My enthusiastic Lela, has for the first time, beheld the majestic falls of Niagara, and stood upon the topmost summit of Mount Washington, watching the sunrise, so I wonder not to see the color in her cheeks and the old brightness in her dark eyes. Oh I am very grateful to Mr. Lea!

Last week, Dora went for her poor little sister, they have also returned to-day. Therefore with little Agnes Gleason, we have ten boarding scholars, and opened school with thirty day-pupils.

The first day of anything is always the greatest trial, but now it is over, I find the thought of it was after all the worst. I did dread inexpressibly to meet the gaze of such an assemblage, but I went through it bravely.

Estelle is to teach drawing, beside a hundred other things, Mr. Raymond and Dr. Wilbur, although they have little enough time to spare from their own duties, have promised to give us the first hour after breakfast every day, the for-

mer, teaching on alternate days, Latin and Composition, the latter German and Algebra.

Then Lela is to give an hour's music, and Marion to teach the younger classes for a couple of hours each day, this is all the work we will require of them, so they will be scholars still.

Then I am to be principal teacher of all the English studies, beside giving French and Music lessons; surely we all have our hands full, but we have endeavored to arrange our time so as to relieve each other, though with all our efforts we can not get through by daylight.

Mrs. Wilbur is our invaluable housekeeper, and Sandy and Milly *her* invaluable coadjutors.

Stuart and Clare, are very importunate to be allowed to do something, but we tell them to be agreeable will suffice.

NOVEMBER 30.

What a busy community we are—how we work—young and old, all doing our very best—or striving so to do—and accomplishing a multitude of things. In our school, through the instrumentality of Madame Dugrade—who before her departure, gave us the highest recommendations—and because a few ladies, the parents of some of our pupils, have most kindly interested themselves in our behalf—we have as large a number of pupils as we can accommodate, and indeed have been compelled to reject some.

During the morning we are very busy, having scarcely time to cast one thought beyond the occupation of the present moment. At three the house is cleared of the day-scholars, and then the efforts of all save Lela and myself, are in a great degree relaxed,—but we, have our music lessons to attend to from that time, until dark—so they may in no wise interfere with the school duties.

Our hour for tea is six—from that until eight is study-hour, of which we all take charge in turns,—resting and watching in one. But after that, with the younger ones in bed, we still have our pleasant evenings—only the old room has a greater number of smiling faces, and laughing voices ringing within it.

"We have such grand times at home, one never cares to go abroad for amusement," declares Louise Dutille.

"I wonder what my good mother would think, did she know I would rather pass one evening as we do, reading something worth reading, and then talking it all over,—than be her companion in that whirligig of fashion—that maelstrom of folly, which makes up her daily and nightly life," says Ada Lawrence.

"Oh dear Mrs. Lawrence, she would think you meant to eschew the world, and take holy vows upon you, thus blasting all her brilliant schemes for you, her only daughter, her pearl of pearls, her hope, her pride, etc.," laughed Clara Robbins.

"Well, I own, three months ago," said Jennie Chalton, "if any one had told me I could have passed evening after evening, with just the same faces round me, no variation in the same, I should have deemed the matter apocryphal, fictitious, uncertain."

"You see the effects of association my jewel, *we* are so agreeable, so irresistible—and then we have a world of variety, why I have learned to do six new stitches this last week—have become intimate with that blessed Mrs. Jamison's 'Loves of the Poets,' 'Sketches of Art,' and so on,—can tell precisely who Laura, Beatrice, and Fiammetta were,—how they looked—and why their lovers made them immortal, have learned to look with the utmost complacency upon my plain phiz, since you all assure me I may boast of being '*La Bella Mana*.' And then, what exquisite music we have, my worthy compatriots I am actually of the mind that we all sing like nightingales, now we have such good practice with the queen of nightingales, as Rolf Livingstone, pathetically dubbed Nora—"

"Ada! Ada! you distract me, what vast conversational powers you possess. You will never do for a nun, you have no vocation my dear, that is certain, your mother may safely give up that frightful conception, if she has ever imbibed it."

"Oh dear, how envious our good Dora has become, why my dear can I help having rare gifts?" answered the saucy girl.

And it is true the hours speed away. Time has his wings golden tipped, and they bear him swiftly by, so swiftly that we catch but a gleam of his brightness as he glances past.

—I am almost willing to join with some of my rattle brain family and wish:

"Each day was forty-eight hours long."

It is a pleasant reflection that all are so thoroughly content,—that our system of love has worked so well—that these warm ardent hearts, meet ours so kindly, that with all their girlish impetuosity, they submit so readily and cordially to our strictest rules, and of course some such are requisite when so many are to be governed, and trained aright.

Clare is the beau *par excellence* of all, boy though he is, and likes his "important position" mightily, but Stuart—

"Has no time for such nonsense."

"As if ladies were ever such a dreadful thing," cries Clare.

DECEMBER 15.

We are so happy about Adèle, poor little darling, God is so kind to her, indeed I think He is to blind folks in an especial manner always, bestowing some rare gift upon them in place of that of which He has deprived them. He has given her such a comfort, and all of us through her, in her passion for the organ—dear child, she is never lonely or sad—it fills up all the hours which else might be weary.

"It talks to me, mamma dear, says the sweetest, nicest things. As I play, it seems sometimes to be the voices of flowers holding long consultations; then the songs of the stars sparkling and bright, and often sad plaintive wind voices, weaving tales of the far-away lands through which they have come. Oh, all these voices gladden me so, they steal upon me softly and tenderly, seeming to love me; they are as gentle to my heart as the perfume of violets, and as sweet too. Oh, I pity my Gracie, that though she loves so to sit beside me for hours while I play, she cannot understand the meaning of the strains, they tell her no beautiful things; poor Gracie, her eyes have to work so hard for both of us, she has no time to learn this newer blessing of mine."

My dear child, my Muriel, God love thee ever!

The Christmas tide which draws near, promises a thousand joys to all the young folks; how I wonder while I

rejoice, over the light hearts they bear; how good it is to witness what pleasure even the anticipation of what may fall in the enjoying, has for their untouched hearts.

And yet, methinks it is blessed to suffer; to be purified in a furnace of fire—it is hard to endure trials—it makes one groan and shrink when the fierce storms beat about us, when the sword so sharp and piercing, penetrates ruthlessly our warmly beating hearts; and yet it makes heaven so bright, it draws us so near home and happiness. These bodies, poor and frail we call them—frail, but not poor—we dare not think them that, they are the “temples of the Holy Ghost,” his dwelling-place, and pains and sorrows entering in, cast out sin, making us more worthy.

JANUARY 4.

The house is cleared again, all having gone home for the Christmas holidays. Not only all the pupils, but even my own children and Estelle are away, some with one and some with another; only Mrs. Wilbur, Adèle, and poor little Agnes left; but next week will see them returning.

Our four gentlemen (for my two boys have grown this last year to be so named) have all gone together upon a jaunt of pleasure to the South, taking Howard with them.

Gracie cried sadly at first, at the idea of leaving Adèle, the first time in their whole lives they had been parted for a night, but Adèle said she must go, and so, writes Marion:

“She grieved a little when we first started, but the novelty of every thing, and the kind attentions of Meta and Mand have quite set her right, and she is as gay as our demure little Gracie ever sees fit to be.”

Dora went only because I made her, casting many a look of regret at Agnes, lest she would trouble us.

We have all worked very hard this last three months, and I am glad these weeks of holiday broke in just here, for we all needed it, not that we are wearied with our new occupation, but that we required a little resting on account of the extra efforts we are compelled to make to get all right at the starting.

Oh, we are not tired of our new work, but so thankful, so unutterably grateful, that God has permitted us so to prosper.

Then, beside prosperity, we have so much love, love for each other strengthening each day as we labor with and for one another; then because it is love which is the prevailing spirit in our midst, there is no fear, and we who teach, teach lovingly with our hearts in the work, and they who learn, do it because, although they dread no punishment, they fear to grieve the hearts they love.

FEBRUARY.

The months go by leaving us busy and contented,—we work from day-break until even-tide, and then after our pleasant evening chat, go to rest well tired out, and sleep that dreamless sleep, which few but those who earn it know. Thank God for the laborer's peaceful slumbers—the tired hands' resting time.

Clarence has just completed a picture, which has won him many encomiums—and which his masters who are very proud of him, and prophecy great things for his future—have caused to be hung upon the exhibition walls of the ‘Artist's Fund.’

Poor boy he gets his talents by a sad inheritance, I dread to see his bright life wasted, in a hopeless feverish battle with an unappreciating world, which cannot understand his beautiful genius, nor comprehend his wild struggles for the lovely and true in art.

He calls this picture the first of any importance, which he has painted, and which he means for the first of a series. ‘The Dawning Light.’—— It is a picture of a fairy-like child, who stands in the light of the breaking morn, her fair face tinged with the early sunbeams—standing poised upon her toes, her tiny hands clasping bright flowers which lie clustering in her golden curls, which the wind is blowing back—upon her fair white bosom, and thickly strown at her feet are the brightest, earliest, fairest flowers of summer tide, her sweet eyes are turned with an eager look of wonder and delight to the sunshine,—the dawning day is beautiful—but the dawning beauty of the fair child is a brighter, fairer, lovelier thing.

And Tiny's own face is the fairy child's—although it was

unintentional upon Clare's part,— and gave him a surprise when we discovered it.

"Well," he declares, "I never knew or loved another child, what more likely than that she should form the warp and woof of my dreams."

The certainty of the likeness was decided beyond a question, by the little lady herself—who when taken one day by her sisters, to the Exhibition rooms, sprang from May's detaining hand, the moment her eyes rested upon it, crying to the amusement of the bystanders,

"Me! Me! oh pretty me, let me kiss pretty Tiny!"

CHAPTER XXXIV.

MARCH.

Mr. Lea, a widower of perhaps forty years of age, has been staying in this city for the greater part of the last winter. He is a man of wealth and high respectability, and has but two children, Mary and Laura. He has done me the honor of making me an offer of marriage.

He was very manly and open in the manner of his proposal, stating that it was because his home was so desolate that he sought to make another the sharer of his life.

"The wife of my youth must ever be loved, although with a mournful affection. My Mary in Heaven must ever share my heart with the dearest upon earth."

But for the sake of his daughter who loved me, for the sake of himself, who needed and would cherish me and mine so tenderly, he besought me to give him hope.

Of course I refused him, thanking him for his kindness, but assuring him that my intentions were, never to contract a second union.

He was grieved, hoped it would make no difference in our relations as friends, and so on, which, of course, I gladly concurred with, and there the matter rested, my quondam lover becoming my esteemed friend.

Mary was grieved and disappointed for a while, and let the secret out (by her efforts at pettishness) to the elder portion of the family.

We talked the matter over. Ernest was disposed to be very indignant about it, and say some very severe things.

Harley looked unutterably uncomfortable under his re-

marks, and to relieve him, and silence Ernest, I made light of the affair, acting as though such things did not wound and hurt me terribly as they in reality do.

Before the night was over, I had cause to regret my slight attempt at diplomacy. Regret it with bitter scalding tears, and the heartache of a whole week.

We were talking late in the afternoon, and as soon as it was passed, I thought no more of the conversation.

During study hour, which is always immediately after tea, while the rest were busy, I was seated alone reading, when Estelle came in, saying:

"Harley and I are going to Thackeray's lecture; I wish we could induce you to go, Bertha."

"Oh, I will content myself with hearing you deliver the lecture when you return," was my answer.

When they had been gone awhile, Ernest came in and throwing himself into an easy chair began to read. We sat so long silent, and my book which was "The House of the Seven Gables," enchained me so completely, that I had forgotten I was not alone, when suddenly his voice brought me back from Miss Hepsibeh's little shop to my own little sitting room.

"Bertha, what did you mean to-night, tell me?"

"Mean, when? what on earth is the matter, Ernest? you look as if you meant to eat me, do you?" and I drew back in feigned alarm.

"Oh, Bertha, Bertha," he said in a low tone almost like a groan, "pity me! pity me!"

"I do, Ernest, I did not know you needed my pity, what is it, what ails you, dear?" I replied, going to his side quickly,

He clasped me suddenly in his arms, and holding me so tightly to him I was almost breathless, said:

"Darling, darling, sweetest, I love you! God help me, I love you. Day and night for years have I knelt praying to you with wordless agony, and never daring to tell you of the burning love in my heart. - How that heart was bleeding, loving you always in vain, my angel, my darling, my Bertha."

At first I was stunned. I heard every word so distinctly, never losing one letter, every sound fell upon my brain like burning lava; and when the last words were said, and he

kissed me wildly, it seemed as though the fiery flood had reached my heart's core, and with the words:

"Pity, Oh my Father!" I fell lifeless upon the floor. When I knew anything again, I was lying in his arms, the cold air piercing me, while he rained hot passionate kisses upon my face, calling in wild agonized cries upon me, by every love tone and name, to speak to him. Even now, the shuddering horror of that awakening, the dull disgust I felt for him, the utter loathing, comes over me like an evil dream.

I could for the instant have killed myself and him, for it seemed better to be lying dead upon the dark gravel below us, with our white faces turning whiter and colder in the moonlight, than to live on, when his love kisses lay like a heavy pall of pollution upon my brow. Love kisses! and for me! oh the vow I had taken into my soul, that sad night long ago, had been broken, had been ruthlessly crushed away from me and I stood forsworn, though God knows by no deed of my own.

Could I help but hate him for the instant, as these thoughts rushed like a strong flood through my mind? Could I help saying what I did, as I rose, a fierce bitter pride giving me a momentary strength, and freeing myself passionately from his clasping arms, winding my own round the iron bars of the verandah.—

"Leave me! leave me! Ernest, I hate! oh I hate you!"

For one moment he paused irresolute, as if he did not take the meaning of my words, then as the moon pale and cold, fell upon my passionate face and shrinking form, a swift agony swept over his, and with a low cry of horror he sprang through the window, into the room.

That sharp quick cry, sounding like the wail of a broken heart, the wild look of woe upon his face, which even then, struck me as full of strange manly beauty,—the despairing hopelessness of his actions, recalled me to a sense of what I had said and to whom.

My old friend, the dear comrade whom in old times had been near and dear to us: all the love of my heart for this friend of years, came quickly upon me. I had known him so long, he had been so tender and faithful, it came over me with a mighty throng of regret, that I had been un-

kind to Walter's early friend, his tried true friend, and I cried aloud in sorrowful remorse,

"Earnest, dear Earnest, come back!" but it was too late, for even as I spoke rushing with quick step to the stairway, I heard the hall door clang after him.

Oh the pain it struck into my heart,—what would happen now,—where was he gone,—what would the end be! and I went bitterly back to my old place on the sofa, and lay with my hands clasped over my eyes, picturing a thousand dreary things, the oftenest and the dreariest, a solemn river upon which the moonlight lay, and far down in the depths where the moonbeams could not come, a tall form with dark tangled curls laying heavily above the white temples which had ceased to throb, and the white face as I watched floated up and up, until it lay with the calm unfeeling moon shining into the eyes from which the soul's light had faded,—I could not rid me of the picture.

"And if it should be, and I the cause, God pity me," burst from my white lips, but the last word brought a comfort with them, did God ever cease to pity me. Oh my Father I know now, that the grief of that night is happily past, thou heardest my prayers, and answered them. Not far away, oh my God, not distant from thy poor child, but so nigh, so graciously nigh ever. My Father who pities me.

When the others came in and sat talking, I could not bear it and went silently down to the deserted school-room, and in the darkness paced up and down trying to think, a vain effort then.

But when I could remain alone no longer and went back to the gay party above, I was fain to hide my eyes from the bright light, and my ears from their gay merry prattle, in a shaded corner.

But bye and bye even this was unendurable, for I could not hear the sound of the street door, though I strove never so hard, above the laughing ripples of their young voices. And he might come, and go again and I would not know it.

I bore it quietly, sitting with my fingers tightly upon my eyes, pleading the headache which was nothing to the heartache below, to which it was but the faint accompaniment, until at last it was too much and I sprang up saying, as much like myself as I could,

"Oh Harley, would you mind doing something for me to-night?"

He looked surprised but arose instantly, and leading the way to his room said,

"Certainly, I will do it willingly."

When he had closed the door he seated me in a chair, for my strength was all gone now, and I shook like an aspen leaf.

"What is it, little sister, what is this trouble?" he asked.

"Ernest," I said in a quick, breathless tone.

"What of him?" and I felt him start as he held me, "what of Ernest, dear?"

"Save him! save him!" I said throwing myself into his arms as the vision of the river and the sad white face upon its bosom came before me. "Oh Harley if he comes to harm what shall I do, the sin will be mine."

He was very pale, bending over me a moment he said,

"Poor sister, poor little Bertha, it is a sad fate which compels us, who should protect and guard you, thus to persecute you, thus to stir the fountains of your quiet heart," then after a moment he added, "only be patient my sister, all will be well, God is very gracious He will not afflict even you whom He draws home by sorrow, beyond what you are able to endure."

For a moment he was very still, I think he prayed for me, then he went to the door opening it and I could just hear,

"Marion I want to speak to you a moment," above the hum.

"What is the matter?" she asked as she closed the door.

"Marion," he said slowly and calmly, "hear me quietly, something is the matter, do not get excited, your Uncle Ernest and mamma have had some trouble, and he has gone away displeased and she is distressed, do not speak to her now my pet, she is not able to bear it, and I want you to be quite calm, for I depend upon you to get all the rest quietly to bed, can you do it without attracting attention, to anything unusual?"

"I am quite cool, dear Uncle, certainly, trust me."

"I do dear, if you are not to be trusted I know not who is, go love," and he laid his hand tenderly upon her arm.

I sat up white and anxious as she went out, wondering in a dull sort of way what she would do.

"Dear me," she began as she left the study door, "they quite mystified me, mamma and Uncle Harley closeted and I called in, I began to suspect some grand conspiracy, and

here, I am simply requested to bid you good night for mamma, whose poor head aches so sadly she can not undergo a siege of kisses well as she likes them," then she added—

"So as they have some work upon the *tapis*, if you think best Aunt Estelle, perhaps it would be as well to get the house quiet, and let them sit here, for Uncle Harley has let his fire go down, and it is quite cold in there. The first hour in the morning will be drawing instead of Algebra or German, as both Dr. Wilbur and Mr. Raymond may be otherwise engaged young ladies."

"What happy inspiration made her think of that, dear child," muttered Harley, as he stepped out into the room.

"Marion dear, do not inconvenience the young ladies by sending them away post haste, if they prefer staying up longer"—he began.

"I do not think they will prefer doing anything but just what would please mamma best," she said quietly, "and I think she must need rest sadly when she feels unable to say good night to her flock of bonnie bairns."

Then, when they were all gone, she came softly up to me and laying her soft hands upon my forehead:

"Dear mamma," she said, "can I do anything else to help you?"

"No, darling, nothing else."

"Then, good night, sweet mother, call me if you need me?"

"But do you not want to know what all this trouble means?"

"Not now, dearest, you are not able," then in a whisper she said, "I think I do know already, he would have been what Mr. Lea asked to be,—now we need speak of it no more."

As soon as she had gone, Harley went out on what was, of course, a fruitless errand; for an hour, I sat cold and chilled waiting for him; Marion came in and wrapped a shawl around me, and I saw her no more.

Harley came back and insisted I should go to bed and let him wait up; but this would have been an aggravation of Ernest's misery. So at last he went to his room, shutting me up in mine. But I only stayed a little while until the house was still again; then I went down and paced the whole night up and down the hall and lower rooms.

And hour after hour passed, but he came not; every stroke of the clock struck a knell into my heart; but it did no good, and when the grey shadows stole up the old staircase, I followed them, and crept wearily into bed, not to sleep, only to pray.

In the morning, my pale cheeks were easily accounted for by last night's headache. How I dragged through the day, I know not; but it seemed a week in length. Late in the afternoon, I laid down again, striving vainly to gain some sleep, when suddenly Harley came to my door, bringing a note from Ernest to himself:

Dear Harley,—I am so engaged, I shall not be able to come home through the day. Tell the rest not to be anxious if I do not come back for a couple of days.

In haste,

E. WILBUR.

"It was sent by a boy who was gone before I could make any enquiries."

"No matter, thank God he is safe; show this to the rest, it will account for his absence."

Now I had assurance of his safety, I was comparatively relieved, and could wait in patience until he returned.

The next day, late in the afternoon, Marion came to where I was seated, and whispered:

"I saw Uncle Ernest go into his office a moment since."

Without a word, I went swiftly down the staircase to the little room which after class hours he still uses for his office.

He sat at the table, his head buried in his hands, and never moved when I opened the door.

"Ernest," I said, laying my hand upon his arm; but he made no answer, nor seemed to notice me.

"Ernest! my brother, speak to me," and I drew away his hand from before his face. Oh what a pale haggard face it was. God pity me that I was the cause.

He spoke no word, but gave me such a look. Oh, I could not endure it. I threw my arms wildly round him, saying, in an agony of grief and repentance:

"Forgive me, my brother, my heart is broken!"

"Bertha! Bertha!" he murmured; then, after a pause in a broken trembling tone he added, "you do not hate me now?—I was mad—I was frenzied then, I—"

But I laid my hand over his lips, hushing his reproaches.

"I know, I know, we were both beside ourselves; but it

is over now, we will speak of it no more. This thing must come no more between us. Walter Percy's wife and dearest friend, must have no unkindly thoughts against each other. My brother must not desert me."

"My sister, my patient enduring Bertha, Walter's little wife, I have done you a grievous wrong. But, oh I loved you so, this love has grown within me every day. I have fought against it night and day until I deemed it conquered. Oh forgive me, my sister, that it was not so! For one hour it gained the mastery over me, and made me a madman. But now—now I have put it away with a strong hand, and will keep it far from your sight ever more.

Through such sore temptations and horrors have I come since we stood together, that my strength is well nigh gone, but my will is strong, to subdue whatever may distress you, henceforth you need not fear me. Will you trust me sister?"

"My brother Ernest! yes! through all I will trust and bless you ever more, my own true friend—"

But this time had sorely afflicted him. That night a raging fever laid him low, and for more than a week he was entirely delirious. Then he recovered, but so slowly, that now he has gone on a long traveling expedition to recruit his health and spirits, by a change of air and scene.

Poor fellow, his reproaches were so bitter, so heart-felt. I know what he so plaintively asserts is true.

"I could not help it for this time, it mastered me."

This unwise and marvelous passion, which has so shocked me, will be put away now, I know it will, I know I may trust him,—for he is a strong brave hearted man, and not a silly pining boy, sighing for what is unattainable.

Now he is gone away—and when he returns, we will meet as though this had never been.—

This coming month Stuart is to graduate at the High School, then we shall have plenty of work to do, getting our boys ready for leaving home. It will be hard to loose them all at once, but it seems best, for I fear to have Howard away from Stuart's influence.

His school associations are beyond my reach, and I shudder to think my little truthful boy may become tainted with the evil influences by which he may without my knowledge be surrounded. But Stuart can watch over his out door associations, and direct them always as now.

And moreover this house full of girls is not the best place to bring up a boy, they spoil him. His winning gentle ways, make him a favorite with all. And I dread least he grow effeminate wanting that strong, self reliance so admirable in man.

There is an excellent school, near the college, (Yale) where the two older boys are going, therefore we have resolved to send him thither. Not as a boarding scholar however, that would be but an aggravation of my troubles. But instead of taking one room, as was first intended; they will take two as pleasant ones as they can procure near the college, and Howard will be with them.

I have such a safe contented heart when I think over this arrangement, I cannot doubt but it is for the best.

In the months upon months which must roll away while we live apart what a comfort it will be to think,

"Stuart has Howard in his arms safely locked up to-night," or else, "Howard is sure to know his lessons this morning, because Stuart learned them with him last-night."

And then when Stuart is worn out with too much study, the other two will do him good with their merry talk and tricks, that is a comfort too!

The house is bright and cheerful with their gay voices. Every old nook and corner seems to beam out with happiness, as their merry faces peep into it.

How we shall miss them, when they are gone, my noble boys. I shall pine for them, I will look in vain for my frail Howard's pleading eyes, and tender embraces. I will sorrow that my fervent loving Clare no more pours into my ear his dreams of beauty: but more than all shall I miss the firm true helping hand of my own brave Stuart, true good wise soul, which were worthy of the dearest treasures of my poor heart. Often as I sit and watch them gay and free, laughing with some coquettish maiden, I say with a smile, "Youth and Hope are near akin."

In the first week of Earnest Wilbur's absence I received this letter which explains many things which were dark before.

"Bertha—forgive me, my heart is broken. Oh I have been mad—but am not now. Do you remember years and years ago when we two, Walter Percy and I came to your summer home in the sunny isle of the Mediterranean? Then in that time so

fraught with beauty, sunbeams and flowers— moonlight and songs,— mingling now in my memory, into one mist-like whole, I learned my first dream of love,— from it I awoke one night— seeing Walter Percy's arms woven round Bertha Howard as they stood looking out upon the moonlit sea.

"My Bertha, I had dreamed it might sometime be, but then I know my folly, what was I to compete with Walter Percy, whom all men worshipped, whom I with every pulsation of my heart, honored and loved; my noble, glorious friend.

"Then when I knew the love I craved could never be mine, I began the many years of pilgrimage you used to wonder at.

"Oh I strove in all those years to wean my heart from you, to remember *how* I was to love you— Walter's wife,— and when I met you years after in Paris with three bright little ones about you, I deemed my lesson learned,— and nursed the belief, you were no more to me than the wife of my friend should be.—

"But when I met you here a widowed, desolate woman— blame me not that the old love,—the old longings came back with tenfold force. Oh I could not help the strong wild wish to gather you poor weary child into my bosom, and guard you from life's storms,— but bear me witness that knowing your love and grief for my boyhood's friend, in all this time we have dwelt quietly together, with a great strength, I have kept out of sight my long tried love,— never by word or sign, giving you cause to doubt my brother-heart, until now.

"And, now it is all over, all the old sweet confidence: for the hope a few light words from you caused to spring up within me, I have wrested away from me your old faith, the dear trustfulness which has been my joy.

"Bertha, do not hate me, pity me, oh woman! you should not hate me that I love you. My soul is weary, so weary, moaning fiercely and bitterly over the evil I have done."

It is without date or name, and yet how this letter speaks to me. The very chirography has a piteous appealing look about it which makes the tears well up to my eyes. Poor

Ernest, dear Ernest, come back, it is not hard to forgive you anything.

It shall make no difference, I will be his friend and he mine, as of old, only with this difference, we must oftener call to mind as Harley and I do, that we are brother and sister, it makes it easier I think for us to remember what is best. It seems so strange he should have loved me in the old time, the dear old time.

How the strange wild happiness of that summer comes over me, bright and beautiful, though a death, my precious mother's death, lies like a cloud at the end of it; but Walter helped me bear the sorrow, and thus even this cloud, else so dark and fearful, was made to have a roseate hue, and a circlet of silver round about it.

It seems a strange sad thing that what gave Walter and me such great happiness, should have caused one whom we both prized so highly, misery. Thus it is ever, the very flash which brightens and illumines one life, blinds and scorches another, perhaps better worthy of the goodness; but it is the other way too, the rule works both ways. I like to remember "there can be no rainbow without there is first a cloud."

CHAPTER XXXV.

APRIL.

STUART's examination passed off as we knew it would, first-best; but Stuart's triumphs have grown to be so certain now-a-days, that I tell him:

"The zest is half gone, now we cannot bring ourselves to doubt and fear beforehand."

Of course he protests with grave assurance against their being any certainty in the matter; but we know better, and are so proud of him we never doubt any good thing for him.

Brave heart, steadfast spirit. The *hardest* right always the one he chooses, duty, stern duty, the watchword which

he bears aloft. Following with a firm determined step and steadfast eye, "The Right," come what will, no matter for the thorns which line his way, no matter for the jutting rocks over which the path may lie, he never turns aside to an easier, but presses on through all danger and suffering, towards the shining light far above him, my true-hearted Stuart.

He is one in a thousand, nay in ten thousand, now with his manhood just gathering its mantle over him, his merry laughing eyes overshadowed with the thoughts of life and life duties. The true heart within him so earnest in its aspirations.

Oh, I do not fear for him, his way in life may be rough and thorny, I think it will be; but he will conquer all. Boy though he is, I reverence him, even though knowing it, it humbles him.

If my own Howard proves what Stuart is, I ask no more. I think he will, how can he help but be good: Walter, his father, a memory which will prove a shield, Stuart his elder brother, a firm example, a true friend to guide him. I oftentimes think of the poet's words, when I look at Stuart, he acts them so entirely:

"Life is real, life is earnest,
And the grave is not our goal,
Dust thou art to dust returnest,
Was not spoken of the soul."

MAY.

Last night for a long while Clare and I walked 'neath the shade of the old trees. The moon rode high and calm, a pale fair ladye in the skies, bright and serene, taking her nightly round, encircled with a starry crown; sometimes clear and pure—riding unhidden through the clear ether, but oftentimes with a sheen of silvery clouds athwart her brightness, casting a shadow where erewhile all was light.

Clarence is keenly alive to the beautiful in everything, especially the *beautés de nature*, bowing down soul and spirit before all that is fair.

As we walked up and down the shadowy paths, he confided

to me as his wont, his wild poet dreams,—his hopes for the future, and many a bright flash of glorious thought shone out from his boyish heart, as his fervent Italian tongue poured forth its flood of hopes and anticipations.

And when we stood taking a parting glance at the beautiful night, after our walk was a long while over, and we were communing silently with our hearts, he said while a sad light came into his eyes which had been glowing a little while before.

"I think the moon is such a fit semblance of one's own life, so fair and bright but now, nothing but beauty clustering round it, when suddenly the clouds gather thickly and heavily over it, hiding every ray of light, save a dim faint reflection, which lingers like the shadow of the gladness which is past."

"But then my boy, even while you watch with sad eyes the beauty overcast, the clouds are riven, and a ray of hope glances out, telling of a better time to come, and suddenly the fair pale moon pushing back the darkness which would yet envelope her, rides above, pure and bright as in the old times."

"Oh it is true, it is true," he said fervently, the old brightness coming back once more into his eyes; "and the clouds of sorrow themselves are silvered over with beauty, and make the good more enjoyable from contrast, oh yes, life is beautiful, even its clouds."

And we stood in the door way, watching the queen of heaven descend throwing her flood of silver lovingly over all things, even over this dark gray house, with its jutting corners and heavy arches, which never throw back one kindly glance, but dull and sombre stand cold and gray, half hidden by the shadows the old trees cast.

We stood thus hand in hand, and gazing with outward eyes upon the scene, took in a deep draught of contentment in this bit of earth and sky, which is vouchsafed to us amidst the stirring bustle of this ever busy city, the noise of which comes with a smothered sound over the high stone walls around us.

But my heart went back to other scenes and other days, to moons which shone so gaily once, which had no shadow over them for me, and I doubt not that the boy beside me,

thought of the young mother in her far away grave, over which this same pale moon kept a vigil.

When we turned to go in, Clare said in a low tone:

"It is beautiful, so beautiful, thank God."

And then he repeated the last verse of a poem we had read that night, by "Claudius," I think:

"Du der ilm gegeben,
Mit seinem trauten Licht,
Hast Freund' am frohen Leben
Soust gebst du ilm uns nicht."

Dear Clare, his soul is filled with an unfading beauty, and my old fear that he might come to be a dreamer, without the desire to do his appointed work whatever it might be, is over now. For though when we compare him with Stuart we do not call him a brilliant student, yet he is an earnest fellow, and has well earned the praises of his masters.

Above all, he has learned to conquer himself, "I have learned from 'Arty' to let dreaming be my reward for some piece of hard work," he says, laughingly.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

JUNE 28.

THIS year the girls pleaded very earnestly in this wise:

"Dear Mrs. Percy, we have always had a pic-nic in the woods, just as we had last year, except never on so grand a scale as then. It would not do to have such a coronation as we had last year every season, indeed we could not if we would, so please let us have a water-party this time."

"A water-party, I do not quite understand what you mean by that?"

"Oh, for the whole school with as many of their friends as are desirous of going, to take one of the elegant steamers

which ply down the river to the Bay, and take music along, and have a supper."

"A supper indeed," says another, "and fast all the rest of the day I suppose."

"Not at all," was the reply, "but eat our dinner pic-nic fashion in our own particular clique, out of our own particular baskets, and then, as we are returning, have a grand supper served."

There was much talking over the plan, and after consulting with the parents of many of the girls, we came to the conclusion, it would be perhaps as pleasant a way as any, and so it was settled.

Then there were worlds of things to be done by the scholars, collections to be raised for the supper and music, and another and larger one among their friends who were invited to attend, to defray the expense of the passage. A whole week they were occupied about the business part of the excursion; then all the funds were placed in Ernest and Harley's hands, and in accordance with instructions, they hired the *safe* and magnificent steamer "Bella Donna" for our benefit.

So on the day appointed, at nine in the morning, they went down to the river,—a wild, merry party, of somewhere in the neighborhood of thirty from our house alone.

They were met by the day pupils and a host of friends, who were to accompany them.

Even Sandy and Milly were pressed into the service. The day passed in dancing, singing, and merry games, until, in the afternoon, they came in sight of the sea. To many it was a first sight, and struck them mute with awe.

Of the latter number were Stuart and Howard, who stood looking forth upon the wide expanse of water with eager eyes, lost in wonder at the sight.

With heads bared in reverential silence, they stood for a long while silent. Then Stuart said, in his clear, low voice:

"And He gathereth the floods together. He holdeth them in His hand as a little thing.' 'Be still, and know that I am God.'" And he was silent again.

"Do you remember those lines you set me to learn a few weeks ago, Arty?" said Howard, after a while.

"Say them for me, How."

"Not all of them: only this verse, which seems to speak of this very scene.

'With all tones of water blending,
Glorious is the breaking deep.
Glorious, beauteous without ending,
Songs of ocean never sleep.'

And listen, Arty; do you not hear it, how it breaks with such a grave, dull sound upon the shore yonder? It seems to me to be saying ever and ever those very words, 'Songs of ocean never sleep, never sleep, never sleep.'"

"'Never more, never more.' So they do say it, brother mine. But they say another thing to me. Listen, now, to that great wave just coming. Listen, now, as it breaks. There! what did it say?"

"Only the old thing to me: the same song it sang before. 'Never ending, never ending. Songs of ocean never cease.'"

"To me it says, 'God over all; God over all,'" said Stuart, with a grave face, and a hushed, awed tone.

"But look at Clare! Arty, look at Clare!"

He was standing on the very edge of the boat, where there was no railing, his face white as a corpse, and a look of wild, strange excitement about him. Stuart says:

"Thank God Howard saw him then; for in another instant, under such a passion of excitement was he, I doubt not he would have been overboard, and the steamer ploughing above him, crushing the life out of his glorious face!"

With Howard's exclamation, Stuart went swiftly and noiselessly forward to where Clarence stood, and grasping his arm, wheeled him round out of sight of the sea, saying at the same time, with a forced laugh:

"Come, old fellow, you have looked long enough at the water." And then, as Clarence, pale and exhausted, sank on a seat, he laid his hand upon his shoulder, and, with a loving glance into those upturned eyes, in which the light of the beautiful scene still lingered, said:

"Would my brother leave me? Did the mermaids try to woo you to their embrace with their soft glances and syren songs? Oh! they cannot have you, Clare. I cannot part with my dreamy brother, my glimpse of Parnassus!"

For a little, Clare only answered with a faint smile; then suddenly he said, with tears in his eyes:

"It was not the mermaids, Arty, but my mother, who was wooing me. She lies so close to the sea, the waves at high tide reach the steps. I thought just now I could almost see the little white chapel we raised above her grave; and I thought the roses needed pruning; and I felt as if, could I only have Peter's faith, I might walk the sea, not, like him, losing it after the first, but keeping it till I had walked to where mamma lies, firm and sure as his was at the starting: no doubting or fearing thought. I believe, Arty," he added, with a half laugh, "I should have been off, without so much as good-bye, if you had not pulled me back."

"The days of miracles are over," said Stuart, gravely. "We must not think to try God. Blessed are they who believe, not having *seen*."

"How do you mean? Without having seen what?"

"The outward and actual manifestation of God's grace, as shown in miracles; but humbly accept the unceasing goodness and tenderness of our Father in the constant watchful care He surrounds us with every moment of our lives."

For a long while, with their arms clasped round each other, and a hand of each lain upon Howard's shoulder, as he stood before them, they gazed upon the exceeding beauty of old Ocean, as it lay spread out before them grandly and proudly. After a while, Clarence began in a quick, thrilling tone, Byron's grand apostrophe to Ocean:

"Roll on, thou deep and dark blue Ocean—Roll!
Ten-thousand fleets sweep over thee in vain;
Man marks the Earth with ruin—his control
Stops with the shore;—upon the watery plain
The wrecks are all thy deed, nor doth remain,
A shadow of man's ravage, save his own,
When for a moment like a drop of rain,
He sinks into thy depths with bubbling groan
Without a grave, unknell'd, uncoffin'd and unknown.

* * * * *

Thou glorious mirror where the Almighty's form
Glasses itself in tempests, in all time,
Calm or convulsed—in breeze, or gale, or storm,

Iceing the pole, or in the torrid clime,
Dark—heaving; boundless, endless, and sublime,—
The image of Eternity—the throne
Of the Invisible:—even from out thy slime
The monsters of the deep are made; each zone
Obeys thee, thou goest forth, dread, fathomless, alone!

And I have loved thee, Ocean! and my joy
Of youthful sports was on thy breast to be
Borne like thy bubbles on—

"Why stand ye here gazing out into the deep, blue fathomless abyss, recreant knights?" interrupted a gay voice behind them, and looking round they beheld Cora and Ada.

"Do you like the sea with its depths, its roar, and broad expanse, dear Clare?" said Cora, laying her head against his arm as she saw how pale he was.

"Yes, do not you, Birdie?"

"No, no," she said vehemently, "it frightens me, its greatness terrifies me, I cannot breathe freely with all this mightiness of water on every side of me. Give me the forest shade, the flowers and little running brooks, oh I know them, and love them dearly, they never frighten me."

"Ah! Bird of the green-wood
Thy home is not here."

And Stuart drew Ada's arm through his own, and patting Birdie's flushed cheek told her "to bring Clare and let us see how the rest are affected by this ocean which he thinks grand, and you so terrible."

The sun was just beginning to dip into the western ocean, and they drew to the side of the boat, nearest it, where a large part of the company had already gone, and standing in little groups, were gazing eagerly upon the surpassing grandeur of a sunset at sea.

Marion stood alone, with hands clasped in the old way across her breast, her eyes fixed upon the distant prospect.

Ere they reached her Lela passed them swiftly, with such a look upon her beautiful face, rapt, almost bewildered.

"Of what were you thinking, sister mine?" she asked, clasping her arm round Marion's waist.

"Of that other time—the last time we saw the sun dip into the water thus, and of who was with us then."

"Oh papa! lost! lost!" said poor Lela.

"Not lost darling, only gone for a little while, afterwards—" and her eyes shone, and a sweet smile lay upon her lips.

"Afterwards we will be glad he went first, it is only waiting."

"So long, so long, Marion!" said Lela.

"Nay, not too long, if God wills it. Do you remember what papa said that last time we stood and looked upon the sea, sister do you remember?"

"Yes, oh so well! the time, the words, the manner we stood, all, everything though I was so very young. You lay upon his breast, one arm folded round you, his 'little dove who needed so much petting to make her happy,' he said, and I sat upon mamma's lap and his arm was round her waist. 'And mamma asked if he remembered 'Guy Morville's' farewell of his beloved home, and papa repeated looking out the while——"

"He looked up to the deep-blue sky overhead and murmured to himself, 'In heart and mind thither ascend, and with Him continually to dwell,' and gazing long and intently into the green waters, as he rocked in his frail bark, after a silence he again spoke to himself,——'Why stand ye here gazing up into heaven?' Then pulled vigorously back to the shore leaving a shining wake far behind him, 'was not that it Bertha darling?'—then after a pause, he added, 'oh that we may, in heart and mind thither ascend,' then whatever comes will be no matter, not hard, not wearisome, if we have that safe sure anchor for our own," and his tone was so low and tender, though I did not know at all what he meant, it struck every word into my heart, Marion, and I have thought it over a thousand times."

Cora, who stood back of them, was sobbing with uncontrollable grief on Stuart's breast. They heard the sound.

"Poor Birdie!" said Marion, "come here, little sister, and see how God's goodness shows itself in every line of this picture."

And they stood for a long while quietly looking out, until Mr. Livingstone and Mr. Marstone, who stood near them, and had heard their conversation, kindly came and drew

bright pictures of the ocean; repeating first the one and then the other, passages, grand and beautiful, of some old poet, in which the sea was magnified.

"I do not wonder," said Marion, "that people to whom no revelation had been given, should have worshipped the sun. I think, next to God himself, it is the greatest, the noblest, the most like God, of any of His works."

A sneer, or something very like one, was, for an instant, on Mr. Livingstone's face, and he asked:

"How do you think it should be with those who have a revelation, Miss Marion?"

"How do I think it should be with them?" she said, gently, "I do not understand, please?"

"What should they do, how should they be impressed?"

"With a sense of God's greatness, I think, sir," she answered, modestly, yet earnestly, "with a renewed desire to serve Him better, every time their eyes rest upon such an evidence of His wonderful power and greatness."

He bowed, and with the same look fleeting over his face, turned and looked forth silently, moodily.

Lela gazed curiously at him for a moment, and then said softly:

"I always think of those words of a German poem, when I think of the sea, or look upon it either:

"Hope on, hope from the heart may sever,
But the heart hopes on unchanging ever.
Wave after wave breaks on the shore,
The ocean is deep as it was before.

That the billows heave with a ceaseless motion,
Is the very life of the throbbing ocean,
And the hopes that from day to day upstart,
Are the swelling wave-beats of the heart."

"Do you know that in the original, Miss Leanoire?" asked Mr. Marstone, as she ceased.

"Oh, yes sir," she answered, "it is much prettier in German."

"Say it again, please," said Mr. Livingstone with a strange look upon his face.

"In the German, sir?" she asked.

"As you will, as you will."

And she said it over. When she had finished, turning, Mr. Livingstone asked:

"Do you think it true, young lady?"

"Certainly, sir," she said in surprise, "do not you?"

"No, I do not, for I know some hearts, where hope is dead utterly and entirely."

"Then the heart is dead too, hope is the last thing, sir, which leaves us," said Marion, "I pity such a heart."

"You may, you may," he said, and turned away, with the words, "yet there are such hopeless hearts, which are not dead to any feeling save hope."

They looked sorrowfully after him, and Mr. Marstone said, as if speaking to himself:

"Poor fellow, poor fellow."

"Is he one of the hopeless ones," asked Cora softly, with a half-frightened tone.

"Birdie! Birdie!" said Marion, "a wrong question. Mr. Marstone will not answer it, I hope."

But a look told them what his lips did not, and a sorrowful feeling lay upon each heart.

"Nora," said Adèle, from somewhere in the depths, "please let me come to you."

Lela went to the stairway, and, taking a hand of each of her little sisters, said:

"Naughty sisters, to be so forgetful. Come, here are May and Birdie: we have been so busy talking we forget our little sisters utterly."

After they had regained the place where the others stood, Adèle said softly:

"Tell me of the sea, please."

"May or I?" asked Lela, gently.

"I like to have Stuart tell things like that best. He makes me see better."

"Come, then, darling!" And folding her in his arms, he began,

"The boat is lying almost still now, so we may enjoy to the full this beautiful sunset. All along, for so great a way it tires the eye almost to look, lies the ocean. It sparkles and shines, the waves are great and round, and swell up and down, and every wave is broken into ten thousand other little rippling waves. On all of these—and there are millions upon millions of them—the sun is just now shining

with a golden light: not the kind of golden brightness you remember in Birdie's hair, but a more crimson kind of gold. Away off, far, far to the west, the sun is lying like a great red ball of fire, and it almost seems as though, without our knowing it, he must have taken one plunge into the water and then arose again; for it seems as if he was shaking himself free from thousands of sparkling drops. They shimmer and gleam, and make all that part of the ocean look like a shower of diamonds. Then all the sky is blue and crimson,—the back-ground blue and the clouds crimson: some of them with great golden bands folded out on either side of them, and others, farther off, having only a silver rim.

"But what is most strange of all the rest is, that while all this beauty is shining, and glowing in the west, just a little to the south there is a heavy black cloud; and every once and a while it opens, and a streak of lightning goes from top to bottom zig-zag through it, and then we can hear the low rumbling thunder."

"So beautiful!" said Adèle. "So beautiful! Gracie, do you not love to look at it?"

"I do not know. I have not seen it, only as you have."

"Why, Gracie!" said Birdie, stooping down. And sure enough, the faithful little comrade had her eyes tightly closed, not willing to enjoy so much beauty which Adèle might not see.

"But I have seen it nicely, now, Gracie, through Arty's good eyes," said Adèle.

"And so have I, real nicely," said Gracie, keeping her hand fast over her own.

"But," said Marion, "does not that dark cloud, which looms larger and darker in the south, tell of a coming storm, and danger?"

"When the sea is fair and calm, says an old Italian legend, the syrens weep, though the sky is never so cloudless, though the waves are never so smooth; still the syrens weep, for they know the storm will come," said Mr. Livingstone, with a smile, as he came up to her.

"But the young lady's about right," said one of the men belonging to the boat, as he passed. "If we don't have a pretty rough time of it to-night, you may kill me!"

And the man was not mistaken, for as the shades of night

came down, the moon by whose beams they had thought to return, was overcast, and while the river was yet so wide they could not distinguish the shores upon either side, a heavy blow came up, and then the storm broke over them in all its fury, making the noble bark quiver in every joint.

The waves lately so calm and quiet, were lashed by the taunting winds into a mad frenzy, and broke against the devoted steamer in great white capped mountains of foam. And the angry winds howled piteously over them, and their voices sent a chill of fear into every heart.

Where but a little while ago all was laughter and smiles, terror and cries of frightened agony sounded. Still the hope of "land was near," and cheered the hearts of all, but the few, who knew the land was their chief danger in such a storm, and that all their efforts must be to keep clear of the shoals upon the shore. To keep out of sight of what the others were vainly striving to discern, praying for with fervent words. Oh, is it not so always amidst the storms of life, praying for the evil which to our poor blinded eyes seems only the most perfect good! How satisfying it is to know there is a "God over all," who "doeth all things well."

But, though they strove to keep the vessel in the middle of the stream, the mad winds lashed her sides and drove her helpless upon the sands—a fearful crash!—an awful sound like a gasping groan, and swinging round upon the reef which extended a mile or more out from the shore, she settled and began to fill.

"Man the boats, and bring them to the side, for your lives, boys! work with a will!" sang out the commander.

Then the scene baffles description, the wails of agony, the cries of little children, the gathering together of families and dear friends into groups, the words of fear, and sometimes the gentle voice of a comforter, all mingled with the voices of the men, as they worked, and the cruel winds as they laughed at the destruction they had made.

Then it was necessary that the pumps should be worked to keep the vessel afloat, and men unused to manual labor worked hours for their lives, and their dear ones.

When the boats were ready, such gentlemen as could be spared, were called upon to man them. Stuart and Ernest were in one.

From the first, Mrs. Livingstone's frantic cries had been the loudest and most vehement; now, as soon as the boats were ready, she sprang to the side, demanding to be taken on board.

"Certainly," said her husband, with a sneer, "most unselfish of women, you must go first." And he lifted her over.

Then Stuart, standing upon the prow, said to Ernest, who stood upon the edge of the steamer:

"Hand me down Marion first."

"No, not until the others are safe, none of us will go this time."

"But, Marion, some one must go first," said Ernest.

"I would rather not," she replied firmly.

"Then, Miss Leanore," said Mr. Marstone, "will you come?"

"Certainly not, Uncle Ernest insist upon your mother going."

All this took but an instant, and Ernest called out:

"We will take the eldest ladies first," and one after another were handed over, with great danger, as the boats heaved up and down upon the angry waves.

Then, when the three boats were filled, they put off for the shore. The sea rolled angrily still, but the storm had lulled gradually, else they would not have dared trust their frail boats upon it.

While they were gone, the rest waited in agonized prayer for the issue of this venture.

At last a shout came ringing over the water, and a "thank God!" from many a lip, told the boats were safe.

Each boat held ten, three had gone, and it would take at least two more journeys ere all could be landed. And in the meantime the steamer must be kept afloat, and with renewed hope they worked at the pumps most faithfully.

Marion had gathered our own dear ones about her, giving the charge of the two little ones to Lela and Estelle, while she kept Cora near herself, quieting her fears.

None of the girls who live with us had gone save Louise and Clara, whose anxious friends had hurried them off.

And now while they waited for the return of the boat, poor Cora, stood with clasped hands leaning against the railing, weeping bitterly, her poor little form shaken with sobs.

Mr. Livingstone and Mr. Marstone, came up much exhausted, from their turn at the pumps, and stood near her too weary to speak for a while, then the former said tenderly stroking her curls.

"Poor child, brave little heart, so frightened and yet ready to give up to others the chances of escape, if there is a God he will care for you."

"He will, I know he will, not for my own sake, but for the sake of papa and mamma," she said earnestly, not noticing the doubt in his speech.

"He remembers his own," said Mr. Marstone.

Just then Mr. Raymond, came up, pale and exhausted, and throwing himself upon a seat beside Marion, leaned his head against her.

"Come what will, we can work no longer. I cannot raise my hand up once more, and I am sure the strength of every other man on board is as completely gone."

"Then the women must take their turn," said Lela promptly, "please some of you show us what to do, if you are not too weary."

"No, no, it will do no good," said Mr. Marstone.

"Nevertheless we will try," said Dora, "Lela is right, we must try."

"Yes" said a dozen eager voices, "tell us what to do," and after that all who had strength worked faithfully, for their very lives.

Then the boats came, and were sent back with a second load, and again the lessened company waited and worked, and although they strove their utmost they felt the water was gaining upon them, spite of their utmost endeavours.

But again the boats came near and they left the under decks which were filling, and crowded above.

"Aunt Estelle please go and let them hand you Adèle and Gracie," said Marion. And it was done as she requested, then she said:

"Now Birdie you must go."

"Yes, little one, we must force you," said Mr. Livingstone lifting her lightly into the boat; "the storm is past, the waves almost calm, but the steamer is foundering rapidly, we must make all speed now."

All were in at last, and the two first had started and were already out of sight, when as the last pushed off, it was

found she was too heavily laden. Four men must go with her to row, and guide her safely, Mr. Livingstone, Harley and Mr. Marstone sprang upon deck, but it was not enough. Quick as thought, Leaneore followed them. A wild cry rose as she did so, and in an instant Marion stood beside her, then with their arms clasped, they stood with the gray dawn breaking over them, while the friends they had left, implored them to return.

"If we do, all will be lost," said Lela "if we stay here there is hope for us all."

"Let me go to my sisters, you shall not keep me," cried Cora, struggling to get to them.

"My sister," said Marion, "will you disobey me now, for the first time in your whole life?"

And with a wild cry the poor child hid her eyes away upon Ada's bosom, but suddenly, ere they could stop him Howard had sprung to the deck.

"Howard my brother, go, mamma's only boy, do not break her heart, little brother, go to her."

"I cannot meet her without you Marion."

"Listen one moment," said Lela to those in the boat, "every moment you remain here diminishes our chance of escape. If the worst comes, May and I, thanks to our precious father's teaching, can both swim. And I think with the aid of these gentlemen, we can keep up until you come back. But if Howard persists in staying, our anxiety for him, will of course lessen our hope of safety."

"Then he must come with us," said Stuart, almost hurling the boy back into the boat, "and please God we will be back in time."

Then while the five stood closely together, the boat struck out swiftly for the shore. When it was out of sight Lela said:

"Are you frightened dear May?"

"God is my Father, no I am not afraid—yet—yet—I trust for mamma's sake we may be saved."

After that a little while passed in silence, then Mr. Marstone said gently:

"We must go up and stand upon the hurricane deck, then upon the pilot house which is the highest."

And they went, Harley carrying Marion through the places where the water was deepest.

Then while they stood silently looking over the deep, Marion said with a smile :

"If you can, will you sing Nora dear?" and in a clear voice she sang "Fear not, but trust in Providence."

Afterwards Marion said, as she stood clasped tightly in Lela's arms, her head upon her breast.

"Let us all sing 'How firm a foundation ye saints of the Lord,' " and they did, and then the waters were near again, and the gentlemen lifted them on to the pilot house.

They shook hands quietly, and said some kind words, then Marion whispered :

"Pray for us Uncle Harley, for all of us."

And he did, but as he prayed, the glad shout came from the approaching boat, and as it drew near, Stuart said :

"Marie ! Marie ! God kept you darling."

"Yes, dear brother, he has been very near to us all this night."

And they were saved.—In their little boat out of reach of danger they saw the noble steamer go down, and the captain and his men took a last look at their beloved craft and shed a tear over her fate,

Of the rejoicing upon shore I need not speak, by an early train they came to the city, sadly wearied by their excursion and its awful ending, joyful to have escaped a sudden death, but many I fear, forgetful of the kind Providence who had succored them.

They came home just when I was growing very anxious at their protracted stay. Thank God I did not dream until all danger was past, of how near I had come, to being bereft of every thing the world holds, that was dear to me.

But all are safe now, not only of our own household, but all who embarked upon that doomed boat. In this thought there is a great comfort, it might have been otherwise, thank God it is not !

Twice since the night of the accident Mr. Livingstone and Mr. Marstone have called to make enquiries after the well doing of their fellow sufferers. Earnest and Harley answered their kind questions in the office, below stairs.

My Father I know not how to be sufficiently humble and grateful, towards Thee, for all Thy mercies to me, Thy carefulness of my beloved ones. Oh time after time would I clasp my little Ernestine, and say 'oh my baby we might

this day have been desolate, alone upon the face of the earth, the rest slumbering beneath the waves of yonder treacherous stream.'

But God was Our Father, he doeth all things well. Oh the riches of the mercy and grace, Our Father sends upon us.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

LAST week I had this letter, the date of which is at least three months back :

BERLIN, MARCH 1.

"My poor Bertha : Just as I am upon the eve of a long journey, I have received your letter. My poor child, my desolate child, God pity you ! God pity me ! My heart is broken ! It wails over thee, my poor stricken one ! My boy, my noble, glorious Walter, dead ! Where was the justice, where the need, of crushing his young life, with its high aims and humble Christian goodness, and leaving such an one as I, or thousands of others of the world-wise, selfish pleasure or gain seekers, who fill this earth, until there is scarcely elbow-room ? Verily it is true that Death loves a shining mark.

"My brave, true-hearted boy, never to look upon him again ! Why, it has been the one thing I have looked forward to for all these years of wandering,—that at last I should gaze into his young, glorious face ! My noble Percy !

"It has been a comfort to me many a time, when, heart-weary with contact with the soulless great men among whom my lot has thrown me, to think that there was one true heart, one unsullied nature, among the law-makers of my own land. If all was corrupt and false here, there was honesty at home.

"And then methought that at my home-coming that proud

heart would bow before me in loving greetings. My boy! my boy! Well may we cry, God pity us! But while I bewail myself, I forget you, my poor child!

"Poor little Bertha! poor widowed one! God comfort thee! Two years alone, and none to help or soothe you! How have you borne it? But what is most incomprehensible is, that you say, 'We have lost everything—have left Percie's Cliffe, and are living in the city of B——.' Why were you not more explicit with me? It is strange Marstone has never applied to me all this time. I cannot understand it. And here am I with my hands tied, not able to go for you, and learn all that relates to your affairs: no not even did I know you were starving, could I get away from here now.

"But, of course, I understand your 'all' to mean in a broad sense,—that you have, by some unexplained reason, been obliged to part with 'Percie's Cliffe;' but it comforts me to remember that your own pretty inheritance, is safely out of the reach of any harm which might overtake Walter's business affairs.

"My heart reproaches me for a wrong I have unwittingly done you, in burdening you, already so burdened, with the care of my Clarence. I did not mean it, dear. Forgive the act which has added a new weight to your care-worn heart.

"I am glad you wrote me of the children; especially of Leanore's voice. Will you give her to me? My Walter's own child! You had him from me for years. You have all the rest who were his. Give me this one for my own. I will make her my co-heir with Clarence. Grant me this, the only favour I ever asked of you. My little Bertha, give me this child, with Walter's very image stamped upon her.

"After many wanderings in many lands, I am at last to be stationed in Paris; and my public position makes it requisite I should have a home, wherein to receive my friends.

"I have sent for my cousin, Miss Weston, to come and take charge of my establishment. You know her. A most estimable lady. A little peculiar, but a most excellent woman. I have written her to go to B—— and seek you out; and if you decide to give me Nora, to bring her out with her.

"Walter was my boy almost from his birth. You know the sad history of his adoption. I did not spoil him, though I loved him so exceedingly.

"Will you trust me with your child? Reflect well upon the privileges to be enjoyed in Paris. All that money or position can give her of happiness or pleasure she shall have.

"Her voice, which was always a marvel, you say is growing more beautiful with her years. She shall have Garcia for her music, and his equal in every other study. Then she will comfort my lonely heart,—my heart made sadly desolate by a sad fate. I will bless you for her, Bertha. In two years, I shall come to America for a few months; and I promise you, you will be glad you yielded to my urgency.

"Clarence, too, had better come. The boy wound himself strongly round my heart while he was with me. I fear amidst my many duties I cannot entirely shield him from the thousand snares of a Paris life; but it is not right the burden of his care-taking should fall upon you, so I will look for him

"My dearest love and blessing to each and all of the dear children. Poor little fatherless children! As far as I can, I will supply their loss.

"I am glad that I shall be able henceforth to hear regularly every month from you, when I am permanently settled in Paris. I send you a thousand dollars for Nora's outfit. What remains will do for pin-money for the others. With my sorrowful heart, and earnest wishes, I could write you pages; but time, my hard, relentless task-master, bids me pause just here. God's comfort be with you; and I believe it is, ere you could have written me the letter you did. Farewell, dear child! GRACIEN AUDLEY."

The letter, and the manner of it was very good to get, but the gift he asked broke my heart to think of, Lela's first words, were a vehement,

"No, never, leave you, and May, and all the rest, I could not!"

But those were only first thoughts, now we have decided this came from above; and we are grateful. It will be hard to part, but in this life, almost all things have some sorrow next them.

And the shipwreck makes me think—though these two years will be a weary while to miss the light of my Lela's beautiful eyes, yet it might have been forever, her sweet smiles might have grown white and cold beneath the wave, her glad voice been hushed to the noise of its murmuring, and her hands and lips been pressed to mine never more.

So I say while I put back my tears, it might have been so much worse, that this will be a blessing.

All say she must go, that the refusal of such an offer is not to be thought of, therefore I have written to inform Miss Weston where she will find us; now we must set about preparing this traveler (as well as the others) for her journey, so far! so far!

Concerning Clare's going, of course he shall not, Burden! he has been nought but a blessing—an infinite comfort. No no, he is better away from the boy life of Paris; safer within the reach of home influence; his good is more certain here.

JULY 3.

School is over for this year, or I should say for this summer. And most of the girls have returned to their homes. We have decided, this season we will not scatter as we have done, but take a quiet little house on the sea-shore at Rocky Point, where we can enjoy the sea-breeze, and, at a distance, look upon the gay throng which summer after summer gathers at this beautiful spot.

We can thus drink in the health-giving salt air, and enjoy the change of scenery and occupation, without fear of intrusion, and at as cheap a rate as if we remained at home. I was the more willing to consent to this arrangement which was Estelle's planning, inasmuch as I cannot help but see Adèle and poor lame Agnes need a little freshening, and they would neither go without me. Therefore during Mr. Raymond's six weeks of holiday, we will all go to the shore, and gain health and strength for the next year's battles.

All, includes Dora and Jennie with their sisters. I do not know whether I have ever written anything concerning the history of these Chalton girls. They have a stepmother

which, in their case, is the real misfortune, it is generally supposed to be. Jennie is a bright pretty girl nearly eighteen, very intelligent, indeed I have rarely seen a girl more highly endowed. When Meta, the youngest of the three, was only a couple of years old, their father married a second time. Since that, their home has never been a happy place. They were unkindly used by their new mother, who, by every effort, has striven to wean the father's heart from his elder children, and centre them upon her own offspring. The most of their lives have been passed at boarding-schools, with unpleasant vacations at home. The father was too glad to get rid of the bother of them, to make any objections to their coming with us. So all were contented with his consent.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

"Sweet is the memory of departed friends, like the mellow rays of the setting sun, it falls tenderly yet sadly upon the soul."

OSSIAN.

AUGUST 1.

"Three years since, thou departed, leaving me desolate. My home is very peaceful, Walter, quiet and calm. My life flows on, a steady contented stream. I have no sorrows now against which to strive; but thousands of kind and merciful blessings. God has been such a Father all this while. I am surrounded with such tender, earnest love, children and friends ever true and gentle to me.

"Our children, my husband, are growing up around me like beautiful dreams. Nay, that is a foolish simile, they are real and true, while dreams are myths. They are my comfort, my rejoicing, my exceeding great and precious reward this side of Heaven and thee.

"I think I have cared for them well, no other desire or thought has come between me and them. Since thou didst leave me, they have had my whole duty after God. All I

owned, and gave so willingly to thee, since *then* I have devoted to their service. They are good children, repaying all my care with earnest love; in almost everything they are entirely what I would have them. I think no mother was ever more blessed in her children. Perfect obedience to me, tender love and consideration towards each other, characterizes their daily life. But thou knowest this, dearest, thou seest it better, far better than I with my poor mortal eyes can see. Yet, love, it is pleasant to sit here and talk to thee of these things. This sweet converse, strengthens and comforts me wonderfully.

"Were it possible to love thee better, to cherish thy noble deeds and words more dearly, than we always did, I think now our love is more deep, more entire than even in thy life time. How good the hope is to my heart, that soon, in a few more years, God will take me too,—but not now, I do not even ask the blessing of going to thee and God, while my darlings need me here."

AUGUST 10.
CLIFT HOUSE.

We have been more than a month at this pleasant place. The girls, ever fanciful, have given our plain little frame cottage a grand name; but as it pleases them, so it does the rest of us. I may well say *little* house, for with our immense family of twenty-one, including Milly and Sandy (a very important inclusion by the way), we can hardly get round each other, and as for sleeping room, we manage somehow to have it; but how is the mystery. We were much occupied the first part of the time with sewing. Making all things ready for the time when we are to lose not only our darling Lela, but the three boys also. Our return to home and home duties, will also be a sad leave-taking. Yet now, although the time draws near which is to sever some of the bright links of the chain which has been hidden away so long and happily in our humble home, still we have determined to put away the evil thought, and let the young glad hearts at least, enjoy the passing pleasures.

"Now that awful pile of plain and fancy sewing is

through with, we will have a good time, to pay up for hard work," says Birdie, as the last stitches were put upon the last garment.

The latter part of the time, the girls have been enjoying "hugely," to quote Howard. For they have not only the pleasant bathing, scenery, and fresh air, but plenty of companionship beside that of our own household. Ada when she found we were to spend the summer within a long walk, or short drive of the gay watering place, persuaded her mother and aunt (Louise Dutille's mother) to change their plans for Saratoga, and come here. This fond and doting mother, Mrs. Lawrence, thinks I believe, one of the heinous crimes of which no sensible person would dare be guilty, is to refuse Ada any request, however unreasonable it may be.

And yet my bright, impulsive pupil is as willingly and gently led and restrained, by a firm hand as any other.

So, pretty soon after we were settled here, Marion had a letter from Ada, and Birdie one from Louise, telling us in two weeks they would be at Rock Point. And they have come, bringing with them the gay circle which the fashionable Mrs. Lawrence always draws round her.

Among them, are the Livingstones, Mr. Marstone, and several other people whom the girls have already met.

There are also here several pleasant young friends of Stuart and Clare's. So that the girls are at no loss for gallants. The distance from the place we live to Rock Point is so small, that the young people are a great deal together. It makes it very agreeable for them, and now they are growing older I am glad they can thus have free intercourse with refined and intelligent people.

Mrs. Livingstone finds her nerves so entirely unstrung by the frightful dangers of the shipwreck, that although as it is fashionable, she comes to the sea-side, she finds no enjoyment in the dear old ocean. Because she has once seen his evil ways, his ill-tempered mood, she will not be friends with him, and never joins the pleasant parties which explore the beach, therefore her husband, who pays far too little attention to her whims, seeks other company, most frequently, that of my merry girls and their party. I have had fears, lest a man of such remarkable fascination, both in person and manners (his conversation is said to carry an irresistible charm with it, when he chooses to have it so),

least a man so endowed would with his reckless, I fear, half-infidel character, exert an evil influence upon the fresh pure minds of my children; but I think now there is no danger, I could not well prevent their meeting him, and others like him, and I think I can trust them one and all, especially as the elder ones have a good hope, resting upon the firm foundation of the Rock of Ages, and with it to overshadow and protect them, they can surely withstand every dart of sophistry and doubting, hurled at either themselves or their younger companions.

Besides it is a pleasant thought that their fresh unworldly nature, may do him good; poor world-weary man, despairing heart. There is a noble nature in him I know, but alas for the thick hard crust of worldliness which has grown over it. A disappointed useless life, and yet they say he had a praying mother.

I cannot account for the strange interest I feel in this young man, perhaps it is because, pleasant memories cluster round the blessed past, in which I first knew him, a gay wild boy.

Mr. Marstone is also our constant guest. All are delighted with him, I have seen him once at church, and I equally with the rest was struck with his resemblance to his uncle, our dear lost friend.

Estelle, who poor friend to her sorrow, knows much of the world, pronounces him a finished gentleman. He is very attentive to my sweet Dora, and always chooses her and her inseparable comrade, Lela, as his companions, in the many delightful walks they take. Cora is wild as a kitten, and fully bent on 'forgetting that a book was ever written, lest the thought of study should mar some mite of her happiness.' Foolish little butterfly.

When we came down here what was our surprise and pleasure too, to find our good friend Mr. Lea, with Mary and Laura already established at one of the hotels. This makes our number almost complete, and there is not a thing to wish for but our quiet, cold Clara's presence. But I suspect her friends are not quite so indulgent of her vagaries as the others are, else our number would be complete.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

SEPTEMBER 5.

ALMOST the last thing I wrote, when last I did write, was something about Clara Robbins, and soon after came a letter from her, containing a request from Ada and Marion to come to her, as she was to be married on the last day of August, and had chosen them for brides-maids, "as her dearest friends." Thus one of our little group has flown already, never to return, made for herself a home in another part of the world, far away from all her old friends. The girls have just returned from their visit to her, and report her as prosperously married and seemingly happy. I am glad of that, for although Clara was too cold and reserved ever to have crept into my heart, yet I feel, and shall ever feel the warmest interest in her future. She is young, not over eighteen I think, but she is the eldest of a large family, who owe their education to the kindness of a bachelor uncle, so I imagine, it is pleasant for Clara to have her life of dependence ended, and for her family to have her out of the way of the rest; I should like to have seen her once more ere she assumed the solemn duties of a wife, but as this could not be, I have written her a long letter full of the best counsel I could devise, and have had a grateful answer, from herself and husband.

We came home almost a week ago, and are all at work again, though not steadily as yet, for the breaking up is to come.

Last night as I sat at work within my own room, I heard a long confab going on between a party of girls; I peeped in at them, gathered round the sofa in all conceivable attitudes. Dora and Mary with Marion between them on the sofa, Ada kneeling with her elbow on Marion's knee, Louise and Birdie perched upon the arms of the sofa, and Lela and Jennie on either side of Ada on the floor. When their chatter tempted me to look in upon the pretty *tableaux vivante* they made, they were discussing Clara's wedding, or rather her husband.

"What would your choice be, could you make a choice in the matter?" was the first I heard. It was Ada who asked the question.

"Yes, come, that will be first-rate," said Birdie. "Let's describe our future husbands."

"Miss C. Percy, not yet in her teens, aspireth to the honor of a husband," said Mary, laughing.

"Why, Mary, Lea, be sure I do; besides, I am in my teens, too."

"Pray, have you chosen the happy man, my dear, but fast young lady?" inquired Jennie.

"No, but I know how I should like him to be,—handsome and brave, of noble birth, and nobler intellect, like the poet Byron,—just like him, except his lame foot."

"But, Birdie, he was an infidel, and a bad, bad man," said Marion.

"But I would make him good. I think that would be the best of all, to win him to be good."

"You are a silly little goose," said Dora, giving her a pull. "It is well you will have time to prove the falseness of your doctrines before they have to bear the test."

"But Dora, tell us what you would choose. What should your hero be like, fair 'Il Penseroso?'"

"I have not given the matter o'er much thought, little one; but I should like a good, true man, one older and far better than myself, who would guide and keep me in the best and truest path."

"Have you no hero to liken him to? Why, she blushes so, I do believe it is no make-believe she has been picturing, but a true person."

The girls laughed, but did not press Birdie's queries.

"Well, Lela, since yonder damsels have told their desires, pray take your turn with the others," said Ada.

"Sir Philip Sidney, the brave and true, the noble, high-born, high-minded scholar, is my type, my hero. To be the cherished darling of such a heart as his, I would endure all things. If only no doubt of his love came upon me, could I feel assured the treasure was my own and mine alone, I would place my hand in his and walk proudly and without a groan over burning ploughshares. Only, he must be with me. Heigh-ho!" she added, as her enthusiasm wore off; "heigh-ho! I wonder if there are any such men now on earth as Sir Philip?"

"To be sure there are, my bonny lass; and you shall find him, and be 'Stella, Stella, queen of my soul,' to him. Mark my words, I prophecy it," said Ada.

"Now, Mary, what would you have?"

Any one who loved me, rich or poor, high or low. I think it would be pleasant to bring wealth to some good man, taking his love in return."

"Dear me!" cried Louise; "you are too humble for me. I will have a man who will be my slave, live when I smile, die when I frown. Rich and handsome himself, he must surround me with the beautiful."

"That's yourself over again, Louise. Selfish little animal!" said Ada. "The poet Keats for me, with his heaven-bright eyes, his noble intellect, his earnest soul. I am like Lela. I would endure anything which came to be beloved of such a pure, noble soul. Now, May?"

"I would like to be the comfort, the helper, of some brave heart, who, through temptations and ills, battled ever toward the right, and who, while he fought his way through the crosses and temptations of life with his whole strength, would look always towards me, and tell me I strengthened and helped him in his struggle for the good. The right, and good in God's way, I mean."

"Would you not care what he looked like? or what his fortunes were?" said Mary Lea.

"Not one whit, so he had a firm true spirit, so brave and true that did God's service require it; he would sacrifice not only himself, but what should be dearer than himself, me."

"Marion has chosen the better part," said Dora tenderly.

"But do you think such beings are possible?"

"Yes dear Jennie, I have known one such, one who if thus tried, would like Abraham of old, have given up the dearest thing God asked from him."

"Who was he Marion?" asked Louise carelessly.

"My father, dear Louise," answered she quietly.

There was a little pause, then she said, "But Jennie we have not heard from you, lady fair?"

"Oh my idea of a spouse is so totally different from the rest of you, it is quite commonplace. I lay it to my greater age and more mature experience, that my choice would be for neither a hero or a genius, although he might with my free consent be both."

"Ahem! dear old lady, who make such a boast of your nineteen years, pray tell us what this happy man must be like, if neither poet, painter, or soldier."

"Any thing almost, so he be not a piece of perfection Ada, I would choose a grave sensible man, who through a long useful life had acted well towards his fellow-man. I do not want a boy to lead me, or a man who has only ten years longer experience, in life to rule over me. I do not care how old he is, (so he has not one foot already in the grave.) I think the older, the more I should love and reverence him, then I would give him my whole self such as I am, my girlhood for his age, my fresh young unworldly heart, for his weary, worldly-wise one. While I was a child he should lead and protect me, afterwards, when he crept on to second childhood, I in my prime, in the fulness of womanhood, would lead his footsteps, guard and protect him in my turn. Be ears in the place of his dulled ones, eyes instead of his dimmed ones, and ready hands and willing feet to run at his bidding, in truth you see I would like to be an old man's darling, '*mes amies*.'"

"*Chacun a son goût*," said Ada.

"But, Jennie, you say anything, so he be not a piece of perfection, did you not?" asked Lela.

"Yes, queen," she answered.

"Do you consider the poet Keats, a piece of perfection?"

"No indeed, only perfect in very few things, his eyes for instance," she added, laughing.

"Or Sir Philip Sidney, was he perfect?"

"No, only brave and excellent in many things. I only spoke in the abstract. No, indeed, none of your *preux cavaliers* were perfect types, especially Butterfly's admiration, the great but wicked Byron. Is he your hero of heroes, Birdie?"

"He is for some things, but Sir Walter Raleigh is my great hero, of all."

"You have a strangely worldly taste, Birdie."

"Why, was not Sir Walter great, and handsome, and brave, and except perhaps Sir Philip, the most gallant gentleman of his age?"

"Yes; but he lacked one great attribute of greatness, Birdie, goodness. He was good and brave, and generous, not because God was to be served and glorified by it, but because Sir Walter was to be exalted thereby: besides, by nature he was too noble and high-minded to stoop to low things," said Marion.

"I cannot help it," was Birdie's answer, "had I lived when he lived, I should have worshipped him, now I cherish his memory."

"Naughty little enthusiastic Birdie."

"But, Nora, have you no praises for your hero?"

"Indeed I have, Jennie, pages of them. Oh, I could never love any one of whom I was not justly proud. Could I not have been of him?" and her voice deepened, and I knew well how her eyes looked. "Think of the thousand generous deeds which are recorded of him, from the time he entered Oxford at thirteen, and left with his brow wreathed with laurels at eighteen, until that last day, when pierced with his death-wound he lay in agony upon the ground and though his burning lips craved it so piteously, took the cooling water away from them before one drop had touched them, to give to a poor soldier, because 'Thy necessity is greater than mine.' Marion, I am sure none but a Christian heart would have been capable of such a deed, with the death-thirst upon him, do you not think Sir Philip the 'jewel,' as Queen Bess called him, of her times, was a Christian?"

"Yes, dear Lela, I do think, and believe he was; it is pleasant to believe so. A good thing to think that such a rare combination of excellences, such a union of military renown, literary distinction, courtly refinement, and noble frankness, which it is recorded gave him a passport to every heart, could only have belonged to a Christian gentleman."

"Why, May," laughed Ada, "I verily believe you are in love with him as well as Nora."

"How could any one help it? would not you have been too? Think of a man of whom could be written with truth that eulogy which an able writer has penned for him," said Lela.

"What was it, queen, not having had your love to fasten it upon my rather provoking memory, I have let it slip."

"Few characters appear so well fitted to awaken universal and enthusiastic admiration as Sidney's; uniting, all the accomplishments which youthful ardor and universality of talent could acquire or bestow, delighting nations by the witchery of his power, and courts by the fascinations of his address; leaving the learned astonished by the extent of his proficiency, and the ladies enraptured by his exquisite

beauty and grace, he communicated wherever he went, the love and spirit of gladness; he was, and well deserved to be the idol of the age in which he lived."

"And then better than almost anything," said Jennie, "was his firm refusal of the throne of Poland, offered to him although a simple gentleman just knighted, for his bravery, because his country needed his services, because his duty lay in England. Truly there are few men, who in the fresh ambitious ardor of twenty-seven, could have resisted the temptation of rising from an humble subject of Elizabeth, to be king in his own right. Yes, Lela, you are right, Sir Philip Sidney was a great and good man. I know of no other, who in all things was his equal, in some his superior, save one. Our own hero, our Washington."

"Of course he is better than all, but then, I hope the thought is not a wrong one. No girl would think of making a lover hero of our country's father, much more than she would of assigning to her choice any of the perfections which marked the earthly being of our Saviour."

"Oh Lela, Lela, my dear sister, that is wrong, very wrong," said Marion.

"Then I am sorry I said it, I feared it was."

"I think it is a safe rule dear, to leave unsaid and undone, the things we fear may be wrong, at least we are upon the safe side then."

"How old was Sir Philip when he died?"

"Just thirty, Ada," answered Lela.

"Well perhaps had he lived to be an old man, he would have grown worldly and selfish as well as others."

"Not if he was, as we hope a Christian," said Dora.

"But May, have you no hero, of your own?"

"Yes indeed, two of them, one a young man stricken down just when if God had not done it, we would rebel against it sadly. Poor Kirk White, not as a poet, but as a man, I have a very great love for him."

"So young, so full of promise, you know Birdie's pet the wicked Byron says,

'Unhappy White! while life was in its spring,
And thy young muse just waved her joyous wing,
The spoiler came— Oh what a noble
Heart was here undone!'

"And Southey writes of him—'to conceive a human being more amiable in all the relations of life were impossible. Possessing as pure a heart as ever it pleased the Almighty to warm with life.' Oh! it seemed a sad, sad thing for him, crowned with the honors for which he had striven so earnestly, to be called at twenty-one to lay down and die, but doubtless it was right."

"Lovely in his death, as in his life," said Dora, "do you remember his 'Star of Bethlehem?'"

"Yes, but who was your second hero, Marion?"

"One much nearer home, and sublunary things than any of the others. The greatest statesman and the truest man who breathes, 'Henry Clay.'"

"That he is, and all else that is good and great, spite of his youthful sins, which he lives but to repent," said Ada. "I could see the sense of Jennie's choice, did her old man read Henry Clay, God bless him!"

"Great head, but greater heart massa Clay hab," said Milly at the door, "but he must 'scuse you sayin more 'bout him now, Miss Stella sent hir 'spects, and she like your company in de school room."

"Dear me! study-hour already!" and they were gone.

Oct. 6.

The departure of Leănore and our boys, has been delayed a week by a most singular and unforeseen circumstance.

On the evening of the day after their talk in the sitting-room, Jennie came to me in my room where I sat with the little ones.

"Dear Mrs. Percy, may I talk to you a little while in private?" she asked.

Certainly my dear, go into Nora's room, and I will be with you in a few moments."

As soon as I could get through with the children, I went to her, and found her to my surprise, with her head buried in the pillow weeping in a quiet, subdued way.

"What is it, dear Jennie, tell me, love," and I let her finish her weeping upon my shoulder.

"You will promise to be true to me, and not to scorn me if my desires are wrong?"

"Certainly, have you not proved ere this, that I am to be trusted, Jennie?"

"Indeed, indeed I have, dear Mrs. Percy."

"Well then trust me now, I make no promises, maybe I shall scold a little, or whip perhaps, but never scorn my bonnie Jennie."

Then in her straight-forward honest way, she told me she had just received an offer of marriage.

"From one whom perhaps I do not *adore* in the way girls of my age usually do, but whom I reverence and respect, who has chosen me to be his companion and friend. He has been very kind to me always, I have known him well for years, and he has ever been a more tender father than my own. He offers me a pleasant happy home, not for myself alone, but for my worse than motherless sisters, and oh Mrs. Percy, our home has been a very desolate, wretched place for years."

"Who is the gentleman, Jennie?"

"Mr. Lea, Mary's father. He was so kind to me this summer at Rock Point. I cannot tell exactly how the thought of him as something beside Mary's father came; but it did."

I changed color at his name, but said nothing.

"I know what you are thinking of, dear Mrs. Percy. He has told me all about that. But that you should have been his choice exalted him yet more. I will promise not to be jealous of you, dear friend. I think he could scarcely help loving you. In that I defy him to surpass me," she ended, with a smile beaming through her tears.

"But Mary is nearly as old as you."

"I know. Oh! Mrs. Percy, that is my trouble. What will Mary say? Her love for me will turn to hate, I fear. What shall I do? I must not desire to be his wife, if it makes his children unhappy."

"Shall I tell Mary, love?"

"Oh, if you would! She will hear it best from you. I dare not! I dare not!" And she wept piteously.

"I do not think, dear, you need be frightened; for, though Mary may at first be a little cross, she is too good-natured to be so long."

But we were both mistaken. When I spoke to Mary, I found she had suspected the matter long ago, and, indeed,

desired it ever since Jennie and Lela were at her lake home, two summers ago. Her father's fancy for me caused a diversion for a while; but when that ended, she was anxious for the old plan to be consummated. It was in the hope of this she persuaded her father to the sea-side this summer. Good little body! She whispered "Mother" in Jennie's ears ten minutes after I had sent the sorrowful girl to her room. Mr. Chalton's consent was gained at once, and with something very like a "thank you," in his face.

"Bring flowers, fresh flowers for the bride to wear.
They were born to blush in her shining hair."

MRS. HEMANS.

OCT. 10.

Our pretty Jennie is Jennie no longer, but Mrs. Lee. She has won herself a good, true man. One very poignant *trifle* in his favor, was his manly conduct in respect to myself. He treated me in an open, cordial way, which showed better than any other thing could, how entirely he had conquered the momentary fancy,—how totally he had taken the young thing he had chosen into his excellent heart.

Jennie's father was not a loving one; but he dowered her right nobly, much to my astonishment.

"Glad to get rid of all three of us so easily," said Jennie, half sadly, half playfully.

The darling looked right beautifully. Her *trousseau* was exquisitely, although rather hurriedly, chosen.

They were married quietly in our own little sitting-room, with only the every-day companions of her life for two years past, to witness the ceremony.

Mr. Raymond officiated, committing his pupil, with many tender, heartfelt words, into the keeping of the husband of her choice—parting her from her old life forever.

Marion and Dora, attended by Stuart and Clare, stood with her. A pretty group they made.

After the marriage ceremony was over, they had a grand party, given in their honor by Jennie's aunt, who resides in this city. All the witnesses of the ceremony, young and old, were invited and went, save only my Leanoire, who sat with her sweet face turned to mine, and my arms about her,

half that night. For on the morrow, with Mr. Lee and Jennie, she joined Miss Weston in New York, and they all sailed for Europe. There is much comfort in knowing she is under such safe protection and pleasant companionship as Jennie and her husband.

CHAPTER XL.

NOVEMBER 14.

WE are quiet once more. I think the wedding did us a world of good. Keeping our hands so busy with wedding favors, our hearts had little chance to show their mournfulness.

The house is desolate without Lela and Jennie, each hour we have fresh need of them. Oh, my darling, my heart pines for one look into your gloriously beautiful face, my queen, I mourn for one more kiss of your dear lips.

I love the light of your dark eyes, my Nora, the world seems strangely dark, missing their radiance near me. God love you, sweet daughter, and I think He will, my true-hearted, all-enduring girl.

Birdie, as usual, has an ocean full of tears, for her sister's loss. Marion is quiet, but her pale cheeks and downcast eyes, tell how her heart goes forth after the sister, who has been her companion and friend so long, round whom for so many years so much pride and love has been garnered.

My May is nearly eighteen now, a gentle, quiet, little lady, dear dove-eyed treasure, her grief, like every other thing, is borne with a graceful dignity, the depth of her sorrow kept for the night time, when only God sees her.

The parting with the boys, which would have been a great trial, has been completely swallowed up, in this other parting, which was for years, and to cause an ocean tide to swell between.

Then we hear from each one of them once in the week, so that we scarcely seem so entirely parted; for Lela's letters

we will have to wait a month at least, but then they will be a blessing.

We have settled down very quietly, quite a diminished family, since this Autumn tide flowed in upon us, two flowers have been gathered into the marriage wreath, Clara a fair pale lily, and bright-eyed Jennie, a blushing rose. I have put my veto upon any such doings in the future, and tell the girls since they are so sought for, I shall have to put my treasures under lock and key.

NOVEMBER 31.

Our boys are getting along bravely. At first it was all up-hill work, especially for Howard, but now they are getting accustomed to it.

Clare writes about Howard: "He bore up like a man, though his lip would quiver, and his voice tremble in a very suspicious manner, when we spoke of home; but now we are getting broken into the traces and are hard at work it is better! 'Hard work drives away dull care,' sure enough."

Stuart is entirely satisfied with the school at which we have placed Howard, and writes:

"The discipline is most excellent. How' is kept amazingly busy; but I am glad of that. I will take care he is not over-tasked, of course some of his companions are not at all desirable; but as he tells me all they do and say, I think I can keep them from harming him; besides, I find his 'Percy' blood, young as he is, keeps him from low associates, how I can picture the way Lela would flush up and proudly say, 'of course it will,' were she only home to hear you read that last sentence. I shall have far more trouble with Clare, dreamy, poetical Clare, than with impulsive Howard, for he takes for granted every thing which is pleasant is right, and gets in to trouble because he will not take the trouble to keep out of it.

"For myself, I get along indifferently well, for have I not both of them to help me, and your dear letters to comfort and counsel me. Every time you write the precious words, 'my boy,' I kiss them, as I would yourself, my gentle monitor and friend. God bless you!"

We find a world of comfort in these letters, it is next to

having them home again to know day by day just what they are doing, and I know full well how very precious the home letters are to them.

"Like a breeze laden with the sweets of a heliotrope bed, your words from the dear old home come to our waiting hearts, and if the old truism holds good, 'distance lends enchantment to the view,' I suppose that is the reason we cluster such bright hopes and loving thoughts round the old weather-beaten house, and all it contains," says Clare.

And my Howard, my Espérance, says, "Oh the thought of mamma, and all at home, is like a dream of golden beauty!"

DECEMBER 26.

The middle of this month, brought us letters from our precious Lela, and the others. Their voyage across was prosperous. Mr. Audley met them at "Havre." Of course the meeting was a trial to both of them because of the sad loss which both hearts had known since they met years ago. But Jennie writes,

"Now, Mr. Audley has got over the sad memories Nora brought with her, he raves about our 'queen's' glorious beauty. I could not have dreamed a man of his age, and dignity, could have been so exstastic, for he is at least ten years older than my gudeman, and I tell him I have not seen him get up half so much youthful ardor yet."

Leanore describes their hotel, as surpassing even the ordinary magnificence of Parisian life, in its appointments, "I have my dressing-maid and waiter, beside a coachman and footman at my command; I am prone to confess, their numbers and attentions oppress me, who have been used so long to be my own servant, but I never let them know it, but treat them regally, I assure you," and she continues:

"Dear Mr. Audley, I wonder what he would think of me, did he dream that one of 'Walter Percy's' children could find wealth, and its luxuries oppressive."

"Dear me, mamma, I suppose he would be horror-stricken did he know I have been obliged to wash, bake and brew, make beds, and do all myself! dear aristocratic old friend, I am sure he will spoil me for you mamma, for I shall be lazy beyond all comparison, when I come back.

"Mr. Audley has no idea of our poverty I am certain, nor am I going to let him have, I am proud too. He knows of course you have a school, and it chafes him terribly, but I assure him no amount of pleading would induce you to give it up, and become dependent upon him.

"He does not know how sweet we have found the bread of poverty, after it was earned, does he mamma?"

"Mr. Audley knows no limits to his generosity, and my purse is so profusely filled, that even were I inclined to be selfish, I could scarcely expend it all upon myself, so please tell 'May' and 'Birdie' I mean to buy all they wear in the future, in Paris, and send a box with every letter, will it not be good to know just what they are dressed in, though I am so many miles away?"

DECEMBER 31.

Clare writes to me, in one of his weekly letters, after this manner:

"Oh, Aunt Bertha! If I only had the steadiness and determination that Stuart has, or even the half of it, I should be so thankful. When a gay party of students come to our room, and ask us to be one of their number in some mad frolic or other, it is only one time in ten that I am able to resist their persuasion, while it is ten times out of one he does not refuse them. I believe that is not sense; but I mean he hardly ever leaves his books and takes part in the sports.

"At first they tried to make a butt of him, and called him 'spooney,' and so on; and once some fellow laughed, and called him a 'deuced Puritan.' But he drew himself up, and gave the chap a look, he dared not repeat it. You know the power in Arty's eye when he likes.

"For a long while they used to persecute him, and he used to laugh at them. But once there was something on hand in which we all wanted him to join us, and I as well as the rest was certain he would this time, and was provoked because he would not.

"We tried to force him, by threats and anathemas, which he parried with a good-humored laugh for a while, when suddenly he sprang up, and said, not at all in his usual laughing way, but very sternly:

"Now I will tell you, once for all, what is, to-be-sure, none of your business, but nevertheless I will tell it you. I did not come here to play or fool my time away, but to study,—to gain by hard work an amount of knowledge wherewith in the future to make a name. Nay, more than that, to enable me to earn a subsistence for those I love better than my own life.

"Therefore, I will work with might and main as long as my kind friends send me here, and not spend the money they so kindly provide me in frolics.

"If I had powerful friends to back me with their money and influence, as most of you have, as Clare Beaumont here has, I might, perhaps, do otherwise; but I have not: therefore, I must work.

"It is a great crime, I know, to be poor; but poor I am, nevertheless. Now you know my reasons, I am quite certain you will cease to desire the companionship of a poor, hard-working fellow like myself."

"He stood so bravely, looking so handsome in his careless, graceful actions, his nobleness of character came out so boldly, his contempt for the sneers of his companions was so evident, I could have worshipped him. As it was, I sprang to him, clasping my arms about him, loving him—my noble, whole-souled brother—better than ever.

"By George! you are a noble fellow," said young Carroll, who is one of our chums. "I would give all I am worth, or ever expect to be, to own half the goodness of your heart, Aldrich."

"And that is so," added Harry Lester, who is another of our 'peculiars,'—the son of one of our professors, and a glorious fellow. "You have conquered us, old fellow, and by my head! I'll knock the first fellow down, be he freshman or scph., who dares to interrupt you with his nonsense. Count upon that! I am a good-for-nothing vagabond myself, but I have sense enough to honor all brave, true hearts."

"And the others, following the lead of these two, (which, by the way, they always do,) overwhelmed Arty with compliments. And coolly enough he took them all, save the first two, which he knew were heart-felt; and the way he grasped their outstretched hands told them that he understood them.

"Aunt Bertha, I tell you I am proud of my brother. I glory in him. I love him better and better each day I live: the best of anything else in the world, except yourself and little May.

"But I do wish I was not such a confoundedly unstable fellow. I make a set of new resolves every day of my life, and the very first temptation knocks them head over heels, plague upon it."—

Dear boy! I know how hard a matter it is for him to strive against this weakness: yet I hope, with Stuart's help, he will weather all storms, and come off victorious, after all.

We are so well at home and abroad, so prosperous and so contented, surely, with God so good to us, so very near to us, we have need to serve Him more entirely each day we live.

Adèle improves wonderfully in everything, but especially in her music. How she has that strange gift of harmony, which seems to come with blindness! She says:

"The organ is birds, flowers, books, and all beautiful things besides, to me, now."

JANUARY 10.

We have entered upon the duties of a new year, with hearts filled with gratitude for past mercies. God has bountifully cared for us, and we have joy and peace in Him.

Ernest's practice is all we could desire. He has treated himself to quite a handsome little establishment, for which Adèle and Agnes, and sometimes Gracie and Tiny, think they have especial need to be grateful.

"It is not at all like a doctor's gig," says Gracie, very zealous for its honor; "but quite like a genteel carriage."

Adèle enjoys perfect health, and as I watch her merry face this moment, and hear her ringing laugh, as Sandy gives her and half a dozen other girls a "guid bit o' skatin' in the garden," I think I may add of happiness, too.

Gracie is still the shy, blushing damsel of old, not pretty,—at least, when compared with the rest,—but a truthful, happy little soul, with one absorbing passion,—her love and devotion to Adèle, who repays it in its kind.

Tiny is a witch. If she got compliments in her baby-

hood for good behaviour, she will not now, I can assure her.

"The 'tarnalest little plague that ever trotted into all kinds of mischief," says Milly, who, however, will allow no one else the liberty of finding fault with her.

Sandy and Milly, and indeed everybody else, spoil her, I fear; but I cannot help it. Poor, fatherless little daughter!

Marion and Cora are just what they have always been,—the best of children to me. The latter—as wild as a kitten—keeps the house in a constant state of excitement by her antics. The former, as ever, my gentle, faithful helper and friend in all things.

The great pleasure of our lives, beside the comfort of each other's love, and the boys' weekly epistles, is Lela's dear letters. They come every month. Such a budget of them, Estelle declares:

"I do not see how the child finds time to do anything else, when she writes such hosts of letters."

But Lela always had the pen of a ready writer; and now her heart is in it, I doubt not she finds it easy.

In her last box of pretty things, was a hundred dollars for the children from Mr. Audley, who, I am sorry to hear, has just sent Clare the same amount.

CHAPTER XLI.

APRIL.

I AM at New Haven under the shadow of old "Yale," and have been for the past two weeks; this note from Stuart to Marion brought me.

"DEAR MAY:—Clare has been getting into trouble, and now he is very ill, at the house of one of our friends, Judge Lester, of this place. Break the news tenderly to your mother, dear May, we fear he is dying; ask her what I am to do. In haste and love."

ALDRICH.

Of course there was but one thing to be done, although I dreaded it inexpressibly. I came at once, Stuart met me at the cars, and took me to Judge Lester's house, where Clare lay. He had been attacked while coming from college, fainted in the street, and was carried by Harry Lester, who was one of his companions to his father's house, which was near at hand.

A fierce fever set in, with determination to the brain, and when I reached him, I found him entirely deranged, and his life despaired of, but now after two weeks of struggling with disease, we trust he is recovering.

A sad tissue of events led to this illness, which such as they are, it is my duty to relate. With his gay comrades, he had been off, against the earnest wish of Stuart, and his own better judgment, five or six nights in succession upon sleighing parties.

The last night, wild with frolic they came home, went to a gambling house, and for the first time he played and betted, winning several hundred dollars. As he came out, he saw in a mirror the reflection of the face of the man with whom he had just been playing, its wild ghastly look of hopeless despair, struck a pang of remorse into his heart, and he turned to hand back the money he had just won from him, but swiftly and silently the young man had passed from the room.

The next day when he arose ashamed and disgusted with himself, a throbbing pain in his head, and a worse one at his heart, he saw ever before him, the pale, beseeching, anguish stricken face of his opponent.

Ashamed to confess his last night's employment to Stuart, he bore moodily all that long day, the secret of his successful sin; with the evening came his companions who when he refused to go with them, taunted him with cowardice and meanness, in winning their money, and then denying them a chance of winning it back. At last stung by their insinuations, he agreed to go, excusing the act to his own conscience by saying, he was going to seek out the young man, whose face of misery had haunted him all day, and see if he could not befriend him.

Again he played, but this time was not allowed to win, and lost not only his last night's winnings, but the money which he had just received from his uncle. Fired with the wine with

which he had been plyed, reckless what became of him, with a dozen of his fellows, he sallied forth into the town, rife for any mischief which might present itself.

Rushing through the streets they committed the wildest extravagances, carrying signs from one end of the town to the other, setting up barber's poles before lawyer's offices, and a hundred like reckless things.

At length growing more daring, with a syringe filled with some kind of black tar, or varnish, they threw a stream of black liquid over the front of the beautiful marble mansion of the 'President.'

Then frightened at the dastardly action, as the moonbeams showed the elegant white front defaced, by a dozen trickling streams, they slunk to their homes in dismay.

What the feelings of my pure-minded boy were, when he awoke late the next day from a feverish sleep, I cannot describe: Stuart and Howard, were both away, spending some days a few miles out in the country, and his burden of guilt was to be borne alone.

Of course when he sallied out he found that the atrocities of the night, were the 'town talk,' especially the daring insult against the beloved President, and crowds surrounded his ruined home, expressing the loudest disapprobation.

A meeting of the students was called to devise means to discover the perpetrators of the deed, but in vain, they eluded all detection.

The next day the town was again startled by the intelligence that a promising young student had attempted his own life. To Clare's utter horror, he ascertained the student to be the man from whom he had won his money, at the gambling table.

Overcome with this discovery, he sought the youth who lay wounded, and almost friendless in the suburbs of the city, and learned from his own lips the sad history of his life.

The son of a widowed mother, who denied herself almost the necessities of life, that he might gain a college education, he had repaid her kindness by becoming entangled with a set of gamblers, and played, hoping always to win enough to pay his own way and relieve his mother, and then to stop, never to touch a card again; such was his determination, alas! for the fallacy of such a resolution.

Sometimes successful, sometimes — oftenest indeed — a

loser, he had gone on for months, until that night when Clarence met him, he had staked his all upon a single throw, knowing him to be an inexperienced player, and lost.

No wonder he had that look upon his face; no wonder that afterwards when he remembered he had lost his mother's little patrimony, that he had wronged her trusting, loving heart, he grew desperate; but strange, beyond all count, that with such an array of sins upon his soul, he, who feared the face of man, and too great a coward to bear the burden of his own guilty life, should endeavor to rush headlong into the presence of that awful "Judge" who hateth sin, and cannot look upon it save in wrath.

Penniless and alone, he lay when Clare found him, at a little wayside tavern, where he had been borne. Horror-stricken by his story, and taking to himself the blame of making him desperate, Clare, wild with the fear that he would die, and thus his blood would rest upon his own soul, determined to relieve him; but he was penniless himself, and a thing he loathed, a ruined gambler.

But something must be done; taking his watch, his flute, guitar, and a few books, all of them precious gifts of his uncle, his mother, or myself, he pawned them for a sufficient sum to pay the debts of the wounded man, and supply his necessities.

Then haggard and heart-sick, he wended his way home, to pass another night of remorse alone.

The next morning, Stuart came from his trip, expecting to find him in bed; but he was up and gone; hurrying to the college, he expected to find him in his usual place; but when the exercises opened, he was still absent, to Stuart's great disappointment.

But just as the business of the day was about to commence, Clare came in, and with a firm, quick step, and a face deadly pale, walked to the stand where the professors sat, bowing low to the President, asked:

"Will you allow me to speak, sir, to make a statement before the whole school, ere they go to their different rooms?"

"This is hardly a proper time, Mr. Beaumont. Would not a private conversation with your teachers do? this is entirely unusual."

"No, sir, I have a confession to make of a public misdemeanor, and desire to be punished in a public manner."

"Proceed, Mr. Beaumont, proceed."

"Then, sir," he said in a clear loud tone, "I have come here to confess that upon my head must rest the guilt of the dastardly action by which your mansion was blemished upon last Thursday evening, and I desire to be punished, not in accordance with the magnitude of my offence, that were impossible, but in accordance with your strictest justice," and he stood with folded arms and bowed head, a silence like death following his words, every cheek was blanched with terror at the revelation. Then, suddenly, a cry went through the "hall" as Stuart sprang forward:

"Clare, Clare, my brother! God help you!"

For a single instant, the boy's courage faltered, and he stretched his hands out piteously towards Stuart, and then turning away, bowed his head and stood trembling in the presence of his judges.

"Mr. Beaumont," began the President, "your unusual proceedings, and the astonishing import of your words, have taken me wholly by surprise." With the first sound of his voice, Clarence stood up uncovering his face, and Stuart came and stood beside him, clasping his hand firmly in his own.

"Will you answer a few questions we may put to you?" resumed the President, after a brief conversation with his associates.

"If I can, sir, I will, as many as you desire."

"Were you alone when this act was perpetrated?"

"No, sir, I was not."

"Who were your companions?"

"I cannot tell you, sir."

"Not if it saves you from expulsion Mr. Beaumont?" said he sternly.

Clare shuddered at the question, but replied firmly:

"Not if it were to save my head, sir."

"Did you devise the scheme? or only assist at its execution?"

"I gave it the countenance of my presence."

"Did you devise the scheme, I ask?"

"That cannot effect the matter of my responsibility, I was one of the parties."

"Did you devise the scheme?" repeated the President in a raised tone.

"No sir, I did not."

"So I thought," was the reply, "where had you been during the evening?"

"At a low gambling house, when after debasing myself by drinking liquid fire, I lost every cent I possessed, besides dishonoring my good name."

"Are you in the habit of frequenting such places?" asked one of the professors.

"By the Lord he is not," said a voice from the centre of the hall, and with a pale proud face Carlton Carroll, a student from Virginia, came to the stand.

"That and one night before were the only times he had ever entered those halls of iniquity. The first night, full of frolic and about half intoxicated, we came in from a sleighing party, and careless what we did, entered one of those fearful holes, who led us I do not know, but this I do know, that Beaumont induced by the jeers of his companions to play, won large sums of money. The next night, stung by the sneers hurled at him, he consented to go again, and allow those who had lost to him to win back their money."

"Again he played, lost everything, drank deeply as we all did; then wild and reckless we sallied forth ready for anything, and the result you know. I was one of the offenders, and as such deserve an equal share of the punishment. But of this I will take my oath, that not only did Beaumont not instigate the plan, but he did not touch the syringe by means of which the varnish was thrown, and when he says he had a hand in it, he tells the first falsehood I ever knew him to be guilty of."

"To the truth of Mr. Carroll's statement I will bear witness," said Harry Lester, coming forward and standing beside the others; "and not only that, but will swear that when the varnish was thrown, Beaumont was half a square off from it, carrying a sign from the grocery store in B—street to Judge Lester's house, with Carroll's assistance."

A smile ran through the assembly for an instant, settling even upon the face of the venerable President, for the pranks of that night had caused much merriment throughout the town, when lawyers awoke in the morning to find themselves barbers, and physicians undertakers, or something else.

But in an instant, resuming his gravity, the President asked:

"Were you among them, Mr. Aldrich?"

"Sir! I one of the ———" Then, remembering who was, he added in a low, grave tone, "No, Sir. I was not."

"Then please resume your seat."

"If you will be kind enough to allow me—" began Stuart.

"I will allow you to obey me, sir, without any reservations," was the stern reply. Then, as Stuart, with a bow, left the stand, he said, in a kinder tone:

"Excuse my apparent severity, Mr. Aldrich; but I cannot permit one who has conducted himself so entirely to the satisfaction of myself and my associates, in whom we have yet to see anything but that which merits and has our highest consideration, standing, as if an accomplice, with those who have, according to their own confession, erred so deeply." Then, turning to the others, he asked:

"Why did you choose me as the recipient of your evil favors, young men?"

"Because we were fools, sir," said Carrol, impetuously.

"A poor excuse, young man."

"It is not meant for one," replied Carroll, haughtily. Then he added: "President A——, you do not believe we would have intentionally insulted you?"

"You did it, sir: whether intentionally or not, I cannot say."

"Nay, sir! You are cruel," broke in Harry Lester, his cheeks and eyes all a glow, "and unjust not only to us, but to yourself; for never man was better loved or more deserving of it than you. Surely it is not likely, bad as we are, we would have chosen the best loved of our preceptors upon whom to practise a cowardly trick. Had we chanced in front of my father's house, Judge Lester, instead of President A——, would have been the sufferer."

"And, sir, if you had seen the misery we endured as we gazed upon the work of despoilation, and thought of the kind, noble heart within those blackened walls, which would be pained by the deed, you would not think the insult was aimed at you," said Beaumont, earnestly.

"We will let that pass, my boys. I believe you did not mean to wound me, or throw contempt upon me," said the venerable man. his voice trembling, as he winked back a

suspicious looking drop, and beckoning to one of his associates to ask some further questions.

"Were you, then, the only ones? Did you accomplish all the mad pranks of that night alone?"

"No, sir. There were a number of us."

"How many?"

"More than a dozen. As many as twenty, I should judge."

"Who were they, Carlton Carrol?"

"I cannot answer you, sir."

"Who were they, Henry Lester?"

"I must also refuse to reply, sir."

"Will not the dread of expulsion influence you?"

"Nothing will make me a traitor, sir!" said Carrol, proudly.

"Expulsion would be bad enough, but one's self-contempt would be a far worse thing to endure," said Lester, with a shrug.

"What is your answer, Mr. Beaumont, after consideration?"

"The same, now and ever, as before."

"With your false notions of honor, of course you will hold to this, I foresee; but, according to one of the statements made a short time since, neither Carrol or Beaumont were immediately concerned in the deed. Therefore, Mr. Carrol, — will you tell us what Mr. Lester was doing to the best of your belief, when the President's house was abused?"

Standing upon the topmost round of a ladder, waiting for the grocer's sign we were bringing him, and then helping us to fasten it across the house, sir," replied Carrol, with a merry twinkle in his eye at the remembrance.

"Then, according to your own statements, none of you are guilty of the deed of which you have accused yourselves."

"But we are none the less guilty, sir, for we could have prevented it, had we not been careless, and I am sorry to say it, sir, drunk; for I believe it is no idle boast to say, we three are the leaders of the set of fellows with whom we choose to associate, and that they would not presume to perpetrate any act which met the united disapprobation of

Beaumont, Lester, and myself," said Carrol, in his proud Southern way.

"Then your responsibility is very heavy, Mr. Carroll, not only in this instance but in others."

"We have never abused it until now, sir."

"One thing more, sir," said a professor, rising and addressing the President. "As this remarkable scene has been brought before us in a new and unprecedented public manner, I would like to make some remarks upon it. I chanced to be called this morning just previous to coming here, to the bedside of the young man, whose daring attempt upon his own life, has made him at present somewhat notorious. He was in my class, and from him I learned many of the things which have been discussed here this morning; but I also learned the reason of young Beaumont's second visit to the gambling table, which was in the hope of meeting this young man whose money he had won, and whose look of despair had attracted his attention; but in this he was disappointed, for Grey, the unfortunate gambler, had in despair already perpetrated the dreadful act which nearly sent him unpardoned into the presence of his Maker.

"So the next day, in addition to the night's evil deeds, the loss of his whole income, and the insult to his kind instructor, Beaumont learned that this money which he had won, had been the means (or rather the loss of it) of tempting Grey to take his unhappy life.

"In contrition, he sought the wounded man out, and since then, by the sale of his own personal property, he has provided him with every needful thing. I think this, and the noble manner in which Beaumont has come out and confessed before his teachers and companions, should have due weight with his judges."

Lester and Carrol grasped Clare's hand, and wrung it silently.

"Young gentlemen, you will be kind enough to withdraw to your own homes," said the President, "this matter shall be further considered at a more proper time and place."

It was then, as they went home, that Clarence, crushed and bowed down by all he had endured, fell in the street and was carried to the hospitable mansion of Judge Lester.

When Stuart, whom they summoned hastily from his class came, he was in a high fever, which continued unabating until I arrived.

Mrs. Lester received me in the kindest manner, and my sojourn here has been all that the greatest thoughtfulness could make it.

When I went in, the Doctor was holding his wrist, the pulse of which beat furiously; as I approached the bed, I heard his voice, telling over some of the by-gones, sometimes in his own native tongue, and sometimes in ours.

"The dim old cathedral is so cool, let us go there mamma, and I will play the 'Te Deum' upon the grand old organ for you,—and I will get Lela to sing the Gloria for you. Do you know her, mamma, Lela whom we call the 'queen' at home, but whom I always liken to St. Cecilia in my thoughts. Oh, she has such a voice, such tones, it makes you quiver when you listen to her, let me see she has gone—gone, oh, I forget where she has gone, I think it was on a sleighing party to the college grounds. Oh, where are Aunt Bertha and May, my head aches sadly, if they would only put their soft hands upon my eyes I could sleep."

And as if his words were a prophecy, when I knelt beside him with my hands upon his poor throbbing temples, he sank into a deep slumber.

Then I made Stuart lie down for this night while I kept watch: since then we have relieved each other, kindly assisted by our excellent host and his family, upon whom we have been so unceremoniously thrust.

Especially have young Lester and his friend Carrol been indefatigable in their endeavours to aid and relieve us, taking turns in the night-watches, and already I have learned to prize these noble-hearted friends of my boys.

For many a day, this life so precious, hung suspended 'twixt time and eternity; but now the crisis is over, and God has granted him to our prayers.

Last night we all watched in breathless dread around his bed. Carrol and Lester stood at the foot, with pale anxious faces, Stuart and Mrs. Lester at one side, while upon the other worn out with weeping and watching I lay beside him.

How well I recall every incident of the night, so painfully drawn out, some one came to the door and looked in, Lester held up his hands imploringly, and the doctor who sat with his watch in his hand, got up quickly and closed it.

About two o'clock he lay so still and death-like, our hope was almost gone,—just when our hearts were most faithless—the pale lips moved—for an instant the eye-lids quivered—he looked into my face and murmured:

"Aunt Bertha—" but I laid my finger upon his lips gently, saying:

"Not now my darling boy, you are not well enough to talk just now, wait a little my Clare," and I pressed a kiss upon his brow. He smiled a sweet satisfied smile and began to speak again.

"No, Clare, no," I said "you must be a good boy."

The doctor gave him a cordial, and in a moment he sank into a calm sleep, which lasted peaceful as an infant's until morning.

Completely worn out, I had lain down at his side and sunk into a slumber when I heard him ask:

"Stuart where is Aunt Bertha?"

"Here my dear, are you better?" I answered.

"In body yes but—but is not something wrong—I cannot think—"

"No dear, nothing is wrong, only you are sick."

"What made me sick?" he asked after a pause.

"A great many things, but you must get well, then all will be right."

"It was about—" he continued in a dreamy way, "about some bad things I did—what was it Arty? you were there."

"The *very* bad thing you did was to get sick, my brother, but you are better now, thank God," said Stuart fervently.

• But at this moment Clare's eyes caught Harry who stood at the foot of the bed. Like a flash his connection with his troubles seemed to come over him and he said eagerly:

"Oh, yes! Hal. and Carrol were in it too. What was it? I cannot make it out,—only—it was something very wrong."

"Nay, my boy must not distress himself about by-gones, but be content to look and think only of me."

"Dear auntie, do you love me?"

"Indeed I do, dearly, my precious boy!"

"Even if I am bad, very bad, sometimes?" he asked, wistfully.

"Then more than ever, Clare." And with a contented

smile he closed his eyes, and soon lay in another of those deep sleeps which were doing him such a world of good.

When he awoke, he was strong enough to be assisted to remember what had passed. At first, we feared it had done him harm, but when the agony of remorse was over, we were sure it was for the best.

Since then, with none present save the two who were equally concerned with himself, he has had an interview with the venerable President; and I think they will all be better and wiser men for the words then spoken.

All is forgiven; but, for the example's sake, it is thought best none of the three should return to college this term.

By that bed of sickness, while their hearts were still writhing under the sufferings they had endured, and which had cost one of them well-nigh his life, I obtained from them a promise, made upon bended knees, that never again would they play at any game of hazard, or touch a card, even in sport; and I feel in my heart they will keep that promise, made while the shadow of death fell so nearly upon their hearts, and from this trial they will go forth into life wiser and nobler men.

As soon as Clare is able we will go home, where so many anxious hearts pine for us, and we for them.

Howard and Stuart, however, are rejoicing in my presence, for they must be left behind when we go, as we cannot afford that they, too, shall lose the rest of this term's instruction.

MAY 30.

We have been home a month, and pleasant it is to be here. It was many weeks before we felt it safe to move our invalid. But at last, one April day, we started, accompanied by young Lester and Carrol, who had agreed to allow me to pay a tithe of the obligation I was under to Judge and Mrs. Lester for their hospitality, by entertaining them at our home during their suspension. I can never hope to repay the kindness of these dear friends, in whose house I lived, most tenderly cared for, those long, long weeks. All that mortal hands could do to alleviate the anxiety and sorrow of that time they did. And from my heart I thank

them for their untiring goodness to me and mine. Poor Stuart, and my precious Howard, we were obliged to leave behind; for, as Arty said, with a wry face, as we parted:

"Poor folks cannot throw time and money both over their shoulder, and go pleasuring."

So they are to wait until the holidays for their home coming, and then for their pleasure.

We have tried to make the time pass pleasantly for our guests, and I think thus far successfully; for where so many young people are congregated there is scarcely room for *ennui*. Through the day Ernest or Harley take charge of them, or they sally out alone, for Clare is hardly strong enough yet to play the cicerone.

In the evening, they have lively times enough. From my room I hear shouts of laughter, and noise of merry romps. Sometimes, when Birdie and Louise get obstreperous, and I hear Estelle vainly expostulating, I go and bring these two wild witches in here, and scold them a little, until, with their warm lips pressed to mine, they promise if I will let them go back, they will be "just the best and nicest behaved of the whole party."

Sometimes, indeed about twice every week, they go, accompanied by either Estelle or Mrs. Wilbur to some concert or lecture, and come home so full of enjoyment that Ada declares:

"Even Dora's eyes dance for sheer happiness."

And indeed I think not only Dora but all the others are benefited by the interchange of pleasant companionship. At first, we thought Dora's dark eyes had bewitched young Carrol, for his sole thought seems to be, how he could contrive some plan to walk or talk with her; but Estelle, who is an adept at such matters, says:

"Her quiet indifference has quite quenched his flame, and after having flitted for a few brief hours round our 'Mayflower,' he has at last settled his *dévouers* upon Ada, who quite aware of his late gallantries and his present *penchante*, worries him to her heart's content, saucy flirt that she is. Sometimes so coy and apparently all love, then, if he throws the slightest fervor into his looks or tones, she is off like a flash, either as cold as marble, or else flying away from him with her gay mocking laugh. It is well for him that his present passion is (I suppose like all the rest) a myth."

Cora and Louise are young things, and although Harry Lester throws askant looks at them, they are too childish for any feelings but as playfellow's, and many a romp they have. Mary and Dora are at present by turns Harry's chosen friends, at least to all appearances. It has come to be an understanding some way or other, that wherever we spend the summer, they shall go with us, and many are the schemes already made, for future sports. We have had another package of letters from Nora, she is well, and 'as happy as I can be with an ocean between home and me,' she writes.

CLIFT HOUSE, JULY 10.

School is over, and after waiting a little while for our two boys, we all came down to this pleasant place again.

We miss Lela and Jennie sadly, but are none the less gay for that. Mr. Carrol and Lester have followed us, according to agreement; so, with our home beaux and some supplies from the hotels at the Rock, my houseful of belles have an ample supply of gallants. Mr. Marston is here, and passes almost every evening with us. The more I see of him the more disposed I am to like him.

Some of the young folks have taken to teasing him, on account of a secret they have with their prying eyes discovered: nothing more nor less than that he is in love with a very interesting-looking lady, who is staying somewhere in this vicinity, and with whom they have surprised him several times walking or driving. He always looks so flushed and disconcerted when this bantering is in progress, that, as Mary Lea declares, "I think there must be something in it;" but why hide it, I wonder?

The Livingstones have gone to Europe. Mrs. Lawrence and the Dutille's have taken a pretty villa, between our humble cottage and the hotels; therefore the girls are as much together as if still under the same roof. Ada is a very coquette, sure enough, and they tell me has a half dozen swains pining for love of her. Louise thinks she, Dora, Mary Lea, and Marion, are a regular set of old maids, and vows that for herself, if she be not married before she gets to their advanced age (Dora is the oldest,

and she is but eighteen and a few months) she shall enter a convent, or do some other terrible thing; and then she peeps through her curls and looks so *piquante* and *petite*, that though she is so wilful, one cannot find it in their heart to scold her very much. She is even wilder and prettier than Cora, although she boasts "two whole years of greater experience in the world."

CHAPTER XLII.

"Even night hath its songs.—Have you never stood by the sea-side at night and heard the pebbles sing, and the waves chant God's glories."

SPURGEON.

AUGUST 1.

FOUR years are a long time to look forward to; but a short time to talk over after they are buried in the grave of the past.

Yet four years with their griefs and gladness—their clouds and sunshine—have gone by since that dark dreary night, when the angel of sorrow came to dwell in our hitherto unclouded home.

Four whole years since the "Shadow" from the land of sorrow, swept its mantel athwart our hearth stone, and put out the light which had burned so brightly, so kindly in our midst for years, and yet the world moved on as ever!

How many things have come and gone since then, how many another heart has watched some flower that it loved, pale 'neath the sun's bright rays, and fade into the night of the eternal: shuddered to know the life that made its happiness, was being borne by a flood tide into the great ocean of the "To Be."

And yet we live on calmly, although at first we said it could not be, we learn from frequent lookings into the face of our grief, to gaze with even a sad smile at the last, upon what once made us pray for death.

And a kind of happiness comes to the stricken heart, as

year after year rolls by; perhaps once we would not so have called it, but now—it is not the full rich gladness we knew before the clouds came, it has no joyous bursts of laughter welling ever to the lips, nor the glad light hovering in the eye-beam—nay, eyes once thus gladly bright, have had their light washed out by bitter weepings, the heart once brimming o'er with mirth-notes, has for years cherished one memory, so great, so sad, there is no room for other things within the heart's recesses. Still this something, half-pain, half-pleasure, is happiness after its kind, the widowed lonely heart's happiness. And God is good to me.

This, *my day*, the one day of all the year I claim from those about me, as my very own, is over, passed quietly as usual alone, all day I have wandered on the cliffs, far away from mortal eye, or mortal sounds. I have lain me down in the sight of the great sea, with its voice telling me strange tales, and prayed for patience—for patience to wait—to wait! until—until God's time had come.

But when late in the night the harvest moon rode high and bright in the heavens, and the waves sparkled in the silvery sheen she threw, I came home putting away my grief—ready for work—for work once more.

SEPTEMBER 1.

Oh I must be strangely evil that my Father chasteneth me so oft and so grievously, and yet I try—oh I try so hard to be good and true.

My Father! my Father! what does it mean! why have you stricken me once again, was I learning to love her too well, is my very love a curse to those round whom it clings!

We were so contented, so happy, our sky seemed so radiant with Thy tender love, save that the clouds of memory hovered in the distance, making that part a shadowy sadness there did not

"———One speck of gloom appear
In our great Heaven of blue."

And now all is overcast, gloom has clustered round us

like a thick pall, and our hearts laid low, cry out for mercy.

Our baby, our treasure, our bright-eyed pet is dead, dead did I say, heaven help me! perhaps even now as I sit here, she on the deep, the mighty deep, beneath the fierce beams of this noon-tide sun may be stretching her little hands out piteously to me for help—help I cannot give.

Oh my baby! my baby! cry to thy father child, thou art gone beyond my ken, he will help thee now my darling.

Endure the pains of life a little while longer my daughter, lie thee down and sob thy little life out gently, for thy father's arms will be about thee, and when thy bright eyes are glazed in death, and thy fair hair is tossed by the cruel winds above thy death-stilled temples, he will guard thy spirit little one, into the realms of bliss. Thy father will bear thee in his loving arms, and present thee, his first offering, before the face of his Father and thy Father, his God and thy God.

And the, "Lamb" who sitteth upon the "Throne," will keep thee tenderly my little lamb, until I come to thee, my flower! my Lillian!

Oh I know not how to write this sorrow down, we were careless of her, and "Tiny" wandered to the beach, and clambered into a boat, which lay high and dry upon the sands: we know this was the way, for once before they found her there, and brought her home, frightened to know the danger she had escaped. Oh we kept strict watch over her wanderings for days after that, but as time went by we grew careless, and this day she has stolen off again, to see the bright gay waves she loved to watch.

And weary with her play she has lain down in the bottom of the boat to sleep—and then—the tide coming in has floated the boat off, and with our treasure the frail bark has drifted out into the broad ocean; and none of the many who loved her, were near to stretch forth a hand and save her, from an awful doom.

And the sun faded in the west, and in her sweet slumbers our baby floated slowly but surely out upon the deep dark ocean.

We missed her at dark—oh she had too many care takers—for each had thought her safe with some other one,—we searched for her everywhere, until, a loud cry blanched every

cheek, and Howard sprang into the room and fell senseless, with the words:

"The boat, the boat is gone!"

And it was too true. Our baby, in her innocence, had not learned to fear the treacherous ocean, but had trusted it joyfully.

And thus to-day we mourn for our darling, listening in vain for her childish tones, missing the tinkling of her glancing feet upon the floor, and the clinging clasp of her little hand in ours. Oh, my baby! my baby! Never to look into thy face again! God help us! God help us!

If kindness could have soothed our grief, surely to-day this pain would be subdued; for as soon as the alarm was given, every pleasure-boat, every fishing-smack along the coast, for miles, was manned and launched in search of her, but in vain! The ocean bears no marks of the way-farer; the shining line the frail bark left behind, was washed out as it passed; and the sea tells no tales!—

— A week after, a boat came to shore about thirty miles south of this point, and Stuart and some gentlemen from the Rock (including Mr. Marston) went down in search of it, and came back bearing it with them. Oh! one look upon it crushed the hopes that she might yet be saved, for on its prow was written "The Joy,"—the name the grave of our Ernestine bore.

Oh, boat! Not joy, but grief henceforth be your name, —a mother's grief.

SEPTEMBER 10.

We are home again. We could not endure to hear the waves' song, to listen to the mournful cadence of the sea, as it broke upon the shore, so drearily, its words spoke unto our hearts.

"Let us go home, away from this sad sea wave, with its ceaseless moan," were the words of all. And so we brought our sad hearts home.

And as if the old words were always to be verified in our case,—that "troubles never come singly," from the day we lost "Tiny," another flower faded from before our face.

Poor little Agnes Gleason, who all her life has known

sufferings, will soon suffer no more, for God has called her. It was because she pined so grievously for the old garden and Sandy, that we hastened our return even more than we otherwise should.

But from the hour we gave up hope of ever having our "Lilly" bloom in our midst again, all love of life seemed to fade from the heart of Agnes.

In vain did Dora strive to win her back to life and hope again. She would only answer, with a sad smile:

"I want 'Tiny,' Dora. If she cannot come to me, please spare me to go to her. I cannot love to live without our baby." Then she would weep quietly, and add, "'Tis a bright home where she has gone. The flowers never fade, pain nor tears never afflict us there. Ask that I may go there soon, sister. Think of a place where I shall never feel this pain in my poor side and back again, but where I may wander untiringly among those bright, unfading flowers, with 'Tiny's' hand in mine."

And even as she has asked, her sister, with some tears, but a calm, trustful heart, has given her up to God; and now we watch hour after hour, waiting for her death—death, did I say? Nay, her new life, when, for the first time almost in her eleven years, she will know rest and ease. This is our consolation, this is why we say, "Take her, Oh Lord, to thyself!"

She lies like a withered flower, waiting for the dew of divine love to be shed upon her, and revive her. With a child's humble, trustful faith, she says, with a sweet smile on her face:

"My Saviour says I may come to him. Oh! I want to go now. I want to be an angel."

OCTOBER.

And Agnes is an angel, and I doubt not this day with our lost ones, wanders beside the river of life. Oh, we are getting much treasure in the realms of peace. My Walter first, then Mrs. Aldrich, and now within a few short weeks our babe and Agnes.

Oh, each one who is taken, is a new link to bind us to

our home, another stepping stone to the glory beyond the clouds.

And to-night, the stars beam down upon the ocean where our Lillian slumbers, and upon the humble grave, where, upon the bosom of our aged friend, we have lain Agnes, our last born angel.

And sweet stars, while ye keep your vigils over these which are near to us, forget not that far-away grave in a mountain pass upon which a column is raised (by other hands than mine) which recounts the noble deeds of a brave true heart, which sleepeth well; shine tenderly above that grave, and read with your thousand eyes, the gracious name of Walter.

Poor Sandy has grown an old man these last few weeks: his head is whiter and more bowed than of yore; these two children were his darlings, because as they were never set to work, they were always with him in his labors. He had made a little car in which he would lay Agnes, and then with 'Tiny' beside him, would draw them from place to place while he worked.

Hour after hour these children were his companions, Agnes assorted his seeds, and knew as much of the theory of gardening as Sandy himself.

And now the old man weeps for his darlings, and says:

"I wat no why, I, an sich an I, cumber the airth when th' Lord sees fit to cut down sich bright bonnie flowers, fra amangst us."

"Did you not say the other day, uncle Harley," said Adèle, who was standing with them, "did you not say Lilly and Agnes had learned a new song?"

"Yes, Adèle, they sing it now I doubt not."

"Then Sandy," she said, laying her hand upon the bowed head of the old man, "then, may it not be because you have not tried to learn that new song that they are taken and you left? Can you say 'Thy will be done,' Sandy?"

"Noa! noa! Miss Adèle; but I will learn, please God, I wi' learn that song."

NOVEMBER.

Clarence has gone back to college, entirely recovered from his illness, and Stuart writes me to-day:

"There is only one thing to fear now, and that is, that in

his efforts to atone for the past, he will ruin his health by over much study. His conduct is in every respect exemplary. But there is one thing which grieves me, since his return to school, he has packed everything in the shape of a painting implement away. I cannot persuade him to touch them, and when I ask him why, his face turns crimson, and he says humbly but firmly:

"I do not deserve to, it is more pleasure than I have any right to."

"So you see, dear aunt, how thorough his repentance is, and how like a slave-master he punishes himself, forbidding himself this thing which is dearer to him than all other pleasures together."

"And I learned inadvertently the other day, that he has been giving almost the whole of his income to young Grey, who is in very bad health, to enable him to continue his studies."

Dear boy, his troubles have purified him truly; but this must not be, I know the agony of this self-denial, and I will end it, although not openly, for then he would plead to be allowed to expiate his offence his own way.

But I will write to him to paint me a portrait, first of Stuart for myself, and then of Howard for Marion. If it is to please us, and not himself, for our sakes and not his own, he will go about it less remorsefully.

But a strange thing has come into the midst of our grief and mourning. I wonder if such a thing ever did occur before of a suit in chancery being settled. I was inclined to take a Dickensish view of such matters and believe them all, Jarndyce vs. Jarndyce, with a "Bleak House" at the end of them: a whirlpool which once caught in, the unhappy victim was whirled round and round in a never-ceasing resistless vortex.

But all rules have their exceptions, and this is one of them: Dora has been declared sole heiress of the Gleason claim, and has been invested with the remains of an estate which has fed an army of hungry lawyers for a score of years.

It was once an immense estate, but so many professional mice have nibbled at it, such a vast number of parchment-makers have been fed off of it, so many skilful lawgivers have cut a slice, one here and another there, that the best

part has vanished, and the mercy is that the dissecting and dividing process had not gone on until nothing remained.

As it is, there is enough to keep our Dora a lady of leisure the rest of her days. We cast a few vain regrets towards Agnes, but we still them with the thought, "a more enduring inheritance above."

And Dora is our landlady at last, and we say "our home" now, with a sure hope of its ever being such.

Stuart and Howard's letters give me a better account of Clare than before. "There is the dawning of the old light in his eye, now he has his beloved 'Art' to comfort him."

The picture he painted a year ago of Ernestine, which charmed us so much, and which the baby loved so well, hung for a long while in the "Gallery;" but after we lost our darling, we learned to our dismay we could not purchase it, because a gentleman from Europe had already done so, and taken it abroad with him.

Oh, I grieve for this. It would have been such a comfort to have had it, we had made up our minds that, no matter what the price would be, we would deny ourselves every other thing, that we might possess this beautiful semblance of our lost one, and now we find we cannot. Doubtless it is best, but it is a new sorrow.

Baby Lillian, fairy Lillian, we miss thee each day; but, God helping us, we will strive to say, as Adèle does, "He doeth all things well."

Poor Nora, afar off, mourns alone. Poor Nora! It is sad to be alone, without the others about you, who knew our baby's winning ways and merry tricks. I wist how sadly your grief bears you down; but bear it, sweet daughter, as from a Father's hand.

Remember your watchword "Espérance." Do not be proud of it, and cherish it only in sunshine; but, 'midst clouds and darkness, bind it as a shield over your heart. Hope, and remember God is good.

CHAPTER XLIII.

JANUARY.

WE have passed our Christmas and New Year's quietly and sadly. They were to have been joyful days, because of the home-coming of the boys. They brought back with them two very welcome visitors,—Lester and Carrol, and the pleasant intercourse of last summer was renewed; for it has been a pleasant time, although not merry, for I would not have the grief which encompassed us, weigh heavily upon those other hearts who had it only by sympathy, with the few of us who had been bereaved.

We have sent Lela a box of pretty "nothings," which every one of her home friends had a hand in making up. I know how kindly my darling will take these tokens of our many thoughts for her.

Mr. Audley cannot speak words sufficiently strong in her praise. In his last letter he writes:

"The Ladye Lela's voice and exceeding beauty are the wonder of Paris. 'La belle Américaine,' would be the belle, par excellence, did I permit her to take more than an occasional peep into the gay world of fashion. She goes to court occasionally, under the chaperonage of the wealthy Mrs. Livingstone, whom she knew slightly before she came abroad, and who sought her out, and insists upon taking her with her occasionally. Lela is not fond of her, and I think rather rejoices that she will be free from her patronage soon, as they intend returning to America the ensuing spring, she tells us.——"

Just ere they went back to college, Clare came to me, and, with a word of love, put into my hand a package to be opened after they were gone, and I was entirely alone.

"Only kiss me for it now, dear auntie," he said.

The gift and the manner of it was most touching,—the delicacy which would not permit him to look upon the burst of grief which he knew his gift would cause. Dear boy, I thank him!

It was a miniature of my lost child, upon ivory, most exquisite as a work of art, and precious beyond all price or words to my heart,—to the heart of all who had loved our little one. May says:

"Our Lily blooms in heaven, but her semblance is on earth."

FEBRUARY.

To our great sorrow we have been called to part with our dear Ada, her mother has decided it was time she had made her *entrée* into the gay world.

In vain, though so many pleasures wooed her, did she plead to be left one little year more in peace.

"I cannot live without Marion, mamma," she declared.

These goings forth of those who have made up our happy family so long, leave a sad blank, and we do not care to fill their places with strange faces, but will henceforth make our day-school the only place for change: that is so large, it is not needful we should fill the places of the home birds who have taken their flight.

We have a sadly reduced number, first Clara, then Jennie, began the flitting, and Lela with them, these were the earthly losses, then our Father called from amongst us Ernestine and Agnes, taking them home.

Now Ada has gone, and we miss her sadly, Marion says:

"None of the ancient company remain but Mary, Dora, Louise, and we two sisters, the four belles of our circle gone."

I have a letter from Ada every week, in which she gives me a faithful record of the way in which her time is passed.

"Such a never ceasing going and getting ready to go somewhere I do not want to go at all, but must because mamma says it is the fashion. Oh for the old quiet, the bright cheerful light of the old sitting-room, or when one was wearied of the merry strife of tongues, to stand upon the stair-case and watch the sunset fade from the sky, or the fair moon rise, and then with May's arm round my waist to wander out in the dim old garden, and watch the shadows of the trees flit over our path; or else to lay my head upon your knee, and tell you every foolish wish and aspiration which had crept into my brain, and hear you tell me what was right to do, or warn me in your holy way of what was

harmful. Oh Mrs. Percy! dear Mrs. Percy! this noise and turmoil wearies me."

Dear child I wish I had her back again out of the way of that great tiresome world, she complains of, before it taints her pure heart.

APRIL.

For a month or more Marion has been with Ada "making her happy."

"Dressing, seeing sights, and people, until we are almost blind!" they write me word.

Mrs. Lawrence is a very gay woman,—and a leader of a certain set, so that her house is a *rendezvous* for the fashionable of her circle.

Much to her chargin Ada has already rejected two of the best offers of the season, without any reason too, except:

"That they do not suit me, and I am too completely in love with myself and May, to dream of loving any one else," she declares.

This was provoking enough, but when Marion for whom Mrs. Lawrence has conceived a great admiration, actually refused "a splendid offer," over which the good lady had expended a world of thought and planning to bring about, her patience utterly left her and she had no words sufficiently severe.

"It was all very well for Ada who was an heiress, and could always bait some one with a golden hook, but that May who had nothing, should decline the hand of one of the first men in the city was past belief."

"Oh mamma," laughed Ada, "there are as good fish in the sea, for us both, as ever was caught."

Mrs. Lawrence writes to me in high dudgeon but of course as the affair in both cases was decided, I could only condole; poor lady, I am afraid she has two of the worst possible subjects upon whom to expend her match-making propensities.

I have just received the portrait I asked for of Stuart, it is as excellent as the subject himself; I know no greater praise.

"Howard," Clare writes me, "is growing so tall you

would be amazed, and the fellow cares for nothing but books and May and your dear letters."

Gracie and Adèle inform us about twice every hour, "that they are ten years old, this month."

"Oh I beg of you Gracie, do not try to make us believe such a little dumpty mouse as you are, is the same age as this tall slender ladye in the corner. I guess you mean Adèle is ten and you eight; is not that the way of it?" says Birdie, to tease her.

JULY.

I am almost alone again; Harley and Ernest have gone on what they call:

"A gunning, exploring, fishing, foraging, and everything-in-general excursion."

Stuart and Clare have accepted a long-standing invitation, and gone with Harry Lester to Carrol's Southern home.

Mrs. Lawrence has taken a country seat on the banks of the H—, a few miles out of town, and surrounded by the villas of her fashionable friends is "happy, providing her own house can be kept filled with agreeable company all the season."

She has first written, and then come herself, to insist upon our breaking up for the summer, and instead of seeking other quarters, coming *en masse* to her, she knows of course we could never seek the cliffs of Rock Point again.

Her kind invitation was refused; but Ada grew so unhappy, and her mother in proportion so importunate, that we at length decided as soon as all the others were gone, a part of us should visit her at a time.

Mary Lea and her sister have gone to Vermont, to spend the summer with some relatives. The two Chalton girls are with their aunt, upon a farm a few miles away.

So there was only Dora left, who is entirely one of our own, therefore she, Estelle, and Marion, started a couple of weeks since, taking Gracie with them, and write me very pleasant accounts of the way their time is passed.

Birdie went with Louise for a while, and then is to go with her to her aunt Lawrence's. Howard has gone with his brothers.

And Mrs. Wilbur, Adèle, and I stay at home, and think

we have a very pleasant time, although it is nothing new. Thus we are arranged for the summer holidays. Every month brings me a package of letters from my beautiful Leanore, besides all the host of others which come every day. Adèle declares:

"We have the letters, if they have the journeys, and I like them by far the best."

CHAPTER XLIV.

"To weary hearts, to mourning homes,
God's meekest angel gently comes;
No power has he to vanish pain,
Or give us back our lost again.
And yet, in tenderest love, our dear
And heavenly Father sends him here."

THE ANGEL OF PATIENCE.
(A free paraphrase from the German.)

AUGUST 1.

ANOTHER year dawns on me; this year a new grief bears heavily upon us, and yet I will not write down bitter complainings because my Father has taken my baby from this travel-worn, sin-stained earth, this home of tears and clouds, to the brightness beyond, taken her earthly trammels away, unloosed the bonds of clay, and made an angel of my darling, my lost one.

Sweet daughter, was it not blessed as I used oftentimes to tell you, to know papa the very first in Paradise! to hear him say "my daughter" there the very first!

This is the fifth year since Walter's grave was made. With his loss, seemed to come every trial which earth held, crushing and overpowering me; but God has overruled all for our good.

How certain a thing it is "we would always choose for ourselves the very thing which in the end would harm us most."

Had I been the planner of my own destiny, would I have

chosen poverty and toil, could I have said "give me to work unceasingly for my bread and that of my children? Yet this very need of systematic exertion has been best for me. I see it now, looking back and remembering what I was when Walter left me. I know I should have sunk into a state of apathy and sullen misery, had not some shock terrible and unforeseen aroused me, and compelled me to go forth forgetting self.

God is my Father, and has cared for me all this time, although He has a few times sorely afflicted me.

Walter, my husband, I used to say so sadly at the first, alas another long year is gone, and I am parted farther from my old happy life; now I have learned another tone, and it comes over me like a glad song, "so much nearer the end, a whole year nearer home," and I take the hope to my heart, that it is another stepping stone of the ladder of Time, gone by.

This year leaves the record of another earthly sorrow, another heavenly joy, and draws me nearer to the Rock of my refuge.

This five year stone upon which my feet are fast grounded, is nearer the light, is rising me farther from earth, closer to heaven, thanks without measure to my God for all his mercies.

Oh! my true Espérance, even clouds of sorrow cannot hide you utterly.

CHAPTER XLV.

AUGUST 31.

ESTELLE returned in the early part of this month, after a delightful visit to Mrs. Lawrence, bearing an urgent request that I should come immediately.

I found there was nothing left but to go, so with a feeling akin to that one feels in getting into a dentist's chair, I came, and have been here nearly two weeks. The house is

crowded with all sorts of people, old and young, grave and gay, in a constant round of enjoyment.

We have among our party a distinguished geologist, who entertains and instructs his listeners at one and the same time; also a couple of celebrities in the way of poets, an authoress with a lackadaisical up-in-the-air appearance, and an artist to whom Clare is kindly affectioned, and Birdie too for that matter, although her love for the "divine art" has fallen off wonderfully this last year.

Then the Livingstones just returned from Europe; Mr. Marstone and the Dutille's are here staying permanently for the summer, beside the gay fashionables who flit in for a week and then fly off to other sweets.

All this coming and going makes Mrs. Lawrence supremely happy, and I sometimes imagine the good lady gifted with ubiquity, for she seems to be everywhere at once, or at least always at the right time.

The children, and we count them by the dozen, are wild with joy. This beautiful place with its broad expanse of water sweeping past, its gay flower gardens, and fresh sweet air coming over fields of new mown hay, is a very pleasant change to these poor little dusty denizens of great cities, and they take the full benefit of the pleasurable freedom.

My poor little Adèle (I call her little, although she has grown a great girl this last year), is so happy, so entirely satisfied with the pleasures of the place, that as I watch the look upon her sweet face, it reconciles me to being here among all this worldliness.

But I feel like a bird, who, having spent all its life in a cage, is suddenly let loose, to wander at will among throngs of gaily plumed warblers, lost! lost! in a maze; and with a strange sense of loneliness I pine for my cage once more.

Coralie is so wild, plays such wicked pranks, I have a hard struggle to keep her within bounds; although she does such daring things without respect to persons, yet all love and pet her. I fear she will be a sadly spoiled fairy before I get her home.

By an especial request, as they were sadly in need of gallants, our four collegians have concluded to spend the rest of their vacation here.

Harley and Ernest have just returned from their excursion, and come down occasionally (or up I believe it is;) and pass

a night or so at the "Hotel" by (courtesy) in the village near at hand, refusing Mrs. Lawrence's pressing invitation to make her house their head-quarters.

Harry and Louise, are finding infinite content in certain moon-light walks. I often think of Lou's wish "that her husband should be her slave," and wonder whether Harry Lester, is the destined personage, and how he will submit to such bondage, if at all.

Mr. Marstone is I believe, my cavalier especial at present, and Mr. Livingstone has taken a desperate fancy to my "Birdie," and insists upon her being his companion upon every excursion, to which arrangement she always gladly assents.

His wife is the same cold heartless woman, her girlhood promised. She deigned much to my regret to remember who I was, had heard my husband was dead, and had often wondered what became of me, until she met Lela in Paris, and expressed great admiration for her beauty and voice.

"If she was not so studious, and Mr. Audley was not so particular of her, she would be the reigning toast, my husband says."

This was told in a cold drawling tone, and in a manner which expressed very plainly that she condescended to talk to me, simply because I was the mother of the "Paris beauty," and for no claims of my own.

She is sadly worn and old looking, although she is at least five years younger than I, and seems to be the subject of the most painful *ennui*.

No wonder she is unhappy, such an unloved and unloving life she leads, for they do not even pretend to endure each other's society.

Sad fate! miserable bondage, it was better I think to have had a short loving life even with such a bitter ending, than this long weary uncared for existence.

The young folks have talked, walked, danced and flirted to their hearts content. Two or three wild young gentlemen from B—— have joined us this week, and with Mr. Livingstone's aid, they have fitted up a couple of boats, and evening after evening they are freighted with gay parties, who wile away the hours, until almost midnight, upon the bosom of the Lake.

Now as I sit by my window, merry shouts of laughter and

gay songs, with a flute or guitar accompaniment, are wafted over the water, and come across the garden of roses, laden with a thousand perfumes even into the quiet of my room.

How happy, how light-hearted they are, God keep them so, or if it is better they should be perfected by suffering, strengthen and sustain them.

Without all is peace, the moon lies softly and lovingly upon as fair a scene as the eye need rest upon; the bright flowers grow pale in the moon-beams, and the trees have a silvery sheen over them, and look as though some tender bridegroom had thrown a bridal veil over his love.

Within in their pure innocence my two little girls lie sleeping, their loving arms clasped tightly round each other, God keep them thus ever, loving and pure.

And around us I doubt not, though unseen hover two angel watchers, I cannot see them, but my spirit feels their presence near me, and always in this quiet night-watch the joy and peace of my lost ones' company is over me.

A celebrated physician who has been spending some time in this house, to-day made a careful examination of Adèle's eyes, and has given my life a new brightness because of the hope he holds out, that if we are very careful of her for a few years, he thinks there is every reason to believe an operation might be successfully performed upon her eyes, and my darling once more see.

Oh even the thought of such a thing is heart-refreshing, but the child is so happy now, we have not ruffled her sweet content by telling her our hope, she might think too much about it.

"She might dream over it too earnestly, and then be more miserable should it fail of success," says Marion.

Howard is here to-night and sits beside me, my noble boy as I watch the light come and go upon his glorious face, as he bends entranced over "Endimyon;" I lift my heart to God in thankful gratitude for such a precious treasure.

His father's own son, each year something grows upon him which draws him nearer to my heart, because it was his father's once. Oh I should love and prize him tenderly my own son! my only son, at any rate, but can I help it that this love grows more intense, this pride becomes more strong, when I behold him before my face, growing in all things like my precious husband!

"Howard, dear Howard, your mother loves and blesses you dear boy, my noble *Esperance*."

"Does she not always?—has there ever been one instant in my life when I was not thus blessed?" And roused from his book by my passionate burst, he came and folded his arms about me for a while: my darling son.

SEPTEMBER 1.

It is a wise providence which hides the future from our gaze. Last night, I sat half-dreamily watching the beauties which lay upon earth and sky.—

Yesterday, this house was filled with gay voices, which gushed forth in songs and laughter: now, where so lately joy reigned, nought is seen but grief and dismay, nought heard but bitter weepings.

Last night I said, as the summer air bore to my ears a burden of the gay song,

"By moonlight and love-light,
We bound o'er the billow,"

"I wonder if any ill lies near the heart of any one of that gay throng?" and now some of those very hearts lie stilled in death, their life anthem hushed very near its beginning, their eyes closed upon earth just when its flowers bloomed the brightest. Sweet eyes, which looked but love, never more to smile upon earth.

Even while I sat with my arms wound round my boy, and blessed God for this one of my many blessings, I thought I heard a cry of terror mingling with the laughter, and springing out upon the balcony, I exclaimed:

"What was that, Howard? Did not some one cry for help?" And even as I spoke, came another shriek, so wild and fearful, it sent a chill of terror to my very heart. I

sprang down the stairs almost before it died away, and made my way down to the river-side.

A terrible sight burst upon me. Two of the boats were being rowed quickly into the shore, but the third lay bottom upwards in the very middle of the stream, and clinging to her, were her passengers.

Oh, how my heart ached! Who was amongst them? Could they be saved? And, with strained eyes, I scanned the groups which were landing quickly from the two boats. As I sprang forward to ask, my single voice was drowned by twenty others.

"Are they safe? Are any gone?" and then the congratulations, as dear ones were recognized, among those who had either been borne to shore by a stronger arm, or swam thither themselves.

All had passed in such a moment, that it was not until this instant I discovered Coralie was not among those who stood near me.

"My child! my child!" I cried; but, even as the words burst from me, a voice from the approaching boat replied loudly:

"Safe, safe, Mrs. Percy. She is here, thank God!" It was Mr. Livingstone's voice; and, as he spoke, he lifted her from the bottom of the boat.

"She has fainted. Take care of her quickly!" And some one, (Mr. Marstone, I think,) carried her before me into the house.

Wrapped up in my own selfishness, I did not see two white faces likewise borne along behind us in the moonlight, nor did I know for hours afterwards, that my bright-eyed Louise was dead.

Oh, dear eyes! never to shine again, full of radiant light, whose brightness was shadowless, never more to hear the rippling of those silver-toned notes, laughing chirrupingly at every gladsome thing.

Poor mother, poor desolate father, their only one, their bright, golden-haired pet, around whom so many hopes had clustered, struck down ere one wave of sorrow had taught her heart earth was not all beauty and holiday! Poor little one! God comfort those broken hearts! God pity them!

This was not all. Another had shared a like fate. But, even amongst the terror of that time, I could but note the difference: while upon every lip Louise's dear name was

coupled with a blessing, and each one was telling something of her, how to-day she said some sweet thing, or how beautiful we thought her, a cold expression of regret was all that the other name elicited.

No tears were rained over the pale face of Isadore Livingstone, no lips were pressed to her chill ones, striving to bring warmth back to them. Her husband stood over her, horror-stricken, while efforts were vainly made to resuscitate her, but no tear was shed, no blessing whispered above her.

All night I sat with the poor stricken father and mother of Louise, striving to give them a morsel of comfort; but oh, I felt how vainly! The only words she said were, as she clasped my hand:

"Do not let any one else come near me. You alone understand my woe."

That was the bond between us. Until I knew her in her sorrow, I had never liked Mrs. Dutille, so gay, so thoughtless, so careless of her child's real interests; but now, stricken by my Father's hand, she grew very near to me.

The poor father, with bowed head, sat beside her, moaning ever and ever:

"My child, my darling child!"

Towards morning I stole softly away, while Mrs. Dutille slept, to spend one moment with my rescued child; all night Marion had watched with her, and often had come gently into the room where I sat, bringing word of her well doing.

I found her, though feverish, in a deep sleep, and Ernest and Marion beside her. After watching her a little with a heart of grateful thankfulness, I started to return to my post. On the stairs, pale and haggard, I met Harry Lester, who had been one of the rowers in the ill-fated boat, and who had been rendered incapable of giving any assistance to his fellow-sufferers, by a blow which he received from the capsized boat, and which made him for a time insensible.

As I looked in his face the thought struck me of what his grief must be, laying my hand upon his arm I said gently:

"Harry, dear Harry."

"Oh, Mrs. Percy, God help me!" burst from his white lips in a tone of agony.

"He will, Harry, if you ask aright," and putting my arm around him, I drew him into my own room. After the first burst of grief was over, he told me of his love for this little one, and that only a few hours before they started upon their ill-fated sail, she had promised "when they were old enough" to be his own.

It was a boy and girl's love; but this terrible ending will make it sadden his whole after life, and the sorrow he now endures is none the less poignant because it has come upon him in the spring tide of his life.

Later in the day I met Mr. Livingstone pacing up and down the garden walk, his head bowed down, and in such deep thought that my passing did not disturb him; but as I stood for a moment watching him, my heart smote me that we had left this poor man alone, and above all, that I had not thanked him. Going back, I laid my hand upon his arm:

"How are you to-day, Mr. Livingstone?"

"Well, quite well, I thank you, dear madam," he said, gratefully.

"I may not have another opportunity to thank you, oh so much, for having so nobly rescued my child, they tell me it was only through your efforts she was saved."

"Dear little Birdie," he murmured.

"A mother's loving prayers shall ever be yours, that by God's help you have spared me the agony poor Louise's mother now endures."

"A mother, a mother! I never knew a mother's love or prayers, perhaps if I had I should have been a better man."

"'Tis very sad not to remember a mother's love, sir, mine is such a precious memory to me that I pity you. And oh think of that poor mother in yonder room, who to-day mourns for her only child."

"Isadore was an only child."

"Yes, I know; but her parents are not left to mourn," I replied.

"But her husband is," he said in a cold tone.

"I know, I know, pardon me, poor Isadore, so young to die."

"Nay, not young, old, old, worn out, *blasé* to all sweet affections or kindness, a heart of stone," he said quickly and fiercely.

"Mr. Livingstone! you forget yourself," I said, shocked at his language.

"Excuse me," he replied, a weary look settling down upon his face, "I did forget, you cannot know," and he turned to leave me.

"She is dead now, forgive her, Rolf," I said, laying my hand on his arm, all that he had endured coming over me, and remembering how the gay generous boy I knew years ago, had become a cold, scoffing, cynical man, by the hand of this dead woman.

He shuddered, turned deadly pale, and after a moment's silence, said in a low tone:

"I do; dead! yes dead! oh, that I knew—oh, that I knew—" and he looked doubtfully at me.

"If I can aid you in any way, you know you have the right to ask me now."

"Thanks, Oh, Mrs. Percy! when Louise, in springing to another seat, overset our boat, and we all sank together, when I arose to the surface, the first two who met my view were Isadore and your Birdie. Both had fainted. I could only save one; and, by all that is holy, the only reason I chose your child, was because the thought came over me, 'so many hearts will mourn if she be lost, but the other—' Oh, Mrs. Percy! believe me, though she was my enemy, though she has blasted my life, withered my happiness, made me a reckless roué, turned me sometimes almost to a fiend, until I have well-nigh cursed her, believe me in this I was unselfish, I only thought of saving many hearts great anguish by rescuing the child.—But it has haunted me ever since that I have murdered my enemy, unintentionally; God knows I did not mean it—but that it was by my neglect, oh, is it so?" and he looked eagerly at me.

"I cannot judge. I dare not. Your loss is my gain. God pardon me, that I cannot wish you had done otherwise."

"I did not mean it. You will bear me witness that I struck out, even when my exhausted state made it madness to do so, and brought her to shore, spite of all danger. Even then, the thought struck me, 'If she is dead, remorse will live with me.'"

He spoke eagerly, telling over his conduct; more, I could see, to endeavor to excuse his actions to himself than for

my sake, striving to find some comfort in thus explaining, for his tortured conscience; but one look into his haggard face told how hopeless was the endeavor.

I have somewhere read of the agony of remorse endured by a man who saw his bitter foe, whom he had hated with a life-long hatred, struck into the foaming billows, and of the awful strife within himself, whether to peril his own life to save the man he had a thousand times wished dead, or let him perish. And while he thought this, and said to himself, "His blood will be upon my soul!" the man sunk, to rise no more. Then he went forth with the curse of Cain upon his brow, a murderer in intent if not in fact, the drowning man's imploring face and outstretched hands ever before him.

While I looked at Mr. Livingstone, this story came to my remembrance, and I shuddered to think perhaps such might be his fate. Something of this was in my face, I suppose, for, with an imploring look, he caught my hand.

"Do not hate me. Think leniently of me, for the deed was unpremeditated. Do not teach little Birdie to despise me, dear, pure-hearted child!"

"She could never hate one to whom she owes her life," I said.

"Thanks! I will remember your words when I am far away."

"Are you going away?"

"Yes, to-night. I shall go to B—— with the ——" and he paused shudderingly,—"with the corpse of my wife. Afterward, I will start for Europe. I cannot stay here now."

"But are you able to undertake a journey, under such circumstances, so soon? You need rest, after the excitement of last night."

"It is no matter. If it kills me, so much the better. I shall be rid of a world of misery!" he replied, bitterly.

"Do not say so. The suffering here is nothing to be compared with an unprepared hereafter. This is a warning, remember. Please take it as such."

A sneer passed for a moment over his face, or, at least, the shadow of one.

"Thank you. We differ in our ideas of such things. Our creeds are different." And I saw no good would result from an argument with him.

"There is only One who can change your views; and I will pray night and day, even though you may not thank me, that, either by sorrow or happiness, He will guide you by His light out of darkness." And I left him.

Of course, this terrible dispensation has effectually put to flight all thought of pleasure; and the gay party here, shocked and dismayed, departed.

Ada Lawrence, upon whose untried heart this loss of her favorite cousin has fallen, with all the poignancy of a nature unused to grief, has never risen from her couch since they laid her there in a fit of insensibility, and requires the whole of her mother's, and Dora's, or Marie's attendance.

In the evening, cold and stern, without one trace of the afternoon's emotion, Mr. Livingstone came to say adieu. Mr. Marstone and Stuart were going with him.

"Give my best love to Birdie," he said. "She has been a very pleasant companion to me this summer, and whiled away many an otherwise dreary hour."

"Will you not say good-bye to her yourself?" asked Marie. "She is very desirous of seeing you, and will grieve if you go, without her thanking you."

"I should like very much to see her, but thought perhaps she was not able."

"Oh, she is quite well: only a little weak from her fright."

When we entered the room where Birdie lay, she started from the sofa.

"Oh, would he not come?" she said, seeing only me.

"I wanted to see him so badly. Oh, Mr. Livingstone, you might have come!"

"Birdie, dear little Birdie! did you want to see me so much?"

She sprang into his arms, and while he held her closely, she said:

"Oh, I am so glad! I thought you had gone, and I should never see you!"

With his arms clasped round her, this cold, proud, cynical man of the world bowed his eyes upon her curls and wept. She stroked his hand gently, and wiping the tears he strove to hide, murmured:

"I will always remember you saved my life,—saved me from the cold, cold river!" Then, as the thought of that

scene—the pale, dead face of her cherished friend and play-fellow—came upon her, she flung herself upon the floor at his feet.

“ Louise, my Louise dead ! dead ! ” she cried frantically.

It was now his turn to comfort, and lifting her up, he sat for a half hour, with her upon his knee, soothing and cheering her.

I let them be, for I thought, perchance when this man is far away, the thought of his talk with the child will comfort him, and do him good.

When they came to tell him he must go, he laid her gently upon the sofa, and kneeling beside her pressed kiss after kiss upon her cheek.

“ Birdie my little friend you will not forget me, you promised me pet ? ”

“ Never, never, indeed I could not ; I love you so dearly. ”

“ Kiss me good bye, for I must go now. ”

With a shy, but exquisitely graceful action, she laid her head a moment upon his breast.

“ Will you never come again sir ? ”

“ Yes perhaps, if you want me to, shall I *mignonne* ? ”

“ Please, please do, I want you to so very much. ”

“ Then I will come next year ; ” then he added, “ but I must go now, give me my kiss dear child. ”

“ I will give it to you then, ” she said.

“ When ? ” he asked with a look of surprise, “ when do you mean ? ”

“ The time you come again, ” she said, “ next year sir. ”

“ But why not now too ? you have let me kiss you ever so many times to-day ? ”

“ Yes but that is different, ” she said with a pretty conscious dignity.

“ Well my little lassie has more art than I dreamed after all, ” he said smilingly “ I will come a long way for my kiss. ”

“ No not for that, you would come anyhow. ”

“ How do you know that, Birdie ? ”

“ Because you promised sir, that you would. ”

“ But I might change my mind. ”

“ No you will not, I believe in you, I trust your word. ”

“ Thank you dear child, I will come, ” and pressing a kiss upon her brow he went away. Birdie wept a heart-full of tears for him. The rest of us pity him, so much of good, and yet so sadly marred by evil.

CHAPTER XLVI.

MAY.

THIS whole winter has been so busy, and yet so utterly empty of incident, that I have not felt it requisite to keep a record of each week as hitherto.

When we came home last summer, Marion and Dora did not come with us ; but because of the urgency of Mrs. Dutille's prayers, went with her to pass the long gloomy winter she so much dreaded, at her home upon the blue waters of the Potomac, and they are still there.

Of course this sad bereavement, the loss of our little Louise, which had been so sudden and awful, precluded the possibility of the Lawrences' going this year into gay society, and Ada has been permitted to come back to us.

Cora had a long spell of illness caused by the shock of her accident and the sad fate of Louise ; but with the return of spring, her strength and spirits, which have been sadly depressed for the first time in her whole life, are reviving, and we think her almost well.

Mary Lea, in a letter sent with the return of her sister Laura to school in the autumn, wrote me sad news, because it was the sundering of another of those ties, which for the past three or four years have wound round my own and the hearts of all the others, weaving us together in a close and loving fellowship, and the snapping asunder of these cords of love which bind us thus tenderly, sends a pang to each heart ; she writes :—

“ With many a heartache, and a few hearty weepings, I have decided not to return this year to school, if indeed ever again. Oh, Mrs. Percy ! can I say it, can I much less adhere to such a course after I have said it ; and yet I

know were you here, and knew all my circumstances, you would tell me what you have an hundred times, 'whatever is your duty you must do without shrinking, cheerfully with a brave heart,' and I will, although this duty leads me away from all pleasures and loves that I have cherished before.

"The only relation of my mother is, you know, my grandmother, she is old and feeble, and needs constant care, she loves me very dearly, if I do as my heart dictates, and come to you, I shall have it ever before me that the duty I owe her, the care I should take of her, are being performed by the hand of an hireling, and I know even the joy of being with you all again, would be quenched by the thought of such a thing, therefore I must stay."

Dear Mary, I think she is one of those, the very few of this earth, who have their reward here, at least the beginning of it, her letters are full of peace and contentment, we manage it so, that she has letters from some of us every week, and we in return from her.

We have long letters every month from Nora. Mr. Audley can never say enough in her praise; but he is a partial judge, and we would scarcely rely upon his panegyrics, were they not corroborated by other witnesses. Mr. Marstone who accompanied Mr. Livingstone to Europe, has written one or two letters to Ernest.

He has seen Lela several times, and speaks in the highest terms of our darling's wonderful voice and exquisite beauty.

The boys are busy at their studies; in their weekly letters they describe Lester as much changed, but not for the worse. He, Stuart, and Carrol, expect to graduate next autumn.

Clare not having worked so hard before he went to college, or indeed, not having Stuart's abilities, went in, in the freshman's class, while Stuart entered at once as a sophomore. Since his terrible downfall, poor Clare has done up a world of troublesome study, which should have been done before; he is to be promoted among the juniors this year.

Howard astonished us all (but Stuart,) by passing such an examination as admitted him at once to the class, into which Clare is about entering, so though there is at least five years difference between them, they will work side by side.

But Howard is Walter Percy's son; how could it be

otherwise? the only matter to be astonished at would have been, if he had not been brilliant as a scholar.

Then, too, he is not an artist, with a world of fairy visions to escape from, ere he can settle down to study. Oh, Clare deserves more credit than any of them, if they do leave him a little behind in the race up the hill of knowledge, for the rest have not such a cloud of bright dreams enveloping their brain. If they are great in some things, so is he; they may read Greek letters, but he can rear a Grecian temple; they may know a deal about the philosophy of nature, but he can make nature look like life itself with his sun-tipped pencil.

Oh, I am very proud of my artist boy, and his comrades love and cherish him as if he were a fairy gift.

We give all our spare time to Adèle. I have oftentimes spoken of her love for the organ, and we have paid great attention to her in this respect. It will in coming years be of benefit every way; for in case we should all be taken from her, and she be left, alone and portionless, to grope her way through life, (and such things have occurred ere this,) it will be a blessed thing that, though blind, she is not helpless. She already plays in our little church.

Gracie is nothing in particular, but a blushing, shy little damsel, with sweet blue eyes peeping from behind her brown curls, which seem made especially to hide them. She has no particular love for music or drawing, is not remarkably brilliant in any one study or any one thing, only loving and clinging to everybody, (Adèle above all,) made happy with a kiss or kind word, everybody's helper, a pair of willing hands and ready feet, which every one uses, and thinks they have a right to. A demure, blushing, timid, useful little dame is my Gracie.

She has such rosy cheeks, is so short of stature, and so round and plump, that the wild ones make her the target of many a witty shaft.

"Mamma, do you not feel distressed for Gracie's astonishing rotundity? Why, I fear we shall have to lock her up, least the uninitiated should mistake her for a crimson pin-cushion, and make use of her accordingly," says Cora, with a pretty look of horror.

"Oh, is this a little girl? Why, I declare one is not to be blamed for mistaking her for a blush-apple, taking madem-

oiselle's *toute ensemble* and cheeks into consideration," was Stuart's parting salutation. Clare writes:

"Tell Gracie for me it is time for partridges now. I trust she will keep in cover." But, though Gracie blushes a little more, she does not mind their naughty speeches much.

Next month, with the Spring's breath, will come my May-flower. Darling! I have missed her sadly, but another needed the comfort her presence brings, and I could but spare her. Dear, dove-eyed Dora, too. It will be pleasant to see her home once more.

Our school is very prosperous. Indeed, we cannot accommodate all our applicants. We live contentedly, working unceasingly through the day, and sleeping peacefully through the night. We mourn for the loved and lost, but we mourn with a blessed hope; and when oftentimes I start from a dream, thinking Tiny's arms are about my neck, or Walter's voice in my ears, I comfort myself for the disappointment with, "Though not now, afterwards!"

Ernest has been working very hard this winter, and has quite electrified the scientific world by some discoveries, which his extensive travels and keen observation, in almost every part of the habitable world, have enabled him to make: and now that people begin to find in the haughty, reserved, although humble physician, a great scholar, and man of profound erudition, he is much sought after.

But the cruel trials of life have embittered him; the chastenings God has sent him in various ways fell not upon a Christian's humble heart, but upon a proud, self-reliant spirit, and they have hardened him. Out of our own circle he is a cold, haughty man. Even here, sometimes, the children deem him stern; but he is not, dear brother. To me he is all tenderness.

His mother and the rest of us have to do all the "being proud and honored" by the attention shown him. He cannot forgive the world the wrong it has done to him and his; and although I know at heart he exults thus to oblige men to acknowledge his superiority over them, though he is proud thus to have won, unaided by outward circumstance, the notice and approbation of the best of men, yet he never by word or sign shows that it is so.

Harley keeps the even tenor of his way, winning not lau-

rel wreaths, but friends to love and prize him, to look for his presence as a blessing. He is the light of many hearts, and the adoration of the people among whom he labors is the best commentary upon his faithfulness. But these last two years he grows strangely grave and quiet, working more zealously, allowing himself little rest. Ernest has been very anxious concerning him, and thinks this city life and work is doing him a world of harm, but we know not how to help it.

"He must look out for some quiet parish among the mountains, or else I fear me much he will betake himself off in search of that crown, and those treasures, which he has been so zealously laying up, over the dark waters of the much abused Styx," says Ernest, in his half-heathenish, unchristian lightness.

But Harley only laughs at our anxiety, and declares himself quite well, and that hard work and plenty of it is good for him, although he acknowledges that, in their excursions into the unsettled country, he seems to take a new lease of life.

Estelle and I have our hands full of employment, but we like it amazingly, and are only thankful to have it to do.

JULY 1.

To-day our vacation begins. The boys are to be home next week. We have left counting months and weeks now, and say, "in so many days they will be here."

We had thought to stay quietly at home this summer; but our fate, in the shape of Mrs. Lawrence, forbids it.

She has taken a home somewhere, she knows as little where as I do; but her agent, who has rented it, says it is a beautiful country-seat, in a most healthful and charming location. It is to be tested this summer, and, if it prove equal to the meed of praise bestowed upon it, she intends purchasing.

"So that we may have a home of our own somewhere," she says.

She proposes we shall come to her "*en masse*" bringing

Sandy and Milly, "for whose services she will be unutterably grateful," and close our house until Autumn.

But this is simply an impossibility. Ernest cannot leave the city this summer for any length of time without great loss, and Mrs. Wilbur will not be induced by any consideration to enter again the world which so ill-treated her.

Stuart considers it very essential Howard should spend as much time as possible during the vacation in quiet study, as he is so much younger than his classmates, and of course has to study very hard to keep up with them; so Harley spite of our entreaties, and Ernest's expostulations, has decided to stay at home and take charge of his studies.

Therefore, as Mrs. Lawrence has given Ada her solemn promise if we come, to make a quiet family party of it, we have concluded to go to them.

We have had one great pleasure this last week, in the return of Jennie and Mr. Lea. We had hoped Mr. Audley would have brought Lela home this year; but there is now little prospect of such a thing, precious darling, how my heart aches with longing to see her.

Jennie is the personification of a happy wife. Mr. Lea makes her a good true husband, although he pretends she plagues him mightily, and "is such a shrew;" but his fond looks tell another story.

We are to meet Mrs. Lawrence at the cars in the city of P——, which is the city a few miles from which our old home lies. It will seem very strange to be even that near to "Percies' Cliffe," and I fear there will be more pain than pleasure in the familiar city of P——.

CHAPTER XLVII.

"ROSEDALE," JULY 20.

We came as we had agreed, to this country-house of Mrs. Lawrence's, whither she and Ada had preceded us by a week.

We met them at the depot in P——, where they do, not only their shopping, but their marketing, although it is a good five hours drive from their house by railroad.

How strange it seemed to sit there. May and I winced under the remembrance of the time when, after a tour of calling or shopping, we had sat here in this smoky station-house, waiting for "papa" to come from the office, and after being whirled along the road for an hour or so, to arrive safely at home, away from noisy, dusty, tiresome, and tiring P——, amidst the old mountain-like hills, the cool, shady forests and the bright flowers of our own country home.

Oh dear happy time never to come again! We may sit as we did yesterday in the old waiting room, and watch the ebb and flow of strange faces, as we oft have done before. We may look out at the door to spy out the old landmarks and find them all, or else note the change which five years of absence have made.

But though glad voices may fall upon our ear, though smiles may greet our eyes, though the hasting of coming steps may break upon us, yet the old time may never come again. All remains unchanged, the room, the street, the whizzing in and out of the cars, the starting hour, the bustle and flurry of getting settled, all, all as of old; but how the hushing of one voice, the missing one radiant face, the needing one strong arm to care for us, changes all! changes all!

Oh dear steps never to come quickly towards us! Oh dear voice never to break upon our listening ears! tender father, loving husband! To know the realms of heaven are thy pathway, to know songs of angels tune thy voice, should comfort us that we are desolate; but God forgive us, it does not.

It seemed like a dream the being hurried, upon Stuart's arm into the very cars, which in the old times had carried us home, and for one instant the thought flashed over me

"perhaps it is even our old home Mrs. Lawrence has taken;" but then I knew how foolish such a thought was, how impossible. Then I strove to remember where this could be, once I knew every cottage and villa along this road for miles beyond our own house; but I could decide upon none, it was a new place, I could not get at it.

I had half hoped, half dreaded that the train would pass by "Percie's Cliffe," but suddenly a new road opened upon us, and turning from the old track about four miles below our lost home, we whizzed into a strange country as well. Until then, I had done nothing but watch from the window breathlessly, but as we turned and the old association was broken, I looked at Marion: her face was very white, and clasping my hand, she said:

"Mamma, mamma! If we only could! Oh, I had hoped so!"

"It was better not, daughter. It was better not!"

While we clung to each other for an instant, a thousand thoughts overwhelming us, we were suddenly aroused by Mrs. Lawrence's voice.

"What is the matter, Birdie? What ails you, child?" Then, for the first time, I remembered that she, too, must recognize these scenes, child though she was when she left them. She, too, had watched and hoped until the turn had caused the bitter disappointment, and now she sat, sobbing half hysterically, beside Mrs. Lawrence.

Stuart, with his quick intuition, saw some trouble was upon us all, for I was speechless to comfort my poor child. He said quickly:

"Clare, change seats with Birdie, and let her sit by me."

Then, with a smile, "Mrs. Lawrence, you must not be surprised at Birdie's tears. They are like April showers, and dried as soon. A beautiful scene, or continuation of scenes, like these we are being whirled through, are just the things to excite her emotions. You know she has, like Clare, an artist's eye for *la beauté*."

Mrs. Lawrence was satisfied, and Stuart kept Birdie's eyes and tears very assiduously out of sight the rest of the way.

This place, at which we arrived just at sunset, is very pretty and picturesque, perched up on the side of one of the high hills of which this region is composed; and now I have found my reckonings, I know just where we are.

Many and many a long year did this place belong to an aged couple, who, withstanding the tempting offers made by city gentlemen, who would fain have possessed the beautiful site lived here in an humble thatched cottage, preferring to keep their old home to making money.

"Not if you cover every acre with gold," was their invariable reply to purchasers.

But now they have gone to that "other home," and the place has been purchased, and a cottage '*a la Suisse*' erected upon it by some one, who with larger expectations and desires than means, is compelled to sell it.

The river, which runs at the foot of the hill, (so small as scarcely to be so called at this point,) winds round its base for five or six miles, gathering breadth and strength as it rushes on, and sweeping through a forest of oaks, forms the boundary line for a quarter of a mile of the vast estate of "Percies' Cliffe."

In yonder boat, which lies so lazily in the moon-beams. I could glide quietly along, and in an hour's time stand in the rocky summer-house, where a thousand times, with dear eyes now dimmed, I have watched the moonlight shimmer on the murmuring waves. Then a spring down the stone steps, a single turn through those trees, and in all its beauty, "Percies' Cliffe" would lie before me, its white towers gleaming in the silvery light, and falling upon my heart like the melody of heaven.

Oh, that I might go! Oh that I might——, But I will not. Harm, and only harm, would come of it. It would prostrate me for days; the old longings, the old repinings, would come again. No, no; I will not go!

Marion and I alone know all this. She it was who first remembered the spot, "old Gilbert's cottage," we used to call it. We have wept and longed together over the thoughts these memories brought us, as we do over everything. It is some comfort always to share our sorrows with each other.

But Cora has no idea of the neighborhood, although she has bounded along the road, which lies at the edge of the mountain upon her nimble-footed "Fairy," and come with her sunny smiles and curls to the "old man's cottage," an hundred times before; but it is as well she should not know that just over the brow of this tall hill, lies her idolized birth-place.

It is very lovely here; the garden is a wilderness of roses; the river below murmurs ever a sweet song in our ears,—pleasant I deemed it once. Now it sounds like a mournful cadence from the grave, and seems ever singing a “misc-rere” for my lost Ernestine Lillian, my lost baby!

Thus, weak, faithless creature that I am, I turn even God’s beautiful gifts into a cause for sorrowful remembrance and mourning.

The children enjoy the wildness of this country exceedingly, and never weary of clambering the mountain’s side, and losing each other in the woods; all day long they have been out with Sandy.

How thankful I am he came instead of Milly, who knows every inch of this country, and would distract me by her grief, beside letting the children know where they are, which is not necessary.

Estelle did not dream, until I told her, where we were, although she spent a year with me when I was first married.

Mrs. Lawrence has sent an invitation to Carrol and Lester to come; there is also a brother of her husband’s here with his wife and a son of about Howard’s age, just home from his first vacation at the naval school of Annapolis; he is a wild boy, a great pet of his cousin Ada’s, who is his especial darling. The children find him the greatest addition to *their* party, as he is forever getting them into some trouble and mischief.

There are two or three families living within a mile or two of this place, of whom Mrs. Lawrence hopes great things in the way of variety, although the rest of us are well pleased with our present quiet.

Then, too, the city of P—— is so conveniently near, she has no dread of the solitude the rest of us covet. She is so charmed with the spot, as well she may be, that she has decided to purchase at once, and Ada has already christened it “Rosedale,” with which I have headed my leaf.

Oh, I think the sky is more fair here, the flowers more sweet and luxuriant, than anywhere else in the whole world. Oh, though it has brought some pain to breathe this air again, yet I am glad, I am thankful to be here.

God is very good to me, granting me many, many mercies.

Oh, the sunbeams gliding softly down upon me, stealing

silently but tenderly through the forest trees, tell me a tale of hope, sing a sweet song of *Espérance*, and rest me even while they pain.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

JULY 22.

THE other day a gay party started out to walk to the “Lion’s cave,” a few miles up the mountain.

On their return, Stuart and Clare were as usual with Marion, as they came running down the rocks she stumbled, and falling, struck her forehead near the temple, so very near that now when we look at it, we shudder to see it, and say, “Thank God, it was not lower down.”

Although not much hurt, the blow stunned her; both sprang forward to lift her up, and while Clare held her, Stuart, with his usual quick decision, leaped over a fence and hastened towards a brook which gurgled near by.

When he returned, bringing his hat filled with water, he beheld Clare with passionate gestures striving to restore Marion.

“Darling, precious May, speak to me.” These, and a thousand like words of wild love uttered in tones of the most thrilling entreaty, broke upon Stuart’s ear, and as he stood still for one instant watching the kisses rained upon her cheek, and listening to the words Clare’s eloquent Italian tongue poured forth, he learned a truth which blanched his cheek, and sent a chill to his very heart.

For no brother’s love spoke in such a way, none but a lover’s lips could rain such kisses, so wild, so passionate, and with a sickened heart, Stuart stood, unmindful of the aid he had brought, watching with folded arms and ashen cheek the scene before him.

Suddenly, the delicate eyelids quivered, the faint rose-tint came into the white cheeks of the fainting girl, and with a smile, she murmured:

"I am better now, dear Clare, better now."

Stuart waited for no more; turning with fleet steps, he sought the woods, uttering but one word:

"Lost! lost! lost!"

Gently and tenderly in his arms, Clare brought May to me. Forgetful of the cause of her having to be thus borne, forgetful of all, save that he had at last told her, at least by tones and actions, the deep love of his heart; told her at last what had burned within him so long, and which he dared not speak. In silence, with a tenderness which is so natural and beautiful in him, he placed her on a lounge, and kneeling down, said:

"Marion, my Marion, may it be?"

She smiled sweetly, but very faintly, and leaning over him pressed a kiss upon his brow. He bowed his head, and with a smile of unutterable love, said:

"God bless thee, my Marion."

Then, with his old vehemence, he turned to where I stood, a silent, amazed spectator:

"May it be, Aunt Bertha, will you let me be your son indeed?"

"If Marion gives you to me, Clare," I answered with a smile.

"Will you, darling, will you?"

"If she wants you, Clare," she said in a low voice, and then turned so pale, I thought she would faint again.

"I plague you, my own. In my new-found happiness, I neglect my treasure. Oh, I did not dare to hope such joy could ever be mine."

And then hurriedly he related to me May's mishap, and I sent him away, while I bound up my darling's wound, and soothed her to repose.

I must own this affair has amazed me. I never have been blind to the possibility of an attachment growing up between some of these boys and girls, brought thus for years together, but never May and Clare. I own that this has surprised me.

Clare, foolish fellow, is wild with joy; but Marion, my little one, who clings so closely to those she loves, who always needs so much petting to make her happy, is so cool and undemonstrative, she astonishes me. To my urgent question, as to "whether she is sure she knows what she has promised," she answers:

"It is very pleasant to be loved by Clare, mamma."

But Clare with his shining eyes filled with tears, said in his sweet humble way:

"Am I worthy, Aunt Bertha? am I worthy?"

And as I laid his head down upon my shoulder, and listen to the long account of how this love has grown up within him, I clasped him more closely to my heart, and said truly from the depths of that heart:

"Yes, my boy, worthy of the best I have."

And then I think the comfort which showed itself in his bright face, was a very good reward for my words.

"What will Stuart and the rest say?" he asked after a pause. And I know not why, but those first three words sent a sense of painful disappointment through my heart. But I will not give it place, but calm myself with the thought:

"It is only because you thought and hoped it would be the other way, this most likely is the best."

For a long while we sat there alone, the rest were too busy to miss us. We three said many sweet things to each other in the bright moonlight, then we sent our weary Marion to bed, "for having been so naughty as to get a fall and a lover all in one day."

A little while after, Stuart came in "from a long ramble in the woods," he said, "and tired enough."

"Only an excuse to get an extra degree of petting," I assured him as his head lay on my knee.

"As if I did not get that any way!"

"Well then I shall give you something more, a piece of news," I said gaily.

He gave a start, and I thought as the moonlight shone across his face he was very pale; but he answered in a gay tone:

"No news to me. I am an old friend of Clare's, and generally ferret out his secrets as soon as he has them."

"But you did not know this? Surely, Stuart, you have never suspected this one secret of my life?"

"Yes; but only to-day, Clare. So do not be so amazed."

"How, then? Who told you? May?"

"Both of you, as I brought, like a goose, water to bathe.

the faint one's brow,—as if there was need, when lips above her were raining such a storm of kisses upon it."

This speech jarred me. I knew not why. The words were not like Stuart, or the light, careless tone, either.

"You seem to esteem this which has come upon your brother and sister as a light thing, Stuart. I deem it so great, so sacred a change for our precious May, I can scarcely bear to speak of it, even seriously."

"Forgive me, forgive me! I am not careless. I did not mean it, Aunt Bertha." And he turned his face from the moonlight, and lay very quiet for an instant; then, springing up, he said:

"But I must not be here, idling my time away. I have a letter to write." And he turned toward the door, when, suddenly coming back, he said, holding out his hand to Clare:

"Nay, I think my long walk has walked off with some of my brain; for I have left it all this time before congratulating you. You have won a jewel, my brother: may you wear it well, and be happy as you deserve to be!" And, with a grasp of the hand he held, so quick and hard as to make Clare wince, he turned to go.

"What is the matter, Arty? You give a fellow the grip of a giant! How pale you are! Are you sick?"

"Pale, you love-lorn laddie? Has love made you blind already? Why, according to the popular fallacy, all should be *couleur de rose*; or perhaps that hue is only thrown round the lady herself. I profess entire ignorance. 'Bueno noche.'" And he was gone.

"Oh! Aunt Bertha, I think he does not like it. He thinks I ought not to be trusted with May's happiness, does he not? Do you not think so?"

"Foolish boy! I am sure he did not hint at such a thing. Unsatisfied lover, you think if all the world is not as extatic as yourself at your happiness, they are not content."

"But he did act strangely. I do not know how, but there is a something unexplainable in his manner, which would keep me, I know not why, from going to him to-night as usual, and telling him all that is in my heart."

"That, dear Clare, is not the fault of your listener, but

of the thing to be told. This love creeps into the heart, bringing a new train of hopes and fears with it."

"And you do not think Stuart is displeased?"

"I think he has tired himself out with this long walk of his, and gone to bed more weary than he liked to own to us. But my happy young lover must go too, for although your new possession may be food and sleep for you, a poor old lady, like myself, requires something more substantial." And, with a kiss, I sent him off.

Dear boy! dear May! Their joy is a good thing, and yet, I know not why, there is a weary pain at my heart,—foolish, unreasonable, I know full well, yet I cannot help it. Let me take what train of thought I will, I always find at the end, "If it were only Stuart, instead of——" Then I reproach myself for unkindness toward the dear child whom it is. I had a strange doubt come over me last night, but this morning, Stuart's face, bright as usual, only a shade paler, from his foolishly long walk yesterday, dispelled it at once. May looks pale and quiet, but her accident explains that sufficiently at present.

JULY 25.

This week has brought a large addition to our quiet party. Jennie and her husband, together with a half dozen young people as wild as it is possible to imagine, and evidently bent upon having their full meed of country pleasures.

All of our own party have avoided the once coveted enjoyment of boating this year, with a shudder of painful memory, not from dread of another accident, but from sorrowful recollections of what that pleasure had bereft them.

But the new comers have no terrors of the past to make the bright smooth stream an evil thing to them, and ere they had come down for a day, were merrily sailing in the gaily decked boats which had thus far wooed temptingly in vain.

Now we have boating again by moonlight and starlight as of old; but Louise's friends content themselves with riding parties, pic-nics among the mountain gorges, or pleasant moonlight strolls along the fair banks, it is as lovely as

a dream, and the days seem scarcely long enough for their pleasures.

We seem in for love makings this summer, or at least for the development of them. Last night Dora came in from a walk with Harley, who, by the way, came down last Saturday with Howard for a couple of weeks enjoyment and freshening up.

Where I sat sewing Dora came, with her soft eyes beaming gladness, and in her quiet way whispered a love song into my ear. Oh, I am so glad, so thankful. I have wished a thousand times it might be, but scarcely dared hope it.

"Harley, my brother Harley, I am so pleased, so thankful," I said when he came a while after her into my room.

"I knew you would be, dear Bertha, and Dora has promised me, to only love you more, that you were my first love," he said in a voice of deep emotion.

"I tell him you were mine too, dear friend. Oh, Mr. Raymond, you could never have loved her better than I have done since the very first."

"Could I not?" he said with a grave smile, "then we will talk of it never more. Bertha is my sister," and he laid his hand tenderly upon her's. "Dora has said she will be my wife," then he added more gaily, "but who is Mr. Raymond?"

"Forgive me," she said, blushing deeply, "the other seems so sacred. I have never said it, save at night sometimes, in a whisper."

"Dora, my Dora," he said quickly, clasping her hands, an expression of pain coming over his face, "do not think of me thus, you shame my weak heart."

We have decided, this, as well as our other engagement, shall be kept a secret among a few of us, until we return home.

Ada and Carrol, I and the rest thought, were attached to each other, indeed we had concluded it was a settled affair; and in truth Ada half confessed an understanding between them to Marion last winter. But this summer, although she plays the hostess to perfection, she gives him no more of her attention; she is a sad flirt, I fear, although she declares with tears, she is no such thing.

However that may be, Lester this summer is her cavalier especial; at first they sought each other for the sake of the

lost one so dear to both; but lately, I sometimes think Ada has found a balm for Harry's wounded heart.

When I see him walking in the moonlight, or bending tenderly (seemingly) over Ada, I think of that time last summer when with white lips he cried:

"Pity me, pity me, Mrs. Percy."

But he is young, and Ada is very bewitching and lovable, and I am glad if she can give him comfort, it is far better thus, than that he should "gaze ever mournfully into the past," a living friend may be better for him than a dead love.

But I have no idea of Carrol's being unkindly used, that he is, I do not know, he is a proud fellow, and keeps his own counsels better than any of the others.

My sweet Marion, with all her new-found happiness, is sadly out of health this last few weeks, and like a timid bird that she is, bides ever by my side.

"I am tired, dear Clare, do not mind me, I shall do so much better alone, with only mamma. I am not quite well, I think, for the gay talk and movements of the rest, give me a dizzy headache," she will say almost every evening.

And very sadly, but because she wills it, Clare leaves us; but my boy's heart is heavy I know, and he understands this querulousness, so unlike her old manner, which has lately come over May, as little as I do, and it grieves him sadly.

Why is it? I wonder, what is the cause? perhaps my May droops so sadly, because our old home lies so near, and yet so very far away.

I think we will not come here another summer, the trial is almost too hard to bear, no wonder it wearies my gentle darling.

JULY 27.

TO-DAY, Mr. Lawrence brought up from the city, to the infinite delight of his sister-in-law, and to our great surprise, Mr. Marstone, whom we thought still in Europe. But he tells us, both he and Mr. Livingstone returned a couple of weeks since.

"I was called home on urgent business." And he added, smiling, "Rolf and I have come to take it as a matter of course, by some means or other, we must spend a part of our summers with your pleasant party. You know this is the fourth summer we have been in company."

"We will expect you, both bag and baggage, for the next two months, then," said Mrs. Lawrence. "I am so glad to have you back once more, I shall not allow you out of my sight for a single day."

"Thank you kindly, dear madame; but we shall not be able to accept your invitation in toto. But I doubt not you will see quite enough of us."

"Why, where will you stay, then?" asked she.

"My own estate," said he, with an expressive glance at me, "lies but eight miles back of this."

"Is it possible? But then that is over the mountain; you cannot come so far, as often as we will need you. Besides, where will be the use, when we have plenty of room?"

"Thank you again; but my presence is required there, and I must forego the pleasure of accepting your kindness. Besides, by the river it is only four miles from this pretty place, which Miss Ada's taste has well named Rose-dale,"—with a bow to her. "From my place, which another fair lady, years ago, called 'The Grange,' our boats will bring us thither in a short space. The river makes such a bend for a few miles about here, that, were it not for a projecting rock or two, and a wilderness of forest trees, you could discover from this piazza, the village at the head of which my bachelor mansion stands."

"I think we will pay you a visit some of these days, if it is such a pleasant distance, Mr. Marstone," said Mrs. Lawrence. "Call upon our new neighbor."

"I believe I will have to decline the honor," he said,

lightly, "for I fear my establishment would at present hardly do to receive ladies in. What did you say, Miss Ada?" he said, coolly refusing to hear Mrs. Lawrence's declaration,

"That will be all the more inducement for us to come over, and get you into better habits."

"Then you know all about this part of the country,—all its beauties?" said Ada.

"No, I am sorry to say I do not, Miss Ada; my old home lies far away. I only claim this by inheritance from an uncle, who left it me five years ago, and since then, various duties have called me constantly away from it, sometimes in this country, but oftener in Europe, as you are aware. So I have had small opportunity of making myself at home here."

Marion, and Cora, (who at last knows where she is,) rose quickly, and went silently from the room. Mr. Marstone, with a start, and a look of distress upon his face, turned to me with a glance of deprecation, saying:

"Pardon my heartlessness." And, with a tact and power which I think I rarely saw equaled, engrossed the attention of the company so entirely, that not only the subject was changed and apparently forgotten, but I had time to quiet myself before seeking my poor weeping Birdie.

Afterward, as I was seated alone in the little "boudoir" which, because I have expressed a fondness for it, has been given up by the rest, with a delicacy and kindness I cannot find words to tell, to my especial use, Mr. Marstone passed the window, and paused irresolutely upon seeing me.

"I see you know us, Mr. Marstone," I said, holding out my hand; "but please do not betray our connection with this neighborhood to any one else."

"Indeed I will not, Mrs. Percy. Forgive my having so rudely thrust my knowledge of your former history upon you this morning."

"It is no matter, except that we can hardly bear to have it much talked about. It is a memory of the past, and we hold the past very sacred, for the sake of one who has left us."

"I know, I know. I saw that one once, years ago, when I was a boy, and he in the first flush of his young manhood. Ever after he was the idol of my ambitious dreams the

acme of all good was with me ever after to be like him, who was so great, so honored, so beloved."

"Did you know papa then, Mr. Marstone?" asked a voice very softly, behind me.

"Only through others, and one interview with him in Washington, years ago, Miss Marie."

"Then you knew us from your recollection of him, I presume?"

"Only, Miss Leanore. I knew her instantly as Walter Percy's daughter, before I heard her name. That night, you remember, years ago, when you were children, at Mrs. Chalton's, when Miss Leanore sang for me in preference to Livingstone, 'because she liked me best for my name's sake,' she mystified him, but not me, for I had the key to the mystery."

"We think Howard like papa, Mr. Marstone, do not you?"

"Exceedingly, Miss Marie, but not nearly as like as your sister. Howard has a little of your mother's gentleness, I think, blended with his other self; but Miss Leanore is a true 'Percy,' proud, so very proud," he said, in a musing sort of way.

"Yes, we know she is, and you would make her more proud still, did you tell her what you have just told us; she glories in her true Percy looks," said May, with a smile: "but you do not know how beautifully that haughty spirit bows before those she loves. Oh, we know she is cold and proud, but at home we never see it, she is a very dove for gentleness to those she loves."

"I doubt it not, I know it must be so," and his eyes flashed suddenly, and his cheeks glowed. "It is the kind of pride one glories to see, the kind of love which when one owned, they would die rather than lose an atom of," he said this in a deep tone as though he felt it; but added immediately in a gayer tone:

"But, Mrs. Percy, do you know I half thought when we left the continent, to hear an announcement of an engagement between your beautiful daughter and my friend Livingstone, they were '*con amore*,' I assure you."

"I pray God not! I trust you are mistaken!" I said, in dismay at the idea.

"Perhaps I am, indeed I know now there is nothing of

an understanding between them, for Rolf has assured me of that."

Oh he could not know what a pang the thought of my pure, high-minded girl being caught in the meshes of that worldly man, gave my heart; but I do not believe it, I will not give such an idea room for an instant.

My darling's high soul would surely recoil from that gay, scoffing (I fear), half-infidel man; she would never cast the treasure of her pure heart at his feet, no, no! God will protect her. Yet I am glad she is beyond his fascinations.

Harley and Howard started for home to-day, very determinedly declaring:

"We only came for two weeks, and so we will only stay that time."

So we were obliged to submit, especially as it is for Howard's benefit, they should be quietly at home. How can I ever be grateful enough to Harley for thus devoting to my boy, the time almost any other lover would deem sacred to his mistress.

His parting gave me a pang—and yet I trust I have mistaken his meaning—it cannot be that love for me has lived through years unseen. He had bidden us good-bye, when suddenly coming back to my room, a look of anguish upon his face, he said in a quivering tone:

"Bertha, I am like the children, and come to unburden myself before I go. I have a haunting pain, a sense of wrong-doing at my heart which tortures me almost beyond endurance. I feel as though I was making a pretence of affection, playing a part towards Dora which is not true."

"Harley, what do you mean? when she is so content, so happy, my poor lonely Dora, so very happy, and I deemed you were as well!"

"And I do love her, not perhaps as I should, not as she deserves to be loved who has so fondly given me—so unworthy—her whole heart's first affection. Would God it was otherwise; but I have not deceived her; she knows the weak treacherous heart I have. I have tried faithfully to make her understand what a quiet brother-love I have for her, it contents her now; but in the long-coming years, will it suffice her? will her happiness be sure? for myself, there can be but one fate, learned years ago; either way it will be the same, a barren plain, a light beyond, a joyless

life, a blessed hope; but dare I link her fate with mine? will she not weary of the tie which binds her? will not the chain, tightened by years, gall when it is too late? would it not be safer for her, that she endure the sorrow I know it will be to her, to give up the prospect of our union now while there is time, rather than learn to loathe it in coming years?"

"Oh, Harley, what do you mean? My poor Dora, do not darken her young life by another shadow, shield her in your true arms, be her guide henceforth, she loves you beyond all earthly things, let me plead for her. Oh, Harley, I have revered and loved you so long, do not destroy my faith in you. I love to think you more worthy than almost any one beside; but I could not were you false; be brave, be true, Harley!"

"I will! God help me, I will! I only desire to do right, and have from the first; it was that, which, when a chance word showed me Dora's love, made me meet it tenderly." Then taking my hand tightly within his own—"Dora shall be my wife; but, Bertha, you will be my sister still, thus I can endure all things."

CHAPTER L.

"She was a being radiant as the dawn,
When it comes forth with flush of glory on."
VIVIAN LEE.

JULY 20.

THERE had been an excursion to a pretty glen a few miles distant, called "Clan-Alpine's Glen," and all had come back well tired. For a while the house was quiet, taking what Gracie called,

"A good resting-time after our toils."

It was just before sunset; the drawing-rooms and piazzas were being well filled again; some, with their "resting-

time" not quite over, were half reclining upon sofa or divan, others sewing or conversing in the deep windows, and others still pacing up and down the piazza or lawn.

Mr. ——— (I forget his name) brought a beautiful shell to show me. A group gathered round to inspect the specimen, and listen to his remarks upon it. When he was through, I asked him to keep it by him, to show Stuart and Clare when they came back from their fishing excursion; then I sent Cora to the woods for the children, who were staying out too late.

Presently, the boys (I forget to call them gentlemen sometimes) came, and again we were engaged in the varied hue of the beautiful shell before us, Marion sitting on a low stool at my feet, and the rest standing round. Suddenly, some one interrupted, with the exclamation from the far window,

"Ah, there is a new arrival!" But this was too common an occurrence to elicit notice. A few moments after, there was a stir in the hall, the bustle of new-comers, and then a servant asking,

"Where is Mrs. Lawrence?"

At the same instant, Stuart and Clare, springing forward, exclaimed in a breath:

"Nora! Uncle!"

I sprang up, with the single word upon my lip,

"Where?" but before I realized their words, a tall, slight figure sprang forward, with the words:

"Here, my mother!" and in an instant, Nora's dear arms were about me.

"Mamma, precious, darling, pretty mamma, I am so glad, so glad!" And in an instant her face was buried in my lap, as she knelt before me.

Surprise and joy for a moment overwhelmed me, and I sank trembling into a seat which Stuart placed quickly for me.

"My child! my Leanore!" It was all I could say, as I pressed kiss after kiss upon her fair brow, as she knelt before me. Thus for a moment we gazed at each other; then springing up, she clasped her arms round Marion.

"My sweet sister! my May-flower!"

"Nora, my queen!" was the soft reply. "God love thee, my sister!"

When she had held her thus tightly clasped for a moment, Nora, with that quick, impatient movement so natural to her, turned her sister's face towards her own, and looking down into it, said musingly, smoothing back the hair from her brow: "As pure and fair as ever: as unspotted from the world, my own true sister."

"Did you expect me to be changed, my princess?" said Marie, with a smile.

"No, God forbid! But I am glad to find you just as you were. Do you love me as well as ever, May?"

"Better, better, if it were possible," she said, looking tenderly into the excited face which was bent above her.

Then turning round, Lela looked proudly upon the assembly of faces, saying:

"My brothers, now." And in an instant they were beside her. Laying her head upon Stuart's shoulder, her hand in Clare's,

"My brothers love me as they used to?"

"Only, as May says, better," said Stuart.

"Now it is my turn." And for an instant, Mr. Audley was the centre of attraction.

"My precious Bertha, my desolate little one, God bless you! Clarence, my boy, and Stuart, my other boy, whom until now I have never seen, my kindest love to you both; and May, where has she hidden?" Then, as she came quickly forward, "Well, my fair Howard, do you love me, too?"

"Indeed, indeed, I do!" she said, fervently.

"Good! I knew it. But where are the rest? Howard we have brought with us, or rather, have left to follow us in a couple of days, for we dropped them on the way."

"The rest will be here in a few moments," replied Marie, while Lela, hiding her face upon my shoulder, whispered:

"And the sea has *our* Lillian too. Oh, Mamma!" Then, with an effort, she dashed away the tears.

"Aunt Estelle told me I should find Dora and Jennie as well as Ada, here." And then they came forward and received her greeting; but Dora's was the tenderest.

Just then some one standing at the far window said,

"Here comes Coralie and the rest."

Leanore sprang up laughing and cried gaily,

"Hide me, hide me from Birdie."

Mr. Marstone, who stood near the folding-doors, opened one which closed into a recess, saying,

"Will you let me hide you while I bid you welcome?"

With the old chilling hauteur upon her instantly, she bowed and drew back, but Clare, cried,

"Hurry, Nora, she is coming across the lawn, and as she uses wings or some other species of locomotion unknown to ordinary mortals, she will be here before you are aware."

His warning came just in time, for Lela had scarcely ensconced herself in her corner, ere Cora came bounding in at the window, singing merrily,

"I've been roaming, I've been roaming,
Where the brightest flowers are,
And I'm coming, and I'm coming,
With their blossoms in my hair."

"Oh mamma, it was so charming in the woods, and the children wanted to stay a while longer so badly, and Willie Lawrence wanted me to go and see a birds' nest in the great oak, and—and so you must please be real good and forgive my not having obeyed you, and come back immediately, but," and she looked round suddenly, "what is the matter, every body looks at me so strangely?"

"Your hair does not look as nicely as it might, sister mine," said May.

"Oh, young ladies who climb oak trees after birds' nests do not care for such small matters as appearance; they expect to look peculiar," said Stuart with a glance of horror.

"It was not in the top, and I am not a tom-boy, I am a young lady nearly sixteen an' it please you, and will lay this hand upon the ear of the first young sprig who comments upon my actions."

"Behold the mighty weapon, Stuart! prepare, for annihilation," said Clare catching her little rosy hand and holding it up.

"Mamma, I think these boys have grown horrid, I can not endure them, I certainly must have a teacher of politeness engaged for them," said she, half laughingly, half provoked.

"Oh my fair climber, we will learn of you," was the malicious rejoinder.

"Well, and you shall, and come out something after all perchance, if my endeavors are not in vain. Meanwhile I will hie me to my chamber and prepare to create a sensation, even more profound than the present," and with a graceful bow she sprang across the room, but midway she paused like a startled fawn, for a voice sang as but one voice could,

"I've been roaming, I've been roaming,
Over hills, and over plain,
And I'm coming, and I'm coming,
To my bower back again."

And with a wild cry of joy and the words uttered tenderly, "My sister Leanore!" she sank upon the floor ere any could reach her.

"My Birdie!" cried Lela in terror, putting the rest aside. "I was cruel to you, pretty little sister, speak to me, I did not mean to hurt you, pet."

We let them alone by the open window, for Birdie already showed signs of consciousness, and in a moment more her tears and kisses were rained upon her sister's face, while her joy found vent in a thousand endearing terms. Suddenly springing up, she exclaimed, "but Adèle, where is Adèle, and Gracie?"

"Here. Oh Lela, dear Lela, speak one word to me," and Gracie who had waited patiently all this time for her share, came up to them.

"Adèle is with Sandy, she will come in a moment, oh Lela she will be so glad, Adèle will be so happy," said Gracie with a very contented expression.

Just then, with an arm-full of flowers, Adèle came feeling her way to the door—then as she stood upon the sill, came the usual question,

"Shall I come, mamma?"

"Wait Adèle," I said, "speak to her Lela," I whispered.

"I am afraid it may do her harm," said the trembling girl, drawing back.

"No it will not," was my answer, then all bent forward to see the meeting.

"Come darling," said Lela in a voice trembling with emotion.

"Speak again, speak louder," said Adèle, in a quick, deep tone.

"Adèle, my darling, come to me."

Swiftly as the wind she came across the room, and was buried in her sister's arms:

"At last, at last, my queen," she said, then pushing back the curls, she passed her fingers gravely over the face of her best loved sister. And as we love to look with more than a passing glance at the features of a beloved one, we have not seen for long, so once nor twice did not suffice Adèle; but after a while with a bright smile, she laid her cheek against her sister's, saying:

"We have not got her home any too soon, mamma."

"Why, daughter?" I asked, guessing the reply.

"The proud look is on her face worse than ever, it would make ugly lines had she stayed much longer from her home, and her loves," then, with an expressive action, she said in a hushed voice, "my beautiful sister, my queen, my queen."

And then for the first time, Lela's well-sustained composure gave way, and she laid her head upon Adèle's shoulder shaking with emotion.

"Did papa's, dear Mr. Audley, come too, Lela?" she asked after a pause.

"Yes, there he sits, dearest, with Cora and Gracie upon each knee, ready to speak to you when you will."

"Will he love papa's little daughter, mamma's blind child?"

"Will she love me?" was Mr. Audley's reply, as he folded her in his arms, "love me without ever seeing me?"

"Oh, I shall see you well enough my way, sir, and Gracie and I have talked of you so much to mamma, we quite know you already."

"God bless my little name—children," said he, tenderly.

"Whom you will never love, no, not you, Uncle Audley, because you hate twins, I remember you wrote," said saucy Cora, archly.

"Witch, do you begin to torment me already?" said he, laughing.

"That is about all she ever does, sir, you must not mind her, she thinks it smart to be saucy," said Gracie, apologetically, "we are used to her."

Everybody, Birdie above all, shouted at Gracie's quaint

explanation; but when Marion saw the color in the poor child's cheeks, she comforted her with:

"Yes, Grace is right, it is better to be polite than witty."

"Now, may I go up stairs and change my dress?" asked Lela, who sat during this time at my feet, "but first, which is your mother, Ada?" springing up as she spoke.

"This, dear Lela," was the reply.

"Dear Mrs. Lawrence, I trust to your goodness to forgive my having made your house such a scene of commotion. We sent letters asking if we might come, and then I could not wait for a reply, but made my uncle, who, I am sorry to say, does just what I ask, bring me forthwith."

"I am very glad to have you;" was the answer, "Ada would have had no rest until she saw you."

Then while Lela went out with her sisters and friends clustering about her, Mr. Audley said:

"My dear Bertha, I fear you did not receive our letters, announcing our return to this country."

"I did not, indeed, the first I knew of your being in America, was your welcome presence in our midst."

"Then I fear we will inconvenience our kind hostess," he said, doubtfully.

"Not in the least," was Mrs. Lawrence's reply, "we are delighted to have you."

"Do not fear, 'mon oncle,' Mrs. Lawrence's house, her daughter assures us, is gum-elastic, and will accommodate an indefinite number," said Clare, laughingly.

"Well, then, I will ask her hospitality for a couple of days."

"A couple of weeks, you mean," said Mrs. Lawrence.

"Oh, no; you must give me credit for more consideration, I will only trouble you until Lela can see what our own house needs."

"In the city, sir?" asked Clare.

"No, my boy, did you not know the prettiest piece of property you or Lela will own by-and-by, lies here about, not quite two miles from this spot, which, by the way, is wonderfully improved since I last saw it, many a year ago?"

"I never heard of your acquaintance in this neighborhood before."

"Oh, yes, my boyhood's home is in this county, and

when Bertha here was a lightsome wil o' wisp, like Cora, she gave my estate its name."

"What is it called, Aunt Bertha?" asked Clare.

"Ingleside, my boy."

"Indeed!" cried Mrs. Lawrence. "Then we may hope to have one of the prettiest places on the river opened once more. They tell me it has been closed for many a long year."

"That it has. I dare not say how many, but it has been well taken care of, and we will hope when Milly gets to the fore, we will have something like a house. What a jewel the old woman is, Bertha. Such cakes and coffee as she gave us last night for supper! I declare I have tasted nothing like them since I went abroad; and I told her so, making her grin until I feared a dislocation of the jaws, or at least Ernest did."

"Then Milly is coming, is she, Mr. Audley?"

"Indeed she is, and all the rest, Mrs. Wilbur and all. By the way, what a noble-looking woman Mrs. Harrington has grown."

"Yes; dear Estelle is happy now, and her face shows it plainly."

"Yes, only to think of it, mamma," cried Cora, springing into the room; "Nora says all are to come, grand-mamma, Milly, and all, and are to stay the rest of the summer at Ingleside."

Until the tea-bell rang, Lela, seated between Clare and Stuart, talked over matters with them.

"How tall Howard has grown, and how handsome he is, save that he is *tres mélancolie*," I heard her say.

"Yes, he grows very grave; but he studies so hard," said Stuart. "We are very proud of him just now."

"As proud as we used to be of Arty in the old times, when it was a novelty for him to win a prize. Now, alas! we take for granted he will get whatever he tries for; so we have none of the pleasure of anticipation in his case, but give Howard a double share."

"Nonsense, Clare. Your tongue needs pruning, my boy," says Stuart.

"Are you not pleased to know how very studious Howard is? His teachers all speak so well of him, and Arty and

Uncle Harley are so proud of him," said Cora, warmly, "he is so brilliant and talented."

"I never doubted his being that," said Lela, proudly. "Of course, a Percy——" but with a blush, she added, "yes, I am very glad, dear brother."

In the evening we had songs as usual, and for the first time I have heard my child's voice in all its perfection. I cannot describe it. I have no words to tell how gloriously she sings everything. Of all the beautiful sounds, of all the beautiful things I ever heard, her voice takes precedence. It is like a glimpse of Paradise.

Carrol and Lester, who have never seen Lela before, came to me with what they quaintly called,

"Extinguished ideas of loveliness and grace, save what dwells in Miss Lela's glorious face and seraphic voice."

After we went up-stairs, the girls all came into my room, to have one more peep at Lela.

"And talk over old times a moment," said Ada.

"We will only stay a little while, dear Mrs. Percy," said Dora. "It is too bad in us to keep Nora away from you any longer."

"I am glad you came, and I will give you six old comrades one hour to do up your night's talking in, while I stow Adèle and Gracie in Marie and Cora's room, so I may keep Lela in my arms all night."

And I left them, huddled together with interwoven arms, making a pretty tableaux.

Oh, to have Leanore home once more seems almost too good a thing to believe; but to have her the same pure, generous, high-souled girl she left me, untainted by the follies and worldliness through which she has passed, is such a blessing, such a kindness from my Father's hand, that it bows me to the earth.

She lies before me now, so beautiful, so passing fair in her peaceful slumbers, and while I hold my breath, and gaze, almost deeming it a dream of fairy-land, which a moment will dispel, I raise my heart in grateful thanksgiving that God has seen fit to shrine a spirit so pure and true within this casket, which an angel might not blush to own, a Peri sigh to win and wear.

Darling, with all her pride, she has come back to me pure of heart. It does her no harm that she ever wears about

her, like a garment, this pride of birth; that she is only proud of being a Percy, not a beauty and a belle. Above her heart, she wears ever as a shield, the motto of her race, "Espérance." Oh, Percy, "*Hope*" for God's blessing, bright, Leanore Percy!

CHAPTER LI.

JULY 30.

HEAVEN help us, and send us some light to guide us out of this darkness. My undefined fear has taken to itself a form, is a sad reality. Two weeks ago I wrote down the engagement between May and Clare.

Last night I came into the boudoir which goes out of the drawing-room, thinking to spend an hour alone in its quiet retreat. All had gone out upon a riding-party by moonlight, at least I thought all had; but as I came into the room, I saw some one was there before me, sitting within the bay window. Not in the mood for conversation with a stranger or casual observer, I turned to go back.

"Do not go, auntie dear; it is only I. All the others have gone, but I begged off. Riding-parties are so amazingly stupid," said Stuart.

"Stupid? Why I heard you tell Marie when we first came here, you would rather ride through this wild scenery than——. I cannot remember what other——"

"Well, no matter than what, auntie dear. I am a changeable fellow, you see, and have altered my mind," he replied, with a laugh, which, though he tried to make it sound gay and careless, was only forced and unnatural.

"Yes, you are changed this last week and more, so sadly changed, Stuart; why is it? you seem to grow away from me every day, out of my reach."

"Nay, when you have your arm about my neck? Why, auntie! There, sit on my knee. Now I have you in *my* reach, at all events;" and he clasped his arms tightly round me.

"What is it, Arty, my brave boy; my Arty who used to be my good little school-boy, but is so high above me now, in his noble manhood? Whisper it. What is it troubles you, dear?"

But he was still. I laid my cheek upon his brow, saying in a whisper,

"I shall not see you now. I will turn my eyes away. What makes my boy so changed? What has stolen the smile from his lip, the light from his eye?"

The only answer was a groan, so deep, so pitiful, so full of woe, it terrified me. I was determined now—now I would know it all.

"Can you not trust me, Stuart? Have I ever deceived you? Have I been unfaithful to my trust? Am I not trustworthy? Tell me, my good, true boy."

"I will, I will. Only be patient with me, bear with me, my more than mother!" And for a little while he buried his face upon my shoulder, groan after groan shaking him: then he said in a low, wailing tone:

"I love her so, I love her so, my heart is broken! My little May, my darling, who has lain her soft lips upon my cheek a thousand times, drawing my very soul into them! and now she is lost, lost to me forever! Another arm than mine may shield her, another love suffice her, but oh, none can love her so tenderly as I, who for years have dreamed, waking or sleeping, of none besides—who gathered her lovingly into my heart, with blessings and prayers, these many years—even since that night, long ago, when, a wretched boy, she washed the blood of my only friend from my hands and face. With that first sad night, I took her into the depths of my heart, and have cherished her there until she is my life; 'for May' has been my watchword, when late in the night, over my books, my weary eyes would fail me, and my heart grow tired and faint within me, the thought would come, 'for May,' and then new strength would come too.

"And I thought, in my folly, not to disturb her sweet content, not to stir up the depths of her quiet heart with my burning love, until I could win a wreath of unfading laurels to bind about my darling's brow.

"But another has taken her, has taken away my flower into his own keeping, and I cannot, I dare not hate him,

though he has crushed out my life hopes; for oh, I love him! He is my brother, my frank, whole-souled Clare."

"My boy, my boy! God pity you, God help you!" It was all I could say, it was all that was needed then. But when we had grown more calm, we talked sadly but quietly, for an hour and more. The moon went down behind the mountain, and we heard the voices of the returning party. They did not come to this room, we knew they would not. We listened while the good-nights were said, and then, when all was quiet again, Clare's voice, saying:

"Just one little turn down the walk with me, sweet May."

"Not to-night, I am so weary. Please not to-night," she said, languidly.

"Are you not well, dearest?"

"Quite well, my brother."

"Nay, naughty one; not brother." Then, very tenderly, "Something dearer now."

"Yes, yes; I forget. I am so used to the other, it seems natural. Forgive me."

"Forgive? Nay, my May, that is unkind!" And almost sadly, he bade her "good-night."

I clasped my poor, tortured boy more closely while this talk fell upon our ears. He shuddered, but when they were gone we did not recur to it again, but bade each other farewell.

CHAPTER LII.

"Wilt thou not open thine heart to know,
What rainbows teach and sunsets show?—
Saying, what is excellent,
As God lives is permanent;
Hearts are dust, heart's loves remain
Heart's love meeteth thee again."

RALPH WALDO EMERSON.

ELM STREET, AUGUST 1.

I CAME yesterday from Rosedale, there was much to do ere we could close the house for a month or more, and I am at home in Elm Street alone.

I could not—it would have broken my heart to have passed this day so near to “Percie’s Cliffe,” and yet so far away, within sight almost, and yet barred from one look. Oh, it made the agony of this time hard to endure, so I came home, it is better, far better here.

In this humble, quiet house, I have room to count over the many blessings which God, with a free hand, has showered upon me; but there the shadow lay darkly and heavily about me, keeping back all bright thank-offerings; the shadow of the long ago it was, which dimmed and clouded my star of hope, casting a sorrowful gloom ’twixt me and the light.

I thank God that we are all so well, it might have been otherwise; to-day, I might have been so desolate, had not a Father’s hand warded away the blow, and left my bright-eyed Coralie still among the glad things of the earth.

Surely it is better to count our mercies than mourn our sorrows, few ills has this year brought to my heart, and what it has, doubtless our Father’s hand will overrule. My poor Stuart bears a grief which afflicts him sorely, it seems to have no remedy, there is no starbeam ahead to guide him out of the darkness; but perhaps my boy needed chastening, I could not see it, he seemed so good, so true, such an humble fervent soldier of the cross, but eyes of mortals may not scan too closely the wonderful ways of God; but can only bow in obedience to His will.

Stuart has the countersign, and seeks strength to suffer and endure all the trials of his life, from that treasury which never fails.

My Leanore is one of my great blessings this year. I have had few days to judge in, but a mother’s heart is not easily deceived, and though she wear her haughty air for the world, her heart is an open book to those she loves, as easily read as a child’s.

I take it as a good sign, that her life of luxury has not spoiled her, and that she is glad to come back to her common-placed home, with its multitude of cares.

Howard grows a tall handsome boy, but too quiet, too studious and unreal to please me. With Stuart’s love for study, he has not that free gay spirit which makes him when the time of pleasure comes, shake off the student’s weary air, and dash into life and life joys, with a laugh and smile.

I wish I could see Howard lead a careless boy's life, even if a little less book-knowledge were with it. But the change long ago from the freedom of affluence, to the bondage of poverty, came too suddenly upon his little life, pressing down and saddening his spirit, and they have never rebounded, but cause him as he grows in years and realizes all we have lost, to become more grave and quiet.

He was a careless, light-hearted little boy at his father's death; but I suppose he had more of thought in him than any of us deemed possible, for the old things seem to have taken a mighty hold upon his spirit, Walter's oft-repeated words:

"I shall expect great things of my only son, the inheritor of my name," seem to be treasured up as a holy legacy.

Thus he grows a grave, thoughtful boy, loving quiet retirement, making books his companions and friends, but yet with a gentle loving nature ever ready to put by its own pleasure to aid a friend.

Because of his studious habits and many acts of goodness, his classmates have dubbed him "the parson"——.

Adele bears her affliction so lightly, caring more for the love which surrounds her than her eyes, that I reckon her among my chiefest blessings.

Thus, dearest, are we each and all encompassed with the love of that Father, who careth for his own so tenderly.

And to-day, when the song of gladness is on your lips, my Walter, that God has given you rest, while you teach our little one to tune her voice with thankful cadence, remember in that song that we are cared for tenderly by our Father's loving hand.

"I sit and think when the sunset's gold
Is flushing river, and hill, and shore,
I shall one day stand by the river cold,
And list to the sound of the boatman's oar.

I shall watch for the gleam of the flapping sail,
I shall hear the boat as it gains the strand,
I shall pass from sight with the boatman pale,
To the better shore of the better land.

I shall know the loved who have gone before,
And joyfully sweet shall the meeting be,
When over the river, the fearful river,
The angel of Death shall carry me."

ROSE-DALE.

AUGUST 10.

I came back again to-day—to-morrow we will all go to Ingle-side, Mr. Audley is very impatient to be settled there once more.

Mrs Lawrence is somewhat displeased at our going, but we console her with the reminder of how very near we are, and also that she can soon fill our places with other friends.

Poor old Milly, this spot with its thousand tales of the past is a sad sorrow to her, and her wild expressions of grief, sadden me terribly.

Our young people are still the same rattle-brain, merry company, the early summer days found them, as Mrs. Wilbur said almost sadly to-day as we stood and watched them, from the window of the only quiet place in the whole house, my room.

"They seem to think, at least they act as though life's only end and aim, was the pleasure of the passing hour."

"Nay, my mother, verily if you are becoming a croaker, what is to become of me? I insist upon being the raven of this establishment, an' it please you," cried Ernest, as from his writing desk he heard her words.

Carrol has to all appearances assigned Ada to Harry without a struggle, and is now the devotee of La belle Lela. I am sorry for this, for I cannot but think that with all her coquetry Ada really loves him, I am certain now she cares for Harry only as a friend.

He came to me with a very rueful countenance the other day.

"Oh Mrs. Percy, they have been running me about Ada; to think of it! as if I could forget! It is not kind, they do my Louise injustice, who think another could supplant her thus, that I could love again."

"But Harry you have given room for such ideas, by your exclusive attention to Ada, whether you intended it or not."

"I did not mean it, surely she does not think I did, I only loved her for Louise's dear sake," he replied quickly.

"Nay, do not do Ada injustice, she would never give her love unasked, indeed I imagine a man must endure much caprice, and annoyance, ere he win and wear the jewel of her heart; she of course knows the footing upon which your intimacy stands, but not so the rest, they deem

you a victim bound by flowery chains to the car of the all conquering coquette, and you, between you, have been pretty successful in deceiving the lookers on, for Carrol has been driven from his allegiance, although the chains she had woven about him were two years in strengthening."

"True, true, I never thought of this before, how thoughtless I have been," then added, "that accounts for a great deal in Carrol's manner, which of late has puzzled me. What must I do to remedy this?"

"Only find out if you can, whether he really does like her, as much as I think he does."

"I will, if it takes me a month to do it, but I must desert Ada, in order to win back his confidence. I have it, I will follow that *ignis-fatuus* of a Birdie, nobody will be jealous of me then, as she does not affect the beaux, and verily I can plague her quite as much as she can me," and the gay fellow laughed at the thought, but suddenly grave again, he asked, "but how will this mend the matter?" I do not see.

"No matter, it is not requisite you should," I said laughingly, "do as you are bid, and leave the rest to me."—

Dora and Harley are the most sensible lovers I ever knew, none of the crosses and counter-crosses, the ups and downs of a courtship seem to affect them.

So quiet are they and undemonstrative, that I do not think any one suspects them for lovers, and yet they are happy.

Coralie seems possessed with a spirit of mischief this summer, and as I told Mr. Livingstone the other day, he does his best to make her more wild and elfish than ever; she is a great favorite with him, and he seems never weary of watching her capers, and in yielding to her ever-varying humor. I am glad of this, for while he is occupied with the child, his attention is engaged away from Lela, and I am better pleased not to have his chains wound round her young heart.

May and I are both quite certain that Mr. Marstone is more than pleased with Lela; but she treats him so coldly, nay almost rudely, that she has quite put to flight our hopes of his winning her.

CHAPTER LIII.

"The spirit beauty of that open brow,
The noble head—the free and gallant step,
The lofty mien whose majesty is won,
From unborn honor."——

MRS. OSGOOD'S "*Woman's Trust*."

"INGLESIDE," AUGUST 15.

AT last, after much delay, we are settled here, and with the understanding that we are to stay for two instead of one month, delaying the opening of school until October, this is in obedience to Mr. Audley's mandate.

It is very pleasant here, a low-lying place between two hills, "mountains," we call them; to the north three miles away, lies Rosedale, to which a winding path up the hill-side through the deep woods leads.

About four miles to the east, lies the little village of "Marstonville," in the centre of which stands the grand old "Grange," where, after our woeful exile from our home, the kind heart of a friend took us in, and sheltered us for a while. This, and much of the village land now belongs to the present Mr. Marstone.

Just at the end of the village, upon the greenest, highest hill the country boasts, stands "Percie's Cliffe Manor," in all its glory.

We can see the turrets rising white and grand 'midst the dark foliage which encircles it, and we remember the beauty that wilderness of trees conceals from our longing gaze.

Milly has been there, and she says, all is the same, nothing unchanged. The trees which stand in the park are well pruned, the gardens are as well kept, and now are filled with a thousand bright blossoms which bloom unlooked upon, the fountains send up their jets of sparkling spray, the myriads of statues line the walks; but over all there is a deathlike quiet, the utter stillness of desolation.

The deer, once so tame they would eat from the children's hands, spring past afrighted at the unusual sight of a human being.

The windows upon the porticos are boarded up, the

doors are bolted and barred, save one which leads into the southern tower.

All inside is still as death, but unchanged, save that in the first two years after we left, Humphrey and his old wife died, and Allison Williams fills their place, by Mr. Hartley's appointment, because, he said:

"She is no gossip, but will mind her own concerns and stay at home."

And alone, year after year, the old woman lives, using a single room beneath those Mr. Hartley chose for himself in the south tower, and the rest of the house remains in utter quietness, save when once a week Allison goes in and dusts each article the rooms contain.

"For so the master bid me when he left it in my charge, and twice a week, me two nephews and their man come from the village, and tend the gardens and the live stock, but never come inside, because the master told me, none should cross the sill but only himself, and his heir, and me; but who that is, I wist not," says Allison.

And for years, the old man has been wandering in a strange land, none know whither, and in the meantime, the faithful hand of my old servant keeps his possessions from decay.

Oh, Milly, I envy you, that your eyes have seen the sight I never more may see! never more!

In his village home, Mr. Marstone with Mr. Livingstone spend such of the time as they do not pass with us, or at Rosedale; and true to his word, given out at first, Mr. Marstone resists all the endeavors of the rest to invade his house, with a laughing jest, but a firm purpose. Whatever is the reason of his refusal to be hospitable, he considers it sufficient, and with a grace and gallantry unequalled, parries Mrs. Lawrence's oft-repeated importunities.

Mr. Livingstone is the same, and yet not the same, as fascinating and agreeable as of old when he chooses to be, but often gloomy, rapt in moody fits of stern thought.

To Lela, he is all devotion: but as yet, I think he has not won any influence over her proud heart. I cannot think but that she, with her keen perceptions, must have become aware ere this of the something noble and good which with all his attractiveness he lacks. I cannot think my true-hearted girl will bow her beautiful strength before

a man so far beneath her in his aspirations and desires, so weak in moral greatness.

Each day as I watch from my quiet corner, the doings of those about me, I wonder in vain why, it is my Lela puts so coldly away from her, the love of such a man as Mr. Marstone. I would have elected him of all the world to be her guide through life. I cannot think what it is which separates them so utterly, so formed as they seem for one another. His manly heart would have been such a safe shelter for my proud beauty, and I know he loved her once nay, now loves her with the whole strength of a heart grown far out of its boyhood towards its prime, though now their intercourse is limited to the briefest words of courtesy, though his haughty pride meets hers so loftily, nor gives an inch; yet sometimes I have, unseen, watched his eye grow dark, and his cheek glow, when he listened unnoticed to her gay talk or merry laughter, and again his brow gloomily overcast, and his hand clenched quickly as if in pain, when she was kinder than her wont to some brave gallant of the group.

And once—it may have been a foolish thought—I saw, or deemed I saw, a tear glisten in his dark eye, as he stood alone in a deep window, listening to her voice warbling the words, "Robert, toi que j' aime!"

I wonder what it is that turns her heart from finding its resting-place here? Oh, I wish I knew! I fear so, it may be this Rolf Livingstone, with his syren look and tone, which stands between my child, and what I know would be a safe-sure happiness for her. Oh, I had hoped this might be!

But am I grown a match-maker, that I thus seek a suitor for my child? Surely it is not needful my darling should love any one better than myself just now. She is a young, light-hearted thing, and I must guard my lips from awaking the torrents in her quiet child-heart.

It is enough that my gentle May-flower has let another love grow up within her, although I am not jealous of my rival's share; for I can but see it is a very quiet love she gives him, and I have not lost one whit of the old tenderness. Indeed, I oftentimes wish she gave the deep, passionate love of Clare a more fervent response. Her passion is too calm to satisfy either her lover or myself: but in this I cannot counsel her.

I have laid it down as a law, strict as those of the Medes and Persians, that never, by word or sign, will I interfere with the love-making of my children, save when that love will prove a curse, and then only by a word of warning. Oh, this love is a strange, strange thing. How it changes us! What a newness it throws over all things!

CHAPTER LIV.

"Oh, quicker far is lovers' 'ken
Than the dull glance of other men.
And, by strange sympathy, can spell
The thoughts the loved one will not tell!"

BRIDAL OF TRIERMALIN.

AUGUST 25.

LAST night Clare came to my room, and lay with his head upon my knee for a while; then, with a resumption of his wonted vehemence, he started up.

"This must end. I can bear it no longer!"

"What, Clare? What ails you?" I asked, in alarm.

"Oh, Aunt Bertha, it is all a mistake, a grievous error, and May, dear May, has nearly been sacrificed, poor little uncomplaining victim, to my unwise love,—and Arty, too! Oh, it would have been a fearful thing to have immolated my dearest friends upon the altar of my own passionate love! but it is not too late, thank God!" He poured this forth with a wild rapidity, standing, with white face and glittering eyes, in the centre of the room.

"Clare, come to me, dear. There, sit down. Put your head here. How do you know this, my poor boy?"

"Oh, in a thousand ways. By May's pale cheeks and dimmed eyes, which have distressed us all; by the shrinking (although, gentle heart, she tries not) from my caresses, afraid—good little darling—to distress me, yet loathing

them the while. Oh, I have felt it all, and tried not to believe it; but I must, I must!"

"But even if this is so, Clare, with Marion, what makes you speak so of Stuart? Has he ever told you that he craved the happiness we deemed yours?"

"No, never. No, not in words. He is too unselfish, too good for that; but I saw the shadow of it the first night we told him, and I have felt it a thousand times since. He never congratulates me. He is too truthful. Sometimes, a look of pain will come over his face when he meets my eye; and then, with a glance of repentance, he will clasp his arm round me, as though seeking pardon for some thought which did me injustice. 'Clare, brother Clare,' he will say, 'we are brothers, true and faithful. Nothing can make us forget that; nothing must ever part us, brother Clare!'

And at night, when he thinks me sleeping, he will rise and pace the floor for half the night, or else lie by my side racked with emotions, which force fierce groans from him. Oh, it is an awful thing to see Stuart in agony, his heart breaking, and not dare to comfort him, or by word or sign give him a token of my sympathy! It is my right, or it would be, were I not the cause, the wretched cause of his suffering!"

It was too true! What could I say? Not one word,—only to pity and sorrow with him, so crushed and stricken, his fair hair and dreamy eyes bowed upon my knee. A little while ago, for Stuart's sake, I had felt half angered at this boy's happiness; but now——. It broke my heart to think that, either way, was woe for one of them.

To-day, as Stuart stood with folded arms at the library window, Clare came up to him, and putting his arm through his, said:

"Arty, do you think it an evidence of a fickle mind, if, after we have for a long while thought a thing, a change of association, or a new brightness, turns away our hearts from the old, and makes us worship the new?"

"I hardly comprehend your meaning, Clare; but I can never think it right to change without a very good and sufficient reason. I think we may have formed false ideas from false teachings, upon which when the true light falls, the old wrong becomes so evident it were wicked to hold to it, no matter how beloved."

"But in our affections, you think it would not be possible to change?"

"It might be for some, but not for me. I could not change. Once loving, I must always love. Do you remember Mrs. Browning's poem of 'Once Loved'? That is just the way I feel. My heart knows no past in its affections."

"Remember those words, 'Arty!' You are always to love me as well as now. You will never change to me, no matter what I may do." And he wrung his hand.

"Never, Clare. I could never change to you, above all others."

Then they parted, and Clare came to where we were seated with our sewing,—in a summer-house, covered with woodbine and sweet-briar, at the south end of the house.

After talking gaily to some of the party, and pelting Cora and Ada with roses, he turned suddenly to May.

"I want you so badly to take a walk with me, May. Will you?"

"Yes," she said, rising quietly and putting her work away. "I will get my hat, for I am so tired of sewing." It was a new thing for Marion to complain, and so Ada seemed to think, for turning round with her handful of flowers suspended, 'ere she hurled them saucily at some unsuspecting victim:

"Why, May-blossom, then you are mortal, after all. Or is it because earth-dust has settled on your wings for the nonce, that you are wearied?"

"Naughty Ada, to say such things! If you only knew half how cross and irritable I feel half my time, you would not shame me by saying such kind things to me," said May, her eyes full of tears as she went out.

"I verily and truly believe May has the blues, for once in her whole life," says Cora, while Clare cast an expressive glance at me.

"Can angels have such things, Miss Birdie?" asked Mr. Livingstone.

"Ask Ada and Jennie if they remember the time we went with dear old Mr. Ostin to the 'Academy,'" was the answer.

"Miss Ada, Mrs. Lea, you hear my commission?"

Both the girls began to laugh, and Ada asked demurely:

"Were you at the exhibition last year?"

"I was in Europe," he replied, smilingly.

"Oh, what you missed!" she replied, throwing up her hands and eyes in mock ecstasy. "Abel carried to Heaven by a guardian angel, who wore a blue—breastpin."

"Then the matter is settled, and I shall deem blue henceforth angelic."

"Only, or especially, when worn as a breastpin; we vouch for it in no other form," was the gay reply, "not even in ladies' eyes."

By this time, May had returned, and stood ready for her walk.

"We are discussing the hues the angels wear, Miss May," said Mr. Livingstone.

"And of course, Ada and Birdie have told you of their unfortunate artist, and his ideas of an angel's dress," she said smiling.

"Do you agree with him, Miss May, or what is your idea?"

"Arrayed in robes of light, the brightness of my Father's glory, so beautiful and fair, my mortal eyes cannot endure the sight, for you know the promise is, 'we shall be like him,'" she said very gravely; then, as they started, she added more gaily: "but if I may say so, I imagine, Mr. Livingstone, the plumage of birds is nearer your ken, judging from the wreath you have placed upon the brow of our Birdie."

"I acknowledge the correctness of your conclusion, ladye fair, and I like Birdie's plumes so well, I mean to challenge her to soar up the mountain with me, until the sun sets."

"Where are your wings, sir?" said Cora, going behind him with a quizzical expression, "for mine will not suffice to get us both up yonder."

"I will spread them after we start," was the laughing rejoinder.

When they had started, Clare called back as he threw a parting shower of roses over Cora.

"We are going to walk towards the setting sun, so we may be a long time gone should we conclude to go all the way."

"What a happy fellow your nephew is, Mr. Audley," said Mr. Livingstone, as he stood waiting for Birdie and Ada to walk with him; "but then he has the faculty of

making all these fair ladies love and trust him, no wonder he is so light of heart, so happy."

Outwardly, outwardly, I thought, the poor heart is hidden, every heart knoweth its own bitterness; "many a smile wreathed lip, hides a crushed and wearied heart, many a peal of laughter is sent forth more loud and often to conceal the groan which spite of all will come sometimes to the lip. Clare's forced gaiety did not deceive me; why he chose to assume a manner almost unusual to him, I could not fathom. For in his dreamy nature, there is more of the poet's quietness than the merry moods of ordinary folks.

What this walk was to accomplish I could not surmise; but something I felt confident, for as he said, "it was best to end it all, at once."

Oh it was an adverse fate which decreed these two loving comrades to circle with their loves—hide in their hearts my little Marion.

Why, when all her friends and sisters were more beautiful, more brilliant, did this little violet, with her grave, quiet ways, win both their hearts away!

I waited down a long while after my usual hour, watching for them; but they came not, although the rest came in one after the other.

But after I had gone up, I heard Clare's quick step upon the stairs, and without the usual courteous request of an admittance, he dashed open the door, and crossing the floor threw himself at my feet, quivering in every limb.

"Do not speak to me yet, I cannot bear it," he said, in Italian, which he always uses when he is under strong excitement.

And I did not, but went softly and fastened the door, lest any other heart should come with its burden. I had no comfort for any one to-night, but this poor stricken boy. Then I sat down beside him on the floor, and laid his head upon my knee, trying what a loving touch would do. After a time, he grew quiet, only an occasional moan telling the agony was still there. Then suddenly rising, he said:

"Please do not sit upon the floor for me, dear auntie, let me put you in this window seat; now please turn your face so the moonlight will shine upon it, it is my all now, I have only you, Aunt Bertha, no one else loves me! be true to me! please! please!"

"My boy, my poor Clare!" I moaned.

He stooped down, pressing a kiss upon my brow, then drawing back in the shade of the curtain, he began:

"We walked almost in silence to the woods, May and I, and I led her to the glade so silent and so beautiful, where we have gone so often, and sat upon the seat which 'Arty' and I had made for her, because she loved the spot so well. Oh, I shall never go there again after to-night, never, never!—then we sat down upon the mossy stone, with the soft shade about us, and May never seemed so dear, so fair.

"It makes me glad to be sitting here with you alone, dear May," I said.

"Does it, Clare, I am glad, very glad you are so happy."

"But, are not you, are you not pleased and happy to be here?"

"I like it very much, it is a sweet spot, Clare."

"Better than anything else? Would you rather sit here with me thus, than do anything else in the whole world, as I would?"

"She turned very pale, but with her clear, truthful eyes raised to mine, she said in a low voice:

"No, I think I do not like it quite that much, Clare, not better than any other thing, but I like it very much indeed."

"But not the best, Oh May, I thought so, will you answer me something?"

"If I can, Clare, if I can, I will."

"Then with my heart almost breaking, I leaned over and whispered:

"Do you love me best of all? tell me, May, do you?"

"For a moment, she was still as death, then starting up in a fierce way, unlike her gentle self:

"Have I ever since I promised to be yours, given you reason for this doubt," she said in such a cold, bitter tone, you would never have dreamed it was May who spoke.

"Oh, May! May! have patience with me, be your good self. I have come out here to-night, to release you from our unfortunate engagement. It was a mistake, dear sister, I know now we cannot love each other first, at least I think we cannot."

"What makes you talk so, Clare? how long have you thought thus?" she said, grasping my arm.

"Since Lela came; but does it hurt you to have me change so?" I asked, my heart trembling and hoping for one instant, I might have been mistaken; but even while I hoped, she sprang up with a glad cry:

"You love Lela then, oh, Clare, I am so glad," then in that way which is so natural to her, she clasped her hands and lowering her head, said softly, "I thank thee, oh my kind Father, forgive me that I have doubted thee."

"Oh, Aunt Bertha, it broke my heart to hear her offer thanksgiving that I did not love her! Oh, little May! you have grown so cruel with all your gentleness, walking rough-shod over the heart which was lying bleeding in your pathway; but, darling, you did not know it.

"I had schooled myself to hear this and more; but I could not say yes when she asked me did I love Lela, although I had tried to make her think so.

"But, May, who has stolen your heart from me? I had it once you told me?"

"No, no, I never told you so, Clare—you took me by surprise—I did not understand, I had thought so little of such things. I knew I loved you dearly; but I did not know that what I had promised was false until afterwards, and then—it was too late. Oh, I have suffered so since, but you were so happy, and no one else need suffer but myself, I thought."

"But, May, the one you love best, he loves you in return above all else?"

"She leaned her cheek, with a crimson glow upon it, on my arm, and said softly:

"With a brother's love, dear Clare, no more," and then with a pleading voice, "do not let us speak of this, it is no matter."

"Only one little word more, and I will never distress my sister again, never, never, whisper his name, dear sister trust me, you owe me this much."

"For a moment she stood white and still in the pale moonlight, then with a mighty effort she murmured so faintly, it seemed like a sighing breeze.

"Stuart," and fell upon my breast insensible. I held her there so closely, remembering it was the last time, never

trying to restore her, wishing almost she might lie thus forever, her sweet face pressed thus against my heart, mine for this once. But all too soon, without my aid, she opened her eyes. When she had gained a little strength, I sat her upon the seat and pressing a kiss upon her hand, said:

"Wait here for me, my sister, I will not be long away," and I left her.

"Then I came swiftly to the house. Stuart stood alone upon the east piazza.

"Do you think the moon the fairest face you ever saw?" "Arty," that you stand so long gazing up into her eyes?" I asked.

"No; but she is mine as much as another's," he replied with a laugh, "that makes a difference you know."

"Arty, come let us take a stroll and look for May, she is alone in the glen we named 'Arthur's bower,' for the sake of the old 'round table' talk, come let us go, and weave a tale or song for May's delight, such as in the olden time Arthur sang to his Lucy. Ours shall be the 'true lover of Ingleside,' instead of the 'Bridal of Triermaine!'"

"Nonsense, my boy, why should I go, sing your own songs, chaunt your own lays for the ear of your lady-love; what have I to do with it? You are but a sorry lover, if you need another's aid to charm her heart, do not weary of the bliss of loving already, my boy, that were a shame indeed," he said in a light tone of irony.

"But just suppose I was, you would always love me, one cannot help their feelings, and I am but mortal, if I change or weary I cannot help it you know; but I must have your love above all."

"Clare, I wish you would not talk so, what gets into you lately to doubt me? I am not one to make professions; but where I love, I love until death. I love you, my brother, just as you are, faults and all, though those are few enough."

"I know you do, Stuart, but just now I like to have you tell me so; but come go with me;" but he drew back coldly from my grasp.

"I would rather not, Clare, I cannot see the use."

"Go without then, just this once let me lead you, come for my sake this once."

"Well, well, as you will, Clare," but the deep tones of his voice told me how much the effort cost him.

"May sat just where I had left her, her face buried in her hands. I went quickly forward alone.

"May, I have come back," I said, softly.

"Then we will go into the house, I am so tired," she said, in her sweet, calm way.

"But I have brought rest for you, my sister, see what a firm, true, resting place I have here, and my sister has won it for herself."

"She sprang up, seeing Stuart for the first time; he never moved, but stood, as if spell-bound, gazing upon her, then I said:

"She is yours, Stuart, not mine. That was an error. Only yours." And I turned to go. I saw him clasp his arms about her as she sprung to him, and bending his bright face over her, say:

"Is it true? Oh, Marion, my darling, my darling!"

"Then I came to you with my broken heart, Aunt Bertha." He was silent a moment; then, putting my hands over his neck and holding them there, he said quietly:

"She will be happy now, and more safe with him than with me. I knew from the first I was not worthy. It is right: it is better thus. I will try to be happy in their happiness. Marion was too pure for so weak and untrustworthy a fellow as I. Stuart is brave. He has never fallen as I have, never been so covered with guilt. It is right, it is good, he should be blessed, even with my blessing. It is as it should be,—a part of my punishment for that awful sin——"

Just then, a knock at the door and Stuart's voice came at the same time. Clare started, his face the whitest thing.

"Oh, I cannot see them!" he whispered. "I cannot, Aunt Bertha!"

"Nor shall you, my boy," I said. "In one moment, Stuart, I will let you in." Then I opened another door, which led through the children's room to the stairs: "Go, now. I will come to your room to say good-night, but go to bed at once. It will seem like the old times to sit upon your bed and talk with you, as if I had my little boy back once more, with all his old love for me."

Then Stuart came, leading May to me. Oh, for all the sorrow I had just seen, I could not but be glad—so glad—for them.

"She is mine, my very own!" he said, in that low, hushed tone that we ever use, when a feeling sweet and solemn oppresses us.

"I am glad, dear children, it is thus. Clare has told me. Is my May content? Is she happy?"

"Oh, so happy! Oh, mamma, God is very good to me. Is it right-I, who have been so weak and repining, should be thus blessed? I have been so wicked!"

Stuart drew her into his arms, and looking down, said softly:

"My May is not wicked. She is one of God's angels, left to comfort our hearts!"

When I had stayed with them a little while, I stole off to where my poor Clare lay, alone and suffering. But though I stayed until I heard Stuart leave my room, with my head laid beside him, he only murmured:

"My comforter, my only love now!"

I have thought this all over, and I wrote it down with many sad misgivings; but now I think I can see a glimmering hope shining out from all this darkness.——Clare's love is a wild, deep passion, but I think not like Stuart's, rooted deeply in his very soul. With the latter, I think, did he live for years unloved, even never seeing the one he loved, at last, as deep and true, would that love be found shrined within his heart,—a bright, unwavering flame, unquenchable, although unfed, ceasing only with the heart's last pulsation.

But Clare would be chilled by indifference; he would pine and droop did not love like to his own keep the flame alive. May's love, so quiet, would never have sufficed him. He suffers now the more that his love is so vehement; but had he found too late the heart he prized was not all his own, I dread to imagine what his life would have been.

God directs all our ways. He knows the best way for us; and this is the best,—hope of a happy life for my gentle daughter. Now, her love is surely grounded, and I cry, "Happy Marion Percy!"

CHAPTER LV.

SEPTEMBER 1.

"MAMMA," said Lela to-night, kneeling beside me, "mamma do you think I am to be trusted with a secret which no one else knows?"

"Yes, pet," I replied, smiling, "I think I would trust you, but why?"

"Because——" and her voice trembled, "because I have a secret which I would rather tell no one in the world, no not even mamma," and she stroked my face tenderly, "not even mamma, who knows every other thought of my heart."

"But cannot my daughter trust me with this secret also, is it a very important one which requires such care?"

"The greatest, the most important of my life, mamma," she said in a low hushed tone, "that is why I cannot tell it, it is so near my heart."

"Oh, Lela, my child, is it right you should not tell me? My pet knows I am not a harsh judge, that even did my judgment, my larger experience of life, lead me to say it was wrong, yet I would do it in kindness."

"But it is something which concerns another, not myself alone. And it is not wrong, nor will anything ever come of it. It will not change me ever, mamma, to you or to myself, only I cannot tell it, at least not now, perhaps bye-and-bye I can, but please let me keep it now, do not ask me to tell it to you, please do not, trust me, sweet mother, this once."

"I will, Leanore, I think I may, my good child," and I sealed the promise with a kiss of faith and love.

Who may I trust if not my child? In all the years in which she has gladdened my heart, she has been all mine in thought and word.

But I fear so sadly, Mr. Livingstone has somewhat to do with this, and yet she said "it was nothing wrong," and he is very wrong I fear, but she may not.

I do not know—— I will try to trust, and watch and pray, that no harm come upon my dark-eyed beauty.

Oh! after this grievous restlessness about Lela, how it has quieted me to sit beside Marion looking into her gentle

face, and listening to her tender words of hope and comfort. In heart and life is she a child of God, and her sweet face bears the impress of that peace which passeth understanding.

Oh, I am glad one of my own boys instead of a stranger has won my treasure, what should I do without her gentle helping hand.

"Have you told your mother of your offer, ma belle?" asked Mr. Audley of Lela to-day.

"Which one, sir?" was her careless reply, as she turned a saucy smile upon him.

"The last of course, you minx, *le grand offre de la saison*, was not that the last?"

Leanore's face turned crimson, and I caught a quick, half-frightened glance thrown upon Mr. Marstone, who was holding a skein of silk for May, his eye met hers, and a proud cold smile rested upon his face for an instant; but was gone so quickly, that I know no one but myself noted it. What does it mean, I wonder? what have her offers to do with him, I wish I knew?

"Of course," said Lela, recovering herself immediately and laughing gaily, "I am not going to own to any 'last' offer, at least not for many a day. If I conclude to tie a knot matrimonial sometime in the dim distance, then you may ask for the *dernier offre*."

"But have you told of this one, to which I was an awed but insignificant witness, you plague?" asked Mr. Audley.

"Non, *mon ami*, I will grant you the privilege, for which I doubt not you are in torment," and she carried her work to a window.

"Merci, ma belle, I have but one torment, 'an' she is one, she is one, but who she is I may not tell, never tell," then turning to me he went on, "my dear Bertha, you must know had this damsel been less difficult to please, you might to-day style yourself la mère de Madam la Baronne, for before we left London, we were pursued post-haste by the Baron S—, minister extraordinary from Russia to the court of Versailles, who in the most approved manner in my presence, sued most humbly 'for this fair hand,' &c."

"Of course you said yes," cried Mrs. Lawrence, "my dear girl of course you never thought of refusing him?"

"Of course I said no, dear madam," answered Lela, with flashing eyes, "yes, forsooth, as if I would deign, no,

no, I am too proud of being an American girl, too fond of liberty, to put myself into the hands of any minion of the Czar, beside," and she drew herself up with an air of dignity, mock, but so natural, "queens do not mate with subjects, if I cannot find an American sovereign to rule me, I must be content to remain a maiden queen to my life's end; and to tell the truth, I believe I would quite as leave, —but" she added, rising, "what nonsense, do let us do something better than listening to a record of my love-adventures, what shall we do, take a walk to the cliffs?"

And they went, all but Mr. Marstone, who pleaded business at home.

I wish I knew the meaning of that glance of half-confusion half defiance she threw upon him, and which, though he answered it haughtily, left his cheek strangely pale, and unnerved him so; for afterward May said:

"Mamma, do you know when we were all talking, and Mr. Marstone was holding my silk, suddenly without any apparent cause he turned so white, and I felt his hand tremble like a leaf as I touched it in untangling the skein. I fear he is not well. I saw he tried to hide this attack, whatever it was, for he began some jesting remark to Ada the next moment; but afterwards before we started he came up to me and said:

"I think, Miss May, you noticed a sudden spasm which attacked me a while ago: it is caused by a disease of the heart.' And he smiled sadly. 'Please if I am ever unnerved again, do not notice it. I shall depend upon you indeed, to cover over my spells with some quiet manoeuvre.'

"Indeed I will, sir," I answered. 'Depend upon me. Oh sir, I am so grieved to hear that you have anything the matter with your heart! Papa died with a heart-disease, you know. It is very terrible to us always.'

He smiled a strange, grave smile, saying in a musing kind of way:

"Mine is not that kind, Miss May,—not mortal in its effects, though it is in its agony. Oh, little girl,' he added passionately, 'may you never know what I endure! And yet I stay like a martyr tied to a stake, while a ruthless hand pierces my tortured heart!'

"Was it not strange in him mamma? Could he mean in another sense than the one he meant to reach my ear—

that some one tortured him? and if he did, oh mamma, can it be Lela, who thus with her cold proud rejection of his most trivial kindness, makes the heart that loves her wretched? Oh it is a fearful thing to wound the loving heart of a true friend!"

I fear me much May's surmise is correct. What can it mean?

CHAPTER LVI.

SEPTEMBER 20.

WITH many songs, dancing, and divers excursions, the summer-tide is ebbing out, going all too soon for the happy party assembled in this old country-house.

The time passes gaily between Rosedale and here. It is a difficult matter to tell to which place the young people belong, so equally do they divide their time between the two.

But among all the pleasures and happinesses of the time, Ada and Carrol are still unfriendly, although Harry Lester and I have done all we dare do towards cementing the shattered vase of their friendship or love, whichever it was. How true it is that hearts once parted are hard to come together again.

Poor Mrs. Lawrence is horrified that Ada should be unmarried at the great age of twenty, and rates her soundly.

"When you have every advantage, and suitors without number, to remain an old maid, precisely as though you never had a chance."

"But I do not want some great, cross man saying, You shall and you shall not," cries Ada, laughingly.

"Nonsense! I should think you might find some one among the many you know. There is Mr. Marstone. The girl will be happy who catches him."

"Which I never shall. Oh how I hate that idea of husband-seeking! As if that was all one had to live for. As if a girl's life, instead of being a beautiful, pure, self-sus-

tained existence, was only made up of the desire of entrapping a husband and making a good match!" said she, petulantly.

"But then all girls do so Ada, and you must marry some one."

"But to think of laying a snare to catch such a man as Mr. Marstone. I do not see how even you, mamma, can dream of such a thing. I think one glance from his cold, proud eye, would frighten all schemes away."

"Well, there are many others beside him, although he and Rolf Livingstone are the two most eligible. But you could never get Rolf I know. He will only marry a great beauty."

"Well," said Ada with a comical air of resignation, "since you are so weary of me, please—since I must get me a husband—ask old Mr. Wayne if he will have me. I am *une tres excellente bonne*, although not experienced in the gout."

This little dispute took place in my room; but after it was over Ada came to me.

"Oh, if I might only be happy my own way!" she said, wearily laying her head upon my shoulder.

What that way was, she did not say; but her sad tones struck painfully upon my ear. With all her wealth and fashionable pleasures, that my poor pupil had an aching heart, in her bosom, I could but see.

May's happiness now is a very different thing from the seeming of the old time when Clare had a part in it, that faint glow like the delicate coloring in the leaves which a tea-rose folds away in its heart, is on her cheeks again, and the clear eyes have only the old clear peaceful look in their hazel depths, not a sad shade of a something hard to endure, yet hidden, lying in them.

Bless my sweet child, such a glad life lies before her, with Stuart's strength to shield and comfort her always.

But Lela, my Lela, why do you thus cruelly steel your heart against the glorious beauty of a manly soul. Oh, child! child! he is so strangely like your father, I should think you would bow before him involuntarily, such a strange gravity, and yet with all, such an entrancing halo of manly perfection seems to hang about him, even from my obscure corner, to which none ever penetrate unbidden;

even here, Mr. Marstone's voice and eyes send a thrill of admiration and reverence.

Oh my daughter, what has blinded your eyes? what cast a veil betwixt you and the knowledge of this good man's perfections? And yet, sometimes he seems to entrance her. If for one instant she feels his power, her cheeks will glow as though she was proud of his influence over her, and the light in her dark eyes will grow soft and tender; but only for a second, for with a pang it would seem, some thought crosses her, and she will spring away from the sphere of his influence.

Whatever it is which parts them, she means it to be effectual, and he never strives to make it otherwise; indeed I imagine none but myself, my foolish dreaming self, give this matter a thought, yet I cannot help it. I wish I knew what Lela's secret is.

My little Birdie, (little we all call her, although this summer she has grown quickly and suddenly into a woman,) seems more wild and variable than ever, and yet often she is strangely grave and quiet, for only a minute at a time, yet it is a new thing to watch in our little bird, this consciousness of a dawning womanhood, growing upon her.

Yesterday it seemed as though "the tears of the whole summer-tide" were being rained out, in revenge for the beautiful season of smiles which has clustered about us so uninterruptedly for such a long time.

Early in the morning, in the midst of a pelting shower, the party from "Rosedale" drove over, and in a short time were followed by Mr. Marstone, and his guest, Mr. Livingstone.

"Who were rained from the opposite direction," they declared.

Stuart and Howard, a pair of book-worms that they are, were shut up in some out of the way place, studying the amount of knowledge which, rain or shine, company or not, must be learned every day of their two lives.

The children, who made quite a party of themselves, were ensconced in the library, with the injunction that as an especial favor to the owner:

"Willie Lawrence would only ruin half the furniture to-day."

The rest assembled in the drawing-room were vastly busy

doing for the most—just nothing. Mrs. Lawrence between yawning and complaining, spent, I judge, a very uncomfortable day.

The most of the young folks, however, declared the variety was rather to be voted a luxury.

"We shall love the merry sunshine so much the more, from contrast with the dark clouds of to-day," said Dora.

"But what shall we do with ourselves all day?" queried Ada.

"Marion and I intend to do up a mountain of sewing, which we have been putting off too long already," said Estelle.

"And which we are grateful to this rainy day for reminding us of," added Marion.

"I will join the sewing party, for I have a world to do," said Jennie, "and of course Cora and Clare have some pictures to touch up, as usual; Birdie always used to put off everything until a nice long rainy day should come."

"And then let some one else finish it for her," said Clare, quizzically, "she will be sure to join Hal and Carrol in their employment, ere long."

"Which is —?"

"Doing nothing, at which they are perfectly *au fait*, having done it all their lives, Oh never shake your heads at me, there is naught in them."

"Well, I confess," cried Mr. Audley, coming in for a moment, "I thought them amazingly busy this whole summer."

"At what mon oncle?"

"Flirting and lady-killing," was the laughing response, as he left the room.

"Then while you ladies work, suppose you get Marstone to read for you, he has an especial gift that way, and reads almost as well as he talks, and you will bear me witness that is praise enough," said Mr. Livingstone, with a look of affection with which he ever regards his friend, and which always strikes me as the most genuine thing about him.

"No more, an' thou lovest me," cried Mr. Marstone.

"But why not read yourself, Mr. Livingstone, no one can talk as well as you."

"Do you think so Miss Cora, thank you," he replied with a gratified look, "but you have listened too often to

me, and too little to him, if you say so; but Paul, why do you not offer your services, man?"

"Because you have offered them for me, but I am quite willing to do whatever the company wills, to read or remain quiet."

His services were accepted with acclamation, by all but foolish Birdie, who pouted because, 'no one ever did what she said,' and came in her pretty pettishness and hid herself in the deep curtained window seat, near which I sat.

With a smile at her wilfulness, Mr. Livingstone followed her into her retreat.

"Are you vexed with me, Birdie?" he asked.

"Yes, just go back, I do not want you here at all."

"Then I mean to take my seat just here upon this seat beside you, nay pretty one, you are too petite to fill the great window all yourself, even if you are very cross, so I shall sit here and win you to good humor."

"But I will not speak to you once."

He leaned over and whispered something I did not hear, and, with a shy laugh, she pulled down the curtains over her part of the window, and sat completely hidden. Foolish child, how he bears her pettishness.

"Now we are going to be sensible for once in our lives," said Ada with a demure settling of herself to the embroidering an infant's robe, and to listening.

"But what shall our reading consist of, prose or poetry?" asked Mr. Marstone.

"I hate poetry," said Birdie from her hiding place, while her companion laughed.

"And I hate prose, you little cross girl."

"Well then we ought to have a little of both," said Clare.

"The best thing I know of," said Dora, "is May's extract book, which she calls by a variety of terms, 'a casket wherein is shrined the pearls she has gathered from oceans of thought,' and 'the vase where is contained the perfume of a thousand flowers;' and again, 'orient pearls, at random strung.'"

"And still one other Dora, you remember, 'diamond bits which shone into my heart from beneath a world of rubbish,'" said Jennie.

"Why Miss May, if your book yields half the beauties

the titles promise, we will indeed have struck a mine to-day."

"I think you might find something much better from your own reading, Mr. Marstone, my book is filled with the merest snatches of beautiful thoughts from a variety of books, and mostly the connections give the sentiments half their beauty; Dora and Jennie like them because we read the works together."

"But Miss May, we might gather some honey as well," said Harry Lester.

"You may try, if you desire it," and she brought the book and gave it to Mr. Marston.

"Shall I find anything original?" he asked with a smile.

"I think not unless you write it, sir," and she left him turning over the leaves.

"Here is something of Aldrich," he said after a pause, "which is pretty."

"The name is enough, that assures us," said Jennie.

"Of what, Mrs. Lea?" asked he smiling at her.

"Of its beauty, Aldrich never misses his aim; he always charms, not alone the fancy, but what is of more moment, the heart."

"I am glad to agree with you, what could be prettier than this: and he read:—

"We knew it would rain for all the morn,
A Spirit on slender ropes of mist
Was lowering his golden buckets down
Into the vapory amethyst.

"Sure enough, what could be prettier," said Harry Lester, when he was through.

"Dipping the jewels out of the sea,
To sprinkle them over the earth in showers—

"And then this which he terms 'Conceits,' is brimful of happy thoughts."

"I have placed a golden
Ring upon the hand
Of the sweetest, little
Ladye in the land.

When the royal roses
Scent the summer air
I shall gather white ones
For my Ladye's hair.

Hasten, happy roses,
Come to me by May,
In your folded petals
Lies my wedding day."

"That is the sweeter of the two, to my mind," said Mr. Livingstone, but Harry Lester, looking *backward*, was very sad—the brow of the reader was overcast and he gave no word of praise, but Dora looked with a quiet smile into my eyes, and thought of the one whom twilight should bring to us, who had said: "we will be married, my Dora, some May day."

"Is that all?" said Carrol after a pause, during which Mr. Marstone sat buried in thought.

"No, no, certainly not; I believe I had lost myself in a maze."

"Let us unravel it for you, Mr. Marstone;" said Birdie, peeping her head out of one edge of the curtain, "Let us unravel your thoughts."

"I think you could not, they are beyond even your ken, though you are a fairy or an elf," he said smiling.

"A witch without the broom," said Mr. Audley, coming in.

"Wicked uncle!" was the pouting reply, as she hid herself once more, with Mr. Livingstone peeping in laughingly at her.

"But here is another by your pet author, Mrs. Lea: that touching monody for 'little Charlie.' and Mr. Marstone read it in a deeply feeling voice to the lines——

"We miss thee darling when the Spring
Has touched the world in flowers."

When looking up quickly at the sob which Cora gave, and seeing the pale, mournful look upon many faces about him, he said with a touching gracefulness:

"Pardon my thoughtlessness. I forgot, dear Mrs. Percy.

I forgot the meaning of these lines to you, to all the rest. It is strange," he added in an under tone, "very strange, that our own sorrows make us selfish. I used to care for other hearts," and he was still.

"Please go on with it, it is very beautiful, and we love to talk of our lost little ones, even as the poet speaks of his," I said, but he shook his head.

"You know mamma has the comfort of a good hope for all those who are beyond the river," said Marion, gently, going up to him, "so have some of the rest of us, we trust, only it is not quite so firm as hers. That is why we can bear to listen to such words as these; Dora and I read it just after our Lilly and Agnes went home and it is very dear to us now; I will read it if you please?" and she did, in that sweet, gentle way which carries peace with it always.

Lela had come and laid her head upon my shoulder, it was the only sign of the deep sorrow which lay in her heart, and which had come to her so pitifully across the dark waters. Mr. Marstone looked at her for an instant with a troubled sorrowing look, and then, with a sad smile said:

"Your hope is a very restful thing, to even those weary hearts which do not know its fullness, as you do, Miss May."

"Do not you, sir?" she asked quietly, laying her little hand upon his arm.

"I fear not, Miss May, I fear not, I have a very hopeless heart just now, my sunlight has faded into darkness."

"But the hope you need shines brighter and surer in the darkest night sir, like a star afar off; but its light reaching down. I wish you knew that hope, sir; I wish you had it shining over your life."

"I wish I had, God knows I do!" he said in a low fervent voice.

Lela sat gazing at him breathlessly, but as he turned and looked towards her, an expression of the most utter scorn swept over her proud face, and with a weary sigh he took up the book once more.

"Here are many words from Margaret Fuller, very beautiful," and he read some of them, "do you admire her Miss May?"

"Only negatively,—as a woman not very much, as a writer, not always, and as a reformer not at all."

"I thought your gentle nature would hardly attune to her rougher one."

"She was very earnest, I am sure," said Lela. He started quickly, it was so rare a thing for her to open a conversation with him, or indeed address him at all if she could avoid it.

"But very faithless, Miss Léanore," he said gently.

"Why do you draw such a conclusion?" she asked quickly.

"From herself chiefly, her own words—'Faith is not natural to me,' and again, 'Circumstances have an appalling effect—and those links not riveted by interest may be lightly broken by a chance touch, I speak this not in misanthropy, for I believe

'Die Zeit ist schlecht, doch giebt's noch grosse Herzen.'

And once more she writes to a dear friend, 'You ought not to deem me ungenerous, if I try sometimes the ground I tread upon, to see if possibly it may return the echoes of hollowness.' Is there not a want of faith in that, Miss Leonore?"

"I think you do her injustice in selecting passages only which will tell what even the best may sometimes feel."

"Do I? Perhaps I do. I should be glad to change my opinions, for it is better to think good of all if we can," he said, "but she was too self-sustained, too independent, few men would have taken her into their hearts."

"But why?" asked Ada, "she was interesting and fascinating in conversation."

"This selection of Miss May's from 'The Head of the Family,' by that woman of all women, Dinna Mulloch, answers you better than I could, Miss Ada," and he read: "It is a lesson worth learning by those who seek to allure by their accomplishments or dazzle by their genius—though men admire, they never love a woman for these, but for what is essentially distinct from them—her woman's nature, her woman's heart. That is why we often see a man of high genius pass by the De Staels and Corinnes, and take to his bosom, some wayside flower, who has naught to make her worthy of him, except that she is a true woman."

"Then you deem," said Lela half scornfully, "the only thing worth living for, in a woman, is to win the graciously accorded favor of some Lord of creation. Commend me to the De Staels and Margaret Fullers of life, if that be so."

"Not so, you cannot so misjudge me,—but surely it is a good test," he added with a smile, "pardon my reminding you, that a higher Power than ours has decided that *we* shall protect and shield by our stronger, rougher nature, your frailer and more delicate, less enduring ones. We give to you a strong arm, and a firm hold, while your gentle hand soothes and lightens the painful struggles that encompass our pathway. The angel in our walks."

"Do you recall that telling sentence of some woman beloved?" said Carrol,—"'he raised me to the pedestal of his own high thoughts, and wings came, but I did not fly away, but stood with down-cast eyes, worthy of his love for he had made me so.' Do not these words tell a life-history, with a blessed ending?"

"And yet few find the end so blessed, from their own or another's will; the joy is changed to mourning, the bright hopes darkened," and Mr. Marstone's face was overshadowed, but in a moment, he added, "perhaps it is better thus, it would be strange were all alike successful in this life. The wanting of a perfect happiness here, points to your star above, Miss May, does it not?" he said smiling at her.

"Making it shine more pure and bright by contrast," she replied.

A moment before Stuart had come in and was listening, standing by Marion.

"Do you remember these words," he said:

"Who lives forlorn
On God's own word must rest,
His faith is bright
With heavenly light,
His lot among the bless'd."

"It may not be pleasant for any man to dream such a loneliness lies along his own life-way, but it must be a comfort to know there is a balm even for such ills,—but how came you to contemplate such a dismal future, none here have it in prospect, I trust," he added gaily.

"No, we are only discussing knotty problems in the abstract, and we are getting tied up in them, I fear," said Mr. Marstone, "but it is right to do one's duty, even though there may be thorns in the way which tear the flowers of happiness from our grasp," he added with some change of the theme.

"Yes, verily," broke in Mr. Livingstone from his window-seat, "of all the clingers on to the red hot irons of duty commend me to Paul Marstone, his motto is Southey's,

'Be a high sense of duty still thy guide,
And all good powers will aid a soul like thine.'

"Hear what Miss May has culled upon that point, thou scoffer of duty," cried Mr. Marstone, turning a smiling glance upon his friend, "'When two paths perplex thee, and thou knowest not which to choose, take the one to thyself most full of thorns;' there will not Miss May's fair advocacy convince you?"

"If anything will, certainly such gentle agency might," bowing to her.

"I fear not if other things have failed to do so," she said gently.

"What other things, Miss May?"

"Life's realities, and still better the teachings of affection, Mr. Livingstone."

"I have had too little to do with that latter commodity to judge," he replied with a half laugh, "although by Thor, I know somewhat of the former," and he turned away and stood moodily looking out upon the lawn.

"But, Mr. Marstone, you must ask Lela's pardon for having beaten her from all her strongholds, or else make her forget it by reading her something she likes."

"I hope, Miss Ada," he began with a deprecating look at Lela, "she does not think I meant to do that,—I trust she does not?"

"Oh not in the least, sir; Ada is mistaken. I was only talking for the sake of argument, and because," with the prettiest of yawns, "I had nothing else to do."

"And in order to draw Marstone out of his shell, Miss Lela," said Mr. Livingstone laughing, "I have seen you do that in Paris the same way."

"I doubt if any one can do that," said Lela flushing

crimson but laughing, "without he chance to be in such a mood as would make him talk whether one tried or not, at least any in this presence."

Mr. Marstone looked at her as she stood with her proud head leaning upon Stuart's shoulder, and then with a sigh but half concealed, said:

"But what must I say or read, Miss Ada, to make my peace."

"Almost anything, so it is grand or lofty, or above all if her hero, at least her girlish hero be the author you quote."

"But who may he be," said more than one voice.

"Oh long ago we girls chose our *beau ideals*, our own peculiars, and we all made our choice. Jennie chose Mr. Lea, and——"

"Oh, Ada, I did not," cried Jennie, blushing.

"Well, so near to it, that we all recognized him, although you left him nameless, Madame Lea, and you may thank your stars you have your heart's desire, while all the rest are waiting except two," with a mischievous glance at Dora and May, which brought the blood to their cheeks. "Do you remember the time, girls? it was just after Clara Robbin's wedding, and we just began to have a perception of the something good in store for us. I wonder if our dear old sober Polly, away in her quiet Vermont home, so far from all of us, has found 'her true good man, upon whom it would be such a pleasure to bestow her fortune,'—has she May?"

"I think she has, Ada, at least her letters are strongly like it."

"Oh dear! Nora, you and I will soon be the old maids of the party, as poor little Louise used to tell us we were."

"But all this time you have forgotten to tell us who Miss Lela's hero was."

"Sure enough, well Sir Philip Sidney, for his character I refer you to the damsel herself, for I have heard her descant by the hour on his perfections——"

"Stop talking such nonsense, Ada, perhaps I have changed my mind, increasing age bringeth increase of knowledge," said Lela.

"It is since last night then, for Dora and I both went to sleep while you gave us a dissertation on his glories, *ma chere*."

"Well, then, I own him, *sans doute*, my hero, *sans peur et sans reproche*," she replied, laughing.

"I remember one little scrap of his," said Mr. Marstone,

'A sweet attractive kind of grace,
A full assurance given by looks,
Continual comfort in a face,
The lineaments of Gospel books.
I trow the countenance cannot lie,
Whose thoughts are legible to the eye.'

"Pretty in poetry," said Clare looking up from his painting, "that last, though not very desirable in a practical sense."

"No, few could stand the test of being so read," said Mr. Marstone, musingly, "yet some could, in a large measure at least."

"All could in a measure, I imagine," said Lela, "but few enough altogether, or in a good degree."

"Why, sweet sister, that is a hard doctrine," said Stuart, "do not condemn harshly, my Lela, you have too little experience in life to warrant such conclusions, and I trust you will be able to keep so pure a heart that you may not only have the look your hero speaks of, but see all good in others."

"Oh that I could, that would be better than all the rest, oh that I could!" she said it quickly, with an almost agonized desire in her tone.

"And can you not, Miss Lela?" said Mr. Marstone gently, "have you thus soon found so many false hearts, that you fear to trust or believe in any?"

"Not so," she said quickly, but coldly, "it is the other way, in my experience," and she added bitterly, "but even one is enough, under some circumstances to show what the others may be. I hate fair-seeming people, when I know their secret deeds are evil; good words sound like mockery from their lips. I always fancy could I raise the veil prudence lowers, I could see the sneer upon their lips; blessings sound like curses. I would a thousand times rather know I had for my friend a confessedly bad man than a pretended good one; for there is in the last the double curse of sin and deceit. I despise whited sepulchres," and she dashed her hands fiercely together. "But what a tirade—pardon me, I did

not know I was talking so extravagantly, let's wear off the effects of this disputation thus——" and she caught Stuart and whirled him round the room in a rather *quick* waltz."

"Yes that will be something new, a dance before dinner," and in a short space, while I played, they danced to their hearts' content.

Lela seemed perfectly wild with gayety, and I thought the grave look Mr. Marstone fixed upon her, as he stood leaning with folded arms against her harp, made her more reckless. But when the dancing was over she came and stood quietly beside me. Suddenly turning, with her winning smile, she asked:

"What does mamma think of me?"

"That perhaps, after all, I was wrong in deeming Paris had not sullied the beautiful purity of my daughter's soul—and believing my darling had come back to me, as untouched and undefiled by the world as when I sent her forth, a little girl, to strive alone with it."

"Oh, mamma, do not say that, please do not, I cannot bear it. I will try to be good, indeed I will,—but it is not Paris or anything learned there, which made me talk so; other things—those things which you have promised to trust me with, have made me thus so hateful and worldly," and her beautiful eyes shone with tears.

"But dearest, do not condemn unheard, try always to think well of all."

"But one cannot doubt their own eye sight. Oh I could so gladly think otherwise of some people, but I cannot—I dare not."

"I am in the dark entirely as to your meaning, but perchance the one you judge could explain away——"

"Never," she said passionately, "I will not give the opportunity for a smooth tongue to win its way over me."

As she spoke a servant came in asking hurriedly for Mr. Marstone.

"Here, what is the matter?" he said, coming forward.

"A man is here in great haste, sir, and says you must come home at once, if you please, sir," before he could finish, one of Mr. Marstone's own servants burst into the room.

"Oh, sir, please come quick, we can do nothing at all with Miss Kate."

"Enough," he said, his face flushing painfully, "I will come at once." Livingstone gave a prolonged whistle, but when Mr. Marstone turned a look of deep meaning upon him, he said quickly:

"Pardon me, Paul."

"Mrs. Percy will have the goodness to excuse me, as I am thus suddenly called home, upon a matter which another cannot settle, and as I go from such a pleasant party, mine will be all the regret," he said it gracefully but very sadly. As he saw Livingstone preparing to accompany him he said:

"Stay where you are, Rolf. I do not need you, or want you either—nay, I insist, your room will be better than your company. I can manage better alone, old friend," he added pleasantly.

"I should think so," muttered a voice beside me, just loud enough to reach my ear, and turning quickly, I caught the expression of Lela's face as she said the words. Every shade of color had flown, but her eyes were fierce and bright, and a look of the most unutterable contempt and abhorrence lay round the mouth, as she looked full upon Mr. Marstone.

"Lela, my child," she started as if from a dream, the blood pouring in a crimson flood over face and neck.

"Oh, mamma, forgive me, I believe I am mad,—am mad," and she sprang quickly from the room, and when I would have followed her, to comfort her, she waved me back beseechingly: "Please do not come, only let me go alone—if you love me, do."

Oh, what is this mystery—why will my child not trust me! When she came among us again, towards evening, for at dinner, she sent an excuse that she was lying down,

"With such *un mal de tête*," her maid said.

But though she was a shade paler, that was all, her laugh was as clear and far more frequent, her songs as gay, and her wit more keen and brilliant than was usual with our dignified lady. And only my eyes knew there was a shadow upon the heart of my child—a weary one of some kind.

When she caught my look of sorrowful wonder, she came quickly to me.

"You said you would trust me, sweet mother, do! do my own dear one! if not because I am worthy, only for papa's dear sake, trust Walter Percy's child. He does, looking upon my heart this moment!" and she was gone.

Oh I will trust her now—but I am so glad we are to break up this party and all go home next week. Lester, Stuart and Carrol graduate next month, then Harry starts for the continent while the others study their professions.

CHAPTER LVII.

AT HOME, OCTOBER.

LOOKING upon many things, I have decided that the best thing for Clarence is, that he should go abroad. Not alone for his own sake, that by new scenes he may wear away the misery he now endures—but for the sake of the other two, also.

I dread that Stuart's keen insight, which enables him to read so entirely the hearts of those he loves, will make him suspicious of the truth of what Clare has given up for his sake. No good would come of this, but much harm.

My noble hearted boy's sacrifice must remain unknown to any, save the two who know it now, myself and him.

The humble way he takes this heart trial which is making him grow so grave and quiet, is very touching to see.

"It is right I should expiate my sin, even by much suffering," he says, while I think to myself, how very few would accept it thus.

It is a good thing to sorrow—but while with penitential tears and aching hearts we expiate our offence, we cry the while, alas for the old time, the pure, true time, before our heart's gold was stained or dimmed, tears may never bring back the old brightness, though they wash it never so clean from the sin.

At first Clare was shocked that I deemed it needful for him to leave me, but even while the newness of the thought surprised him, the look of gratitude, the involuntary sigh of relief, showed it would be easier to go.

So I have persuaded Mr. Audley, as his *forte* is not literature, but art, it will be better for him to go to Italy when Harry Lester does, and study painting at Rome and Florence, with the old master pieces for models. It is hard

to give him up thus, perchance for years, but it is better so.

We are at work again, although Mr. Audley frowns and scolds, and would prevent us if he could; but we laugh at him, and tell him we will not be his pensioners.

He has taken a suite of rooms at the A—— Hotel for himself and Lela, and to please Ada, the Lawrences have also gone there for the winter.

As the acknowledged heiress of Mr. Audley, Lela is very much sought for, and sees much company; chaperoned by Mrs. Lawrence.

Stuart is hard at work already at his law-books; Ada tells him crossly, "You are the veriest old book-worm, and altogether the most uninteresting and useless personage, for all practical or society purposes, I know of; I pity your wife, when you get her, she must always expect to see you peeping from behind a mountain of books."

But he laughs, and looks slyly at a little, demure damsel who sits, sewing, in a corner, and says, saucily:

"It is well for me, Ada, dear, everybody does not think alike, for some folks I know of, think me a real good sort of a fellow."

"Oh, Mr. Vanity! you need not think May does, for I am impressing her gradually, with a firm conviction of your no-accountedness."

But a little nod and smile from the corner, although a blush comes shyly along with it, tells Stuart a different tale, and sends him off to his work with a light heart and a merry song, so glad to study now, it is for May again!

We had been home a very short time, ere there came a petition from Louise's mother, for Marion to come to her, she writes:

"I am so lonely, in this great house, the brightness of my life all gone; you have a troop of merry children about you, while we are childless. Oh, I weary for the sight of a young face to lighten the gloom of the house; send me one of yours for only this winter; by a mother's broken heart, I beseech you."

We could not turn a deaf ear to such entreaties—but who should go?

Birdie, I could not trust alone, without Marion or myself, Gracie might go, only she can scarcely hold up her head

and speak to strangers, when her family are about her to keep her in heart; and then what would Adèle do? no, it was plain Gracie could not go, she is everybody's right hand, the helper of every one, just the one everybody always wants.

"Therefore it is plain I must go," said Marion, "no one else can,"

She said it without a sigh, but that was only to spare me a pang; I felt before she spoke, how it would be. Of course if there are to be sacrifices, or putting away of self, it is Marion who steps in quietly, and does what is needful; it was always so.

But this seemed too much, even for her to do, Stuart at home this whole winter, so happy and glad to have her with him; so many pleasures planned, lectures to be attended, books to be read; so much to be done which must all be given up.

Oh, it seemed too much to ask of either of them, and they had so lately learned their perfect love song; so lately grown to be all in all to each other!

"But Stuart, Marion," I answered as I thought of these things, "what will he say?"

"What is right and best I am sure," she said with a little blush, "poor fellow it will be a great disappointment to him though; he has planned so much."

"And to no one else, I suppose."

"Oh yes, mamma, I shall be very sorry to give up all, but I ought not; I must learn to be more unselfish, now I have so many more sources of happiness. New pleasures and joys bring new cares and duties, do they not?"

"Yes, pet, but how can I spare you? I said."

"I should be glad to think you could not, mamma; but I feel you can. I was trying to make myself believe all the while you were reading the letter, that I could not be the one to go, because now I had begun to teach I was needed in the school, but I could not make myself believe so; for unless you will stop tiring yourself by taking the hardest part, indeed by staying out of the school-room altogether, I know I am only a fifth wheel to the coach. And for the rest," and her lips sought my cheek, "you have so many comforts—which poor Mrs. Du Tille, has not, not alone in an earthly, but an heavenly sense, and perhaps God will let me help her bear her burdens, as I have seen you bear yours for so

many years. Oh the blessedness a sure hope, a certain rest, has been to you, all this while, dear mamma, how it has helped you to bear the storms of life "

"And you, Marion, you too, my darling, know the same hope."

"Only lately, mamma, before that it was only love for you and dear papa, but now," and her face had a sweet, happy look in it, "now it is different. God, my Father, is first now. Oh, He is, mamma. I am sure my Saviour enables me to say it with my heart as well as with my lips, dearest mamma; we must not grudge of our blessings to any whom they may comfort. You will send me away for the sake of the good which may lie at the end."

"But what can my May do?" I asked.

"Nothing of my own strength, but God may let me do some little thing, if it is right I should, He will know that. And oh, it would be a thing to rest upon, and take comfort in, for the remainder of a life, if one could take the good of the text home: 'Let him know that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way, shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.'"

"My daughter shall go, and God himself, I think, will bless her good intentions," I said, taking her to my heart.

Of course there was the loudest disapprobation expressed throughout the house, for Marion is needful to every one of us, in one way or other we all count upon her.

"But what is to come of our charity visits, and our mission school, and all the schemes we have laid out to do good among the poor?" said Mr. Raymond in dismay.

"The rest must work harder, under Dora's management. Birdie and Lela may both help you somewhat, but you may depend for everything in the shape of hard work upon Gracie, she can do better than I, because she is more earnest."

"But are you not leaving your duty, May?" Mr. Raymond said, selfishly, I fear, for he had no notion of losing her.

"A greater duty lies there, Uncle Harley. I mean to try to do good where I am going; there are so many here, none there to try."

A sweet look and an earnest pressure upon his arm, won him to think her way was right.

All had some expostulation to urge, why it was wrong for her to go, but all were silenced in a firm, but gentle way.

Stuart's first words were, when he was consulted: "You must not, I cannot spare you."

"Not if it is right, dear Stuart?" she said.

"But it cannot be needful or right that you should go, my May," and at first he held to it stoutly, but after a little more talk she had won him.

"But you do not need discipline, May, dear," I heard him say, "no one requires it so little."

But she laid her hand over his lips and said in a half-playful, half-earnest voice:

"There do not over-value your own property, or you will grow a miser," and then changing to a serious tone: "it is wrong to say that, dear Stuart, even if I were as good as you think me, I could not have too much discipline; Jesus himself has told us it was needful. He draweth us home with it."

"I know, I know, but do not talk of home, *that* home yet; do not go there, May, my precious one, before me! I can spare you for months, but not forever," and he wove his arms passionately about her.

"Stuart, dear Stuart, you must not grow faithless. What am I to do for a guide and teacher all my life long, if you cannot teach me aright."

And so it was decided that Mrs. Du Tille should have our Marion for the next two months at least. When we had finally concluded for her to go we thought it best it should be at once. But what was our amazement, and her mother's utter dismay, when Ada Lawrence, learning Marion was going, declared she would go with her, and she has held to it obstinately, against all entreaties; her mother thinks her demented, "Just at the beginning of a gay season, too." But she always does just what pleases her best, and this new freak will have its way.

NOVEMBER 10.

This week has been a sad one, filled with partings.

First, as it was not best for Howard to come home so near his long vacation, Mr. Audley, took Marie and Ada

with Clare, to spend part of a week with him. Then they returned bringing Harry Lester with them, and in three days more the boys were to start, to be away perhaps for years.

I suppose the thought of this took what little color yet abides in my face away, for they were all very careful of me, prophesying a spell of illness if I did so many things for, and thought so much of my exiled boy's comfort.

He would look at me with wistful eyes, and then springing up kiss me again and again.

"Do not look so, do not, Auntie, dear, if it grieves you so, I need not go; let me stay—it is not too late."

But of course that could not be thought of, so the sorrow was with a weak hand held back until they were gone.

At the coming of each of our children we had chosen a bible of missal binding, and written their name upon the leaf with some motto. These have been very precious to them all—more so, because upon many a leaf was some token of their father's hand. I have one of the same kind, which had been one of my wedding gifts; of late years I had meant it for Stuart, but now he must content himself with Marion's, for with blessings and tender love Clarence has it.

The motto my husband's hand wrote for me was "Endure unto the end," for Clare I have added two others, "A patient continuance in well-doing," and "Let us not weary in well-doing, for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not."

As soon as they had gone, the girls went too; then Carol, who is going to study medicine with Ernest, came from his home in the south, to make one of our household for the winter. And we have all settled down to our duties, quiet once more, save in school hours.

CHAPTER LVIII.

DECEMBER 10.

WE have letters two and three a week, from either Marion, or Ada, also from Howard. The last I have from Ada is full of comfort. She writes:—

Marion is an angel, one of God's blessed angels. In her proper person, I reverence all that is good and pure in Christian womanhood. The manner in which she has ministered to my poor aunt, not only in temporal, but spiritual things is past believing. Last week, one day we were sitting sewing, in Aunt Louise's room, she lying as is usually the case with her now, upon a couch with closed eyes thinking sadly of the past. Suddenly opening her eyes she asked,

"What day is this girls?"

"Thursday," I said quickly, before May could answer, I had been trembling and dreading this question all day.

"No, I mean what day of the month?"

I made no reply, but May quietly answered.

"The fifteenth, dear Mrs. Du Tille."

"I thought so," she replied springing up with a strength she has not shown since we came here, her face very pale.

"Oh! this used to be my darling's birthday, *used to be!* God pity me! My bright eyed Louise would have been eighteen this very day."

I had remembered it all along but could not speak of it, and now could do nothing but weep, my sympathy for the poor stricken mother, thereby in my selfishness only adding more sorrow to hers.

Not so dear May, for a single moment she was quiet, still as death, then she went softly to Aunt Louise's side, and putting her arms around her neck said in a low tender tone,

"God will pity and help you Mrs. Du Tille, if you will only ask Him. He is very tender, and very merciful."

"He is not kind Marion, do not say so, was it tender to take my only child, my precious little one away from me? what? was that being merciful? no, cruel cruel," and she flung herself in a passion of weeping back upon the couch.

"So He draweth his children home. When He from his far away throne, looks down and sees some heart with sinful love setting an earthly idol upon the place which should be his alone, in pity and love he removes the thing, which because so precious is doing his poor child harm."

Her voice was so low and sweet, and yet so firm and distinct that Aunt Louise against her will, lay silently to listen to her words, but when Marion had ceased she moaned again piteously,

"If it had been anything else, friends or fortune, anything but my sweet Louise, I could have borne it better."

"Dear Mrs. Du Tille, I do not mean to strive to make you think your trial is not a very grievous one, almost the worst and hardest to endure of any other, but it is so dreadful to me to hear you accuse God of injustice. Oh, He is not unjust or unkind He has not afflicted you or any of us beyond what we are able to endure. He knows what is best for us, his poor weak rebellious children, wandering so far from his love."

"Oh that you knew and felt the comfort, the safety of his promises,—these very afflictions which He sends upon us work out for us, if we will accept them rightly, a far more exceeding, and eternal weight of glory."

"Marion, would that I could, but I cannot, he has taken my child, I can only remember that," said Aunt Louise, growing more calm and humble as Marion talked.

"He spared not his own Son, but for your sake and mine, delivered him up to the cursed death of the cross, think of that gracious deed, dear friend, God spared not his only and well beloved Son, else, were we all this day lost forever more."

"I wish I might find the comfort, your words point out; how can I? Oh, Marion, help me," and her tone was piteous to hear.

"I cannot, God will, if you will only ask Him, 'for He is ready to forgive—plenteous in mercy unto all that call upon Him.' 'Cast thy burden upon the Lord, he will sustain thee.'"

"But I cannot, I do not know how to ask aright. Pray for me, Marion, that I may find this peace."

"I will pray with you, dear Mrs. Du Tille, that will be

better. Remember the words, 'in thy day of trouble call upon Me, and I will draw nigh to thee.'"

Then we knelt down, and Marion made *such* a prayer. Oh I never heard such an one, it touched even me who am so cold and faithless. She prayed first for God's spirit, upon us who were kneeling there, especially that good words, which would be effectual to the saving of the souls of those about to perish, might be put into her own heart to say.

And dear Mrs. Percy, I think that prayer was heard, for not of her own strength could she have so spoken, or have have been the means of doing so much good.

Oh, even to me who am so thoughtless, so very wicked, the change which since that day has come over my poor Aunt is happiness. Marion and she will sit for hours searching for some "morsels of comfort," they say, from the Bread of Life, and every once in a while Aunt will say softly, after reading some passage:

"Wait dear, let me take the comfort of that a while; such a blessed rest there is hidden in those words."

And again May will say with a sweet smile:

"Mamma loves this verse dearly, do you see the comfort in it yet? 'The shadow of a great Rock in a thirsty land,' or this, 'A broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.'"

And then Marion every night puts her to sleep, singing some beautiful hymn. I never dreamed there was so much beauty in hymns, until May's sweet voice sang them, and I saw how they calmed and quieted poor Aunt's tried heart.

"How firm a foundation," and another, "Whilst Thee we seek protecting power," are, I believe, the favorites of both of them; but Uncle who also seems to have found this "peace which passeth understanding," always asks for "I would not live always," or "God moves in a mysterious way," and at the verse

"Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take,
The clouds ye so much dread,
Are big with mercy, and will break
In blessings on your head."

He always joins in, and once he told us with streaming eyes, how true it was in his own case. That once he had when a

young man, striven to live for God's service, but when riches and cares increased, like the seed sown among thorns, they had choked up and over-grown his faithful endeavors. Until this great affliction, this lost treasure, had awakened him to a sense of his evil life, and made him seek since then to live nearer his God, and he ended by repeating a verse from some hymn which May loved well :

" Trials make the promise sweet,
Trials give new life to prayer,
Bring me to my Saviour's feet,
Lay me low, and keep me there."

It is a good thing, dear Mrs. Percy, that you let May come, for she has been such a balm, such a helper to these sorrowing hearts. Oh it must comfort you when you know this.——

And it does infinitely, more than I can tell. My darling is laying up for herself a crown of joy.

CHAPTER LIX.

DECEMBER 15.

WE are all to go down to "Ingleside" and "Rosedale," to spend the week's vacation at Christmas, because Mr. Audley insists :

"For once we will keep the holidays in true English style, with a whole week's merriment for rich and poor : we will have Lela's anthracite coal in the grates, and a yule log on the hearth."

"Why do you say Lela's anthracite coal, Uncle?" asks Adèle.

"Because queen likes it, better than anything that was ever lighted before, even than the light of a lover's eyes," was the reply.

Orders were sent down for the men to trim the house, but the girls countermanded that immediately, declaring :

"The chief sport will be in that."

Holidays are but sad things after all, for at best they are but way-stones which mark the distance we have come, and the ills we have endured since the last was reared. Even worse with some they are cold, white monuments beneath whose shadow lies buried some tender memory, some vain regret. We sigh and think once it was thus, such and such a presence lent a beauty to the time, now—now though gay laughter, and smiling faces greet us, we sigh wearily for the old happiness.

This year we miss the presence of four accustomed faces. Clare and Harry, with a thousand miles of deep, dark water between, think of us to-day.

Marion and Ada, in their sorrowful, far away place, will pine to be with us but will try to be contented away.

Howard comes home for his vacation. Oh, the blessing of having him with us, is some compensation for the loss of the rest.

"INGLESIDE," DECEMBER 31.

WE came here the day before Christmas, and found Mrs. Lawrence already settled at Rosedale, with a house-full of friends. Mr. Audley has also been very lavish of his invitations, therefore as he insisted upon every one of our own family coming, we are pretty closely stowed away.

It is a long journey from B—— to this place ; in summer we thought nothing of it, but in the depths of winter, the idea of it was rather intimidating, but Mr. Audley like many another man, knows of no impossibilities, or impracticabilities, if there is pleasure to be won at the end of the effort.

So, very much against the will of some of us older ones, but to the joy of the young folks we were bundled up and brought a two days' journey by railroad, to spend the holidays,

"Half the fun was in getting here," giddy Cora declares.

The first day was passed in trimming the house with wreaths of ever-green, holly, and other things, until we seemed to be living in a perfect forest. From the merry shouts which reached my room, I judged this decorating process was the gayest time of the whole.

In the evening they lighted a 'yule log' in the wide hall, and danced and played charades by its light, until as Gracie told me,

"We heard the great clock on the stairs tell the hour of twelve, and then we all clasped hands and waited until the angel of Christmas had passed by. Then Lela began the Christmas hymn, and we all joined her. After that we all said good night and went without much more talk to bed."

The next day while the Christmas tree was getting what some of the little ones called,—“Sparkled over with little stars,” a something came to us by way of a gift which was doubly precious because we had not dared to hope for it.

Soon after breakfast Mr. Audley came in wrapped in a great fur riding coat.

"I am going down to the 'Percy lane' station to meet the cars, for half the things Lela ordered, did not get here last night." And he went out.

We worked with a will, getting things ready for the evening's entertainment until we heard the tinkling of the sleigh-bells once more, when it came in sight some one said,

"It is filled with people, ladies too, I declare."

"It is May and Ada as I am alive," shouted Birdie, flying out of the room.

It was worth something to see the way Stuart dropped his book, and sprang out of the house, and then to watch the race between him and Birdie as she flew down the path her curls streaming behind her, but Stuart won, and bounded into the sleigh and had May in his arms, the happiest fellow the world held.

Then such a torrent of kisses and welcomes as followed from everybody, the girls were obliged to cry for mercy, and beg off.

The explanation of their sudden appearance was, Mrs. Du Tille needed medical advice, and knowing the girls pined to be with us, hastened her journey a month. They left the Du Tilles in B——, and followed us here at once. Of course May made it a more enjoyable Christmas for all, but a blessed time for me.

At night from the brilliantly illuminated tree, a comical gentleman, attired as the far-famed Santa Clause, gave each

one a pretty remembrance of some kind, seasoning it with divers quizzical jokes, and words of warning.

Then they had what was to be the crowning glory of the evening, *tableaux vivants*, for which purpose not only every trunk and chest at Ingleside had been invaded, bringing forth scores of articles which had not seen the light since Mr. Audley was a child and his mother a brilliant belle, but also, everything Mrs. Lawrence could gather from her own ample store or that of her thousand and one friends, in two weeks searching.

At the head of the larger drawing-room, there is a small oval room, to which you ascend by one broad step; this is enclosed by sliding glass doors, and is the room in which Mr. Audley years ago arranged a very valuable cabinet of the trophies he had gathered in a long life abroad; the library, and Mr. Audley's study, lie at either side of this room, and communicate with it.

Before the arch which leads into the drawing-room, Mr. Audley had crimson curtains hung, and altogether this (as we call it) "Sanctum Sanctorum" of Mr. Audley's, was a jewel of a place for a *tableau* enactment.

The drawing room with its host of spectators, guests and neighbors, rich and poor, was dimly lighted, the sole illumination of the pictures coming from the lights shed through the doors at the sides from the library and study. This arrangement heightened the effect amazingly, all the light being gathered and centred there.

The first picture was the scene in *Ivanhoe*, so celebrated as a *tableau*, wherein the beautiful, but unhappy Rebecca, visits the fair-haired Rowena, the morning of her bridal, and presents to her the casket of jewels. Lela was the one—Cora the other.

Then one very beautiful picture was *Leanore*, as the fair Kate Percy, Harry Hotspur's faithful wife, the dress was exquisite, and my proud, haughty girl was in her element, as she assumed the apparel, and mein of her ancestress,—the ancient robe and odd coiffure, copied from an old picture, became her well.

Then Ada, as the saucy, witching Di Vernon, looked her very best.

Next a pretty scene, in which the lovely Hebe, (Coralie) with a chaplet of flowers on her fair brow, and the vari-

gated robe decking her form, stands, a grieved expression upon her face, with clasped hands, gazing sadly upon the cup which the youthful Ganymede, is bearing away. Howard was the latter.

"The old 'sire of the gods,' had a miserable taste, to turn away his nectar and ambrosia bearer, for any cause, if she was as fair as this one," quoth Mr. Livingstone

Again Birdie, whose fair hair and "heaven blue eyes," were requisite in almost every group, to set off some darker face, enacted the fair Rowena when "descending from her station with graceful dignity," she is about to place upon the brow of the victorious Ivanhoe the chaplet of Honor. Birdie surprised us by her pretty dignity as the queen of Love and Beauty, and Mr. Livingstone, who was Ivanhoe, vowed:

"I wonder not the good knight periled his life for her smile."

There were among a dozen others, the Christian Graces, with May for Faith, Ada for Hope, and Dora for Charity.

Then we had poor Amy Robsart, as, wild with happiness, the one night of her triumph, she sat at the feet of the handsome, but wicked Robert, Earl of Leceister, robed for the first time as became her station as his wife; again we had Cora and Mr. Livingstone. And last of all the scene in the "Bridal of Triermain," where the brave De Vaux, after a score of adventures and temptations, enters

"A lofty hall, with trophies drest,
Where as to greet imperial guest,
Four maidens stood, whose crimson vest,
Was bound with silver zone.

Mr. Marstone was for the nonce the brave De Vaux, and looked the hero every inch. Of the four damsels: the first, a lively nymph of Gaul,

"Where easy step and laughing eye,
The borrowed air of awe belie,"

was Meta Chalton, the personification of a laughing French girl. Next to her was Dora, much against her will, playing the Spanish maiden's part,

"Dark-eyed, dark-haired, sedate, yet bold."

While Coralie's "ivory skin and tress of gold," told "a daughter of Almaine."

Thus they stood, proffering sceptre, robe, and crown, which he refusing, the fourth maiden, (Ada) "who a space behind them stood," dressed

"Like ancient British druidess,
Her hair an azure fillet bound,
Her graceful vesture swept the ground,
And in her hand displayed,
A crown did that fourth maiden hold,
But unadorned with gems of gold,
Of glossy laurel made."

Suddenly she struck the harp 'gainst which she leaned, and sang. While she recounted the brave deeds of the bold knight, a curtain at the back of the "Alcove" was drawn apart by unseen hands, and there as "King Arthur's child, deep slumbering in her fatal chair," lay Lela in a gorgeous dress,

"That form of maiden loveliness
'Twixt childhood and 'twixt youth.—
—Still her dark locks dishevelled flowed—
Hiding half her charms from sight."

Then enacting his part (which from a representation of the "divine art," had now assumed a life-like guise,) to perfection, Mr. Marstone, as the text bade him, "stood motionless, with folded arms and clasped hands, gazing down upon her,

"Trembling in fitful joy!"

And then, as slowly the dark-fringed lids of the sleeping Gyneth quivered,

"Gently low the warrior kneels,
Soft that lovely hand he steals,
Soft to kiss, and soft to keep—"

And ere we had achieved one half the picture, mischievous Mr. Audley turned out the lights and left us in utter darkness.

"To typify the general consternation which should have

come in just here, when the waking beauty drops her warder," he declared.

When the lights came, Lela had vanished, and Mr. Marstone stood at a window looking out upon the snow.

It had been sadly against Lela's will that they were thus coupled together, but when Mrs. Lawrence conceives an idea, she has a woman's will, and is not easily put off, and of course Lela could make no determined objection in so small a matter; and Mr. Marstone gravely accepted whatever parts were assigned him.

AT HOME, FEBRUARY 20.

THE night before leaving Ingleside, a thing occurred which pained me exceedingly. After the entertainment was over, and the company dismissed either to their rooms or homes, came, unexpectedly enough to the poor child, an offer of marriage from Carrol to Lela, as unwelcome as it was unlooked for.

This was their last evening—on the morrow all were to disperse—and as the affair turned out it was well it was so.

Leaneore has a habit of late of sitting up alone, long after all the rest have retired. This evening she sat in the drawing-room, before the fire in a deep fit of musing, when suddenly her solitude was broken in upon, a voice saying:

"May I come in, Miss Nora?"

"Certainly, Mr. Carrol, what is the matter? have you left anything?"

"Yes," he replied, in a low tone.

"The fire-light is so dim, you will be scarcely able to find it, I fear,—shall I light a candle?"

"No, no, I can find it better in the dark."

"Why what is it? that is strange."

"My—shall I tell you?"

"Certainly," she replied laughingly.

"Please be serious, and be patient with me. I am not come to seek for what I lost to-night, but months ago—do you guess what it is?"

"How should I, Mr. Carrol, I have no interest in taking care of your property," she said coldly.

"But you have this nevertheless,—my heart—I love you,

do not turn coldly away from me. Give me one word of hope, that you do not quite hate me," and he caught her hand.

"I am sorry, Mr. Carrol, you have spoken thus, for you have been a very pleasant companion to me all this winter, and now——"

"It is all over," he said bitterly.

"Now it is all over, unless you will forget this scene to-night," and she held out the hand which she had withdrawn, "and will be what I at first heard you were, and have held you in high estimation as being, my dear friend Ada's especial lover."

"Ada Lawrence's lover I am not," he said fiercely.

"But you were once, and would be still, had not this foolish fancy for a new face, and some silly quarrel between you two parted you for a time," then she added merrily "but I must say good night while the night lasts, please forget me as speedily as possible, Ada is better worth your love than I, though I doubt whether it is to be had, for she is a wilful lassie, is my Ada, but I counsel you to try," and she left him and came to me in great distress.

"Oh if Ada finds it out and she can hardly help it, she will be so unhappy." But it was not so, for though Carrol looked rather pale, he stood the bantering of the rest, about the quieting effect, the prospect of parting seemed to have upon him, bravely.

And when we reached P—— he bid us a careless adieu, to fulfil an engagement of some kind, with some college friends. at New Haven, he announced.

We came directly home, sending Howard back to college with Carrol. We had hardly been back a week ere I had a letter from the latter, dated from his own home in the south, announcing the fact of his being upon the eve of departure, for Europe, "At the urgent command of my father, who has conceived an idea that I have over worked myself, which I am sure you will bear me witness is not the case, unless it was in the way of dissipation,—so I am to give up all ideas of a profession for the present, and go abroad to hunt up Beaumont and Lester. I go so soon, that I must needs take my farewell of all my dear friends in B——, by means of this letter."

Ada's cheek has grown paler since this news came, but

that is all, she makes no confidants in this matter, not even of me to whom she tells almost every other thought, and I cannot ask it from her.

We have been home nearly three weeks. Mr. Livingstone we see almost continually, but Mr. Marstone has some honorable appointment at Washington, and is there nearly all of his time, so an hurried and rare call is all we receive from him.

Stuart still keeps up his never ending study, though now he and May are having their long hoped for pleasant evenings.

Mrs. Lawrence is in a perfect whirl of excitement all the while, and keeps not only Ada and Lela deluged with invitations and engagements, but would fain have my little Birdie introduced, but I say no, to all her pleadings on that score.

CHAPTER LX.

MARCH 20.

HARLEY and Dora had thought this spring tide would bring upon its waves their wedding day, but for some reasons we deem it better it should be delayed awhile.

He had at first a kind of pride about marrying an heiress, although Dora can scarcely be called that, at least in a great way, but she has such a gentle way of arguing the matter, that she has at last convinced him, it is much the better plan for him to help her spend the little she has in Christ's cause, giving her in return, a guide and protector, which she needs so sadly, poor orphan Dora!

His health is very indifferent, and even he has been brought to think, what we all dread to be obliged to know, is best, that he should seek out some country home to labor in. Therefore they will delay their marriage for a while until something is decided, more definitely upon this subject.

It is hardly possible, but that this people among whom

he has toiled so many years, should have won his affections very nearly, but though they love him likewise tenderly, they with us have watched his failing health, with great anxiety, and now say, one and all, it is better he should leave them, than jeopardize his life by staying.

And now a letter from Howard, has quite made us at ease, as far at the church is concerned, he writes,

'Ever since you wrote to me of Uncle Harley's determination to leave the E—St. church, I have been thinking over a plan, to aid his leaving it less regretfully.

You remember Grey, the young man whose attempt at suicide, made him so noted at the time of dear Clare's trouble. Since then he has been an earnest repentant man. With the aid of some friends he has finished his collegiate course, although of course he was a marked man through the whole town and he has, since he graduated been studying for the ministry, and will be admitted next June.

He is spoken of as an excellent, fervid preacher, and there can be but one opinion of his through repentance, and eminent piety.

Suppose I invite him home with me this summer, for I am quite intimate with him, (although he is old enough to be my father,) for Clare's sake, I need say nothing about the object of his coming, and you can all judge of him, and see if he would be a fit person, upon whom to let fall Uncle Harley's mantle.'

We have written for him to come, and hope we have found a substitute.

APRIL.

Nora's health is very poor this Spring, and Mr. Audley talks strongly of taking her with him to Europe, where he is obliged to return shortly. In the meanwhile I have decided to take her away from our busy city life, and spend a few quiet weeks ere summer comes, at 'Ingle-side.'

Now Marion is at home, I feel I can be spared from the school, especially as we have engaged a couple of gentlemen to teach some of the higher branches.

Poor little May, it will tire her sadly, I doubt not, but that will be better than to have her go with Lela, as I at

first thought of doing, and leave Stuart just when they are having such pleasant times.

So we are to go next week, taking Adèle with us, in order to lighten the care of the rest as much as possible, for as Mrs. Wilbur declares,

"You have left the younger classes, and divers other things to Birdie's care, and for the three first days doubtless she will attend to them most vehemently, but after that as a matter of course, good little Gracie will have it all to do, while Birdie kisses, pets, and plagues us."

"Naughty grand-mamma," cries Birdie, pouting, "trading my good name, mamma knows how faithful I am, how trustworthy!" with a comical little shrug.

"Exactly, I know you are to be depended upon as entirely, as Adèle's 'Bueno.'"

"But, Bueno is very wise, sometimes, mamma," cries Adèle fearful lest her little spaniel should suffer by comparison with Birdie.

"So is Birdie sometimes," laughed Ernest, as he came into the room.

"Et tu Brute!" cried Cora with a little scream of pretended horror.

"Shame on yer Cora-ly, to call yer Uncle sich bad names, and he one of the granderest gentlemen in the country," cries Milly, "come along yer, wid yer and make a custard for dinner, and try to be spectful to yer elders."

"Even Milly," cried Cora with raised hands and eyes, as she went out.

And this journey has another great object in view, aside from the hope of good to Lela, Mr. Audley has promised to take us to New Haven, to stay a week first. Dear Howard, it seems such a long while since we saw him at Christmas, and though we have two letters every week, we want to hear his voice and see his face.

CHAPTER LXI.

"And why that fervent love was cross'd
Thou knowest the best, I feel the most.
But few that dwell beneath the sun
Have loved so long and loved but one."—BYRON.

MAY 20.

ALTHOUGH spring with her balmy breath has studded the valleys below us with a multitude of bright flowers, she has scarcely settled her wings upon 'Ingle-side,' and its surroundings, although she sings us a little song of hope for the future.

These mountain regions are hard to warm, so that even now though the middle of the day is soft and balmy, in the mornings and evenings we find our anthracite coal grates very genial. Adèle has learned to depend so entirely upon herself, now that Gracie is away, that she wanders through the house and gardens, and is looking very bright and well.

Last evening I had been busy seeing to her after tea, but when I was through I went to spend the remainder of the evening until bed time with Lela. As I went in at the door, something in the way she crouched before the fire made me pause. I could not tell why, but though I could not see her face, a certain drooping of her figure, or a prostration noticeable in the way in which she sat, with her hands clasped round her knees and her head bowed upon them, struck me painfully as having a crushed despairing way about it, I went in quickly.

"Is anything the matter, pet?" I asked. She sprang up and hid her face out of sight, and seemed trying to get beyond my reach.

"My poor child, what ails you?" She turned her pale face to me and clasping her hands above her head moaned.

"Oh mamma! mamma!" and with an earnest, entreating look flung herself into my arms. There she lay panting wildly, nor did my utmost entreaty serve to soothe her, suddenly springing up she began.

"I cannot help it, I must tell, right or wrong, I can bear it no longer alone. Oh mamma, I love him so! why

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did he write such bitter words to me? why did he?" For the first time I saw a letter lying crumpled at my feet.

"Who, Lela, who do you love so? not Rolf Livingstone, I hope, I trust!"

"Rolf Livingstone!" she repeated with infinite scorn, "as if I could. Oh you should know me better," then with a crimson cheek, she said in a low voice, "not him, but— but Paul Marstone," then as the name passed her lips she continued wildly, "but I have turned him from me forever! Oh how could he write such a letter, such bitter cruel words," and she held it up to me. I read these words.

"Leanore, Leanore, proud, cold, heartless girl, on this the anniversary of the day when I humbled my manhood before you, and sued for your love; which a thousand signs had bid me hope was mine, I sit and write to you.

"In you who bore an angel's beauty, I had dreamed an angel's spirit might dwell, I had watched you from your childhood up, and believed all that was lovely and good in woman was centered within you. Oh fool! fool! to imagine such a thing. Oh ten thousand times an idiot, to conceive the idea, that a woman, with beauty such as yours, could fail to be a coquette, a cold, proud ruthless conqueror of the dearest, noblest part of manhood, our hearts' affection.

"By every blasted hope, by every blighted expectation, by my crushed and bleeding heart; I swear you gave me every hope of your love, until you had won me to worship you, to bow the whole strength of my soul before you.— I did love you,— God knows I did love you, passing belief, as you, with your cold proud heart can never realize. I would have endured death itself for you, God knows I would,— and for all this, you gave me scorn, bitter cutting scorn, which seathed me like lightning. Oh it is strange one can live and endure the woe, that I have borne.

"Oh darling! darling! though you laugh your gay mocking laugh, over my presumptuous words, I will call you thus this once, as I have a thousand times, when in dreams you have stood beside me, the fair sweet creature I deemed you were, but only in dreams— never, never, but in seeming, for even then, when I called you thus, stretching out eager loving arms towards you, have you escaped my grasp fleeing away from me, leaving only that mocking laugh you

left behind you on the stairs that day, and which knelled my life hopes on its wings.

"Oh I may not have been as noble of intellect, as gracious of bearing, or have borne so proud a name, as others who lay their homage at your feet, but none could rival me in the depth of my love,— did others worship, I ten thousand times adored you. I defy you to find one, who so long, so tenderly, has treasured your image as I; ever since a little girl I used to watch and listen to you, have I loved you.

"Oh girl so beautiful, yet so false; can you find in this whole universe a love more enduring than mine? Never! never! though you search the wide world through. Amidst scorning and mocking, I have loved you, against my will, though I have fought fierce battles, with this passion, which is making a weary unhappy man of me. I am becoming old before my time, my two and thirty winters lie as heavily upon me, as if they were double the number. I have plunged this last year into a sea of politics, striving to drown by dreams of ambition my sorrow, in vain! in vain!

"So I will lay down all my prospects for future glory — and as soon as a fair sad life, which even now lingers upon the brink of the awful hereafter has gone out, into the brightness beyond, and the little comfort I can give to the only being upon earth who truly loves me, has passed away, I will leave my native land, never to return until this passion which now consumes me, is laid in the dust;— therefore never.

"Leanore, glorious Leanore, queen of beauty, live happily with the heart you love,— but God in mercy preserve you from the agony I now endure.

"You have been the dream of my life, no other hand has ever stirred the still deep fountains of my heart,—this night, I have riven you from me, with an awful agony,— and henceforth no matter how long this life endures, the one aim of my being shall be to forget—to forget Leanore, the loved but lost.

Farewell, God keep you,
PAUL LINN MARSTONE."

"Oh Leanore, what does it mean? you say you love him, and yet you have spurned him, I cannot understand it."

Then growing calm she told me all—how she had met him in Paris, beloved and respected by all men, how, comparing his grave proud dignity, with all about him she learned first to esteem him, then to watch eagerly for his coming as the pleasantest thing in life, and then to find when he was obliged suddenly to leave the city, how entirely she loved him, with a first pure love.

And Mr. Audley had seemed glad they should like one another and had thrown them much together, because of a love he bore Marstone for the sake of some old memory, so she never hid her pleasure in his company, from any eyes.

When he left them so hastily she heard it whispered with a sneer, and covert laugh, "that he had gone for no good," but she never doubted him.

After a couple of months had passed they came to London on their way home, and spent several weeks there.

One day as she drove along in one of the suburbs, she came suddenly upon him sitting at the window of a small pleasant looking cottage, with a young girl upon his knee. She saw his face so distinctly as she was whirled rapidly by, that she could not but believe it was he. Yet with a woman's faith in the object of her love, she strove to think she had been deceived, and that he would come and explain all.

But she waited in vain, for though he must have been aware of their proximity to him, he never gave any token of his presence; at last she could endure the suspense no longer, and said carelessly one day to Mr. Audley:

"Bien bon," (the name she always gives him,) "I saw your favorite, Mr. Marstone, in the street a week or two since."

"Impossible, my dear, you were mistaken, he started for home, a month ago, in the Arctic."

"Has he a sister?" she asked, with a new hope springing up in her heart.

"No, pet, he is the only child my poor——" and with a grave face he kissed her cheek and went away.

Then he was false, he whom she worshipped with a wild idolatry; but there was still hope, she might have been mistaken—such things as remarkable resemblances had occurred before, although even in her anguish she smiled at the idea of mistaking any other face, for the one whose

every expression she had learned by heart, and treasured so fondly.

In the dusk of the evening she called a cab, and drove to the neighborhood where she had seen him, then she walked past the house, but though the windows were opened and she could see two figures passing up and down, she could not distinguish them, by the dim fire-light which illumined the room.

Crossing the street to where a woman stood idly in a shop-door, she asked: "Who lives in yonder pretty house, my good woman?"

"Queer folk, me lady," was the reply, "queer doing there be over there; sometimes a fine gentleman, who is as grand looking as his majesty the Prince his-self, goes away, and then my little lady, who never goes out, falls into a tantrum,—and in a great flurry one of the old serving-men goes for him, and then when he goes in to be sure there is the awfulest shrieks, it would make your hair stand on end, me lady, to only hear them," and the gossip, well-pleased to have so attentive a listener, went on, "Oh but we do have the times a watching them, me lady, that is sure, I can tell you."

"But does not the gentleman live there always?"

"Oh no, me lady, and that is the worst of all, they say they're no man and wife at all, and more's the pity, for she's a pretty little creature and he looks for all the world like a born lord, though he be's only a Yankee."

"But what is his name?" asked Lela, feeling very meanly at thus playing spy upon any one.

"Mr. Mustone, from Americay—but are you sick, me lady?"

"Oh no, thank you," and she recovered herself quickly, by a great effort, and then as a voice from within called the woman away, she passed down the street.

As she reached the house, and was passing it, the door suddenly opened, and threw such a bright light across her path that dazzled by it, she drew quickly into the shadow of the steps; as she stood, he came forth, and with the full blaze of the hall lamp upon him, stood his arm clasped round the light figure of a delicately formed female.

"Good night, sweetest, be a good little Katie, until I come again, will you, dear?" he asked fondly.

"I will try, but you are sure you love me, Paul, even when I am not good?"

"Quite sure my pet, you are naughty to doubt it; why should I not love my own little Katie, good night, dearest," and kissing her, he closed the door, and went swiftly up the street, jostling Lela as he went.

Then it was true, all this woman had said, all the sneers and jests she had heard in Paris; and now she remembered this was the same slight, frail figure they had surprised him with years ago, when we were at the Clift-house, at the sea side.

She went wearily home, and for days after was very ill, then just before they sailed, she found upon her dressing-table, a letter from him containing a declaration of his love, and requesting an answer, 'When they should meet in America,' where he expected to be before she was, 'as he should have sailed ere this letter reached her.'

"I did answer him the very first day I saw him, at Rose-dale, you remember he was there when we came. After I had received his greetings, I said:

"I have something which belongs to you, excuse me and I will get it.' He was very pale when I turned to go, and I found him upon the landing, as I returned.

"This belongs to you, sir,' I said, handing him his letter, 'you without doubt addressed it to me, by mistake. I am sorry I read it, for other people's letters, especially love letters are intensely uninteresting to me.'

"He held it in his hand, looking down upon the seal, on which I had stamped the word, 'scorned,' in perfect silence, then with a grave tone:

"I understand you, Miss Percy, your will shall be my law.'

"I laughed, mockingly, and sprung up the stairs, to my own room; locking myself in I watched him quietly and calmly give directions to his groom to bring his horse, holding the letter in his hand the while, and then go back to bid you all adieu, and come out attended by several others.

"He talked in his usual manner; I could hear his words even where I stood concealed by the curtains, and I saw him smile gravely, and look down upon the letter, when Rolf Livingstone said:

"I should like deucedly to know what that same letter contains, which has started you off so suddenly.'

"That you never will know, my friend,' was his answer, as he vaulted into the saddle, and then when I had seen him pass the brow of the hill, I threw myself upon my bed, and wept, oh, such bitter tears, but I soon grew calm, for I knew I had done right, even in showing my contempt for him. But oh, it was so hard to do it! so very hard—after that I went one day to you, and asked you to trust me with a secret, promising to tell you when I could, and now I have. Oh mamma, my heart is broken, my hope, my faith is gone,—if he is false, who else is true,—whom may I trust?"

I could only fold my arms about my child, and weep and pray for her; I had no comfort for such sorrow as this, my poor broken-hearted daughter!

We sat until the grey dawn broke in upon us, her head upon my breast, and sometimes sinking into a slumber, she would start up and cry:

"Oh Paul, dear Paul, I love you, come back to me," and then would say bitterly, "I thought he was here and had cast me off, and said he hated me."

To-day as I was sitting with Adele, she came quickly to me, her face as white as the snow-drops in her hair, and grasping my hand.

"Come, come quickly," and she hurried me into the woods, almost running in her great haste. It seemed to me she had led me a mile or more, for my strength which is not much to boast of now, was well nigh exhausted, when suddenly stopping she pointed with her finger, through the trees,

"There, look," she whispered hoarsely.

In a little mossy glen, with hanging willow boughs sweeping to the ground, with stray gleams of sunshine peeping through the leaves, making merry smiles upon the brown moss, and dark green rocks beneath, sat a lady and gentleman,—her face was turned away, leaning upon his breast,—his was in full view even to the loving looks which ever an anon he cast upon his frail companion. Just then her voice was wafted to our ears.

"You will bury me here dear Paul, please promise me you will."

"Do not talk so Katie, you grieve me, you are all I have to love, you must not leave me."

"But I must, you know I must, the doctor says so, only promise me this, and I will urge you no more, say you will make poor Katie's grave just where we have sat so often this last summer, where I have known such quiet peace, such peace!"

For a moment his lips quivered, and he could not trust himself to speak, she seemed to know this, perhaps by the throbbings of the heart, against which she leaned, she raised her head and with a tender movement smoothed his cheek, with her thin fingers, then drawing his face down pressed a kiss upon it, saying sadly,

"Poor Paul, poor lonely Paul."

"Oh Katie you break my heart," he said pressing kiss after kiss upon her brow,—then they sat quietly for awhile.

"But you have not promised me yet Paul," she said at length.

"Yes little one, you know it shall be as you desire, but I cannot spare you yet."

For the first time she turned her face slightly towards us, a fair delicately chiseled profile was displayed, fair but worn looking, from that single glance I should take her to be as old, if not older than myself, but suffering may have done that, and my inspection was but momentary, for she laid her head back on its resting place, with the words.

"I am so glad, so thankful, and the little beams will come and dance over me, and the dear old robins will build their nests, and chirp and sing above my resting place, and teach their young, as we have often seen them do. And the great old willows, and the elms, will keep the snow from lying too heavily upon my breast, and above all, you will come sometimes and weep a few sad tears over my grave, and say, 'Poor Katie lies here, she loved me well, the only thing she had to love, and—'"

"There pet, you will waste your strength, you must talk no more."

"Take me home then, dear Paul, I am chilly," and very gently he carried her away out of our sight.

I could not bear to meet Lela's eye all this time, but when they were gone, she whispered hoarsely:

"What does it mean? Oh, mamma, could you have

dreamed so much evil lay concealed in that noble form, beneath those glorious eyes?"

We went sadly home. Until this time I had hoped that Lela, carried away by passion, had been deceived, but now with my own eyes I had witnessed the proofs of his perfidy.

We knew not of his being here, until this scene, for Ernest sent her letter to her from home, where it had come.

No wonder my child has sometimes let fall such words of unbelief in men's goodness, when this grief and doubting of one whom all delighted to honor was ever present with her, as she says,

"If he is false, who is true?"

Oh Paul Marstone you have shaken even my faith in man.

Lela droops day by day, alas! how could it be otherwise, and now I fear this solitude, is not the best thing after all for her, and wish it was time for the others to come to us.

Adèle is well, very well, and I cannot but think has less sad a fate than her sister. Oh my little one perhaps you are saved much sorrow, by the sealing of your eyes.

O Esperance! O Percy! our hope is feeble, the Percies are in danger.

CHAPTER LXII.

JUNE, 10.

'Rosedale' and 'Ingleside' are all alive again, and the other villas about us are likewise brimming over with seekers after fresh air and sunshine.

Mrs. Lawrence has her house filled this year with an entirely new set, strangers to me, the acquaintances they have all made through the winter just over.

But we are for the most part the same party as last year.

'The Leas are with us, and this year Jennie has brought out a veritable stranger, a little girl whom she calls Bertha Lea. We have not seen Jennie since our Christmas party, for she has been at her marriage home, which, I believe I have before written, was upon the blue waters of 'Ontario,' so far away from us, but now we have good news; because the climate in nowise agrees with his wife's health, Mr. Lea has determined to remove his business farther South, perhaps to the city where we now live, or at least to P——, which is so near to 'Ingleside' that at least we will have Jennie's company whenever we are here.

When Howard went home this vacation, he took with him as he had promised, Mr. Grey, who had preached two Sabbaths before the family left home.

"We were all so much pleased with him, in the pulpit and in private," says Marie, "of course he is not Uncle Harley, but he will do, I am quite sure."

Harley says in reply to my enquiries:

"I think he is just the man, I have great comfort in leaving my beloved charge in such excellent hands."

He is to make trial this summer, and in the meanwhile, is keeping Ernest (who considers his practice too valuable to leave long at a time,) company in the old house with Margery (who will never come here with us) for house-keeper. Ernest likes him very much he writes me, and that is a great matter truly.

Then another piece of news which they bring with them is truly stunning—but oh, such a joy notwithstanding, such a making plain of all our doubts for Harley and Dora.

Mr. Marstone, it seems, has gone to Europe, and upon the eve of his departure, which was a week before they started for 'Ingleside,' he called upon Harley, telling him that the church at Marstonville was vacant, and had been for some months, owing to the death of the aged clergyman, whom Walter's father, when they were both young men, had placed there when he erected the church. He said,

"I have been looking out for a long while, even before the old man's death, for a person to fill his place, when he should have gone to his fathers, but for one reason or other I have never met any one to whom I felt entirely willing to entrust the spiritual interests of this people. You must not think I speak like an English lord," he added smiling,

"in taking to myself the power to appoint a minister to the village. I do not mean to insinuate I hold them as fiefs, I assure you. I am a thorough republican, but since the death of Mr. Percy who loved and cared for this little church as he did for every other good thing, with his whole heart, it has become my pleasant duty in his place, to do in a degree what he did, that is of course as far as money is concerned, and as I, following his example, have the paying of the clergyman's salary, the keeping in repair the good order of the church, &c., why of course, they look to me for advice as to a successor to their late beloved pastor. You will understand me that there is nothing meritorious in my doing this, for it benefits myself in maintaining peace and quiet in the village, quite as much as it does any one else, I only speak of it, to give you a full understanding of the state of affairs.

"I heard the other day you were looking for a country place, and then," he added holding out his hand warmly, "I knew instantly why I had not been able to suit myself in a minister before, because I always was comparing them with the pastor of Elm St., seeking a second Harley Raymond.—Another reason aside from the good I think you may do there, has weighed very heavily with me, and I know will with you, that I think it will be a pleasant thing for Mrs. Percy and her daughters, to know you have the charge of their father's old church and friends."

—Oh why is he so kind and generous, seemingly so worthy of respect and love, and yet withal so false at heart. Oh I cannot understand it!

Yet I do thank him from my inmost heart for this thoughtfulness, it will be sad to miss Harley and Dora through the long winter but then to know where they are, and what work they are about, and to know too the summer will take us to them, will be such a comfort. Oh Mr. Marstone I do thank you!

Already we begin to speak of this wedding, as very near at hand, and Mr. Audley with his usual go-a-headativeness, already talks of selling off some of Dora's city property and investing it in a pretty little estate which is for sale, about six miles from here and but a mile or less from our old home, just out of the village of Marstonville.

JUNE 25.

Last evening in the most private manner possible, Harley and Dora, were united to each other, "until death shall them part." Mr. Grey coming up from B——, to perform the ceremony. This morning they started for Harley's old home, to be gone a couple of weeks, taking Mary Lea's village in their way back.

In the mean time, Estelle and all the girls, (the latter term always including Jennie Lea, although she is a mother now,) are to furnish their pretty cottage for them at Mr. Audley's expense, who insists he intends thus to pay a small part of the debt we owe Harley, for his kindness in years gone by, especially his faithfulness in directing the studies of all three of the boys.

Dora has not even seen her home yet, for Mr. Audley with Harley's entire approval has really purchased the property I spoke of, for her.

Mrs. Wilbur and Estelle are to assist Ada and Jennie in arranging the house, none of us could go so near to the spot lost but beloved, and Dora knows that though but a few miles part us, we could never go, even to visit her, where the shadow of "Percie's Cliffe" tower, would fall across our path.

In time perhaps the others may, but I never! never! I could not tread as an alien, the Percy ground which should be my children's; it would be like trampling upon the grave of my buried love and hope.

Lela with the aid of the others is to have the furnishing of her friend's establishment, it will be rather out of the way summer, amusement, but they all enjoy it.

The next bird who takes its flight, I suppose will be May, for I have promised it shall be as soon as our young limb of the law has his credentials.

How strangely things come round, who would have thought a few years ago, that Harley and Dora would ever work together any where, but especially upon the same ground where Walter and I once labored, and yet it has come about quite naturally. His coming to us was natural because he was lonely, and we were a pleasant family, then after Dora came and he learned to know her, it was so exactly right he should ask her to walk the rest of the way with him, and still more when Mr. Marstone needed a faith-

ful servant of God; it was not strange he should stretch out his hands towards Harley, and that he should answer that call.

Thus it is, God by small means works out great blessings for us, and I will trust there may even be some brightness in the future for my poor heart-broken Lela.

JULY 25.

Dora and Harley are home again,—my quiet dove-eyed Dora, a wife—how strange it seems, but her happy look tells it is not strange, but right.

And Harley has such a helper, her steadfast heart can well appreciate his zeal in a righteous cause, surely they are blessed beyond most newly wedded pairs, for they strive heart and life for the same great end, the same good reward.

Next autumn Howard enters the senior class and in one year more will graduate, although he is not yet sixteen.

Mr. Livingstone has come down to stay awhile, but refusing both Mrs. Lawrence's and Mr. Audley's invitation to put up with them, is living an "independent bachelor's life," he declares, in one corner of Mr. Marstone's village mansion, "The Grange," with only two of his own servants for company.

It is nearly two weeks since the Raymonds (how strange it is to say it,) returned, and already they have learned a world of village news; we laugh at Dora, and tell her she must have grown a dreadful gossip since she became a resident of Marstonville, but she declares it comes to her with any seeking, this news.

The other day the conversation at tea turned upon Mr. Marstone, by Mr. Livingstone's reading a short letter from him, dated "Havre," giving his friend notice that he was about starting on a long tour in the "East."

When we returned to the drawing-room, Dora said:

"Mr. Livingstone's speaking of Mr. Marstone, reminds me of another piece of gossip of which I have not told you; it is reported that just before Mr. Marstone left home, he buried a lady, to whom he was much attached, and to whom he had for a number of years afforded a home, sometimes

here, and sometimes, when her health required taking her abroad. The village gossips give out the whole affair of this lady's life as a grand mystery, which even they were unable to fathom.

"Although living a part of each year in their midst, since the present Mr. Marstone inherited the estate, yet the most inveterate seeker after other people's secrets, has never been able to catch more than a distant view of the lady.

"An old lady and two servants, quite middle-aged men, composed Mr. Marstone's domestic establishment, and from them nothing could be learned. Although according to all accounts they were well plied with questions, upon every available opportunity."

Dora related all this in a quiet, matter of fact way, never dreaming how nearly it affected the life happiness of her dearest friend. But when she was done, I asked Mr. Livingstone if he could not explain the mystery for Dora and her village friends.

"There is no mystery, dear madam, which is at all explainable, only some scheme of philanthropy, which Marstone has been working out. I believe I told you duty was one of his inveterate hobbies; I am thankful this one is out of the way at last, poor Katie," he added, a cloud overshadowing his handsome face.

"Then you are more fortunate than my neighbors, Mr. Livingstone," said Dora, smiling, "since you know the mysterious lady. Was she beautiful as report says, or did distance lend encahnment to the view?"

"Beautiful! do you think, Mrs. Raymond, the worn, weeping Niobe was beautiful? no, such a life as Katie Linn's left no beauty behind it," and he rose quickly and left the room.

Katie Linn, then he had given her a part of his name, if not the whole. What could it all mean? and why did Mr. Livingstone, so reckless, and careless of goodness, speak thus tenderly of her? I cannot make it out.

At Dora's request, I have named her home for her, and as she likes it and all the rest also, I have called it Glen-Dora.

Lela is much better, Mr. Audley thinks her quite well, save that he scolds terribly because she is so much more grave than formerly.

It has come over me very sadly, to-day, after a long talk with Gracie and Adèle, that had God spared our little Ernestine, she would have been seven years old, next month, dear little daughter, but perhaps it is better she is taken from the evil to come; of course it is, God pardon me, that I doubt, and long for my darling so sadly.

Ernest was down to-day, and declares that next year if he can get an appointment from some scientific society, he will go abroad, and study what has become his favorite branch of surgery, ophthalmology. He always hopes to be sufficiently skillful to operate upon Adèle's eyes.

How it makes my heart throb and tremble to think of it—and yet my blind daughter is very happy, and Gracie very faithful.

CHAPTER LXIII.

"Love may slumber in a maiden's heart, but he always dreams."
JEAN PAUL.

JULY 26.

AFTER dinner is always a very quiet time with us, the ladies going up to their rooms for an afternoon nap, and the gentlemen strolling into the woods or into some out of the way corner, for a smoke and siesta.

I am lying upon the lounge, in the "alcove" of which I have before spoken, shrouded by the crimson curtains which swept round me, when my slumbers were disturbed by a murmur of voices in the library, which goes out of the place where I was lying, for a moment I lay but half awake thinking I must tell whoever it was, I was there, ere they let me know their secrets, but in a moment all sleep was gone, and all other thought save a desire to hear every word of that low toned conversation, for it was Mr. Livingstone and Birdie.

They had, I suppose, been conversing some time ere I noticed them, for the first words I heard were,

"Then you think people should always pay their debts, especially when they were voluntarily assumed?" it was Mr. Livingstone who spoke.

"Certainly sir, do not you? I am sure I shall always try to do just as I say I will, no matter how disagreeable it may be. The wrong is in making the promise, it would be a double wrong to shrink from it because we do not like it, I think."

"Why you are a perfect little Herod, but I am mightily glad you think so, for I am come to claim the fulfilment of a promise you made me long ago."

"I sir, I do not remember, ever having promised you anything, what is it?" "A———" and he whispered the words in her ear, whatever they were she started, turning crimson, and her eyes flashing through fast gathering tears, she cried, "Oh no, never, never. I did not sir, you know I never could have promised that."

"Naughty Birdie," and he caught both her hands in his, "naughty girl do you not remember, one day long ago, when I bid you good bye, to go on a long dreary journey, you promised me when I came back you would give me what you refused me then, did you not, little one?" and he held her face up, and gazed with his thrilling eyes, on its blushing confusion.

"But I said the next year, sir," she said drawing quickly back, "and you did not claim it when it came due," and looking up archly, "the bargain is canceled, completely outlawed, you come too late by a whole year."

"No, not so, you owe me interest for waiting so long, naughty thing, and now little lawyer that you are, you would cheat me of the whole," he replied, still keeping fast hold of her little hands. But she drew herself up proudly as he said this.

"Not cheat, a child could have paid what a child promised, but a woman cannot you know, it is so different," and she stood with downcast eyes, and blushing cheeks before him.

Oh, then such a passion of love swept over his face, though he did not speak.

"Please let go my hands, I must go now," she said after a little pause.

"Never, never, my darling, my flower," and with a pas-

sionate gesture he drew her to his breast, "may I not hold you here my darling, thus closely and safely?"

She shrank away from him for an instant white and trembling, startled by his words, which struck me dumb and cold where I lay.

"Stay with me Birdie, be my own love, my little one, my cherished flower," he said in a low tone of thrilling entreaty, holding his arms open to receive her, "come to me, sweetest, be my all on earth, the only thing in the whole world I love."

With a wild glad cry she sprang to him, and was buried in his embrace, yea buried forever. I felt it then, forever parted from us all.

"Mine! mine!" he said tenderly, my very own Coralie Percy ever mine, no one else's in the whole wide universe, is it so my treasure, my sweet love?" Rolf Livingstone's own true wife, forever more?"

"Forever, forever, in life or in death yours, only yours," she said in a soft low tone making her woman's vow.

"Birdie, Birdie," he said, pressing passionate kisses on her lips and eyes, "then though hell itself stand in our way, I will never give you up, you are mine though I walk through seas of fire to win you."

"Only yours, only yours," she murmured.

"Let me look into your eyes my little one," he said after a pause, "look at me darling."

For a moment she raised her head from his breast, and met his deep passionate glance, then with a caressing gesture she laid her head back, and clung lovingly to him.

"Does not Birdie like my eyes?" he said smiling.

"Dearly, dearly, better than anything else," she said quickly.

"Then why will she not look at them longer?" and he wound her golden curls over his finger.

"They are too bright, they drink my soul away, I cannot breathe while they shine in mine," she said raising his hand caressingly to her lips and keeping it there.

"My sweetest, my darling, so pure, so good," and he kept playing with her hair, holding her tightly to him, then he said softly,

"Now give me my kiss, darling, you know you have the right, now," and he drew her face to his.

Timidly and reverently, as though he had been some

great and good man, she stood and looked up at him, then rising upon tip-toe, she clasped her arms about his neck, pressing a kiss upon his forehead, and was gone before either of us knew it.

And all this time I had lain quietly and seen the tempter wooing my child from me, and never stretched forth my hand to stay his power, but I could not, God pity me, I could not; I was stricken, crushed, I had no strength.

But when they were gone, the spell which bound me was broken and I sprang up.

"My fault, my own fault," I cried. "I have thrown her in his way, deeming her but a child, to shield Leonore, and now the deed is done; too late! too late!" and I flung myself upon my knees.

Here an hour afterwards, May and Lela found me, and I told them all.

"Birdie, Birdie, oh it cannot be—such a bad, bad man, why she knows he is an unbeliever, for I heard her say so. Oh she cannot love him, she is mistaken," cried Lela in dismay.

"Oh Lela, my sister, do you take it thus, I feared it would not be so; we had dreaded, mamma and I, for a long while, that this bad man had woven his meshes round your heart," cried Marion.

"Oh I knew better, daughter, Lela told me I was wrong while we were here alone before you came."

"Oh Birdie, and we have never guarded your impetuous, loving heart, from him. Oh sister, sister!" cried poor Marion.

But though we mourned, it brought not back the past, dread thought. At tea Cora sent word she had a headache, Mr. Livingstone looked unconcerned and cool, too much a man of the world to be disturbed.

I went to Birdie, but she turned her face to the wall and would not speak to me, because,

"My head aches so sadly, and I am so sleepy," she said fretfully.

Oh, Birdie, to deceive me thus. Oh my child, my sweet child!

JULY 31.

This last stroke crushes me,—my precious little blue eyed girl. Oh, it breaks my heart that she leaves me for this bad man.

He has asked me for her—and bitter words the most bitter I have ever spoken to a human being in my life, have passed between us.

But it has done no good, for though it has banished him from our home, it has only done evil in every way,—it has weaned my child's heart from me.

Oh she has grown so cold and proud, assuming a manner unlike herself, and will have none of our company, but fiercely resisting our entreaties wanders away into the deep solitude of the forest.

Oh we miss her sweet voice and merry laugh; Mr. Audley has tried to reason with her, but turned away from her grieved and wounded by her cold contempt.

Her conduct has cast a shadow over the whole house, for we found it vain to endeavor to conceal, what was passing, as we would gladly have done.

Marie with her old tenderness has tried to win her sister's confidence, but been chilled into silence by her bitter words.

"When you receive Rolf Livingstone, you will receive me, but I love none, who cannot love him," and she turned proudly away.

Oh can this be my gentle loving little Coralie who thus casts us from her. Lela, Howard and the others bitterly resent her treatment to me, and will not judge her leniently, and I cannot make them gentle to her.

"Please do not command me in this thing Aunt Bertha," Stuart will say, "I cannot obey you, I think with Lela it is not to be endured, that you should be thus contemned, by one upon whom you have lavished such love."

Howard pale and grave says nothing; but his arm is never woven about his old play fellow's waist as has always been their custom, and he avoids even approaching her. Adèle last night knelt at my feet.

"Mamma, Gracie weeps and weeps over Coralie's sin, but I have no tears to shed; I have asked my Father in Heaven, to take me from off the earth ere I thus weary and break your gentle heart."

Oh though they are all so tender to me it never lightens the burden, and all this time while we mourn for her, she leaves us, to meet him stealthily, and comes back with a bright smile in her eyes from his embrace.

CHAPTER LXIV.

Mourn O rejoicing heart!
The hours are flying;
Each one some treasure takes,
Each one some blossom breaks,
And leaves it dying.—ANON.

AUGUST 1.

LAST year when I counted up the deeds of the year gone by, I numbered among the blessings for which I was most grateful, the sparing of Coralie's life,—now I shudder and a pang shoots through my heart like an arrow, when I remember who was her preserver, and that by the saving of her life, he has won her soul!

And I made him go to her after that, so she might thank him, foolish woman that I was! exposing my child to harm, such harm! because I deemed it might do him good. O I did not, I could not know, what would come of it.

She seemed such a little guileless child, I never dreamed that interview would decide her fate,—but that it did, winds long since still, have risen to convince me.

She has idolized him,—since that day he periled life to save her from a watery grave, she had shrined him in her heart, the best, the bravest, and above all, her own preserver. Oh child, child you have made him your God, this bad man, this cold, proud Rolf Livingstone with his handsome face, glorious as the face of an angel fallen from "the Presence;" the image of the Creator stamped upon it, but marred and sullied by the hand of the Evil one. Oh Lucifer! son of the morning, why has your syren tongue won my child's heart away from her fealty.

Oh Walter, my husband! I have striven night and day, even as I vowed beside thy dead body, to be faithful to these children, but one of them is lost, and I grope blindly after her, I weep piteous tears over her, I pray fervently for her, but in vain. I may not win her back! may not! may not!

I have been very gentle with her, I have said no unkindly word to her, and that my pale cheeks and weary eyes bear witness against her, I cannot help.

Oh! my child has gone far beyond me, and bye and bye,

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when she has gone from her home with this man, I shall have lost her, perhaps—but no, when my little one finds the mountain of sand upon which she has reared the castle of her happiness, slowly gliding from under her, and knows the foundations of her love are worthless; weary and sad, with her life experience, will she creep back in her day of sorrow to a mother's faithful arms. Walter dearest, pray that I may be faithful, it is so dark now, the ocean of my life is filled with shoals.

My *Espérance* burns dimly now—its bright flame quenched in bitter tears!

AUGUST 10.

It was vain, we knew it from the first, to strive to separate them, so now Rolf Livingstone comes here as of old, but only to carry her away with him—to walk, to ride, or sail in a tiny boat, upon the river which beautiful and treacherous as himself, is his delight. Oh he should be a good, true man, thus to have won my Birdie's pure heart! this wild, passionate idolatry which enthalls her, shines in her eyes, adding a new beauty, a graceful dignity to her whole being.

My child, my little lamb, whom I thought to lead so early, safely into the fold of the great Shepherd, the evil one has won you. Oh my sweet bird, he has charmed you with a serpent's wiles. O why is it thus, Walter my husband! wherein have I been faithless, in what have I lacked careful tender watchfulness? As surely as she goes forth with this man, a scoffing unbeliever, she is lost, not only to us now, but eternally. Oh! she has ever been so frail, so easily led away, and we have guarded her so from evil influences—now—now we may never do it more, oh Coralie!

Oh when God took away my Adèle's sight, did I not grieve over it! Now I could almost think it was meant, in kindness, that she is thus preserved from being won "by the desire of the eye." Better be ever in darkness, my Adèle, than to go into the glaring sunlight with blind faith, trusting for guidance to faithless worldliness.

Tiny, my baby, the sea was kind to take you in your innocent infancy from this sin-stained earth. I mourned for

you, my child, but not thus, always with a sure hope, and a knowledge of your joy.

We will go home, to prepare to part from this child, perchance forever, and so soon, for Mr. Livingstone with a haughty tone has informed me, "I shall go abroad at once, without more than the delay of a month, therefore Coralie has promised to grant me the favor of naming an early day for our marriage."

It must be, for she will do as he wills, whether we oppose or sanction it, so we will not strive with her, but only make her ready as swiftly and well as we may through our tears.

AUGUST 20.

We are at home earlier than last year, but we longed for the quiet that we could not find in such a whirl of company. Save that it was sad to leave the Raymonds behind us, there was little to regret in leaving "Ingleside" this year.

Harley told me just as we left, that Mr. Hartley who has been away for a number of years, had returned, in very ill-health to "Percie's Cliffe." Poor old man, it is very sad to think of him, alone and in sickness, but perhaps, though Harley did not say so, he has brought home with him the long expected heir.

No one in the neighborhood of Ingleside, except our own immediate friends, knew of our connection with this place; therefore, although we have passed summer after summer, so very near the spot around which so many associations cluster, still we know nothing of our old neighbors, or our old home, save the little which Milly learned by her single visit to it last summer.

None of us, not excepting Mr. Audley, have ever gone back to look upon the lost home of our race,—unless Cora in these last few weeks has gone there, in some of her frequent rides with Mr. Livingstone—I do not know, I heard she went to the village church, with him, one Sabbath evening, but she never told us of it.

Perhaps she has even taken him to look for the first time since she left it, upon the scene of her childish happiness.

Oh Cora, perchance he will teach you to smile carelessly over all these memories we treasure so sacredly, lightly to esteem the solemn past. But I must not let her know I murmur thus, for as she says so fiercely: "I have chosen him, he is my own, I have elected him alone, from all the rest of earth to be my very own. Therefore, his thoughts, his hopes, his will, yea his very fate are henceforth and forever mine, and no one shall dare to speak aught against him to me." Oh can it be that this cold girl saying such bitter things to me, to us all, is my wild, bright, summer bird, whom we deemed a rough wind would blight, if it touched her too roughly? oh I do not comprehend it!

Oh! my golden haired pet you should not have spoken thus bitterly to me, looking the while as though you hated me. I cannot help it that my face tells tales against you, my tongue does never, have patience with me, daughter!

My nights are wearily long, and tear-stained, so the morn looks but coldly upon me. I pray God your heart may never feel the pangs mine now endures, my child.

SEPTEMBER 20.

I have more letters from Clare, dear Clare, such warm, bright, joyous letters they are. He little knows how sad we are at home, or what green oases his letters are in this desert of gloom which lies about us. He is studying the Roman masters assiduously.

Stuart works as hard as ever, though the glad hope which seemed so near to him and our gentle May, has been put by. They were to have been married as soon as he had passed his examination and got his license, but now, we all say it must be put off for a while, for Rolf Livingstone shall have no beggar bride; all we have saved, even the little we have laid aside for Adèle, with so much pleasure, we will expend upon her outfit.

Mr. Audley would be generous to her, I doubt not, but he is grieved and hurt by her conduct, and will treat her but coldly, and he shall never hear of our sacrifices, for already we are under a vast weight of obligation to him which we may never pay.

Mrs. Lawrence has been seriously ill since her return, and

has been ordered to the south of France or Italy, by her physician, the change will do Ada good, but we shall miss her sadly; thus they drop away from us, one by one.

Mr. Grey, our new minister is much liked, and is a most excellent man.

Howard would not come home with us, as usual, but went directly to college.

"I will not be a witness of my sister's wicked deeds," he said. Therefore Cora is to be wedded without her father's representative to sanction her vows; poor Birdie!

I am glad Mr. Audley insisted so strenuously upon bearing the expense of Howard's education. It is a comfort to know he is safe from our necessities, that even though trouble should overtake us, he will be able to complete his course.

I am sadly grieved that May and Stuart should be made to suffer for Cora's sake, and Howard is bitterly angry at the necessity, but it was always thus, Marion ever endured trials for the rest, and she bears them patiently.

They do not complain, though it is a great disappointment to them, but with a cheerful looking forward, Stuart says:

"It will be only a little harder and longer working, and then we will take our great happiness, the greater because so long waited for."

SEPTEMBER 25.

They are married, and my young child has left me, to walk the rest of her life journey as nearly by the side of this man, as may please him best.

She, whom a reproving glance would once send broken-hearted in a passion of tears to her knees pleading for pardon, for a trifling fault, stood pale and calm through this whole scene—bidding farewell to her old, careless, happy life—crushing back the tears, lest *he* should think she sorrowed to go with him, and be troubled by her grief. They were married privately, in our own house, by Mr. Grey, for Harley and Dora would not come.

She began bidding us good by very quietly, kissing each in turn; when she came to Marion she wavered in her firmness, and clasping her arms about her, said:

"May, my May, you love me, dearest?"

"I cannot help but do that, Birdie," said Marion, in a low, quivering tone, "you have been my darling so long, I can not give you up all at once."

"Oh Marion, Marion, do not say that!" she said, but she unwound her arms from about her sister, and left her without a look, going at once to Leanore, and holding out her hand irresolutely.

"Good bye, sister," she murmured.

Lela bowed her proud head, and pressed a light kiss upon her brow.

"Good bye Mrs. Livingstone, may you have a pleasant journey," she said it coldly, for Lela with her passionate love for me, cannot forgive her sister the anguish she has caused me, and she has taught the others to be cold and cruel, and resent this treatment, as she says, Percies should, proudly and relentlessly.

"Good bye Birdie—Coralie, I mean,"—said Gracie weeping bitterly, as she hid her face against Adèle.

"But you have not kissed me good bye, Gracie, must Adèle do it first?"

"We can not kiss you, Cora," said Adèle with a look of anguish on her pale sad face, "we could not go to mamma whom you have made so desolate, whose trials, already so grievous, you have rendered a thousand times sadder; poor, gentle mamma, who has borne so much, and whom the rest of us must strive to comfort as best we may, for the sharp sting of ingratitude which one child has selfishly wounded her with; we could not go to her and kiss her pale cheeks and weary eyes, did we bear upon our lips the kiss of Rolf Livingstone's wife—his kisses must suffice you now, my sister; you have chosen between him and all the rest who love you." She said all this very solemnly, but I wish it had been left unsaid, it was more like Lela's proud words than my gentle Adèle's; surely this trouble is developing new phases in my daughters' characters, which I, who have watched them so closely, never dreamed they possessed.

Oh! Adèle would not have spoken thus, could she have seen the white look of agony, and bitterness with which her sister turned away: it wounded her to the quick, it hurt her worse than all the rest, for they were her pets who thus spurned her.

"Mamma!" and her voice trembled, "mamma!" and she paused uncertainly.

"My darling child," and I held out my arms to her, "my little one, come to me," and she sprang across the room into my embrace.

"Good-bye, my daughter, remember your mother's heart will never fail you. Whatever fate awaits you, remember, in trouble and sorrow I watch for you."

"I shall have none, mamma, none, none," and with a bright smile she held her hand out to her husband, who had been standing all this while alone with folded arms watching the scene; he came now and stood by her side.

"Bless us, my mother, and say you are glad," she said softly.

"I cannot! I cannot! oh child! child!" and I clasped my arms about her, "Walter's unhappy deluded child," she drew herself from me, and before us all, laid her clasped hands in his, saying:

"Not poor, rich, rich! not unhappy or deceived, papa's blessed, gloriously happy child! I am ready now, my love," and without one farewell message for Howard or Stuart, they went away.

Married, but oh the thought is agony, though he loves her now, when he wearies of her, this marriage will be a mockery which he will shake off as lightly, as if God witnessed it not. How can he hold sacred a vow made in the name of One in whom he does not believe. Oh my child, my child!—

We are quiet now, talking little of our lost one, and always sadly and softly as if she were dead,—and we are striving, not to learn to forget her, but to live without her. It is strange, but we talk oftener now of Lillian than of Coralie.

CHAPTER LXV.

NOVEMBER 30.

THE Lawrences have gone, we miss them sadly: for years scarcely a day has gone by without Ada's bright eyes beaming in upon us, now we must only know of her, by letters, white winged messengers coming over the seas.

We have had one short letter from Coralie, written the day they reached Liverpool, announcing they were safe and well, though so brief, "because I want to send it at once," it is full of tender love. The only reference to her husband is this, "our happiness is perfect, without a cloud," God grant it may continue so.

Clarence's letters tell of unceasing toil, and Harry Lester and Carrol write, "he will paint himself to death, he looks like 'Banquo's Ghost' now."

I have written to him, pleading with him that he will not thus trifle with his precious health, for my sake, which I believe is the only sake he cares for now.

Lela is sadly out of health, and her pale cheeks cause Mr. Audley much trouble, and he earnestly desires to take her with him to Paris, where he is peremptorily summoned next month, but she refuses utterly to leave me.

"No, no, '*Bien-bon*,' if I am really ill, no one can nurse me into health as well as mamma, and she must not lose another daughter just yet. Leave me here until next year, and then I promise to come."

"Yes, and before then some one else will be putting in their claim to you, before mamma or me, either of us. And you will say, 'excuse me, somebody else needs me now.'"

"No, no, I promise you that shall not be, now do not shake your wise head, I promise to come and live with you, for I expect to live and die a damsel."

But he laughed at her, until something in her eyes made him bend down and gaze long and sadly on her sweet face.

"What makes my dearie's cheeks so pale and her eyes sad, has any false-hearted loon hurt thee, my pet? I'll make him pay for it. What is the matter, sweet?"

"I want to stay with mamma, that is all, nothing else, please let me stay. I am not quite well, but this quiet winter will cure me for you, uncle."

"So you shall, my pet, though Paris will be dark to me, wanting your bonnie smiles and songs: but it was a happy two years you spent with the old man in Paris, we were always happy in the great city of follies, were we not?"

"Very happy, dear uncle, full of glad happiness, but it would not be so pleasant now, when I am not quite well. It would make me grow heart-sick never to have mamma smiling over me, or her hand smoothing away the pain," and then laying her cheek upon his shoulder in the only way she ever caressed him, "you know she needs me now, my poor mamma."

So it is happily arranged, she is to stay this year with me, and the next I am to send her under a safe escort to Paris. Mr. Audley regretted this the more, because not only does he love her, but he needs her, for good Miss Weston is dead, and he had no one to superintend his establishment.

He was talking this matter over with me one day very ruefully, when suddenly in his quick abrupt way he said,

"Well then, since Nora will not go with me, I must have some one else, that's plain, and I believe I will make a fool of myself and ask Mrs Harrington."

"Estelle!" I said hastily, thinking that a new cord would be cut away from round my heart. "Oh I am sure she will not leave me, she would not like to be a housekeeper even for you, sir, she is very proud although she is poor."—

"There now, stop talking about something you do not understand," then he added with a comical smile, "I shall invite her to go as Mrs. Audley if at all."

I was speechless with amazement, and just looked at him, astonished.

"There," he said testily "I know you would think me a fool, but what can I do?"

"Oh sir, I do not, indeed I do not." I said quickly, "but I was so surprised, I never dreamed such a thing was possible."

"Well neither did I to tell the truth, until I was at my wit's end for a companion, but—Mrs. Harrington is handsome, well educated, has exquisite address and manners, is accustomed to all the elegances of life, and can answer all the claims which will devolve upon her as my wife," thus he recounted her good points, much in the same way a sportsman would descant upon his hunter, then he added, "there

is not such a fearful disparity in our years, although I am old enough to be her father, yet she is no girl. Then above all she has sense enough to know that I am too old to play the lover, and that if she marries me, it is because we esteem and respect one another, and it will be an eligible match, she giving me what I most need, a lady-like agreeable wife, to preside over my establishment, in return for unbounded wealth and high social position."

"And I think she must certainly see the advantages on both sides, sir," I said.

First I talked the matter over with Mrs. Wilbur, and then at Mr. Audley's request, explained his desires to Estelle, herself. Poor friend, it makes me smile even now to remember how dismayed she was at first at the idea, as surprised as I had been, and she refused to listen to such a thing, but I have persuaded her that it is not to be thought lightly of, and indeed is a great cause for gratitude.

Oh this marrying is a sad thing—parting friends—breaking up happy home circles,—severing so many dear and cherished ties,—and yet it is right. One of the roses of life, which though beautiful and sweet is not without a thorn. Mr. Audley is growing an old man, and it will be pleasant to know Estelle is ever by his side, for after some demure she has consented to be his bride. And because his time is so short, in two weeks they will be married; we will keep our Christmas with a bridal, instead of the merry makings of last year; a wedding and a parting. This is the fifth bride who has gone out from among us since we have been teaching. Mrs. Wilbur declares,

"If any mothers are in doubts about getting their daughters off, they had better send them to us, we will be sure to provide for them."

This will be a happier marriage than the last, although this too has a long separation at the end of it,—but this lover has our hearts approval; and it is not hard to give up our dear ones, when it is for a sure happiness. The best thing of all is, Harley is to marry them, and we will have a whole two weeks reading of Dora's sweet face, and then Howard is to come home for the holidays.

Ada Lawrence's letters give dreary accounts of her mother's health, and I am afraid the poor girl's life is a tedious one, for a gay lady of the world like Mrs. Lawrence, rarely makes a patient invalid.

We are very busy now, making Estelle ready for her bridal day.

"We shall have to work our finger ends off, if all the others take such a sudden notion to go off, as the last two have," declares Mrs. Wilbur.

Ernest, who has been away two or three weeks, attending some convention of the Esculapii of the land, has just returned, and pretends to be disgusted with finding another wedding upon the *tapis*.

DECEMBER 28.

Within the last few days we have had a package of letters from our absent boys,—the best of which was a long letter—eight pages, closely written, and crossed from Clare.

He is very modest in his account of himself—but Harry Lester makes up for all deficiencies, both by his letters and the papers he sends us.

"Why Mrs. Percy," he writes, "we fellows who used to think him a deucedly good chap (pardon my college slang;) but no better than the rest of us, think it an honor to claim his acquaintance now. If we want to go anywhere, or do anything in this counfoundedly hard-to-gain-admittance land, Carrol and I announce ourselves, as friends of the distinguished artist Beaumont; this is the open sesame that unbars doors and windows, and powder, gold lace, and livery, hail us admitted. And all the while the *great* man himself is living quietly in a small house in the suburbs, in an out of the way place, because as he says, his mother and father once lived there, and that he likes to work in the same spot where he has oftentimes as a child watched his gentle mother soothe with tender carresses, the weary feverish brow and eyes of his artist father:—and he just mopes himself to death, over his pictures, only looking very bright when he has finished one.

"If I did not know Beau," he continues, "so well, I should imagine he intended to bring about the very effect he has, by excluding himself from society, for the less they see him the more these Florentines adore him, and we have scores of invitations from the brightest eyes in Florence, which he will not accept."

The papers give glowing accounts of him, but Clare says, "you must not believe all, I know Hal will write you, but put a great deal down to his love for me; and as for the paper accounts of my two pictures, remember he only sends you those which praise, not the ones that censure, and I like the last the better, for they show me wherein to improve, they do me good,—besides these warm hearted Italians like me because I am a countryman, and Italy has so few painters among her children, of late years One word from home were worth all their flattery, I only crave your commendation and your love for your poor orphan exile boy." Dear Clare you have it a thousand times. I like your humble way of taking triumph.

JANUARY, 1.

The wedding is over, and they are gone, but with many lookings back and vain regrets from Estelle, because she left me to toil, while she went forth to pleasure. She has been such an assistance to us, nay, we were only her assistants, for having no other duties to call her away, she devoted herself with her whole energy to the school-room. Milly says truly.

"We'll nebbber set our eyes upon Miss Stella's like again."

And what a glorious bride she was, in her full ripe beauty, tall and graceful, a splendidly developed woman, with the face and form of a Grecian Helen. Mr. Audley will have good reason to be proud of his wife, and he will, I know appreciate to the full her many excellences.

Dear Estelle, the morning and early noon of her life was filled with trials; it is a pleasant thought, that the evening of her days will be such a safely sheltered one. It is a great comfort too, that part of the time at least, Estelle can watch over Clare. His new aunt will take such good care of him, just what he is not doing for himself I know too well; what a surprise this will be to him.

We are lonely enough, and look round our diminished board with rueful faces.—But three years ago we called ourselves a colony so numerous were we, now half our number are gone,

"Some to the bridal, some to the tomb."

Good old Sandy of course went with his mistress, that was but right, we miss him, but it was the reward of his faithful service, to share her prosperity.

"I'm to follow th' gate me ledly leads me, where'er it may be," he said. Ernest still talks of going abroad but not very soon. He has become quite a noted man, and is spoken of not only in this city but elsewhere as a scholar of great promise; we see little of him for his practice has grown very large. Like Stuart, he goes rarely into society, but, from a different cause. To Stuart it is a real cross, he enjoys congenial companionship with such a zest, but will not give himself up to it, save on rare occasions to please May.

But Ernest takes no pleasure in people in general. He declares,

"My books and segars, and an occasional chat with my home friends, is company enough." The girls call him a confirmed old bachelor, to which term he pleads guilty.

APRIL 1.

How I miss Estelle I can not tell, my dear true friend, but then I know she is helping Mr. Audley as she once did me, and perchance she will see Coralie.

Marion and Stuart never speak of their marriage now, but submit to the idea that it is better to wait, until his business is established, but Ernest says,

"Pshaw, they shall do no such thing, as soon as the boy is through, they shall have their wedding day as well as the rest. Let them have their happiness, for the love of mercy, as long as it is within their grasp. He and I can both work better if we have a new object to spur us on."

And I think it will be as well, but we do not say so to them, fearing another disappointment; but it will be a good thing to see our May, with a certain happiness. She is quite old enough, but I am glad she has waited this long, next June she will be twenty-one, and Stuart is twenty-three or nearly that.

My brave hearted Stuart, how entirely his manhood has fulfilled the promise of his youth, an earnest true soul, reaching ever on towards perfection, tender as a girl to

others, stern as a Roman soldier to himself. His open brow, his frank earnest eyes, his firm clear voice tell of a fearless determined soul, and did not the mouth mobile even in repose, redeem the rest, you would say his face told of too stern a will. There is a firm self-reliant look upon him, which commands instant respect, a high souled glorious scholar my Stuart is, and I take it no mean compliment to him that Ernest and Harley have both for years, shown as much regard for his opinion, and as often sought his advice, as though he had age to command their respect and consideration. And it always has to be asked for, he never gives a word of counsel unsought.

"Rosedale" will be closed this season so, as we gave our word to Mr. Audley that we would spend the summer at "Ingleside" as usual, we will have quiet.

Leanore goes out a great deal, more even than I deem good for her, although I am glad to have her in cheerful company, she is much sought for, and is deluged with invitations, for she is known as Mr. Audley's heiress, and this fact, as well as her beauty brings her many suitors. Jennie Lea has been boarding in this city since Christmas, and chaperones her charmingly.

"INGLESIDE," JULY 1.

Ingleside, is fraught with many sad memories, yet it is pleasant to be here, especially as we are near Dora, who needs us now.

This fresh mountain air is doing us a world of good, but the young people miss the friends of last year, especially our merry light hearted Birdie.

Marion and Stuart have many tender and pleasant recollections of this place, for here they first learned, that each should henceforth make the other's life a happiness, and when they wander in the dim old forest aisle, doubtless a thousand pleasant memories hover around their pathway, for May's cheek is more deeply dyed with the sunset's glow, and love-light makes her eyes more bright.

And then this free gay life is a happy exchange for Stuart's musty tomes and midnight toils, and he takes the entire benefit of it, studying as intently the making and proper

curing of hay cocks, talking as learnedly of the best mode to fodder cattle or sickle grain, as though he never saw a law book or Latin Lexicography in his whole life time.

Adèle and Gracie are growing quite into womanhood, although yet little more than in their teens, but since Birdie left us we have been so sober, they seem to have grown sedate and womanly to suit the times.

Gracie, who is the most childlike of the two, finds some fault because it is so dull, and wishes,

"Some of the children were here who, were at Rosedale last year, particularly Willie Lawrence, who was the best boy in the world."

"Yes, and who promised he would marry you, Gracie, when he had won a pair of epaulets did he not?" laughs Ernest merrily.

But Gracie pouts and declares "she will not be such a goose as to tell him her secrets after this, she knows."

And all this time my poor Lela, has only a dark memory, the sorrow of her life, to summon up in this spot, and it bears upon her sadly, and upon me too for her sake, partly, and because of pining for my other child who is gone. Somehow I cannot rid me of the feeling, that though so many miles away 'Percie's Cliffe,' casts its shadow over me even here, heavier and darker than of old, but perchance it is only because we hear from there oftener, through the Raymonds, living so near it.

CHAPTER LXVI.

"It takes a long time to die of a broken heart,—we learn at last to thank God for the balm that allays its torture.—Little sweetnesses spring up in our path; necessary, wholesome duties come like servants to uphold our staggering feet."—HEAD OF THE FAMILY.

AUGUST 1.

Eight years I have waited for the summons, and yet I thought at the first, one was a weary while, oh we know not what we can endure until we are tried.

How could I have borne to know the dust and toil of eight long years were strewn over my pathway, and yet now I can sit quietly and write that perhaps eight more leaves will be turned down in my book of life, ere the volume is closed and sealed,—yes, it is a true word, that we can bear anything God sends; also, that "it takes long to die of a broken heart," indeed I think that last is never done for my troubles were very grievous to bear, and yet my heart did not break or die, but is strong and full of life to-day.

I pray God Coralie's gay life and all absorbing love, may not make her forget that other heart, which loved her years ago, who though so young and brave, laid down and 'fell on sleep,' when life was most full of promise to him. Oh Cora, my child, do not forget your father, or slightlyly remember him. Darling, we can endure, although sadly, your forgetting us, and never sending us one word of your well being; though in all these months which have flown since you left us, we have never ceased to write fond letters to you, but oh do not forget *him*, wherever you may be, this day, which you were ever wont, with the rest, to spend in quiet sadness, think of him, remember lovingly your spirit guardian! your precious father!

Walter, dear Walter, pray for this little one, that she may not be lost to us in heaven, if she is on earth, and her husband, heaven pardon us if we do him wrong, or judge him harshly, God be with him also.

Oh Walter, your boy is such a good son to me, his life is such a true, earnest christian life, just what it ought to be, when I look upon his glorious face, where your image grows day by day, I scarcely know how to be grateful enough that God has spared him to me.

SEPTEMBER 30.

They have all gone home, but Dora had need of me, and so I staid alone with her and Harley, who have been staying with me at "Ingleside."

Last week, one bright afternoon, we laid a little stranger upon Dora's bosom, and she murmured gently, "My little daughter," and raised its tiny hand to her lips.

They have named it Agnes, with many an earnest prayer that a happier life may await this child, than was the portion of the other one.

It seemed strange last year to say "Dora a bride," but it does not to call her a "mother," for she bears her new honors so humbly and yet so proudly.

We heard to-day, or rather Harley did that poor old Mr. Hartley is sadly out of health, although he still goes about the neighborhood.

We have had letter after letter from all our dear ones except Cora, she will not write, she does not love us now. We had such hopes of the Audleys seeing her, but now that is past, for Estelle writes,

"As soon as we could, after our arrival we sought for them, but after weeks only found their residence to hear that they had gone away the week before, no one knew whither. They had been living in a pretty villa, a little out of the city.

"It is very strange that, though people talk constantly of Mr. Livingstone's having been for more than six months in Paris, yet Cora never appeared in society with him, indeed it was not known among his friends here, that he was married.

"I am so grieved and disappointed to have missed Birdie," she continues, "Of my own house I cannot tell you, enough to say, Lela's hand, and Lela's taste (you know what that is) is in every room, on every article. Tell her I am glad to have everything just as she left it, and try hard to keep it so.

"Clare we have with us, although he is going to Florence next month, and we do not allow him to even *say* pencil or brush while he is here, but make him do nothing most assiduously. Mr. Audley has appointed him my especial *cavaliere servente*, and you may imagine I keep him busy, riding, shopping and entertaining, so I think he is in a fair way of getting back his strength and color, which is in sad need of replenishment, he declares the only fair way he is in is of ruination, saucy fellow!"

FEBRUARY.

"Howe'er it be, it seems to me
'Tis only noble to be good,
Kind hearts are more than coronets,
And simple faith, than Norman blood."

We had no gay parties, or bridals to keep us employed during these holidays. Howard's coming home was our only bit of novelty, and we exchanged our love gifts very quietly, thinking the while of the absent ones. I do not think Howard is at all well, he will not complain, but he grows so tall and slender; it makes me fear he is studying too closely. Last night he came to me, and sat silently for a long while, at last he said,

"Mamma how very proud we are of being Percies, especially Nora and I: was papa?"

"I think he was, although he did not speak of it often, Howard."

"I am afraid we ought not to be proud of it, at all," he said sadly.

"But why my son, why not?" I said in surprise.

"I have thought of it for a long while, and it makes me feel as if pride of ancestry was very wrong; and makes one responsible for their evil deeds, especially when we remember, 'the sins of the fathers are visited.' The race we boast of was not a good people, but much evil is recorded of it from Harry Hotspur and his father, the Earl of Northumberland, or as they called him, the King-maker down. I have been trying for a year past to get rid of this old feeling of pride, and only be proud that I was Walter Percy's son, not some one else's great-grand-son. And I want to remember always that I am to help to remove the 'sins of my fathers,' to finish as nearly as I may, the work of extenuation which papa began but which because of the 'sins that are visited,' God saw fit to cut him off from, so very early. I take great comfort in the other part, which promises 'mercy unto thousands, who love and keep God's commandments,' because I think since I have papa's good deeds to plead before my own, I may be able to accomplish more towards the restoring God's favour to my race, than even he was permitted to, for 'God is tender of his own,' and shows his love unto his children's children."

"There is none other name given whereby men may be

saved, than the name of Jesus Christ,' are you not forgetting that my son, has not our blessed Lord done all for which you are now striving? Can you do by your own good works, what he has already done so well for you?" -

"No, no mamma you misapprehend me, Christ redeems us spiritually, God for His sake forgives us our sins, but without lessening our responsibilities, for the command says expressly, 'the sins of the father are visited,' and our Lord says, 'one jot or one tittle shall in nowise pass from the law until all be fulfilled,' so the old threat is not removed. I think the 'sins of the fathers,' perhaps mean that we are exposed to greater temptations, have more trials to endure, in order to test our faith, especially when, as is our case, we have kept the descent so constantly before us, as something to glory in, thereby making ourselves anew responsible for their evil deeds. Do you not see this, mamma, it has nothing to do with works, I do not mean we can remove the curse, by our own strength, but that Christ aiding us, we may more humbly accept the salvation offered us, 'working out our salvation with fear and trembling' you know, remembering how much more there is in us to be forgiven, even 'the sins of our fathers.'

"It keeps me right many a time, when the wrong tempts me, and I resist with the thought the sins of thy fathers are to be visited,—*C'est a nous a pager pour les crimes des notres.*"

"It seems a beautiful thought, Howard and I think it must be right, since it makes you so very heedful of these things. But there has been more good in the Percies than you think, many good true men, beside your father."

"I know, I have been tracing our lineage back a long way. I have examined the history of my race in many books, but I think the few good are the reason why the many were spared who have been so evil. I think it is so in every family, not ours alone.—Oh I think it makes one very humble instead of proud to remember these things."

These are strange words, and though I am not certain of their being at all orthodox, yet I trust they will do my boy no harm, at least so far they have only made him a better Christian, more prayerful, more watchful.

We spend the time very quietly all of us but Lela, who goes a great deal into gay society and has many friends and

admirers. Marion takes her enjoyment in an occasional going out with her, when the party is to be a sensible, literary, or musical one, but for the most part spends her evenings at home or at a lecture or concert with Stuart, and either one or the other of her younger sisters.

Gracie is a good little body, as steady as possible, and the neatest of sewers. Mrs. Wilbur declares, "Gracie will never find time to have lovers, she will be the maiden sister, and spoil the children."

"I do not think I shall be an old maid at all," she replied with a sly little laugh.

"Whom do you contemplate fastening your fangs upon my dear?" cries Uncle Ernest. But she and Adele are highly indignant at such an idea and will have nothing to do with him.

MARCH 1.

Alas how quickly this year is passing away and we have promised faithfully to send Nora to Mr. Audley, when the year is up. Already he begins to mention it in his letters.

To-day we had a letter in haste from Dora, which causes us great surprise.

"Please let May come to us at once if possible, Mr. Hartley has been taken very ill, and although until now he has never acknowledged our presence here, he sent immediately for Harley to come to him. My husband says he found him in a poorly furnished room very ill, with only Ally to nurse him.

"He is rather better now, though still very ill, and the physicians think can not last the week out, as soon as he was able to speak, he said:

"Send for Marion Percy, I want her to nurse me, tell her I want her and she will come," then he added softly, 'dear little Marion,' since then almost the only thing he says is to ask 'when will she come? how long will it be?'"

Of course, there was but one thing to be done, we owe Mr. Hartley too much gratitude to refuse him such a boon when he is suffering, so to-morrow Ernest will take Marion to Glen-dora, and return at once. Stuart is to be examined this week so of course he cannot go.

Howard will graduate next autumn, and if his health is not too much prostrated by his close application this last term, he will enter at once into the same office where Stuart has been reading law.

Ernest talks more strongly than ever of going abroad, and I think will go now very soon. It seems the chief obstacle to his departure has been that he desires the next year to be able to send for Adèle, as it is entirely on her account that he is pursuing this study of ophthalmia, so intensely, but he has not felt assured that his funds would warrant such an expensive proceeding, but I have given him my promise that if he really thinks it would be preferable to have her in Paris, if he concludes to attempt the operation, which it makes my heart tremble to think of, I will raise no objections to her going, for she will be as safe with Lela and Estelle, as with me, although it will be terrible for me to be separated from her at such a time; but of course the expense of her journey would swallow up all our earnings, both Ernest's and mine, and I must not think even of going.

CHAPTER LXVII.

"Again I sit within the mansion,
In the old familiar seat,
And shade and sunshine chase each other
O'er the carpet at my feet."—BAYARD TAYLOR.

May's first letter, written a few days after her arrival, says,

"Dearest mamma, to think where I am sitting, in papa's own little study, writing to you! oh the past seems all a dream, mother mine, the only waking part, the time when we were here so happy—papa and all.

"How every book and cushion reminds me of the old times, even the way the shadows fall across the carpet, making it

sombre and brown in the shade, until some bright sunbeam peeps in and makes it bright and gay.—Now, as I sit in the high chair papa bought me long ago, that I might sit nicely beside him at his own table and learn to write, I mind me of the many times we three have been here, papa writing, with me perched up beside him, while just opposite us, sewing and rocking, with her little feet placed so cozily upon the very largest cushion the room contained, sat the fairest of ladies, "the mistress."—

"And bye and bye when papa had grown weary of writing, down would go the pen, springing up suddenly he would sit upon the cushion which had been chosen so large,—

"Just to tempt me from my work to come and rest me with a look into my Bertha's eyes," he declares, with his proud head resting against his little wife.

"Oh the tears are blotting my paper mamma, and yours poor darling will be rained upon it.

"The sunshine glistens on my paper, and it grows a blank, until one little ray shoots into my very eyes, I think I hear papa's dear voice.—

"The wicked sunbeams, how they dance with their naughty pranks into my May's eyes," and he goes and shuts down the curtains, or at least it seems as though he did, just as he used to in the old times, for oh, the room has grown suddenly so dark—but that is because I have hidden my eyes away from the dear old things, and am weeping such bitter tears upon the cushion before mamma's chair.

"But sweet mother, I am making you sad, to no purpose. Our old home is just as we left it, oh it would almost frighten you, to see how exactly everything is as it was. I find in your boudoir, a dress which you had been working for our poor little Tiny, the baby who had not come yet, just rolled together with your thimble and scissors as if you had been hurried away and left it in your work-stand drawer. Oh it broke my heart to look at it, you were working upon it, when they carried papa up the walk in that dreadful insensibility, which lasted so long; and underneath it lies a little book from which Howard was saying a lesson while the rest of us played about—oh mamma, since the day nine years ago you huddled them together into the drawer, they have never seen the light till now,—for you did no sewing for a long time after that day!

"But for all this, it is changed here, this hushed stillness over everything, the wanting the old familiar faces and voices—is a sad, sad change.

"The men who have worked here have been very faithful for the sake of the old family, but they lacked skill for all but feeding and weeding, and I think the flowers are brighter when they bloom for merry eyes, and the fawns and birds are gayer when there are laughing hearts about them.

"When I arrived at Glen-dora as soon as I had kissed Dora and that jewel Agnes, Harley brought me here. Poor old Mr. Hartley, he raised himself up in his bed and rained tears and kisses upon my face, Oh, Stuart and the rest would have pardoned him his sternness in the past, to see him so gentle now. Papa, dear papa, it is good to be loved so well—knowing it is for your sake.

"Did you come willingly little Marion?" he said, "or did you hate to come and stay with the old man his last few days upon earth?"

"No sir, I was very glad to come to you, so happy to know you wanted me."

"But you know as soon as I am dead my heir will come and turn you out, but I have bade him pay you a little, if you came willingly."

"Please do not talk so, I only want you to let me love you, and love me a little in return, I do not want any other reward then that, I shall not take his pay," I said a little crossly, I believe, for it made me angry to hear him talk so.

"Why child you must not get miffed at me," he said laughing.

"I am not sir, only I wish you would think I should have come to you as soon if you had not had anything to pay me with."

"Since then he has never spoken in that way, except once to tell me his heir (whom he never calls by name) is very good and will act well by his inheritance.

"Harley (how strange it seems not to say uncle) is constantly with him, and we are both so grateful to see that now he receives every word of counsel with gladness.

"Before I can write again I fear he will have passed away, but we trust with a sure faith in a merciful Redeemer to sustain him.

"Hope is in my heart—that I may do him good,—hope

is our boon, our watchword, is it not dearest, even in darkness and clouds we ever say, the old war cry of our house, 'Espérance, O Percy!'"

APRIL 12.

In another letter a week later she writes,

"I am just come from Mr. Hartley's room. He had been very ill all night, but towards day-break grew so much easier he could bear to have me sing to him as I often do.

"Oh mamma, he is so gentle you would scarcely know him. His way through life has been a dark hopeless one until now, when it is growing narrower and very short.

"He can almost see the river of death—but just across upon the other shore, stands surrounded by light the 'Cross' and the rays from it shine over the heaving water, and mark a safe clear pathway for his boat to launch upon. Is it not true that,

'God moves in a mysterious way,
His wonders to perform.'

"Was it not God's providence which brought Harley Raymond with his fervent zeal and winning voice, to dwell in this place. Oh I am sure God's hand led him here? for scarcely any other could have won upon Mr. Hartley's worldly heart as he has done—

"Soon all will be over,—then I will come at once to you, but not until after the funeral, for Mr. Hartley has asked it of us, that we, Harley, Dora, and I, will go alone with Alison Williams, and bury him in the little church yard.

"I have seen no one since I have been here, I could not have borne it, without the rest of you, and Allie and I have been very busy in the sick room."

This letter came four days ago, and last night we were sitting anxiously expectant of her arrival, when Stuart came in saying with a sigh,

"No May to night, I have been down to the cars, but could see nothing of her," and he sat down looking very cross indeed.

"Is there not a later train?" asked Howard.

"Yes, but that does not come until about ten, she would never travel so late alone."

We sat a couple of hours longer until Milly came in declaring,

"Its near as nuffin to leven o'clock, and I am jist going to shut up the house, and take dese old bones off to bed quicker, I tell yer, for thar'll be no May to-night."

"Oh no, of course not, but she will be sure to come to-morrow," said Lela.

When Milly had been gone down stairs a little while some one said,

"Hark, did not Milly call somebody?" but we listened and hearing nothing, concluded she had been only singing, as usual, but an instant after the door opened, and Marion in the deepest mourning knelt at my feet, in such a passion of tears as none there but myself had ever seen her shed.

She gave us no greeting—it was so unlike her usual quiet self possession, that for a moment all were astonished. Then Stuart put his arm tenderly about her.

"Do not, May dearest, do not weep so," he said softly.

She sprang up and flung herself into his arms, and when he had held her closely for a moment stroking back her hair, she grew calm and smiling up into his face for an instant, turned to me,

"Dear mamma, I am very foolish, but I have borne so much, all my self control is gone, oh I have borne so much!" then going up to where Howard stood, she drew him into the middle of the room, and winding one of his arms around her waist, she said in a distinct tone,

"Marion and Howard Percy, sole heirs of 'Percies' Cliffe."

After that I do not know what happened, for I am one of those weak women who at first always lose in darkness the knowledge either of joy or grief. When I came to myself.

"What did you say May?" I said sharply, seeing her bending over me.

"That Mr. Hartley is dead mamma, and that in his will he has left our father's 'old property,' with its accumulated income of nine years, to the rightful heir Howard Percy, and his own property which is vested in the funds of S——, to Marion Percy, thus the will which was opened yesterday by a lawyer of P——, reads," she said it in a calm collected

voice, her excitement all over now her tale was told, and her only care how to keep me quiet.

"Thank God for all his goodness," were the only words I had to say, but Howard who until now had knelt with his head buried in his hands, by my side, arose suddenly, and said in a sweetly solemn voice raising his clasped hands and looking up—

"And thank Him that he has been so good to us in all our ways, tender and kind to us, ever in poverty; learning us to look to Him at all times."

"But are you not glad to be the heir of the Percies once more, my brother?" said Gracie softly, stealing her hand into his.

"I am glad to be Walter Percy's son, my sister," and his eye kindled, "we have been poor, very poor, yet I was always that, spite of all, Walter Percy's son," then he said gently, "but I am glad, very glad to tread my father's halls once more."

We had forgotten Lela all this time, but now she came her face all aglow, and bending her proud head down before Howard kissed his hand softly.

"My father's only son, the head of my house," she said in her clear ringing voice and throwing her arms wildly above her head cried, "oh I would willingly die now, the honor of my race restored—'Percie's Cliffe,' our own once more, oh the joy is greater than I can bear,"—before we could reach her she fell insensible at her brother's feet, murmuring 'Espérance!' 'Espérance!'

It seems strange we should take this great blessing so solemnly and sadly, but oh, we know though all the rest has come back, one presence is lost forever.

Then too, sadder and wiser hearts will go to their old home, for we have known much sorrow, but nevertheless we are glad and thank our God.

Late in the night we said our prayers together, and went to our rooms, very humble but happy.

The next morning we could bear to hear all of that last scene, from Marion. I may not tell of the many gentle deeds my daughter did to soothe the last days of that old man's life, but I treasure them in my heart, as they were told me by our gentle Dora and her husband, who came with her that night even to the very door but turned aside bidding her

a good night; because "it was right she should tell her story to her own family alone" they said, kind friends, who would not look upon our joyful grief.

Nor can I tell as gently, in such sweet and tender phrases as did Marion, the story of the old man's life, as he told it her with his last breath, but this much I know that his history teaches me anew, "that every heart knoweth its own bitterness," that every life has the echos of some sweet, sad tone ringing like bell notes through it with each pulsation,—or rather pealing out knell after knell, which sadden heart and brain because it is the requiem of dead and buried hopes. All, even those we deem most stern have some flower, some leaf, some beauty which memory treasures, which is cherished the one bright spot of a dreary life-time.

—Long years ago, "I will tell the story, in a story-tellers guise," long years ago, four young men started in life nearly together, the oldest and wisest of them was rich, past all reckoning, and had great influence because of his high birth,—and to the best of his ability he aided the others who were his friends, in pushing their way in life. This was Clarence Percy, my husband's father; in his early life he had come from England and purchasing a large estate, brought hither his fair bride, who was a Percy too, and a distant kinswoman of his own.

A few years they lived happily in their pleasant western home, but then their lives grew sad, because one by one three fair babes were laid to sleep in the church-yard. Then last of all, the young mother died, giving her life for a little son whom she left to grow up, never knowing a mother's gentle care.

Sadly the husband mourned for his lost one a few short years, and then he rested beside her and their children, and his three friends bitterly mourned for him. The orphan boy was left to the guardianship of one of them—his property, to that of the other two.

The one who was to guard the boy was Gracelon Audley, "my dearest friend, a brave true man" the will said. He was a lawyer, and had through his friend's influence and his own talents, won himself even then a name.

The other two were Mr. Hartley and Mr. Marstone, the first a wild gay youth with just enough fortune to make him careless about working steadily at any thing. The latter,

like Mr. Audley a lawyer, who by earnest industry, was earning back to himself the lands which bore his name, and which once had belonged to his own family, in the village of Marstonville.

How the boy thus guarded, lived and grew a noble man, —winding himself not only round their hearts, but those of all who knew him, I need not write, for he was Walter Percy.

Year after year went by and the world treated kindly the dear friends whom Clarence Percy had spoken kindly for, and the old friendship was very close between them, but Audley and Marstone were for many reasons the dearest friends. They were connected in their business, in their habits and tastes, but the closest bond lay in another cause. Marstone had a little sister who had passed her life at school, and who, now her brother had a home for her, came one summer to spend her vacation with him. She was young and fair and Audley loved her, and because her good brother willed it, more than because the proud grave man had won her heart—Marion Marstone went back to school the betrothed of Gracelon Audley.

They had met and passed one summer together, that was all, after that the love making was to be carried on by letters, for Audley was busy winning a home for her, and could not go to her distant school home: thus they arranged it.

Hartley in his wild mood was chasing some fancy—and ere his return the bird had flown back to its shelter, he frowned and said,

"He never could get a peep at Marstone's pretty sister," but that was all, and they did not tell him that his friend's sister had promised to become the wife of his other friend, when her school days were over.

Months passed and Marion never saw the man she was to marry, but letter after letter brought word of his constancy.

But one spring day, some pleasure called Hartley to the city where she was, and thoughtless of evil, his brother sent a package by him.

That is all—they met—they loved; his wild gay humor pleased her better than the grave young student whom her brother had chosen.

They rode, they walked, they met in sweet stolen interviews in the school-park, where she trembling like an aspen,

waited, while he in true lover-like romance, scaled the high wall to reach her side, "coming through unheard of dangers to kiss her hand and look into her eyes."

He won her heart with all its first pure love, and he who so oft had played lightly with the meshes of love, was at last caught, and gave himself up with his wonted recklessness to this new and intense passion.

Even when he had won her to confess her love, she told him with white trembling lips of another's claim, and that other his friend, but he only grew more reckless, vowing no man should separate them, that she must be his at any cost.

For weeks this went on, he lingering by her side, and she only too willing to keep him there, until tidings came that his father lay dying in a distant city, and even then he was loath to go.

But at last wild with regret, and bitter repentance for the consequences of this love, he tore himself away, vowing to return as soon as he could, and make her his bride. Alas, what was his grief to hers when she stood condemned and horror stricken, before the tribunal of her own conscience, perjured, disgraced! Her noble brother deceived, the name which he was laboring night and day to redeem from the stain of poverty, dyed with a double stain by her sin. Her kind true brother who loved and trusted her so tenderly. It drove her mad, and in her wild despair, she wrote a full confession to him and then fled, from his wrath.

I cannot tell of the weary search that miserable brother had ere he found her and brought her home. Nor of the bitter anguish of the man to whom she had been promised, enough to say that wounded and broken hearted he went abroad, with his ward, and never looked again upon the face of Marion Marstone, his perjured love. And the brother who had been once so kind, grew a stern cold man, and she lived few short months secretly within his house, always with his frowning face keeping watch over her, lest she should escape and blazon their shame to the world, or else seek once more the arms of her destroyer.

And she waited and watched for his return, in vain, nor did she ever know that he did come once, while she sat pining for him in her lonely chamber, pleading with his former friend, in a wild agony to know where she was hidden, and then went forth a broken hearted, reckless man into the gay world,

because he had been told that when she came repentant to her home, Audley had received and pardoned her, for she said, "after all she loved him best," and that they were married, he forgetting her sin in the infinite love he bore her.

Oh how her brother's heart was changed ere he could thus stain his lips with a lie, but neither knew it was not true, and each mourned the other as false, and they never met again, but he went forth with a cold seared heart, and she heard of him amidst the gayest of the gay, and deemed him careless of her fate.

And after a few months she went to a far away home with a husband her brother's wealth had bought for her, and lived a sad weary life, but not worse than the brother who had loved her so, and cherished her as the apple of his eye.

In after years Audley and Marstone met, but the name once so dear to both was never spoken, by either. Hartley disappeared and only came back when my husband was a grown man.

It is a strange, sad history, the lives of three strong men made desolate by the act of one frail girl, but so it was.

Her fate I can not tell, but my mind misgives me, that this Paul Marstone, is her son. Who is his father if it be so? Mr. Marstone had but one sister, and no brother.—If she married a stranger, why is her son called by her maiden name? I say it is very strange. Will Lela's proud heart still love this man when she knows a fearful stigma lies upon his birth? It will be a hard struggle between pride and love.

And poor old Mr. Hartley never knew until Marie told him, that Marion Marstone was never Marion Audley. How much this history reveals and explains,—why Mr. Marstone and Mr. Audley never mentioned his name, and why Walter who I suppose knew all, never sought to make his guardians friends.

And why too, Mr. Marstone would take my Marion upon his knee so often, and gaze so mournfully into her face, saying softly and sadly,

"Poor Marion, poor little Marion."

And why Mr. Audley started when we told him what we had named the child, and said turning very white,

"I wish you had not done it Walter, it was cruel," and Walter replied with such a look of sorrow,

"I did not mean it in that way sir, but Bertha desired it because it was her mother's name."

And why to this day, he seems to love Marion the least of all our children, and will call her any thing but her own name.

But above all—why Mr. Hartley who loved very few should have loved my child so tenderly, and when we first told him her name, made him take her so tenderly in his arms, saying sadly,

"My Marion, God love thee Marion," and then putting her quickly down, go rapidly from the house.

This was the reason that when they told us Mr. Hartley had purchased the whole estate Mr. Marstone covered his face as if a lightning stroke had blinded him and said fiercely,

"God help me, I might have known it, why did I not sacrifice all that I had been working for, for years, rather than permit this? Audley will curse my miserable folly, he would have spent his all, before that fiend should sit in Clarence Percy's hall, God help me!" and I think the agony of memory which all this brought, caused the fearful stroke which lost us our last protector.

And now partly for her father's sake, partly for the sake of this unhappy woman, my Marion has been made the heiress of a great wealth, and I must tell what she did not, that when the old man told her, that years ago—even the very day we were banished from our home, he had made a will leaving every thing to her, that then, while his heart was softened she induced him to send for his lawyer and have the name of her brother placed instead of her own as the possessor of "Percies' Cliffe."

"I shall be so very rich, with what you have given me sir, and I will like to remember when you are gone, that all which I inherit was only mine because you loved me, not because it was once our own," she said, as Dora has related it to me. Sweet daughter, how good a thing it is, to remember that now your own unselfish heart can take its happiness.

We are in a sad state of excitement, and scarcely know what has come upon us, but Mrs. Wilbur and Marion keep us straight by their *sageness*.—But it is a strange new thought

that our days of poverty are over, that even when no thought of such a thing as even an independence, other than our boys could win has crossed our minds, there should pour in upon us this mighty flood of wealth. It will take a long time to get used to the thought, longer even than it did to grow accustomed to the straitened ways of poverty and toil.

Thank God for all his goodness and loving kindness, to us who are so unworthy of his many benefits. O *Espérance*! O Percy!

JUNE.

It is a month and more since Marion came home bearing to our ears news of such intense and startling interest, and we have been quietly living in our old way, doing our old duties—getting used to the thought of what has come to us.

In what a dreamy way we speak about it, how quietly we talk over it of evenings, when none but our own are about us, not at all as if our every being was filled with trembling at the thought—but as if we deemed it a small matter.

But it seemed our duty to finish our course here—we had many pupils whom we had taken for the year, we were under many obligations to them for kindness in times past, and so we have abode here keeping our secret within our own doors, until all duties should be fulfilled, and we might go forth free from any blame. We have had a very pleasant life in this old place, and though we go to our own home with grateful hearts, yet we cast many a kindly look at this other one, which has been such a safe shelter, amidst the storms of poverty. But above all, we have learned to love our school with its *toilsome* pleasures, and it is with a half indescribable feeling of pain that we view the idea of parting.

Yet many things are changed these last two years, which make it less of a trial to leave this moss-grown mansion with all its belongings. Beside the knowledge that we are going to that place which is the Mecca of our earthly pilgrimage, we know we are to live once more within call and sight of two of our old home friends, Dora and Harley. Then Estelle and Birdie, will be as near us there as here, how far from both!

It was a trial to think of our pupils being disbanded, and scattered, but even this has been overruled for our benefit, Mr. Gray has sent for his mother and sister, and since they have been here so pleased are we all with their lady-like refinement, that we have concluded the best thing we can do is to make over to them the right and title of our house and school, we are very rich now, and they are very poor, once when we were in sad distress a kind woman put us in the way of earning an independent living, so now we have good reason to be generous.

With the assistance of their son and brother, these two can fully supply our place and it will be a mutual favor. It will be pleasant when we are away to remember the old place in Elm st., is in the hands of friends, and that merry faces still gather under its roof.

AUGUST 1.

The last time I write before I go home—my Father I thank thee. Oh it is very necessary for us to remember it is God's goodness which thus encompasses us with tender mercies and loving kindnesses, lest we should grow forgetful and learn to make idols of gold, the very gold which has been lavished upon us.

Walter, my lost one, I am going back to our old home, come back to me there, comfort me with thy presence there, as here—now I may die where my husband died, and be buried by his side. I suppose it matters not much what befalls these poor bodies after the soul has gone forth, yet methinks it will be pleasant to know that when the last trump shall awaken us we will not be far apart.

But in all this radiant happiness there is a cloud. It is always so, even the fairest sky is never cloudless, never all bright. It is a shadow over our joy, that in all this happiness, we may never share one morsel with the little one who has been nourished all her life long, with the same good or ill which has befallen us. That though "Percies' Cliffe," is ours, Coralie is not, that though we go home, she will not. Oh my daughter, my bright-eyed, laughing, golden-haired sunbeam, where do you hide yourself, that we may not even tell to you this new goodness of our Father!

Walter, wherever she this night rests, watch over her, pray the Father to turn her heart toward us once more; guard our darling from crime and harm. I may not! I may not! She is gone beyond my reach!

It seems a strange fate which ordained that our Lillian should never dwell in the home of that father whom she never knew, and yet perchance it was the better way, for she had not the charm of her father's memory to keep her unspotted, and poverty might have been less gentle with her young heart than with the rest, who loved to do his will.

I desire to return my humble thanks, that in all these years, nine long years, God has dealt tenderly with me and mine. That even when our *Espérance* seemed darkened, it was our Father's hand which held the cloud, and warded off the evil, making the gloomiest night have some brightness shining over it.

CHAPTER LXVIII.

OCTOBER.

"Alas! how many hours and years have past
Since human forms have round this table sat,
Or lamp, or taper on its surface gleam'd.
Methinks I hear the sound of time long pass'd,
Still murmur o'er us in the lofty void,
Of these dark arches, like the lingering voices
Of those who long within their graves have slept." ORRA.

CAN I write of this home coming—can I tell of the strangeness of being here—of the sad and tender memories which hover over every spot,—of how I weary myself with the wondering, whether such and such a thing is where I placed it years ago, and go to see, and find it just the same,—and then must needs sit down and weep over a tender memory which it holds for me.

Save that the trees have grown older, and spread their

branches thicker and broader over the land, hiding many things from our view,—the summer-house by the river-side,—the old farm house in the glen, once the mansion house of the estate, and letting us have but an occasional glimpse of the village; save for these it seems as if time had forgotten this place, and passed it by untouched.

The coming here, the starting from Elm st., the many farewells, the tears, and smiles, all are a confused maze, the only certain thing, that we were going home.

When we came to the entrance, Dora met us, and clasping her arms about me, said, "Our Father brings you home once more, dear friend." While we stood for one instant upon the threshold, Howard laid my hand upon his arm, saying proudly,

"Lean here my mother, mine be the arm to shield you now," and with his firm proud step, the heir led his widowed mother back to his inheritance.

We were all very quiet. None of us are ever noisy either in our joy or grief, save one who is far away, and in this home-coming it was sad to miss the passionate gladness of Birdie's weeping, the fountain of her tears lay ever near her eyes.

Gracie, always soft and tender hearted, had a few loving tears for the old memories, but more that were very sad, because the only words Adèle said were,

"And I may never see it more, never look upon the dear old home again!"

Milly poor old woman took her joy into some far away corner of the beloved home, for she has learned in the school of poverty that tender regardfulness of others, which sorrow oftentimes teaches.

Leanore went into the shadow of a deep window, and late in the evening I found her there, the heavy damask curtains shielding her from the light, her face very calm and white, save for the crimson spots upon her cheeks which always tell of intense but suppressed emotion.

She kissed my hand tenderly, as she placed me upon the divan where she had been seated, then with a quick deprecation in her manner knelt at my feet, and laid her head upon my knee, stroking my hand gently the while,

"I am not to talk, daughter, is that what you want me to understand?" I said softly. A kiss upon my hand was

the sole reply, and indeed I knew very soon she could bear nothing more, not even my presence and so I took her myself to a distant chamber, far away in another part of the house, a room which was not filled with old associations, and like a little child she let me undress her and put her to bed.

But though I left her very soon with a gentle kiss, I felt strangely anxious about her, and many times through the night stole through the long corridors to her side, but at last ashamed of my fears because I always found her in a seemingly quiet slumber, I laid myself down to rest, not to sleep, I knew I must wait for that, until this excitement had spent itself.

But hardly an hour had passed ere there came a hurried step along the hall, and then Stuart's voice at my door,

"Auntie, may I come in? do not be alarmed, I am just going to arouse Uncle Ernest, for Lela has broken down under this great excitement, I feared she would."

"Lela! why I left her a short time ago, in a deep sleep, what has happened? where is she?" I answered, hurrying out.

"She is in the larger drawing-room, I have just sent Marion to her."

I went quickly down, but ere I reached the lower floor, I heard Lela's voice, carolling a gay song, and then bursting into a merry laugh, the sound sent a thrill to my very heart; as I opened the door May was saying,

"Lela, Lela do not, please do not," and for a moment I paused upon the threshold in dismay.

With her long black hair streaming almost to the floor, she danced gaily up and down the room, singing and laughing, her eyes flashing brightly, her cheeks scarlet, and ever and anon she would fling her arms wildly above her head.

Marion stood white and trembling, in the centre of the room striving in vain to stay the course of the delirious girl, but at each attempt she would spring by her with a gay ringing laugh, and a mocking smile. As Marion saw me, she sank upon a sofa with the words,

"Oh mamma, this is dreadful." Lela turned quickly as she spoke, and coming towards me said with a low courtsey,

"This is the lady paramount, good friends—the heir's mother, and rules the demesne in his absence," and she

looked round proudly as though the room were filled with a large company. "The heir is a minor, but he will be of age in a few years, and rule in his own right. This is the Lady Percy."

"Leanore, my child, what does this mean? what are you doing up at this hour of the night with—" but she interrupted me,

"Oh we have no time to sleep, for to-morrow the heir comes home from his travels, after that you may sleep 'an it please you,' but now there is work to be done," then springing away from me, she sang,

"Prepare ye—prepare ye the way,
Make ready, make ready the feast."

Just then Ernest came into the room, and with a warning gesture to the rest went up to her, catching hold of her hand.

"What does this mean, Leanore," he said coolly as if in amazement.

"Mean sir," and she drew herself up, and threw off his grasp scornfully. "Mean! simply that Howard Audley Percy the heir is coming home, and that I, his sister am making ready to receive him."

"By my faith," he answered, "would you, a child, in your pride assume the place of your mother and elder sister"? then, as if horror stricken, he added, "nay, you shall not while I am their friend, I will protect their rights, no one shall welcome the heir but his mother and Marion, go you to your room."

She stood abashed, as if this new idea shamed while it startled her,

"True, true, I am always too bold and wilful," she muttered. I can never wait until mamma directs me," then turning to me "can I help do anything?"

"Nothing to-night my dear," I said as calmly as I could, obeying a warning glance from Ernest.

"What must I do then?" she asked humbly.

"Go to rest, and bring bright smiles and rosy cheeks to welcome your brother."

"Oh yes, roses for the heir," she cried, something of the wild manner coming back again, and laughing gaily she dragged

Marie out of the room, "come little pale face to bed, to bed, will lilies do for May to bring to the welcome, mamma? poor little pale cheeked May she has no roses even now."

Thus by humoring her mood we got her to bed, but since then she has been very ill, and our home-coming has been full of anxiety.

But she is better now, and to-night sits before me, listening to Stuart's account, of how he was awakened the night of her attack by her gay song as she passed his door.

"I knew something was amiss, and dressed myself in double quick time, and followed you, but such a chase as your voice led me, as you danced from room to room, from hall to hall, through the house you knew so well, and of which I knew nothing, until you brought up in the drawing-room where there was a light burning. Then when I saw you safe I shut you in and went up-stairs to find your mother, but met poor little May with a very white face, trying to find you."

"Oh I am a foolish girl, but now I am safe, in my own home I will learn to behave less like a tragedy queen," she replies.

We have been here already a month, but it seems scarce a day, because of the time being so engrossed by Lela's sickness.

We have seen, and had kind greetings from such of our old neighbors as death and change have not parted from their old place, yet though the angel with his sickle has cut down some, and their places are filled by those who were almost children when we left, yet there are enough remaining from the relics of the past, to make the old times come again.

Adèle has learned to *feel* herself about her home, and now finds an unutterable consolation, in sitting for hours, drawing grand tones from the same organ which years ago was such an infinite comfort to her father, I am thankful my poor child has this gift, which fills her darkened life with light.

Howard, grave but quiet, even more impressed with the duties of life now than ever, left us as soon as Lela was pronounced out of danger, for college, to undergo his examination and if it was successful to graduate.

To-day he has returned with all his honors upon him, and

very proud we are of him, so young and yet already so successful. To-night as we are seated around Lela, he came to where Stuart and I sat.

"Mamma, now Nora is nearly well, I have a request to ask of you and Stuart," he said, "will you grant it?"

"If your mother will, I will," said Stuart, smiling up at him.

"And I will if I may of course," I said.

"Oh you both may, if May will, I want Arty to hasten his wedding day."

The start and flush of pleasure, which came upon Stuart's face, showed how gladly he would hasten it could he, but suppressing his emotion, he said sadly.

"Not now Howard, it is all changed now, May is an heiress, and"—

"What do you mean 'Arty,'" said Howard, springing up.

"That I must not marry an heiress, Howard, until I have at least won a name to grace her fortune with," he said passionately "oh why did this fortune come to her, why was not my darling left to me, that I might toil for her, as I had so proudly hoped to do!"

"And is this fretful foolish boy, my noble, brave-hearted Stuart, who in all my trials has helped me so by his faithfulness? Oh I do not know my boy at all, he is a changeling," I said bending towards him and drawing him to my side.

"Oh Aunt Bertha, I ought not, I must not keep May to her promise now all is so changed," and he flung himself in his old boyish way at my feet. Just then we heard May's low voice upon the stairs, and Gracie sprang to the door crying,

"Oh May come here, come here," and as she entered the door, "poor sister weep that you are lady of Percy, for Stuart will not have you, nay do not smile, it is true, he thinks a lady with houses and lands, and a rent roll of some thousands, is too high a prize for him, although the gentle quiet heart which for years had been a resting place and comfort of all she loved, was never a whit too good for him, oh Stuart I am ashamed of you."

"Gracie turned speech-maker, well what will happen next," said Marion with a smile, "and Stuart saying silly

things, why mamma we have fallen upon strange times. What has started them up thus?"

"Because I wanted to know when your wedding day was coming," said Howard. She blushed a little, but answered in a moment quietly.

"And did they tell you brother mine?"

"No, will you my lady Percy?"

"Whenever mamma who is to have my entire obedience until—until Stuart takes control of me," she said quietly, "whenever mamma says it must."

"But," Adele began, "Stuart says he will not have you—"

"I think he will," she replied. "I think he will."

"What makes you think so, will you burn the will which made you an heiress?"

"Oh no, I like to be rich, I like to know we will never have to work again. I am a lazy little body—but because I know," and she went softly up to him and laid her little hand in his brown curls, "because I know he loves me too well to break my loving heart."

He sprang up and clasped her in his arms crying passionately,

"Oh May, sweet May, I love you so."

"And yet would cast me off for filthy lucre's sake," she said playfully. "would let Mammon come between two hearts that have withstood many trials without wavering in their truth, O Stuart! I am disappointed in you."

"May! May! good little May, have patience with me," then turning to Lela, "all the rest having spoken for me, Lela, proud Lela, are you too willing your pearl in her golden setting, should take the poor drudge?"

"Unless the drudge, aforesaid, will cast her off, and take poor me instead," she said holding out her hand gaily, "now 'Arty' could you not do that? you know I have not the disadvantage of having a fortune, but will bring you naught but a vixen of a temper."

But the way Stuart drew May to his embrace answered her merry words.

"Well then mamma when shall it be?" asked Howard, "for oh I do need Stuart so sadly, there is much to do on this great property, and I am so young, but when 'Arty' is my brother, and my fellow-worker, it will be all right. —"

With 'Arty' to the fore, I have no fear, he is a sure pilot, and we can trust our bark to him," then turning to him with an infinite tenderness,

"My brother, it will take much care and anxious thought, for us to keep this charge rightly for our mother and our sisters, but I have no fear, if you will direct and counsel me. I need you so, my brother."

And so it was settled that upon the coming Christmas, our gentle May should stand beneath her father's hall a bride. Now we are very busy preparing for it, for as Lela says,

"The heiress of the Percies, must have a sumptuous *trousseau*."

Now Lela being well or almost so, we have concluded although very regretfully that she must fulfil the promise made to Mr. Audley, and go to him for at least one year; he constantly demands it. The other day Marion came to me and said,

"Dear mamma, would it break your heart to have us go to Europe with Lela, you know how Stuart used to dream that some time in his life, he would earn enough to take him to Heidelberg, for a course, I was thinking we might go now, only for the leaving you."

"By Jove, the very thing," cried Ernest, "and now you have the where-with-all, you can bring Adèle to me in Paris, it will be a comfort to your mother to know you are with her, during her trial, I'll go home, gather up my traps and start next week." And spite of entreaties and expositions he has gone already.

"Doing just as he takes into his head to, spite of every body," his mother declares. So poor Gracie and I are getting, or trying to get used to the thought of living at least a year without one peep into three of the faces which make our world, dear faces, of our own.

Now we work for the others as well as May, and are glad we have Margary to help us, and is not her poor old mother more glad than all, that the coming back of "the family" has restored her wanderer as well.

CHAPTER LXIX.

DECEMBER.

"She was not very fair
Nor beautiful — these words express her not,
But oh her looks had something excellent,
That wants a name."

THIS morning Howard was sitting by my side writing, when looking up he said,

"Would it grieve you very much to leave 'Percies' Cliffe, so soon?"

"Not if I knew I was to come home to it, whenever I liked," I said, "but why do you ask?"

"It has come to me many times that Adèle will need you, so sadly mamma, and I do not know why, but it seems to me Nora does not get back her strength, and I know you see it, and will worry and grieve for them both when they are gone. Then my father was just my age when he went abroad to perfect his education, and by his observation learn the best way of being a true man in his own land. I have thought I should like to do as he did, as nearly like in every thing as I can. Suppose we all go abroad, even though we have to leave the dear old home we have longed to see for years, we can always come home again you know, and the Raymonds, will be safe guardians of our interests while we are away."

"But can we afford such an expensive plan? there are a great many of us." I asked, "it will take almost a fortune to pay the expense of all."

"Now mamma," he replied laughing, "I am not talking to the teacher of Elm st., who was obliged to count the pence, she owned, but to the lady of 'Percies' Cliffe Manor,' which for nine years under the hands of skillful business men, has been made to yield by its rental estate an unfailing income, which all this time has been left untouched, to accumulate until now, even the extravagance of taking a whole family to Europe will scarcely consume the interest, beside Marion bears her own expenses you know."

"Is it so indeed? then we will go," and my heart gave a great bound at the thought. It seems strange I should be glad to go away from Percies' Cliffe, upon any cause, but it

only proves how much dearer one's children are, than even the tenderest associations.

The jubilee with which this arrangement was met, was somewhat hushed by Mrs. Wilbur's determinate,

"No I will stay here and keep house with Ally, and Margary, for never again, will I trust myself upon that false ocean which has cruelly wrested my own from me."

I wrote some time since to Mr. Audley that he might expect Lela early in the spring, but said not a word of the coming of Stuart and his bride, because we meant to surprise them, but now, methinks there will be amazement enough when we all arrive.

Clare writes me in a letter which I have but now received.

"Oh Auntie dear my heart gave such a leap, when your letter came and Uncle Audley bade me hold myself in readiness for a journey to Liverpool to meet Lela. Now the next best thing to seeing you once more will be to have Lela just fresh from amongst you all,—laden with your kisses and love, for you do love your exiled boy, I never doubt it. It has been my comfort all this while, that though so far away, you have still that little corner, warm and bright in your heart for me. That thought, and your dear letters have been my good things for many a weary day, and now I shall see 'queen' once more, and verily I will make her, proud or what not, give me all the kisses you send."

Dear Clare it were worth the going, were it only for your sake, how proud I shall be when I am in the midst of my boy's triumphs, the echo of which has resounded across the great deep, making his name and works, the talk and wonder even in this land, where art is reckoned a small matter, in comparison with the all-powerful dollar. And we will see his grand paintings, and listen to his praises, from those who honor by their commendation.

It will be very pleasant to go after all, the old way, half pleasure, half pain, like all life work, many lookings toward the hopes of the future, and some backward glancings of regret for what we leave behind.

But the pleasure over-balances the pain in this, for so many faces wait to greet us on that other shore and—perhaps, we may find Coralie, and win her back to love us once more, she surely cannot escape so many anxious, loving, watchful eyes, we will pray she may not, this shall be our *Espérance*!

DECEMBER 1.

My daughter's wedding-day—a marked one in our lives. It was a fair spring-like day—the sun shone softly upon the white snow which was flung over mountain and moor, like an angel's mantel, all purity and whiteness.

Good mother Nature was in a 'gentle mood, and looked pleasantly on, while the loved of many hearts plighted her maiden troth. A fair sweet thing the young bride was in her simple dignity, so calm yet so very humble in her happiness.

After a death-bed, a bridal is the saddest thing in life. The parting with one's old life, the vows then made, 'until death doth part us,' a pointing though upon the verge of a new life, to the grave which must come at last.

We had a quiet wedding, any other would have been strangely out of keeping with our gentle Marion's whole life. Our guests were the Lees (Mary coming after many years of absence to see her girlhood's friend.) Our old friend Mr. Osten, and the Grays, beside a few neighbors from the village who loved the bride for her father's sake, were all, for we are a strange people, and make few acquaintances, only keeping some faithful friends very near our hearts, and making our world in them.

As Marion stood before the friend of her youth, beside another friend of her life, surrounded by her sisters and her friends, I thought, 'the brides-maids are very beautiful, but the little bride seems fairer than all.' And Stuart reading my thought came to me, and said softly.

"Fairest among thy daughters and altogether lovely."

"My dearest and my best, I have given into your hands Stuart."

"And please God, He giving me life and strength, no rude wind shall come nigh my fair pale flower," he said fervently.

"I know it my boy, my own son now."

"Oh mother, my mother, that is the next good thing after May," he said.

CHAPTER LXX.

HOTEL DE K——, MARCH.

THE arrival, the greetings, the tears and kisses, are over, and we are settled at last. We had a quick and prosperous voyage to Liverpool, where we met Clarence. It was something to see his delight, and to feel his dear arms about us and his warm kisses on our lips. My tall manly looking Clare. I could hardly believe he was the pale slight boy who had left me years ago. Gracie insists upon it,

"He has not grown handsome a bit, and only his paleness and his immense black eyes, are like what he used to be. Then I hate a moustache!"

"But do you not know artists are obliged to wear them?" said Clare, making very *big* eyes at her.

"No, why should they? I do not see," she asked innocently.

"Oh to make new brushes of my dear, and to look distinguished with, combining the useful, with the ornamental, you understand," and he escaped from her laughingly.

When we separated for the night, Clare whispered a request in my ear that if I was not too much wearied, he might come to me.

"It will seem so much like old times, to come to your bedside and talk to you in the old fashioned way;" he said.

And he did come, telling me all his hopes and fears, his trials and temptations, and his triumphs too, which have been sufficient to have turned the head of almost any one, not so thoroughly humble and distrustful of themselves as he.

"My mother's presence in the spirit, and your prayers and letters my other mother, have helped me, and kept me through all," he said fervently.

His meeting with May quite satisfied me that the wounds she had once made in his heart, were healed without even a scar.

"My dearest sister always," he said answering my look, "both for her own sweet sake, and because she is Stuart's wife."

The next afternoon we went to London hoping to meet

Ernest, but to our disappointment learned he had gone to some town in Germany, with one of the usual unpronounceable names. So we shall not see him for some time.

Howard's appearance, and the change the years of separation has made, seem to astonish Clare exceedingly, and I was amused at the way he would sit and watch every change in his face, seeming to be trying to find what variety of expression it was capable of, but now he has told me the reason.

"Aunt Bertha," he began, "shall I have your permission to put 'How' in my picture, if he is willing?"

"Certainly, but have you a picture on hand? Bad boy! never to tell me such a thing in all this time."

"Forgive me, but it is the one thing, of which I cannot speak. After the picture is done, it makes no difference who talks about it," then he added, "but I must not feel so with you, if I do with the rest of the world."

Then with a kindling of his dark eyes, which Gracie thinks too large, but which to my mind are true artist's eyes, through which the soul of an enthusiast glows, he began in his rapid nervous way to describe his subject, walking quickly up and down the room,

"It is that scene from the life of Joseph, when he discovers himself to his brethren, and they conscience-stricken cower in his presence, you remember the words——"

"Then Joseph could not refrain himself before all them that stood with him, and cried, Cause every man to go out from me. And there stood no man with him while Joseph made himself known to his brethren."

"And he wept aloud and said—I am Joseph, doth my father yet live? And his brethren could not answer him, for they were troubled at his presence."

"How they looked—what a scene that was.—The room in which they were assembled, filled with all the gorgeousness of Egyptian splendor, strewn with rich carpets, velvet cushions of the richest dye, piled upon each other, curtains of rare silks sweeping from ceiling to floor, all that the rarest taste could gather together, of the splendors of the luxurious East, were clustered in this hall of princes, and in the midst in his robes of state the king's favorite, Joseph, the first ruler in the land stood, his noble form arrayed in the sumptuous robes of state, purple and fine linen, with chains of

gold about his neck—the judge of the rude men around him, and yet their brother—a look of yearning love upon his handsome face, for doubtless he was a very handsome man, else he would not have captivated the heart of a bad woman.

“And then those men,—Rueben, Simeon, Levi, old grey-headed men, those old men, with long white beards which their nation wore making them look—true fathers in Israel, cowed down before their young brother, whom they had so cruelly wronged. And Judah, the noblest of them all, in the pride and strength of his middle age—just through his touching appeal, standing but a little way from his judge—alone—his proud form quivering with the intensity of his urgency, his haughty eye, flashing though he strove to make it humble, as he sued with this man, almost a boy, when compared with himself for—his little brother’s liberty.

“Oh I have thought it over a thousand times,—the look of those dark fierce brethren, whose mothers were slaves. Issacher with his dull lazy look apparent even amidst his fear, standing far behind the others, that the brunt of the whole matter might not come to him, ‘a drudge stooping between two burdens.’ Dan with his fierce keen look, and snake-like eyes,—Gad strong and like a giant in his towering form. All the others, bearing upon their faces the impress of their nation, and their occupation, standing startled and dismayed in the presence of their injured brother.

“All but one, a boy, have *such* a look upon their faces, as makes you sure a sin to be repented of lies behind—a fair boy,—a beautiful boy, a very child standing innocent of sin among those guilty world worn-men.

—“His father’s darling—nourished tenderly in his father’s house—the little Benjamin, the child of his old age, whom the old man loved for the sake of his dead wife, ‘the beautiful well favored Rachel,’ whom he had toiled for years to win,—and for the sake of the brother of the boy whom he mourned as dead—Judah in his touching appeal had just now called him, ‘a little one, whom our father loveth.’

“Benjamin has been my desire to make perfect, but in vain have I striven to give his face the attributes which I imagine belong to it. The soft lovely look of his gentle mother, with the eagle eye of his father, the characteristic of his tribe yet in a boyish face rather felt than seen,—oh I have

dreamed over it, I have worked over it—but in vain, it never pleased me—but the other night when Howard stood before me, I could have sprung up and shouted, ‘Benjamin.’ Since we have been together I have studied every lineament of his face, and now I have my Benjamin, his lithe well knit figure, his dark earnest eyes with their dusky lashes, sweeping his cheek, the long black shining hair, flowing down below the collar, the straight nose, the full chin and throat, all my long sought Benjamin’s belongings entire. Tell me Auntie mine, will not that do for my *chef d’œuvre*, think you? I sketched it last night.”

And he drew forth a small piece of canvass, upon which was sketched a head of Howard,—like exceedingly, but with a glory around it, a holy expression about the eyes and mouth, which Howard has not. It was Howard idealized. Or, as Stuart says,

“Howard, as he struck the painter.”

This was weeks ago that I had this description, but we have none of us any idea of the progress of the picture, save what we can form from the amount of time expended upon it; but I have seen other of my artist-boy’s productions, and no longer wonder at the praises he receives.

It is not my partiality alone; but all say—those who have a *right to say* in such matters—that if his coming years fulfil the promise of his youth he will stand before the world the painter of his age.

We rested awhile in London, and then came to Paris, having of course the usual trouble in getting here. Oh if we only had Americans at Calais what a blessing it would be to *benighted* travellers.

When we got into Paris, and drove to Mr. Audley’s hotel, the sad remembrance of the last time I had traveled through these streets with Walter, Marion and Lela, beside me, and poor Birdie, a wee baby in her nurse’s arms, came over me; how glad we were, that our journeyings were coming to an end, and we were going home.

I was glad when Clare and Lela exclaimed as we neared a hotel from which many lights were flashing,

“Here we are at last—” and the carriage stopped.

We were lead up a broad stair-case, (the glitter of which dazzled us, coming out of the darkness,) into a spacious hall, at the door of which we were announced.

The elegantly appointed drawing-room was one blaze of light, there could be nothing more refined and *recherché* than the fitting up of the apartment, no particular style, or taste, was portrayed, but over all there was an appearance of rare beauty, a grouping together of the graceful and stately, the lights and shadows of art and science, and the eye and senses were charmed—entranced.

Here stood a noble harp, its golden form leaning against crimson velvet, there a piano whose keys of pearl glittered in the soft light.

On *etageres* lay strown thickly *bijouterie*, in Parian marble, or Bohemian glass.—Exquisite paintings hung against the wall. On tables of antique forms, were piled magnificently bound volumes, and in vases at intervals through the room were the rarest hot-house flowers vieing in brightness with those which lay in clusters upon the floor, the furniture, and the hangings upon the walls.

At the furthest end of the saloon, at the entrance to the conservatory from which a thousand breaths of fragrance stole softly in, where the light fell very dimly, lay stretched upon a couch of azure velvet, a lady—yes you knew she was a lady, by the curve of her white neck, by the elegantly draped form, and above all, by the proud face, which one white hand half concealed. At the entrance, the servant who ushered us up, announced;

"Madame, your expected guests from America,"—but we saw the lady was asleep, and Clare waived the servant from the room.

Then we all stood about her for a little while: dear Estelle, how good it was to see you, so regally surrounded; while we waited she slowly unclosed her eyes, then the shriek, the embraces the tears of joy which followed who may write? Not I forsooth.

"And Mr. Audley has a dinner party for the Prince De Q——, she said, and I shall not be able to get him word for hours."

So we settled ourselves as comfortably as needs be. Estelle denying herself to all visitors, and waiting until past midnight, talking over a thousand things. And when Mr. Audley came, the greetings were all to go over again, but though he was kind to us all, Lela and Howard, had the tenderest welcome. And the guardian of my husband

turned aside, his heart filled with emotion, because, as he said,

"This boy is just what his father was, in outward form, pray God he may be like him in all inward things."

But he was sadly distressed to see Lela so wearied with the journey, but now after we have been here a couple of weeks, and the effects of her travels have passed away, my daughter has regained much of her wonted health and spirits; it has done her good to come.

MAY.

We have been here about two months, and Lela's health is wonderfully better, Ernest is here busily engaged in his studies, so busy indeed that we rarely see him. He says,

"The acme of good with me, is to feel sufficient confidence in my skill, to attempt an operation upon Adèle's eyes."

Ten years have made great changes in the society, we once knew in Paris, or at least which Ernest knew, for it is far more than that since we were here. A thousand changes have swept away not only the people we once knew, but the very houses and streets. Revolutions are sad havoc-workers, and throw down, and build up in a manner more marvelous than the famed nights of Arabian memory.

But in the brilliant circle which Mr. Audley's high position gathers about him, Lela reigns queen, "*La belle Americaine*," as she is called.

Stuart and Ernest, find much that suits both their different tastes, (and their could scarcely be two so unlike) within this circle, but little May says,

"Such a whirl of pleasure is rather a pain, than a happiness."

Adèle and Gracie go no where of evenings except to the opera, which is their delight. Through the day they are busy enough, going all sorts of places, with a variety of escorts, chiefly however with Clare and Howard, and attending to the instructions of several masters of Mr. Audley's choosing, whom Clare calls,

"Uncle's finishers, who give the fancy touches, requisite for Parisian society."

Last week Estelle received a short note from Ada Lawrence, bearing the intelligence of her mother's death, she writes,

'I shall go home now, for because I so earnestly desired it, and because she knew how safe I would be with her, mamma has written a letter to dear Mrs. Percy, asking her to take the place which her death has left vacant, and be a mother and guardian to poor orphan me.

'I will stop in Paris with my Uncle Lawrence's family, who are also going home; Willie is a cadet on board the sloop Washington, and will cruise for a year longer in the Mediterranean.'

When she came I met her, and brought her here, poor pale-faced Ada, henceforth to be one of my daughters.

CHAPTER LXXI.

AUGUST.

"Deep as first love and wild with all regrets,
Oh death in life—the days that are no more."

TENNYSON.

IF I had been told that to-day, the first day of those which marks my years, the only one which has passed since my home has been restored to me should by my own free will have been passed away from that home, how would I have scorned the idea,—yet to-day I write not at my beloved, "Percies' Cliffe,"—but in Paris. But it is right, that is the comfort, even though it is not the most pleasant, it is right, therefore I am content.

I have much to thank my Father for, but above all, that my Lela is restored to her wonted health. My stately flower is blooming again, though a little while ago I almost deemed she was fading from earth.

All the others are bright and well, and very happy, and so gay, I almost scold them for the whirl they live in,—Ada

Lawrence and I are the only sober ones, and we think we have as pleasant times in our quiet rooms as they.

We mourn for one thing, but we hope even for that, Coralie our lost one. It cannot be we never again are to look into that bright laughing face, never again to listen to the rippling notes of her bird-like voice.

Oh my sweet child, come to me, I wait, I pine for you!

Walter dearest wherever she is to-night, pray the Father that he will send his good Spirit upon her heart, and soften it towards us.

Dearest, another year, nearer thy rest, Jesus my precious Saviour is ever with me, giving me comfort and strength, to "bide his time."

All is fair about me, our children are heavenly boons, in which my heart finds comfort, my friends are faithful and true just such as the widowed heart can rest upon.

Walter, dear Walter, God is very good to thy wife! and I will have faith to believe that He will make all things work together for my eternal good, and that of my loved ones.

SEPTEMBER.

We came home late one evening from a drive, meeting Estelle and Lela at the door, dressed for some gay party, and looking so lovely we must needs stop them for a kiss.

"We will take Adele and Gracie with us to the opera, if they will consent to sit out of sight for this one night, as their dresses and hair are not *comme il faut*," said Lela, "we are just in time and cannot wait for them to make *une grande toilette*, and we will send them back by Uncle."

So, glad to go under any restrictions, they sprang into the coach and were whirled away, leaving me quite alone, for the rest had gone to a lecture.

"Madame," said a groom as I came down from my room, "would you have the goodness to speak to a lady, who is waiting in the drawing-room, for Mr. Audley, she has been there a long while and looks sadly ill?"

"Certainly, why did you not tell Mrs. Audley, perhaps she would have done as well as your master?"

"I did, but she was in haste to be away," was the reply.

I went in unconscious of what awaited me, with slow steps, entering the room where such a treasure welcomed me, for as I stood on the threshold, the light beaming upon me, a girlish form sprang towards me, and a voice said,

"Mamma, mamma, can it be?"—and Cora lay insensible at my feet. Oh my child, my fair pale child, my arms were about her, I cradled her dear head upon my breast, while I said a prayer of thanksgiving over her. Then I went feebly out closing the door behind me and knocking at Clare's studio brought him with me in silence. Then hushing his exclamation, I made him carry her to my own room where Ada Lawrence sat writing. As he laid her down she opened her eyes and said in a low rambling tone,

"I have sinned against heaven and before thee and am no more worthy to be called thy child," and then swooned again, and lay so long insensible, that frightened Clare went to find Ernest, while Ada and I vainly sought to revive her.

How the others received the news of our lost one's return, I know not—I was conscious of nothing beside that pale sweet face, those closed eyes which only awoke from their stupor to stare and flash in fever. And then we shaved off her golden curls and I wept over them, and kissed my darling's sun-bright hair.

But after many days, she grew better, and now is able to walk with a supporting arm, through the long corridors. Poor child, all her bright merry ways gone. Oh Cora, I dreaded this—I deemed it might be thus,—but you would none of my advice, but loved another better, and chose to serve him first! Now I must tell how it came, that I found her sitting alone at night in Mr. Audley's drawing-room, when she and I, knew not where to find the other, whom we needed so.

For a long while, all was brightness and beauty—her husband was her lover—she lived in his smile and he—he said, she was his star, his all on earth.

When they reached England, she wrote that one hurried letter—the only one I ever received, her husband mailed it, saying, "he had enclosed it in one of his own, pleading that we would forgive and receive him as our own."

This of course was false, such a letter never came although the other did.

Then she waited a little while and wrote again and again, though no answer ever came—such loving letters, I have them now—but I must not anticipate.

She waited and watched month after month, for some kindly word from home, but it never came, and at last she gave up hoping for it, and grew to believe the words of her husband, that we had cast her off. And then he would take her in his arms and say,

"For my sake Birdie, they do not love Rolf Livingstone's wife, you must love me better to make up, I must have their share, and my own as well."

And she did love him fervently, yet, though she strove she could not forget the friends of her childhood, her widowed mother over the sea, but pined for them, until her cheek grew pale, her merry laugh stilled, and her bright eyes dim.

Then when her beauty was on the wane, or its brightness clouded, his boasted love grew cold—he was not unkind, but he left her often, staying out late at night, and laughed when she said she missed him, and kissing her gaily called her,

"A foolish child, who expected a man to be always a lover, even after he had been married a whole year."

"But you do love me you know Rolf, so why not be what you are, my lover-husband," she said.

"So I do little one, but then you must not worry me, if I sometimes stay out late, I always like perfect liberty, and soon learn to hate those who seek to shackle my movements."

"But you could never hate me, that would be impossible," she said in a frightened earnest tone "your own wife you know!"

"Why not?" he said laughingly, "if you were not such a pet, I could hate my own wife, as cordially as anybody else."

"Oh you do not mean it," she said with a shudder, "God heard our vows, and would punish you for breaking them, even if your wife was not all she should be, as she is not, I know."

"Yes she is, little pet, don't slander my wife, I will not hear it," and he drew her head down upon his shoulder, "but about the being punished for doing wrong, I do not think

the personage you refer to will take the trouble to interfere."

"Oh Rolf, it is wicked to talk so, even in sport, it frightens me to hear you say such things."

"Then I am mute, little wife."

But though he petted her, the while, these talks left a strange weariness behind them.

And they did not mend the matter either, for he only staid the longer, and went the oftener, and without her—

All this time they were living in England, never in one place long at a time. Sometimes in London, then when it was fashionable, at Bath, and back to London again.

But one day a letter came at breakfast. When Rolf saw the superscription he started and changed color, took it up as if to open it, then laid it down once more. He looked up half sorrowfully at her, and then seeing her glance of enquiry said quickly,

"From an old friend on the Continent."

"Oh I thought, I hoped it was from home," and she burst into tears.

"Nonsense, I should think you had got over that foolery by this time," and taking his letter he started up and left the room.

This was the first unkind word he had spoken. That and the manner of his leaving her, sent a chill to her very heart, and the first doubt of his entire love came upon her, almost crushing her for a while.

The next day he told her, he must go to Paris for a few weeks on business.

"Then I will prepare at once, when shall we start?" she asked.

He looked abashed for a moment, and then said with a half laugh.

"Why Birdie! I did not intend to take you, as I must make such haste."

"Not take me? leave me here alone? oh surely you will not do that, oh Rolf please let me go, I will be so good, and give you no trouble, indeed I will not," she said beseechingly.

"But I will be gone only a couple of weeks."

"Oh it will seem like years if I may not see your face, it will break my heart."

And after more pleadings and tears, he gave consent, not very willingly she saw, adding,

"Well then if you must go, why we may as well make our arrangements not to return, but spend the winter in Paris, instead of London."

And they went. He fixed her in a beautiful villa out of Paris a couple of miles, every thing that wealth could buy he surrounded her with, and for a while she was a happy wife. But soon he absented himself again, and now not for hours but sometimes for days, saying,

"His business required his presence in Paris." But he never took her with him.

Thus month after month she lived here, surrounded with all that could entrance and delight the eye, but with an unsatisfied wearied heart. A stranger amongst strangers.

No friend to go to, none to expect. Her only relief from wearisomeness the glimpses of sunshine her husband's presence brought, and the long solitary rides which on fair days she took, but which only made her more sad as the contrast between her own loneliness, and the gay laughing crowds she met in her drives, came upon her.

But one day as she drove listlessly alone, too *ennuied* even to notice the gay carriages with their inmates, which passed her, a laugh was wafted to her ear, and springing up, she cried,

"Aunt Estelle," but before she could catch one glimpse of the faces within, the carriage was whirled away, and lost amidst the maze of others, with which the highway was lined.

After that, day after day she drove at the fashionable hour and out of it, with but one aim, one desire. The hope that she might not have been deceived, but that one of her home friends was near her, and that she could find her at last.

Thus she drove with eager watchful face, never dreaming of the sensation she was creating by her beautiful establishment, and still more beautiful face. Once in a while, she would think she saw her husband amidst the crowd of gay loungers, which gathered round some doorway, or balcony, or perhaps seated beside some lady driving quickly by, but of this she was never certain.

When he came again however, it was with a frown and an angry expostulation that,

"You shall not make yourself, as you have been doing, the talk of Paris. It displeases me to have any woman, above all my wife a town talk."

It took her a long while to understand how or why she was conspicuous. But then she said sadly,

"I never thought of that Rolf. I thought once, a week ago, that I hear Aunt Estelle's voice, and since then I have always been looking for her."

"Nonsense, what silly notions you do get," he said with a frown, "but you are moped to death here, and I am going to take you to Florence with me next week."

"To Florence, dear Florence, oh I am so glad."

"Why little wife how you brighten up, if you would look like that oftener I would give you more of my company I think; bright looks such as you once had are the only things to chain me."

"But I am not quite well I think, not well as I used to be, I fear," she said with her ever ready tears, but then as she saw the frown coming over his face, she dried them, and added quickly.

"But Florence, dear Florence, it will do me good to see it once more."

"Once more, why were you ever there, Birdie?"

"I was born in Florence, Rolf, and I should like"—

"Like what sweet? you shall have just what you like."

"My baby to be born, in the same house where I was," she whispered, hiding her face upon his bosom.

"Then we will go there my own," he said tenderly.

And they did and for many a day her husband was her lover once more, and Cora was strangely happy.

And weeks after when she lay, a fair young mother, with a "birdling" nestled closely to her heart, the darkened room seemed to have a glory in it when Rolf came, and kneeling at her bedside, took his darling in his arms, and told her over again his love tale, even before he looked upon his son.

"Shall we call it Walter my sweet?" he said.

"No, no, I am not worthy, oh that I dare! but I have sinned too much, alas!"

"Naughty Birdie, sinned in loving me."

But the look of love she gave him, showed how very dear the sin was.

"Then what will my darling call her son?"

"Rolf," she answered tenderly, brushing the heavy locks from his brow with her weak pale fingers.

He started up as if a dagger had struck him, and paced quickly up and down the room, then seeing her look of fright he came back again.

"No my dearest, name it after a better man, in the hope that the name may make it more worthy."

"Rolf, my Rolf, do not talk so, your sins are better worthy of love, than any other being's goodness." And raising herself she threw her arms about his neck so proud, so tender, so loving of him.

"And I will call our son Rolf," she said.

But with a shudder, he answered.

"No, no, not if you love me, be contented pet to think I know best, and have a good reason for my no."

"Then I will call him Leonard, for my sister Nora."

"Why not Marion, since you love her best, or for your mother, pet."

"I am not worthy," she said meekly, "and besides Lela will see that I forgive her, that she was unkind to me, if—if I ever see them again."

"What tears coming then I am off?" he said but as he stooped to kiss her, she held him fast putting away the tears he hated so.

"No, no, I will be good dear Rolf, only let me look at you a little longer, it makes me happy, so very happy," she said.

But after she grew well again, the old absences were renewed, but this time she minded them less, for had she not her child, her little Leonard, to comfort and engross her?

If sometimes a pang went through her heart, at the thought that Rolf loved her less, she smothered it in kisses on her baby's soft lips. And then he was always tender of her, and petted her, perhaps less often but still tenderly.

And while her baby was left her, she cared not much for any earthly thing. But God looked down and saw the fair child, and knew it was best it should come to dwell with Him. And so one night with only her servants round her, and they almost strangers, the pale watcher was made motherless. So quickly, so suddenly had death come, they had no time to summon the father, until all was over. And

then they sought for him in vain; in the midst of her grief they came to her, asking where he was to be found, and she could not tell. His valet said,

"If Madame will look among Monsieur's papers perhaps she will find the note which summoned him away this morning, I dare not, Monsieur would dismiss me."

But wild with grief she heeded him not, but dismissing them all, said:

"We will wait until he comes, it must be soon."

And for a whole day and far in the next night, she nursed her grief alone, mourning over the pale cold corpse of her fair dead boy, but saying,

"For my sin, for my sin, I was unworthy."

But bye and bye the desire to share this anguish with her husband—the need of his sustaining arm became insupportable. And remembering the words of the valet, she went slowly and weariedly into her husband's dressing-room, to search for some clue to his whereabouts.

His keys were thrown upon the dressing-table, his desk locked stood near. It was filled with notes and letters, some opened and others tied in packages.

The first two or three were business notes, then some bills, then a delicate little perfumed note dated the day before. With these words written in a hurried hand.

"Dearest:—Come to me at once, Rolf has sprained his ankle terribly, and is so cross I can do nothing with him. He wants papa, and you know I sing to night, so I must leave him sick or well.

Thine, Nina."

What did it mean? with eager eyes, and trembling hands she opened another, which read thus:

"I have a supper to night at the 'saloon de Théâtre,' will my own precious Rolf make the hours flee like golden seconds by his dear presence. What you have often called me,
Your darling, Nina."

With a wild cry, forgetting what she came there for, forgetting the dead boy in the next room, over whom her heart had mourned so piteously but just now, Coralie, with frantic eagerness, read note after note, like these; some more tender, some upbraiding him for negligence, but all calling him

her own, her Rolf. Some were dated as far back as when they were in London, but all bore the post mark of Paris or Florence. This was why they had been hurried from London, and then from Paris, that her husband might be near this woman.

An opera singer or a ballet dancer, that her notes plainly bespoke her, and—heaven help the heart-broken reader,—her husband's mistress!

Then when all those billet-doux were read and re-read she bowed herself upon the ground and strove to make out what it all meant. For hours she sat thus, crushed and bowed down, with this terrible revelation, until the gray dawn broke and her lamp grew pale.

Then she rose and calmly, opened and read letter after letter, many of them in the same hand but dated years ago, before she knew him. Full of love, at first, then of upbraiding, then a demand for money, because a child was born, "which I have named Rolf," the writer said, that was the reason of his "No!"

Then came angry bitter letters, telling of neglect and desertion; some of them had followed him to America, and one was received the very morning he had told her of his love, in the parlor of "Ingle-side." And in it was a threat which Cora hardly noted—that she would send the child to him, and make him acknowledge it.

These were the notes which had met them in London, the first acknowledging the receipt of a sum of money, others reminding him of his promise to come to Paris, and then the one which had brought them to Florence—which said, "your son is ill, come quickly."

She read them all, quietly, then folding, and tying them together laid them back again, and turned to go, but suddenly a well known hand struck her, and eagerly she caught up a bundle of letters,

"Oh mamma! and I dared to doubt you,—ingrate that I am!" she cried,

There they were, all the letters she had pined so for, dozens of them, from every one of those dear ones whom she deemed had forgotten her.

And under all, lay the fond pleading letters she had written to us, each one as she had given it into her husband's hand to send away.

"Dastard," she said, her eyes flashing, "these are mine at least," laying them aside she arranged the rest, and locked the desk.

Then beside her boy's cold corpse she read all those loving words we had sent across the deep to her.

But though she kissed them often, she never shed a tear, but read and re-read them until twilight fell. Then calling her maid she dressed herself in a dress of azure velvet, put diamonds in her ears and on her breast, and laid bright flowers 'midst her golden curls, and with but one long kiss upon her darling's brow, summoned her carriage and went forth, with only the valet for her companion, spite of the frightened remonstrances of her servants.

"To the Opera House," she said, as she drove away.

It was a blaze of light, and for a moment after they entered the lobby she grew dizzy, but recovering she bade the servant go and procure her a seat.

They were very late, the opera had begun some time before, drawing the curtains closely round her box she scanned the assembled audience, for a long while in vain.

But bye and bye a little stir occurred in a box opposite her, and a party entered, one of the ladies, a beautiful woman, dressed in the extreme of the fashion was attended by two gentlemen, and one of them was Rolf Livingstone.

He sat down moodily, with a look of *ennui* upon his face, answering once in a while the gay sallies of his companions, then relapsing into silence.

Now Cora ordered her attendant to draw back the curtains, and sat in a graceful position with her eyes fixed upon her husband.

It was just as the ballet was closing, and the instant her curtains were withdrawn all eyes were turned towards her, in wonder and admiration.

Oh I know how beautiful she looked in her magnificence, with a blaze of diamonds flashing in the light, no wonder Rolf Livingstone sprang up with a white face as he beheld her. Then sank down again as the laugh and jeers of his companions recalled him to himself.

She met his gaze coldly, and turned her eyes indifferently upon the stage, just as the curtain went down. Then she watched him endeavoring to excuse himself from his companions, as she knew from their gestures, and the way the lady clung to his arm—in vain.

"Haste Adolphe, I must meet your master in the lobby, and take him home to his dead son," she said with a laugh as they made their way through the crowd.

"As soon as I speak to your master, call my carriage," she added as they went on.

Just at the door they came face to face upon Livingstone and his company. He turned white as the wall beyond him. With a bow and a sneer she said in a gay tone,

"Pardon my interruption sir, but I would say a word in your ear if your lady will permit me."

"Certainly," was the reply from the person thus addressed, as she let go his arm, "I will wait."

Before he had time to recover himself she said in a low tone, approaching her lips to his ear.

"Your *youngest* son died last night, and we"—

"My God! Cora what do you mean?" he cried catching her arm.

With a look of withering contempt she drew back, then said coldly.

"The gentleman forgets himself," and made a sign to her servant.

"Mrs. Livingstone's carriage?" he cried.

"Waiting," was the reply from the groom without, and before Rolf could stay her she had passed into the carriage and was whirled away.

At home once more she laid aside her gay dress, and seated herself besides her boy's little couch.

After she had watched his sweet face for a time, she called for her easel and began with a steady hand to sketch that calm pale face, upon the canvass.

"Mamma will like to see how you looked the last day you were on earth my boy," she said.

Suddenly a carriage drove recklessly to the door and a furious knock told who had come. In a moment she heard his quick step and eager voice as he came up stairs. Bending down, she pressed one kiss upon the little white face, and then proceeded calmly without a tremor, to her unfinished portrait.

"Leonard my boy! my boy!" burst forth from the grief-stricken man, as he threw himself upon the dead body of his child. But the mother and wife, who yesterday, was so tender, so loving and sympathizing, sat by unmoved,

never looking up from her canvass, but working calmly and steadily at her picture. Suddenly with a cry of anguish, Rolf started up saying,

"In the name of heaven, what has come over you?"

"A desire to finish my dead child's portrait before you bury him, sir. I took one of him last week in the flush of health, when he was just a year old. It was so beautiful, I thought to give it to his father on his birth-day. Now I want mamma to see how my darling looked when he had grown to be an angel. My precious boy," and with a gentle smile she stroked back the little soft curl from her baby's brow and wound it lovingly round her finger. It was the only sign of tenderness she showed before him. Later in the day she gave directions how she desired the funeral to be arranged.

"My child shall never lie in this unchristian country," she said, "but let them carry him to Paris, where he shall lie until I take him home with me."

And the next morning, Rolf Livingstone, at her stern command started for Paris, and did as she desired. While he was gone she collected the little that had belonged to her girlhood, which she had treasured up for the old memories which hung about them.

Among them were a few dresses, these she packed together. Then with a small sum of money, which was the gift of Mr. Audley before her marriage, she went forth from her home, leaving behind her a letter in the desk which contained her husband's other letters.

"I came to this place when my boy died, hoping to find some clue to where my noble husband was, that I might within his faithful arms lose half the dreadful grief which was upon me. Unsuspectingly I read one letter, then I read all, every one this box contains. Those which bore my name, I have retained, and they are my comforts, and lay like a shield over my heart. Those of your paramour I have left for your comfort. With nothing save my few girlhood's relics, the littleness of which in my love, I was so proud, happy that all I had, you gave me, I go hence forever. It were vain to seek me, even did you desire it, for God being my witness, henceforth I am no more to you than that dead boy whose body you have this day taken from our desolate home.

"Every gift of my wedded life you will find in their places, the keys lie on your dressing-table.

"Henceforth, I live to prepare for my Leonard's greeting when he shall come to meet me at the gate-way of heaven. Your place is to protect and guard your remaining son, but God pity the poor boy; God protect him. While life lasts I will pray for you, whom with my whole soul I once loved.

"Coralie."

Then she went forth, seeking the places where the letters from home told her Clarence was. But when after a weary two days' travel she reached it, he had gone, and "gone to his uncle in Paris," they said.

Weariedly she retraced her way and after days and nights of travel, reached Paris. Then spent with her exertions, penniless and weary, for a whole day she wandered through the streets seeking for Mr. Audley's residence, and only found it as the shades of night were falling round her. After that, the way I found her, and her illness I have already told.

A few days after she came, and while we yet despaired of her recovery, Rolf Livingstone arrived. None of us saw him but Mr. Audley, who sternly and positively forbade him the house.

"This child whose life you have cursed, is mine now, and to the utmost extent of the law will I protect her from you."

"She shall choose between us sir:" was the haughty reply as he departed.

And so she did, for when she grew able to bear it, we told her he had been here. With a wild shriek of terror she cried,

"Save me from him, I will never go to him."

With loving words we soothed her, and then told her she must see him once more, and let him know her determination. At first she would not hear of this, but afterward she consented, and we sent for him to come on such a day. Proudly and confidently, he came, certain of his power over her, deeming that a few tender words would make her forget the heart-wrongs she endured.

How little he knew her! When we told her, he had come, she said calmly.

"Then let every one of my family come to this room, else I will not see him even now."

And when all were assembled, she bade a servant show him up. With a quick step and pale but haughty face, he came up the room to where she stood with her brother's arm about her, for she was yet too weak to stand long alone. Kneeling at her feet, he clasped her hand in his and kissed it passionately.

"My wife, my precious wife forgive me."

"Mr. Livingstone, I beg of you rise, your position is very unbecoming: and unloose my hand if you please. Nay sir, I insist, else I shall have to call upon Mr. Audley to free me from your insult."

"Insults!" he said bitterly as he rose, "insults! for me to kiss your hand Birdie!"

"Yes sir, the vilest insults, your presence here is an insult, not to me alone, but to those assembled here, my pure fair sisters, my angel mother. The noble brother upon whom henceforth I shall lean for strength, and whose arms will evermore shield me from the pollution of wicked men. Shall they not my brother, will not Howard Percy guard and protect his desolate sister from the infidel *roué*?"

"I will, so help me God," said Howard in a firm clear tone.

For a moment Rolf stood looking in a dazzled sort of a way into Cora's face, which was so child-like and so fair, beneath the little cap of lace which shrouded it. Then with outstretched hands he cried in tones of anguish, such as I think never reached my ear before,

"Coralie, my wife, you do not mean it?"

"As God is my witness, I do" she said calmly, "the one desire of my life is never to look upon your face again."

"Then if there is a God, God help me now," and with a cry of agony, he rushed out.

"Take me to bed again, mamma," was all she said. And though she lay there many days, she only said the words of all, ere they sleep.

"Good night, dear papa."

Mr. Audley has heard that Livingstone has returned to Italy, but since that day we have not heard from him, Cora never mentions his name, nor do we.

As soon as she is able, Howard and I will take her among

the mountains of Switzerland, and now she is so much better Stuart and May, have started upon their long delayed tour, taking Gracie with them, because we thought it better for her to be away, when Ernest made his trial upon Adèle, we have not spoken of it to the poor child herself yet, but he is very desirous to begin.

Estelle and Lela are again in the whirl of fashionable life, in which I fear the latter strives in vain to drown the sorrow an old memory still has for her,—but Mr. Audley likes them to be gay, is pleased that his wife and daughter should be much sought for.

In the meanwhile, Ada whose recent loss, and deep mourning dress preclude her entrance into gay society, is my companion, and we sit, a quiet party in my sick child's chamber, with Adèle, and sometimes Howard and Clare for our visitors, and read, or else write letters home.

I do not like to see Ada so quiet, poor child, it is a strange change, from the wild gay life, which is as natural to her, as the breath she draws.

She has told me in secret of her love for Carrol, and of the coolness which first came between them, because she hated to own even to herself how much she liked him, and how afterwards because she encouraged innocent Harry Lester, the breach widened, until at last Lela came and,

"Won his heart from me, then I gave him up," and she declares with a smile, "I have quite lost my idea of him now, dear friend, and think I could dance at his wedding quite complacently, without a sigh for my first love."

But though she talks thus I doubt she means it.

NOVEMBER.

We have been away for a couple of months, and are thankful to know how much benefit the change has been to Coralie.

And—now how can I write it, how express my gratitude to Him who doeth all things well. My Adèle sees once more. Oh I think of all the pain I have endured, that hour of suspense in which the operation was in progress surpassed them a hundred fold until Ernest came into the

room where we sat, and throwing himself into a seat covered his eyes saying,

"Successful, she will see, thank God!" in a trembling voice,

And she does see, thanks be to our Father above, although as yet in a darkened room, still, she sees. The necessary excitement and call for exertion, has done Cora a world of good. I have written a letter to Stuart to hasten his journey, and by the time they return, Adèle will be quite able to bear the light.

Clarence declares the first eyes which see his new picture shall be Adèle's, but she whispers,

"Not till Gracie comes, dear Clare."

To-night we were much astonished by a visit from young Lawrence, Ada's cousin, who used to be such a great friend to my little girls, in their holidays at Rosedale and Ingle-side.

He is the perfection of a light-hearted blue-eyed sailor, heedless and reckless as his boyhood promised. One speech of his, brought a tinge of red to Ada's pale face, spite of her former declarations of carelessness.

"One of your old lovers was making a deuce of a fuss, because he did not arrive in Sicily before you left, and pestered me with all sorts of questions about you, whether you were married, etc. I expect he will follow you here, as likely as not."

"What was his name?" asked Ada laughing.

"Carrol, he is some kind of a ——— by George, if I know what, but he is something, which is going to keep him abroad a deucedly long time."

"He has been appointed consul to some one of the Mediterranean Cities, he wrote me word," said Clare, "Lester is with him this year too."

CHAPTER LXXII.

DECEMBER.

At breakfast yesterday morning, we were discussing the arrangements of a ball, which Estelle was to give that evening in honor of the Ambassador of S——, and of Marion's wedding day anniversary, she declares.

"I have forgotten to tell you my dear," said Mr. Audley looking up from his paper, "that I have taken the liberty of inviting a guest to your fête this evening."

"Whom pray? lady or gentleman?" asked Estelle.

"Oh, a gentleman of course, and one well worth your knowing, I recommend you and Nora to endeavor to captivate him, for I know of none more worthy of enchaining."

"Dear! who can he be, and what can he be like, to whom you, 'Bien Bon,' take such a desperate fancy," said Lela.

"Ah! he is an old fancy of mine, I associate him with others who were once very dear to me, perhaps that is one reason, why I notice him enough to perceive his own excellence. Remember I recommend him. Although to tell the truth I rather surmise, from two or three things I have heard him say in regard to womankind, that our shy little Gracie is his type."

"Well then what is the use of our exhausting our charms, 'wasting our sweetness on the desert air' etc."

"True enough, Aunt Es, I hate men who have their 'types,' it makes one feel so uncomfortable to know you are being compared with some one else, I will none of your perfect men, I hate him already," said Lela.

"Very well, you saucy minx, now remember you are to keep out of the way, and let Gracie captivate him, that is if the child arrives in time."

"Oh they will be sure to be here by night, dear Gracie, I know they will," said Adèle.

"Yes so they will," quoth Lela, "and I make over my right and title henceforth and forever to Gracie."

"See that you do," laughed Mr. Audley as he went out. Soon after breakfast I was seated alone in my dressing-

room, when the door opened and Cora, with crimsoned cheeks came quickly in, holding a letter.

"Read that, mamma;" she said.

It was a short note from Rolf Livingstone, the latter part read thus,

"My pet, I know, spite of your coldness and pretended scorn of me, you love me yet. I am certain of it, I have watched you from afar, seen your pale cheeks and languid step, and know my darling is pining for me.

"Spite of yourself, your every action shows this, your quiet solitary life. Those whom I have asked, who frequent your house, say, they never have seen 'the widowed sister of la belle Lela,' and add a wish that they could catch a peep 'of one who is almost as beautiful, report says, as the song bird.' Fools! they do not know what they say, how I exult over them in secret. 'Almost as beautiful,' as if my Birdie was not more beautiful even than an angel. Oh Birdie, you may scorn me for a while, but I hope, I hope still, and on my knees I thank you that you conceal those charms, once my very own, but lost, lost now."

Then there are pleadings and love words, which touched my very heart, but only moved her scorn.

Oh! it is strange to see this gentle, loving child-heart so transformed. Henceforth I will say, nothing is so bitterly, fiercely reckless, as a woman wronged. When I had read this through, I looked at her, standing with a fierce, cold light in her eyes and I only handed it back, but said not a word.

"What do you think of that, mamma?" she said sharply.

"It makes my heart ache, Coralie."

"Humph! your heart is more tender than mine,—nay I do not mean that,—I have no heart, mine is in my baby's grave, it was a good, true heart, I must not defame it," she muttered.

"Cora, Cora, do not talk so."

"I will not, dearest, if you do not like it, but I have come to tell you I intend to make my debüt, this evening, as the 'Widow Livingstone.' I have just bargained with Adèle for her white Canton crape, which with a little alteration will suit me exactly, then I will put white moss-buds in my short curls, and it will only take jet ornaments to make my mourning deep enough."

"I will never agree to this deception! never, my child! you must be wild to think of such a thing, beside you know Rolf Livingstone will be here, sadly against his own will, I doubt not, but he is in the suite of the Ambassador, and will be obliged to come; you would never bear a meeting with him."

"Would I not? try me," she said vehemently.

"Your present anger makes you think you could go through much, but it would fail you."

"Nevertheless I will try this night. Forgive me, my precious mother, that I ever do the things you command me not, I of all the others am the bane, the trouble of your life, it is my fate."

"No, it is not so, my pet. I am content to have you as you are, only more happy, my poor child."

"Then, let me have my will this once."

"But the deception," I said, "the falsehood!"

"There need be none told, let them introduce me simply as Mrs. Livingstone, no one knows me here, save one who for his own sake will be silent."

And though I strove to persuade away this plan, Mr. Audley and Estelle espousing Cora's side, they carried it into effect.

Late in the afternoon, our travellers arrived. Stuart and Marion, trembling and anxious, but Gracie free from suspicion was calm as need be.

"Where is Adèle?" were her first words, "naughty puss, not to come and speak to me first of all."

"Here Gracie, dear Gracie," said Adèle's trembling voice behind her.

"Dear sister, how good it is to have you in my arms again, I am so glad to get back to you, I think I will never be tempted from your side, although," with a deprecating look at Stuart, "I have had the best and most charming of times with 'Arty' and 'May.'"

"If you hold me so closely, I cannot see you dearest Gracie," said Adèle softly.

"There, you shall have a chance," and she took her sister's hand and passed it over her face. "I have grown quite old in this long four months we have been parted, feel the wrinkles."

"I have no need to feel any more, it is so much better to see, Gracie, thank God and Uncle Ernest."

For the first time Gracie looked in her eyes, then with a white face she cried :

"What do you mean ? Oh Adèle !"

"That I see my sister, my faithful friend once more, my true Gracie."

"Oh Adèle !" it was all she said ; and before us all, with a beautiful light in her face, she knelt down where she stood, and bowing her head upon her clasped hands, said :

"For all Thy goodness, I thank Thee, oh my God." For a moment she was very still, then she rose and stretching out her arms to Ernest,

"Oh, Uncle Ernest, if the service, and life love of my heart can recompense you, they are your own forevermore."

He clasped her in his arms and the first tears I have seen him shed for years were rained upon her head. Tenderly she kissed them from his cheeks, then turned to me, and kissing me said :

"Your prayers and thanksgivings, a purer and more acceptable offering than mine, my precious mother, have gone up on high." And clasping her arms once more round her sister, "Adèle, papa's pretty Adèle, thank God !" And she went swiftly from the room.

Then followed the loving greetings of Marion and Stuart.

"The light is beautiful, my darling ?"

"Oh is it not, May ? but all your faces are more beautiful. It seems like heaven to have seen you all once more," and she hid her face on Stuart's breast and sobbed aloud.

"Nay, I will not have you dim your bright eyes, sister mine, with tears," said Stuart, "you have no need to weep for light, who always smiled in darkness." Then he let her go to seek for Gracie, and clasping his arms about me,

"Oh I am so joyful in your joy, my mother."

We had sad work before we could make Gracie ready for the evening's party. But Mr. Audley had determined they should both make their entrée this evening.

It has been many years since I was present at a gay ball. But early in the evening I took my place in a quiet corner where Stuart had drawn before a curtain a heavy music rack. It was a well chosen spot, just where three rooms

meet, the dancing saloon, the drawing and music room, which divided from each other by pillars, have only curtains instead of walls to separate them.

Beside one of these pillars in a little nook I felt content to look on unseen at this night's gaities, for I could not stay away ; I could not bear the suspense of not knowing how Coralie would sustain herself,—and then I was doubtful concerning the amount of courage Gracie had on hand after her surprise. Before the arrival of her guests Estelle came to me saying :

"I am glad they have fixed you at the head of the room, for I can receive every one just here, so that you can see them all to the best advantage, and then if you push back your curtains a little way thus, you have full view of the dancing room, and then of the music room as well."

How regally she looked, the humble teacher of Elm street. Oh, wealth is pleasant, but not the best or only thing, for I have known Estelle as gay and elegant, in our quiet home in a plain chintz dress, as she was to-night in her robe of garnet velvet clasped with diamonds and trimmed with rare old lace.

Next her stood Leanore. Her dress was black velvet with a narrow lace collar, clasped with a diamond pin of immense value, at the throat her sole ornament. Only one in a thousand could have worn such a dress, but it made her more lovely, the severe simplicity contrasting with her own brilliant beauty.

Coralie upon Howard's arm, dressed in the manner she proposed, with her short, bright curls decked with flowers, looked younger than either Adèle or Gracie, all her old childish ways resumed again. We watched her anxiously, but her cheek was crimson, her eyes bright, and a smile shot ever and anon over her face, and I did not wonder to hear the words of a gentleman :

"Well, that little fairy is the freshest, happiest bit of beauty I have seen for many a long day. They call her Mrs. Livingstone, who is she ?"

"Another of those Percy girls, a sister of la belle Lela, there is a score of them I believe. Mrs. Aldrich, that little quaker-like dame over yonder in white is one of them, and these girls in pink with pearls, are some more," answered his companion.

"Oh yes, I remember Audley told me, they are Walter Percy's children, noble fellow, he redeemed a world from the dreariness of containing nothing good. I knew him years ago in Italy, he married Howard the English minister's daughter, you know. I wonder if she is dead too."

"I guess so, for I have never heard of her, the Audleys bring them out;" then he added, "but have you noticed that one in pink, they say she has been blind for years, and has just recovered her sight. Her face takes my breath away, old man as I am. I almost expect to hear some spirit voice bid her ascend from our sublunary sphere. Let us go behind her and see if she has wings." And they moved away leaving my view uninterrupted; then as I sat watching, the voice of a lady behind me said:

"Is it really true that the delightful Mr. Marstone has returned?"

"Yes, madame, and henceforth we poor fellows may hide our diminished heads, for he always was the *beau par excellence*, but now when he returns a travelled man, with all his other charms, he will take the fair ones by storm."

"Nonsense, Monsieur, you know you are irresistible, but about"—and they passed on. My poor Nora, I must warn her, but how? she was so far away from me, and I might already be too late. Suddenly I saw Clare, and leaning over called to him, but he did not hear, until some one said:

"Mr. Beaumont, a lady is speaking to you," and he came at once.

"Send Lela to me, Clare, as quickly as you can. I want to see her." He went instantly and returned with her just as the announcement was made of,

"The Ambassador from S—— and suite," and among them, conspicuous from his height, I beheld Mr. Marstone. Estelle came quickly to her place.

"Come, Lela," said Mr. Audley, "take your place my child."

"One moment, Lela, do not look round, my child, can you be very calm and collected, if I tell you something?" I said hurriedly.

"Yes, what is it?" but her cheek grew pale as death.

"Mr. Marstone is here, the guest of whom your uncle spoke I suppose."

She shut her teeth tightly over her lips, and a kind of groan escaped.

"Leanore, your uncle is angry that you do not come," said Estelle leaning towards us, "come you have just time to take your place." The color flew into her face and pressing my hand she said quickly:

"Trust me, mamma," and stood beside Estelle and her husband just as he presented his guest to her.

"And my adopted daughter, Miss Percy, of the United State, your highness." Her only answer was a bow.

When his lordship had moved away with Estelle, Mr. Audley broke through the crowd which instantly surrounded Lela, saying:

"Nora, here is an old friend whom I hope you have not forgotten, Mr. Marstone, who spent sometime with us years ago at Paris, and afterwards at Ingleside."

"I remember Mr. Marstone, and also Monsieur Lambert," she said, extending her hand to a gentleman who accompanied him. "I doubt if either of them remember me so distinctly."

"My fair lady, you do us wrong," cried the one she called Lambert, "how could we ever forget such charms." But Mr. Marstone's sole reply was a grave bow.

"How is Madame, M. Lambert?" she asked.

"*Merci, Madame sa porte bien*," was the answer, "and at this moment she calls me, and I must leave you to my friend Marstone."

"Shall I have the pleasure of a promenade, Miss Percy?" he asked.

"Excuse me, but I am engaged for the next dance and will remain here, lest my partner should be unable to find me amidst the throng."

"Your mother?" he said after a pause, "I hope she is quite well."

"As well as usual, thank you, she is always frail."

"And I presume she is in Paris, as I see all the rest of you are here to-night," he added.

"Oh yes, I suppose," she added laughing, "you think us rather a large family to transport from one continent to another."

"I believe something of the kind did occur to me," he said smiling.

"Well we did think it a terrible undertaking, but it was not much worse than the journey between Ingleside and B—— used to be," she said lightly.

"How well Mrs. Aldrich is looking. I have not seen her since her marriage until now you know; they have been married a year to-night I hear. How well she is looking."

"Is she not? and Stuart, have you seen him? Oh he has grown such a noble man, we are so proud of him," she said warmly.

"And they are so happy," he said sadly, withdrawing his eyes from her face, upon which they had been fastened while she spoke, and looking into the distance with a but half-surpressed sigh.

"Oh, very, such good, true hearts, could not fail to be very happy," but seeming to remember suddenly to whom she was speaking, she said hurriedly: "Have you seen Adèle since her sight was restored?"

"Her sight restored!" he repeated, "then it was she whom I saw as I came up the room, I am very glad, what a source of comfort to your mother."

"Oh is it not?" and her voice trembled, "and to all of us such a joy."

Then others joined them, and the conversation became general, and several cases like and unlike Adèle's were cited, then Lela's partner claimed her, just as Mr. Audley came back with Gracie. A look of pain shot across Lela's face, and I saw she was remembering her guardian's words of the day before.

"Marstone, this blushing damsel has just been going into raptures over the pleasant times you made more pleasant in her childish days."

"Thank you kindly, Miss Gracie, it is very pleasant to be remembered. Mr. Audley has little idea how acceptably his words fell upon my ear." And Lela turned quickly away, she could bear to hear no more I plainly saw.

"Shall I have you for a partner, little friend?" said Mr. Marstone, "there is a place unoccupied opposite your sister," and he led her away.

When the dance was through he brought her back to the old place, and stood looking down into her flushed, smiling face.

"May I ask you a question, Miss Gracie?" he asked.

"If you like to, sir," she replied simply. He smiled gravely at her.

"I cannot understand," he said, "about your sister Coralie, I heard she was married to Rolf Livingstone, and yet she is every where spoken of as a widow, and they meet as strangers, I observe. I have seen him for the first time for years, since I came into this room, and thus have heard no explanation from him, I do not understand it." Gracie looked down in great distress, and was entirely speechless, but a voice at his side said:

"Let me answer your question, sir."

"Mrs. Livingstone excuse me," he said, turning quickly round and taking her proffered hand, "please pardon my curiosity."

"No need of an apology. Will you do me a favor for the sake of the old times?"

"To the utmost of my ability," he replied.

"Forget whom you have heard my husband was, for I have none; he is as truly dead to me as if the grass grew a yard above his grave. I am a widow in heart; Mr. Audley will explain this to you, but yonder man is a stranger to me forevermore."

"I will remember all you——" but as he spoke, Mr. Livingstone approached.

"Welcome back old friend; why Marstone, I did not think I could have existed three years and more without a hand grasp from you," he said with his genial smile and voice, which is always so heart-winning.

"Thank you Rolf, it is indeed a long time," was the reply as they shook hands.

"Birdie, will you not speak to me just once?" his voice, sunken almost to a whisper, was trembling in its pleading tones, and he extended his hand toward her.

"Sir," and she drew herself up proudly, and her eyes flashed scornfully, "you evidently are laboring under a mistake; I have not the pleasure of your acquaintance."

"Excuse me," he replied haughtily.

"Oh certainly," she rejoined calmly, "such things as resemblances often mislead one." Turning to Mr. Marstone she added lightly, "will you not introduce me to your friend?" And he did so, both he and Gracie looking far more the parties concerned than the principal actors, who were calm and self-possessed.

"Why you have the same name," said some one near by, "are you related?"

"We may possibly be, Madame," answered Cora looking coolly at Mr. Livingstone, "my husband had some connections, I believe, but I never knew them," then she added turning with a bright smile towards her interrogator, "you know although I bear the name of Livingstone, I am a Percy, and all my pride is there, the other name, begging this gentleman's pardon, is not a pleasant one to me, doubtless he will consider me sadly wanting in taste, but no name is so sweet as Percy to me; it is my *Esperance*."

"Then of course we need none of us hope to induce you to change, unless we can tack Percy to the end of our cognomen, as one of your ancestors, Josceline Duke of Brabant, did when he married a Lady Percy, in the days of Henry II. of England, although he claimed his own from Charlemagne," said some gentleman.

"Try me, Monsieur," she said merrily, "nay do not, if you do not mean I shall say yes," and bowing gaily, she took his offered arm, and laughing lightly, walked away to the dancing room.

All this while Gracie stood listening in utter dismay, and in her fright holding fast upon Mr. Marstone's arm, totally oblivious of the fact.

"There is no use in trying to persuade you to dance with me Gracie," said Willie Lawrence pettishly, as he came up to her, "you seem so pleased with Mr. Marstone's arm, I suppose mine will not tempt you." For the first time aware of her position, she blushed and withdrawing her hand,

"I did not mean—excuse me I did not know——" she said shyly.

"Did not mean what?" he replied softly, "to be kind to me; nay then I will not excuse you, even to my old friend Lieutenant Lawrence," he said shaking the young man by the hand kindly.

Lela passing by upon the arm of the Ambassador, to the music room, heard his words, and with a weary look in her dark eyes, went on to thrill with pleasure the hearts of many, while her own was filled with sadness and pain.

Then Clare came and fixed the curtain so I could look into the music room. While Lela sang all stood entranced,

how could they help it, it made me weep in my dark corner, she seemed to be singing her very heart away.

"The nightingale has surpassed herself to-night, I never heard her sing so well before," said some gentleman near me, after she had sung several songs.

"Do not your sisters any of them sing, Miss Percy?" said her attendant as she arose.

"Yes your highness, all of them, but only Mrs. Livingstone, in public, I know she will gratify you."

Was she mad to think of such a thing. Ada who had stolen softly in to me for a while, caught my hand quickly, but in a moment we knew it was a concerted plan, and that Lela was carrying out her sister's behest.

Then many voices joined in the petition for a song. She came lightly forward. I never in my life had seen her so bewitchingly graceful, so charming, as with a pretty shake of her head, and a shrug of her white shoulders, she looked archly into the Ambassador's admiring face, and said:

"Well, as you will, but your highness will have need to regret your condescension in requesting me, for even in my palmiest days, I was but a second rate singer, they used to keep me at home to show off Nora's superior excellence, and I must fain take up my old occupation again, it seems, but I am terribly rusty, for want of practice," and she cast a slightly sad glance upon the remnants of mourning she wore.

"Of course, dear lady, we will make all necessary allowance, though I doubt none will be needed, spite of your words," and he led her towards the instrument.

"Oh not the harp, your highness, I hate the harp, the piano is my delight."

"Hate," was the laughing response, "you should hate nothing but snakes; is not that one of your English maxims Livingstone?" he said turning to that gentleman.

"I believe it is, or American, which is the same thing."

"Well, I do not your highness," she replied gaily, "in one sense of the word, that is if you use the viper as a metaphor," and she began a prelude, before a reply could be made, saying:

"Only a ballad your lordship, I sing nothing else," and she began,

"I've been roaming."

How we all remembered the time when she had sprung in at the window at Rosedale, singing it the day Lela came home, Rolf Livingstone's face showed he did, and Mr. Marstone's too, though from another cause, for it was on that day Lela returned his letter. And poor Ada remembered too, that happy light-hearted time.

"Oh Mrs. Percy how can she!" she said clasping my hand.

When she had finished, and was listening with a pleased smile to the shower of compliments from her audience, Rolf Livingstone who had watched her keenly all this while, bending towards her asked:

"Do you sing this little thing from 'Maritaine?'" and he handed her a piece of music; it was a song they had learned about the time of their engagement. How the name brought her back to me, fair and pure in heart, before the serpent had charmed her, and then wearying of his prey, left her a passionate, revengeful woman. I trembled for her composure, and May in her distant place turned pale, but Lela and Cora stood unmoved, proud, resentful,—looking into his very eyes; they were prepared for his request.

She took the sheet, looked over it an instant, humming it softly, then said: "Oh yes, I used to sing this a great deal and was very fond of it, but it is nearly a year since I have attempted it, I fear I should fail."

A cold sneer lay upon his lips at her refusal, but apparently she did not observe it.

"Do oblige us, Madame," pleaded some one, taking up the piece she had laid down, "it is a great favorite with his highness."

"Is it indeed? then I wish I could sing it; Lela do you know it? No! alas then, Monsieur, you and Mr. Livingstone must select something else, for this is a duett, and I cannot sing both parts you know," and she laughed merrily.

"But Livingstone, you sing it yourself, where is your gallantry which is so renowned, that you do not offer your services to the fair lady?"

"I will most gladly, if the lady will do me the honor to use my poor voice." Oh I almost sprang from my seat, and even Lela looked startled as with a light laugh, she sat down.

"Well if I must, I must, but I doubt whether it will give satisfaction; it is rather hazardous for people to sing together unless they have practiced, and moreover I understand Mr. Livingstone is accustomed to sing with the fair cantatrice, Nina De Toille, and I am a sorry substitute for such talent."

"By Jove, not very elegant of her, to bring up a man's cast-off mistress to punish him," whispered one dandy to another who stood near me.

She played the prelude carelessly through, then bowing graciously said:

"Now we will begin if you please, now—" and they sang 'Holy mother guide his footsteps,' her voice never quivered, but was clear as a bell from the first note to the very last.

"Really better than I expected, you are an admirable timest," she said as she rose, "but you sang rather too low, Monsieur, I fear I quite drowned you out."

His face was ghastly pale, and he turned quickly away with a slight bow. With a light laugh, and a half-contemptuous raising of her eyebrows she looked after him.

"Why the gentleman seems literally exhausted," then she said: "Lela, my lord pleads for another duo, shall we try something?" and they did to the delight of all.

"Nay, now I am really done, I shall miss all the dancing my lord, I have a passion for dancing, and yonder music almost distracts me."

"Then may I claim this fair hand for the quadrille just forming?" and he led her away. Just then Gracie passed with Willie Lawrence, and stopping her Mr. Marstone said:

"You are to dance with me once more, Miss Gracie, please remember."

"I shall like to very much indeed," she said, and he turned towards Lela:

"What a charming little lady your sister has grown Miss Percy."

"Which one, sir, I have so many?" she replied coldly.

"Oh the one who has just deserted me, Miss Gracie."

"Yes she is a dear little girl, but Adèle is our beauty."

"So Miss Gracie thinks, she has been giving me wonderful accounts of her sister's perfections, of which according to her, the least is her angelic beauty; I remember as children they were all in all to each other."

"And are still," she replied, "the truest friends."

"Why are you not dancing?" he asked after a pause.

"At first because I was tired with singing, and now because it is a waltz in which I never take part."

"Your sisters I believe do?" he replied.

"No, none except Mrs. Livingstone, and the two girls sometimes together, mamma does not permit us, but Cora of course does as she likes."

"I am glad you do not like it," he said gravely, "but I knew you did not. Shall we seek a cooler place in yonder shaded conservatoire? I should like to tell you something of my Eastern travels, you used to have a penchant for all that belonged to the land of the Saracens." And taking his arm they walked away together, they who had once loved so fondly. Lela's kiss upon my cheek when she went to her room, told me better than words, of the sad weary heart within, yet she was calm.

"But Cora's arms flung round me, and her hot kisses rained upon my face, told how she needed the comfort she would not take. Marion and I have talked her strange, unnatural conduct over, and concluded it is best she should have had her will; indeed I doubt whether she would submit to any opposition, however gently urged."

To-night she met him at the opera, and they say talked as freely and carelessly to him as to the other strangers.

"And mamma," says May, "Stuart and I both think Mr. Marstone is very much pleased with Gracie; would it not be a wonder if plain little Gracie should make such a conquest as that finished gentleman and scholar; we used to think he liked Lela you know."

CHAPTER LX XIII.

MARCH.

Two more months have passed in a round of never-ending gaiety and excitement. I wonder how they can endure it!

Clare's great picture has taken the prize at the "Exhibition." I need not attempt to describe what he has already done so admirably. Howard stands in the midst, the young Benjamin, with the coat of many colors, the same which his brother once wore about him. It looks like an angel's face shining out in the midst of those dark, stern men who surround him.

Clare's health has suffered sadly on account of his application, and his uncle has determined that he and Howard shall go on a journey to the Holy Land, and wherever else they will, to recruit. It will be sad parting from them, but it will be good for both of them, for Clare is worn out, and Howard is never strong.

Stuart and Marion left us some weeks since and are now quietly living in the old town of "Heidelberg," and Stuart is hard at his books once more, they have taken Ada to stay with them, until I go to Marion, which I shall soon.

Adèle's eyes seem quite well now, but we are very careful of them, especially Gracie who makes her sister sit hour after hour with them closed, telling her:

"I will be your eyes for a while, sister mine."

Cora meets Mr. Livingstone abroad, but of course he never comes here. I have not seen him since that first night, but they tell me he is sadly changed. The rest meet him as she desires them to do, as they would any other stranger.

Mr. Marstone visits us constantly, indeed so fond is Mr. Audley of him that he presses him into service upon all occasions, but Gracie, not Lela, is his companion, and often by Mr. Audley's arrangement I imagine.

"I would rather the child married him, than any man living," he says.

"But why Gracie, more than the others?" asked Estelle, carelessly.

"Oh only because he seems to have taken a fancy to her,

for I confess it was once the hope of my heart, that Lela would give him to me for a son," and his voice trembled, "but she would not."

MAY.

We were all engaged to spend a couple of weeks at the chateau of M. Lambert, and even I had agreed to go, very unwillingly I confess. It is a beautiful spot twenty miles or more back of Paris, and one of the gayest parties of the season was to accompany us down. What a place for me!

But now thanks to May, our journey is to be delayed until later, if we go at all, which I trust will be the case.

A letter from Stuart summoned me to May's side, but when with as much haste as possible I arrived, it was to be folded in "Arty's" arms, and hear this greeting, while his face shone with happiness:

"Too late sweet mother, too late for anything but to welcome our son," and, foolish fellow, he burst into tears.

Then when I had done petting him, I followed him to where my darling lay; bending over her he said softly:

"My own, our mother has come at last."

"Dear mamma, I am so glad, please kiss me," she murmured.

How fair she looked, I thought of her that Christmas morning when she stood beneath her own roof-tree a bride. Now so very weak but so proudly she lay with this new and holy motherhood upon her, and I knelt and blessed my child.

We have called him Audley. Walter was too dear a name.

"And Percy must be always left for Lela," said good little Marion.

They would have twisted Bertha into a boy's name but I bade them not. I have been here more than three weeks, and now must leave my May to go back to those who need me more, but I leave them with a sigh for I have learned to love little Audley dearly.

I weep when I remember that Clare and Howard are far away and may be for a year to come.

JULY.

Ada came back with me, and has begun to go out a little more with the rest into the gay scenes they frequent.

My last news from the absentees report them at Geñoa, "and going towards Constantinople." Howard says: "Clare looks quite a new man already, and I intend throwing everything like a palette or brush into the briny deep, so have great hope of bringing him home as good as new some time or other."

Coralie wept bitter tears over the news of Marion's son, but they did her no good, as I had hoped, but seemed to make her only more gay and reckless, although I know she pines for that little coffin where she says, "her heart lies buried."

Lela's happiness seems farther off than ever, but she is still the gayest of the gay, and lives a nervous, excited life, for which I can see no remedy, and Gracie innocent little Gracie, is winning the only heart she loves, from her, and wears his flowers, and sings the songs he likes, with a simple girlish joy, which seems to please and soothe him. And he comes oftener, and bends over her, and apparently wishes for no other place. Oh Leanore, my proud Leanore, with all your matchless beauty and accomplishments, is this to be your fate, to pine and die perchance, for what shy little Gracie wears so carelessly.

Next month we are going to pay this dreaded visit to the Lamberts. Oh I wish it was over, it will be soon, if I can only have patience, but I forget to sometimes.

Our letters from home report all well, and prosperously progressing, but wondering when we ever mean to come back.

I wish I had all my flock safe housed again, but there is poor prospect of it now, so I must lay by the desire.

We have been abroad a year and a half already, but I hope ere the next year comes we will be safe at Percies' Cliffe.

CHAPTER LXXIV.

AUGUST 1.

"Twist ye, twine ye, even so,
Mingle shades of joy and woe,
Hope and fear, and peace and strife,
In the thread of human life."

MEG MERRILLES' SONG.

ANOTHER year past, and yet I am not home, but please God, we will go back in a few more months. To-morrow we are going out to the chateau of these strange people. I do not like it, but I must go.

Last year my plaint was very grievous for the child who was severed from me, now I have her back safely, although not happily, yet I can but rejoice to have her any way, my poor tried Cora.

My two boys are very far away from me to-night, but they are both in God's hands, and he careth tenderly for his own, so I will not mourn because I have them not.

Leanore, poor daughter, I weep for you, your trials are very grievous, and by no wrong doing of your own, my pure high-minded child, yet God will take care of you, He is very gracious and tempers even the fiercest winds to the shorn lamb.

Then my little Marion this year has a double portion of the good things of life, a happy guarded wife, and now a mother, oh my sweet daughter, blessings gather round thy pathway, and thou takest them humbly, gently, with thy wonted meekness.

Then the last and greatest of all this year has brought, is sight to Adele, the beautiful light; shines through her soft eyes down into the depths of her pure child's heart, and her life is no longer a dream, but a beautiful reality, my darling child.

Surely this year is bowed down with blessings, the sunlight streaming everywhere, makes even the few dark places bright.

Make us more earnest, more true, more faithful, doing Thy righteous will with single hearts, oh our Father!

Walter beloved husband again Good-night. The star,
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the bright star of "Espérance," shines with a warm light from thy home even down into the shadows of my own.

SEPTEMBER.

Out on the lawn a party of the youngest and gayest of the assembled company, were playing at battle-door, while upon the terrace, the elder and more quiet were looking on.

Among them Coralie was the most conspicuous, not only for her expertness in playing, but for her merry laughter.

As they played, a groom brought round to the front of the house to display it, a beautiful horse, which our host had just purchased. As he led him back and forth, before the house the game was stayed to look on, and admire his noble form and gay prancing.

Suddenly Mr. Livingstone taking the reins from the hand of the groom, said to Mr. Lambert,

"Lambert, shall I try him for you? he looks amazingly as though he wanted trying."

"I beg you will not Livingstone, for I fear it would be dangerous in his present state, you do not know him, he may have tricks, especially if he becomes aware of a stranger being upon his back."

"Nonsense I will soon get him off of tricks, and as for the danger," with a shrug and laugh, "if there is any, which I doubt, it is no matter, I may as well into the darkness beyond, from off a horse's back as any other way."

"But Monsieur," cried Madame with a little scream, "I am sure there is great danger, please," as he mounted into the saddle, "oh please do not endanger your precious life."

"Madame my life, is nothing, the least precious thing I know of to any living soul, myself included, I will tempt the endangering of this most *valuable* thing," as he spoke he gathered up the reins and started, saying to all, though with compressed brows he bent his gaze on Coralie, who stood near listening indifferently to the conversation, playing the while with the baton which she held.

"Adieu friends and foes, witness my exit complacently I beg of you. I will jeopardize my life to pleasure one fair dame who has wished me among the has beens for many a day. Adieu," and he touched his hat gaily.

"Well, then, while the gentleman performs his suicidal intentions we can proceed with our game," and Cora, who had been listening with an air of careless indifference to his words, tossed the ball towards the target but missing its aim it glanced off, and as Mr. Livingstone wheeled his horse quickly round, struck it full in the face. Before the rider could recover himself, even before we could think, the wild animal sprang forward tossing his heels in mid-air—and in an instant had cleared the iron paling which bordered the park, flinging his rider with terrible force upon the gravel carriage way. All was the wildest confusion, several sprang forward to raise him, but with a wail of despair, Coralie outsped them all, and throwing herself upon the ground beside him, ejaculated:

"My darling, my husband! I have killed him! I have killed him!" For a moment the others stood aghast at the words, but never knowing or caring aught for the revelations she was making, she kept up still the same moan:

"My husband, my own, I have killed him," kissing his white lips the while she mourned over him. At last some of the gentlemen gently raised the prostrate form from the ground and one of them said in a respectful tone:

"Nay, Mrs. Livingstone, he is not dead, only stunned by his fall, let us carry him in I pray you." But as they moved him, he uttered a low groan, turning fiercely towards them, she said:

"You hurt, you torture him, you shall not."

But Lela lifted her to her feet and following them as they bore him on, led her into the house.

A physician was sent for, every thing in the meanwhile was done which we could do, but Coralie with a white face sat crouched upon the bedside never moving her sad eyes from his face, nor could the utmost entreaties induce her to leave her position.

"Do not ask me," she would say peevishly. "I will stay here, it is my right, he is my own, naught shall win me from my duty."

Child! child! it was late for you to think of duty. For days he lay in a stupor, never opening his eyes, nor save a few groans, when it was requisite to dress his wounds, or change his position, giving any signs of life, but then, Coralie's face was piteous in its white, intense agony. The

house was very quiet, for most of the guests had dispersed in haste after the first day.

Leanore in her haughty, proud way explained the circumstances, or as many as was necessary, of her sister's separation from her husband, whether satisfactorily or not, I am unable to say, for I do not know what she said. The next day we sent for the rest of the family to come to us. The chateau we were in was one which Monsieur Lèmbert had hired for the season and as the summer was over, they courteously offered to transfer the possession of it to us. When Ernest arrived he immediately took charge of our patient and never left him.

The latter part of the second week, a fever sat in which baffled all skill to abate, after watching him a long time one day, Ernest drew me aside,

"I do not think he will recover, Bertha, to-day or to-night must be the crisis, and I have but faint hopes he will pass it successfully." Coralie stood watching us, and seeing the look of pain upon my face came quickly to us.

"You are saying to mamma, Uncle Ernest, that Rolf will not get well, that he will die?" she spoke in a calm tone, but with an eager pleading look in her eyes.

"I fear my dear—I fear there is danger—great danger."

"Has all been done, nothing left to do? Oh might we not find something to save him?"

"I have done all, all my child, now God must do the rest," and Ernest's voice trembled.

"I know, I know dear Uncle, but forgive me, might not some other physician know something else, something about this fever which has escaped your notice or your knowledge, I trust you, and bless you Uncle Ernest for your tender care, all this time, but might it not be so? may we try just as the last thing?" and her voice had the despairing pathos of a last hope in it.

"I will send to Paris to-day, I have wished to do so before, it is right it should be so." And with a grateful humble look she went back to her place by the bed, to renew the weary watching. That afternoon two eminent physicians came out from Paris. After a careful examination, they declared all had been done which could have been, and that the state of the patient was extremely critical.

They spent the night watching the crisis, that fearful

word to what heart does it not carry a pang of painful remembrance, of weary watchings beside some loved one's couch, waiting until the light should be extinguished forever, or be fed anew from the lamp of life. Prayerfully we gathered into that room, and watched the pale handsome face: now no earthly passion swept athwart it or slumbered in the lines of the beautiful mouth, it was more than handsome, it was a saint's face, a glorious manly face, with the beauty of a woman's softer graces lying upon it, and there was a touching look upon it now, as of a weary child's.

Coralie sat upon the bed speechless, save for the one cry when the physicians first came,

"Save him, if but for one week, till he makes his peace with God, not for my sake, but for his soul's sake, save him, as you hope for mercy!"

"We will do all we can," said one of them kindly, "we can do no more."

At one time the tide of life seemed ebbing out, and we thought he had gone forth into that darkness which he had expressed his willingness to try, but suddenly without warning he opened his eyes, and resting them for one instant upon his wife, closed them again. We looked at the medical men, their faces gave a hope, and—

"The danger is over, I think he will recover if we are careful," said one of them. Then the strained energies of my poor child gave way, and she fell back unconscious, we bore her from the room, and for a while all trouble was naught to her, but as soon as she was able she went to him again.

"It only hurts me to stay away from looking at him," she said, and believing it, we let her have her way, it was small comfort, and we kept it not from her. Gradually he grew stronger, but the fever seemed to grow fiercer, as his strength increased.

One day Dr. M—, stood watching a long while and at last said,

"There is some outward cause for this increase of fever, I am convinced, something about him excites him, I am sure could we get at this we might combat this fever, for while he is aware of all we do, he cannot make us know what disturbs him thus."

With a meek look upon her sweet face, Cora came to him, when he was done, and folding her hands wearily upon her breast, said in a sorrowful tone,

"It is me sir, I do him harm, I will go away, only may I kiss him once more, I may never see him again you know, if it will not hurt him, I should like to say good bye."

Dr. N—, too much affected to speak waved an assent, and very gently she pressed her lips to his, and then though he opened his eyes, and tried to speak, she turned away and giving her hand gently to Ernest said,

"I will go now, uncle, mamma will take care of my husband," and she left the room. But when the necessity for being composed was no longer upon her, she sank, and for many days lay so very ill that half our anxiety was transferred to her room. Adèle and Gracie were invaluable assistance to Lela and myself, but we were all much wearied by the days and nights of watching already passed, and we were at last obliged to send first for Estelle, and then for Stuart and his wife.

With Marion's gentle nursing and presence, Coralie revived, Lela had been faithful, but May's touch and smile always carries a balm for her poor sister.

Thus after my 'queen' had rested a little against her will she took the burden of Rolf's care upon herself. It was pleasant to me to watch this new phase in her proud character, to see how very tenderly she nursed this man, who once had, and merited too, her haughtiest disdain, but now he was at her mercy, helpless and suffering, and that alone if no other feeling had mingled with it, was enough as it is with all lofty but fine natures, to enlist, and retain her warmest interest.

For Ernest's faithfulness I have no words, but when were not my friends all the best and truest, even Estelle has left her splendid home to do us service.

A letter from our boys, reports them at Jerusalem, "well and doing well." We would be sadly anxious about them, and weary of waiting for a peep into their bright eyes, did not other and sadder watchings at home engage our sympathies.

It is a harder thing to see these eyes growing dim, than to miss the sight of theirs for a time—for the rest they are with God—so are these others indeed, only it is not quite

easy to remember it always. God is good, of great mercy, we ought never to doubt, this sickness so near unto death, is not unbearable, when it is drawing us home—at least it ought not to be, God knows what is best, we do not—Oh that we could always remember that, be content to think so at the right time and not afterwards. Weak, faithless, untrusting hearts.

NOVEMBER.

Under Marion and Estelle's excellent nursing Coralie has recovered so far as to be able to sit up, and even go slowly and languidly about the house. Little Audley is her great comfort, and the rest, not excepting his mother, are content to give up their pet into her keeping, and she never seems so nearly happy as when she has him nestled in her arms, talking to him in a soft, low voice.

Livingstone too, against all our expectations revived, and ere long was pronounced out of danger, but the convalescence was slow and tedious, and very trying to us all. He never mentioned Cora from the time she left him, but his eyes were ever turned wearily towards the door, and as he grew stronger, I dreaded the pleading look should be formed into words—what answer could I give him did he demand her presence,—what harm it might do him to know she would not come to him.

At last one day, the first of his sitting up, we had wheeled him to a window which looked out upon the lawn, he sat gazing upon the spot where, the day of the accident she had flown to him, and I knew by the workings of his face, too weak to hide its emotions, how the memory touched him. Suddenly turning to me, he said in a low, beseeching tone:

"Mrs. Percy, do not keep her from me, please do not: let her come, I pine for her, do not part us."

"I do not, Rolf, I do not," I said quickly, "indeed I do not."

"Why does she not come to me then?"

"Because—you know she has been ill," I said evasively.

"Poor darling, but she is well now, I heard you say so last week, why does she not come now?" he said impatiently.

"Not because she is not permitted to, Rolf, but because she will not," I said in a low tone.

"Will not, why, what do you mean? oh why? I thought the past was all forgiven at last," and his frame shook like an aspen leaf, and his wan face flushed.

"Do not Rolf, please be calm," I said, dreading the consequences of this excitement, "she shall come I promise you, I will bring her to you," and I laid my hand in his. He bowed his head upon it and wept like a child. Oh it was sad to see that once strong man weep, bowed, prostrated, and by his own evil deeds, that was the worst. He the world's votary, the proud sneering cynic, whose very beck had been law to his associates, now sat crushed, sueing even with tears for the love, nay for only the presence of one frail woman. I could not bear it, very doubtful whether it was the best for my child. I sought her, to plead with her that she would seek once more the influence of this man who had wrecked her happiness, and changed all her bright life into darkness. It almost turned me back when I thought of these things, but then came the remembrance "can you not trust your treasure to me," and with the hand of Faith fast clasped in mine I walked through the corridors, making my prayer as I went.

She sat upon the floor, playing with Audley, and a little bright-faced girl, the child of the game-keeper of this chateau, of whom the girls are all very fond, from some fancied resemblance to our lost "Tiny," or at least to what she would have been, but I imagine the resemblance lies in her name being Lillian or Lilla.

I suppose for the moment I seemed more the sufferer than Coralie, for the others looked startled. Lela caught up Audley, and Gracie who is too childish to remember prudence, cried in a frightened voice:

"What is it mamma? what has happened?" Cora sprang up her white face still whiter, but one word escaping her lips:

"Rolf?" and stood with clasped hands before me.

"Is better, my darling, and sitting up for a little while," I said quickly.

"Oh I am so thankful," and she sank back upon her cushion, "I desire to be very thankful to God who has spared Rolf's life through all this terrible time."

"For what, my child? why has it been spared?" I asked.

"That he may repent, and grow a better man, I hope, I trust," and her face was very earnest.

"But is that all——" I began.

"Is not that enough? room to repent, time to reflect and learn to thank God for his goodness, in having spared him from an eternal death, to thank him unceasingly as I do."

"I know my pet, it is my comfort that He has led you through sore trials to himself, and we will pray that your words, which he loves best on earth, may win Rolf to seek shelter 'neath the shadow of the great Rock, the sure Refuge."

"My words cannot, but I will weary heaven with my prayers for him, mamma."

"Your words must, none others can, and we must put aside all earthly considerations, if we may win him, if we can help him heavenward, I have promised to take you to him."

"Lead me not into temptation,' oh mamma, remember, 'but deliver me from evil.'"

"I do, and this also: 'He will not suffer us to be tempted beyond what we are able to endure,' and one other my child, 'Charity suffereth long, is kind—beareth all things—'"

"Have I not," she interrupted, "have I not borne and endured. But it is not that, I could do it a thousand times, but mamma, I fear oh so much,—what will come of it, I so weak, he so unbelieving, nay we never could endure unto the end. Oh, mamma, do not place this cup so sweet, but so perilous to my lips; I have longed so to see him. I do now, it is an unceasing pain at my heart to think I may no more be his own," and she bowed her head upon her knees and sat crouched up for a while, then rising suddenly, she said in a calm, low voice:

"You are right as ever, sweet mother, I must go, it is my duty, I have neglected duty's call too long and wilfully all my life to be careless of it now but"—and her eyes grew dark with intense feeling, "but I have taken a solemn vow, in the name of my broken heart and blasted hopes, that never again will I cast my life with its expectations of eternal peace, into the keeping of one who would win me from the place, I humbly trust I may reach, through many trials at my Saviour's feet. Oh mamma the thought that even I, so

worthless and weak, may say *my Saviour my Redeemer*, has been such infinite peace, such an eternal weight of glory, that sometimes the light has overshadowed even this earthly and passionate love which enthralls me. Go now dearest, and tell Rolf I will come to him."

And I did go with such a sinking within me the while. Oh the uselessness, the uselessness of all this misery! my poor child's life and hopes withered thus early, in the very dawn of her days, changed from the laughing merry child she should be, to the weary-worn woman—and his own, I shuddered to think what his own might be, did all this suffering pass over him, without making him find the one thing needful.

After we had waited a little time, she came softly in. What a child she looked! Her fair girlish face like my own will not show suffering in the way of growing old, until years help as well, you only knew by the sad eye, the pale cheek, and a certain way of quickly and often clasping her little thin hands together over her heart, that she was passing through much tribulation; the form was as graceful, the mouth had no hard lines denoting pain about it, and the brow as white without a shadow o'ercasting its beauty, had the golden hair drawn quite from it, and confined in a net at the back of her head, only the rippling waves showing what a wealth of curls once encircled that sweet sad face.

"My darling, my precious one!" he said striving to rise but sinking back overcome.

She came quickly to his side and laid her hand upon his arm, then as he recovered himself,

"How are you, my husband?" she said.

"Better, much better sweet wife, now I have you to look at, your dear face does me good. Oh! I pined so to look at you little one," and he strove to clasp her in his arms, but she drew back.

"What! will you not let me kiss you? may I not hold my darling to my heart now?" and his voice was piteous in its tone of agonized entreaty, it cut me to the heart to see him thus tortured.

"Never more Rolf, until I have tried you," she said calmly.

"Tried me! have you not? God help me! was ever man more tried! have I not repented of the cursed insults, which

in my madness and folly I heaped upon you? Oh I thought, I thought all was forgiven at last, all this coldness, this disdain which has well nigh crazed me. When I lay insensible upon the ground your kisses brought me back to life, and put hope in my heart once more; when they tore you from me I groaned in agony more of spirit than body, because they were parting us. And now it is all in vain. Oh Birdie, my darling, my much tried wife, bear with me, little one, forgive me my sins."

Oh I wondered to see her so calm, while I, who had just begun to love him, could not endure to hear his humble heart-rending entreaties, she, whiter perhaps, but as calm as ever, stood a little way off looking upon him.

"I may not do evil that good may come," she said at last.

"But my daughter you may do good that good may come," I said, going to the other side of Rolf's chair and kneeling down with my head upon his arm. I could feel him tremble as if with an ague fit, as he clasped my hand convulsively.

"Mamma, you do wrong to tempt me, my way is full of sharp cutting stones now, do not make it still more unbearable, oh the right way is always hard to traverse. Do I not suffer! is this play, think you to me? Do I not love him!" and she stretched out her hands wildly, "Rolf! Rolf! you have stood between my soul and God too long. I can not love you less, I have striven to, I have prayed that I might cast out your image, in vain! in vain! my poor heart only answers Rolf! Rolf! I could as soon cease loving you, above all the earth, as I could cease to breathe, your name is written here," and her face beamed with a strange beauty, "here upon my heart's inmost core, and please God I will keep it ever as pure and bright as now. It is our way, we Percies all love so, once and only once. When we thought you were dying, I asked God to spare your life, if only for a little that you might repent, and I registered a vow, in that hour of agony, that I would give you up and consecrate the rest of my life to prayer for you. Heaven will hear me, I know; and you whom I love so unutterably will be saved at last!"

He grew quiet while she spoke, and as if even the sound of her voice was a blessing, he sighed when she ceased.

"But I have repented, Birdie, I have repented, with all my heart."

"Of what Rolf; of what?" she asked quickly.

"Of the misery I have caused you, sweet wife."

"That is nothing, I care not for that, you should know me better than to dream such sufferings as yours did not render void all offences against myself, but—you said just now, God help you, do you trust him now, do you believe he has power to help you? Do you believe in him now? Oh Rolf do you!" and her words were like a cry of pain in their earnest longing.

"No I do not Coralie, I cannot deceive you, even while I adore you; you are my God, my help, my hope, my all here, and hereafter."

"Then we are parted, forever! forever!"—and with a low moan she sank to the floor. With a strength which a moment before he did not possess, he sprang to her, and lifting her up carried her to his seat, and cradled her upon his bosom. I strove to restore her, but with a pleading gesture, he said—

"Not yet, not yet, let me hold her a little while, it is the last time! you know she said, but now we are parted forever, oh my darling, forever!" and he bent his face to her's and wept the second time that day. Such bitter tears I pray God I may never see again.

But all this was too much for his newly regained strength, and ere I could call for aid, he too had, for a while lost all sense of misery and grief, as I held his head upon my shoulder, the blood gushed in a dark stream from his lips. My wild cries brought the rest to my assistance.

They carried Cora still unconscious of aught, to her own room, and Lela and Stuart laid back poor Rolf, prostrate and insensible upon his bed, never we feared to leave it more, until the cold clods of the valley claimed him for their own.

For a long while all our anxiety was renewed, for he was fearfully ill, and Cora poor child, the ordeal through which she had passed was too much for her, and we dreaded lest her mind, too much tried would give way, this was the worst of all.

She would lie upon her bed moaning and praying for hours, until from sheer exhaustion she would sink into a troubled sleep, but with returning strength would come again the bitter tears and moans.

We did not tell her Rolf was ill again, it would have done no good and she never asked after his welfare; at last Ernest said to me as we watched beside her,

"This will never do, she can stand this no longer, she must be taken away from here at once."

"But she is so weak, will she be able to endure a journey?"

"She can bear any thing better than this, and she must go." So in as short a time as we could arrange it, Stuart and Marion took her away with them to their home in Heidelberg. They write me every day, of her welfare and hope she is better, but it is only hope as yet.

Now that Rolf is out of danger, or at least immediate danger once more, Mr. Audley has taken Lela and Adèle to town with him, but Gracie chose to stay with me, "and help nurse brother Rolf," she says.

This week or next I hope to have Ada back, for though I doubt whether I remembered to tell it before, when we first came to visit the Lembert's, she went with her uncle to spend the last days of their stay abroad with them, somewhere in Holland where Mr. Lawrence has some business.

I think I have told before of a little girl whom my daughters made much of when they were here, she is a child of strange beauty, and now I have more leisure to take notice of her, I am surprised to see how strong is the resemblance to Coralie, only she has not her merry tongue, but with much brightness has a constant looking back, as if for a lost memory, dear little girl, she is a great pet with us all especially with Ernest, who has her with him constantly.

"She is just what you were, Bertha when I first knew you," he says sadly.

CHAPTER LXXV.

FEBRUARY.

LELA is very happy in having Adèle with her, and writes me a billet-doux every day, telling of the sensation her young sister's pensive beauty is creating, in the circles they frequent. Estelle was out last week to stay a couple of days with me, in reply to my enquiries as to how Adèle received so much attention she said,

"With the most astonishing indifference, evidently considering it a part of their homage to Lela. Indeed her naiveté is the most charming thing about her, for her angel like beauty, does not compare with the glory of Lela's charms."

It is strange to know this is my poor blind child over whom we have wept such bitter tears.

"Oh mamma," she says, "all things are so beautiful, the sky is so fair, the earth so green and glowing, and the flowers have a sweeter perfume, when their soft eyes look into mine; it is blessed to live ever in the light, to know your dear face by sight, instead of touch."

Ada writes that she cannot come yet, but sends a most pathetic appeal for some one to come to her, so that she may be permitted to return to us, instead of going to America, as her uncle desires. After some consultation Lela and I have decided that Gracie shall go, although at first she opposed such a thing very strenuously, because I would be alone with Rolf, but he is so much better it is needless for any one to be with him now, save for companionship, and Ada will be so grieved did no one go. However after it was decided she should go, I could not help thinking it was with a kind of gladness; when she had settled it with herself that she was not needed to help me, or as she expresses it, in her quaint way,

"When the road seems plain and right before me," which however it did not for some time, as we could find no escort at all suitable.

"If Willie Lawrence were only here," said Adèle.

"I should not allow her to go with him, if he was," I replied.

"Why mamma?" said Gracie, her face crimson, and tears in her eyes, "I thought you liked Willie."

"So I do, but he would be but a poor protector, I think he is rather too wild for a guardian."

"But Gracie is so wise and steady she would suffice to take charge of both," laughed Adèle.

But our troubles were ended, by Mr. Marstone's coming to make his usual enquiring for Rolf, for when he heard the matter of trouble,

"Will you trust her with me, Mrs. Percy?" he asked.

"Are you going away?" I asked. "At least in the direction of the Lawrences?"

"I think I shall, and will promise to take good care of this little lady, and bring her safely to her friends, if you will trust me."

"But is not this a sudden move? Will not it inconvenience you?" I asked.

"For your first question," he replied, with his grave quiet smile, "it is rather a sudden thing, as I had no idea of going until this afternoon: for the trouble I shall go after Miss Gracie whether I go with her or not."

Oh how pale Lela was, and how my heart ached at his words, for they seemed but to confirm what we have thought all along, that he has transferred his love to Gracie. Oh man! can I ever trust her with you! But when Gracie knows all, as she must, before she gives her happiness to his keeping, all this treachery and sin, which has wrecked her proud sister's heart, what will she do, will she trust him? Oh she could not, with Coralie's blighted life before her. Some words of her's though they were simple ones, haunt me; the other day she said:

"Mamma, Adèle seems to get along nicely without me now-a-days, at first it grieved me, but now I am glad, for I am sure she loves me, just the same."

"But why, why are you glad now?"

"Because even though we had desired it never so much, we could hardly have hoped always to be together, you know," she said simply.

I do not know why but it makes me sad to remember now, though at the time it did not strike me much, that she is glad that Adèle needs her no longer.

Oh for one peep into the future,—nay that is an evil

desire, I will rather pray for a better faith to trust all to my Father's hand.

But though I do not like it, I must let her go with Mr. Marstone, I cannot refuse.

MAY.

Gracie has been away several weeks, and writes of a safe, pleasant journey, and also of her deep regret "that Mr. Marstone has gone away for a while."

Rolf was seated in an easy chair, one morning this week, with closed eyes, and bent head, silent as usual, only looking up to answer some question, or take his medicine. I sat looking at him for a long while, wishing I knew some way to comfort him, and thinking how very hard it was to say cheerful things to people in affliction, when they had no hope, no up-lookings, nothing beyond, to which to turn.

And now I thought, "I dare not try to make him know these things, lest the excitement the memory would bring, should make him ill again."

Bye and bye, the merry laugh of a child's voice was borne upon the wind; looking out of the window we saw the gate keeper's little girl Lisette, or as the girls call her Lilly, (from her fancied resemblance to our own lost pet who would have been but little older than this,) springing along the walk: She threw herself upon the bank where Ernest sat reading—

"Ah? mon cher ami, je suis——"

"Nay Lilly, try to speak English, you will never learn, and you promised to try to remember," said Ernest smoothing her curls softly.

"Pardonne, so I did," she said with her pretty accent, kissing his hand, "you are so good as to take such trouble for me, ingrate I am, *tres sotté*, no, no," she said as he held up his finger reproachfully, "I mean I am so silly I cannot learn, so careful, no, no so careless, I never remember what you want me to, my kind master."

"But what were you going to tell me, Lilly-bell?" he asked.

"I have been up in the very top of the elm tree, it was *tres belle*, so free and fresh up there, and I lay among the

branches, and let the sunbeams talk to me of my other home, then I sang for the birds, and they sang for me, then the leaves began to sigh out a long story of their troubles, and trials, and I had to stay and comfort them—and—then I went to find where the fairies' dance in the moonlight, as old Elsie says they do. I have often looked for them, but I can never see them, and that is the reason, my master, I have been so long away; now I will be a good child, and learn my English well, so to write pretty letters to you when you go away over the great water—oh the sea," and she hid her eyes a moment, "I do not love the sea."

"Why, did my little Lilly ever see the sea?" asked Ernest.

"Oh yes, I used to live upon the sea, so long, so long, until old Jack died and this father brought me home. Oh do not let us talk about it, I cannot make it out, and—it tires me to try."

"Cannot make what out? tell me Lilly, what do you mean?"

"I do not know, only something I have forgotten which only the sunbeams know, and they will not tell me, but only laugh," she said sadly.

"Foolish child, then come and learn what they do not know, so you may laugh at them," he said, and they came into the house, she dancing before him like a glancing sunbeam herself.

"It is quite amusing to see what a wonderful fancy Ernest has taken to this child, and how much time he wastes upon her, which he used to think must be spent on books or experiments," I said as they passed out of sight, but Rolf with a weary sigh said, sinking back on his lounge:

"How much she is like what Birdie was at her age, just the same merry little fairy she was the summer of the accident; how it maddened me to see her bright face sinking beneath the cold unfeeling waves. Do you remember how fearful she was lest I would not come and say good-bye to her, and how tenderly she wound her arms about my neck, and thanked me.—Oh Birdie! Birdie! my darling, so cold, so cruel now," and for a moment he stretched out his wan hands as if to woo her to him, and then bowing his head upon the window-sill, sat looking such a picture of desolation, it cut me to the heart. I went to his side, and laid my hand upon the thick

dark hair, where sorrow, not age, was already leaving white memorials.

"Do not, Rolf, please do not, I cannot bear to see you so."

He looked up piteously into my face, with that weak, helpless look which suffering only leaves. Something he saw there, perhaps the pity which from my heart I felt for him—or a surety that I had at last taken him into my heart, and loved him, and grieved for him—whatever it was, he said, laying his poor head upon my arm.

"Teach me the way! please teach me the way."

"What way, dear Rolf?" I said.

"The way she would have me believe, make me to believe, I will try. Oh with my very soul I will try, if I may win her at last."

Oh what a motive, it struck a chill to my heart, a chill of fear lest God would not be found, when so sought, but then came the hope, if he loves the creature so frail and sinful thus, because he knows her, may he not be taught a greater love for the Creator whom now he does not know?

"How can I help you Rolf? how do what your Bible has failed to do?"

"My Bible, I never read the Bible, I never had one," he said.

"Oh Rolf! Rolf! then your unbelief, your sins are not a strange thing. It is only God's grace which has kept you through all, that you might be saved." And then for hours with a prayer in my heart, and sometimes on my lips for strength and grace, to say what was best and most needful, I told this man, of the message of life, taught him like a little child, what almost any child would blush not to know, but of which he, a man of great ability, knew not even the first rudiments.

And the proud cynic, after a few sneering words, and gestures, laid aside his worldly wisdom, and his pride, and like a little child sought eagerly for this beautiful mystery, this priceless pearl, marvelous though easy, of a God over all, a Ruler, a Creator and a Judge. And farther on, of the dear Saviour, of His great work, of His nearness and tenderness to those who call upon Him; and of the Comforter whom He has sent to be with us, until He come again.

When he grew too weary, with the intensity of feeling

which all this long rejected message brought to his heart, I left him with the tale but half told, to go and pray for him.

But the next day almost with the day-break he was up and waiting for me, feverish to know more of these things, which he had neglected all his life, and his only words were,

"Tell me more! tell me more!"

And I did, reading to him often from the "Book," such things as seemed to meet his case, and there is always just what all need, to be found therein. When I read that invitation to the stricken soul "Come unto me all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest," the tears sprang to his eyes, and he said in a low voice.

"Please read that again," and when I had done so, he took the book and read it himself saying, "What a comfort that must be to those who can accept it," and he added, "let me think of that until to-morrow," and I left him.

Since then, sometimes with my aid, but oftener alone, he has studied this blessed Word, through much darkness, and bitter prejudices. At first the hope of winning Cora was his only incentive, but in a little while this was past, and he read and studied for his very life.

"My master will do himself harm, my lady," said his valet, "he reads late in the night, and I find him reading again with the day light." But when I asked him,

"Are you not applying yourself too closely, in your weak state?"

"No I must learn now, if all this is true, I have no time to lose," and he was buried in his book again.

One day I read to him that glorious description of the heavenly Jerusalem in the 21st. of Rev., suddenly looking up he asked in an earnest tone,

"And do you believe that this plan of redemption includes all who accept it?"

"I do, all who accept it in the name of Jesus."

"Yes of course, 'the only name under heaven whereby men may be saved,' I remember is written, but does this include little children do you think?"

"As truly as I believe in a heaven, a blessed life to come. Christ himself says, 'of such is the kingdom of Heaven,' and that, 'their angels stand before the throne of God.'"

"Then if this be so, I shall not have lost my little Leon-

ard forever, but if by faith I win a crown I shall at last meet him in the streets of the beautiful city, clothed with the robes of righteousness, and tuning his golden harp to sing the praises of his risen Lord," and his eye kindled as he spoke, then for an instant the glad look upon his face was overcast with a touching sadness, and he said, in a low tone.

"And though upon earth I may never see *her*, if I am faithful to the end, I shall have her for my own at last," and rising he laid his hand upon the open bible and said in a deeply solemn voice,

"Lord I believe, help thou my unbelief," and kneeling down prayed such a prayer! Oh there was joy in the presence of the angels when that humble prayer reached the gate, and methinks thousands of glorified ones carried it on to the throne, with songs of gladness, bringing back a blessing, for the peace which followed is beyond description.

With the zeal and whole-heartedness with which he followed after sin, will he now seek righteousness, and I felt fully assured of his deep conversion, ere I could say, "Cora has my blessing dear Rolf, that she ever gave me such a son." To-day as we talked he said sadly,

"If I had only listened to Paul Marstone long ago, he used to try to make me understand all these things, and told me my evil deeds would find me out, but I only laughed at him for preaching."

"That sounds to me like Satan reproving sin, Rolf," I said.

"What? for Paul Marstone to reprove me?" he said quickly, his eyes flashing, "you misjudge him, Mrs. Percy; few men are so free from sin as he; even in my worst, most reckless days I dared not bring my evil deeds into his presence. I loved him and respected him, for his pure self-sacrificing life, even while I scorned his advice and example. I was always a better man when his influence was upon me."

"I cannot think what you mean by such words, Rolf, when I think of what I have heard and seen, they are to me inexplicable, but I may have been deceived; God knows how gladly I would think so, I would not judge any wrongfully, but appearances are strongly against your friend?"

"Appearances against Paul! then what is the use of a

good true life," he said vehemently, but added the next moment, "in the eyes of men I mean, with God it counts more a thousand-fold, that his fellow man condemns him,—but what are the complaints against one of the purest, noblest hearts which ever beat?"

Then I told him all, knowing I might trust him, glad to show him that I did—of Lela's love, of the offer she received from Paul Marstone, at the very time when she had first learned so surely of his perfidy. Of that summer at Ingleside, what we had seen there, everything just as I have written it here.

He heard me quietly from first to last, but with a restraint upon him which showed itself in the heightened color, and the way he shut his teeth over his lips, then he said:

"Oh Mrs. Percy, it was not like your good true heart to harbor evil thoughts against any man; and yet all things were against him," and he murmured sadly, "poor little Katie you have done much harm by your suffering life, to this noble man, but innocently poor child, yet this exceeds them all tenfold," then turning to me he said: "Oh you have done him wrong, the poor girl was his sister, his only sister."

"Oh Rolf," and I sprang to my feet, "why did I not think of that, wicked woman that I am."

"No, no," he said gently, "do not say so, you could not know it, that was the secret of their lives, or at least of her's, but Mr. Audley knew it, if you had only told him, but I will tell it to you now, it can do poor Katie no harm."

And he did, making so plain all that was dark before Mr. Hartley's story should have made us know it. Rolf told me briefly all I before knew of the way in which Mr. Marstone hurried his erring sister away—explaining what had been a mystery to poor old Mr. Hartley to the day of his death, as to what had befallen her. In a far city of the west, lived a man by the name of Linn, who by indefatigable industry at some mechanic's trade, supported himself, and an aged mother and one sister. By a fortunate investment he gathered a little sum of money; it was a season when the spirit of speculation was rife all over the land, and when the tales of wonderful fortunes being realized in a day, had spread everywhere even to the most remote corners of the west.

Gathering his all together, full of wild dreams of wealth, Mr. Linn came east, made an investment, and lost everything. Half-crazed, he applied to Mr. Marstone to whom he was known for advice. Hearing his story of the poor old mother and sister at home, upon whom this blow would fall so heavily, Mr. Marstone suddenly conceived the idea of saving his sister from open shame, while he aided the man's necessities. At first Mr. Linn's honest, upright heart rebelled against independence at such a price, but after Mr. Marstone had explained all to him, and shown him the poor girl whose name he was to shield, pity if not love for her, won his consent, and they were married.

She, helpless, and heart-broken, assured of the falseness of her lover, cared little what became of her, and feared less the stranger, than the cold, stern brother, once so kind.

With her young child, a little girl of a few months, she sought his western home. To his mother and sister he told all, but to the world they gave out, "she was a widow," and the report went forth, he had married her for her money and she him for a protector. So for a few years they lived together. Paul was born, and then the poor, erring girl, the sad heart-broken wife went to her God, leaving her baby motherless. When Mr. Marstone came to look the last upon the sister he had once loved so fondly, he would have taken little Paul back with him to be his own, the child of his sister's sin he never noticed, but Mr. Linn with a good, true heart, kept both his children with him, and so faithfully did he and his sister fulfil their duty, that these children grew up, never knowing the right of one was greater than the other.

As he grew older, Paul went to college, then to study a profession, according to the request of his uncle. And Katie grown to woman's estate, was sought in marriage by one she loved, but ere the tale of her love was half told, the father died, and with his last breath told his children all, asking their forgiveness for having kept it from them so long, and bade Paul, as he hoped to meet him hereafter, guard and protect his poor desolate sister.

But though with all the tender love of their hearts, Paul and the good Miss Linn strove to lighten the sorrow to poor Katie, she could not endure it, and for years these two,

faithful in their love, watched over her: for after a fearful illness which brought her to the verge of the unseen land, she never was herself again. This mighty burden of shame crushed out the light from her brain, and left her sadly distraught. Thus it was, as the gossip in London had said, "wild screams were heard, which only the gentleman could quiet," for though humble and obedient to her aunt in her lucid moments, she was only manageable in the least by her brother in her fits of insanity. So it came that where ever his business or his inclination called him, this sister with his aunt and two faithful servants followed him. When old Mr. Marstone died, he left all to his nephew, "on condition he assume my name," the will said, and therefore it was that instead of Paul Linn he bore his mother's name.

Oh how easy a matter it is to see all things plain and right if one has but the key wherewith to unlock the mystery. And how prone we are always to judge harshly instead of looking hopefully for good in all. After Rolf had made all this clear to me, I could but cover my eyes and think. Alas! too late, too late for Leanore! but then came the thought, we have misjudged this noble man, therefore it is right we should suffer, there may be happiness for him with little Gracie, and although I cannot greatly rejoice over it, yet it is some comfort that her faithful heart may in some degree recompense him for the sorrow he once endured for Leanore, it is right he should find peace at last.

Late one night, seated with my arms about her, I told my daughter all; when I had finished, she sat very still for a moment, then with her eyes shining softly, and a sad smile upon her lips, she said gently and patiently:

"Oh it is not so hard to give him up now, dear Paul, true and good. God love you Paul, and make you happier with Gracie, than you could have been with me," and with a kiss upon my brow she left me.

Since then we have never spoken of it, but she is oftener with me, leaving the gay scenes of her city home, and sitting here with us,

"Learning the true happiness which my brother Rolf has found," she says.

"And thank God, my sister, they who seek, never are turned away," he says tenderly and fervently, dear Rolf!

CHAPTER LXXVI.

JULY.

It seems a strange thing, that I who have had so many children of my own to protect and guard should ever be called upon to take those of other people, but so it is.

First came Ada—but we have known her so long, and loved her so well,—that our only distress has been lest her guardian-uncle, should think it better for her to go with him, and so, to help him decide in our favor, we have sent Gracie to them.

But now comes another—and, yet though the change will be in many ways a great one—we have taken her into our hearts.

A few nights ago, Ernest who spends a part of every week with us, came out saying, that he was going home, having received the offer of a valuable professorship in P—— College, and that it was too good a chance to let slip.

"So I will go home and help my mother take care of 'Percies' Cliffe,' until you go back," he said.

Although it was a sad thing to part with him, yet we were urgent for him to go, because when we are at home once more, it will be a pleasant thing to have him settled permanently so near us. To my dismay when we were through talking of his journey and prospects, Rolf after a moment's pause said;

"I will go with you, Dr. Wilbur; nay, my dear lady," he said, as I began to expostulate, "my duty bids me go, I must begin to live so as to redeem the time." And he maintained this decision against all persuasion.

But while we thus sat talking, the door was flung suddenly open, and Lisette, the little girl of whom I have before spoken, sprang into the room, dripping with rain, and wild with terror.

"Ah, Madame," she began, but seeing Ernest, "Ah Dr. Wilbur, ma pauvre mamma," then instantly the habit which he had insisted she should observe of only speaking English to him, came upon her, and she told her story as well as she was able, sometimes in one tongue, sometimes in the other.

The old woman with whom she lived, and whom we all thought to be her grandmother, was dying, alone with only this child near her, and feeling her end approaching had sent the poor young thing for me. Hastily as he could, Ernest went with her, forbidding me to go out in the drenching rain, promising to send if I was needed—but I was not, they arrived too late, for when they reached the cottage only the work of the death angel greeted them, the old woman was dead.

Ernest brought the child back with him; the next day instituting strict enquiry, he learned there was no one to own or protect her; with frantic grief she clung to him, and in a childish pleading way besought him,

"To take poor Lilly with you dear master," and so he has decided.

"I will adopt her, she shall be the old bachelor's comfort, she shall be my pupil," he said, laughing.

And so I am to have her, and bring her home with me, when I come. Lela and Adèle are very glad of this, for they have conceived the strongest attachment for the pretty child.

In a visit to the cottage, some days after the funeral, Ernest discovered among the effects of the old gate-keeper which now of course belong to the child, the following paper written in a rude hand.

"Out at sea in a gale we came upon the wreck of the ship Wescott, bound to China, all on board dead but two, the captain and a child which he told us he had picked up somewhere, but he was too far gone to tell us where, in the afternoon he died, and we cast him overboard, but the child soon grew hearty, and as I was first mate and the captain of our boat did not want her, I took her. She called herself something which we could not understand, but some of her clothes were marked Lillian, and so we called her Lissette. We were sailing for the "Indies," and she lived on ship-board nigh two years, and was a great pet with all hands."

This seemed to be a part of a log-book, or journal kept by a sailor, and on enquiring Ernest discovered from some of the neighbors, that a number of years ago, a son of the gate-keeper, who was a sailor brought her home, and that she had lived there ever since,—but that her protector had been lost a few years ago, on a cruise to India.

Oh it seems so strange, we should find a Lillian away here, so nearly the age of our lost darling, and the children all think so strangely like what she would have grown, however this may be, we are going to take her in the place of our little angel, although Ernest is to be her owner in particular, she is a bright-eyed child of almost twelve summers I should imagine.

SEPTEMBER.

Ernest and Rolf have gone, two others who are very dear to us because of many things, have bidden us farewell—and to-night are rocked to rest, by the lullaby the ocean sings, God's peace be with them.

We are a widely separated family this year, the winds of fate have scattered us, like leaves in Autumn time, into a variety of places.

Three, nay four (for it would be high treason to forget my precious grandson Audley,) are in Germany, Gracie with Ada and her friends have gone south, and are now staying for a while upon the banks of the Arno, "so as to be with Willie Lawrence, whose vessel is cruising here for a week," they write us.

My two boys where are they? perhaps beneath the burning sun of Africa, or else searching for records of the past in Palestine, or—perhaps homeward bound, oh I cannot help it that day and night, thinking it may be so I watch for them, they have been gone eighteen long months.

But about those two who have just gone, I have wandered from what I was saying of them, Rolf's going was a sad disappointment to me, it makes my heart ache to remember how long it must needs be now, before he and my poor Cora will meet, and exchange forgiveness. He left a tender earnest blessing for her, but that was all, even that cost him exquisite pain.

Ernest and his little protégé had what he with a rueful countenance termed, "a pathetic time at parting," so fond has she grown of him, in the months in which they have known each other, that it has been as much as we could do to comfort her for his departure, and only the promise we have given her that she shall go to live always with "her

dear master," as she calls him, reconciles her at all to his absence.

She has come with me to Paris, oh gay, noisy Paris, I do not like you at all, it was more peaceful, more home-like in that old country house but I could not stay alone, and so Mr. Audley has brought us here once more.

In a little note which I found here upon my arrival, Rolf says, among other things.

"I go to prepare a home for *her* near your own. Her's whether I share it or not."

OCTOBER.

Last night I sat alone in the drawing-room reading, when Lela came in dressed in her beautiful ball dress.

"Why Lela," I said in surprise, "I thought you had gone hours ago."

"And so I did *ma mère*, but I am so stupid to-night, that I begged off from the ball, and drove directly home from the opera, with the avowed determination of having one more sensible evening with you."

She sat down at my feet, and rattled on merrily for a while, I listening and thinking how very beautiful she was, but how little good all her charms had done for her, the summing up of all her life experience—a weary broken heart, which even her proud firm will could not conceal, the sad look in her eyes, the quivering of the proud lips so often, and the touching pathos of her voice, told too plainly of a lost hope, a past joy. Suddenly she sprang up, saying,

"I mean to go up and see Lilly awhile, I know she is not asleep, little goose that she is, I imagine she is lying with her eyes wide open, talking to the stars, or else holding divers conversations with the fays, with which her old life seems to have been surrounded, I will be back soon as I have told her a tale and sung her a song," and she left the room.

A little while after she was gone, the door opened, and a servant announced Mr. Marstone. I had not seen him since I had learned to appreciate all the nobility of character which belonged to him, he had been away since that day he came for Gracie and carried her off.

"My dear Mrs. Percy," he said, "I fear my visit is late, excuse me."

"I am glad to see you, when did you return?" I asked hardly knowing what I did say, such a rush of thought came over me,—of the injustice we had done him, of how good he was, and of the probable reason of his coming, for a certain embarrassment in his manner, made me think he had come to speak for Gracie.

"When did you see the Lawrences? I think Ada or Gracie wrote to me that you had gone south with them."

"Yes I just came from them, they are quite well, indeed Miss Gracie sent me to you," he said with a smile.

Oh Leanore my poor darling, how my heart ached when I thought of you. Oh Gracie, cruel little Gracie, how could you win him to love you, when your glorious sister loved him so, these thoughts swept over me so grievously that for an instant I was speechless.

"I trust you will not be unkind to poor Gracie, indeed I know you will not, not alone because you are so kind to all, but because naughty little Gracie herself has assured me, 'mamma will not be angry, that is not what I fear, but it will grieve and hurt her to have me do as I have done,—' and as he spoke he handed me a letter, adding as he turned away, "but Gracie will plead her own cause better than I can, I doubt not."

While he sought a distant table and took up a book, I opened a letter from Gracie. Oh foolish Gracie!

"MAMMA, DEAR MAMMA, I have done a foolish thing, such a sinful thing! One day Willie Lawrence came and told us he was ordered on shipboard, the next day, to sail a long cruise which would last for perhaps two or three years. In the afternoon he asked me to take one last walk with him, and while we were together he told me he loved me so much, better than all the world beside, and wanted me to marry him, because he said:

"I shall be so happy when I am away, to remember you are my own true wife, and will have to be faithful and love me all the while."

"But the idea frightened me, and I said no quite fiercely, but then he was almost frantic, and vowed since I did not

love him well enough to make this sacrifice, he would throw himself into the sea as soon as they got so far out that no one could rescue him, and he looked so pale and determined that I knew he would.

"And then when I was so sorry to hurt him just when he was going away—he told me you would not be angry, and that if there was only time he would go for you, and then—then even while we stood talking they came to tell him he must be aboard in two hours, and I was sorry for his distress, and pitied and loved him so, that when he stopped the man, and bade him send the chaplain of their vessel to him, I had not the heart to refuse to let him come.

"And oh mamma before I hardly knew it, we were married, and I stood upon the pier bidding adieu not to Willie Lawrence only, but my own husband. Oh mamma, mamma! was I not wicked!

"And ere I had been his wife ten minutes, they hurried him into a boat, and I stood alone watching him wave good-bye to me. Oh then as he faded from my sight, the sinfulness of what we had done, thus taking vows upon ourselves, in such unseemly haste came over me, and I crouched upon the pier and wept bitterly, until Mr. Marstone found me.

"Ada is very angry with me, and Mr. and Mrs. Lawrence are much hurt, that 'Willie should have led me,' as they say, 'into such an ill-judged deed,' but I am sure it was quite as much my fault as his.

"Oh mamma, it was very wrong, and I would not have done it for the world if it had not come so suddenly upon me, and if I had not been so terrified about Willie's saying he would kill himself; but you will pardon me, dearest, I know you will, you always forgive and love us better when we do wrong. I do not fear your anger my precious mother, only that my evil deeds may add more sorrow to your gentle heart. I am a bad, unwise child, but hereafter I will try so hard to be a good, faithful, truthful,

GRACIE."

This was of all things which have occurred, the most unlooked-for; foolish child, what a different future I have pictured for her, how much safer and more guarded her life was to be, guided and shielded by a brave, true heart, but suddenly I thought of that heart, and turned to him pityingly, thinking sadly:

"Again one of mine has wounded him." I went quickly up to him:

"Oh Mr. Marstone what am I to do? what am I to think of this?"

"You must forgive poor little Gracie, she is in sad trouble, the poor forsaken bride, you will be kind to her?" he said.

"Is that all you feel sir? are you not——?" and I paused in embarrassment.

"All save that I am sorry you should have such a thing to trouble you, my dear lady, but you know although Gracie will feel the responsibility of the matter very deeply, the marriage is entirely informal, they are both minors, and the young man who performed the ceremony, I have since discovered, is a young Englishman who has not yet taken orders, although he is intended for chaplain of one of the fleet ships, and you know it takes much more in this land of forms and ceremonies, to constitute a legal marriage," then he said smiling, "you will have to keep the little lady safe, and have them married right when you get them both safely home."

"Then you are not grieved by it—I thought——" and I paused.

"What did you think?" he said looking at me curiously.

"That—that you loved Gracie yourself, sir," I said blushing like a girl. He turned white, as though some pain hard to endure afflicted him, then he said:

"I loved once—years ago—with my whole soul, and was disappointed—I shall never love again. Your little girl has been a very pleasant friend to me, who have few to love, indeed to tell the truth not one," and his tone was unutterably sad, "I like her very much, but—my heart knows only its own longings, only its own longings," then he paused abruptly, in what seemed to be wrung from his very heart, and added, "pardon me, I do not mean to array my woes before you."

I could not answer him—I could only look up towards him for a moment, and through the dazzling rays which my tears and the lamplight shed around him, watch him walking moodily with folded hands and bent head up and down, and think but the one thought, which rang through every fibre of my being: 'he loves her yet! he loves her yet!'

All Gracie's misdeeds were forgotten, and I only remembered these two faithful hearts of all the lovers upon earth.

"Wait for me here one moment, Mr. Marstone," I said, and ere he could reply was gone,—with the lightest heart and step, I had known for years.

"My darling I want you," I said thinking the while as I shaded my face from her view, how glad I was, it was not Adèle, who would have heard the glad notes in my voice.

"Oh please mamma," she cried, "I am just in the middle of the most charming story, which I assure you, is almost equal to May's wonderful productions. Well, then, Lilly-bell, if I must go, I must, so *bon-soir, mignonne*."

When we reached the drawing-room door, I clasped her hand in mine; he stood with a grave look upon his pale face, leaning against the mantel; when they saw each other they started back, and the proud look was upon both.

"Nay this is no time for pride," I said quickly, drawing her into the room, "put it away this once. Mr. Marstone, I give her to you, she is yours, only yours."

"Mine, oh Mrs. Percy! you should not trifle with me, I have borne so much!" then as he looked towards her, something in her face gave him the hope, he would not take from me, and stretching out his arms to her, he cried tenderly, "Mine! Leanore, my Leanore!"

With all her pride gone, forgetful of all save her great love for him, she sprang towards him and laying her head upon his breast, said in a low sweet voice:

"Yours, only yours, Paul Marstone!"

Then as he wound his arms about her, and poured out the love which had been stayed within his breast, like a mountain torrent frozen in its course, and now after years, through which it had gathered a tenfold strength, burst the bands which held it, and with the depth and fullness of which few natures are capable, encompassed her. I thought of another heart which had been true—of another life which had been blessed in its truth,—of a joy, a light, and then—a sorrow, a shadow, a grave, and with a heart full of sad memories—but gratitude for the present joy, I closed the door upon them, and went to write to my naughty Gracie—but I could not scold the poor child, if only because of the good her naughtiness had brought this other child.

When I had left them so long, that I knew it was nearly

time for Estelle, and Adèle, to come come back from their evening's entertainment. I went softly to where they sat, so engrossed in happy talk they never heard me.

"It is hard to part those who have been parted such a weary while," I said, "but I must take care of my queen's roses while they are mine to guard."

"And you will give her to me, Mrs. Percy? you will trust her to me?"

"With my dearest love, dear Paul, without one doubt or fear," I said, laying my hand upon his. He did not thank me in words but gently lifted my hand to his lips and left a kiss upon it, afterwards he said as we parted,

"You were jealous of my poor Katie,—but not poor now, happy Katie, for her end was perfect peace, the last year of her life was calm, and full of light. She died in my arms, and I buried her where you saw us. I have told you this dear Mrs. Percy, because I know after what Rolf Livingstone has told you of her, you will be glad to know how gently she went home."

"Since then I have been very lonely, for the aunt of whom Rolf told you, died a few months after poor Katie. Oh I have been a sad weary man since then, but now—" and his eyes shone down into Leanore's face as he clasped her to him, "now I am no more lonely."

After he was gone, and we stood where he had left us, I said.

"Is my daughter happy, is her heart at rest to-night?"

"Oh my mother, my mother, thank God for me, who am so unworthy of this goodness."

This morning Mr. Marstone has asked Mr. Audley, for his consent to their engagement, the "God bless you my child I had hoped for this" with which her guardian greeted her after the interview was over, was another weight of love and happiness, for Lela's happy heart.

And now as a joy past speaking, we tell one another, Lela, our proud Lela, is betrothed, and as Estelle declares,

"To the only man I ever thought really worthy of our queen."

"There is only you and poor me, left of the many who loved each other, mamma," said Adèle half sadly, "all the others, even Gracie, love some one else first, better than they do us, but we are faithful to our first love mamma."

A letter from May to-day, tells us, 'Coralie's health is quite restored, but her merry laugh, her bright free girlish heart, her dancing step, and sunny smile, who shall restore? She is a quiet grave woman, young and very fair.' Oh my darling I could weep bitter tears for your vanished brightness, had I not the assurance that a better light shines on your heart ever more, my little one, my much tried child, God comfort thee!

Oh Rolf Livingstone, you may well weep bitter tears for your sins, an exile from her presence, you have need to expiate the wrongs you did my child, in grievous solitude. But you shall have her at last, dear Rolf only be true to the end.

Stuart will be through his course of study in a short time, and then please God we will return home, as soon as our boys come, home to Walter's home, never to leave it more, until—until I seek that other and better home.

CHAPTER LXXVII.

NOVEMBER.

GRACIE more frightened and blushing than ever has come back, but we need not scold her very much for I think the fault was innocently committed: I have great faith in Gracie's upright truthfulness. Indeed such a sturdy little champion has she ever been for the right, and for duty, that it would have been a difficult thing, under ordinary circumstances to have made her go so far astray. Then the very act bears its own punishment, the weary waiting for years, for that bright face, which because it loved her, tempted her.

Adèle was very cross at first, because of the comments it was but natural we should make upon Gracie's misdoings, and made a great baby of her pet sister, on her arrival, evidently feeling some degree of pleasure in shielding her from our terrible persecution. But though she abjured all society to fondle and guard "her Gracie," who had so suddenly become a heroine, it would not do, for Gracie was

entirely too matter of fact, to play the love lorn, and persecuted damsel, as Adèle would have had her. And like a good little woman, set herself assiduously to work, helping everybody more than ever, "because she had been so very bad."

And because Adèle will go into so much gas light at night; she makes her keep her eyes shut half the day, while she reads to, or sews for her.

This is quite right, and I confess I always feel glad when I see those delicately constructed eyes closed, and covered with her hands as they often are.

"Not because Gracie says I must, so much as because Uncle Ernest, said it was best," she declares.

I have had one letter from America since our gentlemen arrived, Rolf writes, "I have purchased the next property to that of the estate of Percies' Cliffe," the house upon it is very fine, although plain in comparison to your own. It is nearer town. And here please God, I will strive to do some good, and live a worthier man."

DECEMBER.

Stuart and his little family have come. May is the same, as fair and gentle as of old, but it could not be otherwise, no sorrows come near my darling, save those which she feels for others, and for the worst of these she has a prayer and a hope in store.

Now the time of our going home is likely to be in a few months. Estelle and I have been very busy purchasing furniture for May's house, and I have written secretly to Ernest for him to put all things in order for her coming to it very soon. She has been a wife two whole years this very day.

On the "Percies' Cliffe" property still stands, about an half mile from the present mansion-house, the old homestead, a dear, old, quiet place, half buried in the woods, a secluded modest home just suited to my gentle child. I have written Ernest to modernize it a little, and make it as beautiful as as he can without altering its present fashion, and when the furniture comes, let Dora put it in its proper place, and then when my May goes back she will find her home awaiting her, the very one her father in lang syne used gaily to

say "would make a charming marriage dower for the eldest daughter of the Percies."

Cora is changed, sadly changed, but I put away the thought of what she used to be, before she left me to try her wings in loftier soaring, and only compare this pale, gentle little lady, with her meek ways, and beseeching eyes, with that bitter, revengeful woman, so reckless and daring, who for a brief while like an avenging angel, stood in our midst. Oh it is better thus, even though her heart has been seared as with a hot iron, it is a blessing to know the fierce flame which burned a while so wildly within her, has consumed the evil passions of her nature, and that now her heart is purified from sin, tried in a fire seven times.

Rolf she rarely speaks of, but always very calmly, saying softly:

"Redeemed through grace, a monument of God's most excellent mercy."

Mr. Marstone pleads for an early day for their marriage; at first my proud Percy would not hear of being married out of her father's halls, but now she knows Paul cannot go home for perhaps a year, she says:

"As soon as my brother comes, to give me away," and thus it will be.

JANUARY, 1.

They have come, our boys have come, more than a week ago. Clare, with his health and gay spirits quite restored, seems more a boy than ever,—but Howard has gained little by this journey, for he is sadly out of health and more grave and thoughtful than ever.

Some of his earnest, fervent words startle me, they and a remark of Clare's, that ever since they visited some missionary station in the East, Howard has seemed perfectly bowed down with the weight of awful responsibility under which as Christians we rest, makes me fear,—I know not what,—but that with his desire for the good of others, he will sacrifice himself.

To atone for the disappointment of Lela in not being married at "Percies' Cliffe," we had so many home friends about us, it seemed almost a dream that we were in a foreign land.

In their travels, our boys came upon Carrol and Lester, who, according to Clare's wise explanation,

"Still hunt the jades pleasure and novelty, in couples, over the length and breadth of the land, instead of going home and setting to work."

And without much persuasion they were brought thither to add two more home faces to the many who already surrounded our bride.

I was not present when Ada and Carrol met, for the first time, but now they laugh and talk as old friends, not as if any love passages had ever passed between them, and as a natural consequence, or perhaps by Lela's planning, when they came to be coupled off, Carrol fell to Ada's share, in the wedding company, Clare had Adèle, and Harry Lester little Lisette, whom Lela insisted should be one of the bridesmaids.

Our queen was a royal bride, but the noble presence of the groom overshadowed even her proud stateliness.

"They would honor a throne," said Clare enthusiastically to Adèle.

"Better say they will make one happy home in a free land, brother mine," whispered matter of fact Gracie who stood behind him.

"It must be '*tres charmant*,' to be a beauty like Lela, and be loved by so grand a gentleman," said little Lilly.

"Would you like to change places with Mrs. Marstone, Miss Lilly," asked Harry Lester with a quizzical face.

"Indeed I would, I was telling Bueno so last night sir."

"But who is Bueno pray?" he asked highly amused.

"Why Adèle's little dog, don't you know *him*?" she cried.

"Then if he approves, suppose you and I step up and take the place Mr. and Mrs. Marstone have just left vacant."

"What me marry you? indeed I wont," and she frowned upon him in scorn, "you are not nice at all, beside what would 'my dear master,' say if I did such a thing?"

"Oh well then we will wait and ask him when we get to America."

"Then you need do no such thing for I will not have you," she cried in great indignation, as she turned from him to talk to Howard.

The idea that the girls were right in thinking this child strangely like what our little Ernestine would have been, or rather a remarkable likeness which she bears to Coralie at her age, has grown upon me in the weeks in which she has been with me, but I was not prepared for the startling effect it had upon both Clare and Howard, which to this day they cannot rid themselves of, and the vehement way so unlike his usual quiet manner in which Howard said:

"It was well you took her mamma," surprises me.

It has been three weeks since Lela's wedding, and we were preparing to leave Paris in a few days, when yesterday there came sad news, which has caused us some delay.

Willie Lawrence the gay light hearted sailor boy is dead, "washed from the deck of his ship in a fearful storm while in the performance of his duty as officer of the watch," says the bulletin they send.

Very gently did Adèle break this to poor Gracie. After the first grief the poor girl came to me, and burying her face in my lap said,

"Oh mamma it is because of our offending God by our rash vows." But I soothed her, assuring her that was a morbid and unnecessary self reproach.

"Poor dear Willie whom I have known so long, such a dear good fellow, never to see him again, I cannot bear it," she declares in a passion of tears.

But I feel she can, though now very sorrowfully. It is a great shock for her young heart, and for a time the brief life of one whom she had vowed to love, will cast a shadow over her heart, yet it is not a life sorrow I feel sure, but with coming years, will fade away like a dream, which while it harms not, leaves a sad memory.

Poor Willie, his career was short as a summer day, and almost as bright, but to-day his merry eyes and lithe form, rest beneath the bosom of the ocean, and I said yes to the words. May murmured to night as we sat talking over his short life.

"On beds of green sea flowers thy form shall be laid
Around thy white bones the red coral shall grow,
Of thy fair yellow locks threads of amber be made,
And every part suit to its mansion below."

And Gracie will mourn a while for the sad fate of her sailor boy—but his mother's heart will the longer pine that her "glory" has sunk beneath the angry wave, poor mother, he was her pride, her only son.

How many things have passed since we came abroad, poor Gracie's is the newest grief therefore for the time the most important.

When we came, Cora was lost to us, and even when we found her, how fearful was her state, now we have to bless God that over her own and her husband's life, the Day-star of glory casts its beams, lighting their pathway out of earth to the rest beyond.

Lela's life was 'reft of hope when we came abroad, the flowers of her love seemed all crushed and faded, but a Father's hand has restored them, and henceforth watered by the dews of love, beneath the light of loving eyes, watched and guarded they will bloom more bright and fair, with a never ceasing beauty.

Therefore though we leave her for awhile, it is with a sure happiness.

Then Adèle, sweet patient Adèle knows the light once more, and sitteth no more in darkness, but gently says "I see."

We have much to be glad for, more light than darkness, more sunshine than cloud.

FEBRUARY.

My Father thy ways are marvelous, past finding out. I thank thee, my Father that to-night, after so long a time this mercy so unlooked-for has fallen upon me.

Last evening for a while after tea we sat in the dim light, a large party of dear ones gathered together, to spend one of the few evenings that remain before our separation, but Howard plunged in deep thought sat apart in silence, until the lights came, then he began pacing up and down the

room in a strange excited way. At last Stuart went up to him and in his quiet tone said:

"What troubles you, my brother? anything in which I can help you?"

"Nothing, thank you, 'Arty,' I am only nerving myself to bear a great disappointment if need be," and he resumed his walk, after a while however he came and sat upon a stool at my feet.

"Lilly," he said, calling her away from Adèle, "come to me and let me talk to you a while, what do you love best?"

"My dear master and Mrs. Percy," she said standing beside him. Suddenly he clasped both her hands in his and said, looking earnestly in her eyes while he spoke:

"Do you love the sea that roars so?"

"No, no," she said quickly, "it is so big, and I was so cold."

"That was because your boat was too small, and the water came in on you, you know——"

"Yes, and I was so tired so——" and she paused.

"So what Lilly?" he asked quickly.

"I do not know," she replied with a puzzled air, "but I believe I was so hungry, and that the sun burned me."

"I want you to give me that ring, Lilly, will you?" he said suddenly.

"Oh no, no, who told you about it? I did not, for they said if any one found it, and took it away from me, the mermaids would come and carry me off, to live always in the sea," and her face grew pale as death, and she spoke rapidly in French, "please do not let them have me, please! please!" and she clung to him in terror.

"I will not, they cannot find you if you will let me have the ring."

"No, no, they said I was always to keep it, and never loose it."

"Who said so, who do you mean by they?"

"The sailors who lived in the ship with me, they used to tell long stories to each other, and one night as I lay in old Gilbert's arms I heard them say I was a hob-goblin, that the old man of the sea had sent up to charm ships, and that they meant to throw me overboard because I would bring them harm, and then old Gilbert told them I wore something which would sting them if they tried to harm me, and then

he showed them the little bag, with funny letters on it, and said as sure as they threw me overboard the sea would swallow them up. Then he made them promise to let me alone, and so they did, but he took me to his mother when we came to land, and left me, for fear the sailors would get me, but he told me never to let old Elsie see the bag, or she would sell it and then harm would come to me, and then he went away, and I never saw him again,——" she paused in her vehement words and actions.

"But I will not take it from you, only let me see it and I will not touch it but let you hold it in your hands while I look—if you do not I will never let you see Dr. Wilbur, whom you say you love, but will take you far away, even from Mrs. Percy," he said solemnly.

All this while there had been a dead pause throughout the room, all listening we knew not why to this strange talk, but now as we watched them earnestly, Lisette, drew something from her bosom and holding her hands around it showed it to him, and then returned it quickly to its place, without a word of comment.

Howard sat for a moment motionless, then drawing her to him he turned her to the light and with a touching glance read her face, then laying his head upon my knee, he was silent, though I felt him tremble.

"What is it Howard? what is it?" I asked,

"Oh mamma, I do not know whether I may tell you," then rising quickly he said: "May let me tell you something," and drew her out of the room. We waited in an agony of suspense for their return, all but Clare who walked in a quick impatient way up and down the room, till suddenly Adèle sprang to him and whispered something, he turned to her making answer, and caught her in his arms just as she sunk in a fainting fit to the ground. Then as we strove to restore her, Marion with a pale face, and her hands clasped across her breast in the old way which showed some strong emotion was upon her, came swiftly in.

"Mamma," she said tenderly, "you have borne much grief, will you be bowed down by much joy?"

"Oh what is it May? do not keep me in suspense," I gasped.

"No, I will not, my precious mother; Lilly come here, child," then as she came to us she said, "the sea has given

up its dead, this is our lost Ernestine! oh mamma!" and her composure all gone, she flung herself at my side in an agony of tears.

And it is true, oh it is true, what we had never dreamed all these years, our lost baby floated out, and has been taken up in mid-ocean by some outward bound vessel, by whom or under what circumstances, we may never know, for the scrap of journal which I have before mentioned, says, she was taken from a wreck; how God has taken care of our little one all these years, guarding her by sea and by land, amidst rough seamen and uncouth peasants, until by his own good providence he led us to her.

Dear little daughter, our youngest child, how strange it is to know her ours once more, but more strange that none but Howard and Clare should ever have imagined such a thing, but they say they were both impressed with an almost certainty of her identity from the very first, and Howard determined to watch her and convince himself.

She has often puzzled us by strange talk, or hints which seemed to dwell in her memory, but which she could not make plain even to herself, of some far-away home, and a dreary sea which parted her from it, but it always begun and ended with the fairies, and what the voices of the wind told her, and so, we thought it but a part of the fancies with which in common with the peasantry of this land her brain is filled, but Howard thought otherwise.

He says, that while he sat watching her, the thought, came over him to try whether she remembered the sea, and he put his questions in a way to draw her out without any seeming effort of memory upon her part, but as they talked, suddenly he thought "has she the ring which we hung round her neck," then wild with hope he put the queries which brought forth the certain proof, in the very ring which years ago, I sewed in a buckskin bag, and upon which Clare in fanciful letters, painted the words "Lillian, Espérance! O Percy!"

How strange it seemed to look upon this ring once more, and remember the sad legend which hangs over it, and then to think through it our child has been restored to us.

It was a long time ere we could get used to this, or indeed to any thing save the fondling and carressing our restored child.

Poor little darling in her simplicity she could not comprehend it for a long while, or understand that she was not a child of the sea, a mermaid's daughter, as the foolish talk of the sailors, and the after teachings of old Elsie led her to believe, but suddenly while we talked to her, she sprang up and cried.

"And had I no other name but Lilly and Lisette?"

"Yes," said Adèle who had been the first to comprehend the mystery of Howard's conduct, "yes you were called 'Tiny.'"

"Oh I know, I know, and it was in a great garden, and the old man planted seeds, but—" and she paused in a bewildered sort of way, "but she was lame, and went in a little coach,"

"Yes," said Howard taking up the theme quickly helping her out in an easy straight-forward way, "yes that was poor little Agnes you know, who was always sick, but Sandy used to let you ride too."

"Sandy, yes that was his name, the old man with white hair," and she clapped her hands gleefully, "and all this time I thought he was the king of the mermaids, and that the old garden was under the sea." And thus little by little, by a word of help, the poor child is getting back her knowledge of her old life. What will Ernest say to this I wonder.

FEBRUARY.

To-day Cora came to me with a flush upon her pale cheek and putting a letter into my hand said gently,

"If you do not think it wrong I should like to go to her," and I read,

"Rolf Livingstone's wife as you hope for mercy come to me, I am dying, you know me for he told me so, you had reason to hate me that for a little while, because of the love he bore his son, I won your husband to my side, and kept him from you.

"But I loved him for years, he had been my God, my all, when you were a little child, nay I almost think before you were born I had known and worshipped him. When he was a gay, wild boy, he rescued me from a life of guilt in

which my infancy had been passed, was it any wonder then I loved him, and cared only to pleasure him.

"And then for years I lost him, not only his presence, but his love, and I grew reckless and daring, but when he came again after I had not heard of him for years, save through his banker, I thought to win him back again, but I knew too soon alas! it was in vain, for his heart turned ever back to you, and God forgive me, I hated you. What were you, with your pale cold English face, that you should win from me the love of this man, I could not bear to think of it.

"But I am dying now and my boy will be desolate, Rolf came to me the day before he sailed, and offered to provide for my own and the boy's future wants, oh he was so gentle, so kind, so different in many things, and yet so like his old self, but I scorned him, and fled from his presence and hid myself, least he should take my child from me, but now I am leaving him to the mercy of a cold world.

"By the love you once bore his father, (but which he told me you gave him no more, because of his sins,) by that old love, I pray you have pity and come to me fair cold lady,
"NINA DE TOILLE."

"You will go at once dear child," I said when I had read it.

"And will you go with me mamma?" she asked, and with few words we followed the messenger.

But too late, to add one ray of comfort to that sinful sufferer, for ere we reached her side she was a corpse.

Beside her in the wildest grief lay a fair boy, whatever her sins were she was his mother, and with all the vehemence of his half Italian nature he mourned for her, calling upon her by every tender name, to speak to him.

It was a long while ere we could gain his attention, but after a time Cora's gentle voice touched his heart, and looking into her sweet face he said:

"Are you the lady mamma told me of?"

"I think I am dear boy," she replied.

"But ma'ma did not love you, she always wept when she thought of you?" he answered doubtingly.

"She will weep no more," Cora said softly.

"And she wants me to go with you?" he asked.

"Did she not tell you so little boy?"

"My name is Rolf if you please, and mamma said it was a good name, and that I was to live to honor it, and she said I must go to you, and be your good true boy always," and without another word he came home with us.

Mr. Audley has caused this woman to be privately, but respectably interred, and thus ends the life of one upon whose graceful motion and brilliant action, hundreds have hung entranced—and upon whose smiles one had well nigh wrecked his happiness here, and his soul hereafter.

And my daughter with my full consent, has taken this boy to be her own. Mr. Audley, Mr. Marstone, and even Howard at first opposed it, but we have withstood them and gained them over at last, and now she will guide and guard him, it is all the reparation she can make him, or the dead, for her husband's sins, and it is right.

And now the time long looked for has come, and to-night I am writing for the last time I trust in Paris, to-morrow we start for home. The Audleys we leave in Europe, but Mr. Audley says:

"I am growing an old man, and next year if I am spared I will come to 'Ingle-side' to spend the sunset of my life where its dawn began." And we will take our new found Lillian and bring her up to womanhood, the only one beneath the shelter of her father's home, the father whom she never knew.

CHAPTER LXXVIII.

"Mid pleasures and palaces where'er I may roam,
Be it ever so humble there's no place like home."

(J. HOWARD PAYNE.)

"PERCIES' CLIFFE MANOR." APRIL 30.

HOME once more—oh the joy the blessing of it,—who knows the blessing and comfort of a home better than we who have been so long tossed about on the wide world.

We bade Lela and her husband adieu at Havre, where they had accompanied us, it was not very hard to leave her under such safe guardianship, even though we knew a year must elapse before we could look upon her bonnie face again.

And we were bringing home a new child, our bright eyed pleasant Lilly, who was almost a stranger to us, though fifteen years ago she had stolen into our home, one night when the shadows of the grave lay all about us, and made a brightness midst the gloom—but she is all our own, and day by day she grows deeper into our hearts.

We had a safe and easy passage across, and resting one night at our old home in Elm st. with our friends the Greys, we came the next morning towards home.

It was even-tide of the next day when we reached Glen-dora, we had sent no word of our coming, and therefore found no welcome.

"Mrs. Raymond is at 'Percies' Cliffe,' to-day" was the word we got. Leaving Cora and Gracie at Glen-dora, we went quickly on, leaving the carriages at the end of the park, so their noise need give no warning of our coming.

The lamps were lighted in the little sitting room, in the east tower, we crept up the steps to the piazza, and looked in upon the faces of our friends.

Mrs. Wilbur, by a shaded light sat knitting, and looking at Dora and a new baby, who sat opposite her, Harley was reading to them, and in an easy chair sat Ernest fast asleep though he held a book in his hand.

As we listened, Harley's voice fell upon our ear, reading from Hyperion—"Tell me my soul why art thou so restless? Why dost thou look forward to the future with such strong desires? The present is thine—and the past—and the future shall be! Oh that thou didst look forward to the great hereafter, with half the longings wherewith thou longest for an earthly future."—Softly opening the lattice I went into the room, and clasping my arms about Dora.

"Now listen to my words dearest," I said, then the scream of delight from Mrs. Wilbur and Dora, aroused Ernest who started up asking quaintly.

"Is the house on fire?"

"Yes with a blaze of love, uncle mine," cried May as she clasped her arms about him.

Then when the greetings and wonderings were over, and a thousand questions had been asked and answered upon either side, Cora and Gracie came bringing with them our precious child. As she sprang into the room, Ernest caught her in his arms.

"Why my blossom you have really come," he said.

"Oh mon maitre mon cher maitre," she said, then turning to me. "May I tell him myself, please?" when the consent was given, she laid her hand upon his arm, and said softly, "Uncle Ernest, I am Tiny, your own little name child, whom the cruel waves wooed from her home."

A silence fell on all while she made this statement, but when by a word or two we had made them sure, many were the tears and blessings shed upon the sweet face of our new found child. Later in the evening she went softly up to Ernest and said laying her hand in his,

"Will you love me as well as when I was Elsie Rennie's grandchild?"

"Yes sweet one," he said.

"But not better, not better! my dear master?"

"Never better than I loved my little Lilly-bell, my merry pupil who loved me more than even the fairies and flowers," and he clasped the child in his arms, and looking at me said, "she is none the less mine because she has proved to belong to you Bertha, I took her first remember."

"And you shall have your full share of her Ernest, for from the very first of her life, she belonged chiefly to you," I replied.

We have been home nearly a month, and we all with one accord, say we are glad to be here. Stuart and his family are already settled in their house, which is the perfection of comfort and prettiness, and which was a grateful surprise to them. Marion calls her quiet wood surrounded home, "Bird's nest cottage."

Stuart has with his usual energy, and decision, taken an office in P——, to which he drives every morning, in company with Ernest, the one to his already multitudinous duties at the college, the other as he declares with a shrug:—

"To expect the *rush* of clients, which will come, if you give them time."

Then Clare is to have his studio somewhere in P——, but the lazy fellow likes to be at home, playing with Tiny

and little Rolf, planing divers employments with Gracie and Howard, or best of all singing with Adèle.

These are the pleasant things but there are sad ones even here in our happy, peaceful, beautiful home. The morning after we came, Ernest handed me a package after breakfast, saying,

"I am sorry that what you will find there, will cause a shadow thus early over your home coming, but I could not prevent it."

When I had gone to my room, I found it was from Rolf Livingstone, and contained letters for Coralie and myself, my own read thus:—

DEAR MRS. PERCY, ——— Last night I sat busy but sad, in the home beautiful but lonely, which I have made for my wife, sadness oppressed me, I thought of many things, but above all that an ocean rolled between my treasure and myself,—not alone the ocean of dark heaving waters, but an ocean of sin, which my own hand had formed, fierce cruel billows of madness and crime,—but in the midst of the clouds black as midnight which enveloped me, came a bright glad light—Ernest my tried true friend sprang into my room.

"They have come!" he cried, "a half hour since, and in the midst of the noise and merry making I thought of you old fellow, playing hermit over here, and so I stole through the woods to tell you—and now I must back again before they miss me."

"And before I could ask a single question he was gone—for a moment I sat trying to realize what he said, 'they have come,' that meant Cora was near—my wife so dearly loved though lost, was within my reach—but a few steps and my arms were about her and her kisses of forgiveness were on my lips—then I cried out in bitter anguish.

"And I may not go to her, I dare not, I am not worthy, I have not won the blessing of her presence," Oh it wrung my heart!

I prayed long for strength to endure this, the hardest trial of my life, and my God heard my cry and made me strong.

I came late in the evening, stealing softly and carefully, through the dimness the star-light threw over wood and fields, and stood looking in upon you all,—I saw my Cora,

oh I call her so even though I know the thought of being mine would make her shudder,—so fair, so beautiful, she was standing just where the bright light fell upon her—her hand laid tenderly upon the head of a little boy whose face was turned from where I stood, she bent a fond look down upon him, and as as I watched I heard her voice.

"Good night dear son, go now to Milly, God protect my little Rolf," and then as he went away I saw his face, my own boy's face, and they were both so near me, my own once—my injured son—my thrice injured wife, both so beloved, both sundered far from me.

I wound my arms fiercely round the pillar against which I leant, pressing my lips against its cold marble, to hush the groans my stricken soul sent forth. Oh she has heaped coals of fire upon my head! Oh Coralie your goodness crushes me down to earth! it lays me in the dust before you!

Without another look I came away, and now in the gray light of the opening day I write my farewell. Oh Mrs. Percy I know I am unworthy now, I know that even if for pity's sake she would forgive me, and take back those fearful words.

"Rolf I pray God I may never see your face again,"—even then I could not trust myself. Were it love instead of pity, which she gave me, I might be true to my vows—God knows—perhaps I might be trusted, but now I fear—knowing my own heart, with its passions and evil desires—I fear to trust myself to a life of ease, a home wherein she dwells.

I must go forth and battle with life—for an eternal life to come. I have written Coralie a letter, she will show it to you,—if the love which I have striven to hide, is too much spoken of, if my words annoy and disgust her, who has no answering love wherewith to excuse their excess,—speak to her for me, dear friend teach her to pardon my importunity, for the sake of the love she once bore me.

"Once bore me" oh with suffering Cain, I raise my hands to heaven and cry, "my punishment is greater than I can bear," but not than I deserve, I remember that.

But she did love me once, and by that old love I have prayed her to live in the home I have made her,—I did not tell her so—but it will comfort my heart in its weary wan-

derings to think of her there, among the beauties and luxuries my own hand has gathered for her. Plead with her that she go there.

Long ago when we were lovers, both of us happy, and one unspotted by the world, we rode by this spot, and laying her hand upon my bridle she said,

"See yonder old brown mansion Rolf, on that woody mound? it is just within view of my father's study window, if I have one wish upon earth beside that 'Percies' Cliffe' should again belong to my family it is that this place should be my home." And then she blushed and shook her golden curls over her eyes because I said,

"Then it shall be *our* home my pet."

Now I have bought it and had it put in order for her, and henceforth it is her own. Within this envelope I have sent you the deed by which it is settled upon herself, beseech her to take it dear friend.——

Since I came home, I have striven long and prayerfully to discover what was my appointed work, what my Father meant me to do. I remembered that the young man who from his youth up had obeyed the whole law, "went away sorrowful because he had vast possessions." His riches tempted him who was *almost* a good man,—what would mine do for me who am so great a sinner, and I determined to put all this great wealth away from me, after I had decided what to do without it.

Accidentally, perhaps providentially, my attention was directed to the factory town of G——, a few miles below us upon the river. The owner of the mills had been unfortunate, the work was stopped, and hundreds of men were thrown out of employment, and their families reduced to a state of starvation. I visited the place, it was desolate beyond description, the children with hungry eyes, stared at me as I rode through the narrow crooked streets. Filth, squalor and famine, met me every where, and then I said to myself:—

"This scene disgusts you, the very name of factory and trade causes your aristocratic lip to curl, and your refinement to stand at bay, an humble christian should know no such pride, should feel only scorn for sin, not for honest labor, therefore to humble your pride of birth, you shall become a

tradesman a mill-owner,—here is your work ready for you, put forth your hands and take up your life work,"—and forthwith I purchased the whole concern.

There during the last few months I have passed most of my time, the mills are a little out of the town, and around them spread acres of unimproved ground, on this I have erected small houses, and in them the men employed in the factories, can live more cleanly, and cheaper than they now do. In the midst we left room for a church.

I have left the work in good reliable hands, till my return. Now I am going forth, to travel among the manufacturers of other lands, and learn from them my new duties. To learn from their negligences and wrong doings, the right and best way.

I will confess my weakness. God forgive me, that I cannot cast from my heart, this wicked pride. Even now I remember that I have tainted my noble name, by becoming a tradesman with a tingling sensation of shame. It is my English birth. My false unchristian education. No child of mine shall ever start in life with the curse of riches upon him. I have guarded against the temptations which surrounded my early life, ever being endured by those I leave after me.

Except this homestead, and a moderate income for my wife, and the money invested in the factories of G——, I have willed every cent I owned away from me irrevocably. With the advice of older and wiser Christians than myself, I have made a perpetual fund of it, for the benefit of benevolent and missionary societies. Will you explain this to Coralie, and that henceforth, by the labour of my own hands I will provide for the wants of my wife and son.

Pray for me Mrs. Percy, pray that I may not become proud of being humble, but that with fear and trembling I may expiate my crimes, and work out my salvation.

And lead my wife to think gently of me dear friend. Oh I know by the peace I sometimes feel God has pardoned me, will not she? Poor stricken lamb, God's peace be with her now and ever more. Ere this reaches you I shall be far upon my way. (It was signed,) "Rolf Livingstone."

Gone! could it be possible, gone with the thought she did not love him! did not love him! He ought to have known

better, only that night ere she left me she had said with a glad smile,

"To-morrow, I shall see him mamma! to-morrow I will take his son's, *our son's* hand in mine and we will go alone, and plead for his blessing upon us," and now it was all over and he was gone.

Oh Rolf, brave hearted, noble Rolf, remember not by works can you be saved, this was more than was required of you, it was not needful that you should thus banish and torture yourself. The thought comes over me— who of all those who through a long life have professed to serve God, would thus have given up their all, and lain even their pride, a sacrificial offering upon the altar of their God!

Coralie bore this last stroke meekly, as she does all things now, only, "If he had not doubted my love," she said sadly. The next day, as he had willed she went with her young son to the home his hand had made, scarcely a half-mile distant from our own.

Now like a spirit of light she goes among her husband's workmen, a part of every day, cheering them with gentle smiles, and pleasant words, and already they couple her name with a blessing, my precious child!

Ernest and Harley have recounted to me many of the noble deeds which have employed Rolf's time since he came home, and though the discipline has been severe, it has borne precious fruits, and will in the end win a reward.

Another great change has fallen upon us, a few days after our return—Howard after much earnest talk, expressed his determination to become a minister of the everlasting Gospel, we had always taken for granted he would study his father's profession, and take his place, but this is surely better. Therefore again at college my grave, good boy prepares himself for his life work. All is peace, about us—the day brings with it enough of care and labor, to make the night time a sweet season of rest, God's goodness is all about us, the trials and temptations, of the past are as a dream when one awaketh,—even the hardest sufferings of our life, now they are gone seem mist-like—or only clouds round which our present sunshine sheds a roseate hue,—the past afflictions, but make the present good more enjoyable—thank God for all his mercies, and they have been strewn all along

our pathway since life began,—a few gloomy cloudy days, but mostly having a sunbeam somewhere over them.

CHAPTER LXXIX.

"I stretch lame hands of faith, and grope,
And gather dust and chaff, and call
To what I feel is Lord of all,
And faintly trust the larger hope—" Tennyson.

AUGUST I.

ANOTHER August day—the first since our return,—the fifteenth since Walter went home—it seems a long, long while to say that fifteen summers with their weary days have flown,—that days and nights for such a time have been heaped mountain high, one laid upon the other, some good or evil deed illumining or staining the fair tablet, which has been given us by God, wherein to record our life thoughts and deeds.

So many things have chanced since then, so much has changed, it makes me sing the old song,—Walter dearest, that we used to sing in lang syne,

"Many the changes since last we met;
Blushes have brightened, and tears have been wept,
Friends have been scattered like roses in June,
Some to the bridal, some to the tomb."

So many of mine to the bridal, so few thank our Father, to the tomb, and yet even those few have made me sadly wicked, for though I always try not to, my heart will feel what my lips refuse to say. "Why not I, others go home, why oh my Father may not I? how long! O Lord! how long!"

To-night these thoughts come thickly over me though I strive against them, knowing how full of evil the desire is, Father pardon my sinfulness, for Jesus' sake.

I write to-night, with my Ernestine by my side, her great eyes fixed gravely upon the fire, and when I asked her—

"What are your dreams to-night my fairy?"

"I was pitying myself mamma," she replied turning her eyes to my face.

"Why my little one? what ails my baby?"

"I was thinking how sad it was never to have known papa, whom you all love so dearly, never to have shared the sorrows of that life which followed his death, which has knit you so closely together—I feel an outcast among my own, and O mamma I fear papa will not know his Lilly up yonder."

But I folded her in my arms and taught her a better knowledge, than that,—and bade her rejoice that her father's blessing was sure in Heaven.

And is it not so my own, whatever comes to pass if we live aright shall we not come with thee in that company, that wait upon His will.

OCTOBER.

A thing I have hoped for, prayed and even planned for, has come to pass in the most matter of fact way imaginable, Ada and Carrol are married.

It seems so strange—after the years of separation, that the matter should be all right at last, and so quietly done.

Carrol has been studying his profession of medicine, and assisting Ernest in his laboratory as a procurator, he has visited us constantly, and always seen Ada, at least since she has been with us, for on our first arrival, she went directly from the steamer to pass a few months with her poor lonely aunt Mrs. Du Tille, before she came to live with us, or rather near us, for in her independent fashion she chose to live in her own home of Rosedale, a few miles from us, saying,

"I must not get used to being with you always, for it may be I shall be called to part in some future time, and it would break my heart."

And so for many reasons, and because we could see her every day, and aid and comfort her, she has been keeping what she calls 'an old maid's hall,' with a host of friends always around her.

Carrol met her here—went with others at all times to her own house—and yet they grew no nearer to each other. But one day, Ada tired and worn out with a siege of calling and shopping in P—, seated herself in the cars to come home: just as the train started Carrol came in, and as a matter of course took the vacant seat beside her.

Then he noticed she was pale, and sad, and they talked their present life over, her loneliness, his business, then by some chance word the old times when they were young and light-hearted, and free from care was brought up.

"You liked me then Ada," said Carrol with a half laugh at calling her thus.

"Indeed I did Charlton very much," she said quietly.

"Better than any one else, while the fancy lasted you."

"The best in the world, with my whole heart," she answered calmly.

"And by my cursed folly I lost your priceless love, oh Ada!"

"Yes, you lost it such as it was," she said, but her cheek was very pale, and she shut her hands tightly together as they lay in her lap.

He sat silently looking at her for a little while, then he asked sadly.

"Who has that heart now Ada Lawrence?"

"One who will never spurn it, casting its love back, making its life a weary thing."

"Did I do that Ada? oh did I?" he said quickly.

"It was not a very bright sunshiny time, Charlton, when I proved you false, but I lived through it bravely," was the quiet answer.

"But whose is the heart which might have been my own, you said some one who would not misunderstand or lightly esteem its worth."

"Only me—self and Mrs. Percy," she said gaily "but let us change the theme, old times must be forgotten."

He laid his hand softly upon her clasped ones and said in a low voice:

"I pine for your old love Ada Lawrence, give it me again."

"For what intent, to have it cast back once more?" she said checking a quick sob, which welled up from her loving

heart, but which pride who keeps the doors forbade an utterance.

"As God is my witness no, but that by the devotion and faith of a man's love, I may show the light esteem to be placed upon a boy's folly. Oh trust me Ada, a heart-trying by years is better worthy of a kindly hearing, than the fickle fancy of a silly boy."

"But I have lost the old love, Charlton," she said.

"Oh Ada, learn it over once more," he pleaded.

"I can not, if I would, because ——" and she paused.

"Because?—because what?—oh tell me Ada."

"Because I have learned a better love than my girlhood ever dreamed of," he drew his hand quickly away but she caught it in her own and although she blushed deeply, "do not spurn the woman's love dear Charlton, be true to the lone orphan girl who has given you her heart."

"Oh Ada, dearest Ada," and he bent his head over her hand, and I saw a tear-drop lay upon the white wrist, for though he knew it not, I was just behind them, for Ada and I with our bundles and our weary limbs had been together in the city little dreaming what would come of it.

And now after two months time they are married, two more whom I dearly love, have found this resting place on earth, after many trials which now they are over matter not, save to make the present more fair.

CHAPTER LXXX.

——"God's greatness
Flows around our incompleteness.
Round our restlessness His rest.

(E. B. BROWNING.)

AUGUST 1.

My husband, did'st see our boy to-day—did'st listen to his words of grace—oh God was never so near to me—never so

truly my friend as to-day—when for the first time, in his youthful fervor, with his matchless beauty, and love-toned voice, my son, stood up and proclaimed before his fellow-men, the truth as it is in Jesus.

His father's fervid eloquence, and zealous heart have descended upon him like the mantle of Elijah upon Elisha in old times—and the grace of his father's piety, envelops him, my boy my blessed boy.

To-day—by the appointment of those who have had charge of his spiritual progress, he preached his first sermon before the vast congregation of the 'Calvary' Church. Oh how very near he was to his God, appeared in every thought, and many a heart beside my own, invoked a blessing upon the boyish preacher, thus early buckling on the armor, ready for the charge, his banner unfurled, his helmet down.

To-night I wonder if it is much longer needful for me to bide here. I will not ask to go, but these are the things which make me remember to thank God that I can go with few backward glances.

Marion my little friend and comforter, amidst her children, with my own true Stuart guarding her, leads a happy shielded life, no storms come near my May-flower, and if they do, in the future, God is her stay.

Leanore, proudly laid her heart, her name, her all, upon the altar of her love. A happy wife, a happy mother, is my queen. A noble man is Paul Marstone and we prize him well, taking his stand in the first rank, as a scholar and a citizen, he represents his state, at the nation's conference, filling the same place which Walter Percy's name gave grace to, in other years. And though my Lela shines a belle among the proudest of the land, yet she comes back to her village home, with its duties and cares, with a kindly affection for the life so different it presents to her. One bright-eyed boy, blesses their home, and she proudly says:

"My Percy has his father's eyes, and noble brow."

"No, no, they are his plebian grandfather's very own," her husband responds, and then Stuart taking up Paul's bantering says with a laugh in his eyes:

"Sister mine how came you a Percy to link your high mightiness with a mechanic's son, I am shocked at such taste!"

"She was badly off for lovers," quoth Lillian, "and she beheld three blooming sisters the last of the train exceeding fair, coming up beside her, she knew she could never stand *such* charms and so took brother Paul, and thank you too," and with a sly nod at him, "upon the whole she has not done so badly, for he makes a very 'gude-mon.'"

How good the grateful look in Lela's eyes told, though her lips did not. But Lilly's merry words have touched a chord in Paul's true heart, for drawing his wife to him tenderly he says:

"Our little sister does not know what need I have to try and be good, for she knows naught of those weary days which were so dark wanting the sunshine of my Leanoire's eyes, which I deemed were never more to light my way," then softly he added "my darling, does our fairy say truly, am I a 'gude-mon' to thee?"

The way she, who is chary of many caresses, even before those she loves the best, laid her proud head upon his breast, would tell did not her fervent words how dear, how good she deems him.

Coralie once gay as a bird, then sad and stricken to the very earth, wounded poor bird by a sharp arrow in the hands of a wicked man.

My fair sweet Coralie we never call her Birdie now—how very dear she always was to us, how we always prized her—she was our sunshine our bit of the old life when clouds were heaviest about us—when the hand of poverty was grasped closely and fiercely down upon us—our bright golden-crowned Birdie laughed, and sang, and danced, out of one gloomy room into another, like sunshine darting from the clouds, she kept alive our hope, she did us a world of good.

And now after much discipline, she lives a quiet hopeful life, it is hopeful yet, alas! for Rolf still lingers in other lands we know not where. Sometimes comes the fear that perhaps 'God has spoken to him,' or else the trial has been too severe, and he has gone back to the old life, others say that, I do not, for I never doubt him, noble Rolf, and Coralie neither doubts or fears, but waits.

"I know he will come back, perchance to-day," and her cheek will glow for an instant, then as if it was not right to hope thus she adds meekly "it may not be to-day, I will not

look for him to-day, but sometime he will come back to me."

Oh Cora my vehement impatient Cora, how changed, what a new beauty this meekness, and self control gives to you.

Day after day, patiently waiting, she teaches her little boy something, which "Your Papa will like to hear you say dear Rolf when he comes home." Amidst a thousand duties for her child, her house, her friends, and above all, for her husband's workmen, the stream of her life glides gently on.

"Never happy until he comes back and pardons me, but full of sweet content, oh my mother!" she says.

Gracie bustling Gracie, is my chief helper, and Mrs. Wilbur's unfailing assistant as well, she is always full of divers important employments which only she can accomplish.

"Old Betty is cross to-day, and I must try to spare an hour to read to her in," or else, when she is wanted for an excursion or pleasure party,

"I cannot go this time, for Cora and I are busy over a basket of clothes, for some poor folks up at the mills, and we must get them through to-night."

And so good little woman, she is always giving up her own pleasure for the benefit of some needy one, never dreaming of there being merit therein.

Adèle, my dreamy Adèle, fair passing fair is she, and Clarence Beaumont loves her, not with his boyish passionate love but with a deep true manly tenderness, with all the strength of his artist soul.

One evening I sat alone in the dim light of the waning day, gazing up to the mountain top which now was bathed in a golden flood, when Clare came in and laying his head upon my shoulder, said:

"I think I shall ask Uncle Audley to let me come out to him auntie."

"Why Clare are you tired of us?"

"Never, you know I could not. Oh no I have been so happy, so happy here."

"Then why leave us?"

"Because—because I am a fool," he said in his old impetuous way.

"Principally shown how?"—I asked smiling.

"Oh every way," he replied shortly.

"Not quite every way my boy, only one way just at present I think."

"One way—what do you mean, what way?"

"In running away from your happiness, instead of going boldly up to it and grasping it."

"What do you mean, oh Aunt Bertha?" was the quick pleading question.

"That my boy's heart is still the open book, it has always been to me Clarence."

"Oh you know then all my fickleness, all my faithlessness, and your great love can pardon even this!"

"I can not pardon what is no fault dear Clare."

"No fault after the way I loved May, to take Adèle to my heart as I do?"

"It would be a grievous fault to love your brother's wife, you do not do that I know my boy,"

"Only as I should my sister, the other love passed away the first time I saw her a wife, and I was glad in her happiness."

"And you love Adèle better than you did May?"

"Oh a thousand times, oh it was not love I had for Marion if this is love which now enthralls me, since that day in Paris when Lela was married, I have dreamed of nothing else, nay before we left you for our travels, while she was yet in her blindness, child though she was, I took her to my heart, and oftentimes the thought would come how gladly I would be the guide of her life, and during all our wanderings her face in its saint-like beauty was ever before me,—but she does not love me, and I will not awaken her from her girlish dreams, I will not startle her quiet heart, by thrusting my love, tender and entire though it be upon her," then he added, "not for her sake alone, but because I could not endure to have my passionate love thrown back again to me," and he leaned against the window frame in deep thought with folded arms, his eyes fixed upon the dim outlines of the setting sun.

I watched him for awhile thinking of all his young heart had endured in by-gone days, how nobly he had passed through the trials and temptations of his youth: and was this love to be cast back to him, to be scorned and repressed? I could not bear to think so.

Then I thought of a thousand things unnoted at the time which bade me hope Adèle loved him. I remembered a flower in her journal with a paper wound round the stem, bearing the initials C. to A.—and then she always sang such and such a song, "because Clare loves it best."

I had deemed this but the love of a sister for a brother, but now I hoped it might be a deeper, stronger love. Oh it might be that she had given him her heart, my good true hearted boy.

Suddenly Clare started and burying his face in his hands said with a groan,

"It is gone! gone!"

"What is gone dear Clare?" I asked in alarm.

"My hope, and that cloud, something in your face, gave me a strange hope for an instant, as we stood I saw a cloud rise slowly, and covered with the lustre of the fading sun, float swiftly through the sky, and I said, 'if it remains and gathers strength in its upward flight until the sun goes down, I will hope that even so, in the lapse of years, Adèle may gather from the clouds of life a love for me—but as I watched, with my heart hopes freighted in the cloud it flowed into nothingness, and was gone leaving me desolate! desolate in heart and life!'"

"But I am not a cloud, Clare," said a voice beside him, and Adèle stepped from the shadow of a neighboring window. "I am not a cloud," she repeated while her crimson cheeks made her look very like the sky beyond her.

"What then Adèle? what then?" Clare gasped, catching her hand, and watching her face, his own white with intense feeling.

"Your *Espérance* if you will have me, Clare," laying both her tiny hands in his.

"My precious star, my hope," I heard him murmur as he drew her to him. What other words were said I know not, for I stole to my own room.

"Second in two other hearts Bertha Percy," I said, "that much nearer the end of your labors, that much nearer your home."

And now to-night I sit thrice blessed, a glory shining about me, accepting in humble gratitude the grace that God has seen fit to bestow on his hand-maiden. I am a chosen woman, a mother in Israel, and yet how undeserving, of the

gracious gift of such a son, when I used from his babyhood to watch the quiet gravity of my little Howard, I pined and complained because though good and gentle he was not as other boys. Oh I did not discern that he was growing towards heaven, but now it seems to me, he is a chosen vessel ordained from the first for the master's service.

God love thee Howard, the pure in heart, an humble fervent servant of the great Master. The widow's only son, her *Esperance*!

CHAPTER LXXXI.

"Thou glorious spirit land! Oh that I could behold thee as thou art,—the region of life and light and love, and the dwelling-place of those beloved ones whose being has flowed onward, like a silver clear stream, into the solemn sounding main, into the ocean of Eternity.

HYPERION.

AUGUST 1.

I HAVE grown too old a woman to keep as I have done for years, a record of all the events of our lives, when it was full of sorrow I could better perform the duty for it rested me to come in the silent night time alone and talk over all that had passed through the busy day, but now, the sluggishness of ease, and the growing weight of years, make me care less to tell all the doings of our lives unto these faithful leaves.

But now when the shadow of another year lays upon my life, I like to look over the deeds of those about me, and say all has been well.

A little while after I wrote the pages which go before this, the angel of death came with his sickle, and cut down one amongst us, whose days were fully ripe, one who had passed over the mountain top, and was far down towards the valley,—in the early part of this winter our dear old friend Mrs. Wilbur died.

And but a little while after, just as Clare and Adèle were preparing quietly, because of our recent bereavement to consummate their promised vows—the word came across the water from Estelle.

"I am alone Bertha, alone though thousands surround me; last night with the waning day, my husband, my kind true husband died, Oh Bertha my heart is broken.—When he knew there was no hope for his recovery, he told me among other things, to write at once to you, to tell you to send Clarence to settle his affairs, and to bring me home,—'write them word,' he said, 'that all must go on just as has been arranged, it is my especial request that the children do not delay their marriage one day, it is never best to postpone a wedding, so many things come to pass, that we can in nowise foresee,—it will only be this difference—they will have a more quiet wedding, and a sadder journey,'—so dear friend you will send them together, even as he willed it. They will live at Ingleside—but I will take my old place by your hearth side, my good true Bertha."—

Much more there was of her grief and solitude, but this is sufficient. And as soon as we could, Clare and his young wife went for her, and now Estelle Audley, lives a treasured sister, within my home once more.

Kind good Mr. Audley, beloved not alone for his own sake, but for that other sake which hallows all things unto us, peace to thy soul! though the wish to die within your boyhood's home was denied you, yet loving hands have brought your ashes across the wave, and loving hearts watch over their resting place—Walter's childhood's protector, and manhood's friend, farewell!

Ernest grieves for his mother more than men are wont to grieve.

"She was a good true mother, we have seen many changes together, and now I am alone, so far as kindred are concerned, and but for the love of you and yours a friendless man," he says sadly.

"But while one of us is left you can never be that dear uncle," says Gracie weeping bitterly over his sadness.

"No, dear, I know, but then you leave me one by one," he said half playfully, "and I must make up my mind to have only a little corner in many hearts, instead of one whole loving one to be all my own."

Then let me not forget that Rolf is home again, good Rolf, humble fervent christian, and he does not wait for his reward, but has it even now, and when I see him seated evening after evening with his wife upon his knee, and listen

to the gentle goodness of his words, I wonder not to see how the old light has come back to my daughter's face, nor is it strange when we hear her merry laugh as she counts the white hairs which have crept stealthily amidst the dark curls upon her husband's temples, that unthinkingly we should say.

"*Birdie* has a happy heart."

And oh she has, a happy christian heart, and blessings cluster round her, the olden beauty is upon her, and the olden love-names suit her well.

Howard with the zeal of a Paul, stood up among his fellow men, and day and night plead with them to be saved—for a little while, a few short months, his burning eloquence seemed as though an angel spoke through him—but now just when the work is spreading broad-cast before him—when hundreds are being startled by his earnest pleadings, God has called him—oh I know he has—they say it is only the necessary reaction—that nature overworked refuses to act, and that in a little while he will be strong again, even Ernest is deceived, and will not see that the death-stroke is upon my boy—but I am not—I know this last year's labor, by night and by day has worn him out, and God ever good—has gently said to him "come home to me," oh my boy I will not mourn, I will only try to be glad that I am spared to watch beside you in the time of your trial.

"Death loves a shining mark," it seems strange, that the Master should call home one who was working so faithfully in the vineyard of desolation, but doubtless it is best, perhaps in coming days the praise of men might have become a snare—or he would have grown weary in the battle, and God who knoweth the end from the beginning can so order all things, that even in death he may work a good work.

I take this calmly, so calmly that even I am surprised at myself, but I think it is no new thing, I know now, what I did not before, that I have always been expecting just this event; from his earliest days Howard has been so frail, so grave, so different from other children, a frail, gentle boy, with no boyish tricks, always looking above, loving the good, ever above the evil things of life, I can realize now, that I should have been startled years ago as little as now, if death had cut him off.

Oh Howard Percy, perchance the words you said long ago, are true, "the sins of the parents are visited," and now by your early christian death you are taken hence, to pay the last tittle of that law.

None of the others, not even Marion, will believe their brother's days are numbered, but come and sit beside him, and go away with light hearts.

"He will soon be well," such are their words, "he has no pain, his eyes are bright, and the color on his cheeks is warm and glowing as Lilly's own, Howard will soon be well."

But when they are all gone he says with a sweet smile,

"You know better my mother, you know I am nearly home; it does not grieve you, dearest, to have me leave you a little while, I am so glad to go, so very glad that the Lord Jesus calls me home."

Yes I am glad—though in him I behold the extinction of a name I have loved perhaps too well, though with his passing away my only son shall have left me, but I know through my Saviour's mercy, I shall some day go to him,—and to Walter, oh blessed *Espérance*!

One day Ernest came to me, as I sat by Howard's side and said,

"Bertha, I am astonished that you, who are so keenly alive to the joys and sorrows of your children, should be so unmindful of the sadness of one of them."

"Why Ernest, what have I done amiss? which one have I neglected?"

"Lillian, do you not see how unhappy she is, how she mopes alone, when she is here? how restless she is, unless she can get away to Ingleside? has this escaped you?"

"Entirely," I replied with a smile, "I suppose she wearies of our quietude, after her gay winter in Washington. I am afraid it was wrong in Lela to take her into the world so early, she was too young."

"She is seventeen," he said quickly then, added sadly, "yet that is very young, she is such a child, yes I think it was wrong to have taken her, for though you do not see it, because you have been so engrossed with Howard, I have discovered that our poor child has gained a life experience by her winter's dissipation."

"In what way? if you mean in any love affair, I am quite sure you are mistaken, for you know her two offers

were indignantly refused, and she gave her word, that she loved no one better than those two disconsolate swains who followed her hither."

"No I do not imagine she learned her love song at Washington, but these offers awakened her child's heart to a knowledge of itself, and showed her an old tenderness which none suspected, but myself, who have watched and guided her so long. Like all the rest of you, she only loves a childhood's friend."

"And who pray? not little Rolf, I trust, he is four years younger."

"Nonsense, can you not see, how her every thought is bound up in Harry Lester, how she waits and pines for him, when he is not here, and how happy she is when he comes?"

"Oh Uncle Ernest, how very plain it is you"—and Howard, paused with a smile beaming over his face, "ring the bell for Tiny, mamma please."

"Nay Howard my boy," Ernest said quickly, "do not make her confess it, for I have just come from questioning her, and with a true woman's nature she will not confide even in me, who thus far have known every thought of her heart."

"Not quite uncle mine, I think I know some which even you do not dream of, but here she comes," he added as she sprang into the room.

"Why what is the matter Lilly-bell?" he asked as she drew back with a pout.

"I would not have come, if I had known Uncle Ernest was here, so I would not."

"Why my daughter?"

"Because he is unkind," and the lip lost its fullness and trembled while tears sprang to her eyes, "he is not good to me."

"Why Lillian what have I done?" he asked, "only trying to make you happier, my poor child."

"I do not want to be happier, I only want to be your good child, and mamma's baby, and Howard and every body's pet," she said with a wilful smile, "I am happy enough if I have these."

"But Uncle Ernest thinks you would be happier, if you were sure Harry Lester loved you above all the world," said Howard, "he thinks you and Harry are made for one another."

She blushed a little at his words and quizzical smile, but said with a demure air, and a wilful little shrug,

"I'm o'er young to marry yet, do'nt take me from my mamma yet."

"Then you will marry him sometime sister mine?"

"When Laura Lea departs this life perhaps, but as she has written me word she is to be married this winter, and having been informed by Harry over and over again for the last six months, of his utter devotion to the 'little lady,' as he calls her, I will think over the matter for a long while, before I decide to marry him."

"Oh Lilly do you not love him after all?" and Ernest's face turned pale as death. "Oh my little child why did you not tell me this, I have been so unhappy about it, deeming he was breaking your young heart by his careless attention, why did you not tell me?"

"Because sir," she said pettishly, "you had no right to Hal's secrets, and still less to presume I would love where I was not loved in return, how dare you think I would give my love unasked," and she stamped her little foot down fiercely.

"Oh Lilly, Lilly, we can not always help ourselves, child! child! you little know what you say," and with a quick fierce movement he caught her in his arms, "my little lamb they have not won thee away from me yet, oh Lilly be always a child and stay a light within our home."

"What all my life, indeed then the very first eligible man that comes along and wants me, shall have me," she said with a laugh, springing away from him towards the door, when Howard's voice arrested her.

"Come here Lilly—can you be serious for one moment?"

"I will try for your sake, and I think I will be as grave as a judge, for double that time," she said saucily.

"Does my sister love me very much——"

"Oh Howard, dear Howard," and she threw herself beside him, all her levity gone, and laid her lips upon his hand.

"There pet I know you do, and you love mamma, even better than you do me, yes I know you do, but do not devour her, for I must have her all now, while I stay," he said, a sweet smile resting upon his face, "and yet with all

this my little sister is not happy, but pines for something more, a something, which these foolish Washington suitors taught her the want of. Now listen, sister mine, and let me test your heart, let me see if you love yourself best, or another's happiness. Uncle Ernest has seen much sorrow in his younger days he told me himself he loved once unwisely, and it has cast a shadow over his whole life, his urgency upon your behalf has been for fear your childish heart should thus early be learning the lesson which had made him once, weary of life. As I have lain here with no care, and little thought of the outer world to distract me, I have discovered by a thousand signs the want of both your hearts. My sister Tiny, do not look so frightened—Uncle Ernest do not shrink away as if I had done you a wrong, I am too near the confines of another world, to cause you terror by any act of mine,—sit where you are sir,—dear little sister, do not weep but go now like a true woman and here with only mamma and I to hear you, tell Uncle Ernest how he can make you happy."

She turned white, but as if she dared not disobey the solemn voice of her brother, she stood up and turning to Ernest tried to speak but in vain, the blood came in torrents to her face and neck, and she stood with downcast eyes before him, and he as if powerless sat gazing at her in a dazed sort of way, until Howard rising from his couch the first time for many days, took his sister's hand, and with a gentle force led her forward.

"Oh Uncle Ernest have more faith, be true to yourself, pity the poor child's embarrassment, and tell her you love her."

"I do, God knows I do," and he sprang up, "but I am too old, too worn in the world's service, to hope to win her fresh child's heart. I have bidden my unwise love back, and sought only her happiness in seeking to wed her to one whose years were nearer her own. Oh child, I would never have told you this, but that Howard with his keen insight has discovered my folly; which I meant to carry with me to the grave," and he buried his face in his hands.

"I was only cruel to be kind,—now Lilly it is your turn," and he turned a smile upon her, "let us know your will."

"I have no will—no love—no hope, but what he gives me," and she sprang to his side and knelt down. "Oh my kind-

true master, all that I am save my unworthiness I owe to you, take me—I have waited your time so long,—but I knew you would learn to love your poor child at last, even as she loves you."

"Take her away now," said Howard, as Ernest raised her with a passionate embrace from the ground, "mamma and I like well enough to know the matter has reached a denouement at last, but we cannot endure the sillinesses of lovers, who esteem themselves the only blessed beings upon earth," and he turned his face wearily to the wall.

And indeed the excitement of this scene which was a surprise to me, as well as to both the principal actors, had been too much for him, and a feverish day and night was the result.

Dear Ernest, it is another brightness in my life to know you are happy at last, though I did you a wrong innocently, God knows, years ago, a wrong which—nay I am not naming it rightly—it was no wrong, but I wounded your true heart and made you a grave cold man—but now after year upon year has gone by, you have found a joy at last, and with my bright glad child you are at peace.

Lillian, I thank you daughter that you have made a recompense to your father's friend and mine, for all he has endured. Oh how he loves you child, with what a storm of intensity—do not even in sport cast a cloud over the tried true heart, which gives you its all.

He is older, much older, than my child, nearly as old as her father would have been, and yet I can only see beauty and sacredness in that, for to my mind there is something holy in this binding together, of a man over whom the storms of life have beaten, with a bright untried life, she is like the dew of his early life to him,—over his weary doubtings of all things, of faith, of truth, of honesty, of goodness, comes her pure fresh belief in all,—she brings back the fresh glad cheerfulness with which he started in the race of life. Her smiles are sunshine to his tired heart, her voice music which draws him heavenward.

Lilly, is a gay light hearted child—she will plague him often I know, if only for the sake of testing the love he lavishes upon her, but she is a good child too, and if, her own true heart did not teach her not to go too far, the thought "Howard gave me to him," will suffice even, when he is gone.

CHAPTER LXXXII.

"Calm on the bosom of thy God,
Fair spirit! rest thee now!
E'en while with us thy footsteps trod,
His seal was on thy brow.
Dust to its narrow house, beneath!
Soul to its place on high!
They that have seen thy look in death,
No more may fear to die."

DIRGE BY MRS. HEMANS.

Now surely I am nearly home, my work almost done, my rest almost won,—heaven is very near my soul to-night.

I write with a feeble pen, but a strong heart, my trust is sure, my faith strong as life, thank God, that as I draw near the confines of my earthly existence, all things are so certain and right, so plain and restful to my mortal sight.

Howard my only son, has faded day by day, until—until like a sweet, fragile flower, too pure for earth, the great Reaper has taken him to bloom in the garden of the Celestial city. Day by day, but so gradually with scarce a pang, his life ebbed away,—it was hard for his brothers and sisters to think he was going from their sight, all his fair young life he had been one of God's good things to them, always with his own gaze heavenward, pointing them thither, always helping them "up the mountain."

It is very pleasant to remember that never for one instant was his bright intellect clouded, that never one breath of doubt or mistrust, sullied his perfect faith, "my Father will do so and so, for my Saviour's sake," was the burden of his song in all things small and great, it was the perfection of fitness, for every cross and trial, which met him on his way. One day he said to me with a sweet smile, as I sat alone with him:

"Dear mother, I must tell you something before I go. You can hardly think when you remember how peacefully and tenderly God has dealt with me ever since I lay upon this bed of sickness, that I could have been bitterly rebellious against Him for placing me here, and yet at the first, I was so cruelly grieved, and disappointed, I could see no mercy in it. I see now how wicked I was, meaning to please

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myself, by pleasing God my own way; mamma I meant to have gone out as a missionary as soon as I was sure of myself——"

"Oh Howard, not abroad!"

"Yes to help the poor worn out servants of my Master in Armenia. Oh they are so wearied with the duties of their stations they need help so grievously. It was seeing the way they were obliged to toil and strive, when Clare and I were there, and knowing by my own observation, the need there was of their efforts, which first made me sure I should go into the ministry, and I thought my duty lay there, and I was glad to think I might work there—but God knows best, I might have done only harm by going, so He has prevented it."

"But you never told me this my son."

"It was better not to grieve you before I knew my Master's will, at least I thought so, and you see it was," he replied with a sweet smile, "for I am not going there."

Just then Rolf came in, and for a good while they talked over the plans for the little church at the mills, and Howard left many charges to the people who for more than a year, have listened once every Sabbath to his teachings, then when they were through, Rolf said gently,

"My happy Howard, how near the end you are, only a few more days and you will have passed——"

"The dim and unknown stream,
Which leads at last to the light."

"Yes, very soon, so soon nearly reaching my home—but say that piece to mamma Rolf, she does not know it at all."

"It is something which Howard and I met with yesterday, and liked very much, a poem as beautiful as a psalm, which seemed just to speak to Howard's heart, and mine through him." And he repeated the poem beginning.

"One sweetly solemn thought,
Comes to me o'er and o'er,
I am nearer home to-day,
Than I e'er have been before."

"So beautiful" said Howard when it was ended, "it may be

I'm nearer home 'nearer than even I think,' but it will not be too soon, not too soon," and he sank into a sweet sleep.

That night he died—but so quietly and gently that we never knew the time, once he awoke and seeing us all about him said,

"Lela my queen, sing for me, and then my May-flower will read a Psalm, and Rolf will pray, I almost feel as if to-night was to be the last time we should all join around our household altar."

"Do you wish it dear Howard?" asked Paul, leaning over him tenderly.

"No brother, I have no wishes now, just as He will, it is blessed either way, only, perhaps, to be at rest might be better, yet I cannot tell, I shall be glad either way."

After we had united once more in supplication with Rolf, Howard called Ernest to him.

"Uncle Ernest, God has been so good to you, and yet you hate him."

"No my boy I do not, you do me injustice, only I cannot—and he paused abruptly.

"Cannot give him your heart. Oh Uncle Ernest,—poor little Lillian, how will she ever live a good life, how ever make a joyful end, when—when her guide is blinded by the cares of earth, with no hopes, or desires for heaven? Oh I have asked God to take all wishes from my heart, and I thought he had—but, it is not so, for I have an overwhelming desire, to leave my little sister in safe hands," and he paused exhausted by emotion.

"Oh Howard!" and Ernest covered up his eyes, "I will try my boy, I will try!" and the words broke forth in anguish.

"It will not do, that is not it, you must not try, only go, only say 'I will,' that is the only way, is it not Rolf, we must not wait until we are worthy."

"If I tarry till I'm better
I shall never come at all,"

said Rolf. "Lilly my child do not stand away from his side, he is to be your guardian until life ceases, come here my child," and she came tremblingly and stood beside Ernest laying her head against him. He put one arm round her, but kept his eyes covered.

"The only ones I love who are out of the ark of safety,—the only ones to whom I need say farewell forever," and Howard's tone was very sad, "Good-bye my little sister."

"No, no, my brother, do not cast me off," and the poor girl threw herself in an agony of tears at his side, "I will serve my Saviour, I will meet you and papa up yonder, if He will grant me strength, pray for me brother, and for Ernest."

"And what of you?—shall she go alone?"—

"I will try Howard," came gaspingly from Ernest's white lips.

"Try what?"

"To be worthy, to serve Him as I ought."

"Worthy! worthy a Saviour's dying love, worthy that the Son of God should have lain down his life for you! Oh you cannot be, your worthiness would be as filthiness in the sight of a just God, Rolf pray for him once more, I am too weak.

And he did, just such a prayer as was needed, prevailing in heaven and in the heart of the tortured man, for when he was through and we had arisen, he threw himself upon his knees beside Lillian, and in a voice choked with bitter tears cried.

"Pardon my sins Father, for Christ's sake, grant me the grace of thy holy Spirit, to walk ever before Thee with a perfect heart."

For a moment all was silence, then Howard said softly,

"Mamma you said it might be whenever I would—"

"Yes shall it be now?" and I beckoned Harley Raymond to us.

Without a word he began the marriage service, with a quick startled look, Ernest sprang to his feet, then Paul Marstone lifted Lillian up, and her brothers and sisters gathered about her. Thus was my last daughter wedded.

When it was over Howard said gently,

"Kiss me my brother, and my sister," then turning to me, "another son, mamma," then he said, "raise me up 'Arty,' May dearest, these two are young in the faith, mamma will not stay here long, watch over our youngest child, do not let the cares of this life choke up the good seed: my brothers you are all strong in a good hope,

this new brother is very weak, watch with him day and night, pray with him, until his grain of faith has become a brave, strong tree, whose shadow shall strengthen other drooping hearts," then laying his hands upon their bowed heads, "Ernest and Lillian Wilbur, God's peace be with you! hereafter I will greet you in the New Jerusalem, where we shall meet at the marriage supper of the Lamb.—Now my mother lay your dear cheek against mine, May, my little sister May, my faithful friend and monitor in all the bygone years, clasp my poor weak hand in yours, now with all my dear ones near me,—papa in the spirit, and God my Saviour over all, I will sleep and perhaps—I shall wake—wake a free spirit," and he sank to rest.

And thus it was, that when the first roseate-tint of morning touched the mountain tops, and stole softly into the room, where we sat, we knew only a shadow of our beloved was with us, the reality walked the streets of the heavenly city.

I am very near home, this is my last leaf, I shall not turn to another page, my tale is told—the book of my life is nearly closed—God has been very good to me all my life long, blessed be His great and glorious name. "Through devious paths I have been led, gently and kindly, a guarded life, a tenderly cared for life has been mine, His grace has kept me.

God has adopted *my* beloved ones, and *their* beloved ones into his glorious family, not one whom I love is missing, He has not caused one sorrow to stay with me, all is peace, so great and glorious, that did I not know the source of all I should wonder that it could be so marvelously like heaven.

The widow's God, will be the orphan's Friend, and we will meet before his Throne—Amen.

CHAPTER LXXXIII.

I WHO write the last remaining pages, of this journal am Gracie; a little while before mamma went home, she called me to her, and gave me this book, telling me,

"When I have passed, 'out of the shadow into the sun,' gather all whom I have loved together, and let Stuart read to you the record of your lives."

We loved mamma so dearly, we have thought of her so many years as almost an angel, that now when at last she is what she has so long seemed to be, we do not weep for her, a few bitter tears will come, but they are for ourselves—for the loneliness which the wanting her dear presence leaves.

After our brother died she rarely left her room, save only with one of my brother's arms about her, each night she walked along one of the long corridors to a western window to see the sunset, it was an old custom, which she and papa always had of seeing the sun dip into the river from this window, and whenever she was at "Percies' Cliffe," she never omitted the going there; we called it "mamma's window," it will be its name always.

Long ago, it had been one of the brightest hours of mamma's bright days to sit, papa and she alone, in some quiet nook, oftenest in summer time, in the little marble grotto, which stands upon a rock at the river's brink, and talk over a thousand pleasant things,—afterwards when our dark days were upon us, dark in some things, bright in others,—she had always gone to her little room, at twilight, and we learned to think it was very a holy time, and we always hushed our play and gathered around May, as she bade us, and were quiet listening to her stories until mamma's sweet face came at the door, once more, dear mamma! Birdie grows more like her in every thing—even in heavenly beauty, Rolf Livingstone's treasured wife. Oh we used to be thankful because we had papa's face left us in Lela's haughty beauty, but now we are I think, more grateful than even that, for Birdie's face.

Through all her illness—nay it was not illness—but while she was fading from our midst—we used always to leave her at the usual time because our sister May said it was better, and then when her bell rang, we

gathered from all parts of the house to her room for prayers.

But last Sabbath eve we waited a long, long while, but she did not summon us. Just when our hearts were aching with intense dread, Paul said:

"Marion dear, go to your mother, it is better not to wait longer."

Then when she had gone a moment she came back again, and beckoning with her hand,

"Come," she said, that was all, but we knew at once what it was. When we reached the door, May turned with the sweet smile which is her chief blessing, and looking upon the sorrowful company that followed her said: "Softly my brothers and sisters, it is holy ground."

And oh it was, for kneeling before her desk, her hands clasped upon her open Bible, and her sweet face laid upon them, was our dead mother, the moonbeams making a halo over her as she knelt.

Tenderly Stuart and Clare laid her upon her couch, and we stood reverentially about her, in unbroken silence until Harley Raymond, (who was with us the first time for many days, because Dora is sick almost unto death,) said in a solemn voice:

"So He giveth his beloved rest."

Then when Lillian would have wept over our departed saint, Adèle said quickly: "Not so Lilly, she would not like that you should weep," and the tears were driven back.

"Let us have worship now," said Cora, "it will be sweet to send our prayers above just while they are singing their songs of gladness before the Throne."

And around our pale, cold mother we offered our evening oblation.

This was four days ago, to day we buried her beside her beloved, at their feet rests all that is earthly of their son, our only brother, the last of our race who bore the name—his grave was made four months ago. Our father, our mother, our only brother sleep!

We who are left love each other well, our hearts were knit very close in times of desolation, and of trial, and now when the full tide of prosperity flows around us, we only love the more.

Dora Raymond was our dear friend, mamma's dear friend,

and she is going swiftly but surely into an early grave, stricken by the hand of a disease which bore away the life of both her parents, but when we look upon the pale consumptive's face, there is such a glory of heavenly hope, we forget to mark the other lines which suffering has written thereon.

When mamma's death made me more desolate than all the rest, I would have liked to have gone to Ingleside, and spent the rest of my life helping Adèle, she wants me so sadly, but May says, no,

"You must stay in the old home, my sister Grace, and watch over Lillian, as I cannot hope to with my many other cares, your duty is here, among mamma's poor, in her last earthly home."

And so we four, Aunt Estelle, my brother and sister, (Dr. and Mrs. Wilbur,) and myself live in the homestead, and will together strive to fill in some slight measure the place of our angel mother.

Full of hopes, of fears, of joys, and tender love, we children of Walter and Bertha Percy, in happy homes, await the summons which shall call us from time to eternity, from the fleeting, uncertain pleasures of earth, to the perfect peace of Heaven.

The motto of our race is "Espérance,"—the language of our hearts is "Espérance,"—hope for the time when from the perishable joys of earth we shall win the imperishable joys of heaven! O Espérance! O Percy!

THE END.

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