

# A SPINSTER'S STORY.

BY

M. A. F.

He that writes,  
Or makes a feast, more certainly invites  
His judges than his friends; there's not a guest  
But will find something wanting, or ill drest."



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TO

MRS. REV. J. H. BURTIS

THE FOLLOWING PAGES ARE INSCRIBED

IN REMEMBRANCE

OF THE UNLIMITED KINDNESS FOR WHICH THE AUTHOR WILL EVER

FEEL MOST DEEPLY INDEBTED.

M. A. F.

# A SPINSTER'S STORY.

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## CHAPTER I.

"Such strange and hidden things the future hath in store,  
That man could not believe should he be told before;  
Nor would it profit him if he did know the end  
To which the ups and downs of every day portend!  
Enough to do what's right, whate'er our lot may be,  
What is beyond the present let us wait to see."—OLD FOMM.

It is not my intention to write of myself; not that I should have nothing to say, for a middle-aged woman who has traveled much, mingled with many different and strange people, and occupied both a pleasing and painful position in that motley multitude called society, might certainly recall much to fill a volume, but for the reason that the most important points of my history I wish to keep exclusively to myself, and also because I have long been haunted with the idea that I should be far better employed in arranging for publication the journals of some of my friends, which now lie on my table before me; whenever I have glanced over their pages, it has seemed to me that their narrative would be well worth a perusal. Now as my age is over three score years, I must have come to the years of discretion, and ought to know what is likely to please that most severe of critics—the public. However, should the attempt prove a failure, I shall always feel that the fault was not in them, but that they lost their interest while passing through my hands.

In one of the most picturesque and remote seclusions of Llanwrost in Caernarvonshire, I passed the halcyon days of my childhood, and as soon as I felt myself no longer a child, being left to follow the bend of my inclinations, I dipped rather deeply into the follies of the flirt, until time bade exeunt to my maidenhood, and my fate designed me a spinster for life; why, of course I shall not say,—that is the sanctity of every old maid, and no man or woman has a right to pry

into it. It is said that there is a turning point in every one's life, and that upon this, trivial as the event may seem at the time, depends the whole course of our future destiny. If this be true, I know full well when I trifled with this golden moment which could never again return to me. For fifteen years I had lived for one aim only, and just when I felt this within my grasp, I saw it snatched suddenly from me forever: unconscious of anything save my own wretchedness, I joined a party of friends who were taking leave of our mountains for the land of the renowned Washington, and it was not until I found myself upon the broad expanse of the mighty Atlantic, that I realized the rashness of my procedure. After our arrival we went to Philadelphia, where we had not remained a week before my companions determined to start for the West, to pursue their vocations as farmers. I bade them good-bye, and my dream was over; I burst into tears, and said to myself, "Ellen Morgan, you are in a strange country, without a friend!"

I remained at the hotel until my money was all gone, expecting remittances from Wales, but none came; what to do I knew not, and I passed a day and a night in the most indescribable misery. Debt I abhorred, and I must leave my room at the hotel, and wander the streets in quest of a better fate. As a little child clinging to its mother for protection, I craved the guardianship of the Parent of all; and calmed if not comforted, I arose to meet the changes and chances of an eventful day.

I sat at a window looking out upon the busy throng below — for the street was filled with pedestrians on this bright May morning, and many would have found amusement in watching the motley group as they passed along; but my thoughts were not here, and far away they wandered, until a knock at my door arrested my attention. I opened it; there stood a little urchin holding something towards me, saying, "To-day's paper, ma'am?" Mechanically I took it of the boy, and gave him the last remaining coin in my possession. Then sitting down, I indifferently glanced over the columns and was laying the paper aside, when my eyes fell upon the advertisement "Wanted, a lady teacher of the harp, to instruct a young lady three times a week," &c. This riveted my attention, for, although my education had been deficient in some branches, still of this instrument I felt myself complete mistress. Often when a child, I would hide myself in the room where my brother received his lessons, listen attentively to all the instructions, and as soon as teacher and pupil had left the room, which was never until the latter had tried to the utmost the

Job's patience of the poor professor, I flew from my retreat, and began my practicing upon the harp. This did not escape my father's observation, and one day he said to the teacher, "Oh, I see you will never make anything of that fellow, take this girl, she is always fingering those strings, perhaps you can do something with her," and I became a lover of the instrument, so that I could not tear myself from the companion of many a lonely hour, and had brought this harp with me; this, together with my little wardrobe comprised all I possessed in the world.

Throwing down the newspaper, I flew to my old friend, drew off its many wrappings, and clinging to it, I caressed it and wept over it as a child. Then preparing the long-neglected strings, I sat down as I had often done before, that the soft, sweet strains might soothe my troubled spirit, and they did not fail even now, for I arose with better hopes, and endeavoring to rely upon Him who alone could direct my wandering steps, I proceeded in answer to the advertisement.

It was a stately mansion in one of the principal streets, and as the man-servant showed me into the ante-room, a feeling of awe crept over me when I remembered that my situation was a very awkward one; with no letters, no testimonials, no reference of any kind. What to do I knew not, and I had resolved to make my immediate escape unnoticed, when a gentleman entered the room; there was in his address something so pleasing and affable, that my trepidity instantly vanished, and we chatted freely for some minutes upon European affairs, and various matters, and appearing fully satisfied with this slight knowledge of me, he led me up stairs to a spacious apartment, and placing a harp before me requested me to pass my opinion upon it. The instrument was a superior one, and its rich, full tones must have vibrated the house, for I discerned several forms upon the staircase, and when I had finished playing I heard low voices paying me or the harp many a compliment. The gentleman left me to fetch my pupil, and in his absence I believe I imagined girls of every possible size, age, cast and color, until he again made his appearance, leading a young girl by the hand, which put an end to all further conjectures upon that subject.

"Miss Morgan, my daughter Lydia."

I arose to meet the blushing girl, and although I could not have told why, there was an air about her that made me feel irresistibly drawn towards her. I had seen many fine looking girls before, but never one who impressed me more favorably than this Lydia. The fine, round, full figure, that clear red and

white complexion and cast of features, made me whisper to myself "you are of a good old stock, which the enervating effects of this climate has not yet entirely annihilated. I think to any she would have been very attractive, for there was an ease and grace about her which, added to her natural beauty, made her more than ordinarily prepossessing. Her eyes were very dark, if not black, and in their depths you seemed to read the purity and truth of the soul beneath; then the glossy, black tresses which many a girl of seventeen would have confined by some of the restraints of art, waved at will; and to my fancy gave a double charm to her whole appearance, but more than all, there was that which renders the most ordinary girl beautiful,—a sweet and child-like simplicity that pervaded her whole being.

Her father left us; for a long time we chatted familiarly upon the various topics; I found her very well informed, and very pleasing. She played and sung for me, and hers was one of those voices so liquid and pure, that its strains might have melted the stoutest heart; and her execution upon that grand piano was with a skill and rapidity that was electrifying. I admired two paintings, she told me they were hers, and leading me into another room, showed me an easel upon which rested an unfinished portrait of a younger sister. I took up a few scraps that lay upon a table, and snatching them playfully from me, she exclaimed "Oh! you must not see those, they are strictly private."

"The likeness of some favorite individual, I suppose."

"Favorite!" and she burst into a merry laugh, "promise me you will keep a secret, and you shall see."

"Secrets, my dear? I think every old maid has secrets that will go down to the grave with her, so if you tell me yours it will only make one of that number."

"Well then, you may see," and she laid the papers in my hands.

I shall not say what I expected to see, but what I saw was a collection of caricatures which brought from me the most unrestrained bursts of laughter.

"You do not scold me?" she said, as she looked inquiringly into my face.

"You do not give me time," I replied, as soon as I could cease laughing. Perhaps, if one of these were upon me I might."

"Oh, I know it is wrong," she added with a serious expression passing over her face, "but sometimes the spirit moves me and I cannot rest until I do it."

I remained two hours, which seemed to me only half that time, and saw sufficient to give me a most pleasing impression of the character of Lydia Villiers, and charmingly prepossessed with my new pupil, I arranged the hours for the lessons, and took my departure.

I had now no further anxiety of pecuniary difficulty, for although I had stated such terms as I thought proper, Mr. Villiers informed me that these were far too low, and settled that matter himself. Thankful for this successful beginning, I resigned myself to a residence of several years in Philadelphia, until some change in my family affairs should admit of my return home.

The next morning was the Sabbath; I awoke early, for the prospect of attending a place of worship was one of such an interest as could never be understood by any but those who take delight in that privilege, and have been deprived of it by a long and tedious voyage. My busy thoughts occupied me until the spring breezes wafted in at my open window the chime of church bells, and charmed with the sweet sound, I hastily dressed and went in the direction of the solemn peal which, to my great satisfaction, led me to that form of worship I so much loved.

The service as a whole was very imposing, and when it was over, and I was leaving the edifice, the sacred words which I had heard had made so deep an impression upon me, that any object whatsoever, must have been most peculiar in its character, to arrest my notice. As I was leaving the pew, which opened upon one of the side aisles, a singular looking individual attracted my attention. He was a man of about sixty or more, remarkably small and shrivelled in appearance; in fact, the face was such a combination of wrinkles, that if you looked for the forehead you found that part of his visage so contracted, that the very eye brows formed part of the peruke that was intended to conceal the gray locks, which nevertheless would protrude from either side. An umbrella that might have protected a half-dozen such as he from wind and weather, was under one arm, keeping him at a respectful distance from every one, for none would have relished a thrust from the huge, pointed end which, from its position, seemed ready to challenge the whole congregation. In one hand was a handkerchief, in the other a pair of spectacles, which the palsied hands were attempting to raise to his sunken eyes. At last, after many an effort which was distressing to behold, the golden wire rested upon the little skeleton of a nose, and as he turned himself about as though to take a view of those in the church, my eyes rested upon the

various articles that formed his costume. They were of costly material, while upon an ungloved hand were rings in which diamonds and other precious stones glittered; beside this, around his neck over his coat, he wore a gold chain of a singularly large size, and attached to this, hanging at his breast, was a portrait whose dimensions were as extraordinary as the chain itself. Now, had his appearance been such as to designate him one of the sons of poverty, one's sympathy and compassion might have been excited, but not so much one's curiosity; for it seems natural in us to overlook whatever is strange and phenomenal in the poor; perhaps we allow ourself too often to conclude that their mode of living enervates the faculties of the mind and heart. But this individual was undoubtedly a wealthy man, and as he turned round my curiosity was so intense, that I stood and gazed intently upon him.

Nearly all the congregation had left the church, still I saw his attention was drawn towards the pews of one of the side aisles. I looked in that direction, and saw a female form still kneeling. He walked to the door of the pew, and said in a voice that was scarcely audible, "Anna, come."

The figure arose from its kneeling posture, and I saw it was a young girl of probably not more than sixteen; she was rather small, too, for, had not the figure been very slenderly built, she would not have appeared as tall as she did. Her dress was neat, but of the homeliest texture; in fact, a casual observer would have thought her a very poor girl, and so did I.

"Anna, I will go home with you," said the strange, little old man.

But taking no notice of his words, she took her book, and hastily walked down the aisle, followed by the rapid little steps of her companion. As they passed by the door near which I stood, I had a distinct view of the young girl's face; it was a very sad one, and wore the traces of tears; the features were regular, but I could not call her pretty, for there was an expression of deep-seated sorrow remarkable in a girl of her age; my sympathies for her were awakened, and as she passed me by, the large blue eyes fell upon me; it seemed to me there was something imploring in that full gaze; but a feeling of delicacy made me turn away, and I made my exit by another door. In the street we three met again, she walking first, then came the little old man, several feet behind, with his eyes steadfastly fixed upon her, and I followed, for my way homeward happened to lie in that direction. They never spoke, for he never approached any nearer. On and on they went, and I

found that I was not the only one whose attention had been attracted by this singular pair, as others were watching them, making various comments as they went along. One thought she must have been some disobedient child, who had brought sorrow upon herself and her family, and now would return and be forgiven by the unhappy father who was watching her every movement. Another said, they were certain he was an old scoundrel who exercised an evil influence over the poor girl, because his wealth had an irresistible charm for her, and that she was now hesitating between two opinions; a third suggested that she had made her escape from him, and that he, having discovered her whereabouts, determined upon following her wherever she went.

But she had quickened her pace, and soon turned down a rather narrow, secluded looking street, and pausing in the centre of it, looked behind her for the first time; the little old man now came faster, and his lips moved; at last he said "Anna, wait!" but before he could reach her, she ascended a flight of steps, and rung the bell. He then went into the middle of the road, with much difficulty put his spectacles upon his nose, and stood looking up at the house, as though taking a general survey of the whole. Then the door was opened just enough for a skeleton to enter, the young girl turned and bowed mechanically to him, then entered, and the door was instantly closed upon her.

I passed on, leaving the little old man still gazing up at the house, every blind of which was closely shut, and gave it the appearance of being miserably gloomy to whatever inmates it might happen to contain.

Another week had passed, and another Sabbath brought me again to the same place of worship. During the week I had thought often of this singular pair, and the recollection of them was dying away; but just as the service was concluded, I beheld them again; the costume of the young girl was precisely as before, but her countenance was even more wretched; her companion's attire was more costly this time, and he still carried umbrella, handkerchief and glasses, and acted in every way exactly as before. He followed her, they never spoke, she bowed, and he remained looking up at the house after she had entered. For several successive Sundays, no matter how inclement the weather, they were sure to be there. He always looked the same, except some change in his dress which was always of rich material. But the clothing of the poor girl was always the same, no matter what the wind and weather might

be. I noticed she was becoming thinner, and every time seemed to have wept more profusely, until at last she always wore a veil, which concealed forever after the sad face from my view. Sometimes during the week, I passed by that strange house; the blinds were always as closely shut, except at one little window in the attic which was sometimes thrown open; and often did I long to know whether it would ever fall to my lot to understand the relationship of that unhappy girl, and the singular specimen of a man who followed her.

## CHAPTER II.

"Tis a very good world that we live in,  
To lend, or to spend, or to give in;  
But to borrow or beg, or get a man's own,  
'Tis the very worst world, sir, that ever was known."

In the Southern Provinces of Prussia, there is a beautiful valley, where, sloping down to the rippling waters of the Elbe, surrounded by all that is picturesque, stands the estate of La Belle; so called, probably, from the peculiar loveliness and rare beauty of the situation. It has been said to have been built about 1649, by a Briton, who probably sought its retirement while the fanaticism of a Cromwell was usurping what they considered was theirs by right of noble lineage. True or not, it is of Elizabethan architecture; in many parts the ivy climbs to the turrets, and at night-fall it often presented a gloomy and august appearance, especially as a moat formerly surrounded it, which must have been added only from a fancy of the builder, as it was erected in the prosperous reign of Frederick William the Great Elector. As far back as the genealogy of its heirs can be traced, it has descended in the male line of the Villiers family, until its occupants were Sir Charles Villiers, an austere and overbearing man of fifty-five, an amiable and devoted wife, and four children; among whom, played during their childhood, the daughter of the chaplain on the estate. When she was about fifteen, Charles, the eldest son and heir left home for the university at Edinburgh. "He will soon forget his Liddie," replied the satisfied father, upon being warned of his son's admiration for her. In due time Charles returned from the university; his father took very little notice of him, and being now of age, he thought best to

take his welfare into his own hands, and one evening, while Sir Charles was sitting over his wine, his son and heir entered to present the young and blushing Lydia as his wife.

To Sir Charles, this was unpardonable. Their family had always been connected with the most noble of Berlin, and now to be thus humbled by such an allegiance of his son and heir, was intolerable. Finding himself disinherited, young Charles engaged in a mercantile house having a branch in Philadelphia, and immediately departed with his bride to that city.

He was a man of talent, of the most persevering industry, and after a few years of toil, he stood among some of the wealthiest of his city; nor was it his wealth, or his integrity alone that distinguished him, it was that possession of a soul ever alive to the necessities of others, an ear ever open to the pleading of poverty, a hand ever ready to help the weak and the fallen. No wonder then that the rich sought the friendship of a polished and upright gentleman, while the poor idolized him as a benefactor. And Mrs. Villiers was a woman of a superior mind, indefatigable in every duty of a wife and a mother. Their children were three; Lydia, who was in her eighteenth year when I became acquainted with her and a Charles, a year younger; also a little fairy-like Carlotta just entering her thirteenth year.

A family never impressed me more favorably than this; the manner in which the children had been brought up, their unbounded affection for each other, their self-denial in behalf of the poor, and their general demeanor convinced me that their home was one where the true spirit of piety was inculcated.

One morning as I was about to say good-bye to my sweet Lydia, she said to me, with her usual smile, "Wait a moment, please, I've something for you."

It was autumn, and I expected a dish of fruit, a nosegay, a new caricature, or some such thing as was often presented to me. But Lydia returned with a card, saying, "Miss Morgan, ma has recommended you as an instructress to some young lady, here is the direction."

"Then you are not acquainted with her?"

"No, but Mr. Everett, that young minister at our church, who comes to give lessons to Charles, asked mother about a teacher for a young girl in the family where he lives."

I read the direction, 14 Claremont Place, and bidding Lydia adieu, proceeded thither.

I found it to be no other than the street in which stood that gloomy-looking house of that singular girl I had so often seen

at church. I passed 8, 10, 12, then came this remarkable abode. "Surely this cannot be the place," said I to myself, as I ascended the steps; the number was scarcely legible, yet it was evident that a 1 and a 4 had once embellished the heavy looking door.

I must confess that I felt no small degree of trepidation as I rung the bell, for although my curiosity was great in regard to that singular young girl and strange little old man, yet there had always been something in the appearance of that dwelling so awe striking that I was half determined to refuse to enter, when the door was opened, and as I gazed upon the face and figure before me, all previous thoughts vanished. He was a youth in whose frank, handsome countenance there was more than usual intelligence. With the air and address of a gentleman, he showed me into a dark parlor, quickly opened the blinds, placed a chair for me near the window, and taking my card, left the room.

"Can it be possible that a spirit so bright, and a being so beautiful could live in such an abode?" said I to myself; but here a figure entered, and approached me. It was the spare, meagre form, or rather the skeleton of an old woman; the small grey eyes were sunken; the nose long, and very sharp, and the long chin exceedingly pointed. Putting her head forward, exhibiting the length of a neck that connected it with a very tottering body, she looked upon me with a most searching scrutiny, taking no further notice of me as I rose to meet her; then having seated herself opposite me, the pointed chin lowered, the lips moved, and a shrill voice came forth,—"Good-morning, I am Mrs. Gilbert, you are come about Anna, I suppose; what are you going to charge?"

"But I know nothing of the pupil, madam," I replied, "whether she is a child or one more advanced."

"Oh, she is not at all advanced, for she knows very little; in fact she has been a great deal of trouble—I mean she has been a great deal of trouble—I mean she is not a very good girl—but of course you do not expect me to tell everything to a stranger like you. I'll send for her, and you can easily see what sort of a girl she is."

"But, Madam," I interposed, as she tottered to the door, "perhaps you had better give me a little further explanation respecting your daughter."

"Oh, she is not a daughter—exactly—that is—I mean—but no matter—what are you going to charge to teach her everything?—I want her taught everything in the world."

Here the door opened, and a female form stood before us. A feeling of awe crept over me. She was a short, stout, ill-shaped woman of about forty or forty-five, and thick-set and irregular were the large features upon that forbidding countenance. But there was one thing that relieved the repugnance as you gazed upon her, and that was the grotesque singularity of her dress. From the red, turban-like head-dress, to the yellow slippers, the costume was fantastically oriental, rendering her one of the most ludicrous objects I ever beheld; and I had just resolved to make no engagement with such people, when the old lady said—

"Well, daughter, this is Miss Morgan, come to teach that Anna."

"What is she going to charge," came forth in a rough, coarse voice from the forbidding-looking woman.

There was a loud ring at the bell.

The old lady started, manifesting great nervousness, and exclaimed, "Dear me! I wonder who it can be! Has that Judy gone to the door?"

Here they both left the room to peep at the visitor; but I was not long alone, for again the door opened, and an odd looking servant girl rushed in, threw down brooms and brushes, and stood a few minutes viewing me with a bewildered stare; then taking up one of the huge implements she had brought with her, she began a most merciless infliction upon the threadbare Brussels of long ago, enveloping me in the thick clouds that arose with every stroke of her weapon. Being of woman-kind I might have thought of my bonnet; but I had too great a dread of a blow in the face from the prodigious handle that she flourished in all directions; so in fear and trembling, I made my way to the door, and when assured that I had fully escaped from the room, I called to the girl and said, "I should like to see Miss Anna, if you please."

"Well, you've only to go to the top of those stairs there and knock at the door," was the unceremonious reply. I did as directed, but found the door open, and as my gaze fell into the room, I could not bring myself to knock at the door; so I stood, while the voice of one as though in trouble fell upon my ear.

The apartment was in neat order, but the furniture very scanty, and of a dark, heavy appearance. A small bedstead, an old-fashioned wardrobe, a bookcase, and a little upright piano, were all it contained, except that, over the fire-place there hung the portrait of a lady, apparently about eighteen or twenty, not only every feature of which, but the expression also was ex-

tremely beautiful. "Whoever she might be," thought I, "she must have been very lovely!"

But suddenly my eyes fell upon another object, it was the figure of a girl, kneeling upon a rug before this portrait. The head was bowed upon the clasped hands, and the attitude struck me as being that of prayer. I knocked softly; there was no response. I thought it best to wait. Presently she raised her head, the tears were falling fast over the pale cheeks. It was the same young girl I had seen in the church; as one riveted to the spot, I stood and gazed. The face was uplifted, and in an agonized voice came the words —

"Oh where art thou? What is it that separates thee from me, when I have none other to love me? Can it be that thou art in the world of spirits? If thou art there, then I can never come to thee, for thy abode is with the redeemed, thy spirit was pure and thy soul spotless; but I am left to deplore thee; sinful and wretched I must only sink day by day deeper into the miseries of my unhappy lot. My mother! my mother! where art thou? Dost thou still live?"

I hid myself behind the door, and knocked loudly. She started, and left the room by another door; but soon returning, she answered me in gentle tones, and bade me enter, saying she was Anna.

Her face was paler than usual, thee yes, I found, were blue and very full, her complexion exceedingly fair and delicate, and soft, silky locks of flaxen hair were combed back from the face, exhibiting a forehead of more than ordinary beauty and intelligence. She seemed very diffident, yet her simple manner pleased me, and there was a child-like innocence about her that made me feel most favorably impressed with her. I told her my business, and left her, determined to make any arrangement with the strange people below, in order to learn more respecting this Anna, in whom I felt so much interest.

On descending the stairs, I found the old lady, Mrs. Gilbert, scolding poor Judy the servant-maid, for allowing me to go up stairs. I stated my terms, Mrs. Gilbert stated hers; they were in the ratio of 5 to 17. However, I agreed to hers, and left the house.

Thus was it that I began my acquaintance with Anna Wentworth. My introductory remarks may cease here, and I can now commence the narrative.

### CHAPTER III.

"The gathering clouds, like meeting armies, came on apace."

It was evening; and as the shadows lengthened in the streets without, the greater was the gloom in the dark, old-fashioned parlor of Mrs. Gilbert. But this good woman did not feel it for she was sitting, looking into the fire, buried in far different thoughts. The door opened, and a woman swept into the room. The flickering flame in the grate threw but little light upon her, still the short, irregular step was too well known to the old lady, and she heaved a deep sigh. The intruder stood before her and in tones that conveyed much of ill temper, said, "I've come to say that if you conclude to take these children, don't expect any assistance from me, that's all."

"Susan, you never assist me in anything, you have been the very bane of my existence ever since you were born, and now, although you are turned forty, you tease and torment me as bad as ever."

But before the sentence was finished Susan had left, shutting the door with a force that shook the house to its foundation.

"I wonder whether I shall ever get her off my hands," continued Mrs. Gilbert to herself, "but any man would be a fool to tie himself down to her; however, men are strange beings, and if it be true that every Jack finds a Jill, there may be even now some hope for me."

But a carriage had stopped before the house, the tall, portly figure of a man ascended the steps, and entered the parlor.

"Madam," said he to Mrs. Gilbert, who stood bowing before him, I received your note, the children will be here to-morrow morning. Remember, I wish to be liberal in regard to their education. I may be absent many years, don't trouble me with letters except in case of death, and you understand I have agreed to pay double what you asked, for I wish them very respectably brought up. You will receive the payments quarterly in advance. Good-night." And in a few seconds he was gone.

The morning brought the children to Mrs. Gilbert's. The elder was a boy of eight years, a handsome, spirited child, who seemed inclined to exercise a great deal of control over his little sister Anna two years younger, a timid little creature, who

scarcely dared to lift her mild blue eyes to the angry face of Susan Gilbert. As soon as their trunks were brought in, the little Alfred was made to relinquish a bunch of keys, and Susan set herself to work to examine their contents; when, as she had emptied one, she left the things strewn upon the floor, and went to another, while the little girl busied herself in replacing them, saying timidly, "Mamma put them in so." At last Susan, in her haste, was pulling out a cord, when the boy exclaimed, "Oh, take care, that is our mother!" It was a portrait, and both the children put their little hands upon it, as though to guard it from the rough usage of their new acquaintance.

"And where is this mother of yours?" inquired Susan.

"We don't know," was the answer.

"Well, I expect she is not good for much, pretty women never are," and having satisfied herself that she had seen all, she left her mother to do the rest, and went to her room, to transfer collars, embroider pocket-handkerchiefs, make old head-dresses into new ones, etc. which always occupied the greater part of the day.

The years passed away; all who took notice of Alfred, must have observed that his development, both mentally and physically, was in his favor; for he was an intelligent and handsome youth, and generally beloved—except by Mrs. Gilbert and Susan, the former bearing no very unkind feeling perhaps, but the latter being of a firm opinion that boys were a general nuisance to society; and her dislike to Alfred was so intense, that her mother declared, had the boy not been kept at school, she must have shut herself up in one of the garrets, in order to end her life in peace.

For once in their lives, upon one subject Mrs. Gilbert and daughter agreed, and that was, that if Anna were sent to school, she would only lose that submissive spirit, which now bent entirely to their will, and acquire many "fashionable notions" which other girls possessed. Accordingly, Miss Susan undertook Anna's education, but soon declared the child an idiot, and returned to the baubles of her dressing room. Then the little girl remained a long time learning nothing but the uses and abuses of the odd set of cups and dishes in Mrs. Gilbert's kitchen; at last an instructor was engaged, but Susan soon thought they were paying too much, so he was dismissed, and another called. This was so often repeated, that young as Anna was, she often felt mortified when the poor, half-starved looking teachers, whom extreme poverty had driven to their door, were sent away,

with only half the money they had agreed to receive. Thus passed ten years, bringing such a train of motley professors, that Mrs. Gilbert became a notorious advertiser, and the name of the street was sufficient.

But at last I took the place of these; and I did not find Anna ignorant. I have never found a better historian in a girl of her age, for her studious habits had acquired for her what many a young lady with greater advantages might be proud to possess; and I so soon learned to love my pupil, that no caprice of Susan could repel me.

Not once had these children received so much as a message from their father, and kept ignorant of his direction, they were banished from all means of communication.

When Anna was about fifteen, the Rev. Herbert Everett came to take up his abode at Mrs. Gilbert's. He was probably twenty-seven or eight, tall, thin, and athletic, whose face, Alfred said, always wore a freezing rigidity, while, as you looked upon him, you seemed to behold one of those stern, impenetrable beings who live wholly within themselves. But in the pulpit he appeared a different man. The deep, rich tones of his fine voice, joined to the earnest expression of his pale countenance, made the words as they fell upon the ear, even more impressive; as you saw him there, he was none other than an active disciple of the Great Master, an eloquent preacher, an energetic man. But at home he seldom spoke, his face was always the exponent of the severest austerity; yet when addressed, his manner was soft, gentlemanly, and polished; still, all who knew him agreed that it was impossible "to make him out," except Susan; she of course could read the good man perfectly; he was one of those exceptions, so devoted to the profession of preaching to fallen sinners, that hitherto he had not allowed himself time to think of the fairer sex; not that it was to be understood that he never would, for probably he would one day take to himself one of the daughters of Eve, and who could tell but she might be that favored one. So whenever in his presence, she took care to be attired to most advantage. And although the good man never seemed to raise his eyes, she never suffered her hopes to languish. But Susan did not forget that Anna was a fair, gentle young creature, and very interesting, just such an one as might stand in her light; so Anna was sent to another church on the Sabbath, and kept aloof from him at all other times, that there might be no possibility of the young curate falling in love with her.

Many days passed and Anna never tasted the fresh air, for

she was not allowed to go out unaccompanied, except when attending church, then she was always alone, for Alfred of course, went with Mrs. Gilbert as formerly, that she might keep him in order, as he had the very irreverent habit of suffering his eyes to wander after pretty girls, instead of resting them upon the type of Mrs. Gilbert's prayer book, which he held between his finger and thumb.

Once Mr. Everett asked who these children were, and whether they bore any relationship to Mrs. G. and her daughter; but so strange and stammering was the reply from the queer old lady, and so evasive and indifferent from Susan, that he concluded there was something secret and mysterious in the matter, and said no more upon the subject.

But there was generally one other human being beneath this roof, whom I forgot to mention, and this was a female holding the position of servant girl, who officiated as cook, laundress, chambermaid, and dressing-maid to Miss Susan. But such an individual was always a monthly visitant, as none ever yet would weather the storm of Susan's temper a longer period. To avoid a confusion of names, the appellation of "Judy" was always bestowed upon every one of these; and it fell to the lot of poor Anna to teach these new-comers; no very easy task, and much as she was engaged, it was a wonder to me when she found time for books, for at night, when she had finished the household work which was given her to perform, only one little wick of candle was allowed her as she went to her room.

As may be supposed, Mrs. Gilbert paid very low wages to her maid-of-all-work, and it is no wonder that every Judy was some poor miserable creature whom no one else would employ, and only too often one who presented a most grotesque appearance. And as Alfred was in the habit of playing tricks upon them, the fire was often put out, a dish was sometimes broken, or by his advice she would lay out all the money given her, by purchasing many newspapers at once, to save herself the trouble of going for it every morning, when Susan sent her for the "Daily Times" for Mr. Everett which she generally did, believing that such little acts of attention would attract his notice. But these caprices of Alfred made him the avowed enemy of Susan; and Mrs. Gilbert scolded for the rest of the week; Anna, knowing he would have less rice for his dinner, and less bread for his tea on this account, often mourned over it, as she knew he had not sufficient food for a growing boy, and when her morning lessons with me were over, and she returned to duties in the kitchen, many a silent tear for him would drop into Mrs. Gilbert's cups and platters.

It was Lent; and as there was to be a confirmation at Easter, it fell to Mr. Everett to instruct a class of young candidates every week at the parsonage, as the Doctor was so infirm that he could attend to few duties of his parish; and the young minister one morning tapped at Mrs. Gilbert's door, and spoke of Anna's joining this class of young ladies. It may be, he was thinking only of her soul's welfare, or possibly he thought that to go out among girls of her own age, might be a change for the poor little recluse. However, Mrs. Gilbert agreed that it would be a very good thing for Anna to be a Christian, and Susan thought it quite expedient to please the good man in everything. So running to Anna's room, where the timid girl had flown to avoid her anger for a few moments, and seating her heavy self upon the little bed, she began in her usual abrupt way —

"Anna, I've come to know whether you attend to your devotions morning and evening, as a Christian ought to do."

"Yes, Susan; my mother taught us, and I never neglect it; but you know you often, very often, interrupt me."

"Don't talk so to me, but listen. Mr. Everett has been speaking to us about your beginning a new life; I am sure he must think very ill of you Anna, and no wonder, for you do give me a great deal of trouble."

"What! Mr. Everett been talking of me? But why does he think ill of me? What have I done?"

"Don't be impertinent, but attend to me. Mr. Everett takes a delight in bringing sinners like you out of darkness into light. I've no doubt he has heard me scold you, and knows how much anxiety you give me, for of course, no respectable woman like myself would want to live under the same roof with a girl who bore a bad character like you. So begin at once and repent, that by the time the Bishop comes, you will be without sin. Begin to-day; this very hour, and say all the prayers you know; as to that Alfred, he's past all reclaim, was long ago, and so would you have been, only you have been more in the house with me, with my influence over you. Now mind what I say, and if you feel your sins are forgiven by three o'clock, go and join the good, Christian girls at the parsonage; and she went down stairs, leaving Anna in a maze of bewilderment.

Soon after, on descending the stairs, she was met by the young minister, who told her it was time to go, and that he would wait for her, and take her with him.

Susan did not approve of this procedure in the least, but now

there was no alternative, and as she saw them descend the steps together, she said half aloud, "And so it has come to this after all I have done to prevent it. I wonder whether he likes her! But Anna, if you do get that man from me, you shall suffer for it. You may marry him, but I will follow, and be a constant torture to you; you shall not take advantage of me like this, while I tamely look on. But I will have my revenge. Wait a while!"

Although Anna knew no one in that little assembly except Mr. Everett, still it seemed as though a new life had opened to her, and its happy influence rested upon her during the rest of the week; besides, she and Mr. Everett sometimes had a pleasant chat as they walked home, although this was but seldom, as he generally appeared very sad, and spoke very little, while only his firm, regular steps, and an occasional sigh as it escaped him, told her he was by her side.

At last Lydia, who was always to be found among that little group, observed that Anna was alone, and after that, always took her seat beside her, and by many little attentions, sought to rid her of the embarrassment that so much distressed her; and no one could resist Lydia's charms. Her happy face, her cheerful, winning manner had impressed the lonely girl with a new idea of life, which she had hitherto believed a dreary monotony, except to a heedless, mischievous boy like Alfred, and often in her wanderings about the house, an angelic image stood before her, and as she gazed upon its loveliness, she found it to be Lydia.

But Easter was over, and the gatherings at the parsonage were also at an end; and when she first realized that she should meet Lydia no more, she sat down and wept. The harsh voice of Susan fell upon her ear,— "Anna, what can you be about? Come directly and dress my hair."

And now Anna seldom saw or heard of Mr. Everett. He was out a great deal and when at home, would take his meals in his own room.

## CHAPTER IV.

"Qui rit d'autrui, doit craindre pu'eu revauche ou rie ausst de lui."

MOLIERE.

"ANNA, there's that hideous old Pyke in the parlor, waiting to see you."

"Alfred, I really do wish you would call people by their proper names."

"Well then, that disagreeable, that detestable old maid, or if it suits you better, Miss Sarah Christiana Pyke wishes to see Miss Anna."

"Oh dear! I'm very busy, and she always takes up so much of my time."

"Ah, but you will be highly gratified in humoring her this morning, for she is going to take you to see a most excellent drawing; I told her you were fond of the arts, and she has made Susan promise to let you go, so get ready. Let me help you, here's your shawl."

"Now, Alfred, you look mischievous, and you are only teasing. Miss Pyke is not down stairs."

"Only listen; was there ever another voice like it?"

"I never heard before she had a taste for the fine arts," said Anna, as she descended the stairs. The parlor door was open, and she could distinguish Miss Pyke's voice saying "I dare say, my dear Susan, that Anna is a great trouble to you, as well as Alfred; girls always are; their heads are always running upon beaux and the like; I know it is so, although, like you, Susan, I never was a flirt."

Anna entered. "Oh, my dear Anna, I cannot tell you how rejoiced I am to see you. What a dear girl she grows, Susan, I'm sure she must be a great comfort to you. And your handsome brother, Anna, what a charming fellow; I know he must be a delight to every one in the house. They're quite a blessing to you, Susan." Here she heaved a sigh, and her voice fell into the minor key; then rising, she continued—"Ah me! When I think of all I have endured, and must yet struggle through, my heart misgives me. But, come Anna."

They left the house, and proceeded through many streets before either spoke, when Anna, to break the silence, inquired if the artist's was far.

"Anna, don't talk to me, I've a great deal to go through." They had now reached their destination, and ascended the winding stairs of a large house, containing many branches of business.

"Anna, I am to have an interview with Mr. Hume, and he may say something to make me faint; if so, administer some of this vial to revive me."

Anna took the vial, wondering what was going to happen, when Miss Pyke pushed open a door and they entered a room where sat a gentleman in his dressing-gown, reading. He rose to meet Miss Pyke. She did not speak, but sat down upon the first seat, with a sigh. Anna looked round the room for some indication of the art Alfred had spoken of; but saw only an old picture of Rip Van Winkle. Allowing her to sit awhile, to recover her breath, the gentleman went up to Miss Pyke saying, "Now madam, if you please." The lips only parted in answer; whereupon he took her hand, and amid her many entreaties, led or rather carried her from the room, although she continued to declare "I cannot survive it, sir! do not! do not!" Anna followed; but Mr. Hume closed the door after them, and terrified beyond measure, she stood listening to the cries of Miss Pyke, until they became subdued into a low moan. For an hour and more, Anna remained there — all was silent; the windows looked into an obscure yard, and weary at looking down into it she was turning away, when she was startled by shrieks and cries she knew to be Miss Pyke's. She immediately ran to the door; it opened into a passage, at the end of which was a small room, but it was empty; the screams became louder, and following the sound she crossed the room, opened another door, and found herself opposite a chair in which Miss Pyke sat or rather was held, while Mr. Hume and an assistant were extracting with great difficulty the teeth of the upper jaw. This over, the lady sunk into a fit of hysterics, and Anna in her fright forgot the restorative vial; but bad as she was, Miss Pyke did not, nor did the smiles and tears of hysteria, prevent her taking a very good draught of the port wine; after which she declared herself sufficiently strong to return home. Anna, annoyed at having lost her time, and vexed with Alfred for trifling with her, bade her friend good-by as they reached the street, after wasting all the morning with her, and left her to walk home at the pace of a furlong an hour.

It was Saturday — a day Anna always anticipated much of Alfred's society. No wonder she looked forward to it with de-

light — as she had no other being on earth to love, — or that she listened attentively for the elastic step that brought before her all she could demand in the wide world to love her, or at least to pity her; and when, partly from unkindness from Susan, and partly from her ill health, she sought some bosom whereon to rest the aching head, and pour forth the fullness of the emotion within, although she felt Alfred could not understand the sympathy she needed, still, while he chided her harshly for being foolish and weak, there was a degree of compassion none other would bestow, which made her cling still closer, and indifferent and given to ridicule as he was, caused her to look up to him, until it amounted almost to adoration.

Anna had just returned, when she was summoned to Susan's room. Fearing she had left something undone there the day before, she went immediately, expecting to receive an outburst of anger, for which she endeavored to prepare herself.

To her unutterable astonishment, Susan was sitting up in her bed, assuming the most languishing expression, while the night-cap, of a most singular device, all askew, added somewhat to her ludicrous appearance.

A thousand things were to be done in the time of one, and each command was followed by the valedictory "Don't forget to let Mr. Everett know I am ill."

Susan now occupied herself with her epicurean taste, and no sooner had Anna one little nicety prepared and carried to her room, than she changed her mind, and ordered something else; for which Anna was not sorry at first, thinking the refused little luxury would be a rarity for Alfred; but Mrs. Gilbert insinuated that it might do for a rainy day, and it was carefully locked in the larder.

Having kept her bed three days, Susan still declared she was ill, and determined to confine herself to her room. As it happened, the maid was just new, so that the drudgery of waiting upon Susan, together with much of the household work, fell upon Anna.

"Salt is very good for boys;" said Mrs. Gilbert, one afternoon, as she continued to sprinkle some on the rice from which Anna had dined; "and what he doesn't eat, will do for Judy."

During the warm weather, Alfred had been growing much thinner, and it was with anxiety and the deepest regret, that Anna saw him constantly turning away from the food placed before him. And now she stood looking at the rice, as the clock struck four, and Alfred had not tasted food since their scanty breakfast at eight. Mrs. Gilbert left the room, and the

well known footstep brought the looked-for face beaming with animation, as, throwing his arms round her, he exclaimed "Well sister mine, I should think you could afford to look a little more cheerful, now one bore is safe in her bed."

He seated himself at the table, and Anna observed he was pale and exhausted. "We had a pretty tough lesson in 'Cæsar' to-day," continued he, "but it is over now, and we're going to have our base ball this afternoon; I shall not be home to tea. What's this? rice again? and did you have to dine upon it, too? Why didn't you throw it at her head?"

"I'm so sorry I can get you nothing else; but she has not given us any pocket-money for an age; I suppose you haven't any?"

"No; I gave the last penny to a beggar just now, and here I want it worse myself. No!" pushing the plate from him, "I'll not take any thing she chooses to set me, I'd rather starve any day. Here's something eatable in this larder, and perhaps it's not locked; but no! I'd die before I would stoop to steal it as a thief. And Anna, if you were not such a simpleton, you would side with me, and perhaps we could together get our rights."

She watched him as he rushed from the house; she knew how faint he must be, and that such treatment would eventually impair the constitution which might be obliged to bear many hardships in the course of his lifetime. There was much truth in his last words, and as they haunted her, they upbraided also, when she thought of the many times she had entreated Alfred to be silent, lest the threats of turning him out of doors should be carried out; whereas perhaps, had she shown a like spirit, the necessities from Mrs. Gilbert might have been won, and the rage of the domineering Susan, quelled. She resolved now to summon more courage, and endeavor to show a spirit of defiance, as a trial, to see what the effect would be. But the harsh word and angry look would not come, even for a rehearsal, and she felt she must give it up as a hopeless case.

In spite of her physician's opinion that very little ailed her, and that she should leave her bed, Susan still declared herself too indisposed to bear Alfred's noise if she arose; and Anna now began to despair of ever again having an hour's rest, or leisure for her long neglected books.

"Anna, come here. Have you told Mr. Everett how miserable I have been?"

"Yes — I said you were ill."

"What did he say?"

"I believe he said 'Indeed!'"

"Nonsense, you have forgotten. I'm sure he said he was sorry, for he could not be so indifferent when any one was suffering. Is he in now?"

"I think so."

"Well, go and knock at his door, and say 'Please, Mr. Everett, Susan says,' — no, say 'Miss Susan feels very ill, sir, and would like you to read to her.'"

Very reluctantly did Anna approach the door of Mr. Everett's study, and stood some minutes before concluding to give Susan's message. A deep and slow "come in," answered her tapping.

The young minister was writing at a table covered with books and pamphlets, and as he looked up at Anna, who never before had had occasion to knock, much less to enter while the stern, cold presence was therein, it was with the greatest difficulty she delivered Susan's words.

His pen fell from his hand, while he looked at her in profound astonishment. The icy expression bound her to the spot, when she would fain have made a retreat; and, as if fearing he was mistaken, the good man demanded a repetition of the message.

A scream, as though from some one in pain, now fell upon Anna's ear, and running into the yard, she discovered a little boy hanging half way over the wall, with one foot caught in the bricks from which he was suspended. Having rescued him, she found him unable to walk, and assisted him to his home, next door. "A thousand thanks," said the mother, as she received the terrified child, who, it seemed, had lost a ball over the wall, and had attempted to recover it. Upon being led into the parlor to rest, Anna found three young ladies, busily occupied in needlework. Two of them she recognized as the Misses Danvers, sisters of the little boy. The eldest was a tall, fine figure, but very dark and inanimate looking, while the second was small and exceedingly pretty. The other young lady, Anna did not remember having seen before; but a glance impressed her that she was very interesting, although she bore every appearance of an invalid; the large, full eyes looked very expressive as she inquired after the little Willie, while the others seemed too much engrossed with their embroidery to think a great deal of him.

"How singular it is," remarked the younger sister, "that we should have lived next door to each other so long, without having spoken. But you must often come now," added she, as she accompanied Anna to the door, promising to call and tell her how the child was.

Susan had exhausted all her patience in waiting for Mr. Everett, although she had repeatedly comforted herself with the words, "he is taking a great deal of time and trouble to select a suitable book, the dear good man;" and to Anna's great relief, she found her sleeping very soundly.

Mrs. Gilbert liked to be a busy woman in church matters, among which there was a society for the poor of the parish. A person was wanted to visit the applicants for charity, to read to them, and become acquainted with their cases. On hearing the recompense was good, Mrs. Gilbert undertook the work, and of course, the whole, or greater part, fell upon Anna. The charge was no disadvantage however, as it took her from the monotony of the house in which she was accustomed to pass many days without breathing the fresh air; and she learned much of the wants and trials of the suffering poor, which raised her mind above the petty annoyances of home, and taught her to have a sympathy with all conditions of men.

It was one of those trying days when Mrs. Gilbert was cross with Susan, and Susan with every one, that there came, to the relief of all, a ring of the bell.

"There, go on with that work, Anna," said Susan, "no one ever comes to see you."

After a considerable time spent at her toilet, Susan thought herself "fit to be seen," and descending very gracefully to the parlor, found the pretty little Miss Danvers, who immediately asked to see Anna, gave the name of Kate, and undaunted by Susan's rude staring, again seated herself upon a sofa.

"Oh, how d'ye do, Miss Wentworth, I thought I would call and tell you Willie is quite well; why haven't you been to see us? Josephine was saying she could not imagine what could occupy all your time every day."

"Josephine?"

"Yes, that great, tall, overgrown girl, with a very dark skin, is my sister Josephine. And that young lady you saw is Minerva Simmons, you know."

"Very likely, but I soon forget names, when I've heard them but once."

"Then you don't know Minerva?"

"I never saw her before."

"Oh, she's such a sweet girl, but so unfortunate and very unhappy; but I suppose you've heard about her, haven't you?"

"No! nothing."

"Well, her father is dead, and her mother is not a very good

woman, I believe, she very seldom sees her; she has been with us some months now, we all love her so much, she is such a dear girl."

"She looks an invalid?"

"Yes, she never can do as the rest of us; but if her mind were at ease, I think her health would be good enough."

"Poor thing! I am very sorry; she seems very amiable."

"Oh, she is a perfect dear; if I have any troublesome work to do, I've only to make a fuss about it, and Minnie will instantly relieve me. Then she has a nice little fortune and is very charitable; but she will not enjoy herself, that is the worst of her; she spends most of her time in doing for other people, and there I can never agree with her. Of course, I think we should be as good as we can, but then I like to go out a great deal, and besides, you know how much time is taken up in paying visits, arranging dresses, and so on; although ma is very strict, and so severe; and yet I expect she was as bad when she was a girl. You would think Josephine a quiet sort of creature, wouldn't you? Well, she's a much worse flirt than I am. But do tell me, what kind of beings you have in this house; we've often wondered about you. Is that handsome young fellow really your brother? What sort of a body is this queer looking old lady? and then that horrid Susan of hers! But by-the-by, you know that detestable Pyke; how can you tolerate such a set? Do you know Mr. Barrow?" and for a wonder, she waited for an answer.

"No. I never heard of such a person."

"Then I only hope you never may; but every one knows him, and if you should see him once, you never could forget the gentleman. But I am going to a party to-night, and must go now, and see how Minnie is getting on with my wreath. Yes, your brother is very handsome, you must be quite proud of him, but good-by. I'm very sorry for you, because you must be so lonely; come and see us very often;" and away flitted the pretty little creature out of the room and down the steps, leaving Anna to look after her and exclaim, "What a light-hearted girl!"

"Anna, I hope that Kate will not give you wrong notions. Is she a simple, innocent-like kind of girl?" inquired the old lady, as she met her in the hall, after Miss Danvers had gone.

"I don't know ma'am, I think its rather difficult to tell upon so short an acquaintance"

"Well, if she isn't she'd better not come here, that's all. Now make haste with that sewing, and perhaps I may let you

go out for me. Is that all you've done? there, fold it up now, and put on your things. One of the members has neglected her quarterly subscription; go and get it. I've lost her card, but this is her address, and as I forget her name, you must ask for the sister-in-law of the late Doctor Quinn, who died of the dropsy, resulting from the poorness of his blood, when the Saint Vitus dance had left him. Make haste back, I shall be waiting for you at four o'clock, and it's past three, now."

Anna found the house; it was a small, compact looking dwelling, an elderly woman opened the door, and she was glad to find she was understood without giving Mrs. Gilbert's long preamble.

"You mean Mrs. Barrow, my dear, but she never gets up as early as this; still, if you walk in, she will be down before long."

Anna was shown into an old-fashioned apartment, where everything presented an antique appearance. Near her hung the portrait of a benevolent-looking lady, and Anna, who always felt a degree of dread at meeting new faces, hoped this represented the Mrs. Barrow. But after waiting a long time, recounting how much practicing, drawing or reading, she could have done in the time, a peculiar personage entered the room. She was a very old lady, and wore a long, black gown, that reached to the throat, concealing all but the face, whose wrinkled features and ghostly paleness, struck with a death-like awe as you beheld her. From underneath the black robe, she extended a withered hand, which Anna took shrinkingly, while the sunken eyes peered at her through the large, heavy spectacles. Anna was about to withdraw her hand, but the long fingers clasped it too tightly, and to Anna's great dismay she put the other thin, little arm round her, and seated herself by her side on a sofa. Eager to be free, Anna briefly told her business, to which there was no reply; but the little figure in black still grasped her tightly, eyeing her attentively, while Anna wondered at there existing another such strange being as the three singular women with whom she had the misfortune to be already acquainted. Having answered a few questions as to who she was, Anna endeavored to rise, fearing, from the old lady's strange manner, that her mind was wandering.

"Stop a minute, love; how do you like this house?"

"Very much, ma'am."

"Have you ever been all over it?"

"I have never been here before."

"Then how can you like it very much? but just come with me up stairs, and then I'll show you something."

"Some other time, I thank you, ma'am; I must go now."

"Have you heard the sad news of Cesarine?" still holding her tightly.

"I know no such person, ma'am; please let me go"

"Should you like to see her? but then you would cry to hear her sad fate. Here the black figure led, or rather pushed her into a room at the end of the passage.

It was a small, square apartment, but barely furnished; in the centre was covered with a pall what appeared to be a coffin; this the old lady approached, and embracing it, exclaimed, "Oh Cesarine, she was so good!" and began to lift the black velvet pall. Anna, fearing to see the corpse of a stranger, entreated again in terror, "Please let me go, indeed, I don't wish to see her."

"My dear, it's only Cesarine; have you never heard the interesting story of my son, and his lost Cesarine?"

"Please don't uncover it; oh, do please open this door."

"Hush! Death is here; be very still; oh Cesie, why did you die and leave us, oh come back to us for one single day, darling; we can never, no, never have her buried, she must always remain here. Oh dearest pet; my poor son grieves so much for you, and you know nothing of it!" Here she burst into a violent fit of weeping, and Anna's compassion was already roused, as she beheld the tears fast falling from those furrowed cheeks. Putting her hand upon the bony shoulder, she exclaimed, "I am very sorry, ma'am, you must miss her very much; has she been dead long?"

"Just a week. Oh, yes, I do miss her; and she died on her twentieth birthday. I grieve mostly on account of my son, he loved her so much; but now she is gone. Having recovered the sobbing which seemed to convulse her, the poor old lady continued. "Do come and see how calm she looks; you would have loved her if you had only known her, and she would have done anything for you. Do, young lady, come and look at my lost Cesarine." She now removed the pall, and no sooner had she lifted the coffin lid, than Anna nearly shrieked with astonishment. There lay in the coffin, upon its back, with its fore feet folded across its breast, the body of a huge Newfoundland dog. At the sight of it, the mourner renewed her weeping, while Anna endeavored to succeed in unfastening the door. After carefully covering the pet, the old lady dried her eyes and exclaimed, "here, this way," and opening a door she took Anna by the shoulders, and pushing her into a room, said, "This is the dining-room, where I have eaten many a good din-

ner with my son." She then opened another door, where was a large closet containing all manner of petrified animals and skeletons. She now sent, or rather drove the terrified Anna up stairs into a bed-chamber, saying, "This is my room, and come this way, now you see my son's room. I'm sorry you cannot see him; you would like him if you knew him well, and he would like you; however, I can show you his likeness." She turned to a drawer, and Anna, once finding herself free, was half-way down the stairs before the sentence was finished. Just as she was opening the house-door, she recollected she had received no answer in regard to her errand, which she well knew it would not do to neglect. Turning, she saw the figure in black at the top of the stairs, and for the first time she seemed aware that this was Mrs. Barrow. "What are you waiting for child?"

"I had forgotten to ask you again about the subscription."

"I gave you a check for a large sum."

"Oh no, ma'am, I've seen nothing of the kind!"

"I know if I should search you I should find it."

"Oh pray don't say so! see, my pocket is empty!"

"Wait and I'll soon find it;" and much as Anna dreaded a second grasping, still she was forced to submit. "Look up your sleeve, my dear;" and there was the very check. "Oh, madam, you put it there."

"Of course, child; no one else could;" and she closed the door.

It was late, and Anna walked rapidly homeward, and although this appeared no great event at the time, she had good reason to remember it afterwards.

## CHAPTER V.

*"L'esperance tient lieu des biens qu'elle promet."*

LA CHAUSSÉE.

"WHAT do you think of our making a tour to Europe next year, Lydia?"

"Why, Pa, I should be delighted! but are you really in earnest? I know you think of taking us sometime; have you indeed serious thoughts of going so soon?"

"Even serious thoughts of it, my Lydia. So you see it is not very unlikely you may all have some occasion to use the

languages you have acquired, thanks to me and your good mother."

"But do tell me how early in the year?"

"I think of starting towards the end of the spring."

"How long to be away?"

"Probably about three years."

"And Prussia will not be forgotten on the catalogue?"

"I've great expectations of our visit to La Belle. There you will see the home of my childhood. You will never be wearied at hearing the legends of that dear old chateau. Every river, every fountain and gurgling brook, has a charm, as there is scarcely a pebble but afforded delight as I gambolled among them, with the companions of my boyhood. And there, Lyddie, not far in the distance, is the ivy-grown vicarage, your mother's early home; then, in the grove lying between this and the chateau, is the moss-covered stone, on which I sat when I pledged myself true and faithful to her for life. Ah! with what joy I led my beloved Lydia through that grove to introduce my beautiful wife at the chateau. I thought her more lovely in the wreath of orange blossoms my fingers had twined, than any artificials worn at the court; and it seemed to me the pride and joy I delighted in, would be shared by all at home. But I bore a weeping bride back to the vicarage, and thought myself of all men the most miserable, because my rash importunity had caused her so many tears; however, that is over. The grounds of La Belle are very beautiful, I doubt if any more exquisite can be found in all Europe. And Lydia, you will see something of the court of Berlin, but remember you are not to fall in love with any Prussian count; I cannot give up Lydia yet; I want my darling for myself a little longer, after that I will not be so selfish."

"Oh, now we shall be interrupted. Here are two gentlemen to see you."

"I'm sure I never have any dealings with either, they must come to see you, Lydia."

"But who are they? Oh, I see Mr. Everett, but I don't know the other."

"And yet he is the handsomer of the two by far, and quite a youth."

"Now we shall see who the individual is."

A ring at the bell, and the guests entered.

"Miss Villiers, allow me to introduce a young friend, Mr. Alfred Wentworth. He has been assisting me in setting some of the books of the society to rights; but there was some mis-

take, that a word from Mrs. Villiers will put right. Can I see her a moment?" continued the grave voice of Mr. Everett.

Mrs. Villiers appeared, and the business was settled.

"We are going to dinner, gentlemen, will you remain?" said Mr. Villiers.

"I shall not refuse," was the thoughtful reply of Mr. Everett, "as my companion has already lost his, through accompanying me."

Mr. Everett's exercise in the open air that day, had given his whole countenance a glow, seldom found there. He was a most perfect gentleman to the letter, and when called forth, could display much colloquial power, with a ready flow of wit, for which, very few, from looking at that sombre face, could have given him credit.

Dinner over, they repaired to the parlors. Mr. and Mrs. Villiers and the minister found plenty to talk over, in matters relative to the church. And those at the other end of the room were not wanting in like resources, although they did not happen to be of so grave a subject.

"Let us go to the music room," said Charles, "there I can laugh as I please, the serious face of your good friend over there, fetters me."

"How is it I've not known you before, Alfred?" continued Charles, "you've been at that church, you say, ever since we have had this Mr. Everett, but then you sit so far away from our pew."

"And we are so much out of town," replied Lydia.

"No matter, my dear fellow," concluded Charles, "here you are at last. Do you play at all, or perhaps you don't care for music?"

"Sometimes I practise a duet, to please my sister, otherwise I do nothing in that line."

"Oh, you have a sister? inquired Lottie."

"Yes, Anna. She plays and sings quite well, and has endeavored most assiduously to transfer a little of it to me, and although I should try the patience of a saint, she has not yet, I believe, given me up as a perfectly hopeless case."

"I wonder whether I have seen her, the name is not familiar to me," said Lydia.

"I expect very few know she exists," continued Alfred, "she leads quite a secluded life, and is one of those who pass unnoticed. Poor Anna has no companions, and as she is much more sensible than I am, I fear such a careless, indifferent fellow is very little comfort to her."

"But why is she so secluded?" interrupted Lottie, "does she prefer it, and is she perfectly happy?"

Alfred hesitated as if unprepared with an answer, then said, "It would be difficult to tell;" and seemed to become very thoughtful.

The brother and sisters made no further inquiries. Alfred's manner in speaking of his sister was so half-earnest, half-indifferent, that it was not easy to discover, whether he really sympathized with her or not.

It seemed an evening of infinite delight to Alfred. The humorous Charles, the beautiful and affable Lydia, and the interesting and pretty Carlotta, appeared more like the characters in some of the old books Miss Pyke lent Susan, rather than real life.

They were engrossed in looking and talking over some curiosities which Charles had brought, when the three personages from the parlor entered. Mr. Everett opened the piano, and Lydia played some selections from "La Favorite," after which some poems were brought, and the clergyman requested to read. Mr. Everett read well, and choosing some of the epic poems from the favorite poets, the cadence of his rich, full voice appeared to great advantage. But Alfred admired most of all a trio that was sung, and returned home highly delighted with the visit, to enrapture the lonely Anna with the accounts of all that had so deeply interested him; and again after retiring to rest, Alfred saw before him the lovely Carlotta, and vividly as before shone the little figure, the clear blue eyes, the pure brow, from which the golden tresses were thrown over the round little shoulders, while the sweet expression of the face fascinated to intoxication the fancy of the dreamer. But morning light brought sound reality, and although Carlotta was not forgotten, the good sense of the well informed Charles had also made a lasting impression; and to apply himself still more diligently to acquiring useful knowledge, was now a firm resolution of Alfred.

"That is a fine fellow," said Charles, as the door closed upon the guests.

"I like him, too," rejoined Carlotta.

"You have not asked me yet if you might."

"I am sorry for his sister," said Lydia.

The bell rang for prayers. And that night, as the evening devotions were offered, there arose from the sympathizing bosom of Lydia, a petition, that the life of the lonely Anna might not always be one of unbefriended solitude.

## CHAPTER VI.

"Why so pale and wan, fond lover?  
 Pr'ythee why so pale?  
 Will, when looking well can't move her,  
 Looking ill prevail?  
 Pr'ythee why so pale?  
 Quit, quit, for shame! this will not move,  
 This cannot take her;  
 If of herself she will not love,  
 Nothing can make her."  
 "Be wise with speed;  
 A fool at forty is a fool indeed."

MRS. BARROW, strange as she appeared, was perfectly sane, or rather she was as she always had been, notwithstanding every one who had become acquainted with her of late years, concluded the little old lady was in her dotage. The son of whom she spoke, Robert Barrow Esq., was well known at the Merchants' Exchange as a man of wealth, though nevertheless, one of the most queer and quaint old bachelors, ever discovered in the annals of time. As to his being the son of Mrs. Barrow, there could be no possible doubt, as he partook of the peculiarly awkward and bony form, as well as the droll manner that characterized her. In fact, except that his eyes were not of the same hue, one being a considerable degree lighter than its companion, the little oddity was an exact image of his mother. A singular couple as they were, they were very benevolent; no one in need ever passed their notice unrelieved, although the benefit was generally bestowed in the most extraordinary way; and while they were often the subject of ridicule, their numerous instances of charity seemed to demand respect.

After Anna had departed, Mrs. Barrow sat beside a cheerful fire (as was her custom even in the middle of summer,) endeavoring to come to some conclusion as to what sort of girl Anna really was; her son's riches, the pleasure of having children to inherit his property, and the like, was the channel in which her thoughts now ran. The shadows without began to lengthen; a domestic brought in the tea, and having seen that nothing was wanting, Mrs. Barrow again sunk into her easy chair. She was too far gone in the land of nod to hear a ring at the bell. Lights were brought in; the little figure of a very little man entered.

"Good evening, mother," said a low whining voice.

"My son, good evening, Robert."

He seated himself at the other side of the fire-place, and from the heavy breathings, both were soon asleep. The same domestic entered again, wheeled the two chairs and their contents to the table, replaced the peruke that had fallen from the head of the little gentleman in his slumbers, and giving each individual a tolerably good shake, poured out their tea, and placed it before them. Having awakened, the little voice of Mr. Robert, which was now raised to such a high key that it approached a squeak, gave forth "exeunt," and the domestic vanished. Wheeling his chair to the side of his mother, he took a spoon, and by degrees poured the contents of her teacup down the throat of the good old lady, after which she caressed him very fondly, and at last said, "A very nice sort of girl was here to-day."

"Who was she?"

"I forget the name she said; oh, but she must be the daughter of Mrs. Gilbert, — yes, that is it, my dear, my son Robert."

"A nice sort of girl, you say, mother?"

"I know you would like her; she will just suit you."

"Then she is not at all like Kate Danvers?"

"Quite a different stamp."

"Then you do not think she would laugh at me?"

"I showed her the house; she said she liked it very much."

"But perhaps she would only be a great trouble to me, like that Kate, for nothing."

"Don't despair so soon; and never mind the trouble if you gain her in the end."

"I wonder what kind of family she belongs to, and whether they would make game of me or not!"

"My dear, my son Robert, you are too particular. Remember you are in your sixty-third year, and if you still persist in following your fastidious taste, you will die without having any children to take your property, and what would become of it?"

"But if no one will have me, what can I do?"

"That is your fault, my dear, my son Robert; because you don't go the right way to work. I will tell you. Go this evening to Mrs. Gilbert's, and say you have come to inquire whether the young lady reached home in safety; give my love to her, and do not be afraid to speak to her, but appear as familiar as though you had known her all your life; tell her friends at once what your fortune is, for recollect you have no time to lose, in case you might die, and have nobody to leave anything to."

Mr. Robert Barrow ascended the stairs to his room, where he spent a considerable time making his toilet, and after giving

several very singular twists and turns before his mirror, he took one last glance, and exclaiming, "No one would think I wore a wig," descended to the tea-room below.

"My dear, my son Robert, when you give your name, be sure to say *Mr. Robert Barrow, Esq.*"

"Oh dear! I shall not be able to go, here are the spasms coming on, I can feel them now."

"My son, have you had the cramps to-day, my dear?" — Oh Catharine! make haste, run for the peppermint and ginger-tea! — Oh, my dear, my poor son Robert, don't cough, or sneeze, or do anything, but go to bed, in case you should get worse."

The poor little man was assisted to bed, and he consoled himself by saying, "I will go to her the first evening I am able."

Tea was just over at Mrs. Gilbert's. Mr. Everett had retired to his room, and Alfred was sitting in the dining-room with several books before him, while Anna was preparing some work that she might bring it down, and sit with him. When Alfred was summoned to answer a ring at the door. On opening it, there stood a little meagre figure, bearing a huge umbrella, who gave his name as *Mr. Robert Barrow, Esq.*

As their visitors were few, those who came were somewhat of a curiosity, and Alfred eyed the individual with a degree of astonishment as he bade him enter, and be seated. The little gentleman then began to utter some words, out of which Alfred could understand "*Mrs. Gilbert,*" and he went immediately for her; and again seated himself at his books, though instead of the figures of rhetoric, that of the strange being in the parlor often came before him, and throwing himself back in his chair he would often enjoy a hearty laugh at the visitor's expense.

Mrs. Gilbert made her appearance; and the visitor made his most reverential bow. Her spectacles were put on, and she seated herself opposite him.

"Mrs. Gilbert; do I understand aright, ma'am?"

"I'm sure I don't know what you understand, sir."

"Madam — a daughter — I believe — at least — I hear you had."

"*Had* a daughter? why, I have one now, sir. I've had her a long time."

"Longer than you wished, perhaps, I had thought, and so came to make her acquaintance."

Mrs. Gilbert jumped up delighted, and screamed at the top of her voice, "Susan, make haste, for here's a gentleman to see you."

"A gentleman? Where's my pelisse, and my satin skirt? tell Anna to come and assist me to dress."

Susan entered; neither of them spoke; she seated herself opposite her visitor. Mr. Barrow replaced his spectacles. He could now see more plainly the woman of forty, and in some surprise sat looking steadfastly at her, repeating half aloud his mother's words, "a very nice sort of girl," when Susan, growing tired of this silent suitor, exclaimed, "What do you want me for, sir? whereupon the little gentleman arose, and went towards her; either from habit, or infirmity he stooped very much, and having approached her, bent over her; anxious to know what was coming next, Susan sat perfectly content. At this moment, Anna entered for a bunch of keys, which Susan in her haste had carried off with her.

"Anna, leave us and close the door," said Susan.

"Oh my dear Anna!" cried the little gentleman hopping towards her, "I am so delighted to see you. Yes, you are a very nice girl, I do like you very much. Mother sends her love. She hopes you will allow me to take you home some time to stay awhile with us; yes you are a very nice girl, and I do like you very much. Won't you come this evening? do," seizing both her hands. An expression of bewilderment passed over Anna's face, as she looked first at him, then at Susan, whom disappointment had made furiously angry. Rising from her chair she stood before them and screamed, "Anna, what does this mean? tell me this instant, make haste;" and excited in her passion she took up stool and chair, one after another, throwing them with force before the little gentleman, who, in his nervous fright, clenched Anna's hands the tighter, as he hopped from one side of the room to the other to escape these pieces of furniture.

"Bless my soul! what can be the matter, Susan?" and Mrs. Gilbert ran in followed by Alfred and Judy, and behind, appeared the astonished face of Mr. Everett.

Pale as marble, Anna stood powerless, while the bony hands still retained their victim, as the shrill, little voice of the very little man whispered, "I will protect you."

"What do you do here, sir?" demanded Mrs. Gilbert.

"Ma'am, I am a little deaf."

"Sir," shrieked she, "I wish to know what you have been about, to enrage my daughter? you must have made rapid advances."

"Nothing, ma'am; only this is the daughter I want to see," clinging closer to poor Anna.

"And do you really know her? oh yes, you have come to

take her away to-night. Oh Anna!" cried Susan, "how very base you are, and we knew nothing of it."

"Oh, but indeed, I do not know him, pray believe me, I never saw him before!" her whole frame shook violently as she looked imploringly from one to the other.

"Do you know her or not, man?" screamed Susan to the deaf little individual, who stood trembling from fear, or the palsy, no one knew which.

"Ma'am? Oh yes, I know her quite well enough. I've loved her a long time, — two whole weeks."

"Oh, won't some one believe me? Indeed, I know nothing of him!"

"Anna," replied Susan, "you will have to leave this house to-night; I will not remain under the same roof with a girl so disreputable."

"Oh, will not some one help me — will no one hear me, oh for pity's sake do, please, some one believe me!"

"Anna, Anna," cried Alfred, springing forward, "What is it," but Susan's powerful arm held him back, saying, "you shall not go near her, she is too vile for any of us to touch."

"What is all this, Miss Gilbert?" said the calm voice of Mr. Everett. On seeing him, Susan's rage abated, and she sunk back as he moved forward. The little old gentleman now took up umbrella and hat, and was endeavoring to make his way to the door.

Anna fell on her knees before Mr. Everett, and seizing the skirts of his coat, cried, "Oh sir, won't you help me?"

"Will some one please to explain," said the minister, looking at Susan, and then at the strange being who was attempting to make his retreat, but whom Alfred prevented by placing himself at one door, and amid coaxing and threatening, stood the terrified Judy at the other.

"You know, sir," began Susan, "that it is very wrong of a young girl like Anna, to have a gentleman coming to see her without our knowledge, and then to deny it."

"Oh, Mr. Everett, believe me. I never saw him before. You never were here before, were you, sir?" turning to the little figure.

"Here before? No, I never came here before, but you have been at my house. See, you left your veil, and I brought it with me; mother found it in my room after you were gone."

"Why, look at it! her own veil, certainly," said Susan, "worse and worse. There is the proof! Anna, you are convicted; you shall not utter another falsehood; don't attempt another word."

"Oh, how very dreadful, after all my care," cried Mrs. Gilbert putting her handkerchief to her eyes.

"She shall leave this house immediately," continued Susan "and you, sir, go from here instantly; go now, both of you, and never dare to enter within these walls again."

"Then come Anna, dear, you know I promised to protect you."

"Hush, sir, don't utter your infamous language in my presence. Anna, get your bonnet, and go with him. It's all your own doing."

"Oh, hear me! I am not so guilty!" said the fainting girl, "Alfred where are you? and won't *you* listen? Oh Alfred, come to me!" and she fell to the floor.

"Indeed, Anna I am here. I know you are innocent." But Anna understood not a word. Mr. Everett came forward, and assisted Alfred in placing her on a sofa.

"Oh you have killed her! She is dead!" cried the poor boy bending over the cold marble face. "Anna speak to me!"

One by one they had left the room; until Alfred alone remained kneeling by the couch of the unconscious girl. She lay motionless, while an expression of anguish rested on every feature of her pallid countenance. At intervals, she would start and exclaim, "I cannot go without Alfred. Don't send me away," then sigh and swoon again. Awakening at last to consciousness, she threw her arms round his neck, and buried her face in his bosom, as if to shut out some view, saying, "Cannot you send him away?"

"Look up, love, see, no one is in the room but Alfred." He again bathed the temples; she revived, but seemed so completely bewildered that he would not allow her to talk. Having persuaded her to go to her room, he placed her in a chair and said, "Anna dear, you had better go to bed now; try not to think at all; leave everything till you are well. Let me read to you a little, before it gets later."

He took from the table her Bible, filled with marks and papers of reference; and turning to the Gospel of St. John, read the fourteenth chapter. The beautiful passage concluded, Anna arose and the brother and sister knelt, and offered together their evening devotions.

Then Alfred waited until she had fallen into a slumber, and left the room.

During this time, a consultation was held below in the dining-room, as to what had better be done with a girl so rebellious and deceitful. Mr. Everett had followed them, and now sat the

picture of astonishment. Opposite him sat Susan; his sober face seemed to have silenced her, for she remained in moody sullenness, while Mrs. Gilbert reclined in her chair, heaving a succession of sighs. She was the first to speak, "What a very strange world it is that we live in!" looking at Mr. Everett.

"And there are some very strange creatures in it, seemingly," rejoined Susan.

"Of course, child, that is what I mean. Well, I thought boys the greatest misery, but I find girls are far more trouble."

"That brings Sally Pyke's words true."

"Ah, we had better get her advice as to what is best to be done with this Anna."

"Mr. Everett arose and went to his room."

"You know very well it's no use to get any one's advice. See what a spirit that Alfred has; if we did anything with Anna, he would be like a wild tiger; there's no knowing what he would do,—and as we've been used to their money so long, we never could do without it."

"Oh, by the by, Susan, he has not sent it, as usual, in advance. I hope nothing is the matter."

Susan paid little attention, for a thought had occurred to her, and starting up, she hurried from the room.

There was a little tap at Mr. Everett's door. The good man appeared in his dressing gown.

"Mr. Everett, sir," began Susan, "I thought it would be a comfort to you to know our conclusion. I have been telling mother it would be very unchristian-like to turn Anna into the street, and that it would be better to forgive her, and try her again." Susan looked for approbation, but to her surprise, the good man suffered only an "Oh!" to escape him, and closed his door.

Anna awoke next morning with the returning day-light. She endeavored to recall the preceding evening, but her head throbbed, and memory lent little aid to solve the mysterious problem. With difficulty she arose and dressed. "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." The words fell as a balm upon the troubled spirit, and when the devotions of the morning were concluded, she was able to think more calmly. And now she recollected her visit to Mrs. Barrow, and the strange little woman came vividly before her, as she felt certain that the singular being of the evening must spring from the same source; still, Mr. Everett's astonished and reproving look haunted her, and when Alfred knocked, she was sitting disconsolately, while her tears fell fast. Leaning her

head upon his shoulder, she told more minutely the remarks of Mrs. Barrow concerning a son of hers.

"Anna, there can be no mistake as to the scarecrow, it is plain enough. I am sure Mr. Everett will believe, and you know I do, and as to the rest, who cares for them?"

The cracked bell from below told the hour for breakfast had arrived. On passing down stairs, Anna was met by Mr. Everett. The cold, stern glance, seemed to penetrate her very soul.

"Do you feel better, Miss Wentworth?" said he.

If there was not sympathy, certainly there was pity in the tone, and to have yielded to the impulse of the moment, Anna would have fallen at his feet, and cried, "Believe me, I am not guilty of what they accuse me." But there seemed repulsion in his very figure, and with a faint reply of thanks that was scarcely audible, she passed on.

Breakfast over, Alfred begged to speak with Mr. Everett, when he clearly told what he had to say. The enthusiastic boy was poorly satisfied with the unmoved listener before him, and passionately rushed from the house, to school, saying to himself, "You are nothing but an old hypocrite, or you would sympathize a little with a poor girl."

On the following Sunday, as Anna was leaving the house for church, she encountered the same mysterious little man. He followed closely behind, took a seat in front of her, and turning round, kept his eyes fixed upon her during the whole of the service.

Fearing to excite suspicion, and cause fresh trouble, she said nothing of it to any one, especially as Susan had said, "It's no use to talk, no one will believe you are innocent, but that brother of yours, only take good care never to let us hear anything more of this man, or you'll find yourself in the street."

Week after week, he followed her as usual, and this was about the time I first saw Anna.

Summer had glided into autumn, and nothing had been heard of Mr. Wentworth. As she had not heard from him, Mrs. Gilbert concluded he was about to return home, and fearing his anger at their neglect of Anna's education, was anxious to appear steadfast in her duty, and after much argument on her part, and discussion on Susan's, it was agreed that an instructor should be engaged, who would teach "everything" on very "reasonable" terms; and accordingly, as it happened, Ellen Morgan suited.

Illness prevented Mrs. Villiers being as indefatigable in the society for the poor as was her custom, and more devoted up-

on Anna; but she had learned many a useful lesson from her frequent visits among the poor, and now took pleasure in any occasion that called her among them.

As the seasons changed, Alfred's wardrobe needed much of her attention, and she was busily occupied in this one morning when, below stairs, there seemed to be a great excitement; but glad to be quiet, she shut her door, and took her seat at the window. A carriage drove up to their house; however, Anna was too much engrossed in her work to notice it. Not so Susan, who was standing at her window, considering whether she would go shopping with Miss Pyke, or not.

"A carriage and livery, I do declare!" exclaimed she, running down stairs, "who can it be!"

"Bless me! I'm sure I cannot tell," said the old lady, dropping a dish of eggs.

"Oh, it must be some one to see me, of course; no one in a carriage like that, would come to see an old woman like you."

A lady alighted and ascended the steps.

"Oh Susan, it is their mother, I do believe. What shall we do? Women are not so blind as men; she will demand a thorough explanation of everything. Where's that Judy? As I'm alive, if she asks for the children, I shall sink through the floor."

The affrighted Judy, not understanding the cause of the alarm, opened the door, and hid herself behind it, putting out sufficient of her disordered hair to convince any one that she was there.

"Is Miss Anna Wentworth at home, please?"

Upon hearing these words, Mrs. Gilbert flew to the kitchen and fastened herself in. Susan now ran up stairs to change her head-dress; and Judy, without answering a word, closed the door, showed her into the parlor, and continued to stare at her, with her wide open mouth, as though she had admitted some most desperate character. She then ran to Anna's room, and gasping for breath, exclaimed, "make haste and come down, Miss, the old lady and Miss Susan are like to get into a hobble of some kind."

Anna hastily threw down her work, and followed her. On entering the room, the lady rose to meet her, and extending her hand, drew her towards the sofa. Judy stood behind the door, filling her mouth with her apron, when the shrill voice of Mrs. Gilbert exclaimed in a loud whisper, "Is it their mother, Judy?"

"Indeed, ma'am, it is she herself," said the girl thinking she inquired for Anna.

"Mrs. Villiers; you may have heard of me," said the stran-

ger introducing herself. I feel so very much indebted to you, Miss Wentworth, for your untiring energy in our affairs among the poor, that I know not how to thank you; I am sorry we have not been acquainted before, but I did not know until this morning: to whom I was so indebted; however, I trust we shall be friends in future. Very probably you have never realized the extent of the benefits you have conferred upon many around you. Because you have not only cheered the chamber of poverty and sickness, but awakened a spirit of philanthropy in many of your own age. But perhaps I am detaining you," continued she, rising to go, "at all events, promise me you will call on me when this month's report is finished; I have a daughter about your age, I think, and I can vouch for her being glad to see you. Good morning, dear."

And so it was really true that the lonely girl had occupied some one's thoughts; she, whose obscure life had seemed hidden from all observation, had diffused a silent influence, to stimulate to action some, perhaps, far more capable than herself, to labor in a field of usefulness, where their wealth, or their experience, would capacitate them for services she remained unable to attempt.

The reports of the society were completed. Mrs. Villiers received Anna with her usual pleasantry, that instantly banished all feeling of restraint. Lydia entered; and having introduced them, Mrs. Villiers left the young ladies to themselves.

After talking some time on various matters of interest, Lydia said, "You have Mr. Everett in your house."

"Yes, although I seldom see him, he is very reserved."

"Indeed! I did not know that, I thought him a very social being; you like him don't you?"

"Oh, I expect all his friends think very highly of him."

"I like him, too," said Lydia, and her eyes dropped.

A clock struck the hour, and Anna rose to leave.

"We are going to make a tour through Europe, but I believe my brother told Alfred of it. However, you are coming together to spend an evening with us this day week, then we can talk about that."

"Good-by."

The cloud of monotony that had hung round the spirit of Anna, now began to clear away. She soon felt herself irresistibly attracted to the lovely Lydia. There was so much to admire and to love; her unostentatious manner, and happy temperament, her deference for the judgment of others drew any affectionate heart invincibly towards her. It was now winter, and

quickly was it passing away, for Anna counted the few months that Lydia remained to her. She had hoped the influence of Charles would be beneficial to Alfred, but he seemed as indifferent as ever to all that was serious; for worldly greatness, he was ambitious, but for any argument that bore a religious tendency, he had no respect, and often, after a long discussion, in which Anna became wearied and discouraged, he would exclaim, "And what is the good of it all."

## CHAPTER VII.

"Oh God sublime!  
Thy power and wisdom, love and grace,  
Are greater than the round of time,  
And wider than the bounds of space,  
Yet thou canst turn thy friendly eye  
From that immeasurable throne;  
Thou, smiling on humanity,  
Dost claim earth's children for thine own;  
And gently, kindly lead them through  
Life's various scenes of joy and gloom,  
Till evening's pale and pearly dew  
Tips the green sod that decks their tomb."

"Oh Anna, I'm afraid we have a disappointment for you!" said Lydia, one evening, as the brother and sister entered.

"Why? I've not been expecting anything."

"Yes, you expected to be without a bore who is determined to inflict himself upon you," answered Charles, assuming a serio-comic expression.

"Then it must be you," rejoined Anna, smiling archly, "I can think of no other bore, for Alfred is obliged to behave well when once he is within these walls."

"Ah, my dear young lady, you will have to think of a worse than I or Alfred," continued Charles.

"But I cannot."

"Then allow me to assist you. His majesty, the honorable Robert Barrow, is to spend the evening with us."

Anna turned slightly pale at the sound of the name, and said, with an effort to be indifferent, "Well, I suppose what we cannot cure we must endure."

"I'm very sorry," said Charles soberly, while Lydia put her hand on Anna's arm, "But he will take no hints, and we cannot exclude him altogether from our company. He pretends to come only to see father, and yet, when once in the house, he thinks himself at liberty to come upon any of us, and demand

attention. So we must content ourselves with the idea of yielding our time this evening to Mr. Barrow."

"No matter," said Alfred, "There will be other evenings; it is not as though you were going to start for Bremen tomorrow; but," drawing Charles aside, "do tell me what this door is for, it is something my curiosity has often longed to penetrate."

"See! it fastens with a spring," opening upon a cosy little room. "Why it came there, in an age and country like this, no mortal could tell, unless it was built by some very eccentric person."

As they had left the room, Anna turned to Lydia, and still seeming rather agitated, said, "I don't know how it is, but that man's name always appears enough to disturb and trouble me, and although I assure myself he can never have any possible dealing with me, still there ever seems a lingering apprehension of some coming evil in which he takes the lead."

Lydia was about to reply, but here some guests entered, followed by Charles and Alfred.

They were sitting in a circle, and Charles was giving an account of their plan for their tour, when the bell rang.

"Miss Kate," said Lydia in a low tone to Charles, who sat near her. On hearing the name, he pretended to be very earnest in the programme before him; but Alfred rose and left the room, but he soon returned alone and took his seat.

It was past ten; nearly all the guests had departed, and Alfred and Anna were standing in the hall, congratulating them on their escape from the dreaded visitor, when Charles exclaimed, "Hark! what is that noise?" They listened; all was still; not a sound in the house disturbed the dead silence save a low moan, that ever and anon broke from some quarter near them. In vain they searched hall, parlors, and ante-rooms, and returned again to the spot where they first heard it.

"It is certainly below stairs," said Charles, "let us go and see." He led the way, but the sound grew fainter as they receded from the hall.

"You have forgotten the little room at the left," said Lydia, "where the door locks with a spring."

"Oh, no one could get in there, the key is never in the lock. See, it is not now; I had it last myself. I forgot what I did with it; no one could get in without the key."

"Listen," said Lottie, "the moaning certainly comes from here."

"I had better call pa," said Charles.

"Oh, wait a minute," exclaimed Alfred, "if the young ladies will promise not to scream, I will disclose this apparition."

He now produced a key, and unlocked the little door on the left.

"Veni, vidi, vici!" cried he, as he threw open the door, and behold! there, in a corner, partly lying on the floor, with his head against the wall, slept soundly none other than Mr. Robert Barrow, his hard breathing always terminating in a low groan.

It was one thing to awaken the little gentleman, and another to restore him to the full consciousness of where he really was.

"Allow me to assist you home, sir," said Alfred, placing with difficulty the bent and broken hat which they had found under him, upon the head of the individual. In the dark, he had lost his spectacles, and could not therefore discern those round him. Appearing still very much bewildered, he suffered Alfred to assist him home, and as the youth persisted in asking him how he got there, he answered, "Oh, I am confident it was one of the servants, who, perhaps is a new domestic, and asked me to leave my hat in the wrong room."

Alfred waited until they were in a dark street, and his companion began to stumble, when he said, "Tit for tat, sir, I am the sinner who shut you up," and explaining more fully who he was, he left him to traverse his dark and gloomy way alone.

Three long months had passed, and nothing had been heard of Mr. Wentworth. Anxiously had they awaited some tidings, but none came. Day after day long consultations had been held in the dining-room below, to decide what should be done, if they continued to receive nothing from him. Susan declared that life was uncertain, that it was very probable they would hear no more of that vagabond of a father. That they had better decide at once what to do, and immediately begin operations; and Mrs. Gilbert echoed the opinion, that life was really very uncertain; whereupon one afternoon, after the last consultation, Susan exclaimed, "My mind's made up, I shall go and tell Anna."

In her room, and alone, sat the solitary girl. Alfred had just been to tell her he was a candidate for two of the first prizes for drawing and Latin, in which he had long excelled; and after he had gone she had pondered upon his talents, and pictured to her fancy what a great man he might be. From Susan's countenance something dreadful was coming. She had heard her loud tones as she left the dining-room, but had hoped the storm extended only to Judy, and now she sat trembling with fear, as

Susan drew nearer, and seating herself on the side of her little bed begun; "Anna, be up to-morrow morning very early, follow Judy everywhere she goes, and learn how to do everything, for we're going to send her away, and you are to take her place, for which you ought to be very thankful; as now you are nothing but a poor forlorn girl, solely dependent upon our charity. As to that Alfred, there are plenty of things he can do to pay us for remaining here. So now you know what's to be done, and there's an end to it;" and gathering round her the loose robe she delighted to figure in, the satisfied woman walked in a stately manner out of the room.

As one lifeless and immovable, Anna still sat there. She longed to hear Alfred's footstep, but it came not; thousands of thoughts seemed to crowd at once the perturbed brain, until all attempt to reason was in vain. She arose and stood by a window; she heard a footstep behind her, and turning, found Miss Kate Danvers standing before her. The pretty little face was beaming with animation, and Anna felt the contrast between it and her own, as she exclaimed, "Why, Kate, how did you find your way up here?"

"Oh, that Judy, or whatever you call her, was so long in coming to tell you I was here, that I thought I would do it myself;" seating herself as though very much fatigued with her journey up stairs.

"How is that young lady, Minerva?" inquired Anna breaking the silence.

"Poor child, she is just the same as ever, you would be surprised to know how sensible she is in some things, and what a foolish, weak creature she can be in others. She's always fretting because she has no home, no one to love her." Anna liked the delicate invalid; and unwilling to hear her spoken of lightly, changed the subject. "What a very pretty dress, Kate!"

"It was to have been the travelling costume of a wedding tour."

"Indeed? it's very pretty. I think I would keep it for that purpose."

"Ah, but it was never to be," and she heaved a sigh. "And then this cloak, and these gloves, and ever so many things of poor Minerva's."

"Oh! Then they were hers!"

"Have you never heard of her misfortune?"

"I've seen her several times, you know, but I never heard anything of her history. I like her very much, and would

rather you would not tell me anything of her, she might not wish any one to hear," added she, fearing this thoughtless creature was about to divulge some secret of the sweet girl, for whom she felt so much sympathy.

"But just let me tell you why she was not married, every one knows that, and what makes her so miserable now."

"Oh! please don't. No matter how trifling it may seem to you, take a pleasure in keeping it a private matter. Perhaps you can't feel how painful it is to have something that is near and dear to you handled and enlarged at the pleasure of the public; oh, please do not," added she entreatingly, "especially when the person is so good and kind as Minerva."

"But how does that Pyke go on? Oh, don't you think Charles Villiers very witty and interesting? Which of them,—Mr. Everett here, with his serious face, or Charles, do you think strikes your fancy the most? Or are you one of those who determine never to be captivated by any one? Ah, wait a while, my dear, you will tell a different tale. But I suppose you think me a giddy, empty thing, so I may as well go," and she was gone.

Anna took her place at the window again, and watched the shadows in the street below, but they passed and repassed without pausing at their door,—they did not bring Alfred. She was accustomed to waiting long for him, and often to being disappointed, but this evening the expectation was a burden. Doubtless he had some regard to a vocation for his future life; what was it? The elastic step was heard, it never deceived the ear. Alfred entered, and closed the door. "Well, Anna, I know by your face, Susan has told you their decision."

"Oh, Alfred, is there no way of getting his address? He is our father, and if he still lives, would not neglect us, did he once know how miserably we were treated here. I wish we could find out what he really pays; is there no way of learning his direction?"

"No! we will not write to him, he has never desired a word of or from us, never so much as sent us a message, and he must know we are not children now. I would rather lay stones in the street, than ask him for a penny. No, I will not write, and you shall not."

"But Alfred, what will you do, what can you do? He may be dead, we may never hear anything of him any more."

Alfred's arms were folded. The thick clusters of rich, dark hair fell round his fine countenance, as his head was bent upon his breast—his usual mode of posture when he had anything particular to think about. Then half loudly, half in a whisper,

"And it is true that we two may be driven upon the world without a home, without a shelter! Why have I never thought of it before? I could barely support myself, and what is to become of you, my poor Anna?"

"Oh, how very forlorn, how very wretched we are! With no hope!" her whole frame trembles as she continues, "Oh Alfred, what can you, what will you do?"

"I have no fears, Anna," starting up, "you shall see what I can do," and his joyous spirit carried him from his sister's anxious face, to whistle away the fears that took such entire possession of her soul.

She still sat brooding over their sad fate. *She* could not think, "do not write to him." To her, it seemed no small matter to be thrown upon the wide world, lonely orphans, dependent upon the kindness of any one who might interest themselves for them, when they had no right to demand a shelter from any one. There was but one aid remaining to her, which may be reached at any moment, in any extremity, no matter what the need may be,—the suppliant never pleads in vain. The door is ever open, and in the blessed promises of Him who inhabiteth eternity, the pilgrim may draw near without wavering, and encouraged by this love to us, find an ear ready to listen, an arm mighty to save. And Anna sought this protection, that she might be armed with strength for whatever might await her.

"In public the battle be fought,  
But in secret the weapon prepare."

The urn was hissing upon the table in the little tea-room of Mrs. Barrow, where the old lady sat nodding in her easy chair.

"Good evening, my dear, my son Robert, good evening."

"A little news, mother; so I've something to tell."

"Robert, get me my ear trumpet, I'm rather deaf to-night."

"And as no one is here, I will bring mine, too."

"My dear, my son Robert, what is the news?"

"Mr. Everett called at the Exchange to-day, to solicit some interest for that Alfred, who was so very impudent to me; don't you remember? Well, they've lost their father, or their money, or something that makes them very poor and dependent upon themselves."

"My Robert, my first-born, how very fortunate for you, my dear; Anna is a sweet girl. But go on."

"That is all, my dear mother."

"Oh! Well, now I wonder if Sally Pyke could not be of great use to you in this matter. You say they seem cross to

Anna, at Mrs. Gilbert's, and I would pet her as I did poor Cesarine. Go and tell this to Sally, talk of your fortune, and as she is so fond of jewels, promise her a diamond brooch if she uses her influence for you; I know she is very intimate with Susan Gilbert, or whatever her name is."

"Ah! if she had no brother! When I think of that spirited young Alfred, my heart misgives me."

"But promise to help him. This will be the only way to gain any favor with Anna."

"I see."

"My dear, my son Robert, go to Sally Pyke."

Having made his toilet and secured his companion, the huge umbrella, the little old gentleman set out for the domicile of that peculiar lady, Miss Pyke.

It was about seven o'clock on a winter's evening; Miss Pyke sat alone in her little parlor. The tea-things had been cleared away, her father, with whom she lived, had retired, and she sat busily occupied with her work-box as was her custom when no circumstances called her from home. Not that Miss Pyke waited for an invitation, indeed, she might have waited long enough, as no one would ever have been willing to have endured her society for a single hour; but she never stopped to consider whether she annoyed, or pleased; no matter how often her friends changed their residence, just at the moment when she was the very last person desired, Miss Sally was sure to knock. She might have had some very good traits in her composition, but as none were ever discovered, probably no one had ever taken the trouble to look for any. Her age it would have been difficult to decide, as she was one who never intended to grow old, although it was evident she had been nothing else for a long time. How she passed the hours she scarcely knew herself, except that she made calls to gossip over the affairs of her neighbors, and that altering her wardrobe to the latest fashion, occupied her considerably. She could not read a great deal, she said, as she could never attend to one object long at a time. However, a book of poems was to-night upon her table; some such volume might always be found open before her; perhaps she could not have told you the title, but no matter, it was commendatory of a person's taste to see poems on their table, and that was sufficient. Her ringlets had been arranged with all due precision, as no one knew who might call, and she now sat copying from the last book of Paris fashions; for Miss Pyke's means were limited, and all such contrivances were executed by herself.

"Peggy!" A figure appeared at the door in answer to the call. It was the small, spindle form of a girl; the bare, long arms spoke of poverty, and the tired look of the child told she had been up many hours. "Yes ma'am, here I am," sinking upon a little stool.

"You had better come here, in case I should want you. But bring that apron I was so kind as to give you, go on sewing it. It is a great sin to be idle, and if you are, you will be sure to be punished, you know, at the last day." A ring at the bell made Miss Pyke start from her seat.

"Go to the door, Peggy — run." And Miss Pyke went to the window to peep at the visitor. The light of the full moon fell upon the figure of a man. "A gentleman, I declare!" exclaimed she in ecstasy. "Peggy, make haste!"

But Peggy had dropped into dream-land, and her thoughts were far away in the little home from which Miss Pyke, out of compassion, had taken her to be her maid; and as she played again with the little brothers and sisters, she heard nothing of the ring, or the sharp voice of her mistress.

"Peggy, what do you mean! Never keep a gentleman at the door;" and seizing the two bony shoulders, she gave the little sleeper a sufficiently good shaking to cause her to leave the stool in no time, and fly to the door; in the meantime, Miss Pyke's spectacles were thrown off, as they were worn only in private, the book of poems placed opposite to her, while she sat herself very upright before it.

Mr. Robert Barrow entered. He did not bow, although his mother often taught him how, but stood and looked at Miss Pyke, who, waving her hand, motioned to a chair, whereon the little gentleman seated himself. No one spoke; the umbrella had to be placed; then he carried two handkerchiefs, a red, and a white, and it took a little time for him to distinguish them. This was a respite to Miss Pyke's agitation, to enable her to collect her senses. She had seen Mr. Barrow but two or three times, but that was nothing; she had heard he was a bachelor, and that he was wealthy, and this was sufficient. He was now comfortably arranged in the chair, and leaning forward, began,

"I must come a little closer, ma'am."

"Certainly, sir, do."

"I mean I'm a little deaf, ma'am."

"Oh, that is all! very well, sir."

"Miss Pyke, I believe; and I am *Mr.* Robert Barrow, Esq. Well, I've been wanting to see you, ma'am, very much of late."

"Yes, sir—I understand—go on, sir." A fit of coughing

put a stop to Mr. Barrow's colloquy, and his listener took the opportunity to whisper, "Peggy, is my hair all right? speak in a low tone."

"Ma'am! It seems to me your wig is crooked," exclaimed Peggy loudly, as she yawned again. Indignation was plainly manifested in the face of her mistress, while she proceeded to adjust the shaking ringlets. On hearing Peggy's sentence, the little gentleman placed both hands on his duly arranged peruke to ascertain if all was right in that quarter. At length Peggy was dismissed, and the visitor said that being in want of a wife was the object of his call. He first told of sleepless nights; then of his dreams. Miss Pyke was in ecstasies. He spoke of his fortune, which was more than she had imagined. She was in raptures. He said he thought it quite right to use every means in his power to gain the object so dear to him. Of course Miss Pyke thought so too; her happiness was complete; she was enchanted. Alas! The bliss was of short duration. Her spirits now at ebb tide sunk lower and lower, until at the end of two hours her visitor had exhausted his harangue, and she had learned that her case was hopeless. But listen! the little gentleman has somewhat more to say. "Miss Pyke, I should feel so much obliged to any one who would assist me in this matter, that no compensation would be too much, the party need only, at the end of the time, state what the wish might be — it would be gratified." The spirits flowed again, as a new thought occurred to her. It was very pleasant to be thought clever; and to be able to make good matches was a talent not to be despised. Here was a famous opportunity, and the recompense so rare! Nothing should thwart her; she knew how to act, she would begin to-morrow. With a young wife like Anna, he would take a large house, and if no one liked him, every one who knew Anna seemed to think much of her, and most probably they would keep a great deal of company, for there would be plenty to court their acquaintance, as he could afford to entertain well; while she, the institutor of the whole, would always be considered one of his best friends, and treated as such.

The little gentleman pursued his way homeward as briskly as his withered limbs would carry him, to dream of his new possession, and Miss Pyke suffered the exhausted Peggy to undress her, that she might recline on her pillow, and ponder the better over the business that was to engross her the following day.

The next morning brought the first of a series of snow storms, and as it would have been exceedingly imprudent to risk her

health, and perhaps her life, in making the best of matches, Miss Pyke was forced to postpone her visit to Susan for the present.

It was now the middle of March; Alfred had taken leave of his companions at school, with the air of one who was about to begin a brilliant career, of which they would hear again, at some future time, to admire or to envy, as his name, laden with renown, rang through the range of time. Alfred had been a favorite, and many were the extended hands, and eyes beaming with pleasure, as, "Good-by, Wentworth," resounded from all parts of the long gallery. He had been very assiduous in endeavoring to obtain some position in order to make "a strike," as he termed it. A quaker gentleman had heard of him through Mr. Everett, and sent for him; told him his book-keeper had just left him, and desired Alfred to bring his testimonials the following day. In high glee, glowing with hope, Alfred returned home, and burst in upon Anna, exclaiming, "Now you will soon be freed from this dungeon; only wait awhile, and you'll find us two, in our cosy little house, without any appendages such as Barrows or Pykes, but there we shall breathe the atmosphere of ease and comfort, and there, in our independence, set the world at defiance." Anna was not so soon elated, still she endeavored, for his sake, to participate in the pleasure, as she coaxed him to eat the rice he so much disliked; and throwing her arms round the beloved form which she would have sacrificed her life to protect, she kissed the flushed cheek, and sought the quiet of her room, to return thanks for the friend Alfred had found.

The next morning, Alfred arose long before daybreak, made a miniature day-book, journal, ledger, &c.; and before the milk-and-water was ready for his morning repast, had gone through many intricacies of double entry. The little soda biscuit was only half finished, although Mrs. Gilbert declared such were very good for boys, when Alfred arose to leave. Anna followed him to the door, "You have no money!"

"I know, but I can do without," and he left the house.

Anna stood watching him, as his rapid steps took him from her gaze. She knew his impulsive spirit, the quick temper so soon roused, the fine feelings so easily wounded; and as she thought of the iron minds of the business men he must encounter, the stern faces he must brook, it seemed she must fly after him, and following, throw herself between him and every obstacle that might oppose him. A footstep behind: "There's plenty to do, girl, so don't waste your time staring out of the window." And

Susan must be obeyed, and Alfred, if possible, for a while forgotten.

The March winds had scattered the remaining snow-flakes, and one morning, Miss Pyke ventured to leave her domicile, without fear of injuring her complexion by the gusts she generally thought exceedingly hurtful to a fine skin. Of course, on reaching her destination, it was necessary the lady should rest awhile, during which time Susan could occupy herself advantageously, by examining whatever was new in the costume of her visitor; for, as Alfred said, Miss Pyke went with the fashion, and Susan followed it. After taking a long breath, the lady began her attractive and persuasive oration. It was delivered with all the eloquence of which her colloquial powers were capable; and in satisfaction to the enthusiasm of her argument, at its close it met with the highest approbation. But Anna's garb was not such as would be becoming, now that she would sit in the parlor, and receive the attentions of a wealthy suitor, for her dress had been made from a worn-out one of Susan's, and the dark color was not likely to show to advantage the grave little creature that wore it. So it would be very advisable for Susan to go and purchase one of a bright color, while Miss Pyke remained to luncheon, to undertake the task of broaching the subject to Anna, for which she was much better fitted than Susan, as she could modify her vehemence, when the necessity was as urgent as this, in order to reason very disinterestedly; whereas Susan's mode of attack, was recourse to her violent temper, by which she sought to force her victims into compliance.

"So you are going now, Susan," said Mrs. Gilbert, "Well, here's the money. It is very extravagant, to be sure. I wonder how the affair will end! What strange things happen in this world; they set me almost beside myself. And Susan, while you have been dressing, I've been thinking it must be very sad for a young girl like our Anna, to be tied to an old man she would always dislike."

"My dear Mrs. Gilbert," replied Miss Pyke with a deep sigh, "it is always so in this life; woman's lot is peculiarly submissive and dependent, and the sooner girls find it out, the better. We have so much to bear without a murmur, for all men are strange beings, and nothing but the union of a life time can make us acquainted with their many defects. And as no girl is willing to yield herself to solitude all her life, it makes no difference who it is, as men are all alike; especially as Anna is so forlorn and unprotected,—it is a rare chance for her."

"Of course," replied Susan, "but you are in your dotage, old woman; there, go along;" and with the assistance of the parasol she thought best to carry even in March, she sent the poor old lady rather more quickly through the entry than the tottering limbs usually carried her, for she was now becoming very feeble.

Susan gone, Miss Pyke reigned supreme over the household. "My dear Mrs. Gilbert, you had better go to your room; you are agitated, I know too well what the feeling is, lie down for a little while, I can manage Anna better alone. Judy! go and tell Miss Anna I am come to take luncheon with her."

Anna was about to indulge in a luxury, and had just taken up a book, when she was obliged to descend to the dining-room to perform what was a very odious duty,—entertaining Miss Pyke whom she had not known to be in the house. After the usual preliminaries accompanied by the many tokens of affection from their guest, she exclaimed in a very faint voice, "Now Anna, I will take my dinner, or luncheon, or whatever you have at this hour." Anna cast an inquiring look at Judy, who having returned the same, proceeded very mechanically to place upon the table the scanty contents of the larder. After seating herself ceremoniously before the humble repast, the lady produced a vial containing some port, the half of which she poured into a glass and drank, then carefully corked the remainder, saying, "that will do for me another day."

To Anna's great disappointment, when Miss Pyke rose from the table, it was not to go, for she comfortably settled herself in an easy chair, and began, "Is Mr. Everett at home?"

"I believe not."

"How do you like him? It's time you formed some opinion of him."

"Oh—I—we like him very much."

"Ah! poor child, he's the only one you've known, I dare say you think a great deal of him; it is always so with the first. I can remember how attached I was;" a very deep sigh. "But there are better than he, Anna, secluded as you are, better things are no doubt in store for you, so don't give your affectionate little heart to a poor hungry parson. Have you heard from your father lately?"

"Not very lately; my father travels a great deal, and very likely cannot always send a letter."

"Oh, exactly; although I suppose he is in a state of extreme anxiety to do so. He is a very good parent, is he not?" looking Anna full in the face. She could make no reply to the

question whose irony wounded too deeply, but remained silent, hoping every sentence would be the last, while it grieved her to think this talkative woman had been made acquainted with their affairs; and again, she chided herself for being surprised, since the lady was so intimate with Susan.

"What shall you do, if you hear nothing more of him?"

"Well — I've scarcely begun to think of it."

"Certainly you would not like to be dependent upon poor Alfred. If you have any love for him, you never could be such a burden to the poor fellow!"

She had touched a tender chord. She could see by the emotion Anna was with difficulty endeavoring to suppress, that she was now in the right direction, and she continued, "You see, the trouble is, there's so little time to sit parleying over such a matter, because I know from what I have heard, that your friends here will very soon get tired of letting you stay with them if things do not take a turn."

Anna remained silent.

"I hear you have made the acquaintance of Mrs. Barrow and her son; and I am very much delighted, as you will find him a world of use to Alfred. It's true he is a little peculiar, but then all men are, and you must try to bear with him for your brother's sake. He spoke very highly of Alfred, and said he should be so happy to use his influence for him, which I assure you is not a little."

"Did he?"

"Remember to tell Alfred what a friend he has in him, and that the more attentive, and kind he is to him, the better; and let me add one word more, although I am quite exhausted now," and the head reclined on one side in a very pathetic attitude. "With you it rests to see Alfred an independent man, or a wretched wanderer on the face of the earth; as I have seen a great many in my time, dropping lower and lower, until no vice is too great, no crime too awful, no —"

"Oh do not, please, do not!"

"My dear Anna, if you knew my regard for that noble youth, you would listen to my words, but you care so little for him, I fear he will go to ruin!"

"Oh for pity's sake don't speak so; if I only knew how to help him! Oh what can I do!"

"Dearest, Mr. Barrow can place him in affluence; and then, when you had been the means of his good fortune, you would not mind being supported by him. You have now but one thing to do, influence Alfred to treat him kindly. Anna, do you love Alfred enough to take this trouble?"

"Don't ask me!"

"Will you follow my advice?"

"I will."

"Then good-by."

Day-light had faded into dusk, yet the candles, which were a strange composition of Mrs. Gilbert's own manufacturing, would not be lighted for two hours; Anna had just finished some little kindnesses for the Judy who was to leave early the next morning, and now took her seat at the window to watch for Alfred.

"He may be successful to-day," thought she, "and we will not trouble the strange little man!" and the idea seemed a relief. Then again, Miss Pyke's words struck forcibly upon her recollection, while their weight seemed to rest with an awful power upon her memory.

The wind arose; a hurricane swept through the streets; the lightning flashed, the thunder pealed, as the rain fell in torrents from the heavy black clouds, that threatened a continuance of the violent storm. The thick darkness obscured the vision, and Anna could no longer discern the figures in the street as they battled with the elements. She had long prepared the change of clothing for the wanderer, and sat awaiting his return. It was past eight o'clock when the ring was followed by the well known footstep in the passage.

"Alfred, you must be wet through, make haste to change your things."

There was no answer, as the weary limbs approached a chair, and as he threw himself into it, Anna saw the face; but oh! the disappointment, the wretchedness, that were seated there! The blanched cheeks, the full, expressive eyes speaking volumes as he fixed them upon her, while she stood before him in silent agony, viewing what appeared to her as she thought of his former joyousness, a complete wreck. He spoke not a word, but at length drew her towards him, and resting the aching head upon her shoulder, he burst into tears.

"Indeed, Alfred, you are not so very wretched as you think, but you are exhausted. Have you taken any food since your breakfast?"

"No!" He seemed too faint to utter more.

"Do come and lie down here, and rest before you endeavor to talk."

Finding he became more composed, she left him to get some refreshment: fortunately, Mr. Everett's tea remained untouched upon the table, and by the late hour, he would not return to want it; so hurrying, lest she should encounter Susan, she

brought the little tray, and knelt beside the couch. But Alfred had gone too long without, to relish any now. Turning away from it, he threw his arms round the trembling form that bent over him, and exclaimed, "Oh Anna! Anna! was it not too bad, after taking those testimonials, and waiting two hours to see the old quaker, he said, after reading them two or three times, 'Well, if I should ever make up my mind to employ another assistant, I may send for you, perhaps;' and Anna, I have walked all day, but without success. Oh, it is dreadful! I wish we could die! we are so very wretched." And refusing to be comforted, he wept more violently, as he clung still closer to the distressed Anna; who, finding she could not console, dropped her head upon his bosom, and mingled her tears with his. At last the weary one fell asleep; and awaking much calmed, Anna thought to cheer him by the news Miss Pyke had brought; but instead of being pleased, the dark eyes flashed angrily as he exclaimed, "Anna, I would sooner shoot you and then commit suicide, than be under any obligation to that miserable old ape, and besides, anything that came through the hands of that Pyke, you might know would never come to any good: Oh, I believe I am going mad, my head throbs so. What shall I do!"

With difficulty he reached his little chamber, where, kneeling in prayer to the God of the fatherless, the brother and sister poured out their sorrows. On entering his room before she retired, Anna found he had fallen asleep, although his slumber seemed much disturbed. A cold moisture rested upon his forehead, and successive chills appeared to run over the weary limbs: imprinting her "good-night" upon the brow of the beloved one, she wiped away the tears that still rested upon his cheek, and left him for the night.

## CHAPTER VIII.

"Love, hope, and joy, fair pleasure's smiling train;  
Hate, fear, and grief, the family of pain;  
These, mixed with art, and to due bounds confin'd,  
Make and maintain the balance of the mind;  
The lights and shades whose well accorded strife  
Give all the strength and color of our life."

On entering Alfred's room the next morning, Anna found him in a high fever, and unable to rise; he had rested but poorly during the night, and the despondency that had hung over him

the previous evening still disturbed and troubled him. Judy had taken her departure, and a thousand different orders kept Anna from the bedside, where she longed to linger, and when noon had passed, and the chief of the culinary duties were over, she discovered, to her inexpressible horror, that reason was gone: and ignorant of her presence, he continued to call imploringly for her. Frenzied in her distress, she rushed below, and falling upon the floor before them, earnestly entreated that a physician might be called.

"Why, girl," replied Susan, "you talk like a maniac! Who do you suppose is coming to such forlorn beings as you two are now, without a shilling in the world, except what we choose to give you out of charity?"

"Then let me get some one to prescribe for him. Oh, please do! Let me go and speak to some friend about him! Only think of it, he has lost his reason!"

"Well, he hadn't much to lose, and you are not going to leave the house to-day, so you can make yourself content upon that point. And don't come here again, with your long hair streaming in that style, for you take the trouble for nothing, as Mr. Everett, whom I suppose you are trying to attract, doesn't happen to be at home."

"Oh, pray let me get some one, do, for mercy's sake!" but those were deaf ears that she called upon, and Susan, taking her by her arms, dragged her to the foot of the stairs, saying, "Go and shut yourself up somewhere, it's all you're fit for, like any other lunatic;" and leaving her there in an agony of grief, entered the room again.

"Susan, if that Alfred is going to carry on such a game as this, we shall get nothing from him, and I think we had better give up this house;" ventured the old lady.

"Gracious, no! Why then we should lose Mr. Everett."

"You will lose him at any rate. I am sure he is far more partial to Anna, since he knew they were poor."

"Then it is your fault, old woman, you generally manage to have her right before his eyes—"

"How can you think that? I should be too glad to get rid of you, Susan;—"

"And I daresay, since she has been so busy about the house, he thinks she would make a fine little wife for a lonely parson like himself. However, I shall not give him up yet; not that I care so much about the man, only that he would prevent me dying an old maid. But while there is life in that skeleton of a Barrow, there is hope for me. Anna shall have him, and

while she is nursing the decrepit old fellow at home, I can enjoy the carriage, as a recompense for making the match. Things are working very well so far, I'm very well satisfied, and shall get the dress-maker here to-day for Anna's dress; the sooner the trouble of it all is over, the better:" and she left the room.

Day after day, Alfred lingered without indicating any sign of recovery, the consciousness that would return for a time, soon disappeared, while the perturbed mind dwelt continually upon their misfortunes. Mr. Everett seemed much impressed as he beheld the affliction of the brother and sister, and was exceedingly thoughtful and kind; and at last, under the careful treatment of his own physician, Alfred evinced some signs of amendment. Before he had anticipated a want, the kind forethought of the minister had brought some little delicacy to the couch, where he often spent an hour, amusing the invalid, and manifesting to all, that there was a very warm heart beneath that cold exterior.

One afternoon, on entering Alfred's room, which he had now kept for a week, Anna found him sitting up for the first time, and what was more satisfactory, he evinced some return of his usual animation.

"Oh Anna, here you are at last, I've been longing for you to come. I could not sleep, and the time passes so slowly; then I knew you were as anxious to come as I was to have you, my own sweet sister; you are so good, what should I have done without you? I know I have never cared for you as I ought, but oh, Anna, indeed I do love you, and you shall never find me so indifferent and unkind again. I know, too, I have been a great trial to you, and you have so much to bear without my troubling you; oh, I have so much to say, and I'm afraid I may grow delirious again, before I finish. Anna, I have never wanted to talk about our mother, but I have thought so much of her, since I have lain here. What are your ideas of her, have you ever thought she is still living?"

"No! I feel confident she died."

"I am glad you think so. I was older than you, and since I have recollected what passed when we were taken away from her, I know she must have died. Can't you remember that time?"

Tracing once more her earliest recollections, Anna saw again the little chamber, on a calm summer's evening, where they sat beside the couch of pain, receiving the kind instructions and sweet counsel of the beloved parent, ere she bade farewell to the world, and joined the heavenly hosts, in the land of the

blessed. "I love them that love me, and those that seek me early shall find me;" came vividly before her memory as when the dying christian had uttered them, and now the words seemed doubly precious. Again she saw the hue of death rest upon the delicate features, and felt herself and Alfred torn from the favorite chamber, while they endeavored in vain to cling to the cold corpse of the beloved mother. "So long ago," said Anna, "and yet how vividly it comes before us."

"She was very beautiful, Anna, and since I have been ill, that sweet face has often visited me, and I have not dared to have an unkind feeling towards any one, and have been shocked when I remembered what a thoughtless, careless, rebellious boy I have been: for the prayers you took so much pains to teach me were either neglected, or uttered with such irreverence that I am sure it only increased my condemnation: and in my vexations and disappointments, I had no resource but despair. But now I see differently; I do not regret the difficulties, except where they troubled you, for they have made me wiser. We are now orphans, to struggle alone through the many vicissitudes of life, and I am sure nothing but your confidence in all which is good, has supported you through the misery you have combated with, in this house. It was not until I became more observant, that I was aware how much you suffered; and instead of relieving you, I often added to your trials. But Anna, my sister, I will now take my place beside you, and never, as long as life remains, will I desert my dear, good Anna. I know now there is but one sure foundation for happiness, both in the events of this life as well as in that which is to come after, and I am resolved, by God's grace, to trust in His providence and not fear any evil that may happen to me. You know the servant, St. James, says 'Is any among you afflicted, let him pray.' And St. Paul so beautifully expresses the love of God towards us when he says 'For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.'"

"You are tired, dear; rest awhile."

"In a minute, but I've one thing more to say. I know Susan and the old lady have not been very kind, but I have done very wrong. I have hated them, and our Saviour said 'Love your enemies.' I will try never to feel such evil towards them again. I want you to tell them I'm sorry, in case I should die without their forgiveness." The glow of bright animation that

had lit up the fine features had long departed, and he fell back upon his pillow exhausted. Wiping away the tears that had flowed during the converse, Anna went down stairs in search of a restorative. Mr. Everett had gone out. Seeing no one but Mrs. Gilbert, she thought it a good time to give Alfred's message.

"Tell him we are not such fools, so he need not take the trouble to play the hypocrite;" and Susan instantly appeared from behind a closet door. Anna said no more, but took the vial, and was leaving, when Susan bade her remain. "Take off your dress, girl; do you hear? don't stand there staring at me, but do as I tell you." In her unutterable astonishment, Anna obeyed, now was she amazed by Susan's rough hands placing upon her a bright, gaudy, red dress of an immense pattern. What could it mean? and Alfred on his couch between life and death. "There, you needn't look so bewildered, girl, the whole explanation is, we are much kinder to you than you deserve. That will do very well," continued she, thrusting up one sleeve and pulling down another. "Now take it off; you are to wear it only when I command you."

As Anna was passing up stairs, puzzled at Susan's generosity, the bell rang. Susan hastened, and opened the door; Anna caught a glimpse of Lydia and Charles. With an exclamation of delight, she was hurrying to them, when Susan closed the door upon them, and turning, said to Anna, "you needn't trouble to come down, I soon despatched them." Anna had not left the house for more than a week, and would have given worlds to have seen her friends, especially for Charles to have gone up to Alfred; but it was only one of the vexations that followed in the train of its predecessors, and might as well be borne with patience. She had just reached Alfred's door, when there was a second ring, and Susan called out "Anna, come to the door." To her dismay there stood Miss Pyke.

"My dear Anna, I've come expressly to see our favorite Alfred. I met that good man, Mr. Everett, this morning, and learned from him that your brother, dear fellow, was quite indisposed. I've brought some of Dr. Shank's remedy, it cures all diseases; once, poor Mr. Barrow had the gout, or some dreadful pain, of course I did not ask the particulars, although I have known him so long; however, whatever it was, it cured him." On meeting Susan she exclaimed, "Oh my dear, I have come on purpose to talk a little with you in private." Closing the door upon a woman who always disgusted her, Anna undertook once more to administer the restorative to Alfred; but, on

entering, she found he had fallen asleep, and sat down to await his awaking. He still slumbered when the door was thrown open, and Miss Pyke approached the couch, saying,—

"I will soon relieve him," and taking him by the shoulders, heedless of the tearful entreaties of Anna, she roused the pale sufferer to consciousness. Uttering some faint exclamation, the weary eyelids dropped again; but the lady was very persevering when she felt inclined, and taking a bottle from her pocket, she endeavored to pour its contents down the throat of the invalid. As well as his feeble strength would allow, he resisted, but neither his or Anna's strength could gain the mastery over the obstinate woman. "She would not be baffled," she said, and after contending, and struggling for a long time, the whole of Dr. Shank's remedy was spilled over the head and face of the exhausted Alfred; while, dissatisfied at not succeeding better, the troublesome woman, suppressing her anger, forced a kiss upon the forehead of Anna, and left the room.

Alfred was slowly recovering and needed a change and the fresh air, when Mrs. Villiers called. Susan did not find it so easy a matter to satisfy her with an abrupt answer, as she had the previous inquirers, for this lady had seen more of the world, and was not so short-sighted. Her gentle manner quite overcame the virago, who could not refuse her seeing Anna; and according to an arrangement now made, Charles and Lydia came in the afternoon with the carriage to take them for a drive. Susan stood looking at them as they drove away; she had been in one of her sullen humors for several hours, but at last she spoke. "It's a fine thing for those children to be riding about in a carriage,—what a fool I was to let them go! and Mr. Everett has talked a great deal with Anna of late, a pretty pass things are coming to; yes, I may stay at home, while a bit of a girl, who hasn't a home or a penny in the world, monopolizes the courtesy that an experienced, full-grown woman like me ought to demand. But I will have my day. Wait a while, Anna, your friends, those Villiers, will soon be going, and no one else can oppose; yes, I can ride in a carriage then, while you, my dear girl, will be keeping vigil beside your decrepit little apology for a husband; you'll see then I'm going to rule a while longer. Yes, you may go for a drive to-day, all things in their own good time, the summer will tell a different tale!"

Although the air had invigorated Alfred, the exertion and excitement of going out had greatly fatigued him, and urging him to partake of a light repast, which the kind thought of Mr. Everett had prepared for him, Anna persuaded him to retire

early. Stealing into his little room soon after, she found he had fallen into a peaceful slumber, and taking a last look at the thin, pale face, went to her room to pass the evening at her own disposal. She had just opened the "Life of Madam de Genlis,"—for her perseverance and close application had made her very familiar with the French language,—when her door was thrust open, and Susan, in her evening dress, appeared.

"There, put away all such rubbish as that, and put on that handsome dress I was so kind as to give you, put your hair down your face, and then you'll look more of a woman; remember to talk as pleasantly as you can, and at all events, whatever you do, don't sit like a deaf mute, but say something."

"Susan, what do you mean, please?"

"Why, I mean you are to mind what I say, if you don't want to be turned into the street. Mind you appear very sympathetic, and inquire after all his aches and pains, and the like."

"Oh, Susan, whom do you mean? I don't understand you."

"I tell you he's coming to-night, Mr. Barrow, I mean, to talk over the welfare of Alfred, as Miss Pyke told you;" and waving the feathers she carried on the top of her head, she descended the stairs again.

Anna could not imagine what the welfare of Alfred could have to do with the aches and pains of the old gentleman; however, as the former occupied the first place in her thoughts, the dress, distasteful as its glaring red pattern was to her, had been put on, her hair, in accordance with Susan's commands, had been combed down the grave little face, and this preliminary penance over, Anna left her room, in happy ignorance of the purport of the little man's visit.

Two hours had passed; still Anna sat a victim to the whimsical individual, who, seated opposite her, never once relinquished his tight grasp of both her hands. His garrulity might have been summed up in the following,—that he thought her a very nice girl, admired her brother, and intended to place him where his talents would unfold to advantage, and that aspiring mind find scope for the exercise of its ambition. But like all other miseries, there was an end also to this torture, and the strange little man arose to depart, and too happy to be free from the caresses so offensive to her, she flew to her room, locked her door and found relief to her agitated feelings in a flood of tears. There was so much to be borne; to be obliged to submit at all times to the caprice of this mysterious stranger, and after all, even if Alfred were willing to yield, so distasteful would it be to receive a kindness from one they so intensely dis-

liked. Again Alfred's ill health and need of assistance, crowded upon her recollection, and amid a thousand hopes and fears the troubled spirit cast itself upon an Almighty power, and she laid the aching head upon her pillow.

Mr. Barrow's visits became frequent; and so wily were all parties concerned in the plot, that even the quick eye of Alfred discovered no object, other than the desire to obtain for him a vacancy that was expected shortly in the firm of which Mr. Barrow was a principal partner. Alfred, whose recovery now emancipated him from his chamber, seldom did penance by remaining in the house, and Anna missed him greatly, and sometimes felt he might have endured a little that was disagreeable, to cheer her loneliness and scatter the ennui that so often hung heavily upon her; but upon chiding him for the neglect, an embrace and a kiss were always a satisfactory atonement, so glad was she to see him happy; she could forego the pleasure of his society, to know he was free from the demands of Mrs. Gilbert, and out of reach of the sounds of tyranny that ever emanated from the harsh tones of Susan.

## CHAPTER IX.

"Leaves have their time to fall,  
And flowers to wither at the north wind's breath;  
And stars to set,—but all,  
Thou hast all seasons for thine own, Oh Death!"

MRS. HEMANS.

DURING Alfred's illness, Mr. Everett and Anna had often been thrown together, and by slow degrees the reserve that characterized him, wore away. Perhaps he found much to pity; it might be he found somewhat to admire in the quiet little mind, that timorously retreated from the slightest approach to an intimacy, the sympathy and confidence of which she would have given worlds to have possessed. However, Mr. Everett was too impenetrable for any scrutiny, and all curiosity must resort to patience, and await the issue of time.

Who or what his family and friends were, if he had such, and what little history belonged to him, was more than Susan's indefatigable exertions could discover; that he came from Boston was a certainty, but that was all. Some declared him very unhappy; others, that he was out of health only; and there

were those who were sure it was his natural disposition to be unlike most men of his age.

One evening, as Anna sat alone in the little parlor, thinking she was the only person at home, Mr. Everett entered and took a seat. He spoke of the change of seasons and of the flight of time, and though his subject was grave, his manner was anything but gloomy, even if he could not be called cheerful. He dwelt upon the roll of events that pass before us, ever unfolding something unexpected, something new; and the perplexities and difficulties that must form a part of each life, when the essence of true religion would be found the only comforter. He was very earnest in exhorting all who desired to become a follower of the Saviour, to make an open profession of their religion, and spoke solemnly and emphatically upon the institution of the Holy Communion, the dying command of Him who, having finished his great work of redemption, ascended into the highest heaven, where He now sitteth at the right hand of the Father. "Anna, continued he, were we to wait until we were holy, we could never approach those holy mysteries; the feeling of our utter unworthiness is sufficient, if it lead us to a true repentance, having a steadfast faith, a lively hope, a universal charity. This is all that is required of us, the rest remains with God; for 'Every good gift, and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning'; so that, unworthy as we are, we may trust in His mercy. 'Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.' And even were there no life beyond this present existence, if a conformity to the principles of religion enabled us to follow more consistently in the path of rectitude, with more love to our fellow men, would it not be worthy our attention?" He seemed inclined to say more, but here they were interrupted, and rising to go he added, "After the great Napoleon, who half conquered the world, had himself been conquered, and retired to the little island of St. Helena, some friend asked him, 'Which was the proudest day of his whole life?' He expected of course, that he would name some day when he had fought one of his hardest battles, or achieved one of his greatest victories, or had received the crown as emperor from the hands of the Pope; but his answer was simply 'The day on which I received my first communion.'" As he left the room Anna followed him with her eyes, until the door of the little study in which he passed so much of his time, closed upon him, and the tall figure was hidden from her view;

but her memory ever retained his words, nor were they, as they fell from the rich full voice, lost in their effect upon the listener, and before long he saw the effect of his words, as his eye fell upon the slender figure of Anna as she knelt at the altar.

"Busy as usual, Anna," said Kate, as she entered, and threw herself into the nearest seat. "I had nothing particular to occupy me just now, so thought I would come to take a peep at you. How is Alfred? I longed so much to see him during his illness, and sometimes chose a book to read to him, for I know some young fellows would be delighted to have me beguile their weary hours away when they are so ill, but then I knew father would scold, mother would lecture, and Josephine would never forget to talk about it."

"How is poor Minerva?"

"I haven't asked her lately. But do for pity's sake tell me, is it true that you tolerate that old Barrow? What does he come for? not to see you, surely!"

"He is a friend to Alfred, and I think it but right to treat him politely."

"Oh! But my dear girl, you pay dearly for his friendship, if you are obliged to sit by the hour and hear the catalogue of gout, asthma, cramp, paralysis, palsy, colic, cough, palpitation, blindness, deafness, fits, spasms, and all the other infirmities of the old sinner. He never tried it but once at our house; for we all, after almost strangling ourselves to keep back the laughter, burst into a loud roar, in which the very dog and parrot united their efforts, as the peal followed the little bachelor out of the house. That was the evening he came to make a proposal for me, when I had not so much as condescended to look at the little scarecrow, and he said he thought it nothing but right to tell what few ailments troubled him a little occasionally. And that was and ever will be the last of him in his dealings with me. So I hear the Villiers are to start soon. Charles is very attractive, don't you think so? Did you know Mr. Everett was very much attached to Lydia?"

"I've heard nothing of it."

"Oh, it's quite true. Don't you remember how sad he has always seemed? Of course he knows very well no young lady with her fortune, would care for a poverty-stricken preacher, although, they say, she likes him. But I cannot believe it, she is such a beautiful girl. I never envied any one half as much."

"She is beautiful and good, but I know nothing of the rest. You must please excuse me now. I am glad to see you, and will call to see Miss Minerva as soon as possible."

Anna was watching her visitor from the window as she descended the steps, thinking of her words in regard to the sweet Lydia, when her eye caught a glimpse of Alfred, who appeared much excited, from the irregularly rapid steps with which he approached the house. His illness had made him much thinner, and he appeared taller. She sometimes thought he was rapidly declining, when the little incident of his proposed tombstone struck painfully upon her recollection. "How Alfred grows!" said she, half aloud. "Of course," replied a voice behind her, "ill weeds grow apace;" and turning, she encountered Susan.

"I thought I spoke to you once before, girl, about staring out of the window, wasting your time: you had better go and boil some rice instead, or you and that scapegrace will fast instead of feasting at dinner time." But Alfred's appearance alarmed her, and running to meet him, she found him almost breathless as he reached the door. "Oh Anna, something very awful has happened at Mr. Villiers!" and he sunk upon the stairs to rest.

"Is any one dead?"

"I fear so, by this time."

"Who, not Lydia?"

"I saw her a moment ago, but she seemed quite distracted. She ran down stairs, and seizing hold of me exclaimed, 'Alfred, we are in trouble!' then letting go her hold, passed me hurriedly by. I went to the kitchen, but it was deserted, all were up stairs; where I heard lamentations and excessive distress; a feeling of sickness came over me, and fearing I might faint, I hurried homeward."

"What's all that nonsense about?" inquired Susan.

"I must go there now," said Anna.

"You would be of no use, girl, I'll go myself, and see what the matter is;" continued Susan. "I dare say that brother of theirs has fallen headlong and broken his neck. Boys are always making trouble for themselves and every body else." It took Susan a long time to equip herself as she thought becoming, before visiting such a house as that of Mr. Villiers; and Anna, who had prevailed upon Alfred to lie down awhile, remained in the most anxious suspense to know what had happened. He arose several times to go again to make inquiry, but it was raining, and as his cough seemed returning, Anna would not allow him to risk fresh cold, and begged him to wait the return of Mr. Everett, or Susan. And reading to him to compose him, she was at last satisfied to see he had fallen asleep. Mr. Everett did not return, and it was night fall when Susan came back.

To Anna's earnest inquiry her answer was, "Oh, I scarcely stopped to see, Miss Pyke was there, and we went shopping; you did not suppose I was going to stay all day in a house hearing the cries of misery, did you? There, don't pester me with your questions. I'll take my supper now and go to bed; Sally would go so far, and I'm tired." Having seated herself in her loose robe, she exclaimed, "There'll be no travelling to the Holy Land now, or anywhere else either."

"Susan, what do you mean? Indeed, I think you might tell me what has happened;" and she burst into tears.

"I don't like young girls to meddle with other people's business."

Early the next morning Mr. Everett returned, and brought word that Mr. Villiers was dead.

It was the last morning the sun rose for the affectionate father. The happy group met for the morning devotions. The second lesson was the seventeenth chapter of St. John's Gospel, where our Saviour prays for his apostles. Charles usually read the lessons;—by some chance it was read by Mr. Villiers himself. His comments were longer than ordinarily, as he dwelt upon the sublimity of the language of the Saviour's last prayer upon earth,—His parting wish to meet those chosen ones in Heaven, for whom He now poured forth the fullness of His love, in pleading for their glorification. "Father, I will that they also whom Thou hast given me, be with me where I am." It was not a suppliant petitioning, it was the claim of a conqueror. He desired they may be partakers of His glory, and so importunate is the plea, as though these earthly jewels were needed to complete His crown,—their happiness constituting a part of His own! The little group was about to disperse; a remark was dropped; so impressive was the answer, all stood to hear, while Mr. Villiers seeming unwilling to leave the subject, continued, "Each has some appointed work to perform, some little niche in the spiritual temple to occupy. Yours may be no splendid services, no flaming or brilliant actions to blaze and dazzle in the eye of man. It may be the quiet unobtrusive inner work, the secret prayer, the mortified sin, the forgiven injury, the trifling act of self-sacrifice for God's glory, and the good of others, of which no eye but the Eye which seeth in secret is cognizant. It matters not how small. Remember, with Him, motive dignifies action. He can be glorified in little things as well as great things, and by nothing more than the daily walk, the daily life!"

The father lingered that morning to take a second farewell of

his family : it was the last time they looked upon that face radiant with life ; he left the house. At noon they surrounded again the same form, but it was that of — a corpse.

Mr. Villiers was a principal stockholder in one of the first banks of Philadelphia. Shortly before his death, the founder of a railroad in the West, being incensed towards some of the stockholders for not agreeing to unite in his speculation, bribed the editor of a leading paper to proclaim the bank, "Suspended." Demands were made instantly, and unable to fulfil all obligations, the personal property of the stockholders was seized, and Mr. Villiers reduced to penury.

He was returning from a depositor where in vain he had begged him to wait, when a fit of apoplexy seized him, he fell insensible upon the pavement, and before he could be conveyed home, life was extinct.

The day arrived when the last rites to the departed must be performed. The rich and the poor, the arrogant and the humble, thronged the aisles which had witnessed his attendance so many years. All met to mourn the loss of one whom all respected, although only a few could appreciate.

The solemn silence was broken by the words "I am the resurrection and the life, saith the Lord : he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live : and whosoever liveth and believeth in me, shall never die." "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth. And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God : whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another."

They stood by the grave ; the remains of the fond husband and affectionate parent were committed to the solitude of the tomb. "Earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust ;" and the bereaved ones must return to a home circle vacant and desolate, because his smile was gone forever, and the household once rendered happy by his presence, would know him no more !

## CHAPTER X.

"The soul's dark cottage, shattered and decay'd,  
Lies in new light through chinks which time has made."  
"And yet that sweet face is not all of sorrow,  
It wears a softer and a higher mood ;  
And seemeth from the world within to borrow  
A holy and a constant fortitude."

A week has passed ; the last beams of the setting sun are shedding their effulgence of peace over the streets of Philadelphia. In her room, and alone, sits the beautiful Lydia ; the robe of mourning seems to lend a calm resignation to the melancholy face, as the full, dark eyes are raised to the window to watch the last rays of the declining day. Before her on a table, is an unfinished letter, which appears often to engross her attention. Twilight has faded ; the taper is lighted, and the letter concluded. The direction of her grandfather in Prussia has just been written, when a gentle tap, and the widow enters.

"May a blessing attend it, my Lydia, for we are penniless !"

The epistle informed the old gentleman of the death of his son, with a touching appeal to his sympathies in regard to their poverty, and great was the anxiety with which the answer was awaited.

A day was set for the sale of the furniture, the proceeds of which was all that would remain to them. A last look had been taken of those rooms peculiarly dear to all, and the doors had been locked, — they would enter them no more. They repaired to Mrs. Villiers' dressing-room, where many arrangements must be made preparatory to their leaving that beloved home.

It was past midnight, yet Lottie was the only one who had retired. The sum of wages due to each domestic, together with some little token that the faithful services were not forgotten, had been carefully put up. The morning dawned, yet found them still busily occupied ; nor was it until an hour before the breakfast bell, that they sought repose.

The last breakfast to be taken there was over. The servants were summoned, and Charles delivered the several packages ; then the "good-by" was said with many tears, and the faithful group took their departure.

About noon, the mourners repaired to the house of a friend ; the sale took place, and they now awaited an answer from Prussia to decide what course to pursue.

It came. Not a word was spoken as the widow broke the seal and unfolded it. Cold and indifferent, it contained very little, and the sum of that was, "You can come over here if you like, and if I find you are the right kind of children, I might do something for you."

It could not take long to decide. The best to be done, was to go, and trust for the rest.

Accordingly, the little state-room were engaged in the good ship "Wing of the West," bound for Bremen; and now for the last time, the morning dawned for them in Philadelphia. Many were those who came to say "good-by;" and among them was one who felt their loss most keenly.

"Excuse me," said Lydia to the Misses Danvers, as she caught a glimpse of Anna, and leaving them, sprung forward to meet the pale, sorrowful face of her affectionate friend.

"Oh Lydia! I cannot realize that you are really going."

Lydia's tears were the only response, until, buoying herself up against the despondency, she raised her head from the shoulder upon which it had fallen, and brushing away the tears, exclaimed, "Anna, there is no girl to sympathize as you can, for you know what it is to suffer. And this is the last day I can see you, the last time I shall hear you speak. You can never come where I am, I must content myself without you. Oh, Anna! I cannot tell you how much I have loved you. In many things your judgment was far superior to mine, and I could ask your opinion, and trust in your good sense; and then I felt how much you loved me, and knowing how lonely you were, drew me still closer towards you: and now we must part."

"Girls!" said Charles, coming up with Alfred, "Here is that Pyke, let us escape up stairs." He led the way to a balcony at the back of the house, where they could remain for a while undisturbed.

"When shall we meet again?" said Lydia, as Carlotta joined them.

"And where?" rejoined Charles. "But that is not for us to consider; we cannot any of us tell what the future may be."

"Come, young ladies," said a domestic, "the baggage has all gone, and your mamma is ready."

"Anna, you will come with us to the dock," said Lydia, seizing her arm, as she was about to enter the carriage.

"I am afraid I cannot," began Anna; but Alfred fairly lifted her in without farther ceremony, saying, "Susan can prepare the dinner for once, for a change."

Through the busy streets they were whirled to the greater

bustle of the dock, where the honest face of the captain welcomed them on board the "Wing of the West." She was a sailing vessel, not long launched, and to one accustomed to the sea, must have worn an inviting appearance. But there was little time to think of such things. There were many passengers and the deck was crowded.

"All aboard" from the rough voice of the captain, was a signal for departure. A hasty "good-by" was spoken, and friends parted.

The travellers stood upon the deck, watching the forms upon the dock below, until they receded from their view; the clanking of chains, the coiling of ropes, and the unfurling of sails, made them seek quiet in the cabin below. But there all was confusion. Some were still weeping at parting with friends and relatives, children were crying in spite of the loud lullabies of their nurses. Stewards and stewardesses whirled to and fro, often treading on the very toes they were trying most to avoid, while, to complete the chaos, trunks without number were constantly wheeled from one end of the saloon to the other. They sought the deck again, which they found cleared and presenting an appearance of good order. They were now in deep water, and the land was fast fading from their sight.

To Mrs. Villiers it brought back the scene of her estrangement from her native land; an orphan, with few to love her, her husband had been all to her; with him, no trouble, no danger was too great for her. It seemed but yesterday, that they were all in the world to each other, as they stood upon the deck taking a last look at the land of their birth. But now he was gone never more to return to her. Yet there were those he had left to bear his name, and as she gazed upon them, her regrets for the dead were changed into sympathies for the living, for here all the energies of her soul found a source, and would never cease to flow, stimulating to action as long as life remained.

A gong summoned them to tea. Trunks had now found a destination, stewards did not stumble for old ladies' corns to pay the penalty; and children had forgotten their sorrows in the fond arms of Morpheus, while the elder members of the little community found their tears had ceased to flow, as the sad adieu was for awhile forgotten among the surrounding novelties. Most of the passengers retired early, and our travellers, weary with fatigue and excitement, followed their example, and sought their first night's repose upon the waters. Their vessel was of clipper build, and with favorable winds, they expected

to reach Bremen in four weeks. Theirs was an adventurous undertaking, but too weary to think, they soon fell asleep.

The brother and sister remained standing upon the dock, gazing intently upon the gallant ship, that was passing out of sight.

"Oh, they are gone!" exclaimed Anna, "my sweet Lydia, I never shall see you again! Oh Alfred, if we had never known them!"

"Come, Anna, it's cold for you here;" and drawing her arm closer into his own, he led the way from the dock; he was thoughtful and unusually sad, and too weary to talk, they pursued their long, tedious journey homeward.

"Well, I must say," began Susan, "it's a fine thing to stay out at your own pleasure, to see people go Europe; perhaps before long you will have to stay away from here altogether; then you will see how you will relish that. Anna, how dare you neglect your duties in this way, go and take off your bonnet, I've a hundred things for you to do, and as you choose to stay away all day, of course, no one was going to boil any rice for you, so, as there's nothing for you to eat, you can begin work immediately."

"Anna, I'm going out, for then I may find something to occupy me, and make me forget I am hungry;" and before she could entreat him to stay and rest, Alfred had left the house.

Faint, weary and unhappy as she was, Anna managed to complete one after another some of the hundred things Susan spoke of having in store for her. First, several rooms must be swept and dusted. Next, Anna must imitate the embroidery of a flounce that had been borrowed from the region of Sally Pyke. Then Susan felt melancholy, and would have Anna read a Psalm. After which some eggs must be poached for the "good man's tea;" and as the time drew near for his return, Anna was sent out for some of the best French pomade, that she might dress Susan's hair. She had come to the last braid, hoping her tasks, for the present, at an end, when Susan exclaimed, "Anna, you ought to go now to Mrs. Barrow and read to the poor old lady, you may be old and blind some day yourself, especially when her good son is doing all in his power for Alfred, you ought to manifest a little gratitude."

"Oh, but I was there yesterday!" replied Anna, as she recalled the wearisome hours she had spent answering the old lady, and the still more trying evening in the company of her oddity of a son.

"Well," said Susan, "every other day will do, so go to-morrow."

"We have lost one of the jewels of Philadelphia," remarked Mr. Everett, rising from his unfinished tea; "there are few young ladies to be found, like Miss Villiers." He said no more, and was soon shut once again in the solitude of his little study. With difficulty Anna carefully concealed the remnant of his meal, and awaited impatiently Alfred's return. It was now dark, yet there remained fifteen minutes of Mrs. Gilbert's appointed time for lighting the candles, and Anna was brooding in darkness when the bell rang. "I'm so glad you are come!" exclaimed she, opening the door.

"Yes, my dear Anna," said a low whining voice. "I know you're glad to see me."

Vexed and disappointed, Anna was forced to take the bony, trembling hand of the little gentleman she so much disliked, and nothing but the image of Alfred constantly before her enabled her to control her feelings, and treat him politely. The umbrella and hat had at last found a suitable resting-place, (for the little man was often in jeopardy lest some mischievous individual should play some trick upon them,) the red and white handkerchiefs had been used to satisfaction, and the snuff-box at last found its way back to the pocket again, when, bending forward, and seizing both her hands, as he peered at her through the pebbles on his nose, he began —

"Sweet Anna, beloved one, I've something very important, — I've come on purpose to tell you, because I knew it would make you very happy, and that is the great object of my life; — yes, Anna dearest — I mean it. Yes, yes."

A fit of coughing prevented his proceeding; Anna fetched him some water, and he at length continued, —

"Peter Crookshank has left at last, and Alfred can now have the vacancy, tell him to come to-morrow."

"Thank you, sir, we are very much obliged."

Anna was struggling against the odious caresses of the little old man, when, to her great relief, the bell rang again, and Alfred entered. Mr. Barrow cast a shy look at him, and whispering to Anna, "You will tell him all about it yourself," took hat and umbrella, and left the house.

Alfred liked his new occupation, though the salary was small for the first year, a mere pittance Susan said, and still declared they must turn out of the house if it were not raised very soon.

"Anna," said Alfred one evening after he had been sitting some time in a meditative mood, "that Barrow comes now more frequently than ever, and it is not on my account; does he think, I wonder, that you are to be the sacrifice for his assisting me, certainly he comes only to see you."

Anna gazed at him in all the agony of a painful idea that flashed suddenly across her mind. She had once had such a thought before, and now the full force of all the preceding hints and suggestions of Susan, came before her, and in a flood of tears she exclaimed, "Alfred, what do you mean? oh, but I understand too well! Yet can you not save me? Oh Alfred, do save me from him; I would rather do anything — do help me!"

"Anna dear, try not to think of it to-night. You know as long as we retain our reason, there is a soothing balm in the holy influence of prayer. 'The Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.' And Anna, neither you nor I can be so very forlorn as we might be, if we were entirely alone in the world. We have each other to live for, at least; and then we have the blessed promise 'If two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them.' And knowing this you see we are not so very wretched as we might be. Good-night, love, and let us try to leave the future in better hands."

Mr. Everett was ill. He desired to have as few to see him, as possible, and gave no definite reason for his indisposition. Yet every one was sorry except Susan, who now thought the time was come for her to convince the good man of her abilities for an excellent nurse, which every one must know was very requisite in a wife. Accordingly, as soon as the little necessities had been carefully prepared by Anna, Susan carried them to the invalid, and expressed each time the deepest regrets for his illness, as she manifested the greater anxiety for his comfort.

## CHAPTER XI.

"There was a wreck last night!  
A wreck? Then where's the ship, the crew?"  
"By the quivering gleams of livid blue  
Her deck is crowded with despairing souls,  
And in the hollow pauses of the storm  
We heard their piercing cries."  
Shout to them in the pauses of the storm,  
And tell them there is hope —  
And let our deep-toned bell its loudest peal  
Send cheerly o'er the deep —  
'Twill be a comfort to the wretched souls  
In their extremity — all things are possible:  
Fresh hope may give them strength, and strength deliverance.  
"It is too late;

No help of human hand can reach them there —  
One hour will hush their cries — and by the morn  
Thou wilt behold the ruin — wreck and corse  
Float on the weltering wave."

HAVING recovered from sea-sickness, Lydia made out a schedule for the disposal of her time. As yet, she found but little diversion in her own thoughts, and she could not remain unoccupied. As to Charles, he intended, he said, to act just as the spirit moved him, which was part of the day in teasing Lottie, often mourning the loss of his poor, dear father, and the remainder, in wondering what sort of an old gentleman his grandfather was — whether gouty and crabby, or indulgent and kind. Mrs. Villiers' health continued very indifferent, but the mornings were fine, and the sea breeze began to invigorate her.

For herself, life seemed to have lost its charm, yet for those left to her, she often entertained brilliant hopes; still her anxious fears, lest they might not meet with success and be drifted upon the world by the cold blasts of poverty unprotected, would occasionally haunt her; but not wishing to throw a gloom over them, she would often complain of some slight indisposition, that she might shed her tears in secret, and in her cabin alone, act the part of the miser in her sufferings.

The passengers numbered about thirty, all were now sufficiently acquainted, to form, for the time being, a social circle. It was June, and the mornings were generally spent on deck, when the ladies who had recovered from sea-sickness were occupied in sewing, while some accommodating gent read aloud, until eight bells were struck, — the signal for dinner; after which, the indisposed, or more often the indolent, sought the couches below, and this was the time our young friends took for their

own readings and study. The calm pleasant evenings brought all on deck again, where they danced, sung, and joined in various games, in which even the closest followers of etiquette could not refuse to participate. So that in general, the time passed pleasantly, except once now and then, when some fidgety old maid, or a quizzical old bachelor made them remember it requires a mixture to make a world, and that oddities may as well constitute one ingredient. The Sundays were observed in order and quiet by the crew, as no duty was done by them, except that which necessity demanded, and Mrs. Villiers never failed, when the weather permitted, to gather her children round her, while they passed the morning in the use of their church service.

It was twilight on the ocean; in an obscure part of the deck, apart from the rest, sat Lydia. The face, as it wore the traces of tears, was expressively beautiful; her eyes were fixed upon the horizon, from which the gorgeous sunset was fast disappearing. But the tearful eyes were not contemplating those rich tints gilding the heavens — her thoughts were upon a sadder theme. With what different prospects had she thought to have crossed that ocean! and as her eyes fell upon her robe of mourning, and she remembered for whom she wore it, life seemed for the moment, only a burden. The moon had risen, and was casting its beams of peace on the rippling waters, as a light footstep approached and a musical voice said, —

"Why, Lydia, quite alone? Come and watch with me the crystal foam, as it sparkles in the moonlight."

Lottie's face was the picture of animation, and the full blue eyes gazing intently upon the tearful countenance, as the flaxen tresses waving over the simple black dress, contrasted with that dark robe, and added a charm to the gentle entreaties, and putting her arm round the slender form, Lydia suffered herself to be led to the side of the deck, where, looking over, they could watch with what rapidity their gallant vessel was sailing over the deep blue waters.

"I don't like the looks of it," said some one behind them in a sharp, hurried tone. They turned, and saw the captain and several gentlemen looking earnestly at a cloud not far in the distance.

"We may as well make up our minds to have a bad night of it," rejoined a companion.

"Oh, Lydia, do watch this wave. See! here it comes. Was ever anything more beautiful!"

"Listen, Lottie, love!" and she drew her sister from her object, to contemplate the group before them.

"Yes, captain, depend upon it, we shall have a storm."

"Why, girls," said Charles, coming up to them suddenly, "I've been looking for you, come down now, it begins to blow a gale, and they are going to 'about ship,' and the deck will be no place for ladies."

They joined their mother in the cabin, and had just arranged their several occupations for the evening, when their attention was directed to the noise above. The vessel soon began to "pitch and roll" tremendously, while the rough voices of the crew told the deck was a scene of busy work. For a time there would be a lull, then came again, as a mighty avalanche, that world of waters, when every mast creaked afresh, and every timber seemed shaken, while the lamp above them lay parallel with the ceiling from which it was suspended, proving the vessel to be upon her side. As in similar situations of danger, many ladies found their only resource in pouring forth the most prodigious screams, until the courage of the bravest was shaken amid the groans and cries of those around them.

"Ladies, you had better go to your berths, and we will fasten you in your beds;" said the composed voice of the black stewardess, as with no small degree of nonchalance, she proceeded to put her words into operation upon all who were not inclined to oppose her.

There is much satisfaction in knowing the extent of danger, yet those upon the deck could draw little hope as they saw their ship tossed upon the billows, until she dipped her top sail in the dark waters.

There was a lull for a few hours, after which the rolling again created fresh fears, as the thunder pealed tremendously and the storm fell in torrents that threatened to remove the deck. Down rushed the mighty weight of salt waters into the saloon.

"We are going down! Oh God, have mercy, we are fast sinking!" The rushing ceased for a few moments, as if an interval for prayer. Then — an awful crash! and for a time all other sounds were drowned in the deafening thunder of some mysterious weight falling, with a tremendous force, across the deck.

"Lord save us, we perish!" cried many.

Again struggled the distressed vessel with those mighty powers of the elements, and again rolled o'er the ocean, the last, the only hope — the minute gun.

There was all the terror of an untimely death! But a little while, and they must stand before the great Tribunal to give an account of the deeds done in the body. What then were the

treasures of earth, the glitter of wealth, the illustrations of honor, the glory of fame? and what would not now be given for one other breath, one more second, to plead for mercy?

"Lydia, where are you?" At the farthest end of the saloon, upon the floor, sat Mrs. Villiers. One arm clasped a beam, while the other supported the form of Lottie, upon whose pale countenance, when the glimmering lamp light fell upon its horror-stricken features, seemed to rest the hue of death. By her side sat Charles, repeating in a low tone, the petition, "Oh most glorious and gracious Lord God, who dwellest in Heaven, but beholdest all things below, look down, we beseech thee, and hear us, calling out of the depth of misery, and out of the jaws of this death, which is now ready to swallow us up. Save, Lord, or else we perish. The living, the living shall praise thee. O send Thy word of command to rebuke the raging winds and the roaring sea; that we being delivered from this distress, may live to serve Thee, and to glorify Thy name all the days of our life. Hear, Lord, and save us, for the infinite merits of our blessed Saviour, Thy Son, our Lord Jesus Christ!" Lost as the words generally were, still ever and anon would fall upon some ear, as a surviving hope in the hour of anguish, a broken fragment of the supplication.

"Oh, where is Lydia! My beloved child, come and die with us, let us not be parted in death! Speak to me, Lydia! or have you perished!"

At last a faint voice exclaimed, "Mother, I am here—I cannot get to you."

The tossing became less intense, and by means of the fixtures, Charles was enabled to crawl by degrees to where Lydia was. During nearly the whole of the storm, she had supported herself by one of the stanchions, from which she hung suspended until the weary limbs were exhausted, and she was thrown upon the opposite side of the saloon. She was insensible from the fall, and Charles, as he endeavored to lift the prostrated form, was chilled by the icy coldness, and suddenly struck by the persuasion that he clasped a lifeless body.

The night was past, and the pale grey dawn now stole in upon the sufferers. By degrees the vessel righted herself, the wind lulled, the lurching ceased.

"Thank Heaven! the danger is over," cried one.

The exclamations of thanksgiving were scarcely uttered, when the door that had been fastened upon them was suddenly opened, and the captain's voice cried "The ship has sprung a leak, we are going to the bottom!"

In vain was the steady lookout at the mast head; no sail gladdened the horizon; and now as the death knell, sounded the firing of the minute gun.

Lydia awoke to the danger; and as soon as the painful limbs would allow, with the aid of Charles she joined their mother, and Lottie. There are terrors not to be told, horrors only to be felt; and these, in all their appalling vividness, seized the suffering souls of the "Wing of the West;" yet, although unable to form words into prayer, many a heart was uplifted to the Mercy Seat, where dwelleth the Omnipotent, mighty to save!

"The leak has been found!" exclaimed a man, rushing into the saloon, "soon it will be stopped, and we are safe!"

The fastenings which had prevented all access to the deck, were now removed, and the doors and hatchways thrown open. Before long the leak was pronounced effectually stopped, all danger was over, and the minute gun was heard no more. In order to right the vessel, the main mast had been cut away, the falling of which caused the crash that had created so much dread; and from the loss of her rigging, the once noble ship presented the appearance of a complete wreck. Still the wind was in their favor, and they were now in a direct line for Bremen.

Now many began to tell of their fears, their sufferings from starvation, and every other real and fanciful apprehension that had taken possession of the soul. The danger was past; many chatted freely, and the storm was already only—a tale to be told.

"Oh, pray don't let us so soon forget the mercy of our deliverance," exclaimed Charles, as he stood in the midst of a group upon the deck, and turned towards them with much earnestness; "Let us return to the cabin, and offer up a thanksgiving; we are not yet at Bremen, and none can tell what storms are awaiting us before we reach our destined harbor."

All gazed in surprise upon the youth, in whose countenance glowed the zeal which constrained his earnest appeal. The influence of his words was felt by many, who now left the deck, and followed him below: the force of example had its sway, and soon the remainder had deserted the deck, and joined their companions, where, with the exception of a few who remained on duty, the whole ship's company were assembled. In the midst of them, standing upon a seat, was Charles. The breathless stillness was broken by him as he began the solemn service. Having read the Psalms for thanksgiving after a storm, in which the rest followed, every knee was bent, as their young leader, in a clear, firm voice, offered the fervent petition in the beau-

tiful prayers appointed for that service. Then, "Our Father," in which the children's voices were united, arose from every lip, and having sung a hymn and received the benediction, the little congregation dispersed. There might have been those regardless of all religion, yet there is often, by the blessing of God, a silent influence, irresistible, that will steal over the soul, and find amid its thorny, rugged surface, some resting-place whereon to leave its efficacious, its lasting impression.

It was now late in the afternoon, and many began to recollect dinner had not been served, and grew impatient as they expressed that they were hungry.

"Just think of those poor sailors," exclaimed Charles; "who have been hard at work for our preservation for nearly four and twenty hours, without tasting food, and with a teetotaler for a captain!"

The hint was well received by more than a few, and notwithstanding their captain loved his dollars more than he did his gallant crew, he was prevailed upon to send to the fore-castle, a somewhat more inviting repast than their usual hard fare.

The meal was nearly over in the saloon, and all talked of retiring early, when a door was hastily thrown back, and a voice exclaimed, "A ship in distress!" They listened for further intelligence, and the firing of a distant minute gun fell with its weight of melancholy upon the ear. "Oh, can we not help them?" and many rushed upon the deck. But no sail, no speck relieved the expanse of water; yet the firing continued, although the vessel was not to be seen. "Bear down to them!" was the universal cry, and ere long the "Wing of the West" had changed her course, and was fast "making" for the direction of the sound.

"Ship on the starboard side!" from the lookout at the fore-top-sail-yard." Eagerly did every eye follow the direction: first a single spar, then a hull was visible. As they drew nearer she appeared to be a bark, but presented every indication of a complete wreck. Two of the masts had been partly cut down, in order, probably, that the sufferers might cling to these and float, when their vessel went down; yet this work was but half completed, and the firing of the minute gun, from the failure of strength to load it, as it was supposed, had ceased. The remnant of a flag was at half-mast, but so rent into shreds that it was impossible to discover to what nation she belonged. Nearer and nearer, and now the anxious watchers could discern the many forms clinging to the wreck. The wind was high, a heavy sea was running, and the mountain billows often hid her from their gaze.

"Take care, Lydia, or you will fall, it is impossible to stand unsupported!" Charles went to where she was standing, and putting his arm around her, continued, "now I can hold you. But you do not want to look? — so very awful!"

"Oh! I cannot take my eyes from it!"

"Lydia, they will perish! Oh Heaven! spare them until we can reach them!"

"No easy matter," replied the captain; and turning to an officer he gave the order to "about ship."

"What, turn away from her? Oh, captain, you cannot surely — for pity's sake you will rescue them!"

"A sinking ship is no small hazard."

"But they have seen us; and what must their disappointment be to see us turning away;" cried Lydia, as her tears fell fast upon the coat-sleeve of the captain, which she grasped tightly in her distress.

"Oh save them, save them!" from every quarter of the deck. The wreck had sunk from their sight. She rose. Again the billows covered her, and naught remained whereon to rest the aching eye, but that vast expanse of mighty waters.

"Charles, let me have that glass," said Lydia, as she turned to him the countenance of despair.

"Lydia, if you are not more careful, you will be overboard." Her mantle was partly blown off, her hair had fallen from its confines, and the flowing tresses were waving at the will of the wind, as she stood ready to dart forward, exclaiming, "can nothing be done? Oh, have mercy!"

Many of the noble crew came forward, and entreated to be allowed to man a boat to the wreck. The captain appeared staggered for a moment by their earnest appeal, then answered decidedly "I cannot afford to lose you, my brave men, no, no," and turning to the passengers as he saw the scorn, anger and despair visible on every countenance, he continued. "If we value our own lives we must keep aloof from that sinking ship, as she goes down; think of the whirlpool she will make, and should we approach her now, she would draw us into the awful vortex."

"Then throw ropes to them."

"What, at a distance of two miles?"

"See! they rise again. Look, how many are on her deck now! Oh, there they are, kneeling, with their hands uplifted to heaven. Oh, Father, have mercy! Spare those precious souls for thy Son's sake! Oh, we are near, but cannot reach — they see us, but we do not help them! Oh, merciful God, save ere

they perish!" It rolled tremendously; then righted; was tossed again, then lost to their view.

"Oh, they are gone! we shall see them no more! Do, Captain, let us linger here a little while!"

But no; freight was now higher than ever; should he delay an hour, upon reaching port he might find it down. The "Wing of the West" must continue in her course, leaving the sinking ship to her unhappy fate.

Again, and for the last time, she rose. Higher bounded the billows, as more violently the wild waves lashed the shattered hull, leaving the masses of foam dancing triumphantly round the ruin they had wrought. Lower and lower, and now only the deck was visible. In vain did they look for some boat, some floating raft, plank, or spar, but none could be descried; only to the wreck, clung those despairing souls.

"Is no aid in our power? oh, awful scene!"

Once her bows were raised in mid-air: then the immense waves met as they dashed over her deck. The mighty rushing of the engulfing waters drowned the cries as they ascended to Heaven. A roll — an awful plunge — and all was over! She was seen no more!

"But the bodies will rise!" cried Lydia. She turned to the deck, it was deserted; nearly all had gone to their cabins, to weep over the sad catastrophe. She heard lamentations near her, and looking round found they proceeded from the man at the wheel.

"Oh it was so awful not to help them!" and her tears flowed afresh as she beheld the grief of the weather-beaten tar.

Ah! Miss, if I'd not signed articles to obey orders, you'd not find me here shedding useless tears on the deck, when I'm a good mind to jump overboard."

"But I have signed no articles, and no captain can detain me," said Charles, rushing forward, followed by a group of gentlemen.

"Who is willing to assist me? Here is a good life-boat!"

"Charles, what do you mean?"

"Lydia, don't hold me. Would you not have me pick up some of those bodies? Say, gentlemen, who will join?"

"I couldn't leave my wife." "There's such a heavy sea," "I don't know how to swim," came the several responses.

"Here, here! I will go," said a young man, and turning to a companion, he added, "I'll leave my things with you. If you hear no more of me, write and tell my sister, that she may know George Taylor was not found wanting in this act of humanity. Now I'm ready. Where's the boat?"

"Here she is," answered Charles, "just look to that davit. That's right, thank you."

"Oh Charles, Charles!" cried Lydia, clinging to him. "Think of poor mother! Do you love her, do you love Lydia, do you care for Lottie?"

The group around them had greatly increased. In their midst stood the captain, sullen and silent.

"Wait one second," said Charles, "I'll go below to my mother. No! Lydia, kiss her for me. Good-by!" and tearing himself from her clasp, joined his brave companion in the boat, which was lowered amid many entreaties to return, and loud shouts in honor of their noble effort, spurring them on, while many a prayer was offered that the blessing of God might accompany them.

"Here are some provisions," said an officer.

"Give me the bag," said a stout young man, coming forward. He seized it, and lowered himself into the boat, saying, "If I perish, I shan't be missed."

"Oh, come back, no boat could live in such a sea!" arose from the deck, as they saw the skiff tossed as a feather upon that tremendous swell of mighty waters, and with what difficulty the oars were plied, as they were fast carried away on the lonely deep.

After the wreck had sunk, Mrs. Villiers, weary with fatigue and anxiety, had retired with Lottie, and they had wept themselves to sleep. With an electric rapidity, the intelligence of the hazardous undertaking had spread from cabin to cabin; but so prompt had been the preparations, that by the time the good mother had fully awakened to her distress, her beloved Charles was far away. Although she had not complained she had suffered from illness some days, and now overcome, sunk fainting, upon her pillow.

Lydia refused to be comforted. She remained upon the deck, her arms extended towards the boat that was now only a speck in the distance. "Oh, Charles, come back! night is coming on — return, or you perish in the dark waters! Oh, come back to us!"

So vehement had been the exclamations against the captain, when it was found he would continue in his course, that, had he feared a mutiny, he could scarcely have yielded more submissively. Sail was taken in, and the vessel made to "tack." The sky lowered; soon the rain fell; only a few remained on deck with the distressed Lydia, who, wild in her despair, continued to kneel, clinging to the bulwarks in an agony of grief,

exclaiming, "Oh, why did you let them go? Tell me, can we ever see them again? Oh, he is gone! poor mamma!"

"Miss Villiers, you will take your death here," said the stewardess, wrapping the mantle round the trembling form.

"But my mother; I cannot comfort her, what can I do for her?"

"Indeed, Miss, she bears it very well. She has revived now, and said calmly 'God grant he may save some fellow creature from a watery grave. Thy will, oh Lord, be done!'"

"Dear, good mother! I'll go to her. But listen!" Near the hatchway stood two gentlemen; one was speaking in a doleful tone; "It was evident," continued he, "they had been without food and perhaps water too, for some time, and when we saw them, they were in a state of exhaustion, having thrown everything overboard to lighten the vessel. I shall never forget the sight."

Lydia's thoughts wandered again to the wreck, and casting one more look at the little black speck on the horizon, which she trusted still contained in safety the beloved Charles and his noble companions, she suffered herself to be led from the deck, to mingle her tears with those of her afflicted mother, and the sorrowing little sister.

It was night-fall. All seemed to have retired. Everything was still, save the rain that continued to patter upon the deck. The evening lessons had been read, and the fervent petition offered, when nature demanded repose; and the afflicted mourners were prevailed upon to seek rest, as a good lookout would be kept, and they awakened should there be any tidings. Few slept; those whose thoughts were not disturbed by a recollection of the wreck, were long kept awake by the lamentations of the afflicted family, as ever and anon they broke the stillness of the night. Seven bells were struck, denoting it remained but a half hour of midnight. Lydia raised herself, and looking round, saw she was the only one in the cabin not asleep. No sound, except the regular tread of the officer on the watch, fell upon the ear. It occurred to Lydia, that the rain might have ceased, and that the stars twinkled brightly over a calm ocean. She rose to the port hole, naught there, but the thick darkness, except where the masses of white foam danced upon the black waters. With a heavy sigh, she threw herself again on her pillow; a sudden cry, as though from one aloft, made her start; hastily throwing some clothing round her, she ascended to the deck. A drizzling rain was still falling, and a fog was rising. The lamps in the rigging flickered in the obscurity that seemed

to grow more dense as she contemplated it. She groped her way to the wheel-house. This time, an old man with silvery locks held the wheel. His countenance was very sad, and Lydia was touched by the expression of toil and hardships, seated there.

"You seem very tired, sir," said she, leaning towards him.

"Yes, Miss, none of my watch have eaten or slept since that awful sight."

"Do you think we shall have another storm?"

"Here comes an officer, ma'am; we're not allowed to talk at the wheel."

She had reached the steps, when two gentlemen appeared at the hatch-way to look at the night.

"I came to pass my opinion upon the weather," said one.

"I will stay and hear what it is," thought Lydia, stepping back.

"What a night!" continued the speaker, "and those brave young fellows, of course they have perished long before this!"

"They each wore a life-preserver," interposed his companion.

"What of that? I watched the boat through my glass, as long as it could be seen, and am positive I saw it upset; but I couldn't speak of it, for I feel very sorry for that widow lady, although I've no patience with such fool-hardy, rash adventurers as those young chaps; however, they're all at the bottom, by this time, without doubt."

"Hallo! What noise was that? A sailor has fallen from the rigging, surely. No, there's a woman's clothes; — what can it be? come and see!"

They approached it; lifted it; carried it to a light, the blood fresh and warm was flowing over the face and neck. The stewardess was called, the wounded head and face bathed, when they recognised in the livid features, those of Lydia.

"Don't frighten Mrs. Villiers, Miss Lydia has only fainted."

"Oh see, she will not revive! Sweet girl, you are dying: and so good, so beautiful!"

A lady rushed into the saloon; her face white as the night-clothes that enshrouded her, as clasping the icy form, she cried in her anguish, "Oh Lydia, am I also to lose thee, my own sweet child? oh Father, in pity spare her, take her not from me, in this hour of trial!"

"Don't clasp her so, give her air; see, she moves! What does she say? I thought she was speaking. Yes; listen!" The voice was very faint, yet the words were audible. "See,

he struggles — throw him a rope — oh, do try to save him." The hand was dropped, and again she lay motionless. Restoratives were administered, the physician called, still she showed no signs of life. A steady rain continued, although there was no regular storm. The fog began to clear away, and morning broke upon the watchers round the couch of the favorite Lydia.

"Oh, Doctor, do not deceive me; tell me, does she still live, or has the spirit already taken its flight?"

A glass was brought: all stood breathless in the general anxiety. After holding it to the colorless lips, there was an indication of breathing upon it; it was sufficient — life remained.

It was nearly noon when Lydia awoke to consciousness; and they discovered she must have fallen against an iron baluster, as she had received a deep wound. A lady had read to them a few of the most comforting passages, still Lydia seemed greatly distressed, and it was not until the afflicted mother had knelt and prayed with the sorrowing girl, that she appeared relieved: and the parent's prayer was too earnest, too fervent a petition, not to calm the excited girl, as she supplicated for a spirit of resignation, to sustain them under every difficulty, support in every trial, believing, "That no man should be moved by these afflictions," because "we are appointed thereunto." For "our light affliction which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."

In the afternoon she became much excited, and desired to be carried on deck to watch. She declared she was quite recovered, and would not be denied. Fearing her mind was again wandering, a composing draught was administered, and she at length fell back exhausted, and slept.

The day had been fine towards its close; a rainbow, whose tints appeared more glorious than ever, had spread its peaceful arch over that waste of waters, and as it dipped its varied hues in the calm ocean, impossible did it seem that the same sea, now still and without a ripple, could ever have wrought such havoc to human life. Treacherous beauty! What treasures thou demanded, which thou hast concealed beneath those sparkling waves, that ripple peacefully over the ruin!

Lydia rested well during the night, and the following day found her wounds better. Her usual animation began to return, and she was exceedingly anxious to dress quickly, in order to take her station on deck. Yet she asked no questions, but the anxious faces told hope was ending in despair, and inquiry would avail nothing. During the calm that had preceded, the vessel had not gained a mile, and now that there was a favora-

ble wind, the sails were unfurled, and the "Wing of the West" pursued her course again towards Bremen.

"Please take me on deck now. Thank you, that is very comfortable; now I can lie here and watch."

"For what, Miss Villiers?"

"Oh I scarcely know, perhaps — I like to watch the waves."

What a distance thought will travel, and often when reaching as it were its limits, turn, unwearied, and trace again every channel of its wanderings. Many benevolent faces had come and bent over the sick girl, and made the kind inquiry: but now these were gone, and while Lottie thought she was dozing, the lively imagination of Lydia was linking into an endless chain, many a bright fancy. She saw them at the end of their voyage. One beautiful morning, when all was inviting, and nothing but the loss of Charles arose before her to disturb her thoughts, as she took up the newspaper, her eye fell on the joyous notice that he had been picked up by some foreign vessel, and carried to a distant isle; and as she was regretting the long time that must elapse before she could see him, the door burst open and Charles stood before her. Her temples throbbed, she raised her head, and her eyes fell once more upon the vast ocean. Her dream had vanished, and as she looked in vain for some speck in the distance whereon to rest the weary eye, hope began to give place to despair; and there was very little to divert; every one seemed to dwell upon the sad scene of the wreck, and never did an hour pass without some distressing allusion to it.

The night was fine, and so light, it was possible to read by the moonlight. Many were pacing the deck, unwilling to exchange the pure air for the close atmosphere of the cabins.

"A sail!" resounded along the deck. "Oh glorious! Now for some news; she bears towards us; soon we can speak her."

Although the vessels were fast nearing each other, it seemed an age before the stranger came to full view. Yet onward glided the gallant ship, and at length the "Sea Gull" returned their salutation. The captain of the "Wing of the West" took his station with his tremendous horn, and began,—

"Where are you from?"

"Glasgow."

"Where are you bound?"

"New York."

"How long out?"

"Twelve days."

"Have you spoken any vessels?"

"No! Yesterday picked up a raft and life-boat bearing the name 'Wing of the West.' Nothing more."

The vessels continued speaking, but there were those among the listeners who could hear no more. They had raised their expectations too high, upon seeing the sail, not to feel that hope must now sink forever, and they mourn over the beloved Charles as one never to return to them!

## CHAPTER XII

"Tread softly! for, within these walls to-day  
A soul has fled!  
Though beautiful, we must prepare to lay  
Her with the dead!"

—OLD POEM.

"Ah! matched, but not married;" said Miss Pyke, "and that is so much worse than being married and not matched."

"I should not have thought so," said Anna.

"Oh yes, most certainly, my dear, in our case especially. Of course, with men it is very different; they can do very well either way. I know scores of bachelors perfectly contented; for, when I have given ample opportunity, they have never made the slightest advances. But our fate is so much sadder: we pine away as we brood over our disappointment, I know from my own experience, and many of us drop into the grave. I'm sure it's a miracle I did not myself. So that I've come to one conclusion in regard to this matter, that it is much worse to lose a lover than a husband; because, before people are married, they think each other perfection, but afterwards, they very soon find out to the contrary. And you may depend upon it, nothing but love is eating away poor Mr. Everett. You would suppose, such a dear good man would be too wise to fall into such a snare; but then you know, they are only men, the best of them; and no doubt he feels Lydia is the only one to suit; I'm sure he loves her very much; and as I said before, they are well matched.

"But so different!"

"My dear girl, that is the very reason. Contrasts make the best matches, because 'opposites are well met.' But poor Mr. Everett! I can truly sympathize with him; for now I remember, there was, of course, a very great detriment in Lydia's case of late,—her poverty: and every young minister is obliged to

look out for some wealthy girl, unless he relishes the idea of seeing five or six half-starved children clinging to him. So you see, in all cases, my dear Anna, the greater the contrast the better the match."

"Then if opposite qualities are most needed, it would be no difficult matter to find some one for Mr. Barrow, for where could we meet with any one like that quaint little old gentleman;" and Anna could not help laughing at the idea of Robert Barrow Esq., ever being anything but a bachelor. Her visitor, however, did not move a muscle of her face, and casting a reproachful look at her, said with much emphasis —

"Ah, Anna! you are ignorant of the sincerity that lives beneath that rather singular exterior. What do you suppose is the reason Mr. Barrow remains a bachelor?"

"Because no one would be willing to have him."

"No such thing. Anna, you are a provoking girl," growing angry. "You are ungrateful, cruel in the extreme. Let me tell you, Anna, the reason is this — he has never been able to meet with a girl of sufficient sympathy and gentleness; so of course, if ever he should make a choice, the young lady could not but feel honored by the distinction. You see, Anna, my dear," and the face assumed a more kindly expression, "I am a woman of great penetration; and I have long discovered that to know Mr. Barrow, it would be necessary to live with him through years of close intimacy; nothing short of that would make known all the fine qualities of his noble heart."

"But I thought you said that was the time you very soon found out the imperfections?"

"Ah! in the case of most men, but Mr. Barrow is an exception."

"Quite so."

"Anna, you are in earnest, I hope?"

"Indeed I am. I certainly think him quite an exception."

"I'm glad to hear you say so. Oh yes, thank goodness, there are a few such exceptions in this world; and I think, indeed I'm sure, that poor, dear Mr. Everett, good man, is one of them. There's no likelihood of Susan's catching him," — speaking more confidentially — "never was; don't you think so?"

"What did you say, ma'am?"

"Hush! I hear her coming. How d'ye do, Susan, my dear friend! I was just saying to Anna, that Mr. Everett will need you sooner than ever, as he is not enjoying good health. I advise you to hold yourself in readiness, for when men are ill, that is the time they feel their loneliness, and dependence upon

us more than ever. And then you know, my dear Susan, he cannot have been blind to the tenderness of your care in bringing up these two dear children. Of course he feels even this would make only a small part in your affection for your own offspring. But I came only to say how d'ye do, for I'm obliged to go a long distance to see the spring fashions. Oh, and I came expressly to say I shall call in the afternoon to chat with you, Susan. Good-by."

"So you are gone at last;" said Anna to herself, as she closed the door upon her. "I'm sorry you're to come back so soon; however, here's an end to you for a little while at least;" and Anna hastened to complete the usual morning's work. It seemed less irksome than at other times, as she pondered over the words of the strange woman who had just gone. In vain she endeavored to bring her mind to some satisfactory conclusion in regard to Mr. Everett and Lydia. She knew the idea suggested by the report did not please her, and yet she scarcely knew why. "He's not good enough for Lydia," came spontaneously to her lips. But then, why not! she knew no one she herself liked so well; there was much in him to admire, probably much to love; he was evidently very fond of Lydia, and if Lydia cared for him, where was the difficulty. Certainly he appeared so very grave, even to melancholy, and Lydia's spirit was so opposite; but if it were true that opposites are well met, what impediment could there be to Lydia's happiness! Again, Lydia would not be likely to forsake her family in Prussia, and if Mr. Everett went to her, how much he would be missed in Philadelphia, and Alfred and she lose their only friend. "I wish you had said nothing about it," added she, and heaving a sigh, her thoughts ran into another channel, where she could always shut out every other in thinking of Alfred. But she was not left to herself very long; for as Sally Pyke would drink tea there that afternoon, Anna must traverse the streets in search of the largest of tea-biscuits at the smallest of prices; after which Susan would prepare one of them after some peculiar fashion of her own, Anna would carry it to the door of the good man, where Susan would relieve her of it; and if she could gain admittance, plant herself at the bedside of the young minister, and let him have no peace until he consented to swallow it.

Of course Sally Pyke kept her word; she came back again. As soon as possible, Anna left the room, and took her station at her window to watch for Alfred; while another consultation was held below stairs, and the sum of it was, they would wait three weeks longer; if then they did not hear from Mr. Went-

worth, the marriage contract should be forced upon Anna, and in a month, the ceremony take place. Miss Pyke then gave Susan some advice as to the best mode of treating the case with the children, and took her departure, as Susan ascended the stairs to Anna's room. The little taper shed a flickering light over the little chamber, and as it fell upon the pale faces, that of Anna wore the traces of tears.

Susan seated herself upon the side of the little bed as was her custom, and looking sternly at the brother and sister, began,—

"I'll tell you what it is. You may be called upon to leave here, at very short notice; so the best thing you can do, is to hold yourselves in readiness; that is, have another shelter already sought out. You, Alfred, have always thought yourself very clever, and been very independent, and you, Anna, have encouraged him in it: now you can see how much it all will help you!" And satisfied with the look of dismay that overshadowed the countenances before her, she rose to leave.

"At any moment?" said Alfred.

"Yes! It is a report that Mr. Everett will travel for his health, then we shall give up this house; but that is none of your business; all you will have to do, will be to go."

She saw the impression was favorable; one that was likely to produce submission. And how could it be otherwise, when Alfred's salary would not nearly support himself and Anna, who might have maintained herself apart from him, so anxious to be near and watch over him.

It was the day for Anna's visit to Mrs. Barrow: with delight she saw the sky lower, and the heavy clouds indicate rain. Standing at the window she was watching the weather, hoping every moment to see the large drops fall and prevent her going, when Susan's voice behind her made her start.

"As you're such a poor, miserable, delicate thing, you need not go to her to-day; for its going to rain, and of course you'd take cold to give us the trouble of nursing you."

"Susan, please, can I take those things into Mr. Everett? He told Alfred last evening he should like to see me, and was surprised I had not been to him."

"Nonsense, Anna; it's all Alfred's own invention. Do you suppose such a good man as Mr. Herbert Everett, would be guilty of anything so gross as to send for a young girl like you? Do you suppose he would allow a mere child as you are, to come into his room? Anna, you commit a sin against the good man to imagine such to belong to him; you ought to confess it to him and beg his pardon."

"Well, I will, then, the first opportunity."

"Anna, don't you answer me; I'll not take such impertinence."

"Susan, I believe I've finished everything; may I practice a little now, then it will not disturb you when you take your nap."

"No, indeed. Your education is now at an end; you will have no more of it, I can tell you. The idea of a poor girl—a mere pauper, I might say,—amusing herself with books and piano! I dare say that Miss Morgan thinks she's doing a sufficient charity in coming to you unpaid, to cover all her sins for the rest of her life. But I'm not going to have it any longer. \*Some time, when I feel in the humor, I shall send her away a little faster than she came. Oh Anna, while I think of it. That picture"—pointing to the portrait over the mantle-piece,— "could be sold. I've heard it was valuable on account of the painter."

"Sold! Oh Susan, do not talk of it; we could never sell it, it is all we have!"

"Perhaps you've no reason to think so much of it. I don't believe she was much good,—pretty women never are."

"Oh please don't say such things!" bursting into tears, "Indeed, she was very good."

"Then that's more than your father is."

"Perhaps he is dead. But tell me when you last heard from him, what is he now in your debt?"

"That's our concern. Go and arrange my room now, and ask no more questions."

It was late in the afternoon and Anna was tired; she believed the principal business of the day completed, and had just taken up a book when the bell rang again, and she found the door opened to Miss Kate Danvers.

"So you really are still in existence, Anna. I'm sure a nun's life would be no hardship to you after your mode of living here. So secluded, so dull, so wretched! how you contain yourself is a miracle to me—"

"How are they all at home?"

"Oh Minnie is just as ever, although she thinks herself at the point of death. Then Josephine is irritable as possible, imagining, because she is older, she should govern me: and what with her tyranny, and Minnie's sighing, I was glad to escape for a while; so ran in to see you."

"I am very sorry for Miss Simmons; her health is delicate, and then whatever she may have to trouble her, will prey doubly upon her."

"Well, but she has no more to trouble her, than almost every other girl has! I'm sure you'd little think what I have endured; but then I don't let it trouble me."

"You don't seem to, indeed."

"Oh you had that detestable Pyke here the other day. Don't you find her a great nuisance? Now tell me honestly, do you think I should be like her if I were to be an old maid?"

"I'm sure I cannot tell; I don't think there's much chance of your having the opportunity."

"Indeed, there is. It is so very difficult to meet with one to suit, that I often despond, and think I am intended for a member of that abhorred list."

"Why, have you been so unfortunate?" laughing.

"Oh very! because, as soon as I really like any one, there's sure to be some obstacle. Two years ago there was a doctor from the South, very talented, and a general favorite. I've never loved any one so much; there was a great deal of candor and good-nature in him, that, once acquainted with him, you felt the power of his attractions. In fact, I was so much wrapped in him, that I was fit for nothing; although he gave me no reason to suppose I was any one in particular to him, yet it was my misfortune to imagine so. He spoke sometimes of returning to the South, and I flattered myself that when he took his departure, I should accompany him; still, he never gave me any encouragement for thinking so. Well, it was one summer evening, as I sat meditating alone, that he came upon me suddenly, and said he was going the following day. "I've heard much about the South," replied I, "and can imagine what a pleasant life you must lead there, I've often longed to go."

"But you could not content yourself away from your home and friends?" said he, looking surprised.

"Indeed, I should be very happy there," replied I.

"I wish you could live in the South," remarked he, "our friends are few there, I should be delighted to have you."

"Then you can, easily enough," said I, "for I'm ready to go now."

He was looking at his watch and seemed to pay little attention to what I was saying. "I must go now," said he, "for I am about to fulfill an engagement made a year ago, and she will be in despair if I am not back to my time."

He very cordially extended his hand to me, I don't know whether I took it or not, I only remember that in less than an hour, all vestige of him was gone, and I left to mourn over my miserable fate."

"You were quite unfortunate, Kate."

"Oh, that isn't half. Soon after he was gone, a lawyer often had occasion to come to my father on business. He was very jocular and well informed. Father praised him, mother liked him, Josephine admired him, and I, the unfortunate, loved him. One day he desired to speak with me,—very quickly I seated myself by his side."

"Miss Kate, have you any preference for me?" inquired he.

"Yes," replied I, "there is no one I like so well."

"I'm glad to hear you say so," rejoined he; "for I've wanted to know how many girls cared for me;" and he walked out. I rushed to my room, determined never to look at any fellow again."

"And you kept your resolution?"

"Well—I believe I might; but after that, during the winter, Minnie and Josephine joined a society for relieving the poor. Now I never took any interest in such things before, but they used to bring home such glowing accounts of the attractions of the president, that my curiosity was instantly excited. Minnie was in perfect health then, and full of fun, would remind me often that he was exceedingly captivating, and besides, I knew that he was an importer of wines, silks, &c., and said to be very rich; so I used to amuse myself by imagining in what fine style a wife of his might sail through the circle of envying acquaintance. It was discovered that he lived quite alone in a hotel, that no one seemed to attract his attention particularly, for he was as kind and obliging to all, a very great philanthropist, and much beloved. Well, you know I've often been told I was very pretty, and saw no reason why I could not take my chance with the rest; so, reluctant as I was to pay the required fee, I became a member and joined the society. Through the snow and rain of that long winter I continued to go, and often to my disappointment found he was not there; still, now and then, when he had occasion to come, I was so charmed, that it made up for his former absence. He was about thirty-eight or forty, tall, well proportioned and very handsome. Some said he had a preference for Minnie, others that he most admired me, and I was quite willing to agree with the latter.

One day we had a tremendous storm, Minnie could not go, and knowing very few would be there, I thought it a very good time to attend. No one was in the room; we talked a great deal about the poor, the maimed, the halt, and the blind, the indigent, the ignorant, and all such distasteful subjects, until I was heartily weary, and to change the topic, I asked him how

he liked our city, as I had heard he came from the West. 'I should feel more contented,' replied he, 'only I know my wife misses me so exceedingly.'

I bade him good morning very indifferently, and never again set my foot upon that threshold."

"Why Kate, you must have been discouraged. But did it put an end to your flirtations?"

"Oh it made me more careful afterwards to investigate beforehand."

"And that was all your experience taught you?"

"Ah! but I have not told you all," rising to go. "There was a time when I felt more mortified and grieved than ever." The pretty little face assumed a pitiful expression, and she inquired "am I detaining you?"

"I'll bring my work if you'll excuse me."

"Oh, pray don't! I hate to see any one so busy."

"Well then, I'm sorry you were mortified."

"Oh, yes! I believe I've never thoroughly recovered. I will tell you. I was determined to trust to my fate, and not trouble myself any further, so went into the country to live in seclusion along with my maiden aunt. While I was there, a young officer came to a neighbor's; I don't know when he first saw me, but I remember we were very soon acquainted. I could not help sitting idle at the window, day after day, watching for him, he was so witty and humorous, I was dull and wretched without him. My aunt always gave me a scolding as soon as he was gone, and told me when she was a girl, it was thought an iniquity to look at a young officer, and that my familiar manner frightened her. Accordingly, I told him how I was persecuted on his account. He laughed, and said if I chose, I could see him the following week, a mile from my aunt's,—she would know nothing of it, and I should be saved an additional reprimand. I snatched at the suggestion, but when the day came, it was wet and muddy, and how to get from the house unobserved, caused me much anxiety. Now, there was an old servant living with my aunt, even more severe upon me than she was, and how to escape her notice, while aunt was dozing, puzzled me considerably. However, my aunt was very eccentric, and whenever the spirit moved her, went out among the poor, no matter what the weather might be. The old woman was sitting at the window, and could watch any one passing in the garden. My decision was at last made. I went to my aunt's wardrobe, put on her long cloak, (for she was a tall woman) and large old-fashioned poke bonnet. The clogs hurt my feet,

but I did not dare venture in the wet without them ; so, managed to hobble down stairs in them at the risk of breaking my neck. As I passed through the porch, my large bonnet which I carried, very likely, rather awkwardly, struck against the parrot's cage and removed it, which carried the bonnet with it as it fell. The provoking bird recognized me, and screamed out my name. The noise startled the old woman. I heard her coming to see what was the matter, and endeavored to run ; the clogs impeded my progress, and just as I reached the lane I stumbled and fell. The bonnet my aunt prized so much was broken, so that I could not bring it into any shape again, and my clothes were saturated with mud. However, I put the bonnet on somehow, and holding over me the broken umbrella that would continue to close round me, pursued my dreary way. As I neared our place of meeting, I heard the well known voice laughing at the strange appearance of some old woman, and to my annoyance, and his great surprise, we discovered that I was the subject of his ridicule. He was an immense, big fellow, and I felt less than ever by the side of him. I was very much exhausted in battling with the weather ; he sat me upon his knee, dipped his handkerchief in a pool of muddy water, and washed the dirt from my face. Then taking my aunt's bonnet upon his sword, ridiculed it most unmercifully, as he did the cloak and clogs in turn. After which he looked at me with a mischievous glance, and said, 'now my dear, as you have taken so much trouble to come to me, you deserve something for your pains ; so I'll give you a piece of advice. Next time you happen to fall in love with any one, don't be such a little fool as to let the fellow know it.'

"And what did your aunt say about her bonnet?"

"Oh, it was dark before I reached home, and I lost it, together with one of the clogs, on the way ; my aunt had a headache, and was gone to bed ; I followed her example, and the next morning before they were about, started for the city. So I don't know how she bore the loss of her black satin bonnet. But I suppose you'll have the riot-act read if I keep you here any longer, still I must ask what is the matter with Mr. Everett ? How do you like him now ? But while I think of it — It's true, isn't it, that Barrow still comes here ? I should have thought you would have died long before this, with such an odious, rickety old sinner ; and let me tell you, that you are the jest of every one, for tolerating the whimsical old hypocrite. But I came here in a great hurry to bring a message from Minnie. She thinks she is quite ill, and wants very much to see

you ; I think she admires you, because you agree with her, that flirtation, balls, &c., are too great a sin to be pardoned."

"I'm not quite so severe ; but poor Minnie ! I will come, tell her, as soon as possible ; and I hope she'll soon be well."

"Oh, there's not much the matter with her, only she has the misfortune to have broken her heart into small pieces to give a part to every one ; and now, because she fancies none of us have given her some of ours in return, she is unhappy. She told me to ask you to come soon, very soon ; but you need not ; suit yourself about it. Good-by. Oh, did Charles Villiers ever say anything to you of me ? Because I once hinted I would write, and he remarked, he should be very happy to receive my letters. I know by this time, half of them don't mean what they say ; but then I think he is superior to the generality, don't you ? Well, I really must go ;" she tripped into the street, and Anna closed the door, regretting the light-hearted girl had left her. As she was passing through the passage, a voice called her, and turning, she found it proceeded from Mr. Everett's room,

"Come in, Anna."

The door was thrown open ; and the tall, thin figure of the minister appeared. It would have seemed before that he had no flesh to lose ; however, there must have been, for the altered appearance of the pale face startled Anna, as she looked up at him. She entered the little study ; the books and papers were upon the table as usual. Some music lay upon the open melodeon, and altogether the apartment presented the appearance of monastic seclusion, where only one form of the living moved through the unbroken silence of his solitude. He drew a chair from its resting place, and as Anna seated herself, the peculiar loneliness that pervaded this chamber, seemed to throw a gloom around her. Certainly the house in which she had passed so many years, had too often been overshadowed by the heavy monotony that ever hung over it, and which the years, as they approximated her womanhood, did little to remove. Yet it was more the spirit of ennui, than the gloom of melancholy ; an atmosphere conducive to lulling the passions of the soul into dormancy, rather than to awake and arouse the sensibilities ; still, Anna thought as she sat and looked around her that there had been within the walls of that dwelling, a deeper shade, shut out from familiar intercourse, more solitary than her own, within the door that had just opened to her. "And for any one to suppose that Lydia could ever consent to share such !" thought she, "it would be cruelty of any man to shut within its narrow

limits a spirit so joyous, a being so beautiful. Yet if he loved Lydia, doubtless it was with a passion that would yield the sombre soul captive to her fascinating power. And what do we learn to long for but to be loved; and if this will reign paramount over every difficulty and humble into nothingness every obstacle, where would be the regret?"

"So Anna, you were determined to keep aloof from me; pray, what did you imagine my disorder, something exceedingly contagious?"

"No, indeed, sir. I should have been very happy to have come, but —"

"But you thought I was in such excellent hands, under the kind auspices of my worthy friend Susan, that all other attention would be swallowed up in that officiousness. I don't wonder, for certainly not every sick bachelor has been blessed with a tunic and turban bending over him, every time he opened his eyes, to make him fancy he has been suddenly transformed into an Indian prince; or with a huge fan swinging across his face, to keep away the flies, while the weather was too cold for the least sign of any, when every other motion brought it in contact with the nose of the individual, until he was uncertain whether aught but the bare bone remained. Then fancy a nurse so eager in her solicitations for you to recover, that she forces you to swallow double doses, especially in throwing down a sore throat three pills at a time, when one was upon the prescription; and then to crown all, to hear her read the lessons for the day to you, and because she would not wear her spectacles, have to convert every verse into some unknown sense, so that in the chapter where you expect to hear 'In the days of Sennacherib there was a sore famine in the land,' your astonished ears are informed that 'In the days of Saint Snatch-a-crab there was a boar salmon in the land.'"

"Is it possible you had so much to contend with? Indeed you were quite a martyr."

"Not the first in the house, I expect, Anna; smiling. And that is the reason you can sympathize." His face, as he spoke, was animated; the whole being seemed changed, the gloomy cloud no longer pervaded the apartment; and as Anna gazed upon the countenance, she was too much absorbed in her own thoughts to notice Susan's call. "How much I admire you! And when I like you so much, why should it be impossible for any one to love you!"

She arose as a second call from Susan startled her. "I must go now, sir; if I can do anything for you, I shall be most happy."

"I am confident of that, Anna, thank you; see, I will leave the key of my book-case here, then you can supply yourself with books any time. But I must not keep you, she has called before, but I thought you were in no haste to receive her orders, and I assure you I was not anxious to lose you."

He extended his hand, and with regret Anna took her leave, and closed the door upon Mr. Herbert Everett.

Finding it was impossible to go to Minerva that day, she arose early the following morning, in order to exhaust all the requirements of Mrs. Gilbert and Susan, before night-fall.

It was nearly dusk when she escaped from the house, and ascended the steps, where dwelt the amiable Minerva. Josephine opened the door, and said in a half whisper, "I'm so glad you are come. Minnie has been calling for you ever since yesterday." Walking on tiptoe, she led the way up stairs, noiselessly turned the handle of a door, and left her.

Anna entered; on a bed lay the emaciated form of the pale Minerva. It was little more than a week since Anna saw her in tolerable health; now she stood in the chamber of death. By her side sat the physician, watching with intense anxiety the symptoms of the suffering girl. He raised the pillows, and placed the head more comfortably.

"Thank you, you are very kind." As her eyes dropped again, they fell upon Anna. "Oh Anna, dear, come near. Now sir, you will please leave me a little while."

With an effort she raised herself, and clasping Anna tightly as she threw her arms round her neck, exclaimed, "Oh I'm so very glad you are come, my dear, kind friend!"

"Minerva, I know now how much you have suffered," said Anna, through her tears. "I wish I could have been with you long before; and so you are left alone! You know how ill you are, and I would not have you deceived, but can I do nothing for you, dear?"

"Anna, I am dying — I have settled all — yet there is one thing I must do before I leave this world." The tears flowed fast down the thin cheeks, upon which was seated the hue of death, as the whole frame trembled under the intensity of the suffering within.

"Let me get you something."

"No, love, I am better now; it was a moment of weakness; I had forgotten I had given up all things of earth. I look now for a better inheritance. But I am growing fainter — I must do it now, Anna dear, you will help me."

"Minnie, tell me what it is."

"I must write — give me a pen — I cannot see the paper. Oh yes, here, thank you —"

She took the pen within the powerless fingers, but vain was the effort, and she sunk back upon her pillow exhausted.

"Anna, I cannot — write for me."

When she had revived again, she dictated the following,

"Come to me for I am dying. Let me see you once — hear you speak, and know you are near me."

MINNIE."

The direction bore the name of one prominent among the honorary men of his city; one whose public character remained probably without a blemish.

"Here Anna, is my purse — now send the note by telegraph."

Taking the billet, Anna went in search of some one to watch by the sufferer during her absence.

"I would, but I'm afraid she will die while I am there," said Josephine.

"And I never can bear to look upon anything that is dreadful," rejoined Kate.

"Then I suppose I must go;" said their mother, as she left the room.

With difficulty Anna found the telegraph office; it was growing late, yet she could not return home, although she dreaded an irruption of Susan's fiery temper; and she returned to the chamber of death. Minerva was changed; the eyes were dim, the expression fixed, the lips livid. Near her on a couch sat Mrs Danvers asleep. Bending over the dying girl, Anna whispered,

"Minnie dear, should you like to see Mr. Everett?"

"Yes! I would receive the sacrament."

Leaving the chamber, Anna went in quest of the minister. Passing their house, she saw no light in his room, so knew he was not at home. After much research she found him at a dinner party. He immediately excused himself, left the table and accompanied her. The household were assembled in that still chamber. For the last time Minerva received the pledges of a dying Saviour's love, ere she was called to participate in the holy fellowship of the saints in glory. Peacefully was life ebbing away as they knelt around the bed of the dying. For a moment the eyes opened, she attempted to raise herself as if to view some object at the door. "I thought he had come!" Then sinking back upon the pillows again, "But I should have done with all now! How unworthy! Father, forgive me!"

The eyes closed again, the lips moved, but without a sound; a slight struggle — then all again was calm; a moment more — and the spirit had winged its flight to the regions of the blessed.

The door was suddenly thrown open; the figure of a man rushed to the bedside, and clasping the corpse as he pressed the marble face to his bosom, exclaimed, "Oh, Minnie — speak — forgive me!"

Anna returned home: her thoughts had been lifted entirely out of herself, yet as she met the sorrowful countenance of Alfred, she awoke from her reverie, and soon lived again in painful reality, when she heard his inquiry —

"Anna, where is the picture?"

"The portrait, why, is it not in my room?"

They ascended together; there was the nail, but the face on which they had loved to gaze, over which they had mingled their many tears — was gone.

"There, you've cried enough about that," said the harsh voice of Susan; "it's sold, and there's an end of it. And, you ought, both of you, to thank me for taking the trouble, instead of making that fuss over it. Now, Anna, as you chose to stay out so long to see live people die, or dead ones get buried, you can go and clear away the tea-things down stairs; as you never came home at tea-time, it's a proof you don't want any tea; and a great deal you care for Alfred, when you never came to boil his sago, — you needn't expect anything else, I can tell you, it's a great deal for you to have a comfortable home over your heads."

The fortune of the gentle Minerva was not small, and by her will it was found she had bequeathed it with judgment and benevolence. It was principally divided among charitable institutions, while there was a small annuity to Mrs. Danvers, lest she should some time be dependent upon her selfish children. Her jewels were left to Kate, her wardrobe, which was new and elegant, to Josephine, and her books to Anna. She had been heard to say in her life time, that she desired no stone to mark her resting-place, as none would probably care to note the spot, or shed a tear upon her tomb.

It was the day of the funeral; the poor little children in whose midst she had so often sat, pressed to see the last of her they so dearly loved. And there were those, who, when bending over the bed which held the sick child of poverty, had received from some unknown hand the silent little billet, whose contents could alleviate all their present wants. Hers was an unostentatious life, and silent as was her influence, so was her charity.

Shortly after, a few who cherished her memory visited the

green mound, and found there, erected by some unknown hand, a marble slab, over the grave of Minerva.

### CHAPTER XIII.

"I saw your brother,  
Most provident in peril, bind himself  
(Courage and hope both teaching him the practice)  
To a strong mast, that lived upon the sea;  
Where, like Arion on the dolphin's back,  
I saw him hold acquaintance with the waves,  
So long as I could see."

"A BOAT! a boat!" resounded along the deck, as nimble feet hurried to one side of the vessel, and all gave their attention to a speck, which, far across the wide waste of waters, appeared at the verge of the horizon. Eagerly and earnestly they gazed, while, as the indices of a joy too full for language to express, tear followed tear, as the silent prayer of thanksgiving ascended to heaven. Nearer and nearer — now ten figures could be discerned; but was Charles there, or would the wanderer only bring some vague tidings of the little skiff that had borne those young philanthropists on their errand of mercy over the mighty deep? Hour after hour they stood gazing; at last the faces were towards them.

"He is there! I see him! I know it is Charles!" said Lydia as she pressed the glass still closer to the aching eyes.

"Oh mamma! now we can see them with the naked eye! don't you see Charles there to the left?"

"Yes, Lottie, I can see my noble boy, oh my own Charles, you are spared to me!" and leaning upon one who stood by, the widow wept for joy.

"But they don't return our salutation! See, Charles smiles! yet they scarcely lift their eyes to us, and they are hardly moving the oars: but we shall soon reach them!"

"See, mamma! Lottie! Charles looks at us, his lips move, but we cannot hear a sound although it is so still!"

The boat was now under the side of the "Wing of the West," and amid the shouts and cheers of the ship's company, a rope ladder was lowered, yet none attempted to ascend it.

"Charles, come! Oh, he is dying! Look, none of them have any strength to move. But, no wonder, after four days and nights upon the deep!"

But strong arms were in eager readiness, and very soon the

famished and exhausted bodies were raised to the deck; and after the first embrace, Charles was borne to the rest and quiet of his cabin. Anxious were many to hear of the ill-fated vessel, yet none had sufficient strength to speak to tell the sad tale.

"All aboard!" had been cried by the men in the boat, and they were about to leave it, when one of them trod upon some clothing in the bottom; it moved; the things were removed, and there lay apparently lifeless, the body of a female. A chair was arranged, and lowered, in which the body was fastened and carefully lifted; for these rough, hardy sailors proved themselves very gentle nurses.

For hours Charles lay motionless, manifesting no signs of life; at last the anxious friends saw the lips move, and struggling to raise himself he exclaimed, "Oh, save her! see, she rises, do throw the rope!"

"Who is the female?" inquired Lydia of the stewardess.

"Well, she is without doubt one of the passengers, probably about twenty; the clothing upon her is marked, B. E. S. it is very beautifully made, and her rings are of diamonds. I could not see her in a good light, and I don't wish to, for the little French doctor keeps saying 'tres belle,' and I 'spect in English that means something very bad."

"Is she recovering?"

"Gracious no, miss! I s'pose she's been dead ever since she was taken out of the boat."

"Then please don't sing and appear so cheerful, if there is a corpse on board."

"Why miss, our minister is a very good, respectable-like sort of a man, and a power more of a Christian than half the white fellows who go travelling with their wives, and just wear a preacher's dress because it has a meek sort of a look. Well, he never gets married, or attends to any such common things of the world as I know of; and when he preaches, or says his prayers, you can tell by the way his face looks, that his whole soul is there in the pulpit, with him. 'Now miss,' he used to say every Sunday, 'this is a world of sin and sorrow,' and he never told anything but the truth, so I always try to rejoice when any one is taken out of it;" and again rubbing the silver with all the strength of her muscular arm, the negress continued her song.

The following day it was found that those saved consisted of two gentlemen who were passengers, a lad, the son of one of these, and six of the crew; two of whom were the first to evince signs of recovery, but many preferred to wait until one of the

gentlemen should recover to give them an account of the wreck, around whom they hovered, and bestowed every kindness their sympathy could suggest. But there were a few who could afford to extend their benevolence beyond the confines of their own sphere, and these gentlemen, thinking those in the cabin sufficiently well taken care of, left them for the dark berths of the fore-castle, where lay those who were rescued of the crew of the wreck; and there they heard from honest lips, unembellished by any figures of speech, the history of the sinking ship.

It was the "Eagle," bound for Havre, heavily freighted, and containing upwards of fifty, excluding the crew. She had sprung a leak, and filled so fast that the pumps were of little avail; during the storm, several men were washed overboard, the wheel and compass were carried away, and at last their only hope was in hearing their minute gun fired, and in raising their eyes to assure themselves the remnant of their flag still waved as their signal of distress. Then they told of their joy upon seeing a sail, and lastly, their anguish upon finding it was fast receding, and they left alone to perish.

"But who is that lady?"

"A lady? was there one woman saved?"

"Yes, a young lady; her initials are B. S. I believe."

"Can it be Miss Sauvestre, I wonder?"

"What, Mademoiselle Beatrice; is she saved?" said another sailor, raising himself upon his elbows. "B. S. yes, it is sweet mademoiselle. Oh, she is beautiful, she is good. When she is able, she will come to us, she would go anywhere to the sick; lovely girl —"

"Ah, but it's thought she'll not live."

"Oh, will she die? then let me go to her. I know she will see me!"

"Then you are acquainted with the young lady?"

"I'll tell you how, sir. In the beginning of our voyage, a block fell upon my head, and made me insensible. I was carried below, and when I awoke to consciousness I found a figure sitting near me. It was mademoiselle. How she came there was a mystery, as no passenger was ever allowed to come to us. I never shall forget how I was struck with the idea of purity, as she hovered over me, the light from the hatchway now and then falling upon her, while she kept bathing my temples, and administering many little comforts that carried me back to the days of home. It was thought my brain was injured, and that I should live but a short time. It was too dark to read the books she had brought with her, so she repeated choice passages

of the Saviour's pilgrimage upon earth. She spoke very earnestly upon death and the judgment, then knelt beside me, and laying her hands upon mine, prayed very fervently that my sins might be pardoned, and my soul saved. I was not the only one benefited; there were those whose watch it was below, and not a word was uttered as they listened to the sweet voice, dissipating our gloomy darkness, and throwing around us the light of everlasting truth."

"Then, if she's such an angel of light," said one of the gentlemen, "she should have been here a short time ago, for I came near breaking my neck in the dark, finding my way to you." And growing tired of his stay, he left the poor sailor's dungeon for his comfortable state-room. But fortunately, there were two or three, who, believing an honest heart, bright intellect and sound mind, constitute the man, saw no difference whether he lay ensconced in purple and fine linen, or was laid low by neglect and misfortune: and these, returning daily to linger by the beds of pain, fulfilled the promise of the Saviour, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

Charles continued to linger, and it was not until the third day that he began to revive. His anxious friends had endeavored to draw his mind off the subject of the wreck, which seemed to press so heavily upon him, and Lydia had been using her utmost endeavors in talking of Prussia, and her anticipations for him as heir to La Belle. When one of the passengers came to inquire after him, and finding him restored to consciousness, very inconsiderately demanded an account of the noble young Taylor, who had accompanied him. The lips quivered, and casting a look of anguish upon the speaker, he uttered the word "drowned," and groaning in agony, turned from them, and buried his face in his pillows.

Towards afternoon, finding him much better, Mrs. Villiers left him with his sisters, and softly entered the cabin of the rescued lady. The eyes were closed, and she appeared sleeping calmly. Her complexion was somewhat that of a brunette, though very clear, and the glossy black tresses as they fell upon the pillow, exposed a forehead high and intellectual; the features were regular and well formed, and notwithstanding the hardship and suffering she had endured, a slight tint of vermilion rested upon the cheek and lips, and contrasted with the fringy lashes of jet that fell from the closed eyes. The widow approached softly, and laid her hand upon the clear brow; the eyes opened: large, full, black and sparkling, yet, their glance seemed more expressive than penetrative.

"You are much better," said the widow, bending over the invalid. "I think you will soon be well."

"Yes! but I feel so forlorn, so very lonely! I have lost all my friends now, for he has perished. Oh, yes, he has gone!"

"I think you could bear it if I were to read a little to you." And taking a bible from the folds of her dress, she read from that portion, where the Saviour is deserted by His disciples, after His life of unparalled woe, and left to bear alone the last great trial of His sojourn among men.

She had finished. The arms were thrown round her neck, as the suffering girl exclaimed through her tears, "Oh you are so very kind, madam, so good, the kindest of all! and resting her head upon the bosom of the widow, her tears fell fast. For a time her grief was violent and uncontrollable, but it soon calmed under the soothing influence of the widow, who pointed her to a better Comforter, and uniting in the petition for a submissive spirit, she took her leave of Beatrice Sauvestre.

"Charles, you are regaining your strength, so it will do you no harm to talk, and I want very much to know if you remember anything of the lady whose life you saved. Do you know if she were an old lady, a child, or who?"

Lydia looked into the thin, pale face, but there was naught but thoughtfulness written there, as he replied —

"I've not the least idea. I felt sure from the long hair and flowing garment, that it must be a female; but when we lifted her into the boat, it was too dark to discern anything more, so we took off what clothing we could spare, and wrapped it round her, without knowing whether she were white or black."

"Well, she is up to-day for the first time, and has dressed on purpose to come to you and return her thanks; would you be willing to see her?"

"But Lyddie, I don't like to be thanked!"

"Ah, but you would not refuse an old lady, surely, if it were her great wish?"

"Oh, she's an old lady! Lyddie, you know she's perfectly welcome to any assistance I could ever have rendered her. But I can't see her; I don't want to see any old lady, Lyddie love."

"Then you shall not, only keep here until I return;" and adjusting the dressing-gown once again, and assuring him he looked like a friar, she left his side for a moment, and returned leading by the hand, the grateful Beatrice.

She was of medium height, of a round little figure, and her whole appearance was strikingly handsome. Upon approaching the couch where sat the surprised Charles, she threw herself

at his feet, and clasping the folds of his gown, exclaimed "Oh I cannot thank you, but I have prayed for a blessing!" They raised her from her kneeling posture, but refusing to remain, she again expressed her gratitude to the admiring Charles, and retreated to the seclusion of her own cabin.

"I am going on deck now, mademoiselle," said Lydia, the next morning, "do come with me, it is very delightful, and you will enjoy the fresh air." Her knock at Beatrice's door was readily answered, and leading her upon the deck, Lydia continued, "we call you almost instinctively mademoiselle, I don't know why."

"Oh, il me convient tres bien;" replied she, "for my father was French, my mother was a Swiss, and I am a native of Kingston, Cuba. But I have not lived there since I was a little child. I went back a year ago and saw my parents' tomb. I wish you could see the spot, it is so beautiful!"

"Then you are an orphan."

"Oh, but I never felt so; ever since their death I lived with my uncle in Boston; he was father, brother and friend to me; I was a wayward child, yet he could always control and interest me. He was a younger brother of my father's, very cheerful and lively, and I seldom wanted other society. We read, walked, and played together; but, like my father, he was consumptive, intended to try the climate of the south of France, and we were on our way to a relation in Havre. I have often thought I should not have him long, but little imagined he would leave me so soon for a watery grave. Although I feel assured he was prepared to die, and he may have been spared much sickness and suffering. Yes, it is so very hard to live without him! He was so good, such a Christian; I fear I shall soon fall into evil without him to direct me."

She seemed much overcome, and Lydia proposed leaving the deck.

"You are all so very kind;" said she through her tears, as she took the hand of Lydia, and adding "I shall feel better soon;" closed the door of her cabin.

For many days she wept for her uncle, but at last her happy spirit triumphed.

Those rescued from the wreck were now quite recovered, and Charles, their deliverer, declared himself perfectly strong again.

Beatrice was naturally very vivacious, kind-hearted and amiable, and the bewitching manner that ever characterized her, soon made her acquaintance with our travellers ripen into intimacy; and as Mrs. Villiers occupied herself much with Lottie's books,

Charles and Lydia were thrown often with Beatrice, who was very witty and amusing; yet often her spirits would droop for a time, and she would express her great desire to reach land, that she might exchange the costume she now wore, (and to which almost every lady on board had gladly contributed,) for the habiliments of mourning.

"Oh Lydia, I was just wishing for you, do come here;" exclaimed Charles, as he drew her to a more secluded part of the deck, and continued, "I've been thinking of La Belle, and that grandfather of ours; I'm sure it must be his intention to make us sole heirs, or very nearly so; he has a very fine town house in Berlin, too, we shall see it before long, as we are going, you know, directly to it as we leave the ship. At all events he must have some grand intention in sending for us, and dear mother and Lydia can soon cast away their anxious faces for good. Oh, it will be delightful!"

"Yes!" said Lydia, hesitatingly; "Although I know poor, dear ma is often very much troubled, fearing we might be disappointed. You see she knows him better than we do; in fact her only hope is that he is changed from what he was."

"But Lydia; do you think any one in sound reason would send for us all these miles for nothing?"

"No! I cannot think so."

"Right. And sister mine, now let me tell you, that I'm sure of all the ladies at the court of Berlin, not one could I find more lovely and good than my own sweet sister. And I like to think she'd as soon have a kiss from me as any one in the world. Now Lyddie love, one in return."

"You would rather it should come from other lips on board," said Lydia as she looked with an arch glance to see the effect of her words. Charles bit his lip, then answered with a candid smile,— "Perhaps I shall have it some day."

"Oh remember we were going to sing."

"Yes, but I want you to hear Beatrice's voice; let us wait, she will join with us."

"Ah! L'harmonie la plus douce est la voix de celle qu'on aime!"

"Lydia, you can say what you choose," as the color mounted to his temples; "I should like to know who could help liking such a beautiful girl."

"Oh, I'll allow she is most lovable and good; but tell me Charles, have you forgotten the pretty Kate?" laying her hand upon his shoulder,

"She's a mere piece of tinsel, to dazzle for the minute."

"How did you like Anna?"

"Not at all; although I loved the goodness that was in her."

"Oh, she is a sweet girl, a rare jewel."

"I know, Lyddie; but there are various kinds of jewels, you must acknowledge. Here is my opinion. As they appear to me, the pretty Kate is a glittering spangle that would soon tarnish in the very spray that arose from the sea of trouble; your Anna is a pearl that shows best surrounded by the vesture of mourning; you, Lydia, are something most precious, most lovely, anything that is costly and rare except the diamond, for that is Beatrice."

"Hush! here she comes."

"Listen, she is singing, did you ever hear such a voice?"

The tone was rich and full, as the still air bore to them the silvery strain.

"Say not that I'm over romantic  
In loving the wild and the free,  
But the waves of the dashing Atlantic,  
The Alps, and the Eagle for me."

"Is that all, Beatrice?" said Charles as she tripped towards them.

"Oh no!" continuing,

"You may talk of a soft sighing lover,  
Such things may be had by the score;  
I'd rather be bride to a rover,  
And polish the rifle he bore."

"Ah Beatrice, you will change your opinion;" said Lydia, "remember, you are to live in sunny France; and in Paris, perhaps."

"I'm sure I can't tell;" replied Beatrice. "Just think of it, I don't know my cousin's direction, and I've not the least idea how to trace him; but they will hear of the wreck, and will surely come, some of them, to meet me."

"But if they should not come, what would you do?" inquired Charles, looking very serious.

"Oh, don't remind me of such a dreadful dilemma, or I shall not forgive you. Fancy me walking through the streets in this singular costume of odd garments!" and with a merry laugh she exhibited one after another, the red skirt, blue mantle, and large buff hood! Then my cousins are perfect strangers to me, and one of them I believe is a very precise and eccentric old bachelor; suppose he should come alone, and I have to tell him he

must furnish my wardrobe before I can accompany him!" And again her musical laugh floated over the calm waters.

"There is Lottie playing with those children," said Lydia, looking across the deck; "Mamma must be alone, so I will go to her." She was gone; and Charles was left alone with Beatrice.

The joyous laugh had floated far away, and all vestige of it had vanished, as she stood gazing into vacancy, the expression of troubled thought resting upon the beautiful face, and adding a charm to the fascination, which, although she was ignorant of it, always pervaded her presence. Charles watched her in admiration until he saw the expression deepen into sadness, and going up to her said quickly,—

"Beatrice, I've been wanting to ask you something. I saw a prayer-book with your name, and the thought struck me you might like to join us every morning and evening for prayers."

"Then you don't think me such a wild creature as not to be fit?"

"Oh Beatrice, don't talk so."

"Well, I will not, if you will answer me candidly. Do you want me to come because you think I'm such a wicked sinner that I should never think of a time for devotion, or is it because you like to have me near you?"

Her face brightened with a roguish smile as she fixed her dark eyes upon him with a penetration that seemed to read the very soul. The crimson mounted to his fair temples, and he kept his eyes upon the deck, lest he should, in glancing at her, betray what was passing within; and as an aid in controlling himself, he repeated to himself, "She's a perfect stranger to me, I know nothing of her." And in a serious tone answered,—

"Miss Sauvestre, you believe in a God and in a Saviour, have been baptised in the same faith, and must have many opinions in common with ourselves; and you cannot be wholly indifferent to such, when you would spare no trouble to visit a poor forlorn sailor in his illness, to read and pray with him when no eye but that of the Almighty could witness." Charles seemed pained at having been misunderstood, and Beatrice evidently saw it, as he turned away.

"Oh, I have been unkind," going up to him; "do forgive me. Believe me, I do not know a greater pleasure than joining you, but I have offended you!"

"Beatrice, you could not if you were to try," turning towards her.

"You are too patient with such caprice," extending her hand;

"I do not deserve it," added she, as her tears started, "you have saved my life!"

"And would gladly do so again."

"What, risk such peril again for me? Again risk your life?"

"Beatrice, a thousand times again."

"The Wing of the West" had nearly reached her destined port, and it had so happened that Charles was never again with Beatrice without a third person being present.

The pale rays of a full moon were shedding their calm light over the still waters, and every cabin was deserted for the deck.

There was a secluded little nook behind the wheel-house, to which our travellers generally resorted when many were on deck, and now, amidst Lottie's earnest entreaties to watch the moon from the other side of the vessel, they continued to linger here. They appeared engrossed in the topics upon which they were speaking; and for the first time the subject of the wreck formed one of them.

"Certainly," said Charles, "a storm at sea is awfully grand, and there is in it a sublimity beyond all description."

"And the other phases of the ocean are scarcely less lovely," remarked Lydia. "Just look round upon it now; I never saw it more beautiful than to-night; and such a glorious arch of the blue heavens above us."

"Yes!" said Beatrice; "and there is in its magnificence a holy awe that seems to inspire the gazer with a new attribute of the Creator. How much we have passed through since we last saw land! what intense suffering! and yet so far we have been preserved while so many have perished."

"Beatrice, I heard you singing that beautiful chant this morning, do let us hear it again."

"No, Charles; see, the deck is cleared now; let us form a choir: yours can be the baritone, and Lydia's contralto."

The favorite selections were sung; and for the last time the united voices arose from that deck, and were borne by the soft zephyrs, far away upon the ocean's waste.

But when were those voices to be blended again? and where?

"Land ahoy!"

It was one o'clock in the morning, yet the cry aroused many sleepers; for those who would have remained in the arms of Morpheus, were prevented by the excitement of the majority, who had found a six weeks' voyage too tedious not to hasten upon the deck to assure themselves of the truth.

Morning dawned; the dim lights upon the distant land, told they were really nearing the harbor; the long voyage and its

hazards were forgotten, and at five o'clock, all were astir, preparing for those formidable specimens of humanity, who, according to the general gossip, would search your very pockets, charge duty upon one-half you possessed, and seize the rest.

"Charles, come upon deck."

"Lottie, I cannot at present; I am too much amused here," said he, directing again his attention towards an old lady at the farther end of the cabin, giving the necessary instructions to her maid.

"Here, put this in the toe of my shoe; surely they'll never think of looking there! And Jane, don't forget to fasten that opera glass that was my grandmother's, in my round pocket that ties behind me; and if the German wretches dare to meddle with it, I'll go to the consul."

Some one called, "Charles, Beatrice wants you," and instantly the old lady was forgotten.

After anchoring at night-fall as they passed through the English Channel, it was a week before they reached the Weser. The morning was clear and beautiful that found them really at the end of the long and tedious voyage. For the last time Mrs. Villiers' cabin was consecrated as the little sanctuary, where arose from every heart the thanksgiving for their preservation from a watery grave.

"We none of us know," said the widow, as they arose from their knees, "what is before us. Ours may be the path of trial and disappointment; friends may prove false, and hope long deferred may at last be crushed forever, and we left alone to fall back upon ourselves; and face, unguarded and uncared for, the temptations of the world. Still, let us ever remember there is no want howsoever urgent it may be, no sorrow so poignant, but we can pour it into the confidence of heavenly love; 'Casting all your care upon Him, for he careth for you.'"

They had little time for conversing; the Custom House officers were already busy, and every deck was a scene of confusion and excitement.

"Now, Charles, you can exercise your German tongue," said Lydia, handing him a bunch of keys, "for here are the officers." Theirs was nearly the last baggage examined, and when they returned to the deck it was nearly cleared. An hour before, as they stood there they had witnessed many a happy meeting of friends welcoming the weary travellers; but now these had been borne away to the social hearth, and the "Wing of the West" seemed quite deserted.

During the morning, Beatrice had been the picture of vivac-

ity, and the merry rippling laugh, and joyous countenance, seemed to inspire hope in the most desponding. In vain had she watched every inquirer; none came for Beatrice: yet she had borne the disappointment most heroically.

"Come, children," said Mrs. Villiers, calling to the group at the farther end of the vessel. As she waited, she heard the voice of lamentation, as of some one in great distress. On reaching them, she found Lydia supporting the weeping Beatrice. Inquiring the cause of the tears, Lydia looked up with a tearful face and exclaimed,—

"Oh, dear mother, poor Beatrice begins to realize her situation. Only think of it, here she is in a foreign land, without anything, without a friend. Oh, what can we do," and Lydia's tears mingled with her friend's.

"My dear child," said the widow as she raised the head of the sorrowing girl, "not so violently, love,—we are seldom so very miserable as we fancy."

"Oh, but I am so very forlorn! I know not where to find any of my relations when I reach France, and although my fortune is large, the papers are lost, the lawyer in Boston died just as we left, and should I write there to ascertain, what am I to do in the meantime? Oh, why was I saved from the wreck to suffer this wretchedness?"

"Beloved child," continued the widow, "remember who has said, 'I am the Lord thy God, which teacheth thee to profit, which leadeth thee by the way that thou shouldest go.' 'I will be a father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters.' 'Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee.'"

Beatrice kissed the cheek of the widow and seemed comforted.

"Lottie, stay with Beatrice, while Charles and Lydia come with me."

They went in search of the captain, to consult him in regard to the orphan girl, but without success; and were making further inquiries, when Lottie called to say,

"Oh, I'm afraid Beatrice will not come back, she will lose her way!"

"Why, where has she gone?" cried Charles.

"Oh, just after you went below, two gentlemen came on board, and after talking together, one asked us if we were awaiting any one, and finding we were, they asked several questions, and one of them told Beatrice he believed a friend of her's to be waiting at a hotel. She said she would send a message instantly, when he declared he saw the very gentleman

standing upon the dock. 'Come, and assure yourself,' said he, 'it's but a step from the vessel;' and Beatrice descended with him to the dock. I saw her passing through the crowd, and once turn back, but he took her by the arm, and led her on through the bustle, much farther than he had said; and they have gone to the left and right, until I have quite lost sight of them."

"Oh Beatrice, how could you confide so rashly!" and Charles' face was the expression of agony.

"Mrs. Villiers, if you are going an overland route to Berlin, you had better not linger here any longer," said an officer.

"True, sir. Come, children, we can do no good here. Poor Beatrice! But perhaps we shall hear of her; come, we must be going."

They bade adieu to the "Wing of the West," and sadly and silently passed to a hotel to which they were directed. Little inclined to partake of the refreshment before them, they made inquiries concerning Beatrice; and they were told a young lady answering her description had been there, but finding no one waiting for her, started immediately in another direction, accompanied by her escort.

"And, ma, she has taken scarcely any food for two days," said Lydia, in despair.

"Ask this person whether she knows anything of the gentleman?" said Mrs. Villiers, turning to them to interpret her question in German. The woman, probably heard, and anxious to display her knowledge of English, answered,—

"Oh, Maladi, he be one of dose mans, vat tell de people some hotel for to go, ven dem don't know de place; I tink dem be very bad mans, I hear dem say how dey sheet people of dere money."

"Oh Beatrice! where is she now; and she knows not where to direct to us! We don't know where she is gone, and we must go now on our way. Oh Beatrice, lovely girl, when shall we see you again!"

They entered the train, and began their long, tedious journey to Berlin. At last Charles broke the gloomy silence by suddenly exclaiming, "Oh Lydia, there was a letter waiting for me from Miss Kate Danvers, I think she might have waited until I asked her to write; how ridiculous some girls make themselves!"

"Did she mention Anna?"

"Oh, I forgot — she writes she is not in the city; but that she has heard Anna is engaged to Mr. Everett. I would give you the letter to read, but I tore it and threw it away."

## CHAPTER XIV.

"Indeed, I cannot love him;  
And you will drive this wretched brain to madness.  
Oh save — relent! or strike the blow  
To end this life of misery and tears,"

"ALFRED, come in here; I've something particular to say to you," said Susan, one evening, as she heard his footsteps in the hall.

It was late; and Alfred was faint and exhausted: in vain had he watched the newspapers, and expended all his little stock of money in advertising. No opportunity had offered; and saddened and disappointed, he at last bent his weary steps homeward. Susan had told them in the morning, it would be the last night they would sleep in that house, and he had been dwelling upon the unkind treatment for some time, when he asked himself whether he was not to blame in the matter; and he saw how superior Anna's judgment was to his, when, with an unruffled temper, and untiring patience, she would every day brook what would instantly rouse him into a rage; and that he alone might have been the means of creating Susan's dislike to them, and in the end of casting his beloved Anna friendless, into the streets. And what could be done, should they at last wander at night-fall in quest of a shelter? Then he pictured the cozy little home of the singular Barrows, which would offer them a welcome most gladly, but Anna must then be a sacrifice to that odious little old man, and Alfred shuddered at the thought. Then there was no hope, no resource but despair.

He entered, and threw himself into a chair.

"Dear me! you've sat yourself right upon my new pattern, and I paid a shilling for it."

He arose and went to a sofa.

"Bless the boy! Why, I do believe there's my bonnet shape behind you, I dare say you have squeezed it to death."

Again he moved.

"There! just like boys, always in mischief. Couldn't you see the lace spread over the back of that chair, do you think rubbing your dusty coat against it will improve it?"

"Well, Susan, I'll stand," in a tired tone, as he leaned the weary limbs against the wall. "What did you want me for, please?"

"Oh, Alfred, you know I told you this morning you were to be turned away, both of you, to-morrow —"

"Susan," and the voice trembled with exhaustion and emotion, "I know we've not the means to pay you, but what we receive costs you no inconvenience, or self-denial; and you may be sure, whatever we might receive from you, should it ever be in our power, would be amply repaid. And Susan, let me tell you, I don't believe all has been fair and just in your dealings with us, but of that you know best. Our things can soon be ready, we have very little belonging to us. We will go now and leave the rest to heaven."

Susan was quite confounded at the calm dignity of his manner, and completely overawed, she sat looking at his earnest countenance in profound amazement, then answered quickly —

"Oh, but something has happened — and as to our being paid sometime, what hope is there, when your father is dead?"

"Dead! When did you hear? tell me. Where did my father die? How long ago?" His loud, distracted tone brought the head and shoulders of Mrs. Gilbert in at the door.

"My father dead! and that is what has happened!"

"Oh no, it is not. What has been happening to-day is of much more consequence than your dead father; because, by it you and Anna are quite independent."

"Independent! How?"

"Why, you are not going to be sent away from here, you can stay if you choose, or come with us to a good, comfortable home, it is all settled — was to-day, and we are going to live — all of us four, at Mrs. Barrow's. But Alfred, you must not annoy Anna about it, say nothing to her — you know it was the best thing — she was quite ready to consent, so it was best to have it done at once — I mean Mr. Everett was here, and it is over, you know he is a good man and would do nothing wrong."

"What?" uttered Alfred, as he raised himself as one awakening from a lethargy, and throwing himself back as he lifted his eyes in agony to the ceiling, he shut the door with such force, that it not only removed Mrs. Gilbert's cap and locks to the floor, but squeezed and bruised her shoulders and neck until she shrieked again. "What, despicable woman!" continued he approaching Susan — "and have you forced — driven to madness, this quiet, submissive creature, who would not hurt a hair of your unworthy head? And do you know, Susan Gilbert, miserable woman, that you must answer for this at the great judgment? Aye, and before that, even on this stage of existence, for remember, I cannot be found so submissive a victim as poor Anna

I will expose you — I will — but where is Anna? I must go to her; tear her from him — an allegiance forced is nothing — it shall be undone — Anna shall be free from his clutches — I'll go. Oh my unhappy Anna!"

"Do not rave so. Indeed, Anna is here!" Susan raised her handkerchief to her eyes. Mrs. Gilbert had for some time been in a fit of hysterics.

"Susan, don't be a hypocrite as well as that Pyke; oh how I despise the whole set of you! But Anna, where did you say she was? Speak — make haste!"

"In her room, of course. Alfred, I am quite ill."

"And where is Barrow?"

"In his bed, I should think. Where else would you have him at this hour?"

"When did it take place, and where has Anna been since?"

"As soon as it was over, she went to her room, has been there ever since;" seeming convulsed with sobs.

"Then Anna, you are safe! Oh Anna, my sweet sister, and I was not here — no one near you to know your misery — to feel your woe!"

He flew to her door; it was fastened, and receiving no answer, thought she had fallen asleep to forget for a while her sorrows; exclaiming in a low tone "God bless you, my Anna," he ascended to his little chamber above. All was as he had left it in the morning. The unmade bed, strewn books and papers, told plainly no Anna had been there that day. Again he returned to her door, knocked louder than before, yet no sound from within, and fearing to awake her, he calmed and contented himself for the night, and commending himself and Anna to an Almighty providence, laid the throbbing head upon his pillow.

But what was it that had happened that day at Mrs. Gilbert's?

That morning, soon after Alfred had gone, as Anna entered Susan's room to set it in order, she found her, for a wonder, standing in the middle of the floor, apparently in deep thought.

On seeing Anna, she turned quickly, and said in a hurried tone, "Anna, make haste and come down stairs, don't wait for anything; you know this is the last day you are to be here, and we want to hear what you intend to do. You need not look surprised, I told you so before; but I have been so lenient to you always, that I suppose you thought you could do just as you like with me. But I'm not going to stand it any longer. Why should I deprive myself of the necessities of life to keep you in indolence, and stuff and cram a great hungry fellow like

that Alfred? There's Miss Pyke, who had an offer yesterday, just because she always has the appearance of a more fashionable lady than I can. But come along, I've a great deal to say to you, and don't want to tire myself out now."

Anna had been too ill for some days to care for anything, and so totally wretched that she seemed to take little interest in whatever might happen in regard to herself; still, for Alfred, she was yet hopeful, and longed that something would occur to prevent Susan's putting her threat into execution. But this was the last day, and no letter, no tidings from their father; so, careless and indifferent of herself, and thinking only of Alfred, she descended to hear their doom.

Mrs. Gilbert reclined with all the ease of an Eastern queen in an arm-chair, that from its dimensions, must have been the possession of her great-grandmother, if its history could not have been traced farther back. On Anna's closing the door, the cap was suddenly thrust forward, and the old lady exclaimed, "Oh, Anna, we want to know what you are going to do when you and Alfred leave here to-morrow morning?"

"Now, mother, that's not the way to begin. Leave her to me. Anna, we mean, what are you going to do all your life?" And Susan came and stood before her, watching intently every change in the pale countenance.

Anna made no reply, but gazed earnestly upon the stern features of the hard-hearted woman.

"Anna, answer me," continued Susan. "Tell me at once,—do you intend to be married, or to live a poor, miserable, forlorn, solitary existence, wandering the streets for a shelter?"

"Wandering the streets for a shelter!" came a voice from the arm-chair in the corner.

"Neglected and despised because we had turned you away. Now you can prevent all this, if you will."

"Prevent it? How can I? Oh, tell me!" and Anna buried her face in the folds of the coarse dress that fell around her thin, slender figure.

"I will tell you;" answered Susan. A gentleman has made you a very excellent offer; he has said nothing to you about it, because we are your guardians, and he came very properly and consulted us. And that was very honorable."

"Very honorable!" echoed the chair in the corner.

"So you see," added Susan, "it is in your power to make Alfred respectable and happy, for he thinks the world of Alfred, and would treat him as a brother."

"But who is it?" and Anna lifted the tearful face to the

vehement woman. "Oh yes, I know! But Susan, it would kill me! And but for Alfred I wish I could die!" and her tears flowed afresh.

"Anna, don't talk of Alfred, you don't care for him, or you'd not think so much of yourself. The thing is this; you imagine no one is good enough for you; I know you think that, Anna. Now tell me, what there is to dislike in Mr. Everett?"

"Mr. Everett! Oh, is it he?"

"Anna, what a conceited girl you must be to suppose Mr. Everett could like *you*, when a moment ago, you committed suicide by saying you wished you were dead."

"Oh, Susan, for pity's sake don't trifle with me. Indeed, if you only knew what I am suffering, you could not talk so!"

"Then it is Mr. Barrow;" and her tone softened as she continued, "and there's not a kinder creature in the world, and we are going to live with you, to take care of you and Alfred, upon whom I dare say he will settle some handsome sum, and make him some great man or other, for he's very good-natured;" —

"Handsome sum — great man — very good-natured —" added the arm-chair.

"Then think of it, Anna; you will have a nice house to order and arrange just to your own taste, with everything you could wish for —"

"But think of him! oh, I wish I could die! Susan — don't press me on, one day you will hear Anna has *really* committed suicide."

"Has she, indeed?" and the old lady who had been dozing, started to know more of the suicide.

"Oh, as to him," answered Susan, "he'll be paralyzed all over before long, I've no doubt; at any rate he is old, he'll die soon, and then you'll have all the good things to yourself. Besides, whichever way it is, you need not mind him, you know I shall be with you," patting her on the shoulder, "and when he has the rheumatism, gout, cramp, or any such nuisance, why we can wrap him in a blanket to smother his groans, while we go for an airing in the open carriage. Then as to that mother of his, why she's in her dotage now, goodness knows what she'll be in a few years' time."

Susan paused in her harangue, and looked with surprise at Anna, who appeared as uninfluenced by her mild, confidential tone, as by her vehement threats; and fearing she should be baffled, and lose the great scheme of her ambition, she placed her heavy hands upon Anna's shoulders, and said, while with difficulty she suppressed the rage that was struggling within her —

"Anna Wentworth, there are two evils from which you can choose. One is nothing but a little old man to tolerate sometimes when he is at home,—quite a little evil; and the other great misery is—seeing Alfred wretched and despised. Go to your room, and think it over; see which you love the better, Alfred or yourself. And Anna, remember, every girl has one opportunity in her lifetime to make a good match, and never more than one. Now this is yours; don't stand there looking petrified, but go and decide."

Anna went to her room. For a while, all that Susan had said passed before her as a mass of indefinable ideas, as she stood endeavoring to recall what had happened. Then, as the horror of either choice came over her, falling upon her knees beside her little bed, she buried her tears in the coverlid.

It was noon; the sun shone brightly into the little chamber. Three successive hours had found Anna in the same position; but now she arose. Her choice was made; and in the placid countenance there rested a fixed determination to carry it into effect. Alfred was all in the world to her, and with his image before her, she was strengthened and stimulated for the coming trial.

She was about to leave the room when a sudden thought struck her, and taking up the little prayer book, which had her mother's name upon the clasp, she turned to the marriage ceremony. Her eye fell upon the words, "For better for worse, for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love, cherish, and to obey, till death us do part, according to God's holy ordinance."

"How could I utter such vows for one I so abhorred!" Then came again the frank, open countenance of Alfred, and the doubt, fear, and perplexity, harassing the perturbed soul. She again had recourse to her tears, and then knelt to calm her feelings into prayer.

Susan wished to know what had been the real effect of her words; and nothing short of a long consultation with Miss Pyke, could have kept her from Anna's room so long. But now that lady had at last said "good-by," and Susan did not forget to tap gently at the door of the little chamber, for in case Anna should ever be Mrs. Robert Barrow, it would be best to show the respect her position demanded. However, she soon allowed her impatience to overcome the resolution to be respectful, as, upon finding Anna did not answer her knock instantly, she bounded into the room.

"Right, Anna, quite right, dear girl. I see, by the open prayer book, what your choice has been."

"No, Susan, it cannot be my choice," raising the swollen eyes to the ecstatic countenance before her; "read there what is required, and can you, in any honesty, so conjure me to such a promise? To pledge in jest or deceit, what is a sacred ordinance in the sight of God?"

"Oh, as to that—but hark! Here's Sally Pyke coming up stairs. Yes, here she is."

It required some delay for Miss Pyke to regain her breath. During which time Susan repeated to her Anna's objection to making the desirable choice.

"My dear girl," said the visitor, taking her trembling hand "I know exactly how you feel; indeed, I've felt just the same, myself."

"But, Anna," interposed Susan, "he never asked you to love him, did he? and who in the world can expect to have what he doesn't ask for?"

"Ah, but my dear Susan," and the tone told the breath was quite recovered, "you don't quite understand the dear girl, but I do," with a sigh, "oh, yes, perfectly. I see, like me she looks at every thing in a pious light, no matter what it is. But, Anna, I will tell you. People don't get married because it is the will of Heaven that they should, but because it is a sort of respectable and convenient thing. Men like it, because they are by nature rash and impetuous, and like to be accepted; and we,—well, you know I have told you, it's all we can do, and the very best thing for us."

"Now, Sally Pyke,—I mean Miss Sarah Christiana Pyke, tell her about 'serving him,' in case that should trouble her."

"Is that one of the requirements? The fact is, I never suffer myself to read over the matrimonial service—it makes me feel so very unhappy; and I am afraid to shed many tears for fear losing so much moisture might in time produce brain fever. But let me see; oh, yes to be sure, the clergyman will ask you, 'Wilt thou obey him, and serve him, love, honor and keep him in sickness and in health, and, forsaking all others, keep thee only unto him, so long as ye both shall live?' Now, obey and serve are both the same; and as soon as the ceremony is over, you know you two are one; consequently, when you serve yourself, (as you are doing in the whole affair) you will be serving him. As to loving and honoring him, of course it would not be expected with any one so disgusting and loathsome. Then the best way to 'keep' him would be in a room by himself, and I've no doubt my dear friend, Susan, will assist you to do that, 'so long as ye both shall live,' which can't be very long, for by

my own memory, he has been tottering on the verge of the grave these forty years,—that is, I have heard so,” recollecting her age was at stake.

“Well, there’s no other difficulty, I believe;” remarked Susan with a satisfied air. “Sally, I mean Miss Pyke, did you order the cards?”

“Oh, yes, my dear; I never neglect anything so important, I expect they are all printed by this time.”

Anna heaved a deep sigh and turned paler, but said nothing.

Susan turned to her and began again. “Oh, Anna, we shall be the bride’s maids of course; what do you wish us to wear?”

“Why, Susan, you must have blue, as pink suits my complexion best. Although a gentleman once told me I looked like bees’ wax, of course he meant after it was clarified and made white, and I remember I wore that evening a purple dress. Still, I prefer pink; purple will do when I’m old.”

“Blue is very common, Sarah Christiana, I think I will have a yellow bodice, with a red skirt like a train, and green trimmings; and heavy blue feathers in my hair; they’re not so common as flowers.”

“Oh, I shall not; I prefer a long veil like a bride, and ringlets at the back of my head the same as these in front, with a little orange blossom mingled with each curl.”

“It must be getting late, Sally Christiana,—come, you know we have something to arrange.”

“I could see what the time is,” was Miss Pyke’s answer, “but my watch is a little out of order. It is a very excellent one, only the hair spring is broken, and one of the hands was lost, when I dropped it and bent the case and cracked the glass to pieces; but that’s all the matter with it. Oh, what’s the reason Anna looks so death-like, is she fainting?”

“Oh no; come along! She has been like that all day.”

“My dear Anna,” said Miss Pyke, going up to her and taking her hand; “I know too well how very wretchedly you feel; indeed, I can truly sympathize with you. I know you feel the more you will see of him the more you will hate him, and never be able to bear the thought of his coming near you. Yes, dear child, I know it all;” and as usual when she desired to appear very pathetic, her voice fell into the minor key. “But then whoever you married, your life must be one of subordination, for, unfortunate for us, it is our lot; ah! yes,” and the sigh was deeper, “ours is a very hard lot. So you see I can really pity you, and would not for worlds advise you to do anything that would not make you the most happy; for, imagine

just a moment, that you have discarded this excellent opportunity, and rejected the only good offer you can ever have; and look upon Alfred you love so tenderly, wretched and forlorn, pining into the grave from neglect and want; and think how you would reproach yourself; why, Anna, it would drive you to madness, and nothing but the earnest wish to save you this dreadful remorse, prompts me to speak as I do. But we must go.”

Insensible as Anna seemed, she was aware of their departure, for she cast a glance of contemptuous pity upon the two, as they left the room.

“Indeed, it is true,” said she to herself, “the remorse would be intolerable; yet when I think of that man! But Alfred!”

The last rays of the setting sun were throwing their golden beauty upon all without. Yet its bright beams entered not the gloomy parlor of Mrs. Gilbert; for it was soon to be the scene of business, and all was the bustle of preparation. A carriage stopped at the door; a very tottery little old gentleman, and a still more feeble old lady alighted, and were welcomed by Mrs. Gilbert and daughter, assisted by Miss Pyke. All were seated with due ceremony, when Susan broke the silence.

“I think that’s Mr. Everett; I’ll go for Anna, there’s no time to be lost.” She was soon in the little room above. “What, not dressed, Anna? Here, bathe your face, while I arrange your hair. There, that will do; now put on that red dress I gave you. Anna, you seem asleep! What ails you, girl? Make haste and come along!”

“Where? What for?”

“Why, it’s Mr. Barrow’s wish you should be engaged immediately; that’s all. And I’m very glad he thought of it, as you need be no longer troubled with wavering; you will be bound, and cannot keep changing your mind; and it will be a great comfort to you. Come!”

“Oh, let me wait for Alfred!” drawing back.

“Anna!” and all the symptoms of suppressed rage arose in the countenance of the angry woman, as she still held in her tight grasp the hand of the trembling girl, whose lips moved without a sound, while the large eyes were fastened in agony upon the enraged Susan. Again the lips quivered, and she endeavored to free herself from that iron grasp. But her feeble strength was nothing for Susan to overcome; and partly dragged, partly carried, she was soon at the foot of the stairs, where, from the pain of Susan’s rough treatment, she shrieked “Alfred!” and sunk upon the floor. But Susan was ready as she was rough, and throwing the strong arms round the slender form,

quickly raised her to her feet ; and endeavored to lift her into the room.

"No! Don't touch me. I'll go by myself!" There was the full working of desperation in the look and tone ; and with the colorless lips closely compressed, she firmly turned the handle of the door and entered, followed by Susan.

There was a dignity about the marble countenance, as she stood there in the middle of the floor and gazed wildly around her, that filled those spectators with awe, and made them shrink from the penetration of those full, blue eyes. Yet Miss Pyke was not easily daunted ; she arose and kissed the cold cheek, while Susan, putting her arm affectionately round her waist, placed a chair next the little old man, and seated Anna upon it. He endeavored to rise, but at that moment his limbs would not allow it, and as his arms were too short to reach Anna's chair, she was saved the annoyance of his caresses.

No one spoke ; yet every eye was fixed upon Anna, who sat staring into vacancy.

Susan again left the room, but this time, knocked at the door of Mr. Everett. There was the usual deliberate "Come in," and Susan entered. The young minister was preparing a sermon, and his little table was filled with open books and papers. He looked up in astonishment as Susan entered ; in an excited tone she addressed him,—

"Mr. Everett, sir, I've come—I mean I wanted to ask you—that is, will you grant us a favor—or rather, Anna a favor. Mr. Barrow is here, all are here waiting,—but I forget, sir, you did not know, no, of course you did not—that Anna desires so much to be married, and we don't like to oppose the dear girl, although we knew nothing of her wish until to-day ; I think it's remarkable how girls always keep such things to themselves. But will you please to come, sir?" Her listener betrayed all the appearance of one completely transfixed, as he gazed upon her in mute astonishment ; then uttered, as if half to himself—

"Going to be married—what, Anna? To whom? When?"

"Oh, do just please to come in, sir, it won't take a moment," pulling him by the arm, "We don't like to thwart her, when she's so amiable and good, and besides, as she is so very destitute, it's a most excellent match for her. Come, sir." She continued to clench his coat sleeve, until she found he was rising, heedless of whether she grasped the flesh beneath it, or not. However, with the same bewildered expression he followed her into the parlor.

No wonder he gazed as one stupefied upon the scene before him ; so strange was the medley of the ludicrous with what was truly painful, that it had more the appearance of a tableau than sober reality.

Before him was Anna ; and he looked in amazement upon that image of despair. On a sofa sat, or rather reclined, the two friends, Miss Pyke and Susan, attired in the most grotesque of costumes to be imagined in the modern ages. Behind the door was seated Mrs. Gilbert, her hands tightly clasped upon her knee, and her eyes raised to the ceiling. So unexpectedly had she been summoned by Susan, that only one half of her toilet had been completed. Consequently, the sleeves, rolled up to the elbows, just as she had escaped from the kitchen, and entire state of dishevelment, contrasted greatly with the huge wreath of artificial flowers of every hue that encircled the head, and seemed the representation of some new idea lately introduced into the science of mythology. In an arm-chair by a window, rested the diminutive figure of a man ; who, as the light fell upon him, could not be mistaken by any one whose fate it had ever been to look before upon Robert Barrow, Esq. In a little recess by the fire-place, sat an emaciated form, very erect, and so little of it rested upon the chair, that it had more the appearance of standing. The robe that encircled it, was principally black, while the face was certainly more that of a corpse than of any living creature, while the head, neck, and arms were tightly bound in pieces of cloth, and gave the whole the appearance of some mummy brought from afar ; for Mr. Everett, of course, did not know Mrs. Barrow wore beneath that robe a stiff apparatus for keeping the limbs in their proper location, and that it was her custom to bandage thus as a preventive against neuralgia.

The clergyman had scarcely finished surveying the contents of the apartment, when some awkward movements of Susan, arrested his notice. She was going in great haste to reach something from behind Mr. Barrow, when one of her tassels caught in his chair. The little man tried to extricate it by means of his umbrella, which was laid by his side ; but unfortunately for Susan, the huge end of it buried itself in her flounce, and determined to free herself, in her fury, she went round and round, until the chair and its contents were a complete whirligig. Perceiving the discomfiture of the poor little man, she exclaimed, as she turned away—

"Oh, that's nothing, you stupid, deaf old creature! I shall twist and turn you about much worse than that, before long."

And having recovered a paper, the searching for which had so disconcerted the little individual, she approached Mr. Everett, and as she held it close to his eyes, said, "We wish you to read it, sir — I mean aloud, if you please — if you will just be so very good, sir."

"Oh, stop a moment!" came in a whining little voice from the window; and as all directed their attention thither, they found Mr. Barrow diligently examining every pocket in his possession, and to the amusement of any who cared to notice it, making the most hideous grimaces at every change of position. However, he was at last successful, for he presently held within those stiff, long fingers, a ring that glittered brightly in the twilight.

Upon a second entreaty to read the paper aloud, Mr. Everett seemed to regain his senses, and complied.

It was a formal and lengthy avowal of a love for Robert Barrow, Esq.; written in the first person, and indulging in the wildest rhapsodies of a passionate and uncontrolled affection, most extravagantly expressed; and concluding with declarations of desperate determination upon her own life, if thwarted in a union with the person to whom she expressed herself so greatly attached.

The singular epistle was ended; Anna's lips moved, as she endeavored to rise and attract the reader's attention; but all utterance failed her, and, although in her imagination she was clinging to him, imploring him to believe it all false, still there she sat, the same monument of inevitable despair.

Susan now approached her, and moved both chair and Anna as near as possible to the strange little man. His hands, which shook violently from a stroke of the palsy, seized the cold fingers of that insensible girl, as Susan held them towards him; and after much trouble and delay, occasioned by his extreme nervousness and indifferent sight, the ring glittered upon the hand of its new possessor.

"Now Anna, love," said Susan, as she kissed her, and lifted her from the chair, "just come to the table."

Miss Pyke rendered her assistance, and Anna was carried rather than led to the table, on which lay what seemed to her, her death warrant. Susan dipped a pen in the ink, while Miss Pyke supported the sinking form, and then holding it within the fingers of Anna, said, "just write your name here, darling."

"It's all you'll have to do, dear;" said the kind friend, in whose arms she rested, "I know these ceremonies are exceedingly tiresome, but like many other trials of this life, we must bear them with patience."

It was done. And the deed, whose plotting had cost Susan so many wakeful hours, and her accomplice so much pondering and anxiety, was at last accomplished.

A change seemed coming over Anna, and fearing she should evince some unfavorable symptoms in the presence of Mr. Everett, Susan was now as anxious to have that gentleman make his exit, as she had been solicitous of his company.

"Indeed, sir," said she turning to him, "I think I heard the bell ring, in fact, I'm most sure it's some one for you, sir. And we are all very much obliged to you, Mr. Everett, yes sir, very much;" which was seconded by her ladyship, Miss Pyke, and re-echoed by the nodding Mrs. Gilbert, behind the door. To their entire satisfaction, the curate arose, and taking one more survey of the motley group, left the room.

They attempted to bear Anna to the door, but with an unwarranted strength, she warded them from her, and standing there alone in the middle of the floor, uplifting her hands with a cry to heaven, she exclaimed —

"Oh, Father, have mercy! forgive, help me! Alfred, come before I die!" And the insensible girl fell to the floor.

"It's a mere childish fit," said Susan, as they bore her to her little room, where, having used a few restoratives to revive her, they thought she would soon recover, and left her to herself. Susan locked her in, and secured the key, saying, "I'm too weary to stand any of Alfred's temper to-night, so he'll not see her until I choose."

## CHAPTER XV.

"Thou fairest flower,  
Why didst thou fling thyself across my path?  
My tiger-spring must crush thee in its way,  
But cannot pause to pity thee."

"Neither bended knees, pure hands held up,  
Sad sighs, deep groans, nor silver shedding tears,  
Could penetrate her uncompassionate sire."

NIGHT had cast her sombre mantle over the streets of the capital, when our weary travellers found themselves at last at the entrance of Berlin. As it was late, they concluded to spend the night at the hotel, that rest might recruit them for their reception by their relatives on the morrow. The morning proved clear and salubrious, conducive to the joyous spirit of anticipation that animated them as they drove to the town residence of Sir Charles Villiers. Anxious as they were to see the city, the close vehicle in which they were driven prevented any more than a mere glimpse now and then as they passed; and unable to form any idea of the streets and buildings, they were set down at the dwelling of the grandfather. It was of rather modern architecture, and wore a substantial and commodious appearance; but at present they were not inclined to be as much interested in the building, as in those who occupied it. Charles ascended the steps and inquired for Sir Charles; but to the disappointment of all, heard their grandfather's family had repaired a few weeks previous to their country residence of La Belle, and upon inquiring of the old servant whether his master expected any visitors, the reply was in the negative, making it evident that their letter, informing him of their intentions, had never reached its destination; and it would be useless to pen a second, as they would reach La Belle as soon as the mail. Returning to the station, they took their seats in a train just starting for Halle, and we will leave them pursuing their tedious journey towards Halle, while we take a view of the inmates at La Belle.

Sir Charles Villiers was now about seventy-five, and had been a widower twenty years. To use his own expression, he had been troubled with but four children, the eldest of whom was Eliza, a woman of fifty, who now superintended the household and who partook somewhat of the temperament of her father, which was in no wise the most amiable or agreeable; and she generally contrived to be opposed in whatever she was

desired to acquiesce. On hearing of his son's decease, he appeared softened for a time, and ready to offer them every assistance and even kindness; but Eliza could see no occasion for receiving again into favor any disinherited branch of the family; and she feared lest the widow and children, should they come to Prussia, might hover around Sir Charles, and in time so control him that she would lose all sway in a household where she had ruled so long. Accordingly, she invited the son of a poor, distant relation, to come and remain in the family, and to endeavor to gain the notice and favor of the old gentleman, that he might be made his heir, for the estate descended only in the male line, and the younger son of Sir Charles had been drowned a few years previous. Young Hermann, who had just escaped from the confines of college walls, was proud, indolent, and in no degree elevated in his character. Conscious of his position he spared no pains to remain a short time every day, and read to the old gentleman, when he never forgot to recount all the invitations he had refused by so doing; and by degrees won the favor he so greatly desired, and in the exuberance of his anticipations, he formed an engagement with an Austrian lady, who was elated with the idea of his prospects in regard to La Belle.

Sir Charles received no answer to his letter; and much rejoiced, Eliza declared it was just what she had expected, as it was most probable the wife and children were like her brother, very proud and independent, and without doubt had scorned his invitation long ago. Consequently, Sir Charles, thinking he should hear no more from Philadelphia, made his will, in which Hermann was sole heir to his title and estate. The old gentleman had also sent an invitation to the intended wife of his adopted son; many visitors were at La Belle, and the beautiful valley was illumined by the brilliancy of the gay chateau, after its long desertion during the winter.

It was late in the evening; Eliza was exerting herself to the utmost in aiding to entertain the guests in the drawing-room; not that she possessed much conviviality within herself, but hers was the faculty of drawing it from others, so that when she chose, her society could be desirable. In the library sat a corpulent and hearty-looking old gentleman, whose very air spoke of ease and plenty, while the grey locks that encircled the full, round cheeks, seemed to add but little care to the clear, expansive brow, that appeared to enclose intellectual powers of no uncommon order. Yet there was in his countenance that which forbade any proximity to intimacy; in fact, no one ever dared to

ask a reason for anything he did ; as usual, he was surrounded by the newspapers and journals of the day ; but these were just now disregarded, as he sat back in his chair, knitting his brow as though contemplating some difficult problem.

The door opened, and a lady of medium stature entered. Her complexion was very dark, and the expression of her countenance certainly by no means prepossessing ; her carriage, as she approached the old gentleman, was one of firm and resolute decision. She was evidently about to speak, when Sir Charles suddenly brought his clenched hand in contact with the table, a signal that his loquacity was soon to appear, and that undivided attention must be given thereto.

"They're coming," at length escaped him.

"Who?"

"Those Philadelphia folks."

"What? You never can mean Charles' family!"

"The same."

But the contemptuously curled lip and defiant air of the listener, told she believed the speaker only dreaming ; although, had she ascended to the tower, and looked out from one of the turrets upon the moonlit scene, she might have descried a coach descending heavily the side of the mountain that sloped towards the secluded valley of La Belle ; and could she have discerned the countenances of those within, she could have found how great a change a short time had wrought in the handsome face of the widow, while extreme weariness and fatigue marked the expressions of the rest.

"I tell you it's true ;" continued Sir Charles, "a postillion, who drove on for a relay of horses, brought the word."

"And what do you intend to do, are you going to receive them?"

"I want to see what they all look like." Nodding assent.

"Well, so you can ; and the servants will not know who they are, for I suppose you will entertain them but a short time?"

"Until to-morrow ; when I can give them my mind."

The travellers reached the chateau, and alighted. A reception that chilled Mrs. Villiers to the heart was theirs, as Eliza met them and formally extending her hand, said, without a word of further congratulation.

"I don't think Sir Charles is disposed to see any one this evening ; however, now that you are here, you will be obliged to remain for the night ; most probably you would rather retire at once than join us in the drawing-room ; so I will bid you good-night, and have some refreshment sent up to you."

She instantly turned to a footman, and ordered him to show the strangers into certain rooms at the farther end of the chateau, and walked away in another direction.

Americans are in general early risers ; and this custom, joined to the novelty of their situation, awoke the children at day-break, while a mind ill at ease prevented the widow finding her pillow one of repose. The gentle rays of the rising sun were just playing upon the breast of the silvery lake, when she arose, and opening the casement, drank in the beauty of the beloved scene, which filled her with visions of the past, and for awhile served as a respite from the sorrows of the present. There was the same gravel walk, sloping down through many a maze and dingle to the pure stream below ; while beyond, towered in majestic beauty, the lofty Hartz. To the left extended the broad expanse of the park, over whose rich verdure gambled the deer and the antelope, as they bounded far out of sight to slake their thirst at the fall of the cataract, whose well remembered sound brought to the recollection of the widow many a scene of childish glee, when, far through the woodland would resound the merriment of their innocent sport. And then as the years stole over her, and other aims called her attention, the same velvet lawn, and "grove of citrons," had afforded a retreat to the lovers, when they left the circle of friends, to breathe, in the moonlight, vows that never, until death, had been broken.

But suddenly her gaze fell in another direction, where from among the cluster of trees, arose a memorial of faithful service in the cause of the Redeemer. It was a small spire, perhaps less artistically wrought than any angle of the chateau, yet it spoke to her heart of the lowly spirit of that beloved parent, who had labored unceasingly among that little flock of the valley, until he was called to the better land. While further to the left, in a deeper seclusion of the valley, arose the slabs of granite, to note the resting-place of a family which she alone remained to represent.

The birds were warbling their matin song, and all nature seemed to unite in a welcome to the return of the wanderer. "Beautiful La Belle !" sighed the widow ; "of all places upon earth thou art the most lovely : and I would that my children could love thee as I do. Ah, no !" checking the wish, "cold was the reception ; thou canst be nothing to them ; they must leave thee to another, and wander far away from thy peaceful shade, to brook the rude world without. Oh, La Belle ! home of my childhood ! spot ever dear to my recollection, we must leave thee for ever ; and I, with my children, whither shall I go !"

Then followed the moment of anguish; and the tried soul, overwhelmed by the dark future, turned from the scene that looked too beautiful for the hour of sorrow, and sought relief in the ready tear. But the Comforter, whom the Father hath promised to all who ask in his Son's name, is never sought in vain; and armed with fresh strength for all to come, she left the retreat of her chamber, and bathing the fevered brow in the cool air of the morning, endeavored to leave the past and the future, and roused herself for the occupation of the present.

"Let me see, where did they put the children?" said she aloud, as she left the balcony, and with stealthy steps, lest she should awake the sleepers, entered one of the long galleries, and paused to consider what objects of interest she desired most particularly to point out to them, as it might be the last opportunity afforded her for acquainting them with the spot of which their father had so often spoken with delight.

At the end of the gallery was a glass door, that opened upon a sort of corridor, opposite to which projected one of the wings of the chateau. Hearing a familiar voice humming some favorite little air, she looked up, and there at an open window, stood Lydia, her bright countenance glowing with health and animation, while the rich tresses served as a toy for the passing breeze.

"Lovely girl;" murmured the fond mother, "and you look none the less beautiful for the fatigues of that trying voyage. To what have you been born, my sweet Lydia, and what would that father have felt, could he have known that the homeless and friendless, would ever be the lot of the child he loved almost to idolatry. But, beloved one, yours is a happy temperament, and I'll not sadden you with my anxieties and fears!"

Leaving the corridor, she wound her way to where Lydia stood, gazing too intently upon the scene to be aware of her approach. The embrace startled her, but she instantly returned the fond caress as she exclaimed,—

"Charles and Lottie have gone to look at a swallow's nest, but I wished to remain a little longer to enjoy this view. Now let us go and find them."

Upon descending to the garden, they heard from a distance the musical laugh of the lively Carlotta; winding their way in the direction of the sound, they came to a sequestered spot, where the vines that climbed from bough to bough formed a bower of unrivalled beauty, on account of the cascade that rippled in its centre, over many a bank of variegated vegetation. On a mossy mound, reclined the fairy form of Lottie; her face turned

towards the cascade, where Charles seemed busily occupied in catching the drops as they fell from the waterfall. Approaching her, he sprinkled them upon her fair forehead, exclaiming, "Carlotta, in the names of the nymphs of this bower, I anoint thee goddess of mischief, and sprite of the spirits of sport. Amen."

"Come, children, leave your nymphaean haunts for awhile," said Mrs. Villiers; "I wish particularly to show you the picture gallery."

Carlotta started at the sound of the voice, then threw herself back again, exclaiming, "Oh, I could stay here for ever; and when I come to live at La Belle, this shall be my favorite nook!"

The widow made no remark, but heaving a sigh, led the way to a side of the chateau where the moat widened; and Charles prevailed upon them to forsake the bridge for the novelty of being rowed in a boat across the water to the ponderous entrance. After some scientific manoeuvre that Mrs. Villiers remembered, the door yielded to them, and they passed into the massive oak hall, where the rich, heavy mouldings, carved in various devices, and the curiously inlaid stone floor, would have riveted their attention, had not the widow reminded them that they must not delay in reaching the gallery; and passing through many a passage and lobby, they at last entered it. The walls were closely hung with paintings of every school—the portraits being mostly life size, and of every attitude and costume. Among those of the sovereigns of Prussia, there was in the midst of the group, one of the beautiful Queen Louisa; so exquisite were the features and expression of that lovely countenance, that as you gazed upon the superior beauty, and remembered the sad history of the unfortunate princess, the deepest sympathies would blend with the rapture of the admiration. Nearly all had been inspected, and Lydia was looking intently upon the "Passions," admirably executed by one of the old school, when Charles drew her aside to the portrait of a girl bearing a basket of primroses; the hat was thrown back, and the fair, high forehead and dimpled cheek bespoke the genuineness of the soul within.

"She is very much like you, Lottie," said Charles, "and yet there is a resemblance to you, Lydia, only you see, girls, she is quite pretty;" casting a serio-comic glance at his sisters. "Now, my dear mother, come and make the confession, for I know it is you."

"Yes!" said Mrs. Villiers, approaching the picture; "your father's mother was very fond of me, and once when I was cross-

ing the lawn with some freshly gathered flowers for her, she had a painter, who was in the house, sketch the attitude, while she kept me talking until it was over; then, when I came in, the portrait was taken. But come here, children; who do you suppose this is?"

The subject was an old gentleman in the act of writing; the brow was knit, and wore a troubled expression, while the compressed lips told of some firm and resolute decision.

"It is your grandfather making his will," said Mrs. Villiers, turning away.

"Lydia," said Charles, as they lingered to look at it, "do you suppose a physiognomist could discover aught that is benevolent in that countenance?"

"Why, I don't know; perplexity so strongly marks every feature, that it is the reigning characteristic of the whole, and perhaps we might mistake that for some harsher feeling."

Charles seemed undecided, and watched the portrait with intense interest; and the longer he gazed, the more his face betokened that hope was yielding to despondency. But Carlotta, who had not looked long enough to discover any unfavorable traits in it, had lost none of her vivacity by the gaze; and soon finding a more interesting subject, called the attention of the rest towards it. They found it to be a beautiful picture of the children of Maria Theresa; and many painted by Steens, Rembrandt, Vecchio, and others of renown, attracted their notice, together with some of the most elaborate works of the great sculptor, Rauch, that graced one of the lobbies leading to the gallery.

They were about to leave, and turned to take a last look at the ceiling, one half of which represented Heaven, the other Hell. It had taken years to execute, as the painter lay upon his back, and could do but little at a time. It was a masterpiece of rare workmanship,—imposing beyond description, in the beauty of the one scene, and most awe-striking in the horror of the other. In rapture they were gazing up at this remarkable chef-d'œuvre, when Mrs. Villiers' eye fell upon an object in a corner of the gallery, and she suddenly exclaimed as her tears started,—

"Oh, I have found it! Yes, there it is! Away from it's companions — aloof from every eye!" Her tears flowed faster as she pointed to a portrait over the door, and added, "Stay and look at it; I cannot bear it any longer now—it is your father!" and left them, while the three moved towards the newly discovered treasure. It had most probably been taken about

the time of his coming of age; it was indeed a noble countenance — the brow lofty and highly intellectual; the features regular and handsome; the dark eyes full and expressive; the hair rich and luxuriant; while the whole expression was one of truth and candor. Long and ardently they gazed, and mingled their tears as they knelt beneath it. Too much absorbed in the sorrow of the moment to observe a footstep behind them, it was not until a gentle hand upon Lydia's shoulder made them start, that they beheld a female figure attired in mourning standing beside them.

"Come, dears," said the stranger, "your mother is waiting." She led the way through passage and hall, until they reached a cozy little apartment, where they found their mother seated beside a small table, on which an inviting repast was spread around a hissing urn; and many a vase of fresh-cut flowers, as they filled the air with their sweet fragrance, added to the cheerful appearance of the little room.

"This good person is the housekeeper," observed Mrs. Villiers as they entered; "who saw us from her window, and thought a cup of tea would refresh us before exploring any further, as the family do not breakfast until ten."

The dejeuner over, they were led by the kind stranger to a remote part of the wing, occupied by the guide of the chateau, whose business it was to keep the keys, and show it to visitors. He was termed the monk, probably from his secluded mode of living, and his costume, which was peculiar to that order, though it was said he once belonged to that class.

"Does she know who we are?" inquired Lydia, as the housekeeper left them.

"I've no doubt they both have some suspicion," was the reply, glancing at the half concealed face of the old monk.

They now followed their guide to a suit of apartments which had not been used for more than a century; there was the elaborately wrought tapestry, although the fingers that had so busily plied the needle over the canvas, had long mouldered into dust. The dark, heavy furniture seemed to cast a gloom over the apartments in which they reigned the sole monarchs, while the portraits that embellished the walls, remained to tell of those who had exchanged their abode in the chamber, for the darker confines of the tomb; and many was the tale of interest to which a glance at these likenesses led, when they listened spell-bound to the romantic story, and Carlotta shed tears as the old monk related the tale of woe.

"Here," continued he, "is a room we never show, except

by the special request of some particular friend of Sir Charles." He selected a key and endeavored to turn the lock which rust had rendered almost immovable; but after much effort, the harsh grating sound told he was successful, the door opened and they entered.

"Touch nothing;" said the deep low tone of the monk, as he pointed to the dust that rested as a thick crust upon everything; "during the last eleven years no one has entered this chamber, where all is as it was a century ago, when a dreadful event happened within these walls. It was the boudoir of a young lady whose portrait is over the mantel-piece."

It was a square apartment, of large size, upon whose walls various scenes from ancient mythology had been wrought in tapestry, said to have been the work of the occupant of the chamber, while the furniture of this apartment was less massive and heavy than that of the preceding. Upon a table by a window, what had once been a letter was lying upon an open desk, where the pen still rested in the inkstand, beside which were the ashes of a nosegay.

"Oh, yes!" said Mrs. Villiers, "I remember the story; it was said she was related to Charles, the Elector of Bavaria, and sought a refuge here during the war of the Austrian Succession. Some believed her the consort of Charles of Bavaria; for upon hearing the claim of Maria Theresa had been acknowledged, and Charles defeated, she destroyed herself by inhaling the effluvia of charcoal."

"I have heard my father speak of it," said Charles, "but I thought a lover had something to do with it,—that he gave her poison."

"No!" replied the monk, "neither of you are right. They were rowing upon the Saale, when the boat upset and the two were drowned; the bodies were never found."

"It may have been so;" rejoined Mrs. Villiers, "I know she was called the unhappy Odina. But there is her portrait." The painting was very much defaced, still the outline was visible, and though not strikingly handsome, wore a pensive and interesting expression.

"Listen! there is the bell of the chapel for morning prayers, how much I should like to enter it once again," said the widow.

"There will not be time this morning, madam;" said the monk, "and I wish to show the young people the haunted chamber; such things have generally a peculiar interest with youth."

It was a bed room — not more gloomy in appearance than the rest: the bedstead was of curiously carved oak, around which

the long curtains were closely drawn, nearly concealing the whole of the silken coverlid. But the sun was shining in through the windows, and all in the room wore a cheerful aspect; Charles remarked there was nothing of awe in its appearance.

"Ah! replied the monk, "you don't know the mysterious horror attached to this chamber that prevents any one sleeping in that bed after midnight, no matter if they are strangers, and never heard of it, they are never allowed to rest after the clock in the tower strikes twelve. For then, evil spirits take forms here, and haunt whoever the sleeper may be. Indeed, so many have been seriously alarmed, that now no one is allowed to remain here; you see I keep the key."

"And why do you suppose these spirits trouble the spot?"

"I am going to tell you;" was the monk's reply. "One of the inheritors of this estate made his will, and worded a part of it in this wise,—that as long as his daughter remained above ground, her husband should be entitled to a large annuity; consequently her husband never suffered her to be buried." Here the monk unlocked the door of a closet, and opening it, said, "this marble, you see, is her coffin. From here proceeds one spirit; the other from this event: A duel was to be fought in this chamber, when the younger dropped his rifle and refused fighting; the elder, greatly incensed, sprang upon him, and held him by the throat until life was extinct; he himself was afterwards killed during the seven years' war. His spirit now haunts the spot, for they were brothers, and the provocation was slight."

The breakfast bell rang, and they were shown into a large room, where sat Sir Charles and Miss Eliza; the latter did say "Good-morning;" but the former took no more notice of them than if a domestic had entered, but looking up said,—

"I took the trouble to get up to breakfast this morning, you see, for I wanted to know what you and these boys of yours were looking like."

No more was said, and the meal was half over when the door opened and the fiancés, Hermann and Fritzi, entered, followed by several guests. Mrs. Villiers and her children were introduced as distant relations who were making a tour, and being near La Belle had come to see Sir Charles; although it was very evident Hermann had been better informed, as he conversed with Fritzi to that effect, thinking, probably, no one near understood German but himself and his companion. Fritzi was a woman of large size, with very wide features, and high cheek bones, but might at a distance have been called a showy

girl, although her manners were rude and exceedingly unprepossessing. The breakfast was scarcely over, when Sir Charles, with a frown peculiar to him, said in a tone sufficiently loud for all to hear,—

"Mrs. Villiers, when all these people are gone, I shall want to speak to you."

The hint was duly received by all who knew the queer old gentleman, and they soon arose to leave. Hermann invited Charles to see the stud, and Miss Eliza directed Lydia and Carlotta to the flower garden, leaving the widow alone with her father-in-law.

Carlotta had wandered down the slope to the river, and Fritzine having led away her guests with her, Lydia was left to herself. Pondering over the strange behavior of her grandfather, who had not so much as extended his hand to them, she at last wound her way to the borders of the lake. A little skiff rested upon the sands, in which was a jacket apparently just thrown off. Timid about encountering any one in that lonely seclusion, Lydia turned to retrace her steps, when the figure of a man, in the dress of a boatman, emerged from the thick brushwood, and doffing his hat, she recognized Hermann.

"Miss Lydia, pardon me for startling you; remain a little longer that you may become better acquainted with Hermann Rosdt Deufstandten. Indeed, I must say you are quite a fine looking girl to have sprung from the wilds of America. Let me see, you are half Prussian and half American; now I'll tell you what I am. My father was a Pole, my mother a Prussian, and I spent my boyhood with a relative in Britian, so you see I'm a little of everything, and, nothing. But you don't want to stay and talk with me, and I remember hearing you were a proud sort of girl; and I suppose, too, you think your brother is to be lord of all he surveys, before many years, but I can tell him he is mistaken; my footing here is very sure. But really I like you very much; now tell me my pretty Lydia, what are your first impressions of me, what sort of a fellow do you take me to be? In fact I shall not let you go until you do."

"Then I can wait," replied Lydia, with cool dignity, as she turned to take a fuller view of the lake.

"I know I annoy you, and you really are too nice for that, so, as I want you to have a good opinion of me, I'll say good-by."

They had all gone, the door was closed, and the widow sat brooding the stern, cold glances of the old gentleman before her.

"Well, Lydia," he at last began, "what do you want?"

With difficulty the widow sought to check the rising emotion, and replied,—

"I came and brought my children — by invitation."

"True, but I never told you I was going to beg through the streets of Berlin, in order to place all you in affluence, did I? Besides, as no one forced you to come, you might have stayed away altogether if you had liked; and if you are not pleased with the undertaking, who is there to thank but yourself. There, that's the way with women, always shedding tears; when you might spare yourself the trouble, for the sum of the matter is this: That young hopeful you saw just now, Hermann, I mean, well, he's my adopted son; my will is made, and he is sole heir. And even if I had mentioned your Charles in my will, how would it benefit you at the present time? You don't suppose I'm going to die instanter just to suit you, do you? This Hermann is to be married to Fritzine, the German lady you saw, although if he had had half the experience with women that I have, he'd know the whole pack were more trouble than they are worth. However, I was going to say, it's a pity that girl of yours was not here sooner, because she would have done as well for him as this Fritzine, and I should have had no objection to such an arrangement. But I'll speak to Hermann, and see if he could like your Lydia. As long as he is married to some one, it needn't matter who it is; women are all alike. Yes, I'll speak to him."

"Oh, please do not, sir. I would rather starve than sell my children!"

"All very good; but what are you going to do?"

"Grant me one request, and I will trouble you no more. Do for the sake of the widow and the fatherless, hear this my last appeal!"

"I told you I should not alter my will, did I not?"

"All I ask is a loan; I might then establish some small seminary, and in time by the Almighty's blessing we might be able to earn our livelihood."

"A loan! that means you intend to pay me back at some time, I suppose?"

"Be assured, as soon as it were in my power —"

"With the interest, I mean."

"Make any arrangements you please, sir."

"Very well; now stay till the end of the week. I'm too tired to talk any more to-day, so leave the room."

It was evening; many were gathered in the spacious old-fashioned drawing-room, where the lady Fritzine invariably presided. In a large arm-chair by the fire-place, sat ensconced Sir Charles, who remained most of the time a silent observer of all

that was passing round him, although when he chose, he could be humorous and witty; but perhaps for the further comfort of his friends, his choice was seldom a loquacious one. At one end of the room, the widow was doubtless entertaining a circle of ladies with an account of their voyage, yet the pale, anxious face betokened the state of mind under which she was suffering. In a bay window, half concealed by the rich folds of the damask curtains, sat Lydia; and as the breeze wafted aside the drapery, and the light fell upon the lovely face, it was peculiarly thoughtful, though not sad, except when she remembered the disappointment and sorrow of her beloved mother. Fritzone, with a party, had gone on a ramble, and had not yet returned; Charles had been carried off somewhere by Hermann, and Lottie having overcome her dread of sleeping alone in those gloomy chambers, had retired; and Lydia was congratulating herself upon being undisturbed and left to her own thoughts, when loud talking and laughing on the staircase told Fritzone had returned. She entered, followed by her party, and having promenaded several times through the long room, until she appeared satisfied she had made her debut to advantage, took a seat in the middle of the apartment, surrounded by her German friends, when they soon seemed engrossed in the interests of chit-chat; while Lydia, believing herself forgotten rather than neglected, had concluded to spend the evening, if possible, in her retreat, just as Fritzone came directly to the window, and drawing aside the curtains, as if she knew exactly where to find her, said, in her tolerably good English,—

"Miss Villiers, do you sing?"

"A little, Madam."

"So do I. Play on the harp?"

"Sometimes."

"Well, I'm going to sing; please come and play my accompaniments for me, which I don't know how to do myself."

Lydia complied; although reluctantly, as she felt little inclined for music just then, and took her seat at the instrument. Fritzone's voice was coarse, and she was much wanting in style, so that Lydia hoped she would soon be succeeded by one of her more able country women; however, it was not until she had sung "An Adelheid," "Die susse Bell," "Die Alma," and a few others, that Sir Charles gave indications of uneasiness, and Lydia's task was ended. She had just left the harp, and was passing the door, when it opened, and Hermann, followed by Charles, entered. The latter went immediately in search of his mother, while Hermann, drawing Lydia aside, addressed her in what seemed for him a very respectful tone.

"Miss Villiers, I certainly must apologize for my behavior this morning, but truly, it is always my misfortune to fall into error, just at the very time I would appear to most advantage; yet I know you will forgive."

Lydia smiled at the hypocritical expression that played upon his features; and attributing his former rudeness to ignorance, willingly took his extended hand, and seated herself by him on a sofa.

"Have you been over the chateau?" continued he, "because if so you have been shown the haunted chamber. But it is impossible for you to feel the interest in it that I do, because you cannot imagine what belongs to it. Ah, I know by your look you are amused at my idea of its being haunted, and I well remember how I scorned the thought of a ghost or hob-goblin, until I was forced to have firm belief in such spirits; and you would acknowledge their existence readily enough, should you once be terrified out of your senses as I was."

"And that would not be very easily done." And Lydia laughed as she saw the dread and horror visible in the countenance of the speaker.

"Ah, yes; you can laugh at my fears, but you would not be willing to put your courage to the test by sleeping in that chamber."

"Indeed I should; and be glad to show you I'm not so weak as to be influenced by any reports of yours or the foolish old monk. I am sure I should sleep as soundly in your haunted chamber as any where, so far as your spirits are concerned. And I am ready at any moment to convince you of it, for really I am in earnest."

"Well, will you promise me to sleep there to-night?"

"I will. But let me see, where is it situated, should I be far away from every one?"

"Ah! you wish to be within hearing, I see!"

"Indeed, it was the living I was thinking of, not the spirits of the dead. However, I'll not let my courage fail me; yes, I will occupy that dreaded room to-night."

"Oh, but I can't bear the thought of your running such a risk; indeed, those apparitions are too awful. Although, you have promised; and as to human forms, you can lock every door you can find, so you could be safe from their intrusion. You are sure you know the right room, and I must manage to get the key from the old monk, for it is always locked that none may occupy it. But you will not be willing to keep your promise without stating it to your friends, and they will soon put an

end to it; I know you're not as courageous as you wish me to think."

"Oh, if you suppose that would make any difference, I'll say nothing about it."

"Very well; I shall soon be back with the key."

Lydia looked across the large room, and saw Charles, who had a few minutes before left their mother, now engaged in a tete-a-tete with Fritzine, and the widow was alone. She had just joined her, when Miss Eliza came and seated herself beside them.

"Can you tell me," inquired Mrs. Villiers, "what has become of your sister Cecile? I looked for her portrait among the rest, but found it missing."

"Oh, yes! She married some foreigner much against father's will, and went to Australia; we heard afterwards she had died, leaving a little child; but that is all we have learned."

The noble bearing of Charles seemed to have won the confidence of Fritzine, and to have inspired her, for the time being, with a courtesy she had not manifested before; for she called Mrs. Villiers and Lydia to join their circle, where some interesting topics were introduced, and Lydia soon forgot the haunted chamber. They were not long in discovering, however, that she was entertaining as a musician, and it was not until much of the evening had been passed in that amusement, and Lydia had sung her last song, that Hermann entered.

The time was beginning to drag heavily with the younger members of the company, when Hermann insisted upon reading from a manuscript entitled, "Tales of La Belle," which he had procured from the monk. It appeared to contain an account of every incident of note that had occurred since the foundation of the chateau; but what Hermann selected for the present evening, were those relative to the "Chamber of Horrors." It was said they were written by the monk as they occurred; and being mostly striking incidents, very well told, the circle of listeners, with very few exceptions, seemed deeply impressed.

According to this chronicle, some years previous, several young students came to pass their vacation at La Belle. One of them was noted for his daring and adventurous spirit; and defying all who attempted to reason with him, as he scorned their entreaties, insisted upon passing the night in the chamber, where he was assured an evil spirit always moved at the hour of midnight. It was winter; a fire burned brightly in the grate, and threw its flickering light round the apartment, that seemed

pervaded with the stillness of the sepulchre, except that ever and anon the screeching of the owl, as it left its hiding place in the turret for the neighboring trees, broke the dead silence. Still undaunted, and confiding in the courageous spirit that had so animated him above all superstition, he drew the curtains closely round his bed, and laid himself down for repose, counting upon the laurels he should wear for his bravery when he met his companions on the morrow. The clock in the tower chimed the midnight hour. Suddenly he remembered the reports he had heard, and the horror that had depicted the faces of the speakers as they warned him to abandon his project; yet he remained fearless as ever. He was just falling into a slumber; the bell tolled the half hour after midnight, and the sound had died away, when lo! a distinct footfall upon the carpet — again he listened — again came the tread; lifting the curtain he looked in the direction of the sound. And behold, it was there! awfully frightful in its aspect, standing before him as though just emerged through the wall. The form was tall, and enshrouded in a white pall that parted at the forehead, leaving bare the face and neck of a corpse, whose glaring eyes rolled in their sockets as if seeking some object. The feet that protruded were of a deathly hue; they moved, and sounded hard and stiff upon the floor. Nearer and nearer, and now it stood beside the bed. A long arm was raised, quickly it drew aside the curtains, and laid an icy hand upon the youth, while a voice hollow and unearthly came forth —

"Now, courageous mortal, defy me if thou canst!"

Trembling with horror, as the cold sweat rolled upon his pillow, he was about to call for aid, when a firm hand was placed upon his brow, and the power of speech was gone. The clock struck two, the icy fingers were lifted; the form left the bedside, and glided round the room, often coming and looking over the curtains upon the horrified youth; then moving away as it uttered an exulting cry in that deep sepulchral tone. Again it moved round the bed, and now seated itself upon the feet of the affrighted boy, while it held as in a vice, his trembling limbs.

"Place thyself again in my power," said the voice, "and then shalt thou not escape!"

There was a dead silence; at last the bell in the tower broke the awful stillness, as it tolled the hour of three: the long arms relinquished their hold, the form was uplifted, and as the youth raised his eyes again, it vanished. Terrified beyond utterance, for hours he lay motionless. Morning dawned, and the bright

rays of the glorious sun shone cheerly through the stained glass; yet an indescribable horror pervaded the chamber. He sprang from the bed, threw his garments loosely around him and fled from the room. He sought his companions, told his story, and alarmed at his affrighted look, they returned with him to the haunted chamber. But every door remained locked on the inside as before; every window was still barred and bolted; they searched long for some undiscovered entrance, but in vain. Now they laughed at his tale, scoffed at his fears, called him coward, and the dupe of a mere freak of his nervous system, that had painted this vision to his fancy while he was dreaming. He was hurt at the ridicule, and wandered away from them during the day. At night-fall they gathered again for the evening entertainments, when he also joined them. Again they taunted him, and upbraided him for his irresolution and want of courage, his weak, wavering mind, and superstitious fancies; and defied his willingness to pass another night in the chamber, lest the ghost should carry him off, or deprive him of life. They were about to say good-night, his lip was compressed and the nostril quivered as he eyed them for a moment, then darted out of their sight.

"He has gone to try his courage again," said his jesting companions, "so let him, for he bore the name of the bravest among us."

The next morning they were assembled round the breakfast table; twice the bell had been rung at his door, yet he had not joined them. The meal ended, they repaired to the noted room; the door was fastened; they knocked loudly — no answer. "Depend upon it, the hobgoblin has devoured him," said they, as their rapping became more violent.

Alarmed at his silence, the door was finally burst open, and they entered. A wild laugh rang through the apartment, although they saw not whence it came. They approached the bed, parted the closely drawn curtains, and oh, the awful scene! There, seated upright in the bed, was their noble companion, surrounded by the dolls he had formed of the bed-clothes, of which, piece by piece he had stripped himself. They clustered round him, called to him, clasped him in their arms; but again the idiot laugh resounded through the chamber, and mingled with their cries of despair.

Servants were summoned; submissively he yielded to be dressed, and they bore him from that ill-fated chamber. His friends were sent for, and the beloved parents conveyed the once promising youth, an idiot, to their desolate home.

"Well," said Charles, as Hermann closed the manuscript, "we are taught by the wisest, that,

"Myriad spirits walk the earth;"

although you cannot make me believe they are ever visible to us; still, I must acknowledge nothing would tempt me to pass a night in that room."

"Oh Charles!" And as Lydia spoke, perplexity and doubt were indelibly stamped upon every feature of the fair countenance.

"Why Lydia, I'll tell you. We know it's impossible to possess a sound mind in an unsound body, and at the time of the wreck, I received a wound in my head from which I have not thoroughly recovered, and as yet I often feel my nerves so completely unstrung, that I could not guarantee my courage there to be uncontrolled by whatever foolish fancies might get the better of me; so that, instead of helping to convince the superstitious of their error, I might only add to that dismal calendar;" pointing to the roll in Hermann's hand, and smiling, while the majority asserted that it would be the very essence of imprudence to think of retiring in the haunted chamber, no matter what their courage might be, when so many proofs had already been given them to serve as a warning.

"Besides," said Miss Eliza, "we allow no one to occupy it, since so many have been frightened; in fact, that poor idiot was the last who slept there; and will ever be, while I remain at La Belle, for the monk keeps sole possession of the key."

They arose to separate for the night; Hermann glanced at Lydia, as though to read in that face whether she was shaken in her resolution, or still firm in her decision. But it would have required greater penetration than his to determine that.

"Here's the key," said he in a low tone to her, as they passed to the door.

She looked at him for a moment, and her expression was bewildered; however, she took the key as he held it towards her, and hid it within the folds of her dress. The cold metal seemed to chill the veins to freezing as she grasped it in her fingers, yet she passed on with the throng, and stood upon the staircase to say good-night.

"Lydia, you look pale, or else I fancy so," said Charles as he kissed her cheek. "Let me see you to your room, then I shall know you are safe, for the whole house is not haunted, you know."

He led her to her apartment, which he had decorated with flowers during the day, and their fragrance filled the room with a sweet odor; but Lydia scarcely noticed them, although she thanked him as he inquired if she liked them, and placing her right upon the table, he left the room. She stood with her hand upon the lock, and heard his receding footsteps, as they became fainter and fainter; she was half determined to call him back but he had now reached the end of the long gallery, and she heard him ascend another flight, and close his door.

She re-entered her room, and taking up a time-worn copy of the Scriptures that lay upon an oaken cabinet, she read the nineteenth Psalm and offered to heaven her evening prayer. Then she hastily undressed, threw a morning gown about her, and taking her lamp, the heroic girl left the room to grope her way stealthily to "the haunted chamber."

## CHAPTER XVI.

"The die is cast—and soon they'll lead me forth  
To take the name I loathe, and weep to hear;  
And once within his house to bear the lot  
Of my most wretched fate,  
Despair will drive me on to madness' brink,  
And how will end this catalogue of woes?"

THE next morning Alfred arose early and hastened to Anna's room. At this hour he generally found her door unfastened, as a sign that he might enter; but it now remained locked as before, and fearing to awaken Mrs. Gilbert or Susan, he tapped gently, and took his seat upon the stairs to await her answer. His intercourse with Susan on the previous evening, had produced such a perturbed state of mind, that he had slept badly—his rest being constantly broken by some sudden consciousness of his father's death, and Anna's wretchedness. And now, as he sat at her door, anxiously waiting to hear her stirring, it occurred to him how much she must have to communicate, and that it would be impossible for her to sleep beyond her usual hour unless she were ill. Unable to endure his fears any longer, he arose and shook the door with a violence that caused one in an opposite direction to open, and the night-cap of Susan protruded therefrom.

"Alfred, what in this world are you about? I declare, there is no rest where boys are. Always at something; just as though

you couldn't as well make that hammering after I was up. But it's just like you; nothing but a nuisance; never so happy as when you're plaguing me."

"And think of my poor head and shoulders in the door last night!" said a voice within the chamber. "I don't suppose they've any color or shape left in them; and perhaps I shall be bedridden for a long lifetime in consequence: just think of it."

"Alfred, it's no use for you to keep up that noise; I have the key of the door safe enough, so, at all events, you are not going to see her until I choose you shall; and the sooner you are quiet the better."

"What, woman! Do you suppose I wait your will? No!" And with one scientific thrust he burst open the door.

Susan fell back as she looked upon the scene within, and had Alfred been watching her countenance, he might have seen she turned pale.

In the centre of the room upon the floor, lay the form of Anna, while the long flaxen hair fell in dishevelment over the face and shoulders. Lifting the apparently lifeless body to the bed, he parted the disordered tresses, and kissing the icy brow, waited in agony for some sign of life.

Susan looked for a moment upon the marble face, to whose pleading expression during the previous day, she had been so cruelly blinded; then uttered a shrill shriek, whereupon a meagre little figure in her night-clothes hobbled into the room.

"Keep away from her, both of you;" said Alfred putting his arms closely round Anna as if to protect her from their hands. "Never let me see either of you again!" added he in wild desperation, as he saw Anna still motionless before him.

But the two spectators seemed riveted to the spot, and continued to gaze first at Alfred, then at their unfortunate victim. It was long before Anna showed any signs of life, yet at last the large blue eyes opened, and looking wildly around her, she exclaimed as she clung nervously to Alfred, "Don't let me see him! oh I'm afraid I shall hate them!"

The hours glided away, and the sun had reached the zenith, before Alfred's attempts to restore her to composure proved of any avail. But now a new motive seemed to actuate her, and with an effort she arose, and seating herself beside him said, "Indeed, I am not so very unhappy as you think, although I'm dreadfully agitated, but then I know it's more excitement than real misery."

She gave him an account of the events of the previous day, but carefully avoided to mention anything that might tend to

convince him of the true state of her feelings, as she intended to keep her wretchedness exclusively to herself; fearing lest his anger should be excited, and they rashly turn away from what seemed the only resource: and so successful was her self-government, so calm and collected her argument as she reasoned with him, that at last, finding herself conqueror over his fears and misgivings, she was satisfied that the effort, painful as it was, had been effectual.

It was growing late; and having clasped her in a long embrace as he breathed many a blessing upon the cold brow, Alfred hastened away.

Anna was alone; and fearing to remain unoccupied lest melancholy should gain the mastery over her, she quickly left her room, and soon busied herself mechanically among the culinary affairs below; but even these had an end, and glad to escape from Susan, and not wanting to meet the penetrative glance of Mr. Everett, she took her place at a window to watch for Alfred's return. It was said Mr. Everett would leave shortly for a tour through Europe, and now the Villiers were gone, it seemed as though it would be losing the only friend left to them, should he take his departure; and Anna continued to hope it was only a vague report.

This evening Alfred returned earlier than usual. He had been thinking much of his father, and knowing Anna knew nothing of his death, was anxious to communicate the sad intelligence, that the painful task might be over, and the first dreaded outburst of grief subsided.

It was twilight as they sat there in the little back parlor, and although the shadows were fast lengthening without, Alfred waited for the fading day-light to have passed away, that he might not behold the agonized countenance of Anna when she became aware that they were orphans. He had told it; and when she desired to learn more in regard to the sad event, he exclaimed, "wait here, I shall soon be back, and will tell you." He went in search of Susan. She was apparently very interestingly occupied looking over the contents of her wardrobe; however, as she had been agreeably surprised at Alfred's mild behavior since his intercourse with Anna in the morning, and greatly rejoiced at his not manifesting any "tiger-like" spirit, for which she always gave him full credit, she was willing to look up from the bottom of the trunk where she was so busily engaged, into his face, to hear what he wanted.

"Susan, do please to come down stairs for a moment!"

She made no reply, but followed him into the room; Anna's

face was bathed in tears, but Susan had become accustomed to that of late, and scarcely noticing her, placed herself at her ease in a chair which Alfred had wheeled towards her.

"Now, Susan," said he, "we wish you to tell us of our father."

"What about him?"

"All you know of his death."

"Oh, is he dead?"

"Why, didn't you tell me so last night?"

"I never told you I knew he was dead; but then any one would suppose so, wouldn't they?"

"Then you really have not heard that he is dead!" exclaimed Anna, looking up through her tears. "And have not received any tidings whatever?"

"And what's more, never shall;" and Susan rose to leave,— "so you may be thankful for your good fortune." And she was soon encompassed again by fringe, furbelows, and flounces, in which she seemed to take a sole delight.

It was lovely June, and the soft balmy air of the morning as it wafted in at Anna's window, seemed to waft away much of the gloom that had so long hung over her. It had now been many weeks since Mrs. Gilbert's house was graced with the form of a Judy; consequently Anna had become so habituated to the household duties, that they fell less heavily upon her, or rather, her experience in them, had taught her the easiest way of performing them; and she had just completed the most arduous of these that pertained to the morning, and was about to prepare the scanty meal they took at noon, called dinner, when there came a ring at the bell, and Miss Pyke entered. She was met in the entry by Susan, who took her into the parlor, and closing the door, they chatted for some time, after which Susan came to Anna and said,—

"Never mind those things, we shall soon have far better dinners than these, with plenty of good dessert, fine wines, and the like; so go and dress now and come out with us. Yes, we shall have glorious feasts; in fact, I could fast for a week upon the strength of the anticipation. Make haste and put on the dress I gave you, and although you will soon have much handsomer ones, still it was very kind of me."

Anna was about to ask for what purpose they were going out, but concluding it was to make purchases in preparation for the wedding, she heaved a deep sigh, and left the kitchen to fulfill Susan's command. As she was tying her bonnet, her eye fell upon the mirror, and she started when she saw what an altered countenance it reflected. Pale, emaciated, and care-worn, it too truly depicted the wretchedness that struggled within.

"And no wonder!" said Anna. "But greater misery is to come, and I might endeavor to be less unhappy during this reprieve that is allotted me."

She descended to the parlor where Miss Pyke was alone, as Susan always required considerable time for making her toilet.

"Well, my dear Anna, I'm delighted to see you; and looking so remarkably well, too! But then any one would, with such prospects as yours. Besides, you will soon be mistress in your new home, and can have the satisfaction of being avenged of your enemies here, by turning them out of your house, whenever it suits you; for you know you will be able to have your own way in everything; because, strange beings as men are, wives can always exercise an irresistible sway over them. What an elegant life you will lead! Ah! I have often thought such would be my lot; whereas, while some can be married two and three times, I must remain Miss Sarah Christiana Pyke, just because it is my destiny. I'm sure the good things of this world are very unequally divided."

Here Susan joined them, and they left the house. Having proceeded through several streets, they at last entered the one in which stood the house of Robert Barrow, Esq., and Anna's heart beat quickly as she followed them up to the door. Mrs. Barrow seemed to have been expecting her visitors, and gave them a very cordial reception, especially Anna, whom she held firmly in her grasp until her caresses were disagreeable in the extreme. They were then taken all over the house, and upon reaching the second story, were shown into an apartment which Anna was told would be her dressing-room. She glanced round her; and her attention was arrested by a painting over the mantle-piece. She gazed for a moment; it was enough; there hung the lost portrait upon which she and Alfred had so loved to look, as they talked of the mother who, although gone from them forever, still lived sacred in their memory. And overcome by the joyful surprise she sunk into the nearest seat, and burst into tears.

"Poor, dear girl!" said Mrs. Barrow, embracing her, "you feel lonely without Robert, don't you? But now that he's going to be married he intends to retire from business, so that you will always have him at home with you."

Miss Pyke and Susan exchanged significant glances upon hearing this intelligence, while the former, ever ready with her volubility added,—

"And that will be the greatest comfort; because it is the close intimacy of such an inseparable union that we so pine for

in this life. In fact, we all aim at that, as the great object of our existence. Yes, Anna will be very happy! And indeed, Mrs. Barrow, she is very grateful, and loves your son with a passion that amounts to adoration."

"Does she, indeed?"

"Oh yes! But girls never manifest it, because it would not be etiquette; they are obliged, especially while they are engaged, to evince the most extreme hatred for the very object they would die to serve. It is always so, and that accounts for Anna's strange behavior."

"Indeed, I was not aware of it."

"No, because you are such an old lady, and all the laws of love have been altered since you were young."

"They have, most certainly; yes, I am an old lady."

They were summoned below; Anna controlled her feelings and descended with them to the dining-room, where an inviting collation awaited them.

Their hostess had appeared distressed about Anna's tears, and now placed her in a chair by her side, and often wiped the swollen eyes with the corner of her napkin. She was also very assiduous that Anna should eat, and Anna did endeavor, but the attempt was fruitless; and finding nothing short of emptying her plate would put an end to the urgent pressing of the old lady, of whose annoyance she was heartily weary, she several times emptied the contents into her pocket, and at last her hostess, whose perception was not the most keen, declared to all parties, that Anna had a most astonishing appetite when she once began.

Anna was glad when her companions arose to leave, although they seemed to have as many topics to discuss when they reached the door, as they had had since they entered it, and she thought they never should reach the street. However, at last the final good-by was said, and they passed into the open air. Susan now informed Anna it was their intention to purchase immediately her wedding suit, and that they would lose no time in repairing to the best emporiums of fashion for that purpose. She assured them she had no preference in the matter, and that she would rather have them choose for her, and allow her to return home—a request with which they readily complied; and Anna left them pursuing their way, while she retraced her steps homeward.

As she entered the house she was met by Mr. Everett; he appeared much excited, and without speaking, put a letter in her hands, then turned hastily away, entered his room and fastened the door.

The direction was in Lydia's hand ; Anna went into the parlor to peruse it. It had been written just as she reached Berlin, to assure Anna of their safe arrival in that city ; and being too weary that night to pen more, she promised a full account of their voyage by the next mail.

Anna was carefully folding the sheet, when the door opened, and Mr. Everett entered. His cheek was flushed, the hair and cravat disarranged, and for him, the whole appearance was one of great dishevelment. Looking wildly upon the envelope in her hand he said in a hurried tone,—

"Oh, Anna—pardon me, but you have heard from Lydia—I recognized the handwriting!" and he continued to glance inquiringly at the letter.

"Yes, from Lydia;" and she held it towards him.

"Ah, I should know the hand anywhere—so very elegant! But no! take it—I only wish to know if there is any special news in it—I mean anything unexpected?"

Surprised at a manner so entirely new to the young minister, Anna looked at him for a moment in utter bewilderment, as she thought of various reports that had been in circulation since Lydia left, in regard to her and the individual who now stood before her. Then recollecting herself, she opened the letter and read the contents to him.

"And that is all!" The words no sooner escaped him than he rushed from the room.

At a late hour the purchasers returned; and soon after, a monstrously large parcel arrived, and was opened upon the floor of the parlor, in order that all curiosity might take a peep at what was therein. There were silks, velvets, laces, and flowers of the most costly description, which Miss Pyke took up one after another, and held to full view; and whenever it were possible, placed them upon her person, and displayed them to better advantage by parading the room.

"But so much of everything!" said Anna, as Miss Pyke continued to remind her they were "Miss Wentworth's."

"Of course," replied Susan, you don't suppose I was going to forget myself, do you? indeed, I like good things as well as any one, and wouldn't be fool enough to let such an opportunity escape me."

Anna was going to inquire where the money came from, then recollecting none other than the singular little old man could have furnished it she said nothing, but carried the articles allotted her to her own little room, and shut them up in a closet out of her sight. Although she could not but admire their el-

egance, they ill accorded with her simple taste; and the idea of a plain little body like herself being the cause of so much expenditure, when it only augmented her wretchedness, and might have been used to so much better advantage, was exceedingly painful to her; however, by the time Alfred returned, such had been her victory over herself, that she could meet him with a smile upon a countenance void of all traces of tears.

The house of Mrs. Gilbert, usually so dull and monotonous, had suddenly become a scene of bustle and confusion. Parisian dress-makers and milliners, surrounded by a profusion of silks, ribbons, trimmings, etc., occupied the whole of the second story, where seldom an hour passed, without the angry tones of Susan resounding through the rooms, as she found herself unable to comprehend immediately the broken English of the French women. A Judy, somewhat more tolerable in her appearance than any of her predecessors, had lately been engaged; while at meal-time, the dishes, which for so many years had graced the table with their watery rice and sago, were now allowed to contain some more palatable aliment: and altogether, the domicile at number 14 Claremont Place, had undergone a thorough mutation.

Day after day, Anna was required to remain above stairs to act as interpreter; and often was she forced to hesitate and blush, when commanded to translate the peremptory and impudent orders of the violent Susan.

It was late in the afternoon, and Anna, wearied with the confusion and excitement in which she was centred, was longing for an opportunity to carry her from that maze of bewilderment, when the bell rang. Suddenly she recollected it was the day she must tolerate one of those visits that had become lately so extremely odious to her, and to which she always looked forward with so much repugnance; and when she remembered it must be her lot once again to submit for the space of two weary hours, and suffer the fawning caresses of that repulsive little old man, whom she so intensely disliked, it seemed that in preference, she would have remained for ever there by the side of the tyrannical Susan; and when Judy brought word that she was inquired for, the tears started, and she stood for a moment as though unwilling to move.

"There, go along, girl!" said Susan, giving no very gentle push, which sent her with some force into the lap of a milliner, who had been endeavoring, during two whole days, to suit Susan's fastidious taste in regard to a bonnet. Upon seeing the broken shape, and destroyed fir-apples that had decorated it,

and which she declared were the only ones in the city, she gave one look at the affrighted Anna, who knew full well what would follow the fiery glance of those desperate eyes, and leaving the enraged French woman to battle with Susan as best she could, she made her way over dresses and dress-makers, and was glad to find herself upon the stairs. She expected to hear a little cough of a most-singular intonation proceed from the parlor, but all was still there, and only the tumult above could be heard. For some time she stood, glad to rob even one minute from the time that must be spent within that room. At last rapid footsteps approached the door, and upon opening it, the little figure of the pretty Kate stood before her.

"I was just going to abscond, much as I want to know if all that I have been hearing of you is true. Come here," drawing her to a sofa, "now do tell me, is it true? But it cannot be! Surely you have a little more self-respect, and never could so disgrace yourself for your whole lifetime. What! be engaged to such a creature? Why, there can't be an inch of him but what is all withered and shrivelled up; and by the look of his face, the flesh has mortified long ago; and how you can sit near him and talk to him, and hear that voice of his, really is more than I can imagine. We used to blame poor Minerva for caring for that young fellow, but he was young and fresh, not a stale old article like this Barrow of yours, who has been for sale these fifty years. Just think of it, his mother is ninety-three, and she has been a widow for sixty-one years; now how young can you make him out, pray? And you a young girl not yet eighteen! But surely you never can agree to anything so awful. Oh! Yes, a ring! Then it is indeed true! Anna, Anna! No, I cannot even pity you, though it is so dreadful, and you are a nice sort of a girl, too. But do tell me, who is to be bride-maid? Oh no! never mind; I'm sure nothing could tempt me to be present even at such an affair, much less have any part in it. But who is that at the door?"

With dismay Anna heard little footsteps in the passage; the door of the parlor opened, and the dreaded individual made his appearance. As soon as Kate's eyes fell upon him, she made one bound for the door, which the little old gentleman held in his hand; and not giving him time to relinquish his hold, brushed so hurriedly by, that she sent him staggering against the wall.

Anna gazed earnestly after her as she glided out of the house; an instinctive feeling prompted her to follow her into the open air, and leaving the confines of that unhappy dwelling, forget the affection that bound her to one of its inmates, and be free;

free to roam at will, though it be far away from the haunts of man, on the distant prairie in the track of the buffalo, or on the desert sands, alone on that wild waste to perish; even there to be free — anywhere, to feel no spirit within urging to what she knew to be wrong,—anywhere, to shed alone the last tear, and with nought but the canopy of Heaven above and around her, there breathe the last petition for a spirit of purity, meet for those mansions of the redeemed; and there, in the presence of the Triune and the holy angels, rendering the last thanksgiving for mercies vouchsafed to the drooping soul, yield the spirit unto Him who gave it.

A touch startled her; and recalling her wandering thoughts, she was conscious of a thin, bony arm encircling her waist, that drew her from the door where she could gaze in rapture upon the beauty of freedom, back into that region of martyrdom.

There was much in the vivacity of Kate to enliven and cheer even after the light, little figure had vanished. But this time it had seemed to picture too plainly the contrast between the two; the one merry and light-hearted, the other wretched and even dreading the return of the dawn, as if to-morrow must forebode greater sorrow; and much depressed, she found it impossible to control her tears as she yielded herself to the penance of those dreaded two hours. As her companion witnessed the falling of the pearly drops, the palsied fingers grasped her more tightly, while with the other hand he continued to wipe them away, first with a red, then with a white handkerchief, which he seldom failed to carry in one hand. The faster flowed her tears, the more torturing became his caresses, which caused them still to increase; until by the time he embraced the sinking form for the last that evening, exhausted and overwhelmed, she complained of illness, and entreated to be assisted to her room, where Judy, ignorant of the cause of the suffering, and anxious to alleviate it immediately, administered dose after dose, until she inadvertently intermingled opiates with her remedies, and the miserable Anna fell into a heavy slumber.

A carriage was at the door; several trunks and a valise were in the entry, and betokened a departure.

A tall gentleman, wearing the garb of a clergyman, descended the steps; his face was pale and wore an exceedingly anxious expression. He had reached the last step when a voice behind him said, "Good-by, Mr. Everett!"

He turned instantly and ascending again, extended his hand to a little figure who stood behind the rest, with a flushed cheek and bewildered countenance, and said in a tone of much earnest-

ness "Oh, Anna, I looked for you, and could not find you, and couldn't bear the idea of going away without seeing you. There's a small package on my table,—keep it; probably you will never see me again. Good-by. God bless you."

For a time her eyes seemed blinded, and she discerned nothing that passed before her. Again she looked; all vestige of him was gone.

"Come, Anna, the milliner wants you: make haste, you know we've scarcely three weeks more, and much is yet to be done."

## CHAPTER XVII.

"A horrid spectre rises to my sight,  
Close by my side and plain and palpable.

"It moves — it moves — it rises — it comes on me!"

LYDIA pursued her way through the long, dark galleries; the echo of her own footsteps often startled her, and she would pause to consider whether it were not wiser to abandon her purpose of occupying that ill-fated room, return to her own, at least for that night, and await until time should have worn away much of the impression of the frightful tales she had just heard. Still, the promptings of the courageous spirit within actuated her onward; and although every limb trembled with a violence she could not control, and every nerve had lost its power, she at last reached that portion of the chateau, of which the haunted chamber was a particular feature. She passed through a large lobby, where the darkness seemed more intense than elsewhere, and came to the well-remembered door. She paused, and listened; all was silent as the tomb. Noiselessly she placed the key in the lock, with a nervous strength drew back the rusty bolt—and the door opened. She leaned forward to take a survey of the apartment. By the dim light of her flickering lamp, as it fell upon the objects in that large chamber, the dark massive furniture seemed almost as spectres of themselves; the heavy tapestry that hung from the windows added much to the gloom that pervaded the room; yet most awe-striking of all were the portraits that embellished the walls. Each face appeared gazing intently upon her, while the immense caps of some of the old ladies, and the wig of a judge in one corner, as they seemed to emerge from the thick darkness, appeared so many apparitions waiting to receive her. For a few seconds all was still as before, then came a distinct rumbling noise behind a wardrobe; Lydia started, and in so doing struck the door, which shut with a spring; it fell from her grasp and closed, and she realized that she was fastened in the room where she stood dreading to move, lest some new terror should meet her affrighted gaze.

The bell in the tower tolled; it wanted but a half hour of midnight, still there she stood, the same monument of petrification. At length, by degrees her presence of mind, if not her courage, returned to her; and although she continued to look in the direction of the closet which was said to contain that ghost of terror, she placed her light upon a table and suffered herself to sink into a chair. A noise round the room still fell on her listening ear; but as her courage increased, she concluded from the sound that it proceeded from the rats in the wall. The clock struck the hour of midnight; and fearing lest her nerves should weaken and her courage fail if she remained up as the night farther advanced, trusting to a mightier aid than her own, she resolved to seek the repose of that high, singular looking stratum, where the closely drawn curtains seemed intended to enclose the sleeper as in a tomb. Again she looked towards the closet and round the room; then endeavored to shut out fear, and think upon other subjects, but a feeling of intense dread came over her, and trembling more violently than before, she knelt down and offered up the last tribute of the day. Her fears were in a degree lessened, and her mind more composed: actuated by the impulse of the moment, she wheeled a heavy cabinet before the closet; and having secured the door, drew aside the curtains of the bed, ever and anon pausing to listen as some sound broke the awful stillness. Now the sharp, shrill screech of the owl suddenly burst upon the ear, then followed the dead silence, until the noise in the wainscot again disturbed the quiet of the night.

She was about to lay off the wrapper she had thrown round her, when the thought occurred to her, that the bed, so long unoccupied could not be aired, and refastening it upon her, she turned to take a last survey round the room. Her eye fell upon a large volume that lay upon a bureau; on the back, in gilt letters, the words "Holy Bible" were still legible. She placed her hand upon the book, as though to acquire strength of purpose from the mystical touch, when a sudden noise as of a crack in the wall opposite to her, made her start; she stood breathless and watched in agony the direction from whence it proceeded.

The bell tolled the half hour past midnight; and immediately after, the wall moved. The words of Job arose to her recollection, "In thoughts from the visions of the night, when deep sleep falleth on men, fear came upon me, and trembling, which made all my bones to shake. Then a spirit passed before my face; the hair of my flesh stood up; it stood still, but I could not discern the form thereof."

The time wore on, still she stood motionless and watched; neither the sound, nor the moving of the wall was repeated, and persuading herself that it was a vision of her fancy, she climbed the high old-fashioned bed, which arose on each side of her like a wall, as she sunk into the down, and composing herself for sleep, she soon fell into slumber. The clock struck one and she awoke. By the faint glimmering light, the lamp was nearly extinct; and the dreaded hour had come. The echo of the bell had scarcely died away, when a slight jingling noise made her look up, and she saw the curtains move round her, until she was completely enclosed by them. Shrinking further below the coverlid, she had partly drawn it over her head, when the lamp was suddenly extinguished, and the moonbeams fell in their pale rays upon the wall. She closed her eyes again,—all was still; she heaved a sigh, and lo! the coverlid was lifted, and a hand placed upon her face. The cold stiff fingers pressed heavily upon her eyelids, and a low moan, hollow and unearthly, resounded through the chamber. The hand was uplifted, and heavy footsteps crossed the floor. She lay for some time and heard nothing; at last peeped through the curtains to take a survey of the room. The pale light of the moon shone clearly into the apartment; the doors were shut, and the cabinet remained before the closet as she had placed it. Chiding herself for her cowardice in not springing upon her enemy, and satisfying herself as to what it really was, she summoned fresh courage, and nerving herself against the terror that nearly overpowered her, she arose and jumped down to the floor, for the purpose of searching the room. Under the furniture, into the wardrobes, cabinets and corners, and behind the long, heavy tapestry that hung from the windows, she examined with the minutest scrutiny. But no apparition, not even a sound, while every door remained as she had left them, locked and bolted. Yet the hand upon her face could be no imagination, it was palpable and real; and how a spirit could alight in that chamber, and suddenly take a human form, was beyond comprehension, and determining to battle with the superstition that was overwhelming her, she took her place upon the bed again, to look through the curtains, and keep a steady watch.

The bell tolled the half hour; the sound had died away, and again followed the same unbroken silence. The hour wore on, yet the watcher remained undaunted and the vigil faithfully kept. At last came a light tapping on the wall; a large picture that hung on that side, changed its position; then the wall shook violently, and the picture fell with great noise to the floor.

The wall opened—and behold! awful in its aspect, stood the skeleton of a human form. It moved forward, the arms were raised, then dropped again, while the collision of the bones rang a hollow, rattling sound. It turned, receded and disappeared. A sulphureous odor filled the chamber, and there came rapid steps as of bare feet upon the floor. Nearer and nearer, and now a figure was before her. A black face, sharp features, and piercing eyes that glared wildly as they danced with an exulting grin, and the mouth and nostrils emitting a blue flame. A huge pair of horns projected from the top of the head; the body was covered with a black hairy skin, the hands and feet resembling the paws of some wild beast, while a tail of immense length was coiled upon the floor. High in mid-air it brandished a heavy forked weapon, whose sharp, red prongs appeared just taken from out a fiery furnace.

It stood still; a blue halo surrounded the frightful figure; then it moved with an electric rapidity within what seemed its allotted space, performing hideous manœuvres, accompanied by the most horrifying grimaces. A voice hollow and sepulchral burst forth in loud shrieks and laughter, then died away, until only a low moan broke the stillness of the hour.

It came forward, until it was fully within the chamber, and stood still, as though to take a survey of the room. Again it moved and came nearer, when it was too evident that its course was towards the bed.

There was but a second to decide. Still undaunted and resolute, Lydia nerved herself for the combat, and sprung to the floor, eyed the fierce adversary with a stern and unflinching glance, and with one arm raised towards it, stood ready for the struggle. She endeavored to speak to tell the monster before her that she feared it not; but although her lips moved, all utterance failed, and unable to call for assistance she felt herself wholly within the power of the enemy, as strong arms encircled her waist, while the hot breath came as fire upon her brow, from which the cold drops of sweat were fast falling. Long and valiantly she struggled, until her strength was fully expended, and in a fit of desperation, she struck the head of her antagonist, and as it fell back, a mask, cap and horns, drop-

ped to the floor. The horrifying figure vanished, leaving these as trophies with the triumphant Lydia: the wall closed again, and all was quiet as though nothing had happened. Weary and exhausted, she persuaded herself that the visitations to this haunted chamber were now at an end, and fell into a sound slumber.

The next morning, as they seated themselves at the breakfast table, it was found Lydia's seat was the only one vacant. Carlotta repaired to her room, but no Lydia was there; inquiries were made, yet no one had heard or seen anything of her. Hermann looked up surprised at the intelligence, and instantly left the room. With rapid steps he proceeded to the haunted chamber, and knocked; but no answer. He remained long in suspense, hoping to hear her stirring; all was quiet within, and too anxious to await longer, he unceremoniously entered the room. The curtains were closely drawn round the bed, he approached and listened for the breathing of the sleeper; but all was the stillness of death. He feared to part the curtains, lest a scene too awful to look upon should meet his gaze. He paused to contemplate whether a corpse lay enclosed there, or life in all the silence of melancholy insanity; yet, unwilling to behold the wreck of the beautiful his own wickedness had wrought, he hastily left the chamber and concluded to know nothing of the lost girl, no matter what the consequences might be. Assuming a careless air, he re-entered the breakfast room, and soon appeared to chat freely with the rest, and invited Charles to go with him for the purpose of seeing the kennel, which he declared was one of the finest in Europe.

The meal was just over, when Lydia entered. One gazed upon her in mute astonishment, and that was Hermann. Her fair face was animated with the glow of health and exercise, the glossy tresses were thrown back, and the primroses and lilies of the valley which filled the hat she carried in her hand, completed the rural beauty of the picture.

Sir Charles looked intently upon her, then calling her towards him, said, in a tone, which for him was exceedingly mild and pleasant, "Lydia, you are a good girl, sit here by me, I'll keep you company while you breakfast."

He placed his hand upon hers, and asked if he might present her flowers to the lady he esteemed most, and as she placed them before him, he rang for some twine, and having formed a wreath to the admiration of all present, laid it down upon the table, and sat back in his chair, to take a scrutinizing survey of every lady before him. Fritzine sat erect, as though quite prepared for the honor about to be conferred upon her.

Sir Charles, with a great effort, arose, and standing before them, took the wreath, which was artistically and beautifully made, and placed it upon the head of the blushing Lydia.

Miss Eliza and Fritzine exchanged significant glances, and the latter, with a haughty and piquant air, rose and left the room. The rest soon followed, and Lydia was left alone with her grandfather.

She told him of her admiration of La Belle, and was not long in fully convincing him that her love for all that was beautiful in nature and art was pure and unsophistical. By degrees his cold reserve disappeared, and they chatted familiarly together. Lydia told him of their mode of living in Philadelphia; of the churches, societies, laws, amusements, &c., in the large cities of America; he admired the enterprise of the people, and declared but for his gouty leg he would pass the following summer upon the opposite side of the Atlantic. And lastly, Lydia spoke of her father, of his industry, and toil during her early infancy, his conscientious dealing, his unostentatious and self-denying charity; his love for the home of his childhood, and his loyalty for the land of his birth; and lastly, his piety, casting all philanthropy aside as nothing worth, unless prompted by the love of the Father of all, in doing unto others as we would they should do unto us.

"Here, this will not do," said he, making an effort to rise; "I see you would soon get the better of me, and that is something I never allowed petticoats to do yet; no indeed, not when I was young, and I should be a fool to let a young girl like you, gain a victory over me now; why, I should fancy myself living in feudal times, when knights were obliged to risk head and crop in the cause of chivalry. But no such chivalry for me; I say let women take care of themselves, and we can do the same. I'm sure a bachelor's life must be very happy, I wonder I never thought of it before it was too late, for they've only themselves to please."

"True, sir, but they often find it very difficult to do that."

"That may be, but they've only themselves to blame, that must be one comfort."

"What, grandpa? would it be a pleasure to you to be obliged to reproach yourself rather than vent your anger upon a second person?"

"Leave me, child, or you'll make me break the great resolution of my life — never to let womankind influence one thought or action. Go instantly."

Lydia obeyed; going in search of her mother and sister, a

voice called to her as she was passing the corridor, and turning, she encountered Hermann.

"Oh, Miss Villiers, how did you rest last night? I hope you were not disturbed by those spirits that are said to haunt that chamber."

"I never slept more soundly," replied Lydia, bowing in a dignified manner, "and allow me to take this opportunity for apologizing to his satanic majesty for depriving him of part of his armor which became him so admirably."

The countenance of Hermann changed, and he looked abashed; then walking up to her and extending his hand, which she refused to take, he exclaimed, as the color mounted to his temples,—

"Miss Lydia, you are a heroic girl, in fact I know no one so truly courageous, and never would have given any girl credit for such strength of purpose. Indeed, as I thought afterwards, had I been in your place it would have turned my brain; and I assure you I was rejoiced beyond measure, when you entered this morning, the same Lydia as yesterday; for I really expected to see a dishevelled maniac rush towards me."

"What! could you be so cruel as to allow me to run the risk of losing my reason? And had that awful calamity befallen me, would you have considered it only just retribution for having boasted of my courage?"

"Oh, no indeed, I am not quite so bad as you wish to infer; truly, I never thought of all that, I only wanted to convince you that when put to the test, you would be as superstitious as any one. But you thwarted me, I will confess, and I'll tell you, that the skeleton you saw works upon wires. I believe it once belonged to one of your great uncles, who was fond of anatomy; and that disguise I wore was made for a masquerade."

"I have imagined all that, but the wall puzzled me."

"Oh, do come with me, and I'll explain how that is; it really is a piece of mechanism worth seeing. Do come and look; on the other side, there is a secret chamber that Sir Charles never knew existed until about a year ago. I suppose it was built for the purpose of concealment, should the case ever require it. I think it was a servant who discovered it one day, quite by accident, and by some very singular process the wall opens; come and see."

"Not now, I thank you;" and Lydia turned away.

"Ah, Miss Villiers, you can be indifferent to me now, but let me tell you, young lady, that when you find yourself a poor, penniless girl, obliged to teach all day long for a mere pittance,

and see me here lord of all I survey, indeed you will be glad enough to hear me tell you I like you, for, fine as you may be to look at, precious few fellows would be content with that alone; besides, there are plenty such girls for sale every day, and it costs very little trouble to catch them, because their poverty soon teaches them, 'beggars shouldn't be choosers.'"

Lydia paused and turned, and the full gaze of the expressive dark eyes fell upon him. The look was full of pity, as it was of contempt; she said nothing, but turned away again, and passed rapidly from his sight, leaving him standing looking after her.

The week was drawing to a close, when late one evening Miss Eliza informed the widow that Sir Charles desired her presence in the library. On entering, she found him writing at a table covered with what appeared old manuscripts and journals. He raised his eyes as she closed the door, put his quill behind his ear, and having settled himself comfortably back in his chair, with a motion of his head, directed her to a seat opposite him. For some time he said nothing, and seemed lost in thought; at last, the clenched hand fell with a violence upon the oak table, an evidence that his cogitations had reached some most decisive conclusion, and was about to set it forth in his own concise form of colloquy.

"Well Lydia, it is decided, and your daughter's fortune is secured."

The widow glanced at him with an expression of painful embarrassment, and as if reading an inquiry in her countenance, he added,—

"I have spoken to Hermann, and to my surprise find he is exceedingly anxious to discard this Fritzine, and eager to have matters settled as soon as possible. He admires your child,—I didn't ask him why, I suppose her good looks have attracted him. I was once fascinated in the same way myself, yet never but once, oh, no! I prefer being a widower to that; you women are never satisfied unless you can control and govern all within your reach; in truth, what with a wife and daughters, a poor fellow scarcely knows whether his name is his own. However, these young striplings won't believe this, so they must find it out for themselves. Now what I want to say, is this. This estate of La Belle I have bequeathed to Hermann; there is room enough here, you know, for all of you, and I have agreed that if your Lydia accepts this offer, you are to remain here, and I will settle a small sum upon you and those other two belonging to you. There, now you have all you want, I can live

untormented for a little longer. But what did the young Lydia say?"

"Oh, father! I could not mention it to my child; for worlds I would not have her know that the power of benefitting us lay thus in herself; it would make her too wretched. Oh, no! Let me have the loan, and we will leave to-morrow, to trouble you no more."

"What? Are my proposals to be defied in this way? No! You shall have no loan. Begone!"

"Oh, have a little mercy! We have not sufficient to enable us to live one week. Nay, scarce enough to carry us back to Berlin."

Upon her knee, at the feet of the hard-hearted man, the widow sought for pity, but her tears and entreaties were vain. At length she arose, and was about to leave the room, when he exclaimed, "wait a moment, woman, I've not done with you yet."

He rang for Hermann; and ordered him to sit down and draw up an agreement in regard to a loan for the widow. Hermann looked inquiringly at both, but immediately proceeded to obey. It was finished; and expressing her sincere thanks for the favor, she bade Sir Charles good-night, and with a mind relieved of a weighty load, left the library.

Early the next day the widow and her children took their leave of the beautiful La Belle. Sir Charles remained cold and rigid, yet he took the hand of each as he said good-by; Miss Eliza hoped they would succeed in their undertaking, and should always be extremely happy to hear they were doing well.

The distance to Berlin seemed longer, and the journey more tedious than previously, for disappointment had set her weight upon the spirits; and as the lamplight occasionally fell upon the countenances, there was sealed the deep impress of a hope crushed forever. At last they passed through Halle gate into the streets of the capital, and repaired to the hotel, where they found several travellers had arrived from Bremen. Charles immediately thought of Beatrice, but no such name was upon the books, and vain were the earnest inquiries; no tidings whatever of the missing girl.

They had retired for the night, but Charles found it impossible to sleep, for the memory of Beatrice still haunted him. He arose from his couch, threw his cloak around him, and soon found himself in the streets of the city. About midnight, he returned to his room at the hotel; and believing he should never hear of her again, yielded to the despondency that was fast gathering over him. The dawn of day found him but little re-

freshed, yet he arose with a resolution to devote himself wholly to the comfort of his mother and sisters, while he kept those thoughts that seemed nearest and dearest, exclusively to himself.

Potzdam, the Prussian Versailles, is situated on the Havel, about one hour's journey from Berlin. Here the four royal residences, together with the private houses which are copies from the most celebrated edifices, distinguish it for the splendor of its architecture; although the palace of Sans Souci is to my recollection the most interesting. It was built by Frederick the Great, about 1746. At the extremity of the high terrace on which it stands, are the graves of Frederick's favorite dogs, and among them was also buried the horse that carried him through many battles: according to his will, it was his wish to be interred with them, but a request with which his friends did not comply. Entering the palace, you are shown to the room where he breathed his last. There stands the clock he always wound up with his own hand, and which being forgotten at last, stopped at the moment of his death, and still points to the hour of his decease — twenty minutes past two. In the garden of Sans Souci, there is a statue of the beautiful Queen Louisa; it was the result of fifteen years' study on the part of the great sculptor, Rauch, and represents her asleep. It is most touching and beautiful; yet, although it is said to be superior to any other, and doubtless is so, still, there is a monument of this unfortunate princess at Charlottenburg, a small village on the Spree, that seemed to me far more imposing; for it stands in a shady and retired part of the garden, where she was buried. The figure of the queen reposes on a marble sarcophagus, it is a form and face of the most exquisite beauty, and a perfect resemblance, while the expression is not that of death, but repose. The hands are folded over the breast, the countenance and part of the neck are bare, while the rest is shrouded in finely-wrought drapery. No pompous catalogue of titles, or eulogy of her virtues are there; the Prussian eagle alone, at the foot of the sarcophagus, tells she belongs to the house of Hohenzollern. There are the seven withered garlands still hanging over her, — the first offerings of her children at the grave of their mother.

But as I am not to write of myself, neither should I recount here the particulars of my travels. I had forgotten that a small gothic residence in one of the terraces of Potzdam must occupy my attention.

The street in which it stood wore a retired aspect, while a peaceful serenity seemed to pervade every dwelling. It was

detached from the rest, and the antique style of its architecture, together with the sweet simplicity that was manifested in the garden which surrounded it, rendered the whole peculiarly attractive.

The day was on the decline; the refulgence of a glorious sunset had stolen through the casement and was falling in golden tints upon a cozy little parlor, where a young girl sat alone, apparently in a deep reverie. The duties of the day were over, and as if glad of the reprieve, she had sought to contemplate in seclusion. Not that her occupation had been arduous or irksome, far from it; but she was a novice at teaching, and the fear lest her inexperience should incapacitate her for the work, sometimes troubled her. Yet, thoughtful as was the expression, no sadness was there; and to all who knew her, there shone forth in that sweet face, a ray from the soul within, that told the beautiful spirit of contentment, unalloyed by the baubles of ambition, reigned there in the full essence of its purity.

The door opened, and a youth entered. The dust that rested on the black suit, the slow steps, bended carriage and tired attitude, spoke of much travel. He closed the door, and unaware of her presence, crossed the room, and threw himself into a chair. She gazed intently upon him as if to read in his mien what was passing within.

"Oh Lydia, pardon me. And you are here alone." He was instantly at her side, and drawing her towards him as he watched attentively the uplifted countenance, continued, "Ah, Lyddie love, I begin to know too well what that smile means. You would teach me to hope even when you cannot yourself. And so the school has not increased as you had anticipated?" She made no answer, but placed her head upon his shoulder, and brushed aside the clustering locks that fell over his brow.

"Now to variegate our melancholy, let me give you an account of my wanderings during these three days that I have been absent from you. First, let me tell you, that when I left here for Berlin, my castle building elevated me to some prominent position in one of the mercantile houses of that city, and in my imagination, I had suddenly placed my mother and sisters not only independent of relatives and friends, but in affluence; and —"

"But Charles, your hands! What has been the matter?"

"I'll tell you. Well, I had not proceeded far on my exploring expedition, before I was made to understand that young fellows to write, keep accounts, etc., were always to be had by the shoal, and methought the best and only resource was to turn my

attention in another direction. Accordingly, after much research, I entered yesterday a manufactory, and applied for a vacancy. 'Who are you?' inquired the manufacturer. I handed them my card. 'Do you call yourself a gentleman?' I answered that I certainly aspired to such an appellation, to which he rejoined, 'I could tell that by your hands, and I'll have nothing to do with you, for I want people who can work.' I said no more, but came out, and sat down upon the pavement to rest. I looked at my hands, and certainly they did not resemble those I had seen in the manufactory. So half foolishly, half indifferently, I took up some stones that lay near me, and in rubbing my hands the flint cut the skin,—that was all."

"Oh, Charles!" And Lydia attempted to hold the scarred fingers in her own, but he drew them away, and again folding his arms round her, as he kissed her cheek, led her from the parlor to a little room above, where their mother and Lottie were busily occupied in making wax flowers.

It was now a month since they left La Belle. With the promise of several pupils as boarders, they had furnished the house they now occupied, for the receptacle; but when the preparations were completed, none of the young ladies were heard of. Still they trusted, and hoped for future success, and although the widow saw this evening as the two entered, that Charles had been unsuccessful, yet she smiled at his fears, as Lydia cheered him with her vivacity, and Carlotta endeavored to enliven him with her song; and when Lydia left the room to perform a little duty that always devolved upon her at this hour, she had the satisfaction of seeing that the despair so plainly visible on the countenance of the beloved Charles, was by degrees disappearing.

She remained with their few little pupils until sleep closed the weary little eyelids, and the hymns she was repeating were no longer heard; then bending over the sleepers, kissed away the pearly tears that rested upon the cheeks of those little creatures still haunted by the recollection of home, and assuring herself that all were asleep, extinguished the light, and re-entered the little sitting room.

The evening was passing pleasantly, when there came a loud ring at the gate. A traveller dismounted, and with hurried steps, regardless of the little parterre that had been so tastefully laid out, reached the door, and inquired for Mrs. Villiers. The widow descended to the parlor, while Charles, who had peeped over the baluster, threw his arms passionately round Lydia and exclaimed,—

"Hermann! Now for some news!"

Soon after they heard the parlor door open, and loud angry tones rose on the still air; then the house door was shut with a violence, the traveller flew to his steed, and putting spurs to the noble animal, was shortly out of sight.

"Well, Lydia," said the widow as she joined them, "I've been answering for you, and refused an offer in regard to your becoming the future mistress of La Belle."

"And, my dear Lydia, that means you can have the honor of being bride elect to his excellency, the noble Hermann. How grieved you must be to know your mother has refused. My heart aches when I think of your anguish."

"Hush, Charles!" said Lydia, as she laughed at the mock gravity his countenance assumed. "I wish to hear whether he said anything of grandfather."

"No;" returned Mrs. Villiers, "as soon as I learned the object of his visit, I asked him if he were not engaged to Fritzine, to which he replied that Fritzine was nobody, and engagements nothing. Then finding me firm in my decision, he arose in a passion, and left the house."

It was the evening of the Sabbath; the doors of the English church were open, and the bells chimed an invitation to enter the sanctuary, and employ the last moments of the day in the service of Jehovah. This evening it was well attended, while among those who passed up the aisles, there came a family in deep mourning, known to very few, who recognized them as the Villiers from Philadelphia.

There is often in evening service much that is imposing. The light of the glorious sun with its enlivening influences has departed; we look up, and the day is gone; the shades of night are encompassing us, it is a time to pause and meditate, to leave awhile the pursuits of time, and ponder upon the things of eternity, and ask ourselves how we rank in that register above, wherein is recorded not only the words and actions, but also the innermost thoughts of the heart. The wax tapers shed their subdued light from the altar, as the solemn peals of the organ stole over the worshippers. A door in one of the arches of the architecture opened, and two clergymen entered the church. Lydia's book fell to the floor as she watched the one who ascended to the chancel. She bent forward, and gazed intently at that form as it knelt at the altar. There was something in the gait and attitude strikingly familiar to her. The figure arose, and as it turned to a seat, she recognized none other than Mr. Everett.

The last strains of the psalm had died away, and the stranger from Philadelphia entered the pulpit. The text was from that portion of Scripture where St. John tells us of the agony of the Saviour in the Garden of Gethsemane, wherein are the words "Father, all things are possible unto thee, take away this cup from me; nevertheless not what I will, but what thou wilt."

The preliminary remarks of the sermon were relative to the Saviour's life upon earth. The trials and temptations, the sufferings and sorrows that constituted His sojourn among men, and how, when this earthly pilgrimage was ended, He bore the burden of the cross, and descended to the confines of the sepulchre, that he might burst the bonds of death, and open unto us the gates of everlasting life; and having thus paid the great price of our ransom, and fulfilled every tittle of the law, he has purchased for us a full, complete, and free salvation. Animated by the earnestness with which he addressed them, the eloquence of the young clergyman, as he exhorted all to study the truths of the Gospel, was deeply impressive. After dwelling upon the enormity of the sins daily committed against divine love, he strove to remove every barrier in the way of the penitent's approach to the Mercy Seat; "No argument," said he, "growing out of our deep unworthiness can interpose the progress of the soul towards its Maker. When we once enter into His presence, be it as a penitent supplicating pardon, a mourner unveiling sorrow, the needy asking grace, or the recipient of mercy offering the sacrifice of praise, we stand upon the basis of an atonement which meets our case, no matter what may be its own peculiar form, and need never fear a cool reception."

"We draw near by the way of His cross. We penetrate into His heart through His pierced side. His wounds are our door of hope. We plead His own merits, bathe in his own blood, enfold us in His own righteousness, and He will not deny — will not reject us. And once assured of this statement, justified and borne out by every sentence of revealed truth, who shall dare come between the soul and Christ? What echoes of the 'law's loud thunder,' what lightning gleams of justice, what profound sense of sinfulness, what aggravated departures shall presume to interdict your approach to the Saviour of all! Once led by the eye of faith to the cross of Calvary, and every foe shall pale and shrink away. No sin, no curse, no Satan can stand beneath the sacred, solemn shadow of that cross where, impaled, suffering, dying, hung the incarnate God. Sooner, at the bidding of a mortal, shall the laws of nature stand still, and this universe cease to be; sooner shall Christ vacate His throne of glory,

and God resign the government of all worlds, and of all beings, than shall a poor, penitent, humble, supplicating soul enter into the presence of Jesus pleading His own infinite merits and most precious blood, be chilled by coldness, be awed by a frown, or be rejected with disdain. For He has paid all the debt, annihilated all our innumerable sins, exhausted every particle of the tremendous curse, and is now set down at the right hand of God to secure by His intercession, and to administer by His government, the untold blessings purchased by His blood. We have but to approach, and with the gentlest pressure of faith, touch the spring of His love, and every door flies open to welcome us. And what are the attractions to draw us thither? When the eye of king Ahasuerus lighted upon Esther, robed and jeweled with royal splendor, her person found grace in his sight, and he bade her approach. With a complacency and delight infinitely transcending this, does the Saviour contemplate the believer, as he enters into the Divine presence, comely with His comeliness, put upon Him; extending the symbol of welcome, He invites your approach; His heart, responsive to your petition, is prepared, and His power, commensurate with your case, is 'able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think!' Does glory charm us, does beauty attract us, does love win us, does gentleness subdue us, does sympathy soothe us, does faithfulness inspire confidence? all this do we find in Him who is altogether lovely, and if our minds can appreciate the grand, and our hearts are sensible of the tender; if they can feel the power of that which is superlatively great and exquisitely lovely, then we shall need no persuasion to arise, and going to the foot of the cross, pour out every emotion of the soul, every circumstance of our history. There needs a closer alliance of the soul and the Saviour. Deem not the small events of life too trivial for His ear; for His love, His sympathy, His compassion, are all human; so there is not a petition with which we approach, growing out of our suffering humanity, that challenges not a hearing, that awakens not a response; and remember, we are holding audience with Him who, when He sojourned upon earth, was poor, houseless, and unbefriended; who subsisted on charity, and had not where to lay His head. Whatever may be the trials and temptations, the sorrows and the sufferings of this mortal life, let us trust in that wisdom which cannot err, and in that love which cannot fail, knowing that we prefer no request, breathe into His ear no sorrow, unveil to His eye no infirmity, with which, in all its most minute detail, He was not already infinitely better acquainted than we are; for

long ere the sadness shades the brow, or a tear dims the eye, or a burden presses the spirit, or the perplexity weaves its web around the path, or the archer bends his bow and wings his shaft — all was known to Him, and by Him it was appointed.

"Beloved hearers, there is often on this stage of our existence a sorrow almost too sacred for human approach. It is that of the bereaved. We return to the house of mourning from the grave where repose the ashes of one once animated and glowing with a spirit that blended with our own; we seem to have entombed a second self — all that gave existence an object, or life its charm. But let us arise and tell the compassionate Saviour what a wreck life seems, what wintry gloom enshrouds all the landscape of human existence, — tell Him how mysterious seems the event, how heavy falls the blow, what hard, dark, rebellious thoughts of God now haunt the perturbed mind. Lay the grief upon His breast, and think not that you are alone in your sorrow, that there is not one in this wide world who can appreciate your loss, or enter into all the peculiar features of your afflictions, the delicate shadings of your sadness. There is One, and that One only. He robs us of the idol we love too well, that He himself may occupy its place in the heart. And lastly, tell Him all, tell Him every thing. Tell Him of the world's woundings, of the spirit's tremblings, of the heart's anguish. Tell Him of the low frames, the mental despondencies, the gloomy fears, beclouded evidences, and veiled hope. Tell Him the bodily infirmities — the waning health, failing vigor, progressive disease, the pain, the lassitude, the nervousness, the weary couch, the sleepless pillow. Tell Him of your dread of death, how you recoil from dying, and how dark and rayless appears the body's last resting-place. Tell Him how all beyond it looks so dreary, starless, hopeless. Tell Him you fear you do not know Him, love Him, believe in Him. Tell him all the temptations, the difficulties, the hidden trials and sorrows of your path. There is no temporal want, no spiritual sorrow, that you may not, in the confidence of love, and in the simplicity of faith, pour before the Mercy Seat of the Redeemer — 'Casting all your care upon him, for he careth for you.' Tell Him your desolateness as a widow, your friendlessness as an orphan, your sadness and solitude as one whose heart is overwhelmed within you. And think this no weak, sentimental Christianity to which I am urging you. There is no other which so appeals to the intellect, as to the most sacred feelings and affections of the heart. This reliance upon God in all the minutiae of life, is the divinest, loftiest, and sublimest that can

possibly task the powers of the human soul. All the splendor of human philosophy, science and prowess, pales before the moral grandeur which gathers, like a halo, around a mortal man reposing at the feet of the incarnate God, unveiling his whole soul in all the childlike confidence of a faith that grasps Jehovah. At this focal point must meet the profound philosopher, and the untutored peasant; the matured man and the little child; and He who is always more ready to hear than we to pray, is never sought in vain. Here, all that is tender in love, faithful in friendship, wise in counsel, long-suffering in patience, balmy, soothing, and healing in the deepest sympathy, constitute the attractions of this everlasting Friend. For there is not a moment of time, nor an event of life, nor a circumstance of daily history, nor a mental or spiritual emotion, in which you are not borne in the ceaseless intercession of the Saviour. Live in closer intimacy with Him, and the spirit of meekness, kindness, gentleness, charity and forbearance towards your fellow men, will enable you to do His will on earth, that when moons shall wane, and stars fall, and this earth pass away as a scroll, when the Son of Man appears in the clouds with the company of the Heavenly host, that the summons to meet thy God may not find you unprepared. 'Charity shall cover the multitude of sins.' 'Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.'"

The words of the preacher ceased, and descending from the pulpit, he took his seat in an obscure part of the chancel.

The service concluded, they left the church. The rain fell in torrents, and many thronged the steps waiting for their carriages, as Charles made his way round to the door of the vestry; but he reached it only in time to see a carriage drive off, which he afterwards learned contained the friend they so much wished to see. The rector informed him of the hotel where Mr. Everett could be found, and stated that he believed it the young minister's intention to remain but a short time in Berlin.

The next morning Charles repaired to the hotel in quest of the familiar face of Mr. Everett. They had long been among strangers, and the opportunity of renewing such a friendship was not to be lost. To the disappointment of all, he was told the clergyman left that morning by an early train for some distant part of Europe, they knew not where.

"Charles, I am going to the academy this morning, good-by; but what have you so amusing there, a letter?"

"Yes, from Alfred." And again he burst into a loud fit of laughter.

"What can be the cause of your merriment!"

"Why, a sudden calamity that has befallen that unfortunate Barrow."

"But what about Anna? Do tell me!"

"Oh Lydia! if you are going to Berlin this morning, let me tell you that the train begins to-day to start at an earlier hour, and you just have time to catch it. So wait until you come back, to hear the contents of the letter: it's glorious news, I can tell you. Now go, good-by!"

The Academy of Design to which Lydia was going, was an institution founded by one of the royal family for the promotion of the art of painting. There was one gallery for women, to which many of the most distinguished ladies of the capital resorted, to copy from the artists of the old schools. Once a year there was a sale of pictures to which every lady was required to contribute one, the proceeds of which were given to a society for poor artists. This year a valuable painting of the Flemish School was offered to the one who should execute the most perfect representation of a sleeping beauty; and Lydia, whose time was not fully occupied at home, and who had been introduced into this gallery, was one chosen to compete for the prize. She was exceedingly fond of the art, and passed many pleasant hours at her easel. She had painted several portraits from memory, and now resolved not to copy, but merely follow the dictates of her own imagination. The outline had been carefully drawn, yet this morning as she placed the canvass upon the easel, and stood to take a survey of the whole, the mouth did not meet with her approbation, and supposing herself to be alone in the gallery, exclaimed half aloud,—

"I should like to see a very pretty mouth!"

"Then bring a looking-glass next time!" said a deep-toned voice behind her.

She turned, and there was the tall figure of a man attired in black, but the face was averted, and he appeared gazing intently upon a painting that hung near him. But soon it turned, and the pale, cold countenance of Mr. Everett was before her.

"I don't think I ought to recognize you after that," said Lydia, as she went towards him.

"Pardon me, Miss Villiers, although I have no other plea than that it was a mere lapsus linguæ. I throw myself upon your mercy; in fact I am too much delighted to see you to find words for any purpose. Travelling has done you no harm, for I never saw you look better: indeed, Lydia, to look at you, seems already to have done me good. I scarcely know why,

but I have had very little to cheer me since you left ; although I saw but little of you, it was sufficient to stimulate me for the rest of the time. Lydia, you never knew what a halo of happiness you were throwing round me, and I never intended to tell. I don't know why I have now, and yet I am sure it would be a pleasure to you to know you had been the means of making any one more happy.

"Mr. Everett, you are becoming more prosy than I ever knew you before ; or perhaps I feel less inclined than I used, to receive your sentiments, and having disposed of them to my own amusement, fling them back to you. So you see, sir," added she playfully, "as I have grown more sage we shall not agree as well as formerly unless you resolve to abandon your present mode of address."

"Lydia," and the tone became firmer and more earnest, "I admire your decision. You are right not to let me talk in that strain, for I know it is now distasteful to you. I don't know what I have said, but you are not the child you once were, and I ought to keep such thoughts to myself — and will, hereafter."

Lydia's time at the academy was limited, and promising to call upon them the first opportunity, Mr. Everett saw her to the train and took his leave.

He had not given the slightest clue to his reason for leaving Philadelphia, and Lydia, who was not the most curious in the world, assured herself it had nothing to do with her, and resolved to think no more about it.

It was the evening, and they sat together in a little arbor of the garden, when the gate opened and Mr. Everett entered.

All were glad to see him, as he was to meet them, and as they chatted on the time passed rapidly. Yet the spirits of their visitor seemed depressed, and they did all in their power to entertain him. They told him of their voyage, and the story of the wreck, when Charles fully expected to find him enthusiastic about Beatrice. But he listened to all without saying a word ; certainly his countenance might have changed during the recital, but, sheltered from the rays of the moon, it was not visible, and as soon as they had finished speaking of the missing girl, he abruptly bade good-night, and took his departure.

"Was there ever such a cold, formal being on this stage of existence !" said Charles, as soon as he was gone. "Surely any one who could not manifest a little sympathy for the unhappy fate of poor Beatrice, must be truly hard-hearted, and void of all feeling. How I do dislike such men ! I utterly despise them !"

"Oh, but indeed he is neither unfeeling or unkind ;" said Mrs. Villiers. "Think of his indefatigable exertions among the poor, surely he was no hypocrite in those. And certainly in his sermons he is as one inspired. We will not judge the man we have known so long to be worthy of our esteem and love, as harsh and unsympathetic, because he shows himself indifferent on one occasion. He was evidently occupied with other thoughts, and did not heed sufficiently to gain a full view of the case. Let us always think as charitably as we can of every one."

Lydia said nothing. Usually so ready to vindicate the accused, she now seemed too much occupied with her own thoughts ; but with an effort she roused herself from the reverie, and strove to entertain and amuse those who looked up to her vivacity as the safeguard against the gloomy despondency that so often seemed ready to encloud them.

## CHAPTER XVIII

"There's money a slip 'twixt the cup and the lip."

"On Anna, saved ! saved !" exclaimed Alfred one morning as he rushed into her room. "What an escape for you ! Miraculous event ! Arrested on suspicion of murder ! And you may depend upon it he has done it ; his very face never looked like a Christian's, but always had the appearance of some condemned convict awaiting execution. I don't wonder at all, he looked just the one to commit such a crime. Hurrah for the old hypocrite !"

"Alfred, what do you mean ? Of whom are you speaking, why are you so excited ? You frighten me !"

"Anna, only listen and I'll read it to you," replied he as he caught the newspaper he had flung high in the air. "Here it is ! 'Last evening a man was found dead upon the steps of the Merchant's Exchange, who, it was discovered, had died from a sling shot that was lodged in his head. It was late, and the street was deserted by all except the policeman upon his beat, who testifies that he saw two men descend the steps of the Exchange, when suddenly one fell, while the other moved quickly down the street. He was speedily arrested, and proved to be Robert F. Barrow, the little old man so well known at the Merchant's Exchange. He awaits his trial.'"

The work had fallen from Anna's hands, and in her amazement, she sat as one petrified. But Alfred, on the contrary, seemed little impressed by the seriousness of the case, and continued to manifest by his antics about the room, that he exulted in the misfortune of poor Barrow, who, he declared, must have gained his wealth by dishonesty, and would now reap the fruits of such a fraudulent life.

But below stairs, no such scene of rejoicing presented itself. Upon hearing the strange intelligence, Susan had rushed into her mother's room to apprise her of the circumstance. The curtains were closely drawn round the bed, but two bony, spindle shanks, terminating in a pedestrial form, protruded from beneath the drapery, an indication that the meagre little figure of the old lady was about to descend to the floor. But Susan was not in a humor to await such a debut, so, going up to the bed, hastily threw the curtains aside, and finding the thin, spare form sitting up amid the pillows, with the eyes closed, she supposed her mother still in the land of nod, and in order to awaken the sleeper, suddenly gave the poor old lady a tremendous shake. The little grey eyes were raised imploringly to the excited Susan, who screamed in a passionate tone, "He's in prison, so there'll be no wedding," and quitted the room, leaving the old lady unconscious whether she had seen a vision, or whether Susan had really paid her a visit; and to determine which it was, she hastily threw her clothes around her, and descended to the dining-room, where she found her turbulent daughter pacing the floor with a flushed cheek and angry frown, that forbade any questions from any one, while she exclaimed in vehement tones, "It's outrageous! intolerable! Just as I was about to become all that I wished, and have the pleasure of triumphing over that Pyke who thinks herself the queen of fashion; just when it wanted one step to gain the height of my ambition, that old sinner must get himself into prison, on purpose to thwart all my plans for making this good match. There never was anything like it. But these young rebels shall not stay here to taunt me; I'll pretty soon clear them off, now there's nothing to be gained by them; fool that I have been even to suppose I should be fortunate in anything. But it shall be the last time I'll be so deceived; for I'll never again anticipate any good where men have anything to do with it; I might have known nothing but misery could spring from such a miserable, decrepit old monster!"

"But Susan, I don't understand," ventured the old lady, as soon as there was a pause. "I thought nothing was going to happen

to prevent the wedding taking place. What do you mean? Who has been killed? not that poor, dear Barrow, I hope! And do tell me, who is the monster they've put in prison?"

In few words Susan made her mother understand the cause of her disappointment, when the countenance of the old lady changed from wonder to dismay, and sitting down as she folded her hands, she began in a doleful tone,—

"It's just what I expected, Susan. I always thought something would happen to prevent this scheme of yours. You know, Susan, I once told you how wrong I thought it was to force that poor child to marry such a disagreeable old man; for, as you know very well, they don't owe us anything yet. I'm sure it is the punishment for planning such a wicked plot; and you know too, Susan, that I've often wanted to be a good christian, but you never would let me, because you wanted to wear feathers and flounces, although I told you, you might not catch a husband, if you did; and you see, in order to have these fineries we have done such a wicked thing as to engage poor Anna to this queer little man; and now after all the trouble and arranging that we have had, this is all there is for our pains. But how very wicked the little old man was to do such a thing. I wish I had known he was going to commit such a crime, I'd have had him in prison long ago. And Susan, don't you know that when an affair like Anna's comes to nothing, it is generally the custom to send back the presents?"

"Not to such a Hottentot as he is; I intend to keep them all myself; its precious little that I've gained to what I had expected, and he'll never see any of them again."

The sun had risen higher in the heavens, it was time for Alfred to say good-by, and once again Anna was left alone. A restlessness which she could not resist came over her; and finding it painful to remain within the house, she hastily finished her simple toilet and with a step which for her was firm and determined, left her room. She had thought to make her escape from the house unnoticed, but before she could open the street door, she heard Susan's step upon the stairs, and found her flight was detected.

"Why Anna! what do you mean, who said you might go out? I declare this is something new!"

"I'm going to Mrs. Barrow. I think she is all alone, and it must be a great shock to the poor old lady."

"What! go to the house in broad daylight? Anna, you want to disgrace us. What do you suppose people will think to see you continue such an acquaintance. And as to a shock

for that old mother of his, why of course she knew all about it long ago. Now I come to think of the queer, oblique glances of his squinting eyes, that seemed always looking in every direction, I don't wonder that with such a conscience he could never look any one straight in the face. But go out of my sight, I wish I could never see you again, for, when you were wanted to like the man, you were determined to be obstinate and find all the fault you could in him; and now that he is a miserable criminal, you must do all you can to keep up a close intimacy with them, just because you know it will make me furious."

"Susan, I pity any one in distress, for I know too well what it is to be wretched myself. And Susan, pray don't accuse any one of such a crime until there is more proof; perhaps he is not the guilty party, then think what misery must overshadow them just now. Oh, Susan, you don't know, but I do, what it is to be left alone when you are in trouble, and how dark the world seems, when all are forsaking you. Oh, Susan, please never condemn a fellow being like that again, it makes my heart ache to hear you; I cannot be indifferent to it, I have too often been called upon to suffer, myself!" And as she caught hold of the skirts of Susan's dress, while she entreated her to cease her accusations, she sank upon her knees, and burst into a flood of tears.

"You're a miserable girl, go out of this house, and never enter it again; don't let me see your face once more, or I might do something desperate! Begone!" and opening the door, she shut it again upon the slender form she had forced upon the steps.

The morning air was cool and refreshing, and invigorated the feeble frame which long fasting, together with the sudden news of the morning had quite enervated.

On reaching Mrs. Barrow's, she found the poor old lady had received a paralytic stroke, and could not be made conscious of her presence. But the servant put a paper in her hand; it bore no direction, and upon the inside was written the following—

"My very dear Anna:—Come to me; I am sick and in prison. I cried all last night when I thought of your great disappointment, for you know, Anna, how much I love you. But as soon as I am released we will have all as we wish; I do hope no one will steal my money while I am here. I have very much to say to you, so come soon; besides, I can't make the people here believe about you, they only laugh at me when I tell them of you, and I want them to see you and know I tell the truth. But I know you will come, because you always do right, and mind Anna, if you do not come and see me, you will have to answer for it at the day of judgment. And that you may not let people

laugh at me, is the earnest wish of Barrow, the one who belongs to you for always.

And please tell every body that you are sure I never throw sling shots at men's heads. You know, for your sake, I could not do anything so wicked, and in all truth I know nothing about the affair. My good mother is very bad, but I am sure you are with her because you do everything that you ought. My tears have run into the ink so that I cannot write any more."

With a pity that was mingled with contempt and disgust, Anna cast the paper from her, and having performed several little offices for the comfort of the poor old lady, she thought the anger of Susan must have in a degree subsided, and bent her steps homeward, and was glad to hear that lady was up stairs busily occupied with the dressmakers and milliners who were to remain this last day finishing her wardrobe. "Of course Anna's things would be of no consequence, as she never would have occasion to wear them."

"Susan, why wont you give me the little parcel Mr. Everett left for me? If you will let me have it, I will certainly show you the contents."

"Here, take it, for I want nothing that belongs to you." And she flung it towards her.

Removing the wrapper she found a small rosewood box, artistically inlaid with mother-of pearl, the formation of which spelled her name, and also bore the initials of the giver. Within, lay a prayer book, whose fly leaf contained the words "Watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation." Beside it, was a little book entitled "The Progress of Piety," of which he himself was the author. A small gold ring lay at the bottom of the box, also a little note which ran thus:

"Anna:—As you wear this, remember—that you may continue faithful and diligent in the Church Militant and secure an inheritance in the Church Triumphant, is the prayer of

HERBERT E. EVERETT."

"The man's beside himself, Anna!" and Susan threw the note upon the floor. "I'm sure he doesn't care for you, and none but a maniac would take all that trouble for nothing. But Judy has just opened the door to some one, go and attend to them, and if it's that Sally Pyke, say I'm too ill to be seen."

Anna entered the parlor, and for a few moments saw no one; at last the rustling of silk behind the door, drew her attention in that direction, and there, upon an ottoman, reclined none other than Miss Sarah Pyke. Anna expected she would leave

her retirement, and be the first to speak, but she still sat the same picture of apathy. At length, after a few preliminaries which scarcely drew a response from her ladyship, Anna remarked,—

"You must have been very much astonished upon hearing of Mr. Barrow's arrest!"

"Oh, no! Not in the least, my dear! I'm never surprised at any thing men do; I've studied their nature too long for that."

"What! weren't you at all astonished then?"

"Anna, as I have always said, men are very strange, mysterious beings; and there's no telling what they will do in the course of a lifetime. Oh, no! I was not surprised to hear he had committed so great a crime, because I know it comes natural to them to do all such things. Why you know, Anna, boys are for ever in mischief, and certainly it must strengthen with their strength, so that by the time they are men, these evils have degenerated into enormous crimes. I'm sorry to say it, my dear, but it is always so, even with the very best of them; they cannot be trusted out of your sight." Here the countenance of the lady assumed a more pathetic expression, and she continued — "That is why our state is termed single blessedness, because we have not such torments to harass us. And my dear Anna, when they tell you how dear you are to them, don't believe them, it's only a mere pretense. I've never listened to them, because I preferred to remain a spinster, as I always knew how treacherous they were; besides I never flirt, because when I appear to good advantage I am quite attractive, and I have too much feeling to make any poor fellow heart-broken about me. But there's some one in the entry. Why, Anna, it's a gentleman!" (looking through the crack of the door.) "Who can it be! Does he come to see you?"

The stranger now entered the parlor. He was a young man of fine proportions, upon whose tall figure the eager gaze of Miss Pyke was instantly riveted, as she stood directly before him, holding her eye-glasses upon her wrinkled nose.

"I wish to speak with Miss Wentworth," said the stranger, whereupon Miss Pyke left the room, and stood without, with the door partly open, that she might hear what passed between Anna and the stranger.

"Miss Wentworth," said the visitor, "I hope you will pardon me if I appear officious, but I have been given to understand that you are about to hold a peculiar relationship to the prisoner, Robert Barrow, now under arrest, and thinking your anxiety must be insupportable, I hastened to inform you, that as

the most able counsel will be employed, the case may not end as gloomily as matters at present predict." He bowed and rose to leave. A smile played upon his features, and it was but too evident that curiosity alone had prompted his visit. "And no wonder," thought Anna, as she followed him to the door, "no wonder indeed that any one should be curious to see who it is who would be willing to form such a link in the chain of connection of the miserable Barrow."

Perhaps there are few trials more difficult to bear when we are in trouble, than dissimulation and ridicule. And grieved at finding herself so ill-suited to withstand the taunts of the world, she left the affected Miss Pyke to herself, and sought the seclusion of her room, to weep alone once more over the miseries of her unhappy lot.

"Anna, a letter came to you one day this week," said Mrs. Gilbert one afternoon, as she held several pieces of torn paper and an envelope towards her. "I'm sorry its all torn to pieces so, but that Susan got it before I knew anything of it, and you know what a tiger she is when any trifle excites her."

Anna took the torn fragments, and soon saw by the hand that the letter was from Lydia. On one piece was the following—"You will be surprised my own dear Anna to hear that I am about to leave my home and those so dear to me, to brook strange faces in a country as foreign to me as my situation will be novel." At the top of another fragment was the line, "So to-morrow Mr. Everett and I start for France;" and no definite meaning could be gathered from the rest.

"Anna, there's that giddy, flighty Kate down stairs waiting to see you; why don't you go to her, who do you suppose is going to entertain your company?"

Anna hastily gathered up the fragments of paper, upon hearing Susan's voice, and kissing the envelope, placed it in her bosom, and joined the merry little body below.

"Oh my dear Anna, I've been wanting to see you for a long time to know how you are affected by this remarkable circumstance of the horrid old creature, because if you are grieving at the loss of your inestimable friend I will endeavor to console you; and if you rejoice at your escape from such a monster, why I'm very ready to laugh with you upon his being in safe keeping within prison walls. But you can't be glad about it for you look as pale as ever. What a strange girl you must be, to grieve after such a wretched old heathen,—how you can care for him is beyond my comprehension. Oh, but while I think of it—Does

Lydia say much of Charles, in her letters to you? He has never answered my letter,—insolent fellow! I suppose he thinks, because he belongs to a wealthy family, that he's going to marry one of the European princesses. He needn't think so much of himself, for I don't care anything about him now. There are plenty such to be had. Although," and the countenance of the little beauty became more serious, "it's such a difficult matter to meet with a real good sort of a fellow, one who will be very kind to you, let you have your own way in everything, stay at home when you like, do always as you wish him, and care nothing at all for any one but you. Half of them don't care who likes them best, they want a girl whose father has just so much to give her, or else she must be attractive, and often with both, her family is not as good as is required. And sometimes with all these a poor girl cannot fascinate the one for whom alone she cares to live. Isn't it awful?"

Kate stopped speaking, her eyes were cast upon the floor; and as she stood lost in thought, the pretty face seemed to Anna more interesting than ever. Suddenly a flash of animation came over her features, and she exclaimed, "But if I continue to talk in this strain I shall get the blues. And so Mr. Everett has gone at last; so you see our prognostications were right; he has really gone after Lydia, and now he'll declare to her, that if she does not take compassion on him, he will remain a bachelor for the rest of his days. I know he was always passionately fond of her, though it was evident she cared nothing at all for him; still, as she is such a good-hearted girl, she's sure to take pity on him. Don't you think so?"

"I cannot tell!"

"Oh, but it's sure to be so. I ran against that Pyke yesterday,—haven't we a bevy of old maids in this part of the city? and I do detest them so much!—But I must go if that's the right time; what a queer, old-fashioned looking clock that is! How can it keep correct time? I should think it would be like that Barrow—as bad inside as out. Do you think I'm pretty?" as she figured before the mirror. "Some tell me so, although my looks don't do very much for me at present, but they may some day,—you will see. But then again, I'm so little! that is why I don't like Josephine to go out with me, she's so tall and big like her father, that she hides me. Oh, I must go and dress for the opera. I hope he will come, I'm sure I shall die if he disappoints me. Do you know who I mean? I wish you could see him! But you will hear more of him yet, or of some one else as good or better. I know I shall be a fortunate creature in the end, you will see! Good-by!"

## CHAPTER XIX.

"What is't we live for? tell life's fairest tale—  
To eat, to drink, to sleep, love, and enjoy,  
And then to love no more!  
To talk of things we know not, and to know  
Nothing but things not worth the talking of."

THE moon shone brightly over the streets of Potsdam; the shadows of the evening had lengthened; night was fast approaching, and the promenades which the morning had gladdened with the gay and the joyous, were now deserted, and all was silent, except when the carriage wheel, or the foot-fall of the pedestrian broke the stillness of the hour. A female figure in black, moved quickly over the pavement; her carriage was graceful and the step elastic, as she glided with rapidity from street to street, as if assiduous to gain some desired point yet in the distance. At any other time, her lonely and unprotected situation at this late hour, would have excited terror, but Lydia was too much occupied in brooding over the ill success of her late errand to allow any other subject a place in her thoughts. She had undertaken a commission that was peculiarly painful to her, and had gone a long distance alone to solicit the payment of a bill, which had several times been urged in vain on the part of Charles, who was now too ill to traverse the distance. Unknown to any but herself, she had started on her errand, in full anticipation of success, and pictured to herself the pleasure of conveying homeward what would satisfy the eager creditors on the morrow, and dissipate the gloomy forebodings which threw their dark shadow over the home circle. But she had allowed the first negative to discourage her, and turning from the door began her dreary way homeward disheartened, and vexed with herself for the little moral courage and strength of purpose she had exercised. At last the recollection of the hour urged her speedy return to the little gothic dwelling where anxious faces would be awaiting her arrival. She had just entered a road, and was passing under a wall, whose thickly grown ivy threw its deep shadow around her, when suddenly she paused, as if some unseen power had arrested her, and instantly stooping to the ground, began to regard intently something that met her gaze. At the bottom of the wall, much effaced by the rain, was the remnant of a placard, which, as the lamp-light fell upon it,

bore the words "Beatrice Sauvestre," and which were all that remained legible.

Concluding it best not to mention this circumstance to Charles, she again pursued her lonely way, and finally reached her destination, where the affectionate mother and lively little Carlotta were waiting to welcome the return of the disappointed girl, and unite their efforts in cheering the drooping spirits.

Charles had stationed himself at his window watching for her, until, as the evening closed and the shades of night began to fall, he suspected on what errand she had secretly set out, and as he pondered upon their gloomy circumstances, and Lydia's anxiety for their welfare, his thoughts troubled him. Mr. Everett's visits had become frequent, and he feared lest their forlorn situation should force Lydia to an allegiance, for which he considered her far superior. "A poor curate," said he to himself, "and almost a fanatic at that,—for half the time the man's so absent that he doesn't know what he's about! No, Lydia, I'd rather you would die, than throw yourself away upon such a fellow as he!" A gentle tap roused him.

"Ah, Lyddie love, I knew it was your step; and I can tell too by that countenance of yours where you have been, and what your success was; I know very well, my sweet Lydia, how you are imagining me dragged to prison to-morrow for debt, or committing suicide for very desperation. Don't you know that you women always fear the storm before the clouds are visible, while we stronger minded creatures wait until the rain patters down over our head and shoulders before we complain. Now what have you to say to that?"

Lydia kissed his pale cheek, and saw by the feverish brow and the agitation which was gaining the ascendancy over him, that he was either laboring under mental suffering, or very ill, although for her sake he had assumed the garb of cheerfulness; and remaining until she had soothed the troubled senses into slumber, left the fond Charles to the repose of sleep, and descended to the little sitting room below, where sat the widow alone.

She appeared not to notice her entrance, and seemed engrossed in thought; at last, as she felt Lydia's hand upon her, she looked up, and throwing her arms round the beloved form as it bent over her she exclaimed,—

"My own dear child, there's something I must say to you, and we must discuss the matter to-night. Mr. Everett has been here—but it's a mere proposition, and first tell me Lydia, if you would be willing to leave your home, and go among strangers, when you knew it to be for the good of us all?"

"Ma, what do you mean, and where shall I have to go?"

"To France."

"Oh, tell me all! You know I will do anything you wish."

"Well, dear, Mr. Everett has heard from a friend, of a lady who has a large seminary for young ladies in the south of France. It is a Protestant institution filled mostly with children from the British Isles. A lady who has taught there many years, is to leave shortly, and if we think favorably of it, Mr. Everett says there will be no difficulty in your making an engagement with the maitresse. You see, love, we have no prospect of more pupils, and the few we now have, I can easily teach myself."

At a late hour they parted for the night; Lydia stole in to take a peep at the sleeping Lottie, then retired to rest, to dream of her new life in the south of sunny France.

The morning was bright and beautiful when Lydia took her farewell of those she loved best, and accompanied by Mr. Everett, commenced her journey to France, where all the necessary arrangements had been made for her reception.

The tall, thin figure of the widow could no longer be seen, the trees had hidden the weeping Carlotta from her view, and finding the pale face of Charles at the window, had also receded from her earnest gaze, yielding to the emotion that overwhelmed her, she buried her face in her cloak and indulged in a flood of tears, while her companion sat opposite to her, the same immovable statue of patience and resignation. At last the happy temperament of Lydia triumphed over her grief, and chiding herself for her selfishness in not endeavoring to entertain her companion, who it was evident had little business in France except to conduct her safely thither,—as far as could be gained from the indefinite reasons he gave—she aroused herself and drew him into conversation. The cold expression left his features, the rigid muscles relaxed, a smile played upon the changed countenance, and Mr. Everett was an altered man.

Their route lay through Brussels, Paris, Lyons, and Marseilles, near which city the seminary was situated; and it was not until after a tedious journey of five days, that they reached the maison of Madam de Florigni.

Night had closed in, and little could be seen of the house except that it appeared a large mansion, standing back from the road, surrounded by spacious grounds, whose tall trees, and thick, heavy shrubbery presented a gloomy aspect as they passed under their shadow, the foliage rustling drearily when the branches waved majestically in the darkness. A domestic an-

swered their ring, and having seen Lydia into the hall, Mr. Everett extended his hand, and bade her good-night. He stood a few seconds, as if he would have said more; but Lydia, with her usual perception, anxious to avoid a manifesto in what she could not participate with sincerity, hastily thanked him for his kindness, then turned away; and when she looked again for the tall, athletic figure, it was gone.

She was ushered into a room where several ladies were gathered round a table variously occupied, while one appeared reading aloud; but as she entered the book was closed, and one of them as she rose to meet Lydia, introduced herself as Madam de Florigni. She was a middle-aged lady, rather tall, very corpulent, and somewhat commanding in her appearance; and as she fixed her dark eyes upon Lydia, there seemed severity in the scrutiny of the glance, which made the latter shrink from the gaze; and she was glad when the lady turned from her to the circle at the table, whom she presented as the teachers of the institution. They all arose to welcome the stranger, and as Lydia glanced from one to another, not one appeared so girlish as herself, and her courage misgave her when she imagined her tuitionary skill put to the test by the proficientes who now gathered round her.

A bell was rung, and refreshments brought in; after which when they arose to separate, Madam de Florigni turned to Lydia and said,—

"On m'a dit que vous connaissez le francais et l'allemand, et que vous comprenez l'italien, mais comme j'ai l'occasion de parler si souvent le francais, je prefere causer avec vous toujours en anglais. Shall I tell you your duties to-night, or would you rather wait until the morning?" Lydia preferred waiting until the morning; whereupon Madam added, "very well; the room to which you will be shown, you will share with the Italian teacher,—you had better converse with her in her own language, it will be practice for you. Good-night; you will hear the bells in the morning, please to be punctual."

One of the ladies now led Lydia up several flights of stairs to a room at the end of a long gallery, where, having tapped at the door, she opened it, and they entered.

At a table under a window a young girl sat writing, who was introduced to Lydia as Signorina Susini. She was rather below the medium height, with very sharp, dark eyes, and long black hair; her complexion was also very dark, almost swarthy, but the features were small and regular, and so animated was the expression of her countenance as she came forward to meet

Lydia, whose hand she took with avidity, that she appeared quite attractive.

As soon as they were left to themselves, Signorina resumed her writing, while Lydia, who was weary with her journey, prepared to undress. Presently her companion closed her desk with a violence that shook the table and everything upon it, then turning to her, said quickly,—

"Madam de Florigni said dat I speak Italian wid you, but I like better to talk in English because I not know him very well. Besides, I make never attention to what she tell me, only when I am obliged. Do you like her?"

"I am so tired, that I seem to like nothing at present but to go to sleep," replied Lydia with a smile.

She had just taken up her Bible to read when Signorina threw a letter into her lap saying, "I want very much dat you read dis, and see if de words are all spelled right, your English be very hard for foreigner."

The corrections made, Lydia resumed the chapter, during which time her companion continued to talk sometimes in broken English, sometimes in Italian, when she would appear quite excited, and often stamped her foot upon the floor, while the little black eyes magnified exceedingly, and every limb was in gesture.

For a while Lydia was too much distracted by her singular behavior to think of anything else, but at last, leaving the little lady to herself, she commended herself and the beloved ones at home to the guardianship of the Omnipotent, and laid the aching head upon her pillow. The singular behavior of Signorina still continued. Sometimes she took her letter, and pacing the room, read it aloud, and often became so vehement, that Lydia was much frightened; but after a time her companion became more quiet, and at last laid herself upon her bed, which she had wheeled close to Lydia's. The room was now still, and Lydia was about to fall into her first sleep, when the bedstead shook violently, and she saw Signorina jump from her bed while she exclaimed, "I forgot to make some prayer!" After kneeling awhile with her hand buried in the coverlid, it was suddenly raised and she inquired eagerly,—

"Did you know dat letter was to Mr. Gates of de English Navy?"

"I did not notice the direction."

"Dat is right; I don't want you or any one to know. Did you know it was to a gentleman?"

"I don't remember."

"I am very glad; den no one knows I write to a lieutenant."

"Do you keep a light burning all night?" seeing she was figuring in her night clothes very near the candle.

"Nobody can but me, I alway do just as I like. But I see you like dere be no light, so as I think you very nice I will please you. Look! I blow him out."

She now came to Lydia and throwing her arms about her, held her as in a vice, until she almost suffocated her; then exclaimed suddenly, "Oh, I so tired! and so you will be teaching all dose girls; some of dem like donkeys, very stupid ones; but good-night!" and to Lydia's relief she let go her hold, and returned to her bed.

The moon had risen, and her pale rays shone peacefully into the chamber; Lydia had been so completely aroused by the conduct of her companion, that sleep seemed driven from her eyelids. Her thoughts began to wander upon various subjects, and Mr. Everett was one of the number. But it was a rule she had laid down for herself, not to dwell upon worldly concerns after she had retired to rest; and bending over Signorina to assure herself that she slept, she found her pillow bedewed with tears, while she still clasped tightly a small package of letters which were attached to a cord round her neck. Satisfied that she was lost in slumber, although she still wept, Lydia laid her head again on her pillow, and was soon asleep.

Suddenly she was awakened from a sound slumber, by the motion of something upon her face and a rustling noise near her bed; looking up she saw a figure in white flitting round the room, talking in a low tone, and shedding a profusion of tears. As it moved towards the window, the light of the moon fell upon it, and she discovered it to be her companion, Signorina. She called to her, asked what troubled her, and whether she could be of any assistance, but the same low murmuring as of lamentation was all that came as an answer. After pacing the room for some time she stood before the glass, and by the moonlight arranged her long tresses, and performed several little offices of her toilet; then, taking a little crucifix and beads, knelt in the attitude of prayer. She arose from her knees, and climbed upon a table near the window, still in her night-clothes; and called several times upon some name, each time waiting as if to listen for a reply; then threw up the sash, and disappeared.

Irresolute as to what she should do, Lydia lay motionless. The time wore on, and the night was wearing away; but she neither saw nor heard any more of Signorina, although she kept her eyes fixed upon the window. At last fatigue overcame her

fears, and she fell into a sound sleep. The loud ringing of many bells awoke her, and she found the sun shining brightly into the room, giving it a more cheerful appearance than it wore the night before. The birds were warbling their matin song, and the balmy breeze, as it wafted in at the window, seemed to invigorate the weary Lydia, and inspire her with energy for the new duties that awaited her. Having thoroughly aroused herself she looked towards her companion's bed, and there lay Signorina apparently sleeping very soundly; but she had no sooner arose, than that young lady was at her side, and clasping Lydia in her arms, uttered many passionate exclamations of affection, and by the time their toilet was completed, she had told of her home in Italy, and shed tears when she expressed a doubt of seeing that beautiful land again. Then brushing away her tears, she exclaimed,—

"Oh, let me tell you while I think of it. You need not make much prayer up here, for you will have to do some more down stairs, bote for yourself and every one else; you will see."

Lydia did not well understand her, but soon another bell rang and Signorina led the way down to the breakfast room, or rather it was a large hall, where some sixty or seventy girls were seated at a long table down the centre, and arranged according to their height, while every here and there one of the ladies who had formed the circle the night before intervened, and broke the precision of the rank.

Madame de Florigni called Lydia to her at the head of the long table, and rising said, as she looked with her piercing black eyes down the rows of girls before her, "Mademoiselle Villiers, mesdemoiselles," whereupon every one arose, and every eye was fixed upon Lydia. The morning devotions were now begun; one of the ladies presided at an organ at the end of the hall, while the psalms for the day were chanted, and the music was altogether artistically executed. During these exercises, Madame de Florigni called unceremoniously upon the different instructresses for an extemporary prayer, a duty to which poor Lydia looked forward with fear and trembling.

Breakfast over, lessons began. Madame was a very rigid disciplinarian, and as she gave Lydia a closely written schedule which contained her list of duties for that day of the week, the principal requirements seemed in regard to preserving the strict order of her establishment.

First, they walked, which Lydia enjoyed very much, then it was her task at nine o'clock to sit by a piano where girls from five to fifteen came to practice, and listen to the drumming of

scales and exercises until one o'clock, when they dined, after which she was occupied with books till five o'clock, at which hour a bell was heard with great rejoicing, and books and music were laid aside for the present. The work of most of the teachers was now ended, but as soon as they returned from their evening walk, Lydia found much to employ her for at least two hours. The wardrobes and laundry of thirty girls must be thoroughly inspected, to see that they mended their clothes and darned their stockings, when loud groans and sighs often resounded through the long rooms, and to lessen the woful lamentation, Lydia was sometimes glad to assist in the work. Then, after tea, it was her task to see that lessons were learned for the following day, which occupied until nine, when the bell rang for prayers, and after good-night had been said, there was a lapse of twenty minutes; then Lydia must go to the sleeping chambers and report any young lady who was not in bed previous to the extinction of their light. And now a scene of confusion, and earnest entreaties for a prolongation of the lantern. And at last Lydia's duties for one day were at an end. The teachers now followed Madame de Florigni into her parlor, where an hour was pleasantly passed in choice literature, music etc., but Lydia, who had been suffering from fatigue during the latter part of the day, was not sorry when they rose to separate, and although the idea of passing another night with the singular Signorina was exceedingly painful to her, still she was glad to seek the retirement of her room.

On entering, she found her companion seated on the floor in a corner, with something in her lap, which she instantly concealed, and jumping up, ran into a closet. Lydia now opened the window to assure herself that it was a piazza or balcony on to which Signorina had gone when she left the room the night before; but to her astonished gaze, there was only the roof of a piazza, whose slanting structure, as it was without railing of any kind, was frightfully precipitous; and how the girl could sustain herself in such a situation she could not imagine. Was she in her right mind or not? And why had she not informed Madame de Florigni who certainly could not be aware of such proceedings? Suddenly there came a tap upon her shoulder; and forgetting her thoughts, she turned from the window, when Signorina handed her a letter, saying at the same time, "Oh, Miss Villiers, I forgot to tell you—it is a rule of Madame's to have de housekeeper examine every trunk dat come in her house; and de woman has much headache, and asked me do it for her: so just give me your keys,—I be very little while."

Lydia stood for a moment as though she had not comprehended the purport of her words, then calmly surrendered her keys, and sat down to read Charles' letter, while Signorina continued to throw out upon the floor the various articles the widow had so carefully packed, then tossed them back again,—all the while expressing the disagreeability of her task.

In his letter, Charles mentioned that he had received one from Alfred, stating that Anna would be married on the morrow to Mr. Barrow.

"Oh my dear Miss Villiers," interrupted Signorina, "I must trouble you so very much, I never can rest to-night unless dat I copy dat song you sang us to-day, because it is de favorite of me, I never hear it in my own language since I leave la bella Italia. I am so very sorry it is at de bottom of de house, but if I no do it to-night I forget it."

Lydia went in search of the music though rather reluctantly, and when she returned, her things were all put away and the trunks locked; in a corner stood Signorina mixing something in a tumbler, which, upon seeing Lydia, she immediately offered to her, saying, "You so very kind to me, do let me give you de last draught I have; it very good when one is tired, do please drink it."

"But what is it?"

"Oh, I always forget dose English names! Drink it and see."

She was exceedingly annoying when anxious to have anything accomplished, and as she held the glass to the lips of Lydia, the latter thinking to pacify her by tasting the contents, was about to take a little, when Signorina dextrously poured the whole contents down the throat of her victim; then, manifesting more vivacity than before, insisted upon performing the office of maid to the weary Lydia.

"Tell me from whom dat letter what come to you to-day?" said she, as she continued to loop up her hair in a style she pronounced to be purely Neapolitan.

"From Charles," replied Lydia, with a rougish smile.

"Oh, I guessed dat before, because you seem very much glad; I suppose you love him very great deal?"

"Because he loves me so much."

"Ah, so dem tell you, but it be very hard matter to know if dem say true. And do you not feel very unhappy because you no see him now?"

"He thinks of being this way, and will call."

"Oh, dat never do at all!" and her countenance was the

expression of alarm. "Madame will be a tiger if any gentlemen come to de house for see de young ladies. All de teachers are old maids, and see what old, grey professors always come here, so dat none of de girls can run away wid dem. Now I will tell you de only way we are able to see one gentleman, and you must write him dat he do de same; he must come in at de window. Listen! But you are too tired to hear de plan now, and you will not tink much more of him to-night, for dat draught I give you will soon make you forget everyting and go to sleep."

And Lydia was nearly asleep, until these last words fell from Signorina, which roused her not a little. Perhaps there was some design in forcing the draught upon her; the fear of falling asleep kept her wide awake, and determining to acquaint Madame de Florigni with the case, she lay perfectly still to watch the proceedings of the strange Signorina.

This night she seemed perfectly composed, and although she wept much, her grief was calm, and her tears as those of some deep sorrow rather than the impulse of a wild and passionate emotion. The compassionate heart of Lydia was instantly touched; she arose and endeavored to console the afflicted girl. She seemed overcome by the kindness, and after many expressions of her gratitude, added "You could never comfort me, but by doing what is very difficult."

"I will do it if I can."

"But you would not come down to de garden."

"Yet what benefit could that be to you?"

"Oh I want more air! Only I cannot go alone; de great, tall trees make me frightened."

"Then I will go with you," said Lydia; and hastily dressing she followed her down a sort of back staircase that led to the grounds. Signorina appeared well acquainted with every bolt and lock, and before long they found themselves in the broad extent of the lonely grounds.

"Dis way," said Signorina, as she clung nervously to Lydia, and insisted upon going quickly to the middle of the garden. They had not proceeded far, when she suddenly stopped. "What's dat! don't you see a man behind de tree?"

Her excited manner as she proceeded a few steps, then darted back again, alarmed Lydia, and while she stood considering the best way to control her, she ran towards her saying, "Oh, I was so foolish! it is no one;" and her laugh echoed again, as she caught the clothing of Lydia, and hurried her to the end of the grounds, which opened into a lane leading to one of the public streets.

"Now dis way," whispered Signorina as she took a key from her pocket, and unlocked the gate.

"Why so? The air is as refreshing here; do you not feel well enough to return? it is very late now."

"But I have come on purpose to see some one. Oh Madame would kill us if she knew we here at dis time of de night."

"Do pray come back!" and Lydia endeavored to extricate herself from the nervous grasp of her companion, who was in the act of drawing her into the lane.

"Only come wid me to de end, and I come back dat very minute." She hurried on; and Lydia, afraid to leave her to herself, followed, continually entreating her to return, as the lane seemed interminable, and the poor girl more excited the further they proceeded. At last they reached the street, where several pedestrians were seen in the distance.

"Now," cried Signorina, as in a state of ecstasy she clung to Lydia, "when dey come dis way, see if one gentleman be very dark and tall, wid large whiskers, for my eyes are so very bad."

The figure of a man now drew near, and Lydia endeavored to draw her companion from the street, but as soon as he approached, Signorina went up to him and clasping the skirts of his coat exclaiming "Oh I so glad you are come! Oh no! it is not you!" and she darted away from him. He stood and looked after her as if in profound amazement. Startled at the mistake she had made, she ran swiftly down the lane, and Lydia soon had the satisfaction of knowing they were safe within the limits of the garden. "I will stay no longer;" said she, as she saw Signorina looking again in the direction of the road. She made no answer, but suffered herself to be led into the house. On reaching their room, her tears flowed afresh and sinking upon the floor, she exclaimed in an agony of despair, "Oh, he never keeps his promise! I wish I could die!"

After much persuasion, she took her little rosary, and having performed her devotions, lay down to rest. Lydia sat beside her and read several passages from an Italian Testament, until she was assured the unhappy Signorina was soundly asleep.

For a long time Lydia lay awake, fearing to close her eyes, lest she should fall into slumber. But at last weary nature demanded her due, and the anxious watcher fell into a sweet sleep.

A sound awoke her, and looking up she saw Signorina was leaving her bed; alarmed as she thought of what her intentions might be at that dead hour of the night, she lay still while the strange girl continued dressing. A suspicion suddenly flashed across the mind of Lydia; she arose swiftly and approached

her; moving noiselessly in front of her, she at last had a full view of her face; but lo! the eyes were wide open and fixed upon vacancy — the truth was confirmed, Signorina was a somnambulist. Knowing it to be dangerous to awake such, and trembling for the safety of the poor creature, she took a seat and watched her, while with perfect readiness she found everything as she needed it, — stood before the mirror and arranged the long black tresses, and completed her toilet with the same exactness as though she had been fully conscious; then wound up her watch, threw on her bonnet and mantle, opened the window — and was gone. Lydia still watched, but the figure of Signorina soon disappeared from the roof of the balcony, while, as by some magic power, she descended from one piazza to another until she reached the garden, through which she passed with an astonishing rapidity, opened the gate and proceeded down the lane in the direction of the street beyond.

In agony, Lydia long kept her vigil at the window, but nothing more could be seen of Signorina. At length extreme weariness overcame her, and she fell into a sound slumber. A foot upon her shoulder startled her, and there was the return of the wanderer, who entered, closed the window and retired to her bed. But to Lydia, whose mind was disturbed and restless, her pillow was one of little repose, and the morning found her but little refreshed.

The bell for prayers had rung, and accompanied by Signorina, whose appearance evinced nothing unusual, Lydia was descending the stairs, when a hand was extended to her, and some one inquired in a kindly tone, that sunk into a low whisper "How do you rest in that room, Miss Villiers, — does your companion ever disturb you?"

It was a benevolent face, and as Lydia drew her aside, and communicated the facts, her agitation seemed to touch the feelings of the lady, who replied, "You shall not occupy that room another night. Poor Signorina! She desired we should keep it a secret, or Madame would send her away. It was I who arranged for you to share her room, for I thought as you were young, you would sleep soundly, and not be disturbed. Forgive me; to-day you shall change your apartment."

It was done; and the rest of Lydia was no longer broken.

## CHAPTER XX.

"On n'est jamais si heureux, ni si malheureux qu'on se l'imagine."

"Good-morning, Kate," said Miss Pyke, "I suppose you have heard we're to have a wedding to-morrow!"

"Oh yes, indeed, for I can think of nothing else; and although I blame her very much, still I do pity her."

"But my dear, you see Anna is poor, and it is always the best thing for a poor girl, you know."

"You may think so; I'd rather pick up stones in the street, or beg from one door to another, than tolerate such a horrid old hypocrite. Nothing can make me believe he is innocent of that crime."

"But a man confessed to it, and has been tried and condemned!"

"It makes no difference, I still believe him guilty. Oh how does Anna seem, now the crisis is so near?"

"Well, of course, Kate, it cannot be very agreeable to marry a fellow for whom you have a perfect abhorrence; yet I suppose when it is all over, the poor girl will feel resigned to her miserable fate; but don't forget it's to be at twelve o'clock to-morrow at the church, — I think it will be quite a handsome affair."

"Oh, but it would never do for me to be present at the ceremony, to look at him is more than I can bear; besides, I'm afraid that in the midst of it, I might scream out, or do something desperate. And without waiting for another remark from Miss Pyke, she left her where she had met her, and turned down a street in an opposite direction.

"Yes, to-morrow!" said Anna, as she stood before her bridal array, which, like so many pageants, were awaiting to act their part in the tragic scene. The great end of the sacrifice was already achieved, for Alfred now occupied a prominent position in the Exchange, but the bribe, the price thereof, must be paid — to-morrow.

Morning dawned; and Anna who had passed a sleepless night, arose from her couch, which long ago had ceased to be one of repose. She stood a moment as if to remember whether her sufferings were real or not; a clock struck the hour, she

started, and proceeded to dress. She saw that her door was secure, that she was alone, with none but the eye of the Omnipresent to look upon her, and she knelt — but the words of prayer came not to the troubled senses, yet though unable to frame the petition, the endeavor, and even the attitude of the suppliant calmed the agitated spirit, and seemed to strengthen her for the coming trial. She arose, and opened her door; the sound of subdued sobbing fell upon her ear, she listened, it was a familiar voice, and so accustomed was she to attend the summons, that she instinctively ascended the stairs leading to Alfred's room, when the sound became nearer and nearer, until, reaching the little chamber she found Alfred prostrated upon the floor, indulging in the most violent grief. She endeavored to console him, and as she raised the drooping head, suffering was depicted in every lineament of the fine countenance. "Oh Anna!" escaped him as he threw his arms about her neck, and they wept together; — to Anna who had not shed tears for many days it was a relief.

"What in the world do you two do here? Any one would suppose you had borrowed a paralytic stroke from the miserable old Barrow. Come down stairs and don't act in such a ridiculous manner any longer. You frightened the very wits out of me, as you have often done before. If the world were coming to an end you could not make a greater ado. But come along, don't keep me waiting here!"

On entering the dining-room, they might have observed, had they not been too pre-occupied, that the table was this morning embellished with many dainties and luxuries, which had not honored it for many a long day, if ever before; and also that Mrs. Gilbert herself had been up betimes, and arrayed herself in a most remarkably singular costume, to do further honor to the occasion. But the thoughts of the brother and sister were too much engrossed for these to call their attention, until Mrs. Gilbert, who appeared very assiduous of gaining the favor of Alfred, continued to press them to partake of some of the rarities before them, when Anna seemed to awake suddenly as if from a dream, and turning to the old lady while a faint, sad smile played over the pale countenance, she took the hand of Mrs. Gilbert, and expressed her gratitude for the kind attention, at which the poor old lady, most probably from the fatigue occasioned by the turmoil in which Susan had kept the house during the last few days, shed tears, which, great as her sorrow might have been, must have thrown a sort of oblivion over her plate as they fell into it, for though no one else ate, she did

most amazingly, apparently forgetting that everything of which she partook, was not the first of it she had eaten that morning. Susan seemed in too great a haste to see the end of that morning, to allow herself to partake of the good things for which at any other time she would have manifested too great an appetite for the well-doing of the rest of the family; so that she soon pronounced the meal at an end, much to the discomfiture of the old lady, who seemed to fear, were the dainties left untouched, they might suddenly fall into the hands of the famished-looking Judy, who figured behind her chair, attired most fantastically in some of the cast-off wardrobe of her mistress, Susan.

A bell rang, and Susan, who thought it very probable that the French hair-dresser should make a miscalculation and come two hours before his time, hastily left the table. Alfred arose, and leaning over Anna, who was staring into vacancy, exclaimed as he locked his arms round her neck, "Oh, Anna, my own sweet sister, I know I could not bear to be present — I am very sorry to leave you by yourself, but I could never control my feelings, and for worlds I would not make you more conspicuous — But I will come again to you when it is all over." And he burst into a fresh flood of tears. "Oh Anna, Anna! If something could only be done — Oh, if father could only come now before twelve o'clock — and indeed, Anna, I have prayed as I never did before, and who knows but that it may be answered even at the very extremity? And yet we have not three hours to hope. Oh Anna, may God bless you and save you from this awful calamity!" And again kissing the cold cheek, he flew up stairs, and locked himself in the solitude of his little chamber.

Anna stood in her room to take a last survey of the small apartment in which she had passed many weary hours during so many years. Everything seemed to speak, as she looked upon them for the last time, and when her eye fell upon the vacancy over the fire-place, she remembered that there was one object in her new home, that she could love — her mother's portrait; and it seemed in a degree to reconcile her to the house. Yet a feeling of home pervaded this little chamber in which she now stood, whose power she could not resist. How often when a child had she poured out her heart there by herself, and here too, she would often resort to breathe a prayer for herself or for Alfred. But now she must leave it to take up her abode in that house from which her soul revolted. It was a time again to kneel, and seeking pardon for all moments lost or misspent within its walls, she pleaded for grace to discharge aright the duties of the future.

The door was shaken violently, and a very familiar voice exclaimed in a loud tone,—

"Come, Anna, it's time to dress! Sally Pyke is here, and the French hair-dresser has come. Make haste!"

Anna had no sooner opened her door, than she was dragged rather than led by the impatient Susan to her room, where a meagre little Frenchman sat looking out from a window, while in another corner Miss Pyke was busily occupied arranging a head-dress of black velvet and sun-flowers, upon the crown of Mrs. Gilbert, although the poor old lady declared she was already sweltered under the weight of it. Miss Pyke, however, paid no attention to the sighing of her victim, but pronounced her "fit to be seen," and marched to the window to display before the astonished eyes of the little Frenchman a costume which must have reminded him of Joseph's coat, had he ever heard of such a garment. There was an under skirt of silk which, in by-gone days, was most probably called yellow, over which was a shorter of red gauze, and upon this, white and black lace festooned with ribbons of every hue. Then a bodice of green velvet enlaced by a blue and silver cord, adorned the waist; and lace which appeared to have been laid aside for several centuries, covered the neck and arms, while to a head-dress of crimson beads was attached a white veil that reached to the floor. But Susan, for whom the dress-makers and milliners had been busily occupied for many weeks, was less singularly attired. A dress of a rich pink watered silk that fitted well the round, corpulent figure, was covered with a fall of costly lace, and although in accordance with her own orders, the little Frenchman had braided her hair much in the form of two wings, still as her veil was quite small her costume was altogether less absurd than that of her friend.

"Now Anna, sit down here," and Susan pushed a chair towards her, "and Anna, keep upright, and Mr. What's-his-name will begin." As she spoke, she glanced at the hair-dresser, who immediately sprang to his feet, and was soon at the side of Anna, loosening the flaxen tresses which from long neglect had grown to a considerable length. At last the expert little fingers of the Frenchman had arranged the hair to the entire satisfaction of the two who stood watching every movement, and the robe of white tarlatan was put on. The long lace veil had been most tastefully trimmed with orange blossoms by the women, and attached to a small wreath of white roses which was now adjusted upon the drooping head, the gloves put on, and the whole trousseau completed.

"Susan," said Miss Pyke in a low tone, as she fixed her eyes upon Anna, "what do you think of her? It seems to me her mind is giving way, and I'm afraid we're both committing a sin that we shall have to answer for!"

"Nonsense! What a poor nervous thing you are. Let us give her some wine and bathe her head with cologne!"

The cup was held to her lips, and Anna drank. The two took her between them, Mrs. Gilbert followed behind, and they descended to the parlor.

Several guests were seated in the room, and as the group entered, every eye was fixed upon the costume of Miss Pyke, but it was only for a moment, then all present gazed intently upon the marble countenance of Anna, so truly suggestive of the words,

"I wore my bridal robe, but I rivalled its whiteness,"

while the settled expression of intense suffering was vividly depicted in every feature; but the large, blue eyes were staring into vacancy, and she appeared wholly indifferent to everything passing around her. Very little was said, except in whispers one to another, as they commented upon the remarkable appearance of Anna. Miss Pyke, seated in the centre of the room, employed the time in arranging the veil which she drew round herself, until only her face remained uncovered, then as if exhausted by the exertion, reclined in the large arm chair, and fanned herself with indefatigable assiduity, while Susan stationed herself at a window watching impatiently for Mr. Barrow's carriage, which, according to appointment, was to convey the mother and son hither to meet the bride elect previous to their departure for the church.

"What can keep the tiresome old creature!" escaped her as she turned to Miss Pyke.

"Oh, my dear, you know he is subject to the spasms, and most probably a sudden fit of them has detained him; or perhaps his gout is so much worse to-day, that he cannot be lifted into his carriage; certainly one of the thousand ailments of the poor little man has prevented his coming."

"No such thing, Sally Pyke," returned Susan, forgetting in her vehemence that there were several guests present. "Here's the carriage! Yes, now he is coming." And as she finished speaking, it drove up to the door.

Mrs. Barrow was assisted up the steps, and into the parlor.

"But where's he?" began Susan, without regarding the hand of the old lady which was extended towards her.

Why hasn't he come? You're no use without him. What's the matter? Make haste and tell me!"

As well as her infirmities permitted, the poor old lady tottered to a seat, Susan took her stand before her, and demanded a speedy account of her son's absence. But the more Susan hastened her to tell, the more confused she became; and the clock struck one before they could understand that the little gentleman had started early the previous day for New York, to solicit the services of an old schoolmate as groomsman.

"Well," said Susan, "I never heard of anything like it, and yet I might have known the stupid old fellow would be sure to make some outrageous blunder!"

"But my dear Susan," and Miss Pyke tapped her on the shoulder with her fan, "don't you think it probable that Mr. Barrow, when he found himself belated, went immediately to the church, and is waiting there for us?"

"Very true, Sally Pyke; he is without doubt at the church, parson and all, awaiting our appearance. Let us go! But where's your father? doesn't he understand that he is to give Anna away?"

"Oh, yes, my dear; and I left him shaving for the occasion. See, there he is sitting on the stairs." She then turned to the white-headed old gentleman, and continued, "come, father, we're going; oh, you only fancy you have the rheumatism, make haste!"

Susan and Miss Pyke again took Anna between them; and led her down the steps to the carriage, into which they lifted her, then pushed rather than placed Mr. Pyke into the seat opposite her, and ordered the coachman to drive to the church. The two bridesmaids entered the next carriage, the two old ladies the third, a few others followed, and the procession arrived at the door of the sacred edifice.

A crowd thronged the pavement, as the news that the singular Barrow would now be married, had spread like wild-fire, and it seemed as though all the neighborhood had gathered to learn the truth of the report.

The two bridesmaids alighted.

"Where is Anna?" inquired Susan, looking haughtily upon the crowd of bystanders. "Sally, where's your father?"

"Here I am, ma'am; I thought Miss Anna was here—I was just going to assist her out when I heard my daughter call me, and as I am hen-pecked when I don't obey, I made all haste to get to you. Miss Anna must have gone into the church."

"Mr. Pyke, I think you are a very stupid old man!" and Susan shook violently the arm of the old gentleman.

"As awkward as a bear,—get out of my sight."

"Miss Gilbert, it is quite a long time since I was married!"

An assertion which none of the hearers doubted when they looked at his daughter, and remembered he had been wedded but once. But Susan was in no humor to listen to an apology, and hastened into the church, where the venerable clergyman was standing waiting at the chancel.

"O! Anna is not here; where can she be!"

"The bride is in the carriage!" said some one, and upon going back to it, they found Anna seated as they had placed her. The bridesmaids now took her by the arms, and almost carried her into the church.

"Now wait with her here," said Susan, "while I fetch that old Barrow, I see him sitting in that first pew there,—the old heathen!"

She went up the aisle to the figure, and pulling him by the collar, said, in a very loud whisper, "come, sir, make haste!" The head turned round, and she saw it was not the little old man she sought. She then gazed round the church until satisfied she had discovered in the corner of a pew, the object of her search, and quickly returned to the porch, where Mr. Pyke and his daughter were supporting Anna, and said,—

"He is there, come, march properly up the aisle."

She saw Anna needed a strong arm, and pushing aside Mr. Pyke, placed her once again between herself and her friend, and led her towards the altar.

The church was crowded, and numbers thronged the aisles. To her dismay, Susan found she had the second time mistaken a stranger for the bridegroom, and now with a countenance wholly perplexed, attempted to penetrate the dense assembly. Most of the congregation now arose to learn what caused the delay; suddenly a figure pressed through the crowd and passed up the aisle; when it reached the altar they recognized Alfred.

As Anna saw him she started, and extending her arms towards him, attempted to make one bound to where he stood, but Susan prevented it. Alfred now approached, and pushing her aside, seized Anna's dress with avidity and exclaimed,—

"Oh, Anna, he has really lost them! Not one but both his legs! Oh, happy, happy Anna!"

She fell upon his neck, but the exertion she had made to reach him was too much for her strength, a blood-vessel had burst, and in a moment the bridal dress was crimson, she let go her embrace, and fell to the floor.

## CHAPTER XXI.

"This wretched brain gave way,  
And I became a wreck, at random driven,  
Without one glimpse of reason or of heaven."

THE decline of the day brought a reprieve to the duties of the matron, and the affectionate Carlotta had led her to the quiet of their little parlor, to soothe if not to cheer the anxious parent who now began to dread the dark clouds that seemed impending over the future. Charles now declared himself quite recovered, although his appearance was no index of health, and purposed to leave on the morrow for Belgium, where he anticipated joining a surveyor, who had partly offered him an engagement near Brussels. Their precarious mode of living, his series of disappointments, together with ill health, had damped his spirits, and while the widow sat brooding over her fears, the door was suddenly thrown open, and Charles bounding into the room, exclaimed in an ecstasy of joy, "News from La Belle!" and kneeling before them, presented a letter bearing the Halle postmark. Fearing it was a demand for the payment of the debt, for which they were ill prepared, the anxious mother opened it tremblingly. It was a short note, and ran thus —

"My dear sister-in-law: — It is my painful duty to state that father died yesterday; the will is to be read on Thursday, and as there might possibly be a trifle for your children, you had better come.

Yours truly,

ELIZA VILLIERS."

There are sometimes few emotions more conducive to pain than the fluctuations of hope, and the widow fearing to rejoice upon so uncertain a foundation, and unwilling to check the delight with which the invitation was received by the dear ones who now clung to her, she repaired to her chamber, while Charles penned a letter to Lydia, replete with the outpourings of his elated soul, and closing with a most unbounded enthusiasm, as he reminded her of the event of the wreath; and then in rather a serio-comic style, filled a postscript with a lamentation upon the death of the old gentleman, the uncertainty of life, and sundry other non-important effusions of his wit and humor, although it was evident from a remark he added, how deeply he felt the cold, unfeeling epistle of their aunt, and in what contempt he regarded her, although he said but little on the subject.

"Who can that be sitting there in the rain?" said Lydia, as she stood one afternoon watching from a window the flashes of lightning that darted from the dark heavens. "See! in the grounds adjoining ours there sits a female figure in a garden chair, as if unconscious of the rain. Do come!" continued she to a young lady at the other end of the room. "Who can it be!"

"Oh, did you not know before this, Miss Villiers," said the young lady as she came to the window, "that those are the grounds belonging to yonder building? As far as you can see, is the garden of the Lunatic Asylum, and I suppose that poor creature is one of the unfortunate inmates; probably she has wandered from her companions, and lost herself."

"Oh dreadful! But can we do nothing for her? Look at the long tresses that hang in dishevelment over the thin shoulders. See, she shudders, and with what violence the storm is now raging. Oh, she will take her death of cold! Do let us go to her, poor thing!"

"Oh no, you cannot! you must not leave during school hours, without permission from Madame, and I know she has too little sympathy for the unfortunate, to allow any one to go. So its no use to try."

"What! will no one help you, poor woman?" said Lydia, as her tears started. "I am going," continued she, turning to her companion, "I cannot wait for permission."

"Oh, but now she is rising to go, and before you could get round that large garden she will be safe in the house."

"Do look, see how weak she is, she can scarcely walk; oh how very sad!"

"I know it is very awful," rejoined her companion indifferently. "But while I think of it — are you aware that Signorina is to be sent away to-morrow?"

"Sent away! For what?"

"I will tell you. As soon as we are all soundly asleep, she leaves her bed, and goes out at all hours of the night. Madame has seen her walking on the piazzas at midnight, and heard her talking to some one in the garden below, and what is worse than all this, she denies the charge."

"Certainly she is ignorant of it, — the poor girl is a somnambulist."

"But Madame will not believe it, although she confessed upon her knees that she was innocent of the gross accusations."

"Oh, I'm sure I could convince Madame, for I have watched her very closely;" and leaving the room, Lydia descended to the parlor of Madame de Florigni.

In the centre of the room upon the floor, was the poor Signorina, bathed in tears, while in an agony of wild despair she clung to the dress of Madame, and entreated to be allowed to remain a few days longer. Throwing herself between the angry woman and the unhappy girl, Lydia pleaded long and earnestly in her defence; but Madame spurned the poor somnambulist from her, as though she had been the victim of some loathsome malady, and unmoved by the tears and entreaties of the sorrowing Lydia, ordered the wretched Italian girl to leave immediately, and extricating herself from the grasp that would fain have held her, she hastily left the room. Lydia followed her, and begged her to allow the unfortunate Signorina to stay at least until the storm had abated.

"Miss Villiers," answered the lady with an angry frown, "go to your duties, and leave me to mine."

Hoping Madame would relent, Lydia passed up stairs, and was entering a lobby when she was met by Signorina, who clasping her in her arms, loaded her with thanks for her kindness, until hearing the footsteps of Madame, gave a last hurried kiss, and was gone. The hours in the school-room dragged wearily away, and as soon as she was free, Lydia went in search of Signorina, but to her disappointment was told that in the midst of the storm, while the rain fell in torrents, the poor, unprotected girl had taken her departure.

"Come, Miss Villiers," said one of the children, "the storm is over, the upper walks are dry, and we are going out for the air."

Lydia took the hand of the little girl, and accompanied them on their promenade, until the sky began to lower, and to shorten their journey homeward, some of them proposed making a circuit through a shrubbery that lay between the grounds of the school and those adjoining. It was quite a sequestered spot, around which the foliage clustered so thickly that it was impossible to discern any object through the leaves.

"Listen! What is that?" said one who led the way. They paused, and the sweet, soft notes of a silvery voice arose on the still air.

"It is a female voice," said one of the ladies who accompanied them, "and without doubt it is one of the poor ladies from the asylum."

The voice seemed very familiar to Lydia, and spell-bound to the spot, she listened again. A sweet, plaintive air from one of the Italian operas, floated in a low murmur on the breeze; then followed a gradual crescendo, and the intonation, though

light, was clear, round and full; there was a deep expression in every rippling strain, and whoever she might be, she sung with much feeling. The voice became fainter and fainter, and at last the echo died away. Passing on, they came to an opening between the branches, through which could be seen one of the most secluded portions of the adjoining grounds. A female form emerged from a cluster of trees, and flitted to the other end of the garden: the figure was exceedingly slender, and wore a black robe that was caught up round the waist by a thin wreathing of myrtle; dark, glossy tresses hung disorderly over the shoulders, while a wreath of small flowers, tastefully arranged, encircled the brow; but the face was averted, and could she have discerned the countenance, Lydia felt confident she should not have recognized one familiar feature, for she was not acquainted with a form so slender and delicate; still there was something in that voice, together with the air it had sung, that haunted her as perfectly familiar.

On their return, a little note was handed to Lydia; she found it to be from a child, who, having been suddenly taken ill, had been sent home; she now sent word to Lydia that she was dying, and desired to see her. During her short stay, Lydia had become much attached to the little girl, and as soon as she was free from the school-room, hastened to the home of the sick child. She found her very low of a fever, and was told by the afflicted parents that their darling Hermime was unconscious of whatever was passing around her. But as Lydia's name was mentioned, the full eyes opened, and the little arms were clasped round her neck; and as she leaned over her, the faint voice exclaimed,—

"Oh! Mademoiselle parlez moi encore du Seigneur je me sens — mourir — je vous quitte — oh ma mere — adieu!"

The shades of the evening were beginning to fall as they knelt round the bed of the dying, and remembering the severity of Madame de Florigni, Lydia stole softly from the group, and found her way into the street again. Having pursued her lonely way some distance, she found she had exceeded her time, and was still far from the public road; her nearest route lay across a little cemetery that stood at her left; the gates were not yet closed, and regardless of the gloom that pervaded the lonely place, she entered, and with rapid steps pressed on. Day-light had departed, and to an imagination free from superstition, there is, at this hour especially, a holy serenity, a sacred peace hovering over the resting-place of the departed. There sleep calmly those whose names for good or for evil, will remain indelible

upon the sands of time. There rest the unfortunate, perchance the despised; those who lived only to be loved, and those who loved without one interchange of a mutual feeling. Here the lofty have laid low their aspirations, the humble their toils, and the arrogant their pride; here the same sunbeam, and the same shadows fall upon the friend and the foe who wrestle no more, but side by side, with the forgotten and the stranger, sleep calmly the slumber of the sepulchre.

Having wound her way into the centre of the grounds, and being unacquainted with the paths, Lydia paused to consider in what direction she should proceed, and as she stood undetermined, a low moaning reached her ear. She listened, it was the sound of a human voice, and doubtless that of some one weeping. Deciding upon a path she believed would lead her in the right direction, she continued on her lonely way; the further she proceeded, the nearer came the sound, until, approaching a newly made mound, she beheld a figure wrapped in a cloak, kneeling beside it; the face was buried in the sod, while the extended arms clasped the grave, and in broken accents came the words,

"Oh come back, for I am wretched; return to me or I die!"

Unwilling that the mourner should know any one had witnessed her sorrow, Lydia passed quickly into another path, and noiselessly continued on her way.

Soon the sound of rapid footsteps fell upon her listening ear, and she became startled as she found they came nearer. She turned, and to her dismay, beheld the figure she had seen before, running as if in pursuance of her. It was attired in a long skirt or cloak, while on the head was a sort of cap, from which was suspended a black veil that concealed the face. Terrified almost to the loss of her self-possession, Lydia retreated behind a cluster of trees, hoping that the intruder, whether man or woman, would soon pass her by; but as if aware of her hiding-place, it stopped at the spot, and turned towards her. It viewed her for a moment, then the arms were extended, and clasping them round the waist of Lydia, and jumping upon her, forced her to the ground. Low sounds as ejaculations of some one in ecstasies too great for words, escaped from under the long veil, while feverish lips impressed kiss after kiss upon her forehead. Then the veil was uplifted, but the face! and a cold tremor ran over Lydia as she beheld it. The countenance was thin and deadly pale, the eyes though glaring wildly were sunken in the sockets, while the features were emaciated to sharpness, and every bone was visible through the transparent skin. It cer-

tainly was a female, and whoever it might be, it was but too evident that the poor woman had been a great sufferer, while the wasted limbs resembled those of a skeleton rather than one belonging to the living. A noise like the clanking of chains, disturbed the dead silence, and heavy footsteps were heard approaching. The wretched looking female started, and trembling violently, exclaimed as if in great terror, "Here he comes! I see him, oh save me!" and she clung still closer to Lydia, who for a while could see no one, till the sound came nearer; and a man wearing round his waist a belt from which was suspended a quantity of massive keys, came towards them. At the sight of him, the poor creature uttered such a shriek as to pierce the inmost soul, and starting up while she continued her cries, she ran wildly in another direction, until the monuments hid her from view.

The man now approached, and Lydia's heart being touched in pity for the unfortunate whose cries were still borne upon the breeze, she emerged from her seclusion, and placing herself before him, inquired,—

"Oh, who is that poor woman? please tell me!"

"Why, did she frighten you?" inquired he with an indifferent smile, that played over the harsh features, "oh, she's one of our poor patients, we let her wander about for the air, but I forgot it was full moon and that she'd require extra watching. But dear me! I do believe she has taken the road to the precipice," and he ran quickly in the same direction.

Night had set in, and on Lydia's return she found the lamps had been long lighted, and dreaded a reprimand from Madame, but fortunately did not happen to encounter that lady, and passed unnoticed to her room. She had a project in view, and unhappy as was the impression which her adventure in the cemetery had left upon her, still she endeavored to overcome it sufficiently to put her plan into execution. Accordingly, the easel was placed where the lamp-light would fall full upon it, the brushes arranged, and having pictured to her fancy the countenance of the child she had that afternoon visited, she sat down to begin the work, that she might send to the afflicted parents the portrait of the beloved little girl whose likeness they did not possess.

The outline was drawn upon the canvas to her satisfaction, and the first touches given, when the bell rang for prayers.

"This is not mine, whose can it be?" said she to herself as she began to examine a handkerchief she had just taken up. "I must have picked it up some where this afternoon by mis-

take." On viewing it more closely, she found a name in one corner, she went nearer to the light to read it, and there, plainly legible before the astonished eyes of the agonized Lydia, in small round characters — B. E. SAUVESTRE.

Again the bell rang for Lydia, but she heard it not; and it was not until Madame stood before her, that she was conscious of the hour. For the first time since the death of her father, she was completely unnerved and overwhelmed, so that she was lost to all that passed around her.

"Come, Miss Villiers," said Madame, as she lifted the weeping Lydia from the floor, "have you received any letters to-day?"

"Not any, Madame."

"Has any person been to see you?"

"No, Madame."

"Then your grief can have no substantial foundation, and let me see no more of it, I have no patience with the nonsense young girls are so fond of falling into; I know it is some folly of yours, — come and join in the prayers, and repent of such empty vanity which so ill becomes you;" and she left the unhappy Lydia to the solitude of her grief.

"Oh, Beatrice, Beatrice!" exclaimed she in her agony, "and your Lydia did not know you! You could recognize me, but I could not return your embrace. Oh, my poor Beatrice! and how great must have been your sufferings to have so altered you, that I could discern no resemblance! Beloved girl, how much you have been called upon to bear, — alone in the world, a stranger, and — a maniac!"

"Miss Villiers, you are ill," said a maid, as she stood by her bedside, the next morning.

"Oh, no!" replied Lydia, with an effort to rise, "I don't know what makes me so heavy this fine morning; it must be very late."

"But you must have been quite ill during the night, Miss, for you have been quite delirious, and calling to us to take you to some one."

"Oh, I have not rested well, but I am very sorry to have disturbed you; please leave me now, I shall soon be dressed."

Lydia was about to leave the room, when there came a knock at the door, and the stately figure of Madame de Florigni entered.

"Miss Villiers, I demand an explanation of your conduct;" she fixed her penetrative black eyes upon Lydia, and paused a moment as if to read her inmost thoughts, then continued, "Give

me some satisfactory reason for your behavior during the night, or my patience will be exhausted."

Lydia sunk into a chair, and with tearful eyes gazed into the countenance of Madame: she would willingly have told all, of the beautiful Beatrice, and the suffering lunatic, but there was no sympathy, no kind feeling in the expression of that face; only a cold rigidity — a settled severity — an unrelenting suspicion, rested upon the harsh features. She rose from her seat, and standing before the erect figure, said with a respectful dignity, "Madame, pardon me if I have given offence, I will immediately return to my duties in the school-room, and shall hope never to merit your displeasure again."

She turned away, and Madame, as if repenting of her indignation, replied, —

"Miss Villiers, so long as you conduct yourself as the noble and trustworthy young lady you have ever been hitherto, you will never cease to have my highest esteem, but remember my words, as soon as a girl allows herself to fall into the meshes of love, she may expect to suffer for it at some time."

Lydia was about to add a remark, but Madame was gone.

It was with painful regret that Lydia was obliged to conclude she could do nothing for the present in regard to the unfortunate Beatrice, for she knew it to be of paramount importance to keep Charles ignorant of the unhappy discovery; his passionate love for Beatrice, his indifferent health, so unsuited to bear the least excitement, their extreme poverty, and the present perturbed state of his mind, each was sufficient reason for keeping it a secret until she knew him to be safe in Belgium, and out of reach of her letters, when she could open her full heart to her sympathizing mother, and obtain her counsel for the best mode of proceeding in regard to the case of the beloved girl. Several days passed, during which she was too unwell to leave the house, and although her attention was constantly directed to the massive stone walls of the asylum that towered in majestic stateliness above the neighboring hills, she never again caught a glimpse of any of its inmates. However, the little portrait could not be neglected, and during several successive afternoons, whenever she had an hour unoccupied, she worked busily at the easel.

"Miss Villiers, something for you," said a little girl one morning, as she ran towards her, eager to be first in performing any little office for the young instructress whom they had soon learned to love, — "Here is a letter."

It was that epistle from Charles, containing the outpourings

of his enthusiastic spirit; and every joyous expression seemed he index of a heart full to overflowing, while at the same time, it required her to hold herself in readiness to accompany him home on the following day, that they might start for La Belle to be present at the reading of the will. Now, to obtain permission from Madame, Lydia knew would be no easy or pleasant task, and anxious to have it granted at once, she summoned fresh resolution, and descended as soon as school hours were over, to the parlor of Madame de Florigni.

The sharp and imperative "Entrez" answered her gentle tap, and she stood once again before the scrutinizing glance of the piercing black eyes. She stated her mission, and finding Madame made no reply, again inquired, "Please, may I go, Madame?"

"Yes, for a short time, a long time, or for altogether and for good if you choose; of course while you are away, if only for a day, your salary is deducted. I expect, like that Italian girl, you have some project in your mind, and have no idea of returning, only you will not be candid enough to tell me so. I could plainly see of late that your head was turned like that foolish Signorina's, who was forever writing to some lieutenant who cared nothing at all for her; and I know perfectly well you never mean to come back, and you need not take the trouble, as I shall lessen my expenses this winter. I will give you your salary, and you can go as soon as you like. There! seventy-five francs, that is right, I believe, for the time you have been here. Good-by, Miss Villiers;" and Madame walked out of the room.

Pained and disappointed, Lydia stood as one petrified; to have been so misunderstood, that her word was not relied upon, seemed more than she could bear; but the inspiriting words of the joyous Charles came to her relief, and finding she stood alone in the middle of the floor, she took up the money and left the room.

That evening the little portrait was finished, placed in a wrapper and sent to its destination; Lydia passed a restless night, and early the following day, accompanied the delighted Charles towards her beloved home, and was glad to find he still adhered to a former resolution of his,— never to introduce the subject of the missing Beatrice; and although her thoughts ran continually upon that poor sufferer, she endeavored to appear interested in the conversation of Charles, who seemed determined her journey should know no monotony; and as was his custom on such occasions, he constantly made some captivating tale out of noth-

ing. Lydia wished to learn the state of his feelings towards Hermann, whom they must shortly meet under rather painful circumstances, and was not only pleasingly disappointed, but quite satisfied to find him in that respect perfectly unselfish and charitable.

It was Thursday morning at La Belle. The tapestry hangings in the spacious, old-fashioned drawing-room were so arranged as to admit only a few rays of light, and as the apartment was deeply shaded, a feeling of awe seemed to pervade it; towards the centre stood the coffin that contained the corpse of Sir Charles, while a domestic, the only living form in the room, sat at the feet. The hour of twelve was tolled by the clock in the tower, the door opened, and Miss Eliza, Mrs. Villers, Charles, Lydia and Carlotta entered, followed by Hermann, Fritzine and others, and took their seats; then came the lawyers, witnesses, and the retinue of the household, until the room was filled. Not a whisper was heard, but a breathless silence pervaded that large assembly; a desk was unlocked, a scroll lifted from its hiding-place, a tall gentleman in black arose, and taking the paper, stood at the head of the coffin, and read as follows,—

"In the Name of God, Amen. I, Charles Frederick Villiers of La Belle, in the province of Halle, being of sound mind and memory, and considering the uncertainty of this frail and transitory life, do therefore make, ordain, publish and declare this to be my last will and testament; that is to say, first, after all my lawful debts are paid and discharged, my estate real and personal, I give, bequeath and dispose of as follows, to wit: to my grandson Charles F. Villiers, the estate known and designated as La Belle, together with two hundred shares in the capital stock of the Halle bank, and six hundred thousand thalers. But in the case of his decease the whole of the aforesaid will pass into the possession of Hermann Rosdt Deufstandten. To my daughter Eliza, two thousand thalers a year as long as she shall remain unmarried. To my granddaughter, Lydia Frances Villiers, my town residence in Berlin. To her sister, Carlotta Villiers, her choice of three sets of my plate. To the institution for infirm bachelors, the sum of three thousand thalers. To my valet, Thomas Mark, seven hundred thalers, and my red dressing gown, Turkish cap and wig. To the chaplain of my estate, all the religious books in my library. To my housekeeper, good Mrs. Summers, ten thousand thalers and my favorite cat; to every other servant now in my employ, five thousand thalers. And I give, bequeath and devise all the rest, residue and re-

mainder of my personal estate to the crown of Prussia, as a token of my loyalty to my sovereign.—

Here a rustling of dresses and a subdued cry from the lips of the pale Lydia, drew the attention to the other end of the room where Charles stood supporting the widow, who had fainted. She was carried into the open air, and being assured by the children who stood round her, that what she had heard was real and true, was at last restored.

But the house that contained Hermann and Fritzine was no place of quiet for the widow, and her children who were unaccustomed to harsh words, were glad to take leave of La Belle until they should enter its walls as its future occupants.

## CHAPTER XXII.

"Look through those bars! It is a prison cell.  
See there that youth, and say, canst thou behold  
Ought that's not honest, trustworthy and true?  
Penetrate the depths of those full eyes,  
And tell me, canst thou there discern of fraud?  
Why is he here?"

ANNA lay for several days apparently lifeless; Mrs. Gilbert, who believed her lingering upon the verge of the grave, had too great a dread of death to allow herself ever to enter the room, but she went about the house speaking in whispers, and hushing every sound, while Alfred kept constant vigil at the bed-side of the sick girl. Susan said very little, but remained in a sullen humor ever since the eventful day, and for a wonder, nothing was seen of Miss Pyke, for although she was most curious to learn "how the poor little man could possibly have lost both his legs," still she declared herself too much overcome by the shock she had received, to venture out; accordingly, Mr. Pyke was sent as soon as the weather permitted, to inquire into the query, and at last returned with the tidings that as Mr. Barrow was on his way to New York, a collision occurred upon the railroad; several were killed, many lost their limbs, and among other valuables that were missing, were the legs of Robert Barrow, Esq.

"Susan, for pity's sake don't talk any more of turning them into the street!" entreated Mrs. Gilbert, one day, after having heard the physician say that Anna was not yet out of danger; "I should be afraid to go to sleep and not know where they were. And Susan, if Anna dies, I shall always feel that we were the cause of it."

"Well, I don't care what you do, as long as you don't tease me about them, and all I have to say is, that you are not going to spend any money upon them, for I want all I can get for myself; and when Anna recovers, we need not have a Judy, as she can do all the housework again, and of course Alfred will pay you the whole of his salary; so they can both stay here as long as they don't interfere with me, but as soon as they do, mind, out they will go."

"Very well, then I'll just go and open the door and tell Anna, for perhaps the poor girl is dying, and the comforting words may save her."

Anna lingered for several weeks, while a slow fever wrought its work of debility, and was expected hourly to terminate fatally; but she was not intended for the tomb thus early,—she had much to learn of life which now awaited her, and by degrees arose to take her place again among the duties of the living.

The afternoon was rainy; and although it was early for Alfred's return, Anna could not be mistaken in the foot-fall upon the steps; she was ready in the entry to take the wet coat, and as she shook it she exclaimed,—

"There's something very heavy in one of the pockets. Why Alfred, what a singular looking key!"

"I'm sure I don't know how it came there, and it certainly is the key of our safe."

"Oh, do take it back immediately, in case some trouble should come of it!"

"My dear Anna, if it is the right key of the safe, it is sure to be locked, so that no thieves and robbers can enter therein," returned Alfred, playfully, "besides, to-morrow will be time enough to take it back, I wish to finish a very interesting book this afternoon before tea-time; but of course, Anna, you must always have so many fears for me about nothing."

The following day came, and at the same hour Anna looked again for Alfred's return, but no Alfred came; tea was over, Susan went to pay a visit to Miss Pyke to ascertain what the Autumn fashions would be, and returned, and with the old lady retired for the night, leaving Anna in anxious suspense waiting for Alfred. Ten, eleven o'clock, still he came not: the night was dark and foggy, the lights in the streets burned dimly, and nothing could be discerned from the window. The old-fashioned clock on the stairs struck the hour of midnight, and yet found her pacing the floor of her room, unable to control the agitation which her fears for his safety had excited. At last the weak and exhausted frame sunk upon the floor, and the weary Anna

fell into a heavy slumber. The light of the dawn stole in upon the sleeper, and as by intuitive impulse, she arose and descended to the kitchen to make preparations for the morning meal. At the usual hour, the cap and curl-papers of Mrs. Gilbert made their appearance, and by the time she had put the usual small quantity of tea to draw, Susan entered, and having waited for Anna to put her chair in its accustomed place, took her seat at the table.

"So that tiresome fellow did not find his way home all night," said Mrs. Gilbert, after a long pause, during which time she sat with her hands crossed, heaving a succession of sighs. "Anna, I think you had better go to Mrs. Barrow's, and ask the way to the Merchant's Exchange, so that you may inquire there what has become of him. Don't you think so, Susan?"

But Susan was in one of her sullen humors just then, and thought of nothing but her own grievances, and finding no answer came from that quarter, the old lady added, "Yes, Anna, you had better go."

Having completed her task as maid in Susan's dressing-room, Anna repaired to the domicile of Robert Barrow, Esq.

It could not be said that Mrs. Barrow looked any the worse for her son's misfortune, probably from the reason that she never had any appearance but of one just tottering into the grave; however, to Anna's inquiry of her son, she replied with a degree of sprightliness, "Very badly my dear, very badly indeed, but it will cheer the poor fellow to see you, for he often calls out for you in his sleep."

Anna stated her errand there that morning, but the old lady paid little attention, and continued to urge her to visit the chamber of her son; and at last, out of pity to the poor old lady, Anna complied, and followed her guide to a room where, stretched upon the bed, was the helpless Barrow. To her great disappointment, she found the loquacity of the little man was not weakened, for he continued to talk of his lamentable fate, how the shock of his misfortune had been the cause of her illness, and that she must endeavor to keep up her spirits until he was well again, when the ceremony certainly would take place. He then requested her to come nearer to his bed-side, but Anna, who had comforted herself with the idea that his odious caresses were at an end forever, having obtained the necessary information, left the little man to himself, and made her way out of the house, just as Miss Kate Danvers was passing the door.

"Oh, Anna! you've been to see that miserable old machine of a Barrow! How can you leave the house, and Alfred in

such trouble? We all feel very sorry for him, it must have been the influence of bad companions, he never looked as one who could do anything so base. But what's the matter with you? how strange you look! You know they are not likely to imprison him for life.

But Anna heard no more, she had darted off in the direction of the Exchange.

As soon as Alfred reached his office on the previous morning, he was immediately sent out upon some important business, and forgot all about the key. Some time after, one of the firm, on going to the safe, found it unlocked, and some thousands of dollars, together with checks to a considerable amount, missing.

Business was suspended, and a general search made, but without finding any clue to the robber. Later in the day Alfred entered, was searched and — the key found upon him.

That night a prison cell fettered the form of the noble youth, who would rather have suffered death, than have stooped to the crime of an embezzler.

It was morning in the world without, but through the grating of that prison cell came no bright beam to cast a ray of hope on that sorrow-stricken soul; for the light of heaven might scarcely be said to exist there, except, that ever and anon one gleam stole into the narrow abode, and fell upon a small iron bedstead containing a mattress that had remained undisturbed during the night, a shelf, on which stood some untouched food, and a wooden stool that supported the figure of a youth, whose head rested against the wall, while the thin hands concealed the features. No sound broke the stillness of that cell, until the heavy tread of the warden might be heard approaching the door, a key was placed in the lock, the door opened, and a female figure entered. She approached him, but he moved not, she knelt before him, and clasping the cold limbs, wrapped them in the folds of her mantle, exclaiming, "Oh, Alfred, are you dead? Speak to me!"

No answer came to the agonized Anna, she uttered a shriek, the limbs moved, and the eyelids heavy with sleep, opened to fill with tears as they beheld before them all that was dear on earth, all that could point him to Heaven.

"Oh Anna! Anna!" and the aching head fell upon her bosom, while the sobs choked his utterance. Her cold hands brushed aside the locks that clustered upon his brow, and she endeavored to speak, but the power had failed, and tears only came to her relief.

"Oh, Anna, if we two could but die this moment;" and he

clung closer to the trembling form, while they mingled their tears together. "Anna, this disgrace is more than I can bear, and but for you I would willingly be hanged at once; I know you have no one in the wide world beside me!" and a cold, thin hand was placed upon each cheek, while the icy lips were nervously pressed upon her forehead. And Anna, there is no one in the world to believe me innocent but you, my poor, lonely sister, for you know there is no poverty that could tempt me, no wretchedness that could prompt me to such a crime!"

"But Alfred, whatever we are called upon to suffer in the body, cannot destroy the soul. Remember the words 'He shall deliver thee in six troubles, yea, in seven there shall no evil touch thee.' 'I the Lord thy God will hold thy right hand, saying unto thee, Fear not, I will help thee.' And 'We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.' Besides, Alfred, 'He hath not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted;' but has also said, 'I am the Lord thy God, which teacheth thee to profit, which leadeth thee by the way that thou shouldest go,' and 'As thy days, so shall thy strength be.' For true and faithful is the promise, 'When thou passest through the waters I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee; when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned, neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.' And you know whatever may be the trial, it is intended for our good, For he will not lay upon man more than right,' and hath declared 'As many as I love I rebuke and chasten, and 'What I do, thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter.'"

They knelt; and clasping the chill form of Alfred, the fervent petition for his deliverance from the ignominy of the present hour, arose from a heart full to overflowing.

The door opened, it was a signal for her departure, and Alfred must be left again to the solitude of his cell.

Day dawned upon Philadelphia, it was the morning of the trial. The long, weary hours of a sleepless night had at last passed away, and now, within those narrow limits, enfeebled by close confinement, and nervous from the low state of his system, the youth sat pale and trembling, while the strong desire to rest fearless and undaunted upon his innocence, only increased his agony as he found his physical strength inadequate to this. He endeavored to look within himself, but there only a chaos of ideas, which puzzled and perplexed him. Half instinctively, partly in obedience to an impulse that urged him to the act, he

bent the knee, and raised the thin hands as in supplication; but words came not, yet the assurance of a divine presence threw a holy influence over that benighted soul; in silence the spirit was uplifted, and the whole being was calmed and refreshed. He arose, his agitation was much allayed, and his thoughts more collected; as he turned, he beheld Anna kneeling beside him. Few sentences were spoken that morning, tears said more than words, for a bell sounded, and an embrace as if to be the last, was all; then the door opened, two men entered, and tore from the side of the weeping Anna, all that was left her in the world to live for. And what would be the sentence? She dreaded to think, while she stood alone, and saw them lead Alfred through the long, stone gallery into the court, where, as the door opened, she could discern many persons assembled, looking earnestly upon the prisoner as he was conducted to the bar. A hand was placed upon her arm, and soon she found herself seated in the witnesses' box. Her eyes were uplifted to that vast assembly, as if in search of a kindly glance of pity for the youth before them. But no familiar face met her earnest gaze, for Susan had declared herself and her mother confined to their beds and unable to attend. The doors were closed, a dead silence reigned throughout, Anna heard a voice speaking, but she understood not the purport of the words, for a faintness and dizziness came over her; still she sat the same immovable statue; then some questions were put to her, she arose and went through the ceremony of the oath. A sudden recollection that she was dealing with the sacred volume must have awakened her to a full consciousness of her present position, for with a calm self-possession, she gave her evidence, though it was scarcely finished when she sunk again into her seat, and a stupor came over her. The time wore on; the jury left and returned; the decisive word "guilty" pierced into the soul of the agonized girl. She started to her feet, and looking up, saw them bearing the beloved form within their arms, while there came the inquiry from the multitude, as from one voice, "Is he dead?" and she knew no more.

"Come, Anna, get up," said Susan as she bent over the couch on which they had laid the fainting girl. "I'm sure you are well enough by this time, I know you feign all this, that you may get off doing the work of the house; and again she threw a quantity of water into the pale face, and finding its efficacy to be insufficient, took the invalid by the shoulders, and shook the exhausted frame, until the violence of the movement aroused the unconscious girl, and rising, as she clasped the skirt of the hard-hearted Susan, she exclaimed,—

"Oh, tell me — do please say that you too think him innocent; oh, only tell me you do not believe him guilty of the crime! Please, Susan, for pity's sake!"

"Get up, and don't trouble me about *him*; you know I always have a poor opinion of boys, in fact of the sex in general, I might say, and I'm sure there's one consolation for every old maid in her melancholy moods, the blessed assurance of having no such impediment to what little happiness there is in this life. Haven't I always told you boys were nothing but a bore and a torment? Now you see the truth of Susan's words, wise and discreet as I dare say you always thought yourself; he never was anything but a plague ever since he came here, and now the sooner they put an end to his pranks the better, if I am to have any peace in this existence."

"Susan, what do you mean? They will not take his life?"

"And did I say they would? Foolish girl, of course, as his sentence is two years imprisonment, it's not very likely they're going to take the trouble to hang him afterwards, is it?"

"Alfred! yes, I must go to him now," said she in wild despair, as she sprung from the couch.

"Anna, if you keep on like this you'll soon be a maniac, and goodness knows the trouble you'll be to me then; tie up your hair, and behave in this manner no longer. You know the prisoners are not to stay in the city, at a late hour to-morrow night they'll be taken miles away, and you'll not see Alfred until he comes back, for I'm not going to let you leave everything at home, just to be flying after him like some poor lunatic, so you can make yourself sure about that."

Anna glanced at her in bewilderment for a few seconds, then fell back, and another fainting fit followed.

It was nearly midnight; a stillness impressive of the deepest awe pervaded the house; it would seem that all must be abed and sleeping at that silent hour, yet in a little room at the top of the stairs, a flickering taper might be seen casting its glimmerings upon one who had no thought of sleep; with her hand upon the lock, she stood equipped for the streets, dark and lonely as they were on that moonless night; stealthily she opened the door and listened, but no sound fell upon the listening ear, all was silent as the tomb; she began to creep noiselessly down the stairs, but a cough from the dreaded Susan reached her affrighted ear; she paused, and the feeble frame rested against the baluster for support, while she expected to see a door beside her open, and the angry frown of Susan before her, when she would be commanded to return to her room, and see Alfred perhaps

no more, for ever; but all was still again, she pressed onward, and at last reached the hall door, and found the bolt and locks of which there was no small number, for Mrs. Gilbert had a very great dread of housebreakers, and even in these latter days, would often dream of highwaymen, and in her visions see her pocket which, day and night was singularly tied behind her, ransacked and robbed of its treasures; but at last these fastenings were conquered, and Anna found herself in the street. Here and there, a lamp flickered in the obscurity, but to-night these seemed few and far between; there was not even the footfall of the policeman on his beat, and all was silent, dark, drear, and solitary; but it was late, she had paused long enough and must now hasten on her lonely way. To walk the streets at that dead hour of the night unprotected, had no terrors for her; the darkness of the soul within seemed far more rayless, hopeless; all that occupied her now was to catch a glimpse of him she had not seen since she beheld the slender form borne from the court by those formidable-looking men; and again she must look in one last embrace, all she lived for, all for which she would willingly have died, and once more hear that voice which might remain silent to her for ever after. She had now passed through several streets, and entered a lane with which she was not familiar. Pausing to consider her way, she heard heavy footsteps and loud voices approaching her; ascending the steps of a dwelling, she intended to hide herself in the obscurity, until the men should have passed by; their laughter became louder, and trembling with fear she leaned against the door at which she stood. Suddenly it burst open and she fell into the passage. Before she had time to rise, a room-door by her side opened, and an old gentleman in his night-cap and spectacles made his appearance.

"Bless my soul alive! What in the name of goodness does this woman do here! Betsey, come, quick!"

A stout, coarse-looking woman now emerged from the room; and Anna, who was about to make her retreat, suddenly found the hands of the old gentleman laid upon her shoulders, while in angry tones he continued,—

"Not so fast you miserable wretch, you needn't think after coming here to pilfer all you could get, that you're going to escape justice so easily; you expected to find us all soundly asleep, didn't you? You look a poor, forlorn, guilty creature, frightened out of your senses, and well you need be, now you're in my hands. Betsey, hold her! I'll soon find the police."

The terrified girl felt her trembling limbs powerless within

the iron grasp of the strong woman, while to add to her distress she saw the old gentleman leave the house to carry out his threat.

"Why," said the woman, as the lamp-light from the room fell upon them, "how can such a young girl as you be bold enough to walk the streets at this hour of the night? You must be much more depraved than you look, and it's time such a career was brought to an end! And—" A loud scream came from the room, and dropping her hold of Anna, she flew into the apartment, exclaiming,—

"Oh, my child! my child!"

Anna heard no more; she was already in the dark sloping street, where, not far in the distance she could discern the figures of two men approaching the house. She was now about to meet them under the light of a lamp that stood near, and crouching down in the shadow of a flight of steps, remained unobserved until they were safely past. She then continued on her way, and had just reached the end of the lane, when the heavy rumbling of wheels disturbed the dead silence. A vehicle approached—to her, it appeared a long, closely shut coach, and it seemed to her she could discover a man at the back guarding the door. The cry of "Alfred!" escaped her, and the unconscious girl fell as a dead weight upon the pavement. At last a cold touch aroused her, the warm blood from a newly-made wound was trickling down over the icy brow, and looking up she saw the head of a large dog leaning over her. Fully awakened to a consciousness of her situation, she arose, and as rapidly as the feeble strength would allow, began to wend her weary way homeward; and at an early hour in the morning threw herself in an agony of grief upon the floor of her little room.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

"Oh! have you never known the silent charm  
That undisturbed retirement yields the soul,  
Where no intruder might your peace alarm,  
And tenderness have wept without control.  
While melting fondness o'er the bosom stole  
Did fancy never in some lonely grove,  
Abridge the hours which must in absence roll?  
Those pensive pleasures did you never prove,  
Oh, you have never lov'd! You know not what is love!"  
—MRS. TIGHE'S PSYCHE.

"Oh, La Belle! La Belle! Two years and you will be mine; glorious twenty-one shall I be, and then can I walk from one stately hall to another, and say, thou art mine! And Beatrice, my own beloved Beatrice, shall it ever be that you will grace my dwelling? May I hope that your musical, rippling laugh will ever ring through those halls? And yet I shall have Lydia, and can know I have her tenderest love, and she too is beautiful, good and pure, but Beatrice, beloved one, thou alone can satisfy the longings of my soul, for thou art all in the world to me! But when again shall I behold that face, and know Beatrice is near?"

"And what are your musings, Charles, heir to La Belle?" said Lydia's voice behind him. "Now I know your thoughts have been exceedingly pleasant," and she placed her hand upon his shoulder, "I see the influence of some delightful day-dream still resting on that countenance. Pray, might I venture to ask what it was?"

"It would do you harm."

"What, that which makes you so happy, injure me?"

"Even so; for if I tell, I must flatter you."

"And you think that would injure me!"

"Oh, no, my own sweet Lydia, I know better; and let me tell you I was saying, Lydia is beautiful, good and pure."

"And that was the chief of your thoughts," with an arch glance.

The head was turned away, and he answered somewhat mournfully, "Lydia, I know my thoughts were uttered half aloud. I was not aware any one was near—I was off my guard." Lydia drew the averted head to her bosom, and kissing the pale lips, longed to tell all, that they might mingle their tears of love and sympathy together, and unite their humble petitions for the welfare of the unfortunate; but ever since the reading of the

will, Charles had been under the influence of great excitement, and she knew too well the frail constitution, and the dangerous effect of such unhappy tidings, to allow her to make him acquainted with the awful calamity, which she felt positive had befallen the lovely Beatrice.

"Lydia," said Charles, as he looked up into her face, "there's no one in the wide world to whom I could unbosom what I feel, but you; it would grieve poor mother to know I was unhappy; and Lydia, I know too that you will not deem it weak and unmanly. I don't know why I care so much for her, but I cannot help it!"

Lydia hid the flushed face in the folds of her dress, that he might conceal the falling tear, and feel it was unperceived. The grief for Beatrice, which Lydia had long confined to the limits of her own room, now burst forth in tears uncontrolled; but it was a relief to the burdened bosom, and by the time the brother and sister were called away, the joyous, hopeful spirit of Charles again cast a halo over the little household.

Several came forward to offer an annuity at a liberal interest until Charles should become of age, and enter into the possession of his property, and as Mrs. Villiers' health was much impaired, when the due arrangements had been made with the broker, the school was abandoned, and a comfortable house engaged in Berlin, to which they repaired, and the widow now directed her attention almost exclusively to the education of Carlotta. And Charles did not go to Belgium as he had expected. At last his health seemed to be thoroughly established, and although the widow sometimes thought she saw symptoms of a lurking disease, she endeavored to suppose them only a mother's fears, and that the contrary opinion of friends and physicians was the right one.

Their relationship to the late Sir Charles, and their right to the estate, soon became known, and as their society was courted, they began to be acquainted with the city in which they had taken up their abode. They found Berlin to be one of the finest cities in Europe; the situation flat, the streets wide, containing many splendid buildings, and that there was much superior literary society. Their invitations, which were numerous, were selected with discretion, and it was now for the first time that Lydia, who had become the belle of a large circle, discovered, to her sorrow, that while at the seminary of Madame de Florigni, she had been robbed of a costly necklace, the gift of her father, and the only jewel with which she had not parted previous to their leaving Philadelphia.

They were now in a position to offer a comfortable and pleasant home to Beatrice, should she be destitute of friends, and an answer to a letter addressed by Mrs. Villiers to the asylum, had been long expected, but none came, and among other fears it occurred to them that the unfortunate girl might have been placed there by the instigation of her relatives, who obtained thereby the possession of her property.

It was autumn; a violent storm of wind and rain was raging without, and the evening was cold; in the drawing-room the curtains were closely drawn to keep out the chilly blast, the candles were lighted, two sat chatting by the cheerful fire that burned brightly in the grate, and the room wore an air of domestic and social enjoyment.

"Lydia," said Charles, "it often occurs to me, that some day we shall have an old acquaintance of yours in the pulpit of that dear little chapel on our estate, I wonder whether you will prefer him to a stranger."

Lydia was silent and thoughtful for a few moments, then answered quickly; "But I thought he was to return to Philadelphia, indeed, I have often imagined when he has been speaking of Anna, that he had a great preference for her."

"He never expects to return to Philadelphia, Lydia, and he has no preference for Anna; there is some one not far from me just now, for whom he has manifested great regard; in fact I have heard him acknowledge how intensely he loves her, and how wretched he would be had he the slightest idea of his future home not being gladdened by her constant presence."

An expression of pain passed over the fair countenance of Lydia, and she rose to leave the room.

"Oh Lyddie, love, don't go;" and Charles caught her dress as she was flitting past him. "I will explain," and kneeling before her, as he held her fast, continued, "Is there no one but Mr. Everett, who cares very much for you, whom you would consider worthy to take his stand in that pulpit?"

A smile played over his animated features, as he looked up into her troubled face. She immediately understood the purport of his words, and drawing him to a sofa, exclaimed, "Why, Charles, much as I have desired it, I never expected to see you a clergyman!"

"Lydia, I will acknowledge I think much of Beatrice, yet I can say with all truth, that I am resolved to make the duties of the ministry the great object of my life. It may be that Beatrice is now in Paris, the gayest of the gay, and seldom has time to think of us; and it may be that I shall one day see her again,

and never regret the thoughts I have bestowed upon her. However, I know all will be for the best, an unerring providence hovers over each one of us, and whatever is denied us is for our good, only we are too blind to see it so."

"Oh, how can you sit there so unconcerned?" exclaimed Carlotta, as she entered the room; "Come to the window and watch the lightning! What will the poor in the streets do during such a storm?"

"Yes," said Charles rising, "it is terrific; listen! there's a ring at the bell, who can it be on such a night! What a strange looking individual! from his costume I should suppose him to be an Arab, or Turk, or else a Roman soldier; from that singular head-piece — in fact figuring, in those habiliments, he might personate several characters."

"Poor fellow!" said Lydia, "undoubtedly he is some one with a petition; his case must be very urgent to call him out through this storm. But he will not be sent away from here unheard, and I must go and finish my letters before tea."

She was passing through the hall, when a maid put an envelope into her hand; and turning, she beheld the stranger they had seen from the window, standing before her.

"I am sorry to trouble you, young lady, but it is for a sick child," said the man, with a low bow.

Without examining the contents of the envelope, Lydia directly emptied her purse, and offered the pieces to the stranger.

"Thanks Mademoiselle, but it is a favor I beg, and not money." A smile was visible on his countenance, as he glanced at the confused blushes that overspread the face which was now bent to read the note. It was from a young lady, whom she remembered having been introduced as the daughter of the Count de Castello, and whom she had met several times during her visits to the different families in Berlin. She now requested of Lydia the loan of a French book of tales for a child who was forced to remain in one position, after the setting of a broken limb. The book was selected, and the man departed.

"Lydia, please go to mamma, she wants you a moment, a letter has come this morning, and it seems to trouble her."

Going into her mother's room, Lydia found, as Carlotta had said, that some letter had troubled her, for her tears were then falling upon the sheet in her hand.

"Lydia, it is from the asylum, at last, but I would have preferred none to this."

"Oh, tell me, ma, is she dead?"

"Lydia, had she died, I should have felt less sorrow for her;

no, she has not died. See, the note is very brief, it only states that when she was sufficiently recovered, a gentleman called and took her away with him, and that she appeared alone in the world, without relatives or friends. Poor girl! Oh, Lydia, I would give worlds to know where she is!" and as the widow drew her own child closer to her bosom, she again gave vent to tears, nor were tears all the mother and daughter offered in pity for the lost Beatrice; the door was locked, and together they carried their sorrows to the foot of the cross.

"Lydia, the Countess and her daughter are in the drawing-room, waiting to see you."

"I think," said the Countess, as she rose to meet Lydia, "that you must be very choice of your company, for often when I look for a glimpse of Miss Villiers in the evening assemblies, I seek her in vain; but you are already acquainted with my daughter Estelle, and I hope, as we reside so near to you, we shall cease to be strangers to each other."

"And I have called to return the book, and ask another favor," said the young lady Estelle, as she arose and extended her hand. "I have undertaken to assist the sisters of the Sacred Heart in this city, in a large work they have undertaken, to clothe the poor during the coming winter, and I am soliciting the services of several young ladies to join me. Although I know you to be a protestant like ourselves, I know also that you have sufficient charity to lend your aid, if you are not otherwise engaged; I think, if those who have promised will meet me punctually three times weekly, to sew a few hours in the morning, that we shall have the work completed before the winter sets in, and I hope the time will pass very pleasantly; one of us will read while the rest sew."

The next morning found Lydia punctual at the house of the Count de Castello; it was a spacious and stately mansion, wearing every appearance of elegance and wealth; a servant in full livery led the way to an apartment where, from a circle of young ladies who were busily employed, her new acquaintance, Estelle, arose to welcome her.

Estelle was probably about twenty, or twenty-two; of much vivacity and very pleasing address, while an air of dignity and grace seemed to add to the beauty of the frank, open countenance.

Several of the young ladies Lydia had met before, and the allotted hours for the work, passed rapidly by; the bell rang for luncheon, the group were led by Estelle to the dining-room, where the count and countess were ready to meet the young cou-

turies with a warm greeting. To strangers there was an air of austerity about the count, but the manners of the countess were soft and prepossessing, and gave evidence of having been a woman of great captivating powers; Lydia had scarcely spoken to her, when Estelle, drawing her attention, said, "Miss Villiers, allow me to introduce you to my brother Clarence."

As Lydia turned and beheld the tall figure, and glanced into the noble countenance, it occurred to her that she had seen the face before, but she could not recollect where, and as such thoughts seldom troubled her a second time, momentarily as it had come, so the idea passed away.

Among their acquaintances in Berlin, there was not a family in whom the Villiers seemed to take such delight as that of the Count; why, Lydia scarcely knew, but there was a fascination about that dwelling, that haunted her even when away, and often, after picturing a beau ideal of excellency, she retired to dream of the tall, handsome figure that moved in the mansion of the Count de Castello.

Winter was advancing, and at whatever party or entertainment Clarence and Estelle attended, Charles and Lydia invariably joined their number, and the acquaintance soon ripened into a closer intimacy.

It was an old custom of the Count's, to give a ball upon the anniversary of his wedding day, which was in the middle of December, and this year Mrs. Villiers and her children were prevailed upon to attend. The most fashionable of Berlin crowded the brilliantly lighted saloons, and as it grew later, the air of the room in which Lydia stood, became oppressive, and Clarence led her to his mother's boudoir, which they found empty. He was called away for a few moments, and on returning, Lydia was sitting by a window looking out upon the moonlit scene below; but the face was thoughtful, almost to sadness, and it was evident her thoughts were not where the eyes were riveted. For a moment he stood and gazed upon that countenance, then approached her, and as his footfall fell upon her ear she started from her reverie, and seeing him before her, turned from the casement, and made some ordinary observation upon the evening. But Clarence still stood the same immovable statue, gazing intently upon her. At last bending over her he said in a low tone, "Lydia a beggar, asks relief, are you willing to grant it?"

"I am not prepared, I have no money with me;" and she looked inquiringly into the earnest countenance.

"Lydia, once upon a cold, stormy night last autumn, you

kindly offered this beggar the contents of your purse; now this same beggar pleads for what he prizes far more than riches, and Lydia, will you refuse?"

There was a silence, but their eyes met, and as he bent lower to hear the voice, her lips moved.

But Lydia has not recorded in her journal what she said, and how could an old lady, who never poured gentle words into the ears of a lover, be supposed to know what girls usually say on such occasions?

"Clarence, I want to see you a moment," said the Count one morning, as he drew him into his dressing-room and closed the door. "I wish to know something about this fair Lydia, and I trust my son will pardon a father's curiosity."

Clarence bowed respectfully, and when they were seated, the Count continued, "I believe you to have some thoughts of this Lydia, and their position in society is very good, they are near relatives of old Sir Charles Villiers, but that is not all, are they rich, poor, or what?"

"I have never inquired, sir, for that would make no difference to me; I have sufficient, all I want is Lydia."

"Clarence," and a deep sigh escaped the Count as he drew nearer his son, "four years ago when you reached your majority, you agreed to loan me the fortune left by your uncle, that I might unite it with Estelle's for speculation, and I know I promised to consult with you before parting with it; but I have been rash, there seemed an excellent opportunity to invest it in railroads, and Clarence, my son, it is gone — almost irrevocably lost, for there can be no returns for many years!"

An expression of agony passed over the young man's face; he arose from his seat, and leaning against the wall, exclaimed with an effort that evinced the painful struggle within, "Is it even so, father!" and again seating himself, covered his face with his hands.

"My son," said the Count, as he stood before him, and with a painful expression passed his hand over his forehead as if to control the agitation working in the perturbed brain beneath, "you know my pride, and can appreciate the effort it costs me to acknowledge to you that I have erred, and ask pardon." The young man eagerly caught the extended hand, no thought of upbraiding passed within his bosom, his self-possession failed not in this hour, and having calmed himself to composure, he exclaimed, "Father, it cannot be recalled, say no more!"

The festivities of the evening illumined the mansion of the

Count de Castello, but in his room and alone, the noble Clarence paced the floor in all the wretchedness of despair. That Lydia's love was unsullied by a vain ambition, and that she was ready at any moment to share his portion, however limited it might be, he was fully confident; but if it were true that Lydia had nothing, he could not offer himself, a penniless competitor, with the many affluent suitors who surrounded her, to oblige her to live in poverty for eight or ten successive years, and the case was hopeless!

## CHAPTER XXIV.

"The fountain of my heart dried up within me,—  
With nought that loved me, and with nought to love,  
I stood upon the desert earth alone,  
And in that deep and utter agony,  
Though then, than ever, most unfit to die,  
I fell upon my knees and prayed for death."

A MONTH had passed since Alfred's misfortune, and astonishing and frightful was the change it had wrought in Anna. The emaciated form, the pallid countenance, and the expression of suffering that rested upon it, told all who saw her that Anna was fast drooping to the grave. She arose at her usual hour, seldom spoke to any one, and mechanically performed the work of the household imposed upon her, although many wondered how the feeble frame found strength for the purpose.

Could she but have heard of Alfred, and known he was yet alive, it seemed she would have been less wretched; and again it would occur to her, could she hear he was dead and released from his troubles, her sufferings would be less poignant; and yet he might die, and she never know anything of it, for she never saw any one to ask, as she seldom left the house, and since Susan had not been able to read without spectacles, the newspaper no longer visited them, and all journals were out of Anna's reach, unless she undertook the painful task of paying a visit to the little phenomenon of a man, upon whom she looked as the source of all her misfortune; and then, after dragging the weary limbs that long distance, she often was doomed to sit an hour by the bed-side of that miserable object, to endure the annoying declarations of his love, while he kept fast hold of her dress, and then plead in vain for the newspaper; either her feeble voice was not heard, or the understanding of the lit-

tle old man and his mother, which was never very brilliant, did not comprehend her meaning. And thus passed the dark monotonous days of gloomy sorrow, scarcely knowing whether she lived in the world as she once had, or whether some mighty change had come over her,—only a sort of living death seemed to have taken possession of the soul. An indescribable horror, visible only to herself, appeared to haunt her, as she passed from room to room, performing as from instinct the various menial and more responsible duties which Susan had laid out for her. Sometimes it would occur to her, that to move once again amid the busy world without, would enliven her energies, and awaken those faculties that had so long lain dormant; then watching her opportunity, she would hastily throw on her apparel, and steal from the house. But once among the passing throng of the streets, it seemed as though each one she met was familiar with the history of Alfred, and that every eye was riveted upon her, as one upon whom some awful condemnation had fallen, while none appeared to look to pity, only to censure and reproach; and pausing, not knowing which way to turn, a bewildered sense of her misery and the world's unkindness would overwhelm her, and with a step as rapid as her exhausted limbs would allow, she would hasten again to that dismal abode, to pass as before the hours of wretchedness and tears.

On Sundays, Susan always attended morning service, while Mrs. Gilbert sat by the fire in the kitchen, watching every movement of Anna, who never went to church now except when there was evening service, and often when the day drew to a close, she was too weary to leave the house, and would retire to her little room to pass the remaining hours in weeping and prayer.

On several occasions, and once in the middle of the night, she made her way to Susan, and kneeling before her as she clasped the hands of the unfeeling woman in her own, entreated to be told where Alfred was; but Susan's reply was always the same: "It's no use to tease the very life out of me about that boy, I tell you he's out of your reach, as to where, I neither know nor care; and never ask any one, for as sure as you mention his name outside this door you will repent of it."

For many a long day no one had honored the house with a visit, except the indefatigable Miss Pyke, and one afternoon, as Anna caught a glimpse of Kate upon their steps, it seemed as though a glance at a youthful face and figure inspired her with animation.

"Well, Anna, you see, after staying away for an age, the careless, giddy little Kate is once again within your dingy domi-

cile. How have you been? Have you heard any news lately? How long is he to be away now? Do you ever see that poor miserable unfortunate, that bed-ridden mortal? Oh what a happy escape that was for you! But the idea that he still talks of being married is really too absurd, and although his poor old mother says he suffered most acutely when the remains of his spindle shanks were amputated, it's impossible to pity him. Just imagine, in addition to his innumerable incurabilities, a pair of wooden legs to supply the place of those inestimables he left on the railroad. I declare such a mass of miserable matter is enough to disgust the greatest philanthropist on earth. But, Anna, you do look so very wretched! I'm sure I'd do anything in the world to make you happy; but I don't believe you take what little comfort you might. There, do sit down here, girl, and let that sour-looking Susan wait for her starch, or whatever it is,—you seem to have been immersed in the mysteries of the laundry. Oh, I forgot to tell you, I should have been here before, but I went to visit my aunt, and inform her that my wedding-day is very near, that she might have time to consider what to present me with on that occasion. But I'm afraid I need not expect much, for she still grieves over the loss of her black satin bonnet. Oh, but let me tell you about Mr. Hunt. He's tall, handsome, quite wealthy, a perfect gentleman, and just what I wanted in every respect, and from this moment to the end of my days, I shall be one of the happiest beings in the world; oh, and I must tell you too, that he is in the firm where Alfred was, and when I spoke to him of your brother, he seemed very much troubled, and quite wretched when I told how unhappy you were and how much you loved each other. That proves what a tender, compassionate heart he has; in fact, I've found the mention of your misfortune grieves him so much, that now I never broach the subject. Have you heard lately from our Prussian friends? I'm very anxious to hear of Lydia, and that none-such of an Everett, for I always thought him one of those fellows who have an ideal of perfection in their minds, and live their life-time a bachelor looking in vain for the reality. Yesterday, I heard from good authority that he vowed never to return alone to Philadelphia; so if he comes, (and it is expected he will,) Lydia will come with him. How much I should like to know whether she really likes him! Sometimes I have thought there was a little fascination in every fellow, but oh, gracious, no! that cannot be,—just think of Barrow! Well, I must go, for I've an immense deal of shopping to do; pa says I'm to have all I want, he is so glad to get rid of of me. But

Anna, I do believe you are going to die like poor Minnie, you look so wretched; I know it's because you are alone so much, and I really would come in much oftener, but you know what a dislike I have to anything that's gloomy. Oh, how long I have stayed! Good-by."

Frivolous as was the merry Kate with her baubles, still her visits seemed a sunny gleam to dispel for a while the cloud of ennui that hung so heavily over Anna, and even after the gaiety had tripped away, it was as though she had left in the room where she had stood, a lighter and more cheerful atmosphere, that pervaded it for the remainder of that day. And this time she had suggested the idea of Lydia's return, and bright and beautiful was the thought as Anna pictured Alfred's release, and saw once again the Lydia she loved so well, and felt the influence of her happy, joyous spirit, that ever seemed to shine as a halo round the circle of which she was always the centre. But the voice of Susan banished the transitory joy, again the painful sense of a dark and gloomy sorrow threw its heavy mantle round her, and hope had fled as if for ever.

It had often occurred to Anna, could she communicate with their father, and acquaint him with the misfortune of his son, had he any tenderness remaining in him, it would be immediately called forth; and one afternoon when Susan was in one of her indifferent moods, Anna embraced the opportunity for asking what direction had formerly found her father, and was glad to hear the answer, "Well, if you want it, get it, only don't trouble me any more, I'm sure I don't care what becomes of it, you can burn it if you like."

The direction was in her father's hand; it was the first she had seen of anything that pertained to him, and as she traced letter after letter, and read again and again her name upon the paper, she wept. Of her father she had a very faint recollection, and until lately, had thought comparatively little about him, but she had longed to know the history of her mother. From her portrait, she had without doubt been called beautiful, and we are often inclined to imagine some melancholy story of deep interest secreted in the fate of such an one, and feeling sure her biography was an unhappy one, she believed it to be Providentially veiled from her forever."

But the letter. It required much effort; yet at last it was finished. It was a touching epistle; the anguish of a soul was poured out upon its pages, and many tears bedewed the sheet as she proceeded. It told of the talents of Alfred, of his noble bearing, of the false accusation, and the final sentence of con-

demnation; of the love and attachment of the brother and sister, and the painful separation, and lastly of her own wretchedness, with an earnest appeal to his sympathies as a father, to come and relieve, ere they both perished.

In anxious suspense the answer was awaited, but none came. Another month passed, yet no tidings, and as a last resource, Anna determined as far as lay in her power, to watch the newspapers, hoping to find some day a clue to the mysterious silence of her father.

The first opportunity that offered for this purpose, was on a clear, frosty afternoon, when she had assured herself that Mrs. Gilbert and daughter were safely locked in the arms of Morpheus, and having placed near the chair of each an herb which the old lady used for prolonging the afternoon naps of Susan, when she was in a very bad humor, Anna stole from the house, and by the time she had reached the dwelling of Robert Barrow, Esq., the invigorating air had braced and refreshed her.

Finding it useless to refuse, she at last yielded to the entreaties of Mrs. Barrow, and ascended to the sick-room of the bedridden son. The atmosphere of the chamber was close and fetid, various singular remedies of the old lady's having combined in producing an exceedingly unpleasant odor; the peruke of the poor little man had fallen upon the pillow, and the whole interior of the room was disagreeable in the extreme; but there was no retreat, and keeping as far as possible from the bed, she silently took a seat.

Presently the head of the invalid was raised, the little eyes blinked, and at last a small whining voice said,—

"Oh, Anna dear, I have been dreaming of you, love. Come near to me, darling, I want to tell you how these doctors have chopped and hacked me about; but they say the flesh may soon heal, and my new legs are being made, so Anna, darling, you need not despair, we shall be happy again as we once were, when I hurried away in such high glee to get the groomsman, little thinking what would befall me. But never mind, Anna dear, all will yet be well, and just as soon as the ceremony is over, we will have a second trial for Alfred, and he will then be liberated."

Anna started from her seat at the words, and as if desirous to know whether she had heard aright, approached the bed, and bending over the shrivelled little man, exclaimed,—

"Liberated! What, Alfred? When? Where?"

"Yes, darling, it shall be just as I say, and immediately the bony arms encircled her neck, and for awhile she was forced to

yield herself a victim to a repetition of those odious caresses from the loathsome object before her.

Feeble as Anna was for wrestling, the strength of the poor little man soon failed him, and he could struggle to hold her no longer. With a wild air, as if bent upon some design, she hurried from the room, hastily glanced at a paper she found below, and left the house.

Either the herbs had produced the desired effect, or for once, fortune had favored Anna, for the sleepers were in their chairs as she had left them, and consequently would not know of her absence. The herbs were placed again on the top of a high closet, where Mrs. Gilbert always secreted them, and by the time she had prepared the tea, the sleepers awoke. Anna, as usual, ate nothing, and having placed the tea-things carefully away, under the instructions of Mrs. Gilbert, who, upon every such occasion declared she had had them ever since her wedding-day, which certainly could not have been very recent. Anna fled to her room, and after standing sometime as one bewildered and perplexed, sat down to collect the scattered senses, and contemplate again the project she had in view. But the longer she dwelt upon it, the more excited she became until she knew not what she thought or did. Was it true that there yet remained a means of helping Alfred? And what sacrifice would be too great? None.

It was now night, yet Anna had no thought of rest; completely unnerved, and trembling from the bodily weakness under which she labored, she paced the floor of her room in wild desperation. There came a strange sound upon the stairs, she started, and listened,—it was as of some one weeping; Mrs. Gilbert and Susan never wept, or at least if they did, the grief was altogether inward, and left no manifestations upon the surface; spell-bound to the spot, she stood breathless as she listened, and though so eager to learn why it was, whether it could be Alfred or not, she possessed no power to move forward. But soon her door was thrown open, and as Anna looked up, she gazed in mute astonishment upon the object before her.

In all the dishevelment of frantic grief, weeping profusely, while deep sighs and loud groans escaped her, stood or rather reclined against the wall, none other than Miss Sarah Christina Pyke. The strange spectacle at that late hour, fully aroused Anna, and completely drew her out of herself. Forgetting her own troubles, she immediately inquired the cause of this great distress, but Miss Pyke made no answer, and continued bewailing as before. Alarmed at her singular behavior, and thinking

some catastrophe must have befallen them below stairs, Anna ran to the dining-room, and Susan, as though aware of her errand, exclaimed,—

"Oh, I don't know what's the matter with her, you must do the best you can by yourself, for I always keep out of all such weeping and wailing; and if she goes into a fit, why, let her alone until she comes out of it, that's all."

As Anna was returning with some water to the sorrow-stricken individual, loud screaming might be heard through the house, and on reaching the room she found her visitor in violent hysterics. •Going up to her, and putting her hands upon the trembling woman, she inquired,—

"Pray do tell me what troubles you, Miss Pyke, perhaps I can assist you."

"No one can help me — Mr. Long is dead."

"Oh, it is very sad to lose a friend, but do try to compose yourself,—I'm very sorry he died."

"But I am not at all sorry, it's just what I should have wished."

"What do you mean, Miss Pyke?"

But another flood of passionate tears was the only answer.

Anna used every means she knew of to calm the distracted woman, and at last, after much wearying exertion she had the satisfaction of seeing her a little composed, and having wiped away her tears, she said,—

"You see, Anna, if I could only have known that he would have died,—and why didn't I think that as people die any day, the life of Mr. Long might be very short! Oh dear, if I had only known he would die so soon!"

"But how could a death benefit you?"

"Anna, you don't understand; the matter is this: Mr. Long wanted me very much. I could not describe to you the ardor and enthusiasm with which he always made his declarations, and he told me exactly how wealthy he was,—oh yes, he was very candid to me! and you would be astonished at his riches. Oh yes, I should have been all that is enviable by this time."

"And why did you refuse him?"

"Wasn't he always in a state of inebriety, and never sober. But as he was to die so soon, that would not have mattered. Oh yes! If I could only have thought that he would have died! He had no relations, and I should have had all his wealth. Oh dear, oh dear! Why didn't I take him at all hazards, even if his friends did say 'your head wont be long on your shoulders.' If I had only arranged it so that his will was

made previous to the wedding, then if he could have dropped down dead as we came out of the church, how delightful it would have been! And besides, widow's weeds would become my complexion so well, for I should look so very pathetic in full, deep mourning. Oh dear! If I had only known he would have died! I shall never survive it, no never! I may not have such an offer again; oh, it is more than I can bear! Anna, I shall make away with myself, I know I shall!"

Alarmed at her rash words and distracted manner as she rose to go, Anna strove to detain her, and continued to entreat her to be more composed, that she might think less desperately of the case.

"Anna, it's no use to talk to me," and she pushed the sympathizing girl from her. "I need condolence from those of my own age, and came here expecting to find it in Susan; for when she lost all hope of Mr. Everett, I always expressed the deepest sympathy for her disappointment, but all she said to me after coming this long distance was, 'Sally Pyke, don't make such a ludicrous object of yourself,—the man's dead, you can't have him, and there's an end of it.' Now what sympathy was there in that? But I cannot stay here, I cannot rest, for mine is a very delicate distress, that few can enter into; and Anna, if you hear of something very romantic, don't be surprised, for it's very likely I shall be found drowned in the cistern before long, or something of the sort."

Anna endeavored to retain her hold of the frantic woman, but she was too powerful a combatant for her feeble strength, and she soon found her words were lost, for the distracted Miss Pyke was out of hearing.

Anna returned to her room; soon all thoughts of her visitor had flown, and she sunk again into her own sad and gloomy reverie.

The means for liberating Alfred lay open before her, it awaited only her consent, and he was saved; yet there arose a strong will within to oppose her yielding. She would ponder the matter again, and — decide.

She was still irresolute when the head drooped, and sleep was fast enwrapping the perturbed senses; she aroused herself, and endeavored to place some determination upon paper, but the pen dropped from her hand, the weary head drooped lower and lower, and soon Anna had fallen into slumber.

She dreamed; and bright sunny rays and dark, heavy clouds variegated the scene, as they alternately cast their light and shadow upon the vision. Solitary and alone, she was wending

her way at night-fall through much brushwood and many a dingle in search of some lost treasure; often the brambles entangled her footsteps, and impeded her way; still, perseveringly she pressed onward, and came to a pit; looking down she beheld the object of her search, for there was Alfred. In an ecstasy of joy she was about to leap down to him, and fold her arms once again round the beloved form, when a well-known voice came up from the pit and said, "Anna, help me!" The arms were outstretched towards her, but the pit was deep, and in despair she looked round for assistance; none presented itself, and in an agony of despair she was throwing herself upon the earth, when a ray of light fell upon the scene, and she saw by her side a barrow filled with what appeared leaves and branches. It was old, and discolored with time, the timbers were shattered and decayed, while as it stood there rotting away, it was loathsome to the eye, and she shrank from the idea of touching it. The light shone brightly upon it, and she now saw that where it stood was a garden filled with the good things of earth, and that the barrow was so heavily laden with choice fruits as to sink deeply into the earth, and make a firm hold-fast with which she could support herself with one hand, while with the other she rescued Alfred. Seeing it was the only means within her reach, she laid her hand upon it; it was covered with crawling insects, and the cold, damp touch chilled her to the heart; yet as she looked upon Alfred, she grasped it more tightly, and with a slight effort, the lost one was by her side; but he was exhausted and faint, and could scarcely speak to her; she brought some water from a fountain that played in the garden where the barrow stood, and having bathed the pale face he revived; as her anxiety for him lessened she discovered the hand which clasped the barrow had withered, but Alfred took it between his own, and his ardent kisses soon restored it. They then sat down together, and leaning against the barrow, ate from the good things with which it was filled. As she continued to feed him, she saw with delight that his strength and spirits were returning, and as she laid her weary head upon his breast, her happiness was complete.

Falling from her chair to the floor, awoke her. It was past midnight, but she took no thought of time, and after standing for awhile with her hand to her forehead as if in painful meditation, she descended to the floor below, and knocked loudly at the door. For a long time there was no answer, at last the key was turned, and the bolts were drawn back, the door was opened a little way, and the night-cap and curl papers of Mrs. Gilbert appeared.

"I'm going to be married!" said Anna, as she pressed forward to enter the room.

The old lady gazed at her a few moments in mute astonishment, then ran to the bed where Susan lay loudly snoring; and suddenly shaking the sleeper, screamed at the top of her voice, "Susan, make haste and get up, she's going to elope!"

Startled at being disturbed at that dead hour of the night, as soon as Susan awoke, she rose up in the bed, and looked with a bewildered air round the room. Anna was now in the middle of the floor, and stood with her hands folded, saying, "Yes, Susan, I'm going to be married, I was not willing before, but now I'm quite ready."

"Bless the child," said the old lady, "what does she mean! The girl knows no one, how can she be married?"

"Indeed, I am willing," repeated Anna, "and then Alfred will come back, and I shall be no longer wretched; let us go now, do please," and she caught hold of the night-clothes of Mrs. Gilbert. "I can't wait, for Alfred is very miserable!"

Susan now sprang from the bed, and taking Anna by the shoulders exclaimed, "Deceitful girl! and so you have had secret communications with some one, tell me his name, explain the whole affair, or you never leave this room while I'm alive."

"My dear, tell us the gentleman's name!" said Mrs. Gilbert in a mild tone, for when once the lion within Susan was roused her mother became very gentle and submissive; "his name, that is all."

Anna looked bewildered for a few moments, then returning to her subject continued: "Barrow is ready, and I am willing because of Alfred,—Why won't you come!"

"Oh, now I begin to understand you," said Susan, as she relinquished her hold, and gazed at her in amazement; "but I declare you are enough to drive me mad. When the man was whole, there was no such thing as getting you near him, and now he has been cut about until there's nothing left of him, you come in the middle of the night, and wake every body up, to let them know you've taken a notion to marry the old fellow. Why couldn't you wait till the morning, and not frighten the wits out of me in this manner? I do believe the girl's beside herself!"

"Well, my dear," ventured the old lady to her angry daughter, "you know that queer Sally Pyke has been here, and I'm sure I heard her go into hysterics, and I dare say she frightened the poor girl. I know when Sally takes those turns she is very strange; it's as good as a play to look at her."

By this time Susan had followed Anna to her room, where she remained until the excited girl had undressed, and laid the aching head on her pillow.

## CHAPTER XXV.

"I am the resurrection and the life, saith the Lord: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die."

"Thou art gone to the grave, but we will not deplore thee,  
Though sorrow and darkness encompass the tomb;  
Thy Saviour hath pass'd through its portal before thee,  
And the lamp of His love is thy light through the gloom.  
Thou art gone to the grave, but we will not deplore thee,  
Whose God was thy ransom, thy guardian, thy guide;  
He gave thee, He took thee, and He will restore thee,  
And death hath no sting, for the Saviour hath died."

"Come Charles, the opera begins at half past six, if you are coming, it's time you closed that book."

"Oh Lydia, I have changed my mind. I shall remain at home this evening, for you know I'm going with that party of young fellows to Geneva, and when I come back Mr. Everett will have returned from his tour, and then, Lydia, we start for Oxford, where I hope I shall in due time be prepared for holy orders; so if I wish to finish this course of reading, I'd better do it at once."

"And I shall stay at home too,—just think how long you will be away!" Lydia took her seat beside him, and as she lifted the face from the book, and brushed aside the thick clusters of rich auburn that concealed the fine forehead, a tear fell upon the volume.

"But Lydia, love, indeed I would have you go; don't you know we each have our own sphere, and if it is yours to move in society, should you be dead to all that is passing round you, just because it is mine to sit in a study and pore over volumes? No, Lydia; the field for usefulness is as extensive in your circle as ever mine may be, and I've often pictured to myself my own Lydia shining as a beacon above the follies and foibles of fashionable life, and after mingling with the gay and the dissipated, remain the same unsophisticated Lydia as ever, that her name unsullied by the baubles of empty vanity, might be handed down to her posterity as an example of all that is good and great in woman. No, Lyddie, you must go to the opera; a young artiste is to make her debut to-night. I believe I've heard her

voice is charming and her style exquisite; you have a taste for such. Go, and let me hear what you think of her. Here's the Count's carriage, and I see Clarence with Estelle, now poor Charles may busy himself with his books, for Clarence is all—everything; and I'm not sorry, either, for I like him much, and Lydia may even love him if she wishes, she has my permission, which I know she always waits for in such cases; good-by."

Lydia and her friends arrived at the opera, the house was already crowded, and it was with difficulty they made their way to the box of the Count.

"This opera of 'Il Confesare,'" said Clarence, turning to Lydia as soon as they were seated, "is entirely new, and is said to have been arranged by the young artiste who takes the principal part. The argument is this. Palma is a Spanish nobleman, whose daughter, Violetta, is the fiancée of a young merchant at Naples; Palma, who has a secret plot in view for his daughter, declares the intention of destroying his life if Violetta will not abandon all thought of her favorite Sebastian. Violetta is terrified into submission, and while attacked by a severe fit of illness, sends word to Sebastian that she no longer cares for him, and will see him no more. Frenzied to learn the cause of the disunion, Sebastian seizes every opportunity of obtaining the satisfaction. Violetta recovers, and Sebastian knowing it to be her custom to attend the abbey for vespers and to remain after the service for confession, after much skillful manoeuvring disguises himself as a priest, and officiates as such. The maidens come to make their confession, and among them is the pale, broken-hearted Violetta. She tells of her sorrow; of her father's threat, and her passionate love for the young Sebastian; he still assumes his disguise, and bids her wait until the other confessors have retired, when he can the more effectually console her. She remains, and when they are alone in the abbey, he throws off his disguise; they vow constancy and fidelity for the future, and separate. Palma, always on the watch, and suspecting some intrigue, fears an elopement of his daughter, and to carry out his own secret intention, gives his consent, and pretends to rejoice in the prospect of the union. Sebastian is away on a voyage. Palma intercepts his letters, and Violetta hearing he still lives, believes him unfaithful, and gives herself over to despair, while Palma forges her hand, and sends a letter to Sebastian declaring her betrothal to a cousin; and lastly, in another, enclosed a notice of the marriage. Still glowing with love, yet tortured by jealousy, Sebastian cruises abroad, endeavoring to

dissipate his grief, while Violetta, goaded almost to madness by the solicitations of her father, refuses to accept an offer urged by him, and in preference enters a convent and takes the veil. She becomes deranged, and carries a stiletto secreted in her bosom. One evening a way-worn traveller stops at the gate of the convent to learn the way to the abbey; Violetta sees him from a window, and making her escape, follows him. It is early, the vesper bell is just beginning to toll, the candles are not yet lighted upon the altar; she enters through a back door, and conceals herself behind the confessional box. The worshippers have departed, and the traveller kneels before the confessor; Violetta recognizes Sebastian. He tells of his unhappy fate in losing his idol Violetta, and the load it still leaves upon his heart. A gleam of reason flashes upon the mind of the wretched girl, she recollects the past, and especially the veil which has been taken, and her vows to remain in the convent for the rest of her life. She rushes forward, while those in the abbey gaze in bewilderment upon the maniac before them. In her despair she tells her tale of woe, and none dare to oppose, she turns to Sebastian and calls upon his name, he recognizes her, but before he can reach the aisle in which she stands, her wild laugh rings through the abbey, and glancing a smile upon him she plunges the stiletto into her bosom. Her friends are soon upon the spot, where they behold the bleeding Violetta in the arms of the faithful Sebastian. Her reason returns for a few moments, she pardons her guilty father, again breathes her vows to Sebastian, again hears the words of his love, and while offering a prayer to the Madonna, Violetta expires."

"The music of this opera is much admired," said Estelle. "The principal choruses and all the solos are the compositions of this young prima donna, who has become such a favorite in so short a time, for last night was her debut in Berlin; she is very young and cannot have performed long; she's a stranger here, however, and I think she must be *une françoise*, from the name."

Lydia glanced indifferently at the bill, suddenly it fell from her hands; again she raised it to her eyes,—yes, there was the name, Mlle. Sauvestre. Clarence was now speaking with his sister, and for a few seconds she was left to her own thoughts; Charles, Beatrice, then Charles again presented themselves as subjects for due consideration. "But what is there in a name," said she to herself, "it is not possible this young stranger can be the lonely unfortunate of whom I am thinking!" and by the time Clarence turned to her again, she had recovered her self-possession.

The orchestra took their seats; the last notes of the overture had died away,—the curtain rose; this scene was where Palma was alone in his study, and in the fury of his rage, vowing vengeance upon the young Sebastian, sends for Violetta, that she might hear his decision.

The house was now crowded to excess, and all seemed waiting impatiently the appearance of the young prima donna. A servant had been dispatched for Violetta, all gazed intently at the further end of the stage. Slowly, amid the deafening salutation of the audience, Violetta approached, courtesying in acknowledgment of the applause. The blushing beauty came nearer, and there stood — Beatrice.

The play proceeded. As Violetta, she knelt before her obdurate father, and implored him to hear her; the notes were low, but exceedingly sweet and touching, as she sung with an expression of deep feeling. On hearing his desperate threat, she became much agitated and excited, and rising to her feet, besought him in all the agony of her despair to relent; her voice became stronger as she now seemed to enter into the spirit of the piece, and as she warbled forth the full, rich notes, the clear, beautiful strains vibrated the house. It was indeed a rare voice, light and elastic, and yet so powerful. Finding her father immovable in his decision, turning from him, she faced the audience; the color had faded from the cheek, the canto sunk into a minor, yet the full dark eyes glistened more brightly, and as she warbled a farewell to the absent Sebastian, the natural tears rolled down the pale cheeks, and soon the fainting Violetta was borne from the presence of her angry father.

The next scene was the Abbey where Violetta makes the confession of her love to the disguised Sebastian. It was here that the young favorite so greatly excelled, the blush upon her cheek came and went, until the whole countenance glowed with the enthusiasm of her song. Then followed scenes of the inquisition, into which the hazardous spirit of Sebastian had led him; and when Beatrice again appeared it was where Violetta is received into the convent and takes the veil. This scene was very imposing, where the inclinations of the unhappy girl wrestled with this duty of her religion. The abbess and her nuns were in their robes, and the harmony of their voices as they welcomed the trembling Violetta to their midst, was exceedingly beautiful. The piece proceeded, the last scene was over, the curtain fell. Again and again was the favorite applauded. As she came before them, she appeared tired, and smiled faintly as she acknowledged the enthusiasm of the vast

assembly, that had been so highly gratified with the perfection to which she had carried the part of the maniac.

But upon the whole, how did the beautiful Beatrice appear after her sad misfortune? The form had lost its roundness, still, except where the character of the scene called forth sad emotions which she so admirably depicted, the face wore a comparative glow of health. But she turned to them for the last time; then, amid the bouquets that impeded her progress, she passed from their view, and Beatrice was gone.

Lydia stood gazing in the direction where she had vanished; she said nothing, while a thousand conflicting emotions agitated her bosom, and not feeling equal to relating her story of Beatrice, she concluded it best to be silent.

"Well, Lyddie, how do you like the new prima donna?" inquired Clarence, as they rose to go.

"Oh, a most charming creature!" replied Lydia with her usual vivacity, and pleased to delight, yet sad to melancholy, she pressed on with her companions amid the dense throng to the doors, while on all sides, compliments were continually paid to the young artiste.

On returning home, Lydia found her mother writing, but the pen dropped from her fingers, as she heard from the lips of the excited Lydia, the tidings of Beatrice.

"Well," said she, when the story was finished, "we must know more about her, my dear, before Charles renews the acquaintance; so we will not mention the circumstance to him; but to-morrow, when he has started with his companions, we will go together and find her? In the meantime I hope he will not hear her name, for if so, we are undone."

Lydia had retired, and the widow sat contemplating alone. "Beatrice, the lovely Beatrice, an actress! with that beautiful face, and bewitching manner, what temptations must surround her, as she stands alone in the world in such a public profession! Are there not those for ever on the watch to allure such an one, only to corrupt and abandon, leaving her unprotected to bear the taunts and reproaches of a censuring community? Oh, Beatrice, so unsuspecting, so confiding, how ill-suited you are for such a sphere! And yet were Beatrice as she once was, I could rest satisfied that her character would remain unblemished, for 'God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able, but will with the temptation, also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.'"

The following day, preparations for Charles' departure occu-

ried the early part of the morning, and it was late when Mrs. Villiers and Lydia reached the hotel where they were told information of Beatrice might most probably be obtained. "Mesdames," answered the lessee, to whom they applied, "Mademoiselle Sauvestre left early this morning to fulfill an engagement in London. I know of no way of tracing her."

Saddened by the disappointment, Lydia sought her own room as soon as they reached home, and was sorry to find a note from the Countess Castello requesting that she would spend the remainder of the day with them.

"Your invitations generally come through Estelle," said Lydia to herself as she began to dress, "I should like to know what you want with me, madame. Oh, Clarence, I wish you were here to chide your silly favorite for fearing to hear something to part you and her. Oh, Clarence, why are you such a thief to steal away so many of my thoughts?"

"Well, my dear," said the Countess as she received Lydia, "punctual as usual, you set our fashionable belles an excellent example; but please come into my boudoir, I've something to say to you, to any one in fact who ever feels an interest in our Clarence." The face of the Countess assumed a graver expression, and she continued, "Miss Lydia, thinking you might possibly have a regard for my son, I thought it but proper to inform you that he has expressed a preference for a young lady of whom we all approve, and I am confident she loves him; now Miss Villiers, I know you are not selfish, and let me ask if you too don't think it best that no other girl should visit us as frequently as she? Oh, but don't get up to go, pray be seated, I wish to introduce her to you, you can easily know her, as she will sit on the right of the Count. Come, there's the dinner bell."

Lydia suffered herself to be led away, yet the words "Oh, Clarence!" arose to her lips. And where was Clarence? In his father's study with his eyes fixed on vacancy, while the Count proceeded,—

"I tell you this is an excellent match for you; she's about the same age as that Lydia, and quite as handsome a girl, and she has, too, what is far more important in your case, a nice little fortune and a house in the most aristocratic part of Berlin; and Clarence, for your own happiness, I urge you."

"Father, if you would counsel me for my good, don't oppose me where my true happiness is centered. I will not be rash, I assure you, I will wait —"

"Oh, but I will not oppose you, it shall be your own choice; I am convinced you will soon agree with me that you admire

her as much as your favorite Lydia. Come," and he drew his son's arm within his own. "I'm anxious to introduce you, and Clarence, remember, although I don't urge you, still, you will incur my extreme displeasure by refusing this opportunity."

As they left the room they were met by the Countess, who, with a doleful expression, addressed her son,—

"My dear, Lydia is here; I've told her about this young girl, and I fear she feels it very keenly; I'm exceedingly sorry; but you know it's all for the best, it cannot be helped."

"Mother, what do you mean? You have said what to Lydia?" and for a moment a frown darkened the brow, but soon the self-control was again apparent, and with a countenance expressive of the painful emotion within, he followed them into the saloon. Alone, at one end of the room, sat Lydia; she saw the Count and Countess approaching, and behind was the pale face of Clarence. Taking her by the hand, the Count led her to the table and placed her at his right; the footman had been dismissed, the door was closed, and only the four were present. The Count and his lady smiled as they looked at each other and introduced the two between them, and added in one voice. "Now Lydia, you understand who the young lady is."

Clarence also understood the deception, but it was evident as he took his seat beside Lydia, that he did not admire such jesting, and with a calm dignity he proceeded to do the honors of the table in silence. But poor Lydia found it a less easy matter to control the rising emotion; she had believed herself sufficiently self-possessed to be proof against all betrayal of her feelings, yet, when for the first time Clarence turned to her, and she caught the full, earnest gaze, her self-control gave way, and throwing herself upon his bosom she burst into tears.

"Oh, forgive me," said the Countess, I would not have pained you for the world.

Clarence led Lydia from the saloon, but soon they returned, and the face wore again the bright smile of the happy Lydia. Having apologized to the Countess, the latter replied,—

"Never mind, Lydia, I would not give one of those pearly drops for all the strong-minded women in Prussia."

"Come, Lyddie, to the piazza," said Clarence as soon as they had dined; Estelle will excuse us a few moments."

But Estelle had not been long left to herself when Lydia joined her and whispered, "Have you no curiosity?" and she immediately placed her hand upon her bosom where something attached to a chain lay concealed.

"None whatever;" though at the same time Estelle drew

up the chain and beheld painted in ivory, set round with pearls, a miniature portrait of Clarence. She restored it to its hiding place, and throwing her arms round her companion exclaimed,—

"Beloved Lyddie!" then as she kissed the flushed cheek, her tears fell fast upon the neck of her friend.

"What, Estelle in tears?"

"Ah, I've taught myself to school my feelings, yet I cannot always be the indifferent Estelle, I must sometimes be miserable, and some other time, when I feel less wretched, Lydia shall know the cause."

A letter from Charles was anxiously expected, and at last it came; yet it was no source of pleasure, although it was undoubtedly the intention of the writer to pen it as such. His companions had been obliged to leave him at a hotel, as he was detained by "a slight cold" he had taken at the lakes. But the widow knew it could be no very "slight" indisposition that would force the light-hearted Charles to be left behind. In a little note to Lydia, he remarked, "Yesterday I met his reverence, the honorable Everett. Poor fellow, my suspicions are confirmed, for when I told him of Clarence and you, which I thought best to do, he looked more wretched than before; and all he said convinced me how much he cared for the young lady in question. Now I know when Lydia is aware that she alone can remove the cloud of sorrow that hangs over this sainted individual, that Clarence will be forsaken, while in the true spirit of philanthropy, she takes compassion on the devoted Herbert Everett: Amen."

Through written in the jesting spirit of Charles, there was that in it which troubled Lydia; she respected Mr. Everett, and it grieved her to think she was the cause of his unhappiness; for she would not willingly have wounded the feelings of any one; still there was nothing wherewith she could reproach herself, and folding the billet, she endeavored to think no more of the minister; it was not strange either, that she thought often of Clarence, or of the long life they would spend happily together, for there came to her no forebodings of the future — she knew nothing of the dark days to come!

The last rays of a setting sun were throwing their golden gleam over the streets of Berlin: they stole through a casement to radiate once again a still chamber with their glorious effulgence of peace. There, around the bed of the sufferer, knelt the afflicted mother and sisters, keeping their silent vigils over that youth of promise — that son of many prayers; for

Charles was dying. The instructor and friend, who, by his teachings from the pulpit, and social intercourse with his beloved pupil, had taught him the salvation of Christ, had remained several days in the chamber of the invalid. The last communion had been administered; the thin hands of the dying were uplifted, and the eyes raised to Heaven, while in a changed voice came the audible words, "Lord, thy blood hath redeemed — Father, I come — Jesus, receive my spirit!"

The wasted hands dropped, the eyes closed to them forever, and ere the night had departed, the soul had fled unto Him who gave it.

"Clarence," said the Count one day, as he called his son into his dressing-room, "I've learned that the Villiers have lost all claim to the property of Sir Charles through that death in the family, for it was her brother who settled that annuity upon Lydia; so now as she will have no money, you must give up all thoughts of the girl. But Selina," said he, calling to his wife, "do come and state the case, as I have an engagement at this hour."

The Countess entered, and with a bewildered air took a seat opposite her son.

"Oh, Clarence my dear, for the sake of your mother, do break off this engagement! Let me tell you, your father has gambled, and our very house is mortgaged; now do seek some more fortunate union, for we must depend upon you for our maintenance; do, for the sake of Estelle; do, because it is your mother who asks it, promise to be counseled by her who loves you so fondly, and would advise you only for your future good;" she arose, and standing beside him, placed her jeweled hand upon his shoulder, and shed tears while she continued, "think of the disgrace if we should be forced to leave Berlin, and abandon forever our position in society."

"But my dear mother, what happiness can such afford? But I forgot, I know it is your chief aim, — don't distress yourself," and he led her to a seat, "I will do what I can." The Countess paid no attention to the deep sigh that escaped him, but continued, —

"Then see Lydia as little as possible; she will soon forget you, for girls are all fickle little flirts when they have the opportunity; why, when I married your father, it was only for his title, and although I learned to love him afterwards, I cared nothing for him at the time; and my dear, you will allow me to know best about my own sex, surely. So don't distress your-

self for her. Just think how little Estelle's trouble affects her now, and it is so with all girls. And would you have no more of the spirit of a man, than to allow such a trifle to annoy you? And Clarence, my son, do, I entreat you, endeavor to aid us in our trial, — you may not long have a mother to ask it." Believing she had gained the point, she kissed the cheek of her son, and left the room.

"Yes!" mused Clarence, "it is but too true; Lydia has nothing, I have nothing, and can expect nothing for the next ten years. What hope is there for Clarence and the beloved Lydia? None!" and he rushed from the house.

It was the time when Hungary sought to throw off the Austrian yoke, and establish a provisional government with Kossuth for its head, that the Emperor Nicholas of Russia, interposing in favor of Austria, sent a powerful army into Hungary; then, while that desolating war was raging, Clarence de Castello resolved to enter the Hungarian army. He knew his intercourse with Lydia must be broken off forever, and believing that neglect on his part would cause her to cease to care for him, he constantly avoided her, and when by chance he was thrown in her way, his manner was cold and indifferent. But he was now to leave Prussia, perhaps never to return; and when it came to the departure, although he had steeled his bosom to the task, he could not go without seeing Lydia. He hastened to her dwelling, and was passing the back of the house, when a figure flitted across the lawn; he stood and watched: it entered a little bower, and as it turned, he recognized Lydia, — her movements were languid, and the cheek pale. His first impulse was to rush towards her, but instantly the thought arose, "What consolation can I offer? My income will never cease to be a precarious one, and how could I drag Lydia, who is so well fitted for better things, into poverty! How could I love thee and offer thee penury?" Lydia's head now drooped, and the face was buried in the folds of the black robe. "Oh, Lydia! you are wretched! but then we must consider for a lifetime not for the present moment, and mother may be right, — it may be that you can cease to love me, you may soon listen to the words of another, and if Lydia is happy, I shall be also." He turned away, and endeavoring to control the feelings struggling within, he joined his comrades, and set out for Hungary, to aid the oppressed in the cause of freedom.

## CHAPTER XXVI.

"I am a little man,  
But little men can love; and I have pour'd  
The passion of my soul into her ear,—  
Now she consents; and oh, my joy is full;  
For, from to-morrow's noon not one can say  
A poor, forlorn, old bachelor I lay."

"A LETTER from Van Diemen's Land!" exclaimed Susan, as she rushed into the presence of Mrs. Gilbert, and startled the poor old lady out of her afternoon nap; "so at last the old sinner has really condescended to write, and I'm sorry the man has come to light, for now the wedding won't take place, and I could have made more off that Barrow than I ever can out of him; however, it can't be helped, and remember, old woman, I expect to come in for my share of the profits. I'm glad I let Anna write to him, for it's directed to her, so must be an answer; why, it's very heavy."

"Oh, but Susan, pray don't open it! Perhaps he is on his way home, and will ask Anna whether we have been kind or not; so let us give it to her, for we had better begin to be very good to her now, and I think the best thing would be to advertise for some of those foreign professors, because when her father sees their long beards and moustaches, it will seem as though we educated her as he desired. Oh, dear! what account can we give him if he comes." Susan was now upon the stairs calling aloud, "Anna, make haste and come, that affectionate father of yours has written at last, the old hypocrite."

"Darling, we always wished to be very kind to you," said the old lady as Anna entered, while with a bewildered air, she arose and took the cold hands within her long fingers.

"Yes, Anna," added Susan rather flippantly, "I always thought a great deal of you, and when I've been cross, it has only been because it's natural to me to take those violent turns, I know I'm very subject to them."

"Very subject;" said the old lady with a sigh.

"But Anna, why don't you open the letter?" continued Susan in an impatient tone; "you stand staring at the envelope as though you never saw one before."

"Oh, Susan you've forgotten to be kind;" whispered Mrs. Gilbert.

"Come, Anna dear," resumed the vehement woman in an

altered tone, let me read it, I know you feel excited poor girl, and so should I, only I'm not quite as sensitive."

She snatched the letter from Anna, and tore it open.

"Merciful powers! has it come to that? Why, I never knew anything like it. What impudence to make one pay the postage just for that!" and dashing the papers upon the floor, she rushed from the room.

"Oh, is he dead?" cried Anna, as she lifted the scattered papers and sat down to read. But a disappointment met her anxious gaze, and she burst into tears. All the envelope contained was the old letters returned. Secreting these in her bosom, she carried them to the privacy of her own little room, for as she had but one correspondent in the world it was no trifling matter for the little recluse to have a letter directed to her.

"Well Anna, I suppose you thought you would hear your father was coming back a rich nabob, and that you would nicely get rid of Barrow;" said Susan, tauntingly, as she met Anna upon the stairs; "but you see you were mistaken, and at last will be glad enough to have the poor miserable decrepit. Ha! ha! you find Susan's word come true."

"It makes no difference," said Anna calmly, "I'm quite willing to be married, Susan, for I really don't care what becomes of me."

"And I'm sure I don't," repeated Susan to herself as she closed the door of her room, "that is, when once the marriage is over, and I have a firm footing within that house; for then you can die of your despair as soon as you like. And I must not forget that no credit is due to Sally Pyke, for I've had all the trouble of the tiresome old fellow, and so I mean to take good care that she gains nothing for her pains. Well, matters are just happening as I wished, and after all, I shall be a fortunate creature for that Sally Pyke to envy. But I must go, the sooner the thing is settled, the better for me." For a wonder, her toilet occupied but little time on this occasion, and "Miss Susan Jemima Gilbert" was soon announced at the door of Robert Barrow, Esq.

"Well sir, you see I've come to inquire after you myself;" and placing a chair by the bed, she began to scrutinize the little object before her. "I should have been here before, Mr. Barrow, but poor Anna has suffered so much ever since your misfortune, that I was obliged to remain at home in order to console the dear child; the thought of losing you has made her so melancholy."

"Has it, indeed? Well, I thought so; for she would not have come to see me if she had not cared a great deal for me."

"Of course not; and for her sake I hope you will recover before long. How soon do you suppose your poor flesh may heal?"

"Oh — why — well — you see —"

"La, mercy! no sir, thank you, I don't wish to see —"

"You see, I often have a relapse."

"Oh, exactly sir, yes, certainly, of course you do, I understand. But why do you wait to get well, sir? Surely you can't care so much for a ceremonious wedding, with a great parade, if it were plain and quiet, it would afford as much comfort in the end."

"Then could I be married in bed?" with joyful surprise.

"What's to hinder you, when you are not able to get up?"

"Oh, it shall be to-morrow! Yes, to-morrow!"

"Very well, sir, then that is arranged; and you'll find it a great comfort to have a wife, as you are so ill, for certainly a bedridden bachelor is one of the most forlorn spectacles on this stage of existence, and I'm very glad it is in my power to relieve you, sir."

"Thank you, Miss Gilbert, you are very kind, Miss Gilbert, thank you."

"Perfectly welcome, sir; to-morrow at twelve we shall be here: good-day, sir."

It was now twilight; Anna was sitting in Alfred's little room, a spot where she often loved to linger, and picture to her fancy the beloved form that had so long enlivened those narrow limits with its joyous spirit; suddenly the door was thrown open, and Susan stood before her.

"You must have heard me, Anna, I know you stay up here on purpose to give me the trouble of coming up all these stairs; come down instantly, I've been to Barrow, and it's to be at twelve o'clock to-morrow, so you must make haste and finish that embroidery for me;" and she turned to go.

"Susan, what do you mean?" and as Anna caught hold of her dress she looked imploringly into the face of the angry woman.

"Didn't you say you were willing to be married?" and becoming more infuriated she seized the affrighted girl by the shoulders. "Anna, it's of no use for you to make another ado about it, you've given your consent, and now if I have to drag you through the streets to-morrow, married to old Barrow you shall be;" and tearing herself from the nervous grasp, Susan descended to the tea-table, and finding all prepared to her sat-

isfaction, concluded it would be best to leave Anna entirely to herself until the morning.

It was nearly midnight, and Mrs. Gilbert and Susan were soundly sleeping, when the bell rang violently; the old lady was the first to awake, and believing it to be a mistake, troubled herself no more about it, until the ringing was repeated, when, fearing the wire would be broken, she immediately aroused her daughter: "Susan, who can it be at the bell at this hour of the night?"

"How should I know? Some intoxicated fellow, I suppose, who can't find his own door, men are always at something;" and she settled herself to sleep again to dream of the morrow.

"But Susan — the bell will be ruined."

"And what if it is? Is't Anna to be married to-morrow?"

"Yes, it must be some one very much intoxicated," resumed the old lady, "I dare say Mr. Long used to make just such a noise at Sally Pyke's door; yes, men are very troublesome creatures. There's the bell again,—dear me, what can the fellow want here? Susan, I think I shall get up."

"Well, why don't you, instead of talking about it," and she rather roughly assisted the tottery old lady from the high, old-fashioned bedstead, to the floor.

Having gained her footing, Mrs. Gilbert unbolted the door, and going to the foot of the stairs called in a loud tone,—“Anna, there's a drunken man at the door, get up and send him away, for I'm afraid to go.”

Anna soon appeared, her face was bathed in tears, and as the lamp light fell upon her the pale countenance wore a most wretched expression.

"What is it ma'am?" inquired she through her tears.

"Why, don't you hear him at the door? go dear, and send him away." She looked over the baluster as Anna descended to unfasten the door, and soon she saw it open, when the tall, stout figure of a man pressed forward into the passage.

"Oh, Susan! he has come into the house! I think I hear him say 'Miss Gilbert—' perhaps Mr. Long didn't die, and he's come to see you. How shall we turn out such a great fellow?"

"Then it can't be Mr. Long, for he was very short and thin."

By this time Susan was at the head of the stairs, and in a commanding voice screamed, "Anna, why don't you send him away?" But as she descended she beheld Anna enfolded in the arms of the stranger.

"What can Anna mean?" escaped the affrighted old lady,

"perhaps she has agreed to go away with some one, or could it be Alfred on stilts? boys are always in mischief."

"Let her alone, sir," said Susan, going up to the stranger.

"Anna, how can you allow it? Stop instantly, or I'll have you both turned into the street."

The stranger paid no attention to her words, but continued to enwrap the slender form of Anna within the folds of his cloak, while he repeated,—*"My Cecile's child, my own Anna!"*

"Mercy upon us!" exclaimed Susan as she flew up the stairs. "Why it's their father! the very man himself! Where's my new morning gown, and French cap I bought at the fair? and where could I have put those Turkish slippers? Go old woman, and ask Anna for my gamboge cord and tassels."

"Susan, what shall we do?" returned the terrified old lady, "there's nothing in the larder but a little piece of coarse, raw beef, a roll and a lemon; for you know, Susan, you ate all that toast, and the five eggs for your tea. Bless my soul! nothing in the house, he'll certainly find out how we've starved them; and he has always paid so well, in fact you know, Susan, he owes us nothing, for he sent so much the last three times as to be free from debt for the next six months; but you would not take my advice," bursting into tears, "you would spend it all upon yourself, and with all that fine dress you see you couldn't catch Mr. Everett. But what will he say when he hears we employ no counsel for Alfred, and he always sending a good round sum, that would cover all such expenses? And what is even worse, Anna being engaged to that bedridden Barrow, and the parson engaged and everything to be there at twelve to-morrow! Why, Susan Gilbert, it will be a great wonder if he doesn't have us both imprisoned!"

"Well, it can't be helped now, and don't keep up such a clatter for I want to remember where I put my cord and tassels; it's necessary I should be dressed, because he's a widower."

"But we ought to have some refreshment, Susan. I'll go and roast the beef and make some lemonade;" and the poor old lady began to totter down the kitchen stairs.

In due time Susan's toilet was made, and descending, she found the stranger (who was none other than Mr. Wentworth,) had entered the parlor, and laid the unconscious Anna upon a couch. Taking a seat opposite the gentleman, Susan began to fan herself, waiting undoubtedly for some attention from the guest, but perceiving he was wholly engrossed watching the fainting girl, she threw down the fan, and approaching the couch became very assiduous in her endeavors for restoring her. Soon

there was a great crash in the passage, then followed a pause, after which the door opened, and the old lady entered bearing a tray that contained two slices of raw beef burnt black at the edges, upon a dish that would have accommodated many dozen such pieces, a few broken glasses, a roll, and a large earthen pitcher, which, from the yellow peelings swimming at the top, must have been meant to contain an imitation of a beverage styled lemonade. Such was the agitated state of the poor old lady's nerves, that the whole kept up a continued clatter, until, as she reached the table, her strength seemed exhausted, and the tray fell from her hands with a noise that shook the room. She then stood for several minutes, looking first at the table, then at the stranger; and at last having summoned the courage, said in a tremulous voice,

"Will you please come up to the table, sir?"

"No;" was the abrupt answer, and again he turned his attention to the couch.

Mr. Frank Wentworth was about fifty; there was much that was austere and commanding in his glance and manner, and a very slight resemblance between himself and his children seemed to exist. He was a man of few words, still there was about him the bearing of a gentleman. During the many years of his stay in Australia, he had not once known trouble, until two months previous, when a malignant fever laid him prostrate in a hospital. It was then he thought of his past life, and notwithstanding his public career was one of the strictest integrity, his private history he blushed to recall; and after expending a liberal fortune among false friends, not one came forward in the hour of need to comfort and cheer; and as he thought of those whose fascination and wit had so long captivated his fancy, he saw farther back, vividly engraven upon the tablet of his memory, the image of one who had left her home and kindred, to follow him far across the seas to a distant clime. He saw again the still chamber where the sorrowing little ones clung to the bed of the dying. Again the full, dark eye around which the film of death was fast gathering, was turned upon him, as she committed her darlings to his tender care; and he heard again the low words of the vows he had breathed into her ear. How had he kept that promise? But why repine, while remorse consumed the very soul? Perhaps life remained to him, wherein he might, in his acts of the future, make retribution for the past. He was told the hour when the crisis would come to decide for him life or death. It came—he recovered; and as soon as strength was given, set sail for the home of his children. Still,

there was the obdurate, unyielding will, the consequential air of self-confidence, until as the invalid girl returned to consciousness, he heard the tale of woe, and learned the anguish of a sister's soul; then the whole man, before erect in its self-importance, bowed under the weight of overwhelming grief.

Two days had passed, and as Anna recovered, she saw the anxiety Mrs. Gilbert and Susan manifested as they dreaded she might expose their treatment; and as their distress troubled her, she took the diamond ring bestowed by the singular Barrow, and giving it to Susan, declared she would not mention their unkindness, or the name of Barrow, to her father.

Anna now had a guardian and a protector, but her trials were not at an end, for one greater than any hitherto was about to visit her.

Upon communicating with the authorities of the prison, Mr. Wentworth found their books in some disorder, occasioned by the confusion caused by a recent fire in the building; but there was a short record of Alfred, and what was it? He had been ill and had not eaten for several days, and on the morning previous to Mr. Wentworth's inquiry, the jailer found the food still untouched; he spoke to him, but received no answer; on entering the cell, he approached the body, it was cold, and lifeless! In such abodes as these, there is little respect paid to the dead. Who feels for the pauper and the stranger? When influence and gold are not there to bribe, who cares for the friendless and unknown? At night-fall, when the gloomy shadows cast their darkened shade over the vault of the prison where rest the earthly remains of those whose feeble strength being inadequate to their temptation, had suffered them thus to fall, when the last ray of light was faded, the prison shroud was wrapped round that form, which rough hands hastily placed in the deal coffin, and carried it to the vault. Few indeed were the prayers, and fewer the regrets that accompanied it, as they lowered it down into its dark, damp resting-place. No tear fell to smooth the rough plank that formed his pillow, but let us hope that some link in the chain of humanity that binds man to man was touched to vibrate a chord within, and cause a sigh to be wafted by the chill air over the tomb of the departed.

The body was sent for, that the last rites might be paid by the sorrowing relations. It came.

An opiate had been administered to Anna, and she slept; Mr. Wentworth descended to the parlor and opened the door. In the centre of the room was a pall, and he gazed long upon it. Then the hands were uplifted to heaven, and as the overwhelming of an agonized soul, the words broke forth,—

"Oh, my son, my own child, my Alfred! And thou hast suffered for my sin! Oh, thy father is sorely punished in this affliction! Would that I could have died for thee, and not thy innocent head bowed with the disgrace that I alone should have borne! Oh, my son, would that I could have died for thee!" He leaned against the wall, and the proud man yielded himself to his sorrow. "Alfred, my Cecile's beautiful boy, can it be that those limbs lie stiff and cold within those narrow confines? Oh, Alfred! And yet Cecile, I did love thee, and often when about to yield to temptation, a sudden recollection of thee would repel me for a moment, but then an invisible power hurried me onward, driving the weak resolution far behind, and soon the fascinations around me threw the veil of oblivion over thy image. And couldst thou, my own beloved Cecile, look down from those angelic abodes to know all that has passed here, what tears, what anguish would be thine! But no, sainted Cecile, thy rest is in paradise, and no cloud of sin and sorrow may enter to darken the everlasting light that radiates thy glorious home. Yet, why wast thou snatched from me? Thy love and thy counsel alone could keep me from the evil! And now whither shall I go for comfort? It is said there is a balm for every wound, but that is to be found at the Mercy Seat of Christ, and what do I know of religion? Not once has this knee bent in prayer since I looked for the last time upon the countenance of Cecile. But it is not too late even now; here, by the coffin of my neglected child, I will pour out my spirit, and He whose ear is ever open to the prayer of the penitent will, through the merits of His Son, hear even me also!"

Prostrate upon the floor of that chamber, humble as a little child he poured forth the anguish of his soul, and craved for pardon; then he stood and gazed upon the pall before him. He had imagined much of Alfred; — the countenance of Anna was not striking, although the expression was that of a gentle and submissive spirit, yet the impress of sorrow was so deeply engraven there, as to throw a gloom over the whole, and shade all that might otherwise have rendered the face attractive; but in Alfred, he pictured a youth of fine proportions, in whom the beauty of Cecile was united with his own strength and vigor. He unscrewed the coffin lid, and his tears fell upon the face of the corpse. What did he behold? A mass of decomposition, without one lineament of the countenance remaining on which his eye could rest. Encasing again the mouldering body, once more the strong will gave vent to tears; then he checked the

manifestation of grief, that he might return to the couch of the sufferer.

The day of the trial arrived, when the cherished remains must be laid in their last resting-place. Anna arose for the first time during her illness, and Susan assisted her in putting on the garb of mourning. Mr. Wentworth then led her to the parlor, where the reverend doctor stood ready to read the funeral service. As they were about to convey the body from the room, Anna arose and approached it, and would have detained the men who were bearing it, but it had been deemed best that she should not see the body, and the weeping girl was led from the scene.

"Anna," said Mr. Wentworth one evening, as he placed a small package in her hands, "here is something which, through all my dissipation I have never agreed to part with; take it and keep it, I have no other reliot of her except this," producing a small locket containing the likeness of his wife. "I'm sorry I've no better portrait of your mother, but I might have had, and—" he left the sentence unfinished, while his countenance told of the remorse that was working within.

Anna was about to relieve him by telling of the portrait that still hung in the house of Robert Barrow, but it would be the key to all she had solemnly promised to keep secret; so, throwing her arms round the neck of her father, she only wiped away the tear that rested on his cheek. He arose, and taking a little key from a bunch, placed it upon the package, and left the room. The treasure was a casket of jewels; there were necklaces, bracelets, rings, and a diamond cross of rare value, under which lay a note in her mother's handwriting acknowledging to her husband the gift of the jewel. Anna had scarcely begun to look over the treasures, when Susan, tapping gently at the door, entered and said, "A stranger is down stairs, Anna, waiting to see you."

On descending Anna found a venerable man, deeply furrowed by care and age, who, bowing respectfully, thus addressed her;—

"I come, Miss Wentworth, to solicit a favor. Will you be so kind as to accompany me, and visit a young man who desires to see you; my son is a stranger to you, but please don't refuse." Seeing the speaker was much affected, Anna desired him to be seated and rest awhile. "No, thank you," replied he, "I must not linger, for my haste is urgent. Do please, young lady, com-

ply with my earnest request — come, I ask only your presence at my dwelling."

"Well, please wait one moment, I will have some one accompany me."

"Oh, no, you must come alone with me, I assure you, young lady, my intentions are none but the most honorable, and deep affliction alone prompts my requests."

The trembling hand brushed away the fast falling tears, and as Anna looked into the troubled countenance, anxious to hear her decision, she could hesitate no longer, and smothering her fears, hastily dressed, and left the house to accompany the mysterious stranger. After pursuing their way through many a dreary street, while her companion never spoke, Anna became alarmed, and inquired if they had much further to go. He made no answer. Night was fast gathering round them, and the streets were dark and lonely; still she followed her guide, hoping every turning would be the last; but finding no prospect of a termination, she began to regret having set out, and to consider what she should do. It did not seem possible there could be any design in the matter, and though his silence puzzled her, the sorrow-stricken countenance could be no counterfeit, nor his agitated manner a disguise; and yet if there were no mystery, or secret planning in the affair, why should he positively affirm that none of her household might accompany her? Surely she had been rash in proceeding thus far through a part of the city with which she was wholly unacquainted, for some unknown end. They had now reached a bustling neighborhood, where a crowded populace of the poor and wretched of a large city, thronged the thoroughfares. As Anna looked upon the countenances, some wore the impress of sickness and poverty, while others evinced a callous nature, bearing the stamp of debauchery and crime. Their way was much impeded by the crowd, and at last she missed her companion. She turned to retrace her steps when a firm hand was placed upon her arm, and on looking round she beheld her guide again beside her. He led her after him, and she had no power to resist. At last as her excitement increased, she stood still, and refusing to proceed further, cried, "Let me go, indeed I can follow you no longer!"

"Oh, I shall not let you go till I have done with you, then I will see you home; you could not go alone through the dark streets at this late hour; yet, if you leave me now you shall go unprotected — think how far I have come for you." As he gazed earnestly upon her, she saw the tears were still rolling in rapid succession down the furrowed cheeks. "Young lady," con-

tinued the venerable man, "if you do not follow me you may regret it to the day of your death. Come, it is the last request two fellow creatures will ever ask of you or of any one. Again I assure you, there is nothing to apprehend, mine is the abode of poverty, but there is also —" his voice faltered, and amid the din of the street, his words were lost.

Still undecided, Anna again followed him while he retained a firm hold of her arm, and led her after him. Turning into a narrow street, he entered a dark passage, and after groping their way to the end, he led her up a flight of steep steps into a house where a lamp, suspended from the ceiling, threw a dim light over the passage. Closing the door, and placing himself against it, the stranger grasped the shoulders of the trembling girl, and whispered in an excited manner, "Promise me upon your life, that you will never divulge to any living being, what you will witness within these walls. Promise solemnly, or you shall never leave this roof."

Anna promised.

"And you must also be willing to comply with any request that may be made; no money will be demanded of you, gold would be nothing to us now. Will you grant what I ask?"

"I will."

"Then follow me, and no harm shall happen to you." He led the way up several dark flights of stairs, Anna groping her way after him, and at last coming to a stand, lighted a match and unfastening a padlock, threw open a door. It disclosed a small, irregularly built apartment, the atmosphere of which was close and fetid. On a table in the centre burned a taper that cast its faint glimmerings over the chamber. Upon a bed under a window, a human form appeared, concealed beneath the coverlid; then a chair, a few trunks, and the dying embers upon the hearth, were about all the room contained. Having secured the door, her guide approached the bed, and throwing aside the coverlid, said,

"Claudius, my son, Miss Wentworth is here — while you are able, lose no time."

A young man, emaciated almost to a skeleton, arose upon his elbows, and looked with a bewildered air round the room. The black hair fell in heavy clusters over the pale face, which was exceedingly intelligent, as the full, dark eyes shone brightly, while they looked up as though in search of something. Taking the hand of Anna, the old man led her to the side of the bed, and placing for her the only chair the room afforded, fell upon his knees and buried his face in the coverlid.

"Miss Wentworth," began the invalid, "you behold before

you a dying man, and one who could not leave this world without seeing you, to impart a painful truth." Here his eyes shone with a brighter lustre, and a hectic flush overspread the palid countenance. "You may have heard of Claudius Hunt. I was employed in the same firm as your brother Alfred, and I cannot tell you how much I loved that youth — but I must be brief. You know the pretty Kate, she has spoken to you of our intimacy — she appeared contented with all I could offer, but had no sooner consented to the union, than she began to be dissatisfied, and was constantly urging me for more; while goaded almost to frenzy by her solicitations for higher prospects, the billiard table arrested my notice — its fascinations soon robbed me of all upright and honest principles. I had lost much and gained nothing — I sought to replenish, determining that when once out of debt and difficulty, I would never enter upon such a course again. I obtained the key of the safe of our firm. I know not what I took — I did not at the time, but I intended, when my means should allow, to replace it, every penny. I might have left the key in the lock, but in my madness I ran about the office not knowing what to do with it. All but me had left for luncheon, yet several coats were hanging near me. I deposited the key in the pocket of one, and fled to relieve myself of the money; and oh, my wretchedness, when the morning disclosed that it was upon Alfred I had inflicted the wound. I would have given worlds to have gone forward and acknowledged the truth, as I saw the innocent youth suspected and condemned; but for this I had no courage, I only looked upon the scene, to know it was Alfred, and that I was wretched. And when I heard he was in prison I learned he was an orphan with a sister, an only friend; oh, I could not describe what I felt for you! But my poor aged father has acknowledged the whole for me, and Alfred will be released to you; and I have but two wishes before I die — that something might be done for my father's providence, — for he has reduced himself to penury to assist his unworthy son — and Alfred's forgiveness."

"No, my son," murmured the old man, "I have not acknowledged your sin to the authorities, I could not! I would I could die with you, oh my poor boy!"

"Oh, have you not told then? Go immediately —"

"No matter," replied Anna as her tears fell fast, "Alfred is happy — think only of yourself, young man. Our Alfred no longer partakes of the troubles of this life, he is at rest in the mansions of the redeemed, and while time is left to you, prepare to meet him."

"Oh, but I wanted his forgiveness — and he is dead!" He sunk back upon his pillow, and the sorrowing old man bathed the temples with a tenderness that touched Anna to the heart, for his deep emotion told too plainly how severe was his affliction; while as he bent over his son he often whispered "Claudius, speak to me!"

The young man rallied again, and fixed his eyes intently upon Anna. Kneeling down that he might hear her words, she promised to manifest her forgiveness by attending to the maintenance of his aged father, and inquired whether he desired to see a clergyman; to which he replied, that he had wished first to be reconciled to Alfred, then to send for the minister he had known from his boyhood. "And if I live until to-morrow," added he, "Alfred's innocence and my guilt shall be made known, for then I shall see one of my employers. But I am not guilty now! No, I am forgiven — God is merciful — I no longer fear death!"

There was a gentle knock at the door, and a tall, stout gentleman in black entered.

"Oh, sir, you are come!" cried Claudius, as he caught the hand of the stranger, "I did not expect you until to-morrow."

As well as his feeble strength would allow, he made a full confession of the embezzlement, and pointing to Anna, told who she was, why she wore that garb of mourning, and that he was the assassin of the innocent Alfred. The gentleman who had known him from childhood was much moved by the recital, and bade him seek the pardon of a higher power than his, which he readily offered; and promising to call the next day, taking the hand of Anna he left the room.

His carriage was waiting in the street, and as he accompanied Anna home, the scene they had left, and the beloved Alfred, were subjects of interesting converse to both.

## CHAPTER XXVII.

"Who thinks that fortune cannot change her mind,  
Prepares a dreadful jest for all mankind.  
And who stands safest? tell me is it he  
That spreads and swells in puff'd prosperity?"  
"Men are the sport of circumstances, when  
The circumstances seem the sport of men."

In her room and alone, stood Lydia; beside her were the well packed trunk and valise, ready for her departure, for

as the Count had said, they had lost their claim to the property through the death of Charles, and although they had rented the house and employed every means of gaining a livelihood together, it was found necessary that the widow and Carlotta should again part with the affectionate Lydia, who had accepted an engagement as governess in a family a few miles distant.

The loss of Charles was a sorrow most keenly felt, and severe and heavy was the blow that had fallen upon that little circle. As Lydia grieved over his memory she thought too of the strange, abstracted manner which Clarence had manifested of late, and lastly of his going away without saying so much as good-by, and to-day, as she was about to leave her room, to enter again upon the world without, the mirror reflected the sorrowful face and tearful eyes, and at the sight of them she sat down and bursting into tears exclaimed —

"And they are an index of my heart. Oh, Clarence! Clarence! Could it be that you cared for me only for worldly gain? And yet it is true, for when all hope of that was gone, you even shunned me; and Lydia too would be indifferent if she could. But no! while life lasts, she will remain unchanged, and wherever you may wander, the heart of Lydia will go with you, and her prayers to heaven for you will continue earnest as ever! Oh, none can fill the vacancy you have left! Oh, Clarence, come back to me!" There came a knock at the door, and as she looked up, Estelle stood before her. They had often met of late, but Lydia never inquired after Clarence, and Estelle had too much feeling to introduce the subject, so that his name was never mentioned. Drawing her to a seat, and encircling her arms about Lydia, she began, —

"Why Lyddie, love, you must be trying to imagine you're the most wretched being in the world. Now let me tell you a story. Not very long ago, a friend of ours named Selina was engaged to Oscar, the son of the Baron de —. Selina was nothing but an ordinary girl, (although he did not seem to think so,) but to picture Oscar, you must imagine a noble, generous nature, a perfect type of true greatness. Well, it was the bridal morning, and the happy Selina alighted at the door of the little cathedral, and entered the porch where she met Oscar; he looked pale and agitated, and said in a trembling voice, 'Selina, I must speak with you.' The church was crowded, and with difficulty they passed to the side of the vestibule where it was more secluded. 'Selina,' said he with much emotion, 'I love you too well to deceive you — I have a wife already!' She looked at him in wild despair for a moment,

then turned suddenly to leave him. He conjured her to hear him, and he would explain; but she scarcely heard his words, and passing quickly up the aisle, to the astonishment of her friends, said to the clergyman who was waiting at the altar, 'There will be no wedding to-day, sir;' then rushing from the edifice, followed by her bewildered friends, cried 'Take me home ere I die.'

"She was ill, but recovered to learn something in the history of Oscar, which she did not know before.

"Two years previous, while visiting in Wirtemberg, he made the acquaintance of a young lady who, it is said, can, when she desires, render herself exceedingly fascinating. Now Oscar's parents were solicitous for the happiness of their son, and were willing to receive into their midst the portionless girl; but many knew she was not virtuous, and that her character was by no means without much blemish; accordingly, Oscar's friends bade him beware, and well investigate the matter. The lady heard of this, and in a paroxysm of grief, threw herself upon her knees before him, and with many tears pleaded innocent to the charge, and reproached him for his suspicion. The tender sympathy of Oscar was touched, and incapable of thinking ill of her, he raised her from the floor, and wiping away the tears, declared he believed her faultless, and that no third person should ever interpose. Soon after, they were married. The wedding took place at six o'clock in the morning, as they had many miles to travel before night-fall. They had not gone far, when she inquired minutely into his personal affairs, and upon hearing his exact income, appeared greatly astonished, and declared she had been grossly deceived. She became much excited, and greatly enraged. He bade her calm herself, but she defied him to control her, and upon reaching the first station, was exceedingly insolent, and started to return home. Oscar followed. On reaching her friends, she declared, as she threw herself into a fit of weeping, that Oscar's behavior had been intolerable, and that she was determined to have no more to do with him. Oscar saw no more of her during the month he remained in Wirtemberg, still thinking she would relent and desire to return to him. But to his astonishment he received a note from her, stating that they were now finally separated. He applied for a divorce, but she was no where to be found, and consequently he must live a single life; this he was content to do, until he loved Selina, when he yielded himself a prey to despondency. His anxious friends in reasoning with him declared that in the sight of heaven he was free, and at liberty to

marry Selina, and advised him never to mention his former connection; this he resolved to do, but when it came to the last, his devotion to the young girl, forbade his keeping it a secret. While Selina was ill, as she refused to see him, he believed she had heard and credited the false story of the inconstant Fritzine, and seeking a means of dissipating his melancholy, he accompanied his family on a tour. His father has died, and now Oscar is a baron, and the unhappy Selina has been told that he has found, in France, a talented young actress, who is noted for her virtues and striking beauty, to supply her place."

Estelle's tears flowed fast as she concluded, and with a faint smile she added, "Selina is part of my name; now Lydia knows why Estelle must sometimes be miserable."

"Lottie," said the widow as she stood looking out from a window, "go and tell Lydia Mr. Everett will soon be here for her, I see his chaise coming up the street."

She had scarcely finished speaking, when the tall, straight figure had alighted and stood in the hall.

"Well, Mrs. Villiers, I was sorry to hear you were about to part with Lydia again, but we must trust these trials are for our good."

Wherever the young clergyman had been travelling, certainly it must have afforded him no great pleasure, and no possible benefit, for the face which had grown much thinner, was exceedingly pale, and the expression unusually sad. He sat down, and with a sigh continued, "It must be a great source of anxiety to have a daughter so young and with Lydia's attractions, too, thrown upon the world, with but little idea of the evil that is in it."

"Yes; to me Lydia is attractive, but mothers are not the most impartial judges, you know; I can't tell how she impresses others."

"But I can," and the face was suddenly brightened by a smile, "Lydia possesses great power of fascination, and perhaps is of too unsuspicious and confiding a nature to use much penetration in selecting her friends. Yes, Lydia is truly captivating, and when you once acquaint yourself with the goodness and purity of the soul within, you must be callous indeed if not drawn towards her."

Mr. Everett had never said so much before, and the widow was astonished. Had he cared for Lydia and refrained from acknowledging it because of Charles? Strange man! And

Lydia was now portionless and unprotected; but then Lydia had declared she never could love Mr. Everett, so what was the mother's hope? She must be patient, and wait for time to do its work.

Estelle and Lydia now entered. "Mr. Everett," said the latter, cheerfully, as she hastened to take the extended hand, "I wish you would forget to be punctual when you are about to drag me away on such occasions."

"But you will trust me to be as punctual in bringing you back when the happy time arrives."

But little more was said, for that word which says so much of parting and meeting again must be spoken. "Farewell" and "adieu" will answer for the coquette and the novel, but where is the word that speaks so much to the heart as the old "good-by?"

During the drive, Lydia endeavored to be cheerful and conversant, but it was evident her companion was sad, and it was useless to endeavor to draw him out of himself. They arrived at their destination, and when Lydia took the proffered hand, the icy touch startled her. She was about to make a remark — he was gone.

She was shown into a spacious and elegant mansion, where, although the parents appeared cold and austere, the engaging manners of the children as they led her away to her room, seemed to throw a degree of home-feeling over her reception. Her pupils were three dear little girls, to whom she soon became much attached, and as she avoided all opportunities of brooding in solitude, she seldom failed in her attempts to appear cheerful and happy; ever ready to render a service to any, the young governess soon became a favorite in the family.

"Miss Villiers," said one of the children one morning as they met in the breakfast room, we want you to accompany us to a *matinée* at twelve o'clock; *ma* is not going, but we may have the carriage and go with you, — that is, if you are willing, and you won't refuse, will you?"

Though little inclined for the opera, the appointed hour found Lydia in readiness, and while her thoughts were constantly turned to the battle field, tending the wounded and dying, she took her seat in the carriage, and endeavored to enter into the spirit of the occasion. They had several miles to go, but they drove rapidly, and when they reached the house, the inner doors were not open, while the throng that pressed the entrance gave indication of a crowded house. They alighted, and took their place among the rest. Near them stood two ladies

who appeared not only to know the whole pedigree of all who drove up to the door, but also seemed to deem this opportunity of informing their friends of the same; they conversed fluently in French, and in a sufficiently loud tone of voice for all near them to hear.

"There's the carriage of Count Castello," said one, "but see, Estelle is in deep mourning, — who is it for?"

"Why, didn't you hear poor Clarence was mortally wounded? I'm sorry for Estelle; they say they were very much attached; I suppose some one has dragged her here for a change. I must inquire who those persons are, with her."

"But do look!" said the other, "Why, I do declare there's that American minister, I never should have thought he attended the opera."

"Oh, yes, it is indeed Mr. Everett."

Lydia looked in the direction indicated, and found the speaker was right; but she scarcely gave him a second thought, and again she gazed upon the figure of Estelle, who had not yet alighted.

"Do tell me," continued one of the ladies, "what was it you said you heard about that clergyman?"

"Why, he is the one who has followed that Villiers girl from America. They say she doesn't care for him, but she was the fiancée of that young Castello, and now he has gone I suppose the minister thinks there is chance to hope, as she's only a poor governess; probably he heard she was coming, and took this opportunity of seeing her. I wish some one could show her to me, I've never seen this Miss Villiers."

Estelle, who had caught sight of Lydia, now alighted, and came towards her; she had accompanied an invalid relation to the springs in Germany, and Lydia had not heard from her during several weeks. And now they had no opportunity of speaking to each other, for the ladies before mentioned demanded the undivided attention of Estelle, and to the relief of Lydia they had sufficient consideration not to speak of Clarence. One of these now moved away in quest of Mr. Everett, and Estelle whispered to Lydia, "This celebrated singer we're to hear is the beauty Oscar admires so much, she has just come from France, I believe, — I should like to know whether *he* is here or not."

One of the ladies now came up with Mr. Everett. His eye instantly fell upon Lydia, and he said eagerly, —

"You are surprised to see me here, Miss Lydia, but the exquisite voice of this young artiste is the excuse I must plead."

"Oh, yes," rejoined one of the ladies, "the Baroness de Korsa is sufficient reason for the very elect to leave their penance, and hasten to hear her."

"I was not aware that was her name," said Mr. Everett, with some astonishment.

"Oh, I know she is always called Mlle. Sauvestre," observed the lady, "because there was some difficulty about the divorce between the baron and his first wife, and at present, I believe, this one cannot be acknowledged; I've heard she is very much attached to him, and when she is not appearing in public, leads a very secluded life."

Estelle caught the arm of Lydia, and turned away.

The doors were opened, and amid the eagerness for seats, and Lydia's anxiety to keep her young charge with her, the friends were separated.

Lydia had not been able to ascertain whether the young artiste on the present occasion was the Mlle. Sauvestre who, it had been reported, left for London some time previous; but she felt confident it was the same, when informed that the argument of the opera was originated by the young actress herself, and that the music was a selection she had made from all the favorite operas. Lydia took up the book to read the plot, but her attention was too much divided to fix it anywhere; she longed to tell Estelle how good and noble was the character of Beatrice, how pure and unsophisticated was the soul that lived beneath that dazzling exterior, how ardent was her love, and sincere her gratitude toward any who offered confidence and kindness; and with what earnestness could she have assured Estelle, that were there one beside herself worthy of Oscar, it would be Beatrice. And then Beatrice had suffered much, for the severest of all afflictions had laid its hand upon her; and who could tell what had been the cause of the misfortune?

Lydia was glancing over the argument when one part, which was in unison with her train of thought, because it was melancholy, attracted her attention. It was where the faithful wife was accused of infidelity; and to test her love, her consort with much connivance, feigned illness and death. He then is assured by her grief that her love is sincere, but must carry out the plot, and the funeral takes place, when amidst the agony and tears of the fond wife, the empty coffin is lowered into the grave. At one scene it is night, and attired in the habiliments of the widow, the sorrowing wife pursues her lonely way to the tomb, where, while she is with many tears strewing flowers over the grave, her husband approaches, and seeking forgiveness, bears the happy wife from the gloomy scene.

The curtain rose, and there stood Beatrice; here she was in the costume of a peasant girl, for which part she was well adapted, and she performed it admirably. She was less thin than before, and appeared to have gained much in health, as the cheeks were round and rosy; and as the color often faded for a moment, it was evident no cosmetics had been employed to enhance her beauty. Her voice seemed to have acquired a higher degree of perfection, the compass and power being more rare than ever before.

Scene after scene, and at last that of the cemetery. Slowly she approached, and lifting her veil stood to sing a requiem for the departed. So still was that crowded house, that it seemed the sigh she heaved might be heard at any part of it. Then came in low, but full, rich tones, the mournful strain; the eyes were raised, the natural tears flowed fast, the voice grew louder, then the spirit of the song died away, and as her eyes dropped, they fell upon some object among the audience before her; immediately the voice ceased, as she gazed intently upon it; then she appeared to recover herself, and attempted to proceed, but soon the voice ceased again, and with outstretched arms as if toward the object upon which her eyes were riveted, the lovely Beatrice uttered a shriek that pierced the house, and fell to the floor.

"I must go to her!" cried Lydia, as she clung closely to her charge.

"Oh, Miss Villiers, don't leave us," entreated the children; "you are so fond of helping those in distress, but you forget how forlorn we should be left here in this crowd. Let us go home now, as the opera will not be finished. I can see papa standing on a seat, looking for us. Do come!"

In a state of half-consciousness, Lydia suffered herself to be carried on with the crowd, she saw no more of Estelle, and soon she was seated in the carriage, driving far away from — Beatrice.

On reaching home Lydia found the following letter from Carlotta.

"DEAR SISTER, MINE: — Something rather romantic has happened, and although you will laugh at my lengthy epistle, I mean to give you the tale in full. Here it is.

"I was singing one evening to amuse Mr. Everett, when there came a ring at the bell, and a dark, odd-looking little man in a black cloak that would have fitted an individual twice his size, entered and asked to see 'the ladies.' What Mr. Everett

might have thought his words insinuated, I can't tell, but I know he very soon disappeared.

"'Good evening, ma'am — good evening, Miss,' said the little gentleman with a profound bow at the parlor door, 'a cold evening — a very cold evening — exceedingly cold.' He was silent a few moments, while he glanced with his sharp, little eyes from one to the other, his lips quivering as though anxious to proceed. Then in rapid succession came the words, 'you have seen me before, madam — yes, Miss — I'm positive — you've seen me before.'

"'Very likely, sir, but we do not remember.'

"'No, no — of course not — oh well — that's of no importance, none at all — oh no. Well, ladies, I've a little matter to state — I will begin at once — but of course you wish to know who I am. Now it's of no use for me to tell you my name, you would only forget it — for I'm sorry to say it's very long and very harsh to the ear. How my forefathers came by it, is more than I know — was more than they knew themselves most likely — however, that is nothing to our present purpose — nothing at all. Well, ma'am I am a lawyer — and I have a son — yes, miss — it's true, glancing at me, 'bachelor as I look — I have a wife, yes — exactly; I think lawyers are in general supposed to be bachelors — however, it's true I have a son as I said before — and that is more to our present purpose, yes — exactly. Well, some little business has occurred, which I wished to communicate to you at the shortest notice — yes ma'am, exactly — the very shortest, or I shouldn't have driven at the rate of twelve miles an hour — on bad roads — at the risk of having the very vitals jolted out of me. However, I've received no injury — that is, no serious injury — no: and if I had, it would not have concerned you in the least — of course not! I don't expect anything of the kind, oh no; you only wish to know what brought me here — all very natural, and I don't wonder at all, not in the least. Oh no, but I must proceed, and pardon me if I am tedious. I know I am rather precise. Well, I and my son John were spending to-day at La Belle, it was an hour before luncheon, and my son John who has a remarkable appetite, was lounging from one room to another, anxiously waiting to hear the bell, which I believe was muffled on account of the illness of the mother of the lady Fritzone — and her indisposition is also the reason the wedding has been postponed — but that is nothing to us, though a great deal to them, I've no doubt. Well, as I said before, my boy John has an extraordinary appetite, and

likes to be amused, to pass away the time; so he said to that young Hermann (beg the gentleman's pardon — but forget his name) — "Let us come into this library, there's nothing I should like better than to ransack these old curiosities." They began to pull over the things, and in looking over the pamphlets Hermann exclaimed, "Now I'm here, I'll look for that poem I never succeeded in finding."

"'What sort of a looking affair is it?'

"'One of Shakspeare's in old English — and as you imagine yourself a better scholar than your friend, I'll let you translate it.'

"They both began to look, and my son John soon cried out, 'What in the name of wonder do you call this?'

"'What is it?'

"'I don't know, and I don't intend you shall tell me' — and away ran my son John and Hermann after him, but my John is very tall, not like me — oh no, ma'am — he resembles his mother — yes, very tall; well, before Herman reached him, he found me, and handed the paper to my astonished eyes — for there it was, plain as could be — a very codicil to the will of the late Sir Charles Villiers, of La Belle, near Halle. Now ladies, I don't pretend to say what's in it, but of course whatever it is, is worth having, or I shouldn't have spent the time and attention over it that I have — but that is nothing to you, certainly not ma'am, that is — I mean my trouble — however, there will be a gathering at La Belle on next Monday, so please be there at one o'clock when the codicil will be read. Yes, one o'clock — well — I think that is all I have to say. You may feel confident all is perfectly safe in my hands — and with as little expense to you as possible — for although lawyers are said to get to heaven at a very slow rate — there happen to be a few honest ones in the world — its quite true ma'am, for I'm one of those myself — but I like to be brief — you will be there with your three children — beg pardon ma'am, two children — yes, exactly; well good-night, ma'am — good evening Miss." And the little man was soon in his chaise, driving at the rate of his twelve miles an hour.

"Now Lyddie love, we shall expect you at home to-morrow, (Saturday.) Who knows what the codicil will unfold? Oh, Lyddie! Lyddie! And the beautiful La Belle may yet be ours! But while I think of it, I must state that Estelle has returned from the country, for the invalid aunt has died, leaving her and Clarence a very good fortune. She says her brother's wound is not likely to prove fatal, and as soon as he can be

moved he will be brought home. But as the little lawyer said after he had finished his long preamble, 'I like to be brief,' so will postpone all other news until you meet

"Your affectionate LOTTIE.

"Mamma's best love to her darling child."

It was a cold, frosty morning in the middle of March, and the appearance of La Belle in its mantle of snow, was not in the least uninviting, though, from the little evergreens in the grounds, to the turrets of the tower, all wore the same white crest that sparkled in its beauty as the sun-beams played upon the scene.

The clock in the tower chimed the hour of one; the voices in the drawing-room told it was well filled: without, with his hand upon the door, stood the sharp-eyed little lawyer, a roll of papers tied with pink tape was under one arm, while the three-cornered hat was under the other. He opened the door and entered, making his way in nervous haste through the profusion of silk and satin that impeded his progress; he took his seat, and placed his spectacles on his nose; every voice ceased, and the spacious apartment was without a sound. The little lawyer rose, and took a survey of the company. It was upon the eve of the wedding, and many friends of Fritzine were on a visit at La Belle, and although the fiancés would gladly have dispensed with their society, fearing some humiliating disclosures at the reading of the codicil, these could not be sent away, and to all appearance Fritzine was ill at ease. At last the quick little eyes of the lawyer fell upon the widow and her daughters; his lips moved, and had they been near enough, no doubt they would have heard the words, "Yes — exactly." The reading began —

"Whereas I, Charles Frederick Villiers of La Belle, in the Province of Halle, have made my last will and testament in writing, bearing date the sixteenth day of May, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and —, in, and by which, I have given and bequeathed to my grandson Charles F. Villiers the estate known and designated as La Belle. Now therefore, I do, by this my writing, which I hereby declare to be a codicil to my last will and testament, and to be taken as a part thereof, order and declare, that my will is, that I bequeath the estate of La Belle to the child of my deceased daughter, who was Deborah C. Villiers, together with eight hundred thousand thalers, if it is discovered to be a boy, if not, the estate

and annuity will be for a second institution for infirm bachelors. And after the remainder of my property has been disposed of, according to the statements in my will, the residue of my personal estate is to be divided among the children of my departed son Charles F. Villiers, instead of passing to the crown, as stated in my will.

And lastly, it is my desire that this codicil be annexed to, and made a part of my last will and testament, as aforesaid, to all intents and purposes. I die in the Protestant religion, with the hope of a glorious resurrection, Amen."

The little lawyer now approached Mrs. Villiers, and rubbing his hand violently together, said, "Good, very good — dear old gentleman — peace to his ashes."

Here a door opened and a female figure, partly in her night-clothes, partly in mourning attire, stood before them.

"Bless my soul," said the little lawyer, "what can be the matter?"

"Is it over?" inquired the mysterious creature in a faint, tremulous voice.

All looked at her in mute astonishment, and after waiting as if for an answer, she continued, "You should have waited for me, I could soon have dressed, why didn't you send for me? Who has a greater right to see Fritzine married, than her own mother?"

"Fritzine, make her go back to her room," said Hermann in an angry tone.

"Oh, mother, you've sadly forgotten yourself," and Fritzine with an indifferent air, arose and led the singular old lady from the scene.

Hermann became so infuriate that no one could reason with him, no room could contain him.

"Ladies," whispered the little lawyer, "I think it will not be pleasant for you here — if you return to the city, I will attend to everything for you, — yes, exactly, ma'am."

"Many thanks to you, sir. Can you tell us where Miss Eliza Villiers is now?"

"No, Madam, I cannot — although I know perfectly well, for she told me to keep it a secret, as she prefers to live in entire seclusion — she is, afraid, I believe, of her friends and relatives troubling her. Good day, ma'am — I shall see you again soon — Yes, exactly."

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

"It is the voice of years that are gone, they roll before me with all their deeds!"

"Oh Anna, whose likeness is that you seem to treasure so much?"

"Why pa, that's the Lydia I've spoken to you about."

"So that's the young lady you deem perfection itself, is it?"

"Well, almost; I know I love her too well to be quite contented away from her; but dear pa, if you only knew Miss Villiers, you would not wonder at any one making an idol of her."

"Villiers, is that her name?" He took up the likeness again, and scrutinized it closely. "Who was her father?"

Anna told all she knew of the family, he listened attentively until she ceased speaking, then rather hastily throwing it into her lap, said, "Well, dear child, I'm sorry you've lost the friend you think so much of, it's not probable you will ever see her again; but I am going to take you to see some of our principal cities, it will make a change for you; you know you can leave a sufficient sum with those Hunts to provide for them until we return, when I shall take a house, and you can busy yourself with the arrangements. After a time you will without doubt have a circle of friends around you, then my serious little Anna will cease to be such a lone star."

It was not in Mr. Wentworth's nature to manifest very much affection, but he passed his arm round the waist of his daughter, and looking into her eyes, murmured, "My own Cecile's child!" Then, as if to avoid evincing more tender feeling, he kissed her cheek hurriedly, and rising added, "Well, get your things ready, and when you like we will set out; oh, but you may want to make purchases—"

"No, thank you, pa, I have funds sufficient to last me some time to come."

"Gracious, child! few girls could practice such economy, but I shall not let you have your own way always," added he smiling, "There's a medium in all things, and I must say wealth was given to be enjoyed."

"Certainly, pa, and also to be scattered for the relief of the poor."

"Oh to be sure; and I always give when I am asked, although I'll confess it's often to prevent being plagued the second time, and that I should never take the trouble of going in search of the needy as you do; however, *chacun son gotû*."

After her father had gone, Anna sat viewing the likeness in rather a spiritless mood, when the door opened and Kate stood before her. The face wore rather a pensive expression, and without speaking, she took her seat beside Anna.

"Why, Kate, I wondered what had become of you."

"I suppose so; yet you must have heard of my misfortune, and of course I've not felt inclined for anything;" her eyes dropped and she was again silent.

"You mean in regard to Mr. Hunt, have you seen poor Claudius lately?"

"Oh no; it's enough for me to bear my disappointment after getting everything ready, and when I did not hear anything of him for a few days I was almost frantic, wondering what had kept him away; then the news came that he was ill, and to my surprise he had left the elegant dwelling where he had resided, and having ascertained where he was, I hastened to find him. But oh! such a place! how I reached it I don't know, yet it was no dream, for there he was, the Claudius upon whom I had built my hopes of happiness, poor and wretched."

"Did he upbraid you?"

"Certainly not. Anna, what do you mean? Why, he was always very fond of me, and so was I of him; but when he told me the trouble he was in, and I learned he was in the greatest of poverty and misery, of course I gave him up at once, and thought no more about him although I did go once to see him, for that father of his came, and told us his son was constantly calling for me. But then you know I can't bear anything that is gloomy, and the death like countenance haunted me for days after." A tear stole down the pretty face, and Anna, as she beheld it, said sympathizingly, "Poor fellow, every one seems sorry for him; I'm very happy to know he is easier in mind than he was. I believe from what we can judge, he is prepared to die."

"Oh, but I was thinking of myself, I had expected to be upon my bridal tour by this time. I wonder I've not been in my bed ever since. But for pity's sake don't talk any more about him. He's done with,—I must try to fascinate now in some other direction. Oh, Anna, what sort of a man is your father, good-natured? because, perhaps, he would be security for us for about two thousand dollars,—that is what I came for;

but Anna, you look better, and you take more pains with your toilet than you used, although you were generally very neat. I suppose you see very little of Barrow now?"

"Well, I expect there's but little to be seen of him at any time, for there was very little of the poor old fellow before, what must he be now?" Then their eyes met, and they burst into laughter.

"Well Anna," continued Kate "I know you had good reason for wishing to get out of this house, but really I could never forgive you for submissively yielding yourself a victim to anything so perfectly forlorn. Oh, what an escape for you! Just picture to yourself one half the world laughing at you, while the other despised you for your folly. Oh, it seems to me I'd rather suffer anything, than look upon him again; but there's not much fear that I ever shall, for I'll always take good care to keep out of his way. But I must go —"

"And see whom you can captivate next."

"Ah, I wish I knew. Since I lost Claudius, I met with a very kind-hearted, good-humored sort of a fellow, and as I knew his sister lived with him, I was anxious to learn what sort of creature I should have to contend with in her; so one day, with some trivial excuse I called at the house. Well, she appeared quite affable, and I concluded she would suit very well, and that I should be exceedingly comfortable with such a sister-in-law. Soon her brother came in, and going up to him she exclaimed in a loud, angry tone, 'And is this the one you mean?' pointing at me, 'A man of your age ought to be ashamed of choosing such a trifling, giddy thing; why, I find she knows nothing of the domestic arrangements of a house. Who do you suppose will sew on your buttons for you, and take care of you when you are ill? And don't expect to come to me, is it likely I would do anything for you with such a wife as that.'"

"I looked at her in profound astonishment, and at last was going to reply when her brother said entreatingly, 'Oh, do please to go, Miss Danvers, for I'm afraid my sister will get rather angry.'"

I said not a word, but walked out. I had nothing to regret, for he was not very handsome, and Anna, you will see, whoever I marry will be some one to look at. Good-by."

"Susan, what shall we do when they are gone?" said Mrs. Gilbert, as she stood looking very disconsolate at the door of her daughter's dressing room, while its occupant sat before the mirror busily employed in making her toilet, for as long as Mr.

Wentworth remained in the house, it behooved her to render herself as prepossessing as possible; because, although he appeared to take no notice of her, men were very strange beings, there was no telling what they thought, and who knew but that in the end she might make an impression? "Susan, do you hear me? I say what shall we do?"

"What will *you* do, you mean, for I know very well what I shall do; that old Mrs. Barrow is getting very infirm, and I shall offer my services to take care of their household affairs; but as to you, I don't know what will become of you, and I'm sure I don't care."

"Oh dear! I wish I were in my grave!" And the poor old lady took up her apron to wipe away the tears that rolled down the furrowed cheeks.

"Well, you may go there as soon as you like, only don't trouble me."

"Susan, you're a very wicked sinner, you need never expect to be married, for you don't deserve it; remember it's a very good thing for you that Alfred is dead, for he would have told everything, and goodness knows what would have become of you then; you wouldn't have been here, setting yourself off to the best advantage, I can tell you, for you would have been in the jail."

"Oh well, I might stand a very good chance, even in a prison. I might become the wife of the governor, or of some rich man put there for some very trivial offence, in fact I should never despair in any place but a nunnery. I shall —"

"Susan, those are mine you're putting on, you'll wear them out."

"That's what they were made for; give me the other."

"Susan, I see you're getting into a furious passion; but I know it's all my own fault, for when you were in your cradle, your father said to me, 'Albertina Susanna, I'm afraid, my dear, that girl will be nothing but a bore to you,' and I'm sure he was right, dear good man. Ah, what a good husband he was, there are not such men now as there used to be."

"Of course not," replied Susan, "for there used to be giants in the world at one time, and we haven't any now. But I hear some one coming up stairs. Oh, it's only you, Sally Pyke, I was afraid it was a visitor."

"How d'ye do, Susan, I hear you are going to lose Anna altogether, indeed it is too bad after all you have done for them; but what sort of a man is her father, is there any chance of your catching him?"

"There's no chance for you, Sally Pyke, so don't flatter yourself —"

"And your house has been a home for Anna so long, — yes, it is ungrateful to take her away from you, of course you are very much attached to her, I know what it is to have a tender, feeling heart; oh yes, Susan, I can sympathize with you. But you are just in the same humor as when I came to tell you of the death of Mr. Long, and I shall leave you."

Going in search of Anna, she found her where Kate had surprised her, in a corner of the sofa viewing the likeness of Lydia.

"Oh my dearest Anna, I am so delighted to see you, I've come on purpose to congratulate you upon leaving the walls of this prison house; I've just been speaking to Susan about it, I'm always very candid, and I told her no one could wonder at your going away when they thought of the treatment you've received; I know you have suffered everything with that old woman and Susan. But I suppose your father is very wealthy, and you will remove to a very elegant house, and see a great deal of company, and no one will be more pleased than myself. I shall often call upon you to talk over old times, that old machine of a Barrow, and the like; and Anna, you'll have plenty of offers. Ah, I had once!" with a deep sigh, "but this world is not fortunate to all, its blessings are very unequally divided, I'm sure, for there's that empty little Kate always finding some one to pay her every attention, while a sensible woman like me is never noticed."

Susan entered to whisper something to Anna, and although she appeared very pleasant, it was evident the attempt to seem so was difficult, and that for the present the violent temper was high as ever. "But I always look upon all events of life as sent for our good," continued Miss Pyke, "and Susan, you will find it the greatest consolation, for if we are to be old maids, why we shall, and it's no use to repine."

"Anna," said Mr. Wentworth's voice at the door, "are you particularly engaged?"

"Sally Pyke, you had better go now," said Susan opening the door.

Mr. Wentworth entered the room, and bowing to Miss Pyke in acknowledgment of the low courtesy of that lady, turned to Anna.

"Susan, I wish you wouldn't call me Sally Pyke, it's disrespectful."

"You must excuse me just now," said Anna turning to their visitor, "I may be at leisure the next time you come."

"Then good-by, my dear," and as she drew Anna towards her, and bent over her, the latter could not elude the kiss of the deceitful woman, and glad to be relieved of the painted cheek, returned the salutation, and joined her father in another room.

Mr. Wentworth closed the door, and drawing Anna towards him, placed his arm round her, and looked earnestly into her face.

"What, pa?" said Anna in a tremulous voice, as she saw his countenance was troubled.

He made no answer, but led her to a seat, and again fixed his eyes intently upon her. At last, bending lower the tall figure, that she might hear his words, he said in a low tone, "That Lydia you think so much of — is —"

"What, pa — have you heard anything about her — do tell me, please do?"

"Anna, guess." So sad was his countenance and deliberate his words, that Anna knew the circumstance he was about to relate, must be the most painful.

"Is Lydia still living?"

"I believe so."

"Is she dangerously ill?"

"Not that I know of."

"Then she is married to Mr. Everett, and is unhappy."

"I've heard nothing of the kind."

"Oh, what have you heard of her?"

"Nothing; but I know she is —"

"What! oh please tell!"

"Your cousin!" His head fell upon the shoulder of his daughter, and his tears fell fast over her neck.

"But my father, why should it distress you? Oh, can I not comfort you? Lydia, my own cousin? Tell me all, my own father! we, relations of Lydia! can that be a cause for grief? oh tell me all!"

She raised the drooping head, and wiped away the tears that were falling in rapid succession; recovering himself, he again threw his arms about her and cried, "Oh Anna, my child, can anything be found to relieve me — no, nothing. Read that paper. Remember my neglect, — the cause of Alfred's death, and tell me, could a balm be found? No!"

Anna took the newspaper, and read the following advertisement which his finger pointed out.

"The offspring of Deborah Cecile Villiers of La Belle, near Halle Prussia, will, if a male, hear of something greatly to his advantage by,

forwarding his address to Benjamin Metallurgistneuf, 7. Unter den Linden. Berlin, Prussia. Any informant of the party will be liberally rewarded."

"Anna, my child, said Mr. Wentworth, who had now regained his composure, "that woman spoken of here was your mother; her father was a stern, obdurate man, but my wife was like her mother, gentle, amiable, and of a most loving disposition. I knew of the austere bearing of the father, and I saw him but once, for I used to meet my Cecile at their town residence in Berlin, where Lady Villiers passed the season with her children, her husband remaining at La Belle; and it was on one of those occasions that the noble Lady Villiers, knowing of Cecile's attachment to me, willingly gave her up, and promised to bear all the blame of the angry father herself. Now, as Charles is dead, undoubtedly my Cecile's Alfred, my own wife's beautiful boy, would, were he living, be heir to La Belle. But I neglected my children — oh Alfred, my boy, my son Alfred!"

## CHAPTER XXIX.

"All the world's a stage,  
And all the men and women merely players:  
They have their exits, and their entrances;  
And one man in his time plays many parts."

"Beautiful Beatrice! May our endeavors in search of you be crowned with success, then we shall learn your sad story, and you, lovely girl, will discover that whatever change may come over you, your old friends of the 'Wing of the West' remain true and affectionate as ever."

Lydia now joined her mother, and they set out on their morning's errand — the discovery of the lost favorite.

"Oh Beatrice!" continued Lydia, "the joyful thought of seeing you almost overwhelms me."

"Lyddie dear, try to be more moderate in the indulgence of your joy, remember you may be disappointed, poor Beatrice has undoubtedly suffered much, and it may be that her strength which she exerted too freely, has at last failed, never to rally, for, from the distressing accounts in the papers, we could scarcely be surprised to hear that Beatrice is no more."

Upon asking information of the Lessee of the opera house,

his reply was, "I can give you Mademoiselle's direction, ladies, but I can scarcely offer you any hope of seeing her, for when I called there last night, they told me she was very low with the typhoid fever, and that her physicians forbade any one seeing her."

The residence to which they were referred they found to be a house that appeared to have been the dwelling of some of the nobility, though it now wore the air of neglect and decay. Their knock was answered by a man who looked inquiringly at them as they asked for Beatrice, and repeated the name several times without making a reply; at last he said with an indifferent gesture "venez avec moi;" he then led the way through a spacious hall, up a handsome stair-case, and through an elegant suite of apartments to the back of the house, and taking them up a dark flight of stairs to a small chamber, said, as he motioned them to enter, "Assayez vous," and instantly closed the door upon them.

"What can the man mean, ma?" said Lydia, her countenance betokening much alarm.

"I don't know, child, I should like to know what sort of a house this is; I'm very glad I didn't let you come alone the other day when you urged me so."

After waiting some time, and hearing no more, Mrs. Villiers arose, and tried the doors that led out of the room; not one could be opened.

"Lyddie, we must consider what is best to be done."

"I suppose it wouldn't do to scream for help?"

"No, it may be better for us to remain quiet and summon courage." Again they seated themselves and all was quiet, until the noise as of something being drawn along the floor of the room below, together with the murmur of voices, fell upon the ear.

"Oh, ma, I think we ought to try to do something," and in a fit of desperation, Lydia struck with her full force one of the doors. It flew open, but no way of escape presented itself, for only a closet was before them. Lydia went to another door, and after much force and pressure, it also yielded. It opened into a bed-chamber, the furniture of which was in great disorder, the bed as if the occupant had just risen, while hats, coats, etc., strewed the floor.

"Lyddie, we're certainly in a gentleman's room."

"Listen, ma, I hear some one screaming!"

"Courage, Lydia! How can we get out of this room?"

"Here's a door, no, only a closet; what's behind this curtain, — oh yes, this is one, and — it opens."

It led into a small unoccupied chamber, that opened upon a flight of stairs; they descended and entered a long gallery, but met no one.

"Oh, mother, I still hear a scream!"

"I know, child, we're now going in the direction of it."

They knocked at the first door they came to, but received no answer; the same disappointment awaited them at the second.

"We will wait here a moment, Lyddie, some one may come by."

The screams now came louder, and anxious to hurry forward to learn the cause, fearing it was Beatrice, Mrs. Villiers tried the door before which they stood; it opened to them. The apartment was a bed-chamber most elegantly furnished with everything that art and taste could produce. Dresses of the most costly texture, were thrown over sofas and chairs, bouquets of natural flowers strewed the floor in great profusion, while some of the most exquisitely made artificials were artistically arranged into wreaths of all devices. They passed into an adjoining apartment, here was an open piano, where the stool and sheets of music appeared recently used. In the centre of the room was a table containing jewels most rare and costly, while their lustre, as they shone in their diversity of colors, was dazzlingly brilliant. They passed through to the next room; the furniture of this was plain and simple, on a table was a half-finished letter, and an open prayer book of the church of Rome. Looking to the right, they saw over the fire-place wherein a cheerful fire was brightly blazing, a large, handsome crucifix, before which, upon the floor, knelt the form of a little female, holding in her hand a rosary over which the head was bended. On seeing her, they retreated into the adjoining room, intending to await until she had finished her devotions. They continued to linger there in silence, but the figure never stirred. Again came the screams, and in order to find the passage, they again entered the chamber. In passing through, Lydia turned over a chair which struck the worshipper with some force upon the shoulder; in her haste Lydia made an apology, still the figure remained motionless as though it had been marble. Moving on, and examining the various doors, they found access to a flight of stairs that led to the floor below. The distressing sounds were now more subdued, still it was evident they were approaching the place whence they proceeded. Landing upon a long hall, they passed to the further end, where was an open door, and voices speaking in broken English could distinctly be heard. They knocked, and a girl bearing the appearance of a waiting maid, emerged from the room.

"What is the matter?" inquired Mrs. Villiers, in a voice that betokened much agitation.

"Did you never live in dis house before, mesdames?" and for a few seconds the girl looked inquisitively at them, then passing on said, "oh, if you stay here you often have dat noise, dat lady make vere much crying."

"What is her name?" inquired Lydia.

"Oh, she have two names, no one know which is de right."

"Is she ever called Mademoiselle Sauvestre?"

"I forget — I tink so — she sing at de opera; yes, dat is one of de names, for I hear dem all say when she come, 'La belle demoiselle, Mademoiselle Sauvestre;'" and humming a peasant song, she walked away.

Mrs. Villiers and Lydia now entered the apartment, and passed into a sort of ante-room, where came the audible words, —

"Oh, please leave me — do not so disturb me — let me die! oh, hear me, this body will soon moulder in the dust — let it rest for the little time that remains to it! Oh, leave me to myself, I've but a short time to live; oh, take anything that belongs to me, only leave me a little time to pray, I've much to be forgiven — oh, let me alone for a moment — for pity's sake have compassion! It was a familiar voice, and they approached the door of the room whence the sound proceeded; but no one answered their knock, and the door was secured upon the inside. They listened, and heard the low deep tones of a firm masculine voice, as if reasoning with the pleader, to which came in the same sweet, musical sounds, the earnest entreaty, —

"But I've no wish to live — I've no one to live for, without one friend on earth, why should I care for life? No, leave me to die!"

"Oh, mother, it is Beatrice! We must see her!"

They knocked loudly at the door, there came no answer, and soon all within that room was still, not a sound escaped it. At last the door opened, and a lady attired in a morning costume of richly wrought embroidery, began to pass through the ante-room; the face, which wore a kindly expression, bore the traces of much weeping, and the tears were still fast flowing over the disordered tresses that fell over the shoulders. In answer to the earnest inquiry, she appears anxious to leave them, but turning to Mrs. Villiers, said with a faint smile, "Thank you madame, it's all over now, but she suffered — oh so much!"

"Oh, is she dead?" cried Lydia, seizing her shawl to detain her.

"Oh; I trust not, Mademoiselle, I mean the operation is all over now."

"Can we not see her?"

"I think not, the physicians desire that she may be kept perfectly quiet; but if you are friends, and do not speak, you might go in and look at her."

They entered; the room was shaded almost to darkness, yet there was sufficient light to show the apartment was most elegantly furnished. Around a couch which was festooned with costly lace, stood several ladies and the physicians; all moved noiselessly about the room, and when the strangers drew near, one old lady pushed them back with a frown, saying in a low whisper, "Hush! go away, please."

Lydia caught both her hands, and answered in the midst of her tears, "Oh, we are friends — her only friends."

With a contemptuous curl of the lip, the lady moved away and they approached the couch, carefully avoiding any recognition of them by the invalid. Yes, it was the favorite, the beautiful Beatrice; the eyes were closed, and she appeared to be sleeping, although from the countenance any one might have thought she slept the sleep of death; two of the physicians held each of them a hand, while a third was administering applications to the temples.

"Well, we can do no more," said one of the ladies to the others, "let us go, she will sleep now."

They left the room together, leaving only a maid, who still lingered at the foot of the couch. Two of the medical men were about to depart, when Mrs. Villiers followed them into the ante-room, to learn something of the sufferer. On asking if the case were dangerous, they gave but little satisfaction, and seemed anxious to evade the questions.

"But tell me," said the widow, "do you think she may recover?"

"*Pent-être*," replied the Frenchman, shrugging his shoulders, and with a profound bow left the house.

"Oh, I do not give her up yet," said the other doctor, looking into the anxious face of Mrs. Villiers. "She needs the greatest of care, but I believe life is still vigorous. It is to be hoped so, for it's too sad for such a young lady to die, without being able to leave that voice and talent behind. But to be candid, I also think it will be a miracle if she survives; still again, proper attention may do it, — time only can tell."

"I wonder how soon she could be moved?"

"Well, madam, whenever there are sufficient signs for the better. I shall be here several times a day, and can inform you of the change;" and he was gone.

Beatrice still slept, and leaving several directions with the maid, the other physician took his leave. While Lydia remained in the sick chamber, Mrs. Villiers went in quest of the landlady, and was shown into a back drawing-room, where she was informed that madame was not yet up, but would join her very shortly.

After waiting some time, a corpulent lady entered, and upon the widow's stating that her errand was in regard to Mademoiselle Sauvestre, and that she desired to have the invalid removed to her own home as soon as it were possible, the lady looked surprised, and rather peremptorily replied, —

"A friend of Mademoiselle placed her in my charge, and as he appears very fond of her, he spares no expense for her comfort, and I am sure would be angry if I allowed her to leave here."

"But if, when she is conscious, she should prefer to go, you would not wish to detain her?"

"Oh, that's not very likely," rising to go, "I have offered Mademoiselle an asylum here during her illness, and I'm certain she will not leave it to go among strangers, for although you may call yourselves friends, you cannot be, as Mademoiselle says she has none in the world."

"But however, you will allow us to come here and nurse her?"

"Well — I suppose so."

On returning to the chamber of the sufferer, Mrs. Villiers found Beatrice still sleeping, though the slumber was much disturbed and broken. Speaking kindly to the Italian girl in behalf of her mistress, at whose feet she still was sitting, and promising to send again in the evening, she led the sorrowing Lydia from the room, and they pursued their way homeward.

For several successive days, Lydia, accompanied by a servant, took her seat in the sick room, where she could keep a constant vigil over the invalid without being seen by her, should she awake to consciousness; and as evening came on Mrs. Villiers relieved her for the night.

It was on the morning of the fifth day, as Lydia sat at a bay window, half hidden by the rich hangings, that Beatrice began to evince signs of consciousness. Hitherto she had often spoken incoherently, sometimes in English, French and Italian, of her lost friends, and on one occasion had risen and attempted to prepare for the opera, notwithstanding the earnest expostulations of her maid, the faithful Annette; but finding herself unequal to the completion of her toilet, sunk back upon her

couch exhausted; and at another time, about midnight, she arose, and exclaimed, "Oh, I must go and seek my relations. What are the laurels of fame without any one to love you; let me go! Oh, my strength fails—I cannot! Annette, support me!"

But this morning she was perfectly calm, and manifested a rational perception of all that occurred.

"Annette," said she, placing her hand affectionately upon the cheek of her maid, "how long have I been ill?"

"Not very long, Mademoiselle, and you are much better to-day."

"True, Annette; and the ladies in the house have been very kind, and if anything should prevent my thanking them, do you Annette, please do so for me. Tell them how very grateful I was for their indefatigable exertions. Do you know whether any one has inquired for me?"

"Yes; two lady friends, who are anxiously awaiting your recovery that they may be permitted to see you."

"Oh, who are they? I am well now, please send word;—do let them come."

"Oh, Mademoiselle," interposing her endeavors to rise, "please wait until you are a little more recovered; if they are particular friends you've not seen for a long time, you are too weak for the surprise. Do please keep perfectly still. Shall I read to you what the papers say of your success, and the regret the public manifest for your suffering?"

"No, Annette, thank you; they are very kind, but read me something better. Good, kind Annette, look in that trunk, and find a Bible or prayer-book, and read from that; because you know, I have been between life and death, and I have need of better thoughts than the opera,—which is very well in its place, but not for to-day, Annette. Oh, I think I shall soon be well, then I can see my friends; they may be the widow and the sweet Lydia! But I must be patient"

For awhile she could not restrain her tears, but Annette began to read, and she soon wiped them away. The lessons and psalms for the day had been read, and Beatrice took the prayer-book to read a favorite hymn, that it might be more impressive than in the broken English of the Italian girl. She had scarcely finished when the door opened, and the corpulent landlady entered.

Her usual time for paying a visit to the invalid was at dusk, and she had never yet seen Lydia; but now as the light of the morning stole through the casement, any one who took a survey

of the apartment must have seen part of the figure in the bay window.

Seating herself with a violence that shook the room, after a close inspection of everything before her, she said, "He is here, do you wish to see him or not?"

Beatrice manifested some embarrassment, and thanking her, turned to Annette and said in Italian, "Go tell him I am still very weak, but as soon as I am able to be up, I will see him."

The corpulent woman arose to go, and as she turned, her eyes fell upon the dress and arm of the figure that was partly concealed by the curtains of the bay window; approaching it, she unceremoniously drew the drapery aside, and without speaking, cast a scrutinizing glance upon Lydia. Probably, she had seen many beauties in her time, and considered herself no small connoisseur of such qualifications; however, having looked searchingly upon her for some time, she inquired in a loud voice, "And who are you, young lady?"

Lydia answered in a low whisper, and also told her reason for her silence and seclusion; but her listener only continued her gaze of scrutiny, and appearing to pay no attention to her words, exclaimed, "Oh, you are Mademoiselle Lydia, the daughter of that widow lady!"

Upon hearing the words, Beatrice attempted to rise, and as the thoughtless woman held the curtains aside, the invalid caught a full view of Lydia. Whatever ill effects might follow the recognition, it was now too late to prevent, and kneeling at the side of the couch, the arms of Lydia were soon thrown round the delighted Beatrice, while she mingled her tears with those of that long lost favorite.

The last snows of the season were falling, yet the streets of Berlin still wore the aspect of mid winter, and all without was cold, drear, and deserted; but in the stately mansion, formerly known as the town residence of Sir Charles Villiers, the widow had, through the kind efforts of the little lawyer, been comfortably settled; and an air of social and domestic happiness pervaded that peaceful dwelling. Towards the west, was an apartment whose windows were noted for commanding a full view of that part of the street Unter den Linden, where, amid the limes that beautify the centre, could be seen many of the principal statues for which the place is celebrated, and among these was distinctly visible, one of equestrian form, of Frederick the Great, probably the finest in Europe.

But to-day the view was obscured by the blinds which were

closely drawn, that only a subdued light might enter that chamber. On a couch wheeled before a bright fire, reclined the form of the lovely Beatrice; the head rested upon the bosom of Lydia, upon whose cheek the colorless lips were closely pressed.

"Oh, Lyddie, I've so very much to tell."

"Yes, dearest, but not at present; soon I hope you will be better able to talk, then we will hear all."

### CHAPTER XXX.

"He comes! 'tis no false dream!  
I see—I feel—I know he's by my side—  
I hear the voice—again I watch that smile;  
And tell me not, the confines of the tomb  
Encased that noble form, all this I know,—  
And yet, behold! the lov'd and lost is here."

THAT period of the night when the spirits of the departed are said by some to revisit our earth, and wander again in the haunts of the living, was past, yet those streets of Philadelphia where Claremont Place was situated, wore the same undisturbed tranquility. Soon the faint grey glimmerings betokened the gates of the east were opened, and the golden luminary had arisen from his dreams in eastern climes, to dissipate in his silent approach the darkness of the night, and radiate the scene with the beauty of the early dawn.

A vision bright and beautiful still played round the couch of Anna. Afar off on the ocean's breast, she saw a gallant bark gliding swiftly over the placid waters; the helm pointed towards her, and as the vessel came nearer, she beheld a youth standing upon the deck, pointing upward, as he waved a banner aloft in the soft air of the morning. Nearer and nearer, and now the face was visible. Yes, she was not deceived, it was Alfred! his eye fell upon her, and he called loudly "Anna! Anna!" as he extended his arm towards her. She endeavored to reach it, but the distance was too great. Again came the voice, "Anna, it is I—come to me—let me see you, my own Anna!"

She awoke; still there was the same voice, the same words. Believing herself still dreaming, she arose and listened. Again it came, "Anna! Anna!"

She was now fully awake, and knew the sounds to be real;

but the voice! Never had but one resembled it, and that had ceased for ever. A foot-fall upon the stairs thrilled her very soul, and yet why should it, when that cherished form had been laid within the dark sepulchre?

There came a knock at her door; throwing a garment about her, she opened it. The form of a man was before her; but as yet it was only the grey dawn of day-break that fell upon them, and she could not discern the features; still the attitude was familiar, and half in wonder, half in terror, she gazed in silence. She felt an arm drawn round her, as it pressed her to the bosom of the unknown; her power of speech was gone, but she heard a blessing breathed upon her, as his lips met her cold cheek; then she was lifted within the arms and conveyed to the parlor. Gently and carefully the same hands placed her upon a sofa, and again the arms pressed her in a fond embrace. At last he held her from him to look into her countenance, and as the light fell upon his features, she started from her resting-place and seized the candle; a female form passed before her to interpose her movements, saying, "Anna, I'm afraid it will be the death of you."

Looking up, she found it was Susan, whom she had not noticed before; but the woman was pale as death, and the hand she placed upon Anna was cold, and trembled violently. But Anna forced her aside, and saw beside her the figure of her father bent low upon the floor, while his hands were pressed to his forehead. Hurriedly taking the light, she held it close to the face of the stranger, but it fell from her grasp, and breathing the name "Alfred," she fell to the floor.

Yes, it was true; Alfred was living!

After the lapse of two hours, Anna awoke to consciousness; and as the light of day fell full upon them, it aroused the whole household of Mrs. Gilbert to a perfect conception of what was passing around them. They saw the living Alfred before them, and knew it was he and none other; the consternation and terror of the astonished parties had subsided into a calm wonder, and all were ready to hear him tell his singular tale, except Mrs. Gilbert, who, poor old lady, was completely unnerved by his sudden appearance; for as soon as he was admitted into the house he had been somewhat alarmed at the sight of Mr. Wentworth, and fearing some new alliance had been formed for Anna, he had rushed unceremoniously into the presence of the sleeping Mrs. Gilbert, to ascertain who the strange gentleman was; but both she and Susan ran from him as though he had been possessed of a plague; and astonished at their strange

manner, the cause of which was a mystery to him, he continued to call to Anna that he might see his sister, and learn the whole truth. Mr. Wentworth beheld them running from the youth, shrieking the name of Alfred; he looked upon him, and saw in that countenance the likeness he had so often pictured to his fancy, and confounded beyond description, he sunk as though stunned by a blow, into a state of unconsciousness. But the attention of Alfred was entirely absorbed as he watched the death-like countenance of Anna; he had often known her to faint, but never to look as she now did; however, she was at last restored, and then it was Alfred's turn to manifest astonishment.

"Why are you all dressed in black? And why, if you were surprised to see me, need you all be so astounded at the sight of me?"

Anna made no reply, but looking across the room, she beheld her father standing with his hand pressed closely upon his brow; intense suffering was depicted in his countenance; Anna understood the misery under which he was laboring, and as she looked upon him, she was aroused from the stupor into which the bewilderment had thrown her, and rising, she took the hand of Alfred, and kneeling before the agitated man said in a loud, clear voice, "Alfred, my brother, this is our father!"

The parent fell upon the neck of his son; it was a trying scene to all who beheld it. The little household was now gathered within that apartment, and each felt the power of that spectacle.

The morning was far advanced when the parlor of Mrs. Gilbert again presented a scene of tranquility; then, as Alfred learned the story of his own death and burial, although he shed tears at the thought of his sister's sorrow, yet the merry laugh so long absent, again rang through that dwelling, and every near neighbor might readily have known that Alfred again moved in the land of the living.

His tale is soon told. The excitement which attended Mr. Wentworth when he first learned the misfortune of his son, followed him as he hastened to the authorities of the prison; through mismanagement and carelessness, many of the books had been destroyed by the fire, and while those remaining were looked into, he was told a youth had recently died, but as well as they remembered, and could ascertain, he bore the name of Albert Worth. Upon hearing he was an orphan, and without friends, the agitated man would hear no more; "It is my son!" exclaimed he in his agony, "it is Alfred, send his body to me,

let me have those cherished remains! Oh, my son! My Alfred!"

Soon after, a new governor for the prison was appointed, and a fresh list of the prisoners taken, when Alfred was found to be one of them; but he never heard any one had inquired for him, and gave himself over to the misery of his unhappy lot.

The last moments of Claudius Hunt were drawing nigh, and although his afflicted old father insisted that as Alfred was dead there was no occasion for a public confession, still the young man remained unsatisfied; and at last, finding it preyed upon his son's mind, and prevented his dying in peace, the father consented; and while Mr. Wentworth was busily engaged in correspondence with the little lawyer in Prussia, and paying no attention to the daily papers, Alfred's innocence was acknowledged, and the rejoiced youth obtained his release.

The five months Alfred had passed in close confinement had wrought a remarkable change in his appearance; he was much taller, yet, though he was very thin, and his frame manifested great debility, his constitution appeared but little if at all impaired.

At the breakfast table that morning, very little was eaten, not because the state of Mrs. Gilbert's nerves absorbed every one's attention as they looked upon the excited old lady, nor because in her bewilderment she obliged them to swallow sweets intermingled with some saline property, for under her present state of excitement all this was excusable and none complained. But Alfred had to learn that the noble Charles was dead, that he himself was the cousin of the fascinating Lydia, and also the heir of La Belle, of which he had heard his cousins speak with such delight. Mr. Wentworth proposed they should make a circuitous route through some of the principal cities of the United States and the Canadas, before taking their departure for Prussia. But as soon as the meal was ended, the brother and sister repaired without delay to the humble dwelling of the unfortunate Claudius Hunt. Anna found him still conscious, although lingering upon the very verge of the grave. Having duly prepared him for the great surprise, Anna called Alfred into the room. He knew him, craved his forgiveness, and fell back, saying, "That is all — now I can die in peace!"

Alfred promised faithfully to provide for the aged father for the remainder of his life, whereupon the young man expressed the deepest gratitude, until a change came over him, and during the hour they remained with him, calmly and peacefully he

took his leave of them,—once spoke of the pretty Kate who had so cruelly deserted him in the hour of trial, which she herself had inflicted upon him; then, as they knelt round the bed, supporting the sorrow-stricken old man, the Claudius, so full of promise, breathed his last.

At last the necessary preparations were made, the proposed trip taken, and after the lapse of a month, the three returned, much benefited, to Philadelphia, and began to make arrangements for their final departure.

"Come, Anna," said Alfred one morning, "let us go and bid adieu to the bed-ridden Barrow; and while on our way, I'll tell you how I surprised poor Sally Pyke the morning I returned home; that stupid little appendage of a Peggy who lives with her, ran to her room before she was awake, exclaiming, 'He's alive again, ma'am, he didn't die as they said he did.' 'Is it Mr. Long?' inquired her mistress. 'Yes, ma'am,' replied the child, 'he's very long, a great deal higher than I am.' I could hear a confusion in the lady's room, then opening her door she exclaimed, 'I believe you said "yes," that it was Mr. Long. Now make haste, Peggy, and find my hair with the ringlets. Yes, it was only a report that he was dead,—poor, dear man! and so he has come to see me; oh, if I had only known he was coming, I could have been prepared. Why, Peggy, that's the rouge, I want the powder first.' I then went to her door, and knocked loudly, calling impatiently to the lady to make all possible haste, as I was dying to see her. 'Dear me!' exclaimed she, 'I'm afraid, Peggy, he has one of those bad turns of his, by the noise he is making, and perhaps it wouldn't be proper for me to see him. How did he look, Peggy?' Here the door was opened, and seeing Miss Pyke was already dressed, standing before the mirror, I walked in and seized hold of her hand. But here we are at the domicile of Robert Barrow, Esq."

Mrs. Barrow had not yet risen, but the housekeeper informed Anna that the son would be glad to see her at any time, "For," continued the woman with a pitiful expression, "the poor little gentleman wondered why you never brought your father to see him, that Mr. Wentworth might know who was to be his future son-in-law."

"Very likely," said Alfred, bowing.

"And," continued the woman, "he was so disappointed the day he was to have been married, that he cried like a child, poor fellow. You see, Miss, it's great pain for him to move, and early in the morning, long before the parson came, he sat

himself up in the bed to be ready for you; and there he was that long time, perched like that, while the minister sat with his book in his hand, ready to begin, yet you never came. Poor fellow, it was enough to make one's heart ache to hear him cry; and besides, you never came to see him, and only for Miss Pyke we shouldn't have heard what kept you away. But do go to him, Miss, he'll be rejoiced to see you—this way, please."

"Thank you," said Alfred, "but I must enter this room, there's something here belonging to me."

Opening the door he passed into the apartment which was to have been Anna's dressing-room, and going up to the chimney-piece proceeded to take down his mother's portrait which still hung there, while Anna entered the bed-chamber of the miserable old Barrow.

It was early, and he had not been prepared for visitors, so that a more disagreeable and odious object could scarcely be looked upon.

"Oh, Anna, darling," exclaimed the poor little man as his eyes fell upon her, "come close to me, dearie, I've not seen you since Alfred died; I dare say you grieve about him, and so did I a little, when Sally Pyke called one day and told me, but Anna, dear, as he is dead we can live very happily, for you know he never liked me, so it was all for the best that he should die."

"Yes," said Alfred, entering the room, "but you see, sir, I came to life again; here," handing a little box to him, "are the trinkets you bestowed upon my sister, perhaps you may find them useful for some one else. Anna and I are going with our father to Europe, and you will never, no never, see us again; good by, sir." And taking Anna by the hand he led her down stairs and out of the house, carefully bearing the cherished relict of their mother.

"Oh," said Anna as they wound their way homeward, "if I could but realize that I am about to see the Lydia I love so much! Yet it does not seem possible; I thought we had parted never to meet again in this world, and just think of it, in less than three weeks, if nothing happens, we shall see that lovely face: and sweet Lydia, you are as good as you are beautiful!"

"She is almost my age;" observed Alfred, thoughtfully.

"And what is more, you are heir of La Belle. But what am I saying? Lydia care for wealth? No! Let her love any one, and it will matter not what their station in life may be; Lydia's ambition is not for the envy, but the love of her fellow men."

"But my dear Anna, do you suppose Lydia Villiers could be so long in Prussia without captivating any one? There must

be little chance for me by this time, besides did not Mr. Everett leave soon after, and follow them? And if he had wooed this long time in vain, would he not have been discouraged and returned?"

Anna made no answer; they were now at the door of the gloomy-looking dwelling where they had passed so many years of painful monotony, and upon entering, Anna found a gentleman waiting to see her.

"Miss Wentworth," said the stranger, "I believe I have met you before; at all events, my name is familiar to you, for you had a cousin of mine residing with you sometime, Mr. Herbert Everett, from Boston. But my reason for troubling you this morning was, that as I have undertaken to keep in order the parish books for the poor, and cannot clearly understand who are the life-members, I thought as I was a novice at the work, you could assist me, for I know you kept them well arranged for a considerable time. Oh, I see how you manage," continued he after Anna had rendered him all the necessary assistance, "ah, I was in too great a hurry, I know I've very little patience; I suppose my cousin was exceedingly precise in all such matters?"

"I believe Mr. Everett was very exact, and took great interest in all business of the kind; in fact, he was quite indefatigable in his efforts among the poor; I know many miss him very much."

"But they will have him back again, for he writes of returning in two or three months."

"You have heard from him lately, then?"

"His last letter informed me that he intended making a tour through Europe, then returning to Philadelphia with his bride."

"Oh, he is to be married! To whom, please?"

"Why, I thought you were intimate with the young lady,—is not Miss Villiers from here?"

"Yes; and we correspond, but I've not heard from her very recently; I expect a letter every day."

"Well, he has not told me her name, still I knew, after she left, he followed with the intention of pressing his suit, although he acknowledged to me that he could scarcely hope it would be successful; however it has terminated in his favor, and I should probably have received the wedding cards, but you know the steamer which was lost carried the mail, and most likely that is the reason you have received no letter."

Anna could scarcely pay any attention to the rest of his

words, and she was glad when he was gone. The great hope she had entertained of having again the society of Lydia was now crushed; and that beloved girl would undoubtedly have left Berlin before they could reach it.

"Oh," exclaimed she bursting into tears, "surely I possess

'A soul inured to pain,  
To hardship, grief, and loss.' "

"Why, Anna," said Alfred entering the room, "I thought your tears had all been shed long ago."

Anna told him the sad tidings, and his face was the expression of disappointment and sorrow; but it soon passed away, or else it was to dissipate the melancholy that hung over his sister, that he changed the subject, and began,—

"Anna, my prison life, dreadful as it seemed to me, did me no harm, for I have better thoughts and intentions than I had before. Now I want to tell you of what I have been thinking. You know we should return good for evil, and the old lady and Susan are now very poor; Susan is strong and must exert herself, but the poor old lady is very feeble and indigent; so let us leave the same sum for her support as we do for that old gentleman, Mr. Hunt. But come, we will arrange the rest after dinner."

It was the fifteenth of April, the morning of the final departure. Among the early visitors who came to say 'good-by' was her ladyship, Miss Pyke, and, as was sometimes the case when she had made any unusual effort at an early hour in the morning, she came accompanied by a severe fit of hysterics which, to the extreme annoyance of all parties, prolonged her stay for a considerable time.

As Anna was using every endeavor to restore the lady to a consciousness of her conspicuous situation in the midst of so many strangers who looked with more contempt than pity upon the singular woman, a hand was placed upon her shoulder, and a familiar voice said, "Now Anna, you must spare me a few moments, because it's for the last time."

"Oh, Kate, I'm very glad you have come, we should have been sorry to have left Philadelphia without seeing you; for my acquaintances have been very few and far between, and you have often dispelled the ennui that would hover round me."

"Well, do leave this despicable Sally Pyke to herself, and

come aside for awhile. Anna, what a prospect you have before you, how delighted you must be, and yet you don't seem to enjoy it as I should; but then, as Alfred says, you are disappointed about Lydia. For my part I'm very sorry for her, I know she can't be happy herself, and seeing his reverence so, can scarcely be an agreeable compensation for taking pity upon the being, whose ardent love she had no inclination to requite. Well, I might respect any one for such zeal as his, but as to its amounting to anything more, gracious! Now, Anna, if ever you hear of Kate being married, you may be assured it is to some one just suited to her taste, with everything she could wish for to make her happy; and you know, Anna, that besides wealth, a fine, handsome exterior is indispensable before I could be willing to enter that holy estate, so you will be able to imagine the gentleman's appearance, whoever he may be."

"Miss Danvers," said Alfred's voice behind them, "you must excuse Anna now, for the steamer leaves at twelve."

A hasty good-by was spoken, and most of the friends took their departure, among whom, to the relief of all, was Miss Pyke.

"Come Anna," added Alfred, "they are in the drawing-room, let us despatch that little business at once."

They entered the room. Mrs. Gilbert was shedding tears, while Susan appeared in one of those moods when she was vexed with herself and every one else, and with her elbows upon the table, sat in sullen silence looking upon the floor.

With few words, Alfred gave Mrs. Gilbert the papers which entitled her to the annuity for life, then handed a box to Susan, which she found to contain a handsomely bound Bible, upon whose fly-leaf was written "Live peaceably with all men."

Anna placed before the old lady several little articles she had long needed, and turning to Susan, put a purse containing four fifty dollar notes into her hand. Susan arose, and as she clasped the hand that offered the gift, and said "good-by," for the first time, to Anna's knowledge, the eyes filled with tears.

There is in every human heart,  
Some not completely barren part."

Alfred ascended to the little room in the attic, which for so long had been the only possession he could call his own, and kneeling down beside the little bed where his limbs had so often rested, he offered up a thanksgiving for the Providence that had watched over the lonely orphans in their hours of un-

protected infancy, and through the greater trials and temptations of early youth. Then the final farewell was spoken, and soon after, they were borne rapidly over the bounding billows towards the shores of their future home.

## CHAPTER XXXI.

"Oh! There's no need of words;  
For I can read thy soul beneath that gaze,  
And see what brought thee here across the seas,  
Alone to wander on a foreign strand;  
And need I ask if still thou lov'st me well?  
Ah no! my life's devotion shall reward  
And prove to thee how well I know thy worth,  
Here is thy idol—take her to thyself,  
And should life last, long years of wedded love  
Shall show to thee thou hast not sought in vain!"

MUCH that was mysterious hung over the lovely Beatrice, and most anxiously did Lydia await her recovery, that she might learn the true connection between her and the baron de Korsa, and satisfy the mind of the unhappy Estelle.

For some time the invalid lingered without evincing any sign of recovery, while her life was despaired of; still her mind remained perfectly sound, and at last, to the great delight of her friends, her strength began to return, so that although she could not as yet leave that suite of apartments, she could move from one room to another.

"Oh Lydia," exclaimed Carlotta one morning, as she rushed into her sister's room, "I've something extraordinary to tell you. I was assisting Beatrice in arranging the things in her wardrobe, when she bade me empty one of her trunks; in doing so I found the necklace poor papa gave you, and which you unfortunately lost a long time ago."

"Lottie, it cannot be; it resembles mine, perhaps, but cannot be the same,—that's impossible."

"Well, come and see for yourself, you know Beatrice has nothing she would keep secret from you."

Carlotta led the way to the room, and behold! there at the bottom of the chest lay the necklace she had lost at the seminary of Madame de Florigni; there could be no mistake, for it was a collection of precious stones, and most probably such another could not be found; besides, there in the clasp was her mother's likeness. But what was more singular, attached to the necklace was the toy of an infant; and as they looked

again into the trunk they saw several little articles of a baby's clothing.

"How strange! What could Beatrice have wanted with these?"

They entered the next room where the invalid had been sitting, that they might, if she appeared strong enough to converse, inquire of her concerning the singular discovery. But they found Beatrice had fallen asleep. Lydia bent over the form that was so wasted by sickness and suffering, and thought of the contrast between the emaciated girl now prostrate before her, and the beautiful Beatrice of the "Wing of the West."

The luxuriant hair had been shaven off to relieve the head, and the tiny ringlets that clustered round the pale face gave her an altered appearance; still, when she smiled, there were the same dimpled cheeks, and to those who knew her, she was the same Beatrice as ever.

"Lydia," whispered Carlotta, "Estelle is waiting to see you."

Upon descending, she found Estelle paler and more languid than usual, but she arose as her friend entered, and with the inspiring vivacity that characterized her, said, as she folded Lydia in a fond embrace, "Oh, it seems an age since I saw you, and I begin to be so jealous of your attentions to this new inmate, that nothing would satisfy me but coming here to take up my abode for a few weeks. You look surprised. Well, the truth is this. Our house is undergoing repairs, and as pa contemplates a wedding shortly, he wishes to begin at once —"

"Why, Estelle, who is to be married? not you?"

"Oh, Clarence has returned — but how is Mlle. Sauvestre? I believe she is always called by that name."

"Yes; well, she is not allowed to converse but very little at present, so that we still remain ignorant of her past history, though she will soon be able to tell us all if she continues to progress as rapidly as now."

"Oh, I hope so, for you cannot imagine how much I feel interested in her, although I'm not acquainted with the young lady; but Lyddie," continued Estelle, as her eyes filled with tears, "if she is dear to Oscar, that is sufficient reason; you might imagine I should look upon her as a rival, but no, I love her more than I can describe to you, and I long to see her to tell her so. And I would I could remove all obstacles to their happiness, for I know she must be worthy of him, and I am not. I was passionate, and would not listen to reason, but I have suffered for it since. Oh, it troubles me not to know why he is

not with her, what can the mystery be? My great desire is that they may be happy, and should this lovely Beatrice die, no dear friend, not even Oscar, would grieve more than the unfortunate Estelle."

Alone! It was seldom if ever that Lydia repaired to the solitude of her room to brood over what could not be altered. But after the communication of Estelle, she found it impossible to conceal the effect it had wrought upon her, for although it was her custom to seek some active occupation whenever such troublous thoughts occurred to her, it was useless now to endeavor to control them.

Clarence was returned; a wedding was expected at their house, and it was not Estelle's. Lydia had believed she had given up Clarence long ago, yet now that she was forced to realize that all thought of him must be abandoned, she found herself entirely unprepared to bear it, and for awhile she yielded herself to the tears that would gain the mastery.

"And to whom can I unbosom this suffering? I could not go to my fond mother, to distress her with the tale of my misery; the favorite Beatrice, that sympathizing friend, may soon die, and I could not tell Estelle. To whom then can I go? Oh, there is no one. I must keep all locked within the secret recesses of the aching heart, while I go forth with the merriest of the throng, passing from scene to scene, acting the false part of the gay and light-hearted."

There was Carlotta's gentle tap at her door.

"Come in, Lottie. Oh, don't look so surprised, there's nothing the matter with me, but I was rather faint; I shall soon be better. What did you want, dear?"

"Why Lyddie, see, here are two letters for you, one is of an old date, and has by some mistake been lying at the post-office; look, they're both from Anna."

Lydia opened the first, and the mode of address startled her. But Anna was brief and explicit in giving the fact of their relationship, and although every line was a testimony of the love and devotion the simple, unsophisticated little recluse exercised towards her cousin Lydia, still the whole depicted the pure gratitude she should ever feel for the friendship the Villiers family had so freely offered, when she was the stranger and the unknown. But the latter sheet bore the sorrowing of the mourner for the lost Alfred, whom she still deeply regretted. But there was a second letter, and how astonishing were the contents. Alfred was living, and they were soon to take their departure for Europe.

The sweet, touching tone of this letter brought tears to the eyes of the sisters, as they rejoiced at the prospect of soon welcoming the newly discovered cousins, to congratulate Alfred as heir of La Balle. "And Anna will be here," thought Lydia, "then I shall have one in whom I can confide."

"Dear Lyddie, I know you have company in the drawing-room this evening," said Beatrice, as she took a nosegay Lydia had been arranging, "now I cannot let you remain here a prisoner on my account. Do please leave me, dearie, I shall not feel lonely, indeed I am much better, and hope soon to leave my seclusion, still, love, I would have you stay no longer; do go!"

"But truly it's only Estelle that you hear, and we don't expect any one this evening, besides it would grieve Estelle to think an invalid were left to herself; however, as you urge it so, I'll remain down stairs for an hour, and then come to read awhile to our beloved Beatrice."

Lydia descended to the drawing-room, and had not been long there when Mr. Everett was announced.

He entered; with his usual warmth he took the hand of Lydia and expressed his delight at meeting her once again, after a longer absence than usual. He was cheerful, and told of his travels, entertaining them with the accounts of the inconvenience and contrivance attendant upon tourists at that season of the year; but as Lydia looked upon him, she could see all this was an effort to the minister, and that he was thinner, paler, more care-worn and dejected than ever before.

"You choose an unpleasant season for such travels, sir," remarked Estelle, "and also a dangerous one for visiting those mountain passes."

"True," was the calm rejoinder, accompanied by a faint smile, "but often in the impulse of the moment all hazard is forgotten, howsoever great it might appear looked upon with cool consideration."

"Impulse," thought Lydia, what impulse could have driven him to the mountains, those cold, wet, solitary regions!" She continued to sit buried in her thoughts, and for awhile was entirely lost to the presence of the speakers until the following remark from Estelle fully aroused her.

"I think, sir, you must have chosen such retirement, to leave your ennui upon those cloud-capped towers."

"I might perhaps have suffered from ennui," returned the clergyman, "or more likely fancied so," and immediately the smile was gone, in silence his eyes dropped to the floor, and

Lydia felt assured to converse lightly and with any show of gaiety was irksome to him; she accordingly ran to her room, and fetched Anna's letters, to read them to the astonished auditor.

"What!" said he, as he arose in his profound amazement, "and are they indeed coming here to take up a permanent abode in Prussia, and Anna with them? How strange!" Then rising to go added, "Well, no one will congratulate Alfred more sincerely than his old friend Herbert Everett."

The door was thrown open, and there, with a flushed cheek, and one hand extended towards them, while the other caught up the robe that was thrown around her, stood Beatrice in all the beauty of her dishevelled charms. She entered the room, and gazed around her; there could be no suspicion as to the state of her mind, sound reason was clearly depicted in every glance of those full, dark eyes, as she looked from Estelle to Lydia, as if in search of something. The open door hid Mr. Everett from her, for he was behind it, but he could have a perfect view of one side of the figure before them. She moved into the middle of the room, where the terrified Estelle held back Lydia, and running from one part to another cried as if in all the agony of despair, "Has he gone? Where is he? I must speak to him — let me see him! I know it was he — I heard the voice, oh Herbert, come to me — let me see you once again, and know you forgive, I ask no more. Oh Herbert, where are you?" She attempted to move toward the further end of the room, but her feeble strength was exhausted, and bursting into tears, she turned again to the door, when the clergyman caught a full view of the face, and as she was about to fall was instantly at her side clasping the fainting girl in his arms, as he exclaimed, "Why, Beatrice, beloved one, can it be you? Oh I have sought you everywhere, and in sorrow and wretchedness despaired of ever seeing that sweet face again. But how changed! still it is Beatrice. I have found my idol! Father, I thank Thee; Thy will be done!"

He pressed the lost treasure to his bosom, and wept over it.

Then refusing all assistance, administered every restorative himself, and in an ecstasy of delight saw Beatrice was soon returning to consciousness. She endeavored to rise, and in looking round the room as though in quest of some one, her gaze fell upon the minister. For a moment she looked into the face, then a perfect recollection returned, and placing her hand upon his shoulder, said,—

"Herbert, I was a petted, wayward child, and although I no

sooner knew you than I felt your influence over me, yet my pride would not let me acknowledge it; still your endeavors to make me a Christian were not lost upon me, and though, when you took your leave of Boston, I was cold and indifferent, another word from you might have thrown me prostrate at your feet. But Herbert, were you not impatient? Because you soon loved deeply, yourself, you sought to find in me as speedy a requital; but my girlish spirit spurned all restraint, and your earnest solicitations annoyed and vexed me; then you gave yourself over to disappointment, and bade me farewell. Oh Herbert, had you waited, had you reasoned with me, the past would not have been such a tale of woe. I was thoughtless, inexperienced. I had never known what it was to need a friend, or to wish for some one to love me. The world was then bright and joyous to me, and ignorant of the sorrow and sadness within it, I laughed when told of evil to come. I was not aware with what affections I was trifling, and I know I was often heedless and defiant; still, when I heard of your departure, for which I was wholly unprepared, I seemed to awaken as if from a dream. Reckless as I appeared, there was an under current of better feelings, which, had you been less impatient, and lingered until the sportive, jestive spirit had subsided — you might have discovered. Oh, you little imagined how wretched I was when I heard you were gone; for I did not know till then how much I loved you. Yet I deserved it, I had trifled with your sincerity, I had made you miserable, but oh, how I suffered for it afterwards!"

"Oh Beatrice, beloved one, say no more. I am the only one to blame. Had I considered your youth, had I studied your true nature more closely, I should have discovered how repulsive to you were such sentiments as mine, when I constantly wearied you with the acknowledgement of my love, and urged you to bind to me that free, joyous being, without leaving you time either to know me well, or to learn whom you preferred. I was impetuous, I was rash, to solicit your affection. To conjure you to accept me because I was passionately fond of you, was taking advantage of your early years; but I did not see it so then. I only knew you were essential to my happiness, and when on that last day that we met, I heard your merry laugh, and saw you playfully throw aside all my attempts to bid you listen, I was frenzied, and resolved to banish myself from your sight for ever. I hastened to Philadelphia, and in a state of perfect indifference, accepted the first living that offered. Soon the thought of having the charge of immortal souls, made me

look into my own heart, and as I thought of the past, I saw the error into which I had so blindly fallen; I thought of Beatrice, whose image I so fondly cherished was still deeply engraven upon a painful memory; and then, when too late, I could recall numerous instances where her kindness and sympathy had been extended to me, and saw but too plainly that, had I been patient, and left it to the work of time, my own beloved one might one day have belonged to me. But hope had taken her flight, and I endeavored to erase you from my memory; yet vain was the attempt, and I sought by more earnest labors in the ministry to relieve the troubled mind under which I was suffering. This was certainly much comfort to me, still I was ill at ease, and sunk deeper and deeper into despondency. But Beatrice, I heard you were to leave America, and in wild desperation I could have flown to behold you once again; I felt you were gone, and shutting myself in my chamber for days, I poured out my grief in solitude. Then I heard of the wreck of your vessel. I believed you dead, and longed to follow you; but by the next account, some were saved, and without learning more, I took my passage for Europe, trusting you might be one of the rescued, and that it might happen I could offer some assistance to you. In vain I sought you, no tidings of you anywhere, still I wandered from one country to another, and one day, while chiding a young lady for possessing too great a love for the opera, I pointed to the bill she was reading. My eye fell upon a largely printed name. What was my astonishment,—it was the name of my lost Beatrice! I left the house immediately. That morning there was a *matinée* at the opera, I attended it. Beatrice, you came, and I knew you! In one scene you looked so like your former self, that my self-possession must have entirely forsaken me, for I know I arose upon the seat, and it attracted your attention. You recognized me, but what was the consequence? Oh, how unhappy. In a state of delirium you were carried from my sight, and when I discovered your residence, I could not be allowed to see you, and feared to leave my name lest it should excite you; and lastly, I heard you had left that house, and could not ascertain where you were gone. But Beatrice, beloved one, I have found you, and cannot tear myself away. Whatever your connections may be, let me be near you, that I may often see you. It may be that you belong to another, that I can never call you mine; still, do not send me away from you; although I may never call you by my name, let me stay where you are, to watch over you, and be a true friend to all connected with you; and although it be from a

distance, and I remain in obscurity, let me, while I live, watch over you, and guard your interests. More than this I do not deserve, and will not ask."

"Oh, but Herbert, I am free! free as the birds of the air; I belong to no one but to you who have the greatest right to me; and did you know all — could I tell how the thoughts of you have driven me to madness from which I awakened only to hear that in my delirium I had called constantly upon your name — could I describe the temptations that have surrounded me — with a brain bewildered, and a mind wandering, urged to the forbidden path — when reason was gone, and I no longer remembered the truth, only an instinctive idea that I must preserve my body and soul for a reunion with you, kept me from yielding — if I could picture to you the sufferings of the past, then you would realize how dear you are to me!"

"Beatrice, beloved one, it is enough, say no more!"

The days glided by, and the dwelling that was so lately radiated with the hope of the favorite's recovery, was now the scene of lamentation and sorrow. The chamber whose bay windows looked toward the west, was more darkly shaded than ever; the servants moved noiselessly from room to room as they performed in sadness the duties of the household, while only a few cherished friends were admitted within that apartment, to mingle their tears around the couch where lay prostrated the lovely Beatrice. They gazed upon that sweet face, they pressed their lips to the icy brow, but the eyes remained closed, and the death-like countenance reminded them that the power of speech had already departed from those once ruby lips.

Day after day, and night after night, Herbert Everett kept vigil at the couch of the sufferer, and no persuasion could force him to quit her side for an instant, while he watched with the most intense anxiety every evidence of a change. Was Beatrice for life or for death?

It was the eighth of April; distant bells were pealing a welcome to the Easter morn, but those in the vicinity of the Villiers' residence remained untolled, that the sound might not disturb the last moments of Beatrice Sauvestre. In the library, the sorrowing household were gathered to engage in the devotions of the morning, when every heart responded to the prayer offered up by the widow, that the beloved Beatrice might be restored to them in health and happiness, or received into the mansions of the blessed, as the divine will deemed most expe-

dient. In the still chamber above, and alone, by the bed of the sufferer, knelt the young minister. He had thought to look upon that face for the last time, with the desire that the favorite might be spared to him; but the longer he gazed upon those lovely features, the more difficult it became to consent to give her up, and that his petition for submission to the will of the Almighty, might be sincere and heart-felt, he had turned from his idol, to banish himself from her countenance, and while his hands covered his face, which was buried in the coverlid, his whole frame shook with the fervency of his prayer.

He arose calmed if not comforted, and took his seat at a little distance, where he could not view the face of Beatrice. There was a slight movement of the drapery that shaded the light from the bed, he was instantly upon his feet, but checking himself, moved slowly towards the invalid. For the first time in many days the long, dark lashes were raised, and in the ecstasy of his delight, tear followed tear as he saw the full eyes open. Bending over her he caught the whisper of his name, and it was evident she knew him. She gazed round the room for a moment, then laying a thin white hand upon his arm, distinctly came the words, "Oh Herbert, I'm so glad I am better — I know you are so weary with watching."

"Yes, love, you are better, but don't try to talk, but take this draught and then rest again."

The crisis, which proved favorable for Beatrice, was now past, and she began rapidly to amend, so that she could move from one part of the house to another, or drive out for the air. Her health and spirits were speedily returning, and by the end of the month Beatrice pronounced herself quite recovered.

It was a delightful evening in the beginning of May; upon a sofa wheeled to the windows, reclined the slender figure of the favorite, her head resting upon the breast of the minister, while Carlotta, with an apron filled with hot-house plants, sat at her feet arranging the flowers to decorate the rooms of the near relations, who were daily expected, and who had been invited by the widow to spend the summer with them.

"Lottie dear, please tell Lyddie and Estelle to come. I know you are all anxious to hear what my wanderings have been, and now that I am perfectly strong, I may as well begin to tell; do make them come directly, they're only arranging a wreath for me. Tell them I shall not wait, but begin."

"Did you say Estelle, too?"

"Certainly, she's one of my best friends, and it may be my story might entertain her."

Soon after the widow, followed by the three young ladies, entered the room, and then took their seats round the sofa to learn the following truths respecting the lost favorite.

Beatrice's friends had left the deck, and she stood alone brooding over her sad fate, when a person who wore the air of a gentleman approached her, and inquired, "Are you not waiting for some one, madam?"

"Oh, please tell me — have you heard any one inquire for a lady?" said Beatrice, eagerly, without waiting to reply.

"Are you alone, pray?"

"Yes — quite alone. Will it answer the inquiry?"

"Exactly, ma'am, please. Come with me."

"But who is it, and have we far to go?"

"Only to descend from the vessel to that group upon the dock, there you will meet a gentleman and lady who must be inquiring for you."

Beatrice immediately left the vessel, and followed her guide to the group to which he had pointed. But no such persons were to be found. He then urged her to accompany him to a hotel not far distant, where he assured her, the inquirers must have proceeded. Bewildered by the noise and bustle around her she gazed in perplexity from one to another, who, in their haste or indifference pushed rudely by; with much hesitation she took the proffered arm of her guide, and followed him through several crowded streets until they reached the hotel; but no success awaited them, and Beatrice begged to be conducted back to the vessel.

"But there is a house not far from here," said her companion "which many frequent in preference to the hotel. Let us not be discouraged until we have inquired there."

She accompanied him thither, and then to two other houses he named, but heard nothing satisfactory; becoming alarmed at the lateness of the hour, she turned to leave the last they had entered, and entreated more earnestly than before to be taken back to her friends on the vessel. This the man refused to do unless she first gave him three thalers, which he demanded as his fee. In vain Beatrice assured him that she was one of those rescued from the wreck, and had not so much as a single coin in her possession; this he seemed to receive as a false statement, and finding she continued to assert the same, grew angry, and resorted to harsh language; there was no one in the room where they stood, and the doors that led from it were closed; becoming terrified at his loud, violent tone, she rushed

to a door, and throwing it open, found that instead of opening into the street, it disclosed another apartment where several gentlemen were seated round a card table. She was about to retreat, but finding the insolent fellow close behind her she exclaimed in an agony of despair, "Oh, will not some one send this man away from me!"

Every eye was fixed upon the bewildered girl; but Beatrice had spoken in German, with which she was but little acquainted, and was most probably but imperfectly understood, for with a jest and a jeer upon her excited air, most of them again turned to something that occupied them upon the table, and the door closed. Upon looking round she found her persecutor had fled, and that she was left alone in the room. Going up to the window, she saw the street was crowded with the busy throngs that seemed pressing ever onward, and as she looked for a kind, benevolent face, that she might inquire her way back to the vessel, she could see none that did not appear to her repulsive. The shades of night began to fall, and the darkness was fast gathering around her; still, no one entered the apartment, and in the same unbroken silence, the lonely girl stood reflecting upon her forlorn situation. Suddenly there was a noise in the next room, as of tables and chairs in commotion, and heavy footsteps moved over the floor; then "good-night" was said, and soon it appeared that the party had dispersed, for all was quiet again.

"Oh, what shall I do!" murmured Beatrice, as she still peered into the darkness without.

"Madam, can I do anything for you?" said a kindly voice beside her.

On looking round, she saw before her the tall figure of a man, who was gazing earnestly upon her; from the position in which she stood, although he had a full view of her, as a lamp in the street threw its light upon her, still she could not well discern the face of the speaker, and half timidly, half indifferently, she turned from him, and said with a sigh, "No, thank you, sir."

"Do tell me," said the stranger, bending towards her, "whether I can assist you in any way whatever; soon these rooms will be crowded, and will be no place for a lady, especially when she is alone."

Upon hearing this, Beatrice exclaimed, "Oh, what shall I do! it is now dark, and I can never find my way back to my friends."

"But can I not accompany you and assist in finding them?"

The tones in which these words were spoken, found their way

to the heart of the bewildered girl, and turning to him she told him how she had thoughtlessly left her friends upon a vessel in the dock, and accompanied a man in quest of a relation, whom she had not succeeded in finding, that her guide had refused to take her back without first receiving his fee, and that she had no money in her possession.

"Oh well, if that is all," replied the stranger cheerfully, "don't despair. Wait here, I'll be back in a minute."

He soon returned, saying, "Here's the carriage, Madam, now, if you please, we can soon drive to the dock."

She was assisted into the carriage; her companion took his seat opposite to her, and they drove off. Once he spoke, but the noise, as they rattled rapidly over the stones, prevented her hearing him, and heaving a sigh she threw herself back to await with patience their arrival at their destination. At last the driver stopped, and they alighted.

A faint cry of disappointment escaped Beatrice, as she looked round and saw the place bore no resemblance to the dock she had left that morning. "This way," said her companion, as he drew her arm in his own. The night had now set in, and was very dark, but as they moved away from the lamps of the carriage, she could discern the masts of vessels, and found they were really upon the dock, only it was now silent and deserted, while the large, heavy rats ran in rapid succession over their feet. With difficulty they made their way over the planks, to where the vessel lay, when a watchman accosted them, and gave the painful information that every one had left the "Wing of the West," and not even a sailor remained.

"Oh, they are gone!" cried Beatrice, "what am I to do!"

"Why, certainly you cannot stay on board the vessel," said her escort, "you had better come to a hotel, and search for your friends in the morning. Where is your baggage?"

"I have none,"

"What? no baggage, and come from such a distance?"

"No; I've neither friends or anything else; I've nothing in the world. Oh, what shall I do?"

"Well, let us leave here, and then talk over the matter."

He assisted her into the carriage again, and they drove from the dock.

For awhile Beatrice yielded to the indulgence of the grief her disappointment had occasioned, but as she began to recollect they had gone a considerable distance without stopping, she suddenly awoke to a keener sense of her forlorn situation; but before she had time to consider what was best for her to do, the

carriage stopped and they alighted. Her companion led her into a house that wore the appearance of a small hotel, though was evidently very quiet and select. Taking her into a parlor, which was unoccupied, he offered her a seat, which the exhausted girl immediately sunk into. Then placing himself opposite to her said,—

"I've ordered some refreshment, which will shortly be brought in; after that most likely you will be glad to retire, and I think you will find the rooms here quite comfortable."

The apartment in which they sat was well lighted, and as Beatrice looked up to the speaker, for the first time she had a full view of the face. The forehead was high and intellectual, the features regular and handsome, while an expression of benevolence and guilelessness pervaded the whole. Then the tall figure was well proportioned, and somewhat commanding to look upon, and as she gazed upon him, a degree of confidence took the place of those anxious fears which had so perturbed her excited mind. A waiter entered, and placing a salver upon a table, left the room.

"Come, young lady," said the stranger, "take something to revive you."

Beatrice looked at him for a moment, then arose and seizing his hand, would have spoken; but the tears started, and her emotion would give no utterance to words. He seemed to understand her, and with a smile that betokened much feeling, took her hands in his own, and without speaking, led her to the table, and placed some of the refreshment before her. Beatrice felt too weary to eat, yet she was touched by the kindness of the stranger, and placing her hand upon his arm said, as her tears flowed afresh, "Oh, you are very kind, sir, but will you be sincere — will you be a true friend to the forlorn Beatrice?"

"Indeed, I shall be but too happy to render you any protection and assistance in my power, and I trust you will find that whatever confidence you may place in me will not be ill requited."

Beatrice had taken scarcely any food for two days, and now, had it been possible, would have refused; but the urgent pressing of her companion was not to be resisted, and as she began to partake of the good things before her, he took from his pocket a journal and read several interesting articles, until her repast was finished. Much refreshed, Beatrice could now converse more calmly, and she briefly told that she was one of the passengers rescued from the wreck.

"I know how weary you must be," said he when she had

finished, "and you would wish to retire, so let me bid you good-night," extending his hand, "you will find me here in the morning, and then if it's agreeable to you, we will set out together on our exploring expedition, and without doubt we shall succeed in finding your friends. Good-night, Miss Sauvestre."

"Please let me ask to whom am I indebted?" and Beatrice looked inquiringly into the face, which manifested some signs of embarrassment, then handing her a card he turned away.

"Madam, I will show you your chamber," said a maid behind her as she left the room. Beatrice followed.

She was shown into two cosy little apartments where everything wore an air of comfort, while, as it was a chilly night, the fire that burned brightly in the little dressing-room looked very inviting. A bewildering excitement seemed to have actuated her for the last few hours, and now, as she sunk into a seat she endeavored to collect her scattered thoughts, which for awhile were principally of herself; then, as she grew weary of dwelling upon her misfortunes, they had reference to the mysterious stranger who had voluntarily rendered her so much kindness. But who could the gentleman be? He was young, probably not over twenty-five or seven, and if physiognomy might be relied upon, the frank, open countenance was the index of a nature most noble and beneficent. Yet why had he hesitated in giving his name, when he was engaged only in what was praise-worthy and so highly commendable? What reason could he have for wishing to conceal who he was, which he evidently had endeavored to do? As Beatrice was pondering the matter, she thought of the card he had handed her, which she had since entirely forgotten. It had fallen from her fingers to the floor, and as she raised it, she found engraved on one side the following, "Otto Halbert, Tailor, 5 Van Wart Strasse. Bremen."

Weary and exhausted, she found it impossible to keep awake, and recollecting she was alone among strangers and foreigners, carefully secured the doors, and commending her soul and body into the hands of an Almighty Protector, laid the aching head upon the pillow, and soon fell into a sound slumber.

When Beatrice awoke the next morning it was not yet day-break, but too anxious to fall asleep again, she arose and opening the shutters watched the lamps in the streets below, until day-light saw them extinguished. In her solicitude to begin the work of search, she hastily made her toilet, and after offer-

ing the sacrifice of the morning, felt the better prepared for whatever might await her; still, as the clock of a neighboring church struck the hour, she could scarcely refrain from tears when she recollected how early it was, and that she might yet have several hours to wait before being summoned to accompany her companion upon their exploration. It was now sufficiently light to discern the objects in the rooms she occupied, and she sat down to amuse herself in imagining how many various personages had from time to time most probably moved within their walls. In the little dressing-room was a book-case, where rested several ancient tomes written in German and old English, among which were the likenesses and autographs of many distinguished literary men. In an open drawer lay a package upon which was written, "Letters of Napoleon and Josephine." Of course these must have been copies from the originals, and knowing them to have been published, Beatrice did not hesitate to read them, and found in their warm and ardent language, which was well suited to her rather romantic fancy, many a charm. There was another package,—the letters of some unknown writer, which bore the word "Secret;" for a moment curiosity tempted, but she soon cast away the thought, and left the package untouched. The walls of this room were painted in panels, which were singularly ornamented with drawings, and inscriptions in French and German, while one in Italian told a miniature history of a traveller who had passed a night there. The idea pleased Beatrice, and with a colored chalk she found in one of the drawers, she passed the time in filling one of the empty panels with a poetical sketch of the wreck and her own forlorn situation, signing herself, "The rescued." She had just laid down the chalk, when a knock startled her, and unfastening the door, she found a maid, who said, as she scrutinized Beatrice closely "Madam, breakfast is waiting." Beatrice followed her down the stairs to the parlor where she had left the stranger the night before. The breakfast was upon the table, and near it was seated her friend, Mr. Otto Halbert, the tailor, reading the newspaper.

"Good morning, Mademoiselle Sauvestre," said he, placing a chair for her, "you look the better for a night's repose, and no wonder, after so much fatigue."

The meal was begun; he sat opposite to her, and whenever she raised her eyes, she found his riveted upon her, but they were instantly withdrawn, except once when a sad expression rested upon her countenance as she sat looking out from the window."

"Mademoiselle, you are watching the clouds, and are apprehensive about the weather. I, too, think we shall have a storm; still that may prove no barrier to our success. After I had bidden you good-night, it occurred to me that it might be best to advertise in to-day's papers, which you see I have done," handing her a paper. "So if it please you, I will go out alone, as it forbodes a storm, while you remain here, and should your friends see the notice in the papers, and come before I return, please leave a line for me, that I may know you are in safe keeping."

The proposition was gratefully accepted by Beatrice. Her companion took his departure, and she took her station by the window, hoping every vehicle that drove to the door would convey some one to inquire for her. Noon came, yet no one had been for Beatrice. At last there was a knock at the door of the room where she was sitting; instantly there came her ready answer; the door opened, but to her disappointment it was only a waiter bearing refreshments, which he said had been ordered for her.

Heavily and gloomily the hours wore away, the afternoon came and passed, and now the shadows began to lengthen; still the storm raged violently, and as it grew dark, the room in which Beatrice sat seemed more gloomy than ever. "How late it is," said she to herself, "why does he not come? Could it be that he is not desirous of finding my friends, and only made the rain an excuse for not wishing me to accompany him? Surely it is possible that he would keep me here to suit his own fancy. I will fly, and seek my relations myself. I am wretched now, I shall be no more miserable then. Yes, I'll linger here no longer, and he shall return here to find me gone!"

She arose and looked out upon the night, the rain was falling in torrents, the loud claps of thunder shook the house to its foundation, and except when the lightning flashed vividly through the heavens, all was darkness and obscurity. Where could she wander on such a night? Faint, wet, and perishing with cold, of whom could she ask a shelter? She turned from the window, the gas had now been lighted, the fire stirred, and the tea things brought in; and as Beatrice looked round her, she pondered upon what she was about to exchange for the street. Again, doubt and drear, as she thought of the stranger who might soon return, bade her brave the storm, and fly while the opportunity offered. She was moving towards the door when she suddenly stopped. "The advertisement," thought she, "such a proceeding does not appear aught that is not candid and sincere, surely to suspect and doubt him would be de-

fying the kindness he so freely offers." Still she moved a few steps onward, and was standing hesitating, when the door opened and Mr. Halbert stood before her.

Well, here I am at last, but Mademoiselle will scarcely give me a welcome, because I bring no good tidings; however, perhaps she can content herself here a little longer — to-morrow may be more successful."

He extended his hand, and the honest smile that overspread his fine countenance as Beatrice took it, banished all doubt and fear from her wavering mind. They sat down together, he recounted his day's wanderings, and although he was evidently much exhausted, appeared eager to tell her all. Wiping away the cold drops that had gathered upon his forehead, Beatrice bade him rest, and would hear no more until he had partaken of the refreshments before them. Again they chatted freely till the hour of ten disturbed them, then they arose. "Good-night" was said, and they parted.

The next morning when Beatrice awoke, the rain was beating heavily against the windows, and as she arose and looked upon the prospect without, she could scarcely refrain from tears, for there seemed to her but little likelihood of a fine day, and although she had placed entire confidence in her new acquaintance, the thought of spending another long day in anxious suspense was intolerable, while she still entertained the idea that could she undertake the work of search herself, it might be more successful.

Upon descending to the parlor she found it was very early, but a maid who was stirring about the house informed her that her friend had been called away soon after she had left him the night before, and had not returned. In a disconsolate mood, Beatrice had sat down to meditate, when the door opened, and the gentleman himself entered. His face glowed with the exercise he had taken, and gave no indication of general dissipation. The breakfast concluded, he placed several choice books in her hands to peruse in his absence, and took his leave.

As soon as he was gone, knowing it were useless to endeavor to read, Beatrice took her seat at the window to watch the weather, and saw with delight the clouds were dispersing, and found soon after eight o'clock, that the streets were drying, and the air clear and balmy. In the expectation of some one coming in answer to the advertisement, she contented herself with in the house; but no one came, and at noon, just as her patience was well nigh exhausted, Mr. Halbert again made his appearance.

"Well, Mademoiselle Beatrice, I am forced to come to the unhappy conclusion that no inquiries have been made for you in Bremen, except by a party who had missed you from the vessel, and were on their way to Berlin."

"Oh, what shall I do!" And burying her face in the folds of her dress, she burst into tears.

"Oh, Mademoiselle, let us have patience, and trust to Providence for the rest. Is it not true that you are not so very miserable as you might be? I know how very forlorn you must feel, but please try not to despair,—indeed, it will without doubt be all right in the end; come, wipe away all tears, those eyes can sparkle well enough without them, and listen to me, I've a proposition I think will please you." Raising the drooping head, he wiped away the traces of tears, and continued, "you know this is a hotel,—a public house, and as some days may intervene between now and the period of finding your relations, and I dislike the idea of leaving you here all day alone, unprotected, it occurred to me, that the house of an old lady, not far from here, whom I have known since I was a child, would be a more suitable home for you; and in the meantime, I will advertise in France."

The idea was pleasing to Beatrice, and promising if possible not to give way to despair for a week; she consented to accompany him to the residence of the old lady.

"This old nurse of ours," said her companion as they passed out of the house, "is a Portuguese, but speaks very good English. I know she is rather a singular body, but I am acquainted with no one in this city in whom I could place the same confidence, and I can feel you are safe in her keeping."

Entering a retired street, they soon reached a small, irregularly built house or cottage, and ascending the steps, her companion inquired for his old friend. They were led to a little room at the back of the house, where, seated upon the floor, was a strange looking old woman, smoking a cigarette.

"Well, Marie, how d'ye do?" asked her visitor, extending to her his hand.

With no small degree of nonchalance she slowly raised her hand to his, and eyeing him and Beatrice with a close scrutiny, said, as she continued to enjoy her cigarette, "What brought you here?" and again looked at Beatrice.

"Why, Marie, I have brought this young lady, Mademoiselle Sauvestre, that you may take care of her for a little while, until she finds her friends; she will tell you what an adventurous life she has had, and you will try to make her as happy and comfortable as you can, wont you?"

Another penetrative glance at Beatrice was the only answer from the old woman.

"Well, Mademoiselle Beatrice," said her companion, turning to her, "I must say good-by for the present. I will advertise in the French papers, and should nothing extraordinary occur, you will see me the day after to-morrow."

Beatrice took the proffered hand, and as she looked at the strange old woman upon the floor, and thought how long it would be before the day after to-morrow, she felt she would have given worlds to have had him remain. Alone in a foreign land as she was, without a friend to whom she could fly, she fully appreciated the unlimited kindness of the stranger who had so interested himself in her behalf, and as she gazed after him when he left the house, it seemed she must call him back, and entreat him as her only friend, not to leave her. But soon he was out of sight, and again entering the dark, gloomy, room she took a seat opposite her hostess who, without speaking, still kept her eyes riveted upon her.

At last the cigarette was finished, and turning to a servant girl who stood near, the old woman said, "Marguerite, show this girl into the parlor," nodding at Beatrice, "and also take her to the room in the garret next to yours, she can have that, it's quite good enough for her."

Wondering at the purport of her words, Beatrice cast a timid glance at the strange old woman, and thanking her, followed the maid from the room.

The parlor into which she was shown, was scarcely less gloomy than that which possessed the witch-like presence, except that it looked upon the street, and occasionally a pedestrian might be seen passing the house.

Among the books Mr. Halbert had left her was the *Life of Madame de Stael*, and Beatrice had forgotten her own troubles and was engrossed in those of her heroine, when she was summoned to tea. On entering the room she found her hostess seated at a table which contained a dish of small birds fricasseed in a most novel style, some brown bread, and chocolate. The meal was eaten in silence, and when finished, the old woman continued her gaze of scrutiny, but not a word was spoken; at last, after a deep sigh she frowned and said, "I don't feel able to talk to-day." Taking this as a signal for her to retire, Beatrice left her again to her cigarette, and seated alone in the darkness of the next room, soon fell into musing over her precarious fate; but before long the loud tones of the strange old woman aroused her.

"Marguerite, take care to bolt the doors, in case that girl should want to go out."

"But, Madame, there's some one on the steps with a trunk."

"Send it away, it doesn't belong here."

"Is your name Sauvestre, Mademoiselle?" inquired the maid, entering the room where Beatrice was sitting.

"Yes; does any one inquire for me?"

Going into the passage, Beatrice found a man with a small trunk and a parcel bearing a note which ran thus,—

"Mademoiselle will not be offended, but accept these necessities which may serve her for the present.  
O. H."

"Wait, I'll come and see what it's all about;" said the old woman, who, as she came into the light proved to be very swarthy, and of a most rigid expression. Hearing the things were for Beatrice, she turned to her, and said with a scowl, "I thought you had lost your friends?" then, as Beatrice was about to reply, added, "Oh, no matter, as I said before, I'm not able to talk to-day;" and returned to the dark room she had left.

On examining the trunk, Beatrice found it to contain everything necessary for a lady's wardrobe, and without doubt it had been carefully and considerably arranged by the hands of a woman. Then there was a work-box, writing-desk, a pretty little watch, a Bible, a book of sermons, a map of the city she was in, etc. But it was growing dark, and as there was no sign of a light in any part of the house, she was forced to sit unoccupied in the gloomy darkness, until overcome with drowsiness, she sought the rude little garret, which was very barely furnished and crusted with dust, to leave for awhile her troubles in oblivion, and dream of a happy home among her new friends in sunny France.

The next day passed much as the latter part of the previous had done, and as before, the strange old woman declared she did not feel able to talk. The vivacious spirit of Beatrice longed for a change, and she begged to accompany the maid on her errands in the streets, but this the old woman peremptorily forbade, and Beatrice impatiently awaited the dawn of the morrow, when she should see again the happy, benevolent face of her new friend. It came, and anxiously did Beatrice watch for his appearance; the morning was past, yet he had not come; the afternoon had faded into evening, and Beatrice was despairing of seeing him, when his elastic step was heard upon the threshold.

Pleasantly that evening flitted by; as they became better acquainted, Beatrice found her friend superiorly educated, and well informed, exceedingly humorous and jocular, possessing a sound mind, with much depth of character, which, though pliant and versatile when the subject permitted, ever manifested a basis of principle which no persuasion could falter. Every other evening he devoted to dispelling the hours of ennui from the lonely Beatrice, who, observing he was sometimes void of the spirit of cheer that usually characterized him, would enliven him with her song, when the old woman would come, accompanied by her cigarette, and taking her seat upon the floor, listen in silence. One evening, as they sat alone, Beatrice again expressed her gratitude, when he replied,—

"Perhaps you are not indebted to me as you imagine. It was not wholly the spirit of philanthropy that first prompted me to notice you. There is deeply engraven upon my memory the image of one who, although now lost to me for ever, is still most dear to me, and though the past is painful to recall, for worlds I would not have the memory of her erased from my soul; I live in it—I could not exist without it; when I do right it is her recollection alone which prompts the act, and when I fall into error it is because I have ceased to remember that she is still dear to me! But, Beatrice, your countenance resembles hers, and that first arrested my notice."

He ceased speaking, and seeing he was much moved, Beatrice changed the subject, and said she had long entertained the idea, that if she were once in France, she might readily find her relations.

"Well, if you wish to go, I don't want to keep you here; it may be that your success depends upon it, and as our efforts have been fruitless so far, we can but make another trial in France; so, when you like, we will start."

"Oh, but I could go alone, I would not have you leave your business—"

"I have none at present but to accompany you."

"I thought you were a tailor."

"I believe I was one evening, when I handed you that card."

Beatrice inquired no further. If he desired to conceal who he was, it mattered not to her. He had proved himself a true friend to the distressed, she was grateful, he knew it, and that was enough.

Observing she was silent, he said no more upon the subject, but rising to go, added, "Well, the day after to-morrow I will

call at eight o'clock, and we will set out for Paris. Good-by, Mademoiselle ;" and he was gone.

The next morning, as Beatrice was sitting alone in the little garret room, the door was suddenly opened and the strange old woman entered ; for a few seconds she stood without speaking, while she cast her severe, penetrating glance upon her. At last she took the cigarette between her fingers, and in a loud, commanding voice began,—

"Who are you? Where have you come from; and how long have you known him?"

Beatrice gave her name, and was answering the second question, when her interlocutor interrupted her.

"Oh, you need not take the trouble to tell me anything about the wreck, I've heard plenty of such tales in my time, and now am too old to believe them. But tell me, how long have you known him?"

"Do you mean the gentleman who brought me here, Madame? Oh, I first met him at a hotel not far from here."

I thought as much. Who sent you those things? But no matter, of course he did, I see it all plainly enough."

"Oh, but Madame, as soon as I find my friends, we shall be but too happy to make all compensation,—

"Oh, don't talk so, you know very well you only care for him so long as he'll provide for you,—that's all such girls as you want. I met with many like you when I lived in Spain, and know exactly how you play your part; when you have an opportunity to conceal your true character, you do, and pretend to be a heroine in distress, making yourself as fascinating as possible, that you may captivate such an unsuspecting young fellow as poor Oscar. And it is such as you, despicable girl," approaching her with an uplifted hand, "yes, just such as you, who do half the harm in the world, instead of earning an honest livelihood. You intend your pretty face to provide for you. Why, when I think of the advantage you have taken of this young Oscar, I feel inclined to turn you directly from my door. I've known him ever since he was an infant, his family is highly respectable, and would not tolerate such as you; but I mean to inform them of all this. You took good care it should be a baron you captivated, didn't you? because you knew he was wealthy, and could give you all you asked; and see how you rouge every day of your life."

"Oh, Madame," cried the terrified Beatrice, "indeed I did not know he was a baron, and truly I never paint, come and examine my skin,—"

"But I'll not listen to such! How can you tell me anything so false as to declare you did not know he was the rich Baron de Korsa? I've written to inform his friends of your proceedings, and fine disgrace the poor fellow will be in, for his father was an honorable man, and so might his son have been but for you. And at the same time, while you are leading him into all this trouble, of course every time you see him you pretend to fall into rhapsodies of love, to manifest how intensely you care for him, and he's foolish enough to believe you. But there shall be no more of this in my house. He must know what you are by this time. I despise him for continuing his attention, and when he comes here again, I shall not forget to tell him what I think of you and him too. After acting as he has, he is a disgrace to the society he moves in, and —

"Oh, Madame, please do not talk so! I do respect the goodness that is in him, but indeed I never told him I loved him. But I don't understand you. Who and what do you take me to be? Oh tell me what you mean; or at least, whatever you may think of me, entertain no evil thoughts of him — indeed, he is noble and good, and all that is honorable! Oh, for worlds I would not have him suspected of wrong on my account — tell me of anything I can do to shield him from the censure you say is about falling upon him, and I will do it. He was a friend to me when I had no other, and what would I not do to serve him!" She looked beseechingly at the ugly old woman, but only saw the same angry frown, the same stern penetration, and sinking upon the floor, burst into tears.

"Oh, it's useless for you to feign all that, for I once began such a course as yours, and practiced the same thing myself, and could shed tears at any moment, if any one reproached me; so you see I'm well acquainted with the art, although I did not practice it long, for I found there were plenty with more attractions than I had, so was soon obliged to abandon that life; and cross as I seem, I am quite sorry for you, because I know it's a great misfortune for a poor girl like you to have been born with a pretty face. Still, at the same time I cannot forgive you for deceiving this young Oscar, which you must have done, for he knew nothing of such characters as you, before this, but now he is ruined for ever; and yet you are hypocrite enough to say you respect him, when to-morrow you will injure his reputation still farther, by going to France with him."

"Oh, but I will not! I will go alone — this instant! Only give me one moment to get ready — please don't talk so any more, and I will soon be gone!"

"Yes; and when you arrive there you will write, and let him know where you are."

"Oh, no, indeed I will not! if I have injured him it shall be the last time, I will see him no more; whatever you may think of me, believe my words, I will banish myself from him, where his kindness cannot reach me. I have no money, but I will go, if I beg my passage all the way. Only please leave me for a moment, you disturb me."

"Very well; I see you are not so utterly depraved but that you can have a little love for him, and indeed it would be a great pity for him to be so lost. I know a girl like you can't very well help it, only take care next time to fascinate some old man, whose reputation is gone, and not an inexperienced young fellow like this poor Oscar de Korsa;" and she left the room. But her words were lost upon Beatrice, who stood gazing into vacancy. "I could never carry these, and I've no money to pay any one!" said she to herself, looking at her things. Sitting down, she began to empty some of the contents of the little desk into her pocket, when, underneath some paper, she found a purse which she had not before discovered, containing seventy-five thalers. Beatrice looked at it for a moment, her eyes filled with tears, and she exclaimed, "Oh, what will you think of me? But after all you have done, I would rather you should think any ill of me, than stay here one moment longer to injure you. May God bless you! whoever you are, whatever your name may be, may you one day be rewarded for your kindness to the friendless, and forlorn Beatrice!"

The door opened, the old woman again made her appearance, and seeing Beatrice tying her bonnet said, "Oh, I was afraid you had changed your mind, and would not go. You can take all your things, there are hosts of little urchins in the street who will be glad to carry them to the station for these few macaroons;" and taking up the trunk and parcels as though they had been nothing more than a bundle of feathers, she descended the stairs, followed by Beatrice. On reaching the door, which was open, she stood for a moment without speaking, while she suspended a macaroon in mid-air. Soon a flock of ragged little street-sweepers and their associates, crowded the door. Handing one of them the baggage, with a look of command she gave several loud orders in German, and placing the macaroons in the rim of his time-worn hat, pushed him from the door. Then turning to Beatrice, whose progress her corpulent figure had impeded, and letting her large hands fall heavily upon her shoulders, she said, "You are very pretty, and have beautiful

hair, I'm sorry you are obliged to lead such a life. Good-by;" and pressing the agitated girl to her bosom she kissed her forehead. Beatrice felt the hot, tainted breath from the cigarette upon her cheek, and suffering her lips to press the swarthy skin of the old woman, fled from the house.

Beatrice and her escort arrived at the station, where, having taken her ticket, she recompensed the boy for his trouble, and remembering she was again alone in a strange city, it was not without a feeling of regret that she saw him turn away.

Taking a seat in a corner of the car, she hoped to avoid observation; but soon an old gentleman sat down opposite her, and after gazing at her a considerable time, asked her if she were alone. Wishing him to understand she was a foreigner, not comprehending a word of German, she shook her head, and was silent; soon after he arose and went to another part of the car. Believing she was now left to herself, Beatrice breathed more freely, but to her dismay, an old lady who had been watching her some time, came and took a seat close beside her. Not a little disconcerted, Beatrice moved still further into the corner, and the old lady moved still closer to her. When they had been travelling about four hours, and the train was about to stop, Beatrice found the hand of the old lady in her pocket. She started, and uttered a faint cry, which was unheard amid the commotion, and while she looked round for aid, the old lady was gone. Fortunately for Beatrice, she had concealed her little purse within her bosom, so that she sustained no serious loss.

It was evening when our traveller arrived at her destination in Paris. In a waiting-room at the station, her attention was arrested by a nurse and children, whose ignorance of the language rendered their position exceedingly awkward. Taking compassion upon the anxious faces of the children, she offered her services as interpreter, which were gratefully accepted; and learning they desired to remain at a hotel until the morning, gladly joined the delighted party, and accompanied them to the hotel. In the morning, the father of the children came to meet them, when the enthusiastic little creatures informed him of Beatrice's kindness, and forced him to the side of their benefactress, to whom he expressed his warmest thanks. There was the air of the perfect gentleman, and a parental sympathy and gentleness in his look and manner, which Beatrice could not resist, and summoning fresh courage, she inquired of him whether he could recommend her some private residence, where she could take up her abode for a short time. In reply, he spoke in high tones of the family where he was staying, and seeing Beatrice was satisfied, offered her a seat in his carriage.

The house to which they repaired was pleasantly situated in a street near Place de la Concorde, the upper windows overlooking the gardens of Les Tuilleries. Surrounded by all that was hospitable and inviting, the vivacity that characterized Beatrice began to return, as she found the society select and congenial to her taste, for it consisted of two foreign families distinguished for their musical talent, among whom was the celebrated Mademoiselle Jenny L—— and several from the most refined circles of Paris.

Upon her arrival she had advertised in all the principal provinces, and thinking now that she was in France, she must certainly be successful, she awaited the issue in joyful expectation, while in the meantime she became one of the favorites of the household, and was the recipient of such kindness and affability from Jenny L—— as never to be forgotten. But the weeks glided by, and although during the day and evening she was dazzled by the brilliancy of that fascinating city, she seldom allowed the day to close without retiring to her room to give vent to tears.

It was now five weeks since Beatrice arrived in Paris, yet no tidings; while it was thought by those who interested themselves in her, that the estate of her uncle was in some distant province, and had passed into some other branch of the family under another name; or probably, not being willing to acknowledge an heir, her relations might be blind to the advertisement, and as Beatrice had not the means to fee a lawyer, the matter could not be further investigated. They advised her therefore to trust no more to it for the present, but to support herself by the exercise of her musical talent; and as the two hundred and sixty francs were nearly exhausted, she resolved to deliberate no longer, but to make the trial.

Some young ladies in the house mentioned it to the kind-hearted Jenny L—— and no sooner did that benevolent lady hear of the proposition, than she immediately interested herself in Beatrice's behalf, and early one morning invited Beatrice to accompany her, that she might be introduced to one of the first masters in Paris.

"Well, Mademoiselle," said the little professor, after Beatrice had agreed to instruct his children, "now let me have the pleasure of hearing you sing."

Beatrice complied, and afterwards joined her companion in the duet of "Norma."

"Many thanks, ladies, now please sit down again, and Mademoiselle Sauvestre, I've something more to say to you. After

hearing you sing, I am obliged to conclude that I ought not to give you the tuition of my children."

"I am very sorry, sir."

"And to be candid with you, I never intended you should teach them."

"Then, sir, you have deceived me," with a glowing cheek.

"I know it, for I am a bachelor and have no children."

Here Mademoiselle Jenny L—— and the professor burst into laughter. Beatrice smiled faintly, then, with a sadder expression than ever, arose to leave.

"Oh, wait," exclaimed the little professor, "I've not told you all. I heard of your talent, and that you intended to enter the professional world as an instructress. Now I knew if what I had been told were true, that Mademoiselle Sauvestre was never intended to sit in obscurity teaching children, but to shine as one of the prominent artistes of the day. I knew also that you had no thought of such a career, and would timorously shrink from such a proposition, being aware probably, how difficult a matter it is to obtain even a satisfactory interview with any of the great masters. So, knowing that if I made a trial of your skill, I could tell you at once how far you were qualified for the profession, I begged Mademoiselle to bring you to me that I might have the pleasure of hearing you. So you see I am not the only person concerned in this plot;" glancing at the smiling Jenny L——. "Now Mademoiselle Sauvestre, allow me to inform you that if you are willing, you can become a star whenever you choose, and no longer will there be occasion for you to solicit the attentions of your relations or friends; you will be independent of them all. Say you are willing, and I will engage you at once for the solos in our next oratorio."

"Come, Mademoiselle," interposed her friend, "consent; be assured your debut will be one of success."

Beatrice raised her eyes from the floor, and extending her hand to the professor, said, "Monsieur, I shall be very happy to accept your kind offer."

"Then please be punctual at the rehearsal, to-morrow at ten o'clock."

The oratorio was given before a crowded house, and Beatrice, in her simple robe of white muslin, made her first appearance before the public, which was acknowledged by the enthusiastic Parisians to be one of brilliant success. Thus began Beatrice's career as an artiste.

After a succession of oratorios had been given, they were suspended until the following season, and Beatrice, with a capital

of seventeen hundred francs, after her bills had been paid, retired from the stage to await a re-commencement in the autumn, should she still hear no tidings of her relatives.

But the fascination of the Parisians, and the many attractions of that gayest of cities, did not wholly satisfy the active mind of Beatrice; she sought occupation, and now it was, in her leisure hours, when her companions, for want of something to do, reclined on their couches, and left to herself, that she began to arrange the opera of "Il Confessare." When completed, she offered it to the professional world for approval. It was much admired, and purchased for six thousand francs. The director of the opera desired Beatrice to attend the rehearsals, with which request she readily complied.

"Mademoiselle," said he, aside, to her on one of these occasions, could you suggest any improvement in that lady's acting during that scene?"

The lady in question, though generally a good actress, and possessing a beautiful voice, was not a sufficient tragedienne to throw the desired effect into that particular scene; Beatrice readily detected what was wanting in her style, but loath to complain, made some slight observation, and evaded the question. Not satisfied with a repeated attempt of the lady, the director undertook to explain to her what attitude and gestures he desired; failing to make the lady fully understand, he pleaded the assistance of Beatrice, who, throwing off her bonnet, immediately took the lady's part in that scene. She recollected whose memory it was that had first suggested the writing of that plot, and she had but to breathe the name of Herbert to enter into the full spirit of the piece. The scene ended, Beatrice retired amid the enthusiastic applause of the spectators.

"Mademoiselle," said the director, following her, "if you are ambitious in regard to the success of your opera, you must take the principal part yourself.

Beatrice declined, fearing she might injure the lady already engaged; but hearing he intended to dispense with the services of that artiste, and seek another, she accepted the engagement; nor was her debut as an actress less brilliant than the previous had been. For several successive weeks the opera was repeated before crowded houses, and lessees of opera houses in other cities sought to make arrangements with the young artiste, and the papers of Berlin announced she would shortly appear in that city.

But although engaged evening after evening until a late hour, Beatrice had not given the daytime to rest, for she prepared a

second opera, in which she was to appear previous to her departure from Paris. On account of her engagement in Berlin, her time in France was very limited, and it was necessary that the rehearsals for the new opera should be few, and frequent as possible.

It was Saturday, and as the first rehearsal concluded, the lessee announced,

"Ladies and gentlemen, we shall meet again to-morrow, at ten o'clock precisely. All, with the exception of Beatrice, nodded assent.

"Oh Signore," exclaimed she, "I cannot, I am a Protestant."

"What, cannot come because it is Sunday? then we must do without you until after the mass."

"But Signore, I could not come at any time to-morrow; we must keep the Sabbath holy."

"Mademoiselle, you surely cannot fully understand,—every one must be here to-morrow or we cannot go through the whole in full costume."

"Signore, I cannot; it is one of the great laws of our religion."

"And do you suppose I have no regard for religion? I also am a Christian; and no matter how fatigued, I always attend vespers on Sunday."

"Yes, Signore, but in my religion, we must keep the *whole* of the day, not a *part* only."

"Mademoiselle, this is nonsense," growing angry, "it is a duty your profession demands. Come to-morrow, or resign."

"But Signore, they can rehearse very well to-morrow without me, and I do not require it. You never knew me to fail, and you will find me perfect in my part on Monday."

"Ah, but I require it. Come to-morrow or resign."

"Then, Signore, I will resign."

"What, Mademoiselle Sauvestre resign?" cried the united voices of her fellow artists, looking in consternation at the silent lessee. "Oh, Signore!" continued several entreatingly, "she needs no rehearsal, the talented Mademoiselle Beatrice can take any part at any moment, and you know she is always fully prepared. Oh, do not let her resign!"

They repaired to the green room, thence to the dressing-room of the young artiste, but only her maid remained putting up her wardrobe, for she was gone.

Beatrice was ill; the professor, under whom she had placed herself for the further cultivation of her voice, had allowed her

to take but very little substantial food during several days; the rest which she had allotted herself, had been insufficient, and her strength, wholly inadequate to her indefatigable exertions, now sunk under the exhaustion. Knowing her to be celebrated, and receiving a large income, many made constant demands upon her purse, for charitable purposes; and Beatrice, ever ready to relieve the distressed, had listened to every tale of woe, and had given not only lavishly but indiscriminately; and trusting to the proceeds of her new opera, she had expended nearly the last franc in heading a subscription for a sick actress. New costumes had been necessary for the new opera, and as those who are engaged in preparing such, are ever most extravagant in their demands, Beatrice's bills, which were almost due, were enormous; and although her credit was good, as she viewed all debt with abhorrence, the thought of not being able to meet their demands greatly perplexed her. Then, Beatrice was keenly sensitive, and the idea of having been the recipient of harsh words and angry tones from the lessee, and lastly expelled, seemed more than she could bear; and she gave herself over to despondency. In her day-dreams she had delighted to picture herself again in America to surprise the fond Herbert with her presence, and obtaining his ready forgiveness for her caprice and indifference, take up her abode with him, never again to part. And she thought of the Baron, from whose sympathy and protection she had exiled herself, through the erroneous ideas of a foolish old woman, while, when she had the means to refund what he had so generously bestowed, she knew not where to address him. She had now given up all hope of ever finding her relatives, and the whole preyed upon her mind; in vain she sought to relieve the aching heart. She begged to be alone; they left her to herself, but what was their dismay when upon entering her room the following day, they beheld the beautiful Beatrice, and found that her reason was gone!

What was to be done with her? Her maid had deserted her, and she was now wholly dependent upon the kindness and sympathy of those around her. For a long time, those of the household where she had remained ever since her arrival in Paris, were most devoted to the sick room, but as the sufferer grew worse, needing proper medical care and constant attendance, they deemed it expedient to have her removed to an asylum devoted to persons of her peculiar malady; for sometimes she would insist upon rising, and feeble as she was, would make every exertion to dress for the stage, saying, "Do please help me, for I must go, its getting late; and if I rehearse to-day,

he'll not require me to be there to-morrow, and to-morrow is the Sabbath. Do please assist me, or I shall have to resign!"

"For whom has that carriage been so long waiting?" inquired a gentleman, as he stood upon the steps of the house adjacent to that which was about to lose the presence of the young artiste.

"Oh, it's to convey that poor young actress to the asylum."

"Ah, I heard there was such a distressing case in our vicinity, who is she, please?"

"Oh, the same young lady who made such a sensation a short time ago. Sauvestre is her name, yes, Mademoiselle Sauvestre."

"What, Beatrice? Beatrice Sauvestre? and has she become an actress? Doubtless it is the same, I must see her, I am an old acquaintance."

He was soon in the next house making inquiries of the hostess concerning the invalid, and after hearing a few particulars of her history, exclaimed, "Oh, if she could know me, I'm sure she would be glad to see me."

"Ah, but she is too ill, sir; and can recognize no one; besides, what would it avail? She must be taken away without delay."

"But, Madame, not as a pauper! Fancy the beautiful, the delicate Beatrice at the mercy of those hard-hearted keepers. Oh no! if my purse is of any avail, pray don't let her go as a pauper!"

"Well, but it's all duly arranged," replied the lady, hesitatingly, "and the authorities have sent for her."

"No matter, I'll send the vehicle away, and take the affair into my own hands."

"What now, Oscar?" inquired a companion, as he saw him hastily descending the steps.

"Oh, nothing; I will join you in an hour."

Twenty days remained as a blank to the life of Beatrice.

At last reason returned, and declaring herself to be quite recovered, she begged to be released from her confinement, which she was told was a hospital for convalescent invalids; but although rapidly recovering she was still very weak, and her physicians pronounced her unfit to leave the asylum.

"Mademoiselle, you are better to-day," said a nurse who had devoted herself to the care of the young prima donna. This morning she wished to gain a full view of Beatrice in a good light, and going to the window continued, "Do come and look at these flowers, I never saw colors so exquisite before."

Beatrice eagerly ran to the window, and placing herself in front of her, with a firm and steady gaze, the woman peered long and earnestly into those full, dark eyes, that were now riveted upon the flowers below. "Yes; you are decidedly better, and now if you will promise to keep perfectly quiet, I will take you down stairs to receive a visitor who has called every day to inquire after you. Come," added she, taking her by the hand.

At first Beatrice shrunk timorously from her, but soon suffered herself to be led away, for during the brief period she had remained there, she had experienced sufficient at the hands of these nurses, to remember they must be obeyed; and she followed her guide into an ante-room where stood, ready to receive her, the old friend and benefactor, Oscar, the baron, whom she had formerly mistaken for the tailor of Bremen. The woman left them, but took her station near the open door, where she could hear all that passed, lest she should be wanted. The great surprise, in her present feeble state, was too much for Beatrice, and she was unable to control her tears. But her compassionate friend well understood the weakness under which she was laboring, and drawing her to a seat, would not allow her to talk, while he recounted his disappointment at finding her gone from the strange old woman in Bremen, his anxiety for her safety, and lastly, the singular mode in which he discovered his lost Beatrice.

"Ah, I know now it is to you alone that I am indebted for all this care! I know now what has been ailing me and what kind of institution this is, and I am thankful to the merciful Providence that has watched over me, but what can I say to you?"

"Beatrice, you have forgotten what a bright halo of happiness your society has thrown over my weary life. I have confessed to you that since I lost a cherished idol, I have wandered in quest of something to divert me, and just as the thick clouds of gloomy ennui were enveloping me in wretchedness, you were sent to me; and in thinking of you, in my anxiety for your welfare, I was completely drawn out of myself, and while in your company, forgot that I was miserable; and Beatrice, as long as you are not surrounded by those who have a greater claim, you will not deny me this pleasure?"

"Oh, I have longed to see you, and cannot find words to express half I feel towards you. But why may I not leave this prison-house? I am well now, my voice is as strong as ever; oh, I cannot let you go without me — take me with you — I am

quite able to sing again — oh don't leave me here any longer. I sometimes hear the cries of those around me, I would fly to console them, to pray with them, but my door is barred, — I cannot reach them, and oh, how dreadful is the thought that they must suffer without a friend!"

"Beatrice, I see this is no place for you; now that you are so far recovered, you shall remain here no longer. You shall leave with me to-day."

They did so; and in an ecstasy of delight, with many tears for the poor inmates she was leaving behind, Beatrice bade adieu to her prison, and set out with her companion for Paris.

No sooner was the arrival of the young prima donna announced, than her services were earnestly solicited for the remainder of the season, and scarcely allowing herself time to regain her strength, she engaged herself to the same lessee, who declared they would never rehearse on the Sabbath, and soon, except that she was paler and thinner, she was again the same Beatrice as ever.

The following winter she performed for the first time in Berlin, and had accepted an engagement in London, when a painful circumstance robbed her of her buoyancy, and finally rendered her very unhappy.

The Baron had accompanied her to Berlin, had remained at the same hotel, had guarded her interests, and ever been ready to officiate as secretary, counsellor, escort, as the case required. Now, popular, and a general favorite among her fellow artists as Beatrice was, still there were those who envied her talent, and were ever on the alert for an opportunity to cast their weapon of subtlety and malice upon her. They knew the young Oscar to be no relative, and circulated the report that his attachment to the young prima donna rendered them inseparable, and were not content until they had placed at stake not only the prudence but also the virtue of Beatrice. At last, driven to despair at finding herself the subject of such reports, she determined to fly from his presence, and see him no more. It was a decision that had cost her much, for she had learned to regard the Baron as a friend and a brother; and as a counsellor and protector, had looked up to him when she had no one else to advise; still she resolved to fly by taking a night train and starting for London while he slept calmly, unconscious of her intention. "And what will he think of me?" But she cast away the thought, for it made her hesitate, and falter. It was evening, leaving her room, she sought the Baron, and bade him good night, saying she wished to retire early. She took the hand within her

own, and looking into his face, was silent. He regarded her attentively for a few moments, then smiled, took up his paper, and appeared indifferent; kneeling beside him she lavished upon him the praises and gratitude she could not withhold; then tearing herself from his presence, flew to prepare her departure. But the Baron had studied Beatrice too well not to notice something unusual troubled her. To guard and protect this lovely young creature, was now the great object of his existence; he looked upon it as his peculiar mission, and sought in performing this duty, to forget in a measure his own misfortunes, and complete it to the end, as something his loved and lost one would have wished, had she known the fate of the beautiful Beatrice. For some time he listened attentively; at last he heard footsteps upon the floor of her room. Presently her door opened, and Beatrice, accompanied by her maid, moved stealthily over the threshold. Instantly he placed himself before her, and drawing her into an ante-room, said in a firm voice, "Beatrice, tell me, would you allow the slander of your enemies to banish you from your friends? I know you think to shield me from censure by thus tearing yourself from me, but Beatrice, are you not wanting in discrimination? Are you not wrong to suffer the malicious designs of your false friends to thwart you, and make us wretched? When you know these reports to be false, that we are innocent of these charges, that we can face the world at any moment and confess without a blush all that has ever passed between us, when we know we are right in the sight of heaven, tell me, Beatrice, are you not wrong to regard these false reports? Fling them away as nothing. Have a greater and higher respect for your own honorable principles, and never suffer them to trouble you again. Go, Beatrice, and rest until the morning, then we will start for London together."

She had turned from him, and her eyes were cast upon the floor; for a moment she was silent, then with one of her sweet smiles she placed her hand upon his shoulder and said, "You are right, and you have conquered."

It was early in February, and that massive building near Marseilles, known as the habitation of the deranged, wore a somewhat more rigid appearance in its mantle of snow than when the green verdure and thick foliage obscured the high stone wall that surrounded these gloomy confines.

At a certain hour of the day might be seen, at one of the windows, a sweet face, which, though it wore a pensive expression, could not fail to inspire the gazer with thoughts of the beautiful;

sometimes the casement was opened, and a soft, plaintive air was wafted on the breeze. To those who had known her previously, the face and voice recalled many an association, as they recognized in her the talented Beatrice, the favorite prima donna of the day. The baron had escorted her to London, where she was enthusiastically received by the crowds of applauding auditors; thence, on her way to Paris, she had appeared at several other cities, where she was attended with equal success; but the buoyant spirits of the young artiste did not rally, and yet though too languid for any exertion, she expressed her desire to join a troupe about to leave for the shores of America. Unwilling to disclose to the baron the true reason for wishing to go, he believed it merely the desire for a change, and proposed a circuit in another direction. Her hope of meeting Herbert was now crushed. She grew thinner and paler, and one morning they found her quite unconscious. Though melancholy and perfectly harmless, she needed the constant care of those accustomed to the treatment of her malady, and had been removed to the asylum where they were already acquainted with the invalid.

Beatrice was now quite recovered from the temporary insanity under which she had been laboring, but as she still required medical care, it was deemed best for her to remain a short time longer.

"Paulina, who are those persons in the other part of the building?" said Beatrice, one morning, to the woman who attended her.

"Oh, Mademoiselle, those are some poor women who have no friends to pay for their support; they are the paupers, and we keep them in a part by themselves."

"No friends!" repeated Beatrice emphatically, "but why will not some one go and be a friend to them? How lonely and dejected some of them look! Why did you not tell me of them before? I would talk with them, sing to them, and amuse them. They are perfectly harmless, aren't they?"

"Oh, yes, there's nothing to fear from them. Whenever you wish, you may go to them, but you'll soon get tired and want to come back to your own rooms."

"Good, kind Paulina, a thousand thanks! Oh, indeed, I shall never be tired if I can do them any kindness. Now I am ready, please show me the way."

The place in which these poor creatures were gathered, was a sort of conservatory or extension room, built of iron and glass, which they occupied when the weather would not admit them into the grounds. In one corner was a group of three, appar-

ently conversing very confidentially; a little further on was a middle-aged woman very fantastically attired, wearing a turban of blue and red flannel. As Beatrice approached, she arose, and taking her hand, said in a faint voice, "My dear, I am the Queen of Naples, and intend to go home to my country next week, then I'll take you with me, and you will be my daughter, wont you, for I've lost mine?"

"Oh, yes, Madame," said Beatrice, returning the caress with a sigh, "next week I will go with you, good-by till then." Towards the centre was a table around which some half-dozen were seated. Two of them arose as Beatrice drew near, and one exclaimed, as she made a low courtesy, "Here comes the Queen of Sheba, we must all rise to meet her!"

Beatrice took the hand of each who came up to her; some were busily employed with needlework, while others sat perfectly inanimate. Several began to ask Beatrice a number of questions, and having given her the most comfortable seat they possessed, commenced to acquaint her with their different histories, which were a strange medley of incidents, and according to these statements, several had been the wives of Napoleon Bonaparte; one said she was the sister of Marshal Ney, while an old lady was disputing with a girl who appeared scarcely seventeen, about being Joan of Arc. But Beatrice did not attend to all that was said, for although they often drew her face towards them to attract her attention, her eyes were continually falling upon one who appeared more interesting than the rest. She was rather small, and very thin, probably about twenty; the eyes were a jet black, exceedingly bright and expressive, while the long, glossy tresses contrasted greatly with the pale face that was bent over a beautiful infant, which appeared scarcely a month old, resting on her knee.

"Oh, you wish to know who that young lady is?" exclaimed one of the women, noticing her eyes were riveted upon the infant. "Come, and we'll introduce you," rising and leading her towards the mother and child, she is the Madonna, the Virgin Mary."

"No, I am not," quickly responded the girl, for a moment raising her eyes from the infant. "My name is Gates."

"Oh, my dear, you are mistaken," interposed a young woman, "I knew you when you were an infant, and your name has a very different sound."

"Please do not believe them, what I say is true," said the young girl looking beseechingly at Beatrice, while she pressed the infant still closer to her bosom. Then finding she was again contradicted by several, she buried her face in the clothes of the

babe, and burst into tears. A gong was now sounded, and in a few seconds, Beatrice stood alone beside the mother and child. The poor girl continued weeping, uttering several incoherent sentences in Italian, but as they had hitherto spoken in French, with which she appeared perfectly familiar, Beatrice addressed her in that language.

"Why do you feel so sad to-day, Mademoiselle, is there anything I can do for you?"

The tearful face was raised to Beatrice, and seizing her dress, she exclaimed, "Oh, I know you will listen to me, and believe what I say. Don't think me a poor lunatic like the rest of these people, I know I did lose my reason for a short time, but now I am perfectly sane." With a nervous grasp she still held the dress of Beatrice, as though she were afraid she would not listen, and seeing how faint and weak she was, Beatrice offered to take the infant.

"You are tired, let me nurse it while you rest."

"Oh, but we wont disturb him, see how sweetly he sleeps. Is he not a beautiful boy? Well, yes, you have such a kind face, you may take him, please, I'm sure you will be careful of him. Oh I am so tired to-day!"

"How long have you been here?"

"I don't know—it seems to me a very long time."

Let me lay the baby upon this table, while I go to fetch you something, you can watch him just as well there."

"Oh, no, I could not!" jumping up; "some one might come and take him away, they did once, but it made me so unhappy that they brought him back to me."

"Well then, rest your head against this beam, for I know you are so tired, and I'll soon be back."

"Paulina, I've a favor to ask," said Beatrice, as she returned to her rooms, "I want you to let me bring that poor young lady and her infant to stay here with me. I'm sure her mind is quite sound, and that is no place for her; the time would never seem long to me, if she were here, oh, if you refuse me I shall be most wretched."

"You mean that Italian girl, don't you? well, yes, I know she has had her reason some time, but you are not going to have any of those people here, so, Mademoiselle, don't ask it."

Beatrice sat down and burst into tears; then, as if suddenly recollecting something, she went to a desk, and soon returning to the hard-hearted woman said, "Here are twenty francs, Paulina, do let them come, and when I go away I will give you something better."

"Very well, get them, and then I suppose you will be happy."

The day was on the decline; the golden orb had sunk into the west, and the last beam that had glittered upon the snow-crested turrets of the asylum had passed away, leaving behind only a remembrance of its transient, though glorious existence.

Upon a sofa in Beatrice's dressing-room, reclined the emaciated figure of the Italian girl; near her upon some cushions lay the infant in a sweet sleep; it was indeed a charming little creature, resembling its mother in the full, dark eyes and jetty locks, while the complexion, unlike hers, was exceedingly fair, and bore no token of a southern sky. Beside them sat Beatrice, watching with intense interest the sleepers, upon whom she bestowed her undivided attention.

A thin, trembling hand parted the drapery that was closely drawn round the couch to keep away the cold from the windows, and bending forward, the fond young mother gazed long and ardently upon the infant.

"How sweetly he sleeps," said she, as she fell back upon her pillows, "I wish I could sleep as calmly; but I shall soon, for I get weaker every day; yes, before long I shall be at rest!"

"Oh, but you may be better in a little while, take this draught, you are faint."

"Thanks, beloved Beatrice, now wont you please open that blind, and assist me to rise that I may look beyond those trees. I fancied yesterday I could see the walls of a building where I once lived; thank you dearest, that will do, now I can see. Oh yes, I was right! that is the house of Madame de Florigni!"

"Then you have friends in this vicinity, would you like me to go to them some time for you?"

"Oh, I have no friends! although there is one kind, feeling heart within those walls, but not Madame de Florigni's, oh no; if she had been less harsh and unkind, I should not have been here now. Ah, little she thinks how much she has caused the poor Signorina Susini to suffer."

"But, Madame, this is the hour that kind physician is here, the one whom we like so much; let me ask him to come and prescribe for you."

"No, thank you, no one can do me any good, I feel I cannot last long, and I've no wish to live but for my child. What will become of it?" and she burst into tears.

"Oh, pray don't think about that, if no one else claims it, I will take care of it, and you will trust me, wont you?"

"Mademoiselle, you are so very kind, but I would have its father see it; I think, could he once look upon that sweet little face, he could not but love it, even if he cares nothing for me. Oh, if he were only here for a moment, how much easier it would be to die! I would have him know of the poverty, the wretchedness, the suffering I have borne since I saw him. But don't think him so very much to blame,—indeed, had it not been for that cruel Madame de Florigni, I might have been with him now, and not scorned and scoffed by these hard-hearted nurses as though I were one to be despised. I will tell you all,"—

"But do wait a little while, I'm afraid you will be exhausted."

"Oh, no, don't hinder me; let me tell you while I have strength, and he may not sleep so soundly to-morrow. I believe you know I am a Neapolitan; I left Italy with an English family, to instruct a little girl in my language. They lived at Brighton, and it was at that place I first met my husband. I was then sixteen, he was a lieutenant in the British navy, and soon after we became acquainted his vessel was ordered away, and we were obliged to part for two years. Having no one else who appeared to care for me, I had become much attached to him, and his departure made me very miserable; however, we corresponded, and for the first six months he answered my letters.

Soon, the death of my little pupil rendered me of no service to the family, and I was thrown on my own resources. In my wanderings I met Madame de Florigni, who offered me a home in her school, and I returned there with her. Last spring as I was one evening accompanying several of the teachers for a walk, I met the lieutenant. I had heard nothing of him for a year and a half, but as I reproached him for his neglect, he assured me he had received very few of my letters, and that he had longed to see me again. He proposed that we should be married without further delay, and leave for London where his friends resided; accordingly, I left Madame's and joined him in Marseilles. He expressed his wish to arrive in London before being married, as he was a Protestant; but I insisted upon his keeping his promise or I would not accompany him. At last he yielded to my tears and entreaties, and towards evening we reached a little chapel hewn out of the cliff of a rock, upon the water's edge. It was a truly romantic little spot, and the white headed priest as he emerged from his cloister to welcome us, was well suited to my fancy, and I thought a union formed in such a solemn little place must prove a happy one.

We were married, and received the father's blessing. As we neared the city, which was about a mile distant, I noticed he was silent and thoughtful. Asking the cause, he informed me that he desired to go to Avignon to remain a short time, while he wrote to his friends to prepare them for my reception. We did so, but after we had been there some time, he said he must go to his friends alone, and endeavor to reconcile them to his marriage. He went, I saw no more of him, but heard he had joined his vessel and gone up the Mediterranean. I could not realize that he would not shortly return to me, and would anxiously await the return of the dawn, expecting each day would bring him back. I wrote to him constantly, but received no answer, and at last, my resources exhausted, I returned to the school of Madame de Florigni. My mind must have been in a very perturbed state, for I was often accused of things I knew nothing of; one thought, a sort of instinctive idea haunted me, and buoyed up my spirits from day to day — that he was in France seeking me, and that I must fly to him. The time wore on, sometimes wretched to melancholy and despair, at others goaded almost to madness. I neglected my duties, and became, what I never was before — a somnambulist. But Madame would not believe this, and reproaching me for intrigue and deception, she turned me from her roof. Knowing that should he write to me, the letters would be addressed to her residence, I besought her in their behalf, but she only spurned me from her. Perhaps, could I have told my tale of woe to her, she might have pitied me; but during the first four or five months of my stay with her, she had assembled us every week, while she delivered a sort of lecture upon the folly of marriage, viewing it as a state of servitude and suffering, into which no dignified and high-minded woman would ever enter. In a pure and ardent love she did not believe, declaring that if we did not mortify all such affections, we should never be worthy of a holier and happier existence. The more wretched I became, the more willing I was to agree with her, but could not bring myself to an acknowledgment of the truth, knowing she would only despise me for my folly. She requested me to leave her without further delay. There was a violent storm at the time, and I besought her to let me remain until the morrow, but she refused. I left her. I know no more, except that I went from her door, unconscious of everything but suffering, to which I was fully sensible; and when that awful blank to my life was ended, I awoke to find myself in the asylum."

The eyelids dropped again, the color faded from the lips, and

finding she had fainted, and could not be readily restored, Beatrice went for a physician who was then in attendance, and having pleaded earnestly, at last he accompanied her to the chamber of the invalid. Bending over the couch, the aged man gazed upon the marble countenance, and heaving a deep sigh, in a low, sad tone murmured, "What a wreck of the young and the beautiful!" Then turning away, shook his head, saying, "It's a sad fate, but nothing can be done. Good-evening."

Beatrice watched beside the couch until past midnight, the infant had been removed from the chamber, that the last moments of the dying young mother might not be disturbed. For several hours she had tranquilly slept, and with the intensest anxiety Beatrice awaited a waking hour, that she might speak to her of the welfare of her soul. Towards the dawn of the morning, the dark eyes opened, and finding she was fully conscious, Beatrice broached the important subject. Finding her hope centered in the Virgin Mary, and desirous only for the absolution of a priest, she read to her those portions of the New Testament which declare the Lord Jesus Christ to be the only Mediator and Advocate, exhorting her to pray only to the Triune God, as the Holy Scriptures direct, by which, through the precious promises, we can alone attain everlasting life; and together, in the fervency of the spirit, she prayed that the eyes of the dying girl might be opened, and her soul received into the mansions of the blessed.

"There is near here a man of God, who can speak more ably to you than I can," said Beatrice, as she administered a restorative to the sufferer.

"Is he a priest of the Romish Church?" she asked eagerly.

"No — but dearest, would that avail anything, if he can point you to a reconciliation with God, through the merits of His Son — if he can tell you that the great work of your soul's redemption is already accomplished, that you have only to believe, and nothing to fear for the future, does it matter by what name he is called?"

"No — Beatrice — beloved one; you are right, I know your faith has been a comfort to you in the hour of trial, I would gladly embrace the same faith, the same hope; yes, I will see him without delay."

For two days the daughter of La Bella Italia, lingered between life and death, and fancying she appeared to rally, Beatrice asked whether she would like her to go to Madame de Flo-

rigni, and inquire if there had been any letters or visitors for her.

"Oh, no;" was the faint response, "I like to fancy he has inquired for me, and should you go, I fear I should be obliged to believe the painful reality of the contrary."

In compliance with her earnest request, the infant had been brought, and laid in her arms. Gazing upon it in all the fullness of a young mother's love, she remained some time silent, watching the low breathing of the little sleeper; then looking up, said, as her tears started, "Dear Beatrice, there's but one thing in this wide world I can leave my child as a relic of his mother, and although it is nothing in itself, to me it is almost sacred, and before I die, I should like to look at it once again. I've not seen it for many months, but I have a recollection of concealing it in the lining of that dress, please get it for me while my sight lasts."

It was a paper carefully sewed up in oil-skin, and proved to be the certificate of her marriage.

"Beatrice, please tell me the day of the month?"

"To-day is the first of February."

"Then yesterday I was nineteen!" looking into vacancy, as though recalling the past. "Oh, that I could have died in Italy, and been buried by the grave of my mother!"

"But not those tears, dearest, you are not unhappy any more?"

"Oh, no, it was a moment of weakness, it matters not where my body lies, my soul will be at rest."

"See, love, here is some jewel wrapped up in this parcel. Look, a necklace, shall I keep it for your child?"

The sufferer endeavored to rise to see it more perfectly, but sinking back, pressed her emaciated hand to her head, and examining it closely, answered, "Oh, I have some faint recollection of seeing it before, but where, I know not; could it be that in my hours of unconsciousness I have dispossessed some one of it? Oh, dreadful!"

"Hush! think no more of it, we are not accountable for anything we do in such a moment."

Finding her no longer conscious, Beatrice turned for a restorative, when the altered voice of the invalid cried,

"Take him — I cannot hold him — oh, Beatrice — I'm falling!"

A change came over her; clasping her thin arms round Beatrice, she said in words that were scarcely audible, "I wish I knew whether he were living or dead."

"You mean your husband. I have written, and hear he is living; shall I write again?"

"Yes — when I am gone — that is all — Beatrice, my faithful friend — good-by!"

With a firm pressure she retained the hand of Beatrice until the icy touch told her moments were numbered. All doubt as to her eternal welfare was removed from the mind of her friend, who in her constant vigil over the sufferer, had witnessed the growth of a sure and steadfast faith in Him who alone can save.

The morrow's sun rose not for that fair daughter of Italy, and ere her remains were entombed, the babe was laid upon the bosom of its mother, and lowered beneath the green sod, to await the morn of the resurrection.

Beatrice's term of imprisonment ended, she again repaired to Berlin. But grateful as she was for the reception that ever awaited her, it could not afford her the gratification and pleasure her friends anticipated, — such could not satisfy the yearnings of her soul. Her experience with the world, had developed those sensibilities, which her previous life of comparative inaction had permitted to lie dormant; her passions awakened to their full power, her keen susceptibility alive to every impress, she turned with disgust from the admiring throng, and repined as she pictured to her fancy the humble cot where the love and sympathy of kindred hearts are riches the world without cannot give. Those who were still envious of her success, continued to throw their taunts and reproaches around her, and now at her earnest solicitations, the baron consented to leave her locality, that his name might no longer be mingled with her own. He was gone, and Beatrice now felt herself again alone in the world, taking pleasure in but one object, — that of bestowing the greater part of her income for the relief of the poor. Often she longed to relinquish her profession for a time, and seek a reprieve among the simple and unsophisticated, of the mountain regions. "But why do you wish to withdraw from us?" her friends would urge, "your health is improving, you are best fitted for an active life, you take much pleasure in bestowing charities, and while there is such great need of philanthropy, why relinquish even for a season your life of usefulness?"

Though unknown to Beatrice and her circle of friends, the night arrived when she was to stand for the last time, to receive the plaudits of an admiring audience.

But Beatrice had no need to relate the rest of her story to the intent listeners, they were already acquainted with the event of the last appearance of that favorite private prima donna.

"And now I've something to say," said Mrs. Villiers when

"Beatrice had concluded her narrative, "You know, Lydia, we've often wondered at our adventure in that house where we found our long lost Beatrice. Well, after we had secured our favorite here in her new home, I went back to ascertain if everything of Beatrice's had been brought away, merely for the sake of satisfying my mind as to the household of that landlady. I soon discovered the inmates of that house to be of the highest respectability, and that the man who showed us up that back staircase into that singular room, was a poor idiot, a relative of the landlady's, who gave him a home in her dwelling. So you see how much we may suspect from appearances."

It was evening, and Estelle was alone in the drawing-room. The baron who, after much research, had at last succeeded in discovering the residence of the lost Beatrice, came to make inquiries respecting her. Estelle knew the voice, and ordered the servant to usher him into her presence. But what was his surprise when, instead of meeting Beatrice, he beheld before him his favorite Estelle. At first the interview was embarrassing and painful to both; but it was soon exchanged for one of mutual delight. But what was their hope? Fritze could not be found, a divorce could not be obtained, so Oscar and his devoted Estelle must remain only as friends; and as such, they knew the less frequently they met, the better.

"Lydia, I must now return home," said Estelle, as she came to bid her good-by, "we are to have a masquerade on the fifth, will you come?"

"I think not, love, but I will call on you soon after."

## CHAPTER XXXII.

*"Chaque age a ses plaisirs, chaque etat a ses charmes."*

—DEMIER.

"THEY come! They come! Welcome, thrice welcome, heir of La Belle! May every bright anticipation be realized to the full, and to you, sweet cousin Anna, be your beautiful home ever one of happiness and peace!"

It was late in the evening when the travellers arrived at their destination in Berlin. Those who had previously known Alfred, found him as bright, intelligent, and prepossessing as he had ever promised to be, while either the sea voyage, or her release

from the limits of Mrs. Gilbert, had wrought a great change in Anna, for upon learning that it was not to Lydia that Mr. Everett was engaged, the ecstasy of delight beamed in smiles that were never before seen upon the countenance of the little nun of Claremont Place.

At the usual hour the servants were called in, and together they knelt to offer the evening sacrifice, in which the clergyman seemed more impressive and eloquent than ever. Good night had been said, the dazzling Beatrice who now appeared in the midst of them in her perfect health and beauty, had again taken the hand of the new cousins, and nearly all had left the room; still Alfred turned again to take a last look at Carlotta. Though in her sixteenth year, and tall of her age, as she stood alone in the room caressing a favorite spaniel, it seemed to him she was still what he first styled her, fairy-like Lottie."

Preparations for the wedding of the favorite Beatrice were now engrossing the attention of the greater portion of the household; and although Lydia's taste was constantly solicited in the arrangements of the bridemaid's dresses, still, another object occupied her thoughts. During that long estrangement, she had not once seen Clarence. As she was not expected at the masquerade, she could attend without fear of recognition, and view once again the same figure, hear the same voice, and notice to what extent he appeared to participate in the gaiety of the evening; and although she reproached herself for still cherishing the memory of one so unworthy, she had no wish to deny herself in this respect; so with Alfred as an escort, she would go to the ball.

It was the night of the masquerade, the spacious saloons were brilliantly lighted, and one after another, came the glittering train. There entered the kings, queens, and princes of every age, from the time of Cæsar to Frederic of Prussia; while monks, priests, peasants, and others, were among the early guests. Soon there entered a tall and graceful figure in the garb of a nun, her escort was a knight in armor, who appeared in vain to lavish his chivalric attention upon the silent recluse, who refused to promenade, and retiring from the company, took her seat in a corner, where she could have a good view of all who entered, while none suspected the vivacious, sprightly Lydia could ever appear under that sober garb. But perhaps there was not another there whose feelings so well accorded with that gloomy disguise, and as at her bidding Alfred moved on with the throng, she was left to herself to watch every gentleman who entered. At last he came; there could be no mistake, though

in the disguise of the pope, moving with slow and measured steps,—it was he, and none other. He approached her, saluted her, she made obeisance to him, he passed on and was lost among the crowd. The time wore on, to Alfred who entered into the spirit of the scene, it flitted rapidly by, yet finding the room too warm for Lydia, he insisted upon her accompanying him to a piazza.

"Alfred," said she in a low tone, "who is that in the grounds below, leaning against that pillar?"

"Oh, that's the pope, have you not had the honor of seeing his reverence?"

"Yes, I saw him some time ago; and so that is he?" added she in a still lower tone.

There were footsteps behind them, and soon a lady and gentleman were upon the piazza. Lydia and Alfred were in the shadow, while the rays of the full moon falling full upon them disclosed a king and princess, whose voice Lydia immediately detected as Estelle's.

"See!" said she, pointing to the figure below, "how unhappy he looks, it makes my heart ache to know what he is suffering. Look at him! our own Clarence, standing aloof from every one, when he might have been one of the gayest among us. And then nothing can be done, no, it cannot be altered! Is it not sad, pa?"

Lydia could have stood riveted to the spot, but a better principle within prompted her to leave the speakers, who of course thought themselves alone, and descending the steps she took the arm of Alfred, and moved through the grounds to another entrance; as they passed the figure that still leaned against the pillar, a deep sigh escaped him, and afterwards as Lydia turned to look for the last time, there he was as before, standing alone in the shadow.

Again they entered the saloon where the dazzling throng were whirled in the mazes of the dance; noticing Lydia participated but little if any in the festivities of the evening, Alfred proposed returning home, thinking she must be suffering from indisposition.

"Oh, no," said Lydia, "see that pretty little figure of a peasant girl sitting there disengaged, go and obtain her for the next dance, I will rest in one of the dressing-rooms, and then join you again in less than an hour."

On reaching the room and finding it vacated, she threw herself upon one of the couches, where she had not remained long, when a party entered to prepare for their departure.

"Did you know that was the Count's son?" inquired one of the ladies, of a companion.

"I was not aware of it," was the reply, "though I thought whoever he was, he acted his part perfectly well as long as he remained with us, but why does he so exclude himself from the company? He is now in one of those rooms leading from the corridor, stretched upon a sofa, his mask thrown off, and he the picture of despair; a fine place for him on such a night as this. What can be the matter?"

"Oh, have you not heard some fair maiden proved false to him, and that of the many his father selects, not one will he accept? But see what a cold, lifeless being he is, and I've no sympathy with such."

"No; neither cold, nor lifeless," said Lydia to herself as she arose and left the apartment, "and has some heartless one trifled with those fine feelings?" and the dark eyes flashed as she contemplated the reprimand she could give such an one. "Yet Clarence, have you not acted the trifer yourself? But still there was some excuse for you perhaps, when you continued the rich and the courted, while I was suddenly reduced to penury and want; yes, there might be an excuse, yet, oh how cruel! But you are unhappy, and perhaps regret the past! Oh, I will fly to you—forgive—and comfort you!" She paused as she found she had reached the end of the corridor, and as though frightened at her own rashness, exclaimed half aloud, "what, a reconciliation? Never!" and she turned to retrace her steps. Again she paused, and after contemplating awhile in agitated suffering, uttered in a low murmur, "But once only and for the last time! just to take a last look while he remains unconscious of my presence, then never wish to seek that face again!"

Stealthily she moved along the corridor, and at last reached that portion of it upon which a room opened that was well known to her, for she had often accompanied Estelle and Clarence thither, for the view it afforded. The glass doors were partly open, and though only a subdued light fell upon the apartment, as the damask hangings were wafted aside by the breeze, there was a full view of all within. Upon a sofa, as the speaker had said, reclined the figure of Clarence; the face was pale, and wore a somewhat care-worn and anxious expression; one hand pressed the brow, while the other was placed upon his breast; from the heavy breathing it was evident he was sleeping, though ever and anon came the deep, melancholy sigh. Noiselessly she entered the room, and approaching the couch, stood and

gazed upon that countenance; he moved, the lips parted, a murmur of incoherent words escaped him. Stooping over the dreamer she caught the words, "Stay — listen — only for a moment — believe me — oh Lydia!" Lower and lower she sunk beside the couch, until bending over him, her lips met the forehead, and there imprinting a last farewell, she fled through the door, and along the corridor to the saloon, where she was soon lost in the crowd.

The touch had aroused the sleeper, and as the eyes opened they fell upon the black skirt that was just disappearing between the curtains. He arose, and pursued the intruder, but caught only a distant glimpse of it as it passed into the saloon and mingled with the throng; there were several black dresses among them, and he had no other clue. "Who could it have been?" murmured he, as he stood gazing upon the dancers. "What would I not give to know to whom I am so indebted! However, sweet, fair one, whoever you may be you have my best wishes; but no tender caress can soothe this troubled conscience! No. Never!" and he turned again to the solitude of his chamber.

"Come, sister of mercy," said Alfred, as he surprised Lydia, who was standing lost in thought, "it's late now, suppose we think of retiring from the scene."

The carriage had driven to the door, and soon the festive throng was left in the distance.

Upon returning from the seat of war, Clarence had found himself in possession of a handsome fortune which had been unexpectedly bequeathed to them by a dying relative; ridding the family of every debt that lay incumbent upon them, he withdrew from society in which he had formerly so joyously mingled, and suffering from the remorse that was cankering his soul, constantly hoped to hear the report that Lydia had united herself to one of her many admirers, and was happy; but the months rolled on, and no such tidings reached the ears of the wretched Clarence.

"Estelle," said he one evening as he entered her boudoir, "I hear that Alfred, the heir of La Belle, manifests much preference for Carlotta, and will she be the first, I wonder, to relinquish the name of Villiers?"

"It's difficult to tell;" was the evasive reply. Having been conjured by her mother to assist her in forcing Clarence to think Lydia perfectly indifferent in regard to him, she always avoided the name; and now, as she called to mind many a wor-

thy young lady who respected and admired her brother, she wished, too, for the sake of his happiness that he could forget Lydia and offer himself to one of these; for although she had a secret idea of Lydia's feelings towards him, she had too much respect for the feelings of her friend, to endeavor to penetrate into the truth, and could now add with all sincerity, "Clarence, Lydia never mentions you, and if your name is uttered, turns a deaf ear to it."

"But how is it that among her many suitors none appears to please?"

Estelle looked into the anxious face, and partly overcome by the misery that was depicted there, was for a moment lost in thought, then answered abstractedly, "Well, I asked her that, and she said — oh, but Clarence, I must go and finish a letter."

"Ah, Estelle! I know more, I know you would not mention her name; but indeed love, it is more pleasure than pain to me; and do tell me what she said. Think how long it is since I heard a word from her lips. Do, Estelle, I cannot be more wretched than I am, besides I've lost all hope long ago — do tell me!"

"Well, she only said this; 'Estelle, I shall remain as I am, for I could never again place any confidence in any of the sex.'"

"And well she might say so, Estelle, well she might!"

"Oh, while I think of it, I heard accidentally from Alfred that she was at our masquerade."

"Oh, tell me, did she wear black?" after a long pause.

"She must have, for she came as a nun, but I must go;" and she left him standing in the middle of the floor, gazing into vacancy.

It was a beautiful morning in lovely June, a merry peal of bells, as it broke upon the serenity of the hour, was wafted upon the breeze through the open window of Lydia, to arouse her from her slumbers to the recollection that it was the day when the nuptials of the beloved Beatrice would be solemnized. They were to be married early, and as the morning flitted by, it brought the hour of their departure for the church. By those who knew her, the beauty of Beatrice has been described as presenting the appearance of some beau ideal of the fancy, rather than an object of real existence; the bridesmaids, twelve in number, elegantly and tastefully arrayed, were gathered in the drawing-room, awaiting the appearance of the bride and bridegroom.

"Anna, I thought Lydia was here, where is she?" inquired Mrs. Villiers. Finding her daughter was missing, and remembering how pale the face had grown of late, she hastened to her room, and softly opening the door, found Lydia kneeling by a chair, her face buried in her hands, while the tears fell in rapid succession upon the folds of her dress.

"Lyddie, my own child," said the fond mother, as she pressed the weeping girl to her bosom, "what ails you, love?"

Starting to her feet, Lydia endeavored to cast off the gloom that hung over her, but vain was the attempt, and throwing herself upon the bosom of her mother, she wept without restraint, as she confessed the cause of her misery.

"Lydia, my own beloved child," in a firm voice though it trembled from emotion, "You know we have been blessed above all that we could have desired, yet must be taught in our trials that we are the children of earth; and remember the words of Him who has said, 'Your Heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.' And howsoever rigid the discipline may appear, view each moment of suffering as a link in the chain that draws you nearer to the Mercy Seat, where a spirit of submission is granted to all who seek it in the Son's name. Look into the past, sweet Lydia, and ask yourself if the creature has not been exalted above the Creator? I know you are ready to acknowledge your fault, and recollect, it is the chastening hand of love that tears the idol from its throne, that He may possess the first place in the heart. Seek His forgiveness and ask His blessing, then, whatever clouds may hover round your early life, you will, by and by, be able to see it was the cross that alone could lead to a crown of glory."

They knelt together, and the widow offered the fervent petition for the unhappy Lydia, and soon after, they joined the rest in the drawing room; and with the exception that her cheeks were somewhat pale, Lydia appeared as joyous as any.

They alighted at the church. As they entered the holy edifice the sublimest strains from a choir of exquisite voices stole over them, and the beautiful chant was most imposing, especially as it was quite unexpected,—a number of Beatrice's musical friends having agreed to give her the surprise. The ceremony was begun. In a clear voice that might be heard in all parts of that vast assembly, Beatrice performed her part in that solemn service, at the conclusion of which they received the congratulation of their many friends, and returned home for the déjeuner. Then the sad farewell must be spoken, as the delighted Herbert Everett bore away his beautiful bride upon the commencement

of their tour, which was expected would absent them during the prolonged term of a whole year, when they anticipated returning to Berlin to take the last leave of their friends, previous to the departure for their future home in Philadelphia.

"I declare, Mr. Everett looked quite handsome to-day, with that fine color and bright animated countenance," said Alfred, as they stood taking the last view of the carriage that was fast passing out of their sight, "and we know too how happy he must be; well, I wonder how I shall look when I am married!"

"Ca depend," said his father, somewhat more thoughtfully.

Mr. Wentworth and his children were now comfortably settled at La Belle, the ease and luxury of which, being probably the least appreciated by him, because he had always been on an equality with affluence, while they had been too familiar with the reverse. Anna, as mistress of the household, had much to occupy her; while Alfred who, although his fortune would have allowed him to live in independence and dissipation, began to consider what course of occupation he should pursue. The Villiers often visited them, and at other times Alfred might generally be found at the house of his aunt, for whatever place contained Carlotta, could not be long without him also.

Mr. Wentworth was sitting one evening in his library reading the periodicals of the day, when the door opened, and Alfred entered; he had been talking with Anna in the next room for more than an hour, and now came and seated himself opposite his father, who, upon seeing him, laid down his paper, and extending his hand said, "Well, my son, and have you arrived at any conclusion?"

"Yes, sir;" answered Alfred respectfully, as he arose and took the proffered hand; for although he sometimes felt he could not admire or esteem the character of his father, still he always loved and respected him because he was his father, and rendered him every attention, which the latter was proud to receive. It had ever seemed to Alfred that just so much of his feelings he might divulge to him and no more, while the rest was reserved for Anna, or probably Carlotta received the greatest portion.

"And I suppose your conclusion is," continued his father "that you discover it is more comfortable to be ensconced in your easy chair, than to follow any occupation; so I think."

"No, sir, that is not my decision," said Alfred, smiling.

"Oh no, I forgot; you wish to enter that bank in Berlin, that you may become acquainted with the millionaire, and mar

ry his daughter. Yes, I understand. Or else you want to buy a share in a merchantman and see foreign parts, while you add to your fortune."

"Father," said Alfred, looking more serious, "it is not to increase my fortune that I wish to be occupied, it is that I may not feel I am living for nothing, a mere dormant mass of flesh and sense, while many around me, no better qualified, are earning a name that will ever be remembered with respect and admiration; and —"

"Oh, now I understand what your aim is. I recollect I was just so at your age; ease and luxury were nothing, while fame, glorious fame, could alone satisfy the cravings of my soul, I see —"

"But, father, please hear me to the end; indeed, you are yet mistaken; perhaps, had I experienced no trials and suffering just at the time when the laurels of fame seemed to me most attractive, it might be that I should still have been actuated by the same ambition; but I have learned there is a nobler cause, a more sublime ideal of a perfect enjoyment on earth, than any of these can afford."

Alfred's countenance glowed with the earnestness of his words, and after gazing upon his son some time in silence, his father added, "Then you mean to preach!"

"No, sir; I don't think the pulpit would be a fit place for me. I never could content myself in a parish just so many feet square, no such confined limits could ever have charms for me; besides, I might soon degenerate into one of those who stand week after week nearly sleeping over a more drowsy congregation."

"What! you want to do some good in the world that will leave behind an everlasting name, and yet you don't wish to preach and pray for people; then what the deuce does the boy want to be at?"

"Father," said Alfred, in a milder tone, "there are numerous preachers in the world, already, and it would be useless for me to add my feeble efforts to theirs; but there is a class of men most needed, and yet very seldom to be found, —"

"Then they must be extraordinary good ones if they're so scarce."

"Now it is not all who can enlist upon this roll, because some cannot afford to live without a recompense for their labors;" —

"Oh, then you're going to work for nothing!"

"Not but that there are those who would be willing to abandon all personal comfort for this cause," continued Alfred,

"but a poor man cannot undertake it, for the expenses are great."

"Where in the world are you going? to the West to hunt buffalo? Oh no I forgot, you're to be doing something good, then you're about to start on a crusade to the Holy Land."

"Father, few and far between as these men are, there have been a few in whose footsteps we can follow. Think of a Howard! What great achievements of man can be ranked with such a glorious career?"

"Oh yes, he was one of the great philanthropists, I begin to understand you."

"And father, I've no poverty to fetter me, the will only is needed, I trust I have that, and I will go. I once knew what it was to be in misery and want, but since have been blessed with all the world can afford, and now would gladly devote my life for the good of my fellow men. I would go to the prisoner in his chains, whom the world despises until he shrinks into himself, and longs for death, and taking my seat beside him as a brother, I would tell him I were a fellow sinner, weak in principle, prone to err as himself, who would, without doubt, under the same temptations, have fallen equally low; then, while I ministered to his temporal comfort, I would point him to that everlasting Friend who left His glorious throne 'not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance.' Then, sir, I should have the comfortable assurance of doing the will of the great Master, in whose strength I trust to go forth." Alfred paused, and in silence his father gazed upon him; as he stood still contemplating his theme, the rich locks brushed from the forehead, the cheeks flushed with the enthusiasm which had prompted his words, rendering, as it appeared to the father, a handsomer countenance than ever. As he watched the face, he uttered half aloud, "What! waste such endowments in a prison?"

"Sir," said Alfred, as he turned again towards the silent man, "may I consider I have your approval?"

The haughty spirit relented, and springing to his feet, he seized the hand of his son, exclaiming, "Alfred, please yourself and you please me."

Leaving him again to his newspapers, Alfred ascended the stairs that led to the picture gallery, and passing to the end where the family portraits were arranged according to ancestry, he stopped before that of his mother, which had been taken about two years previous to his birth. "How beautiful you were!" exclaimed he, kissing the lips upon the canvas, "and my Carlotta will be as good and beautiful as you were,

my sweet young mother." Then leaving it to its solitude, he passed on to a suit of rooms in the wing, and entering a cosy little boudoir, sat down opposite his sister, saying, "Well, my dearly beloved, how interesting you look! Now, if I were going to write a romance upon sweet solitude, you should figure as the heroine."

"I know all that, Alfred, but did father consent?"

"Oh certainly, and now I shall answer my friend's letter, and bid you good-by, to accompany him on his route for the principal cities in Germany, where we expect to be absent a year."

"What, a year! and not look upon the face of Lottie, Alfred Wentworth?"

"Ah, you don't know all! but you shall, if you will promise me to keep it secret, and not to think very ill of me if I confess that, unknown to her mother and sister, Carlotta is about to elope with me."

"Why, Alfred! and you at the eve of beginning a great and good work; you frighten me!"

"Ah, now the little heroine is alarmed at the sound of danger in the distance. But truly, Anna, I must take her with me. I like to feel she is dependent upon me; besides," with an expression of anxiety, "it's too late to repent, for she is here in the house with me now, and I don't know how to get her back to her mother, for you see she was stolen."

"Oh, but Alfred, you surely never could take part in anything so dishonorable,—let me see Lottie and reason with her."

"Now the heroine is in frantic despair; but out of compassion I will dispel her fears. Come, Anna, into the next room, and you shall see her sweet face; though first promise to kiss her cheek and speak kindly to her."

"Oh, I will—I will promise anything, only let me see her."

He led her into the adjoining room, and displayed a miniature portrait of Carlotta, which was suspended by a silver cord round his neck, saying, "Can anything be more dependent? Now the heroine is relieved, the romance is ended, and we'll go to tea."

Having received Alfred's letter, the gentleman whom he was to accompany paid them an early visit; their plans were duly arranged, by which they would complete their round in Germany and Holland, by Christmas. Then the packing was completed, and they took their leave.

"Now Anna," said Alfred, as he kissed her sad face, "the first time you hear of a prison falling in, be sure to make yourself miserable by imagining me buried in the ruins. Good-by," and Alfred was gone.

There was a party at the house of Lady Douglas, a Scotch lady who had during the season, contributed much to the amusement of her Berlin friends, by the musical and literary entertainments which she had given. One of Lydia's admirers urged her to attend, and having so often refused him on similar occasions, she at last consented to accompany him.

As Lydia entered the drawing-room, several arose to greet her, and soon a circle was formed in which the chief topic seemed to be the marriage of Clarence, which one lady was positive would shortly take place, while others who had been acquainted with Lydia's previous intimacy with him, urged question after question in regard to his present connection, (of which she knew nothing,) continuing to watch closely her countenance and manner; but so self-possessed was Lydia, that she answered every inquiry with perfect ease, so that the art of the inquisitive ladies rendered them none the wiser. One of them then proposed ascending to the music room, where Mlle. Jenny Lind was singing one of the favorite airs from "Lucia di Lammermoor."

They pressed Lydia to take her place by the instrument, and she sung them a song entitled "Nevermore," in which the words were her own composition, which Beatrice had translated into Italian, and set to a sweet, plaintive air, well suited to the melancholy poem. The first verse was concluded, and she was playing the interlude, when she beheld Clarence standing in a corner, leaning against the wall. Their eyes met; Lydia's first impulse was to leave the cantata unfinished, then, not willing he should think he had disconcerted her, she completed her song, and left the room, still haunted by that countenance in which remorse, sorrow, disappointment, were so strongly depicted.

That night brought no moment of sleep to the unhappy Clarence, who passed the long, weary hours in pacing the floor of his chamber. The morning dawned, he resolved to write to Lydia, but sheet after sheet was violently torn to pieces, for none could satisfy him, as none could portray the intensity of feeling that prompted the act. He would go to Lydia—he would see her—speak to her. No matter though she scorn him and refuse to listen—no matter though she upbraid, and spurn him from her presence, what more did he deserve? he would go. No matter though his father would vow vengeance upon him for acknowledging they had ever known poverty, he must, and would confess all, tell her how much he loved her—how much he had suffered for her sake. Yes, no matter the consequences, he must see Lydia!

Impatiently he waited until the first hours of the morning had passed by, then rushed from the house, and with rapid steps pursued his way through the streets that led to Lydia's. A servant answered his knock, he inquired for Miss Villiers, and gave his name; he was shown into the parlor, and the name carried to the ladies. There was a short delay, then the rustling of a dress, and he arose expecting to see Lydia, but Mrs. Villiers stood before him.

"Madam, if you please, I would see Miss Lydia."

"Sir, you cannot see Miss Lydia," with calm dignity.

"Then I have no further request;" bowing, "but oh, Madam, you know not what you deny."

"Sir, you have denied me the happiness of my child, and would now inflict further pain upon her, by forcing yourself into her presence."

"I, Madam? I deny Lydia happiness? I inflict pain upon Lydia? Oh, hear me, I beseech you!" he caught her dress as she turned to leave him, she could not resist the expression of agony that rested upon his countenance, she suffered him to draw her to a seat, and listened to the broken sentences of his confession; then she repaired to Lydia's room, and taking her by the hand, said, "Come with me!" and led her in silence down the stairs into the parlor. She started at seeing him, then stood and gazed intently upon him; he arose, and remained with his eyes fixed upon her, but neither spoke. The widow withdrew, closed the door, and left them to themselves.

### CHAPTER XXXIII.

"I pray you do not fall in love with me,  
For I am false than vows made in wine;  
Besides, I like you not."

GAILY the summer had flitted by, notwithstanding the loneliness Anna had imagined she should experience in the loss of Alfred; the autumn fruits had been gathered in, and now preparations were being made for Christmas, an event that was anticipated with much pleasure by the cousins, who were to pass the time together at La Belle, where a large company was expected. It was a week before the joyful event, as Anna sat one evening wondering whether anything could prevent Alfred's arrival, and impatiently awaiting her father's return from the

post-office, that the door was thrown open, and a small package of letters thrown into her lap, as Mr. Wentworth's voice exclaimed, "Now darling, see when he's coming!" She opened the one whose direction bore his handwriting, it ran thus:—

"MY BELOVED SISTER:—You see your delinquent of an Alfred has again forgotten to be negligent, and sends you another endearing epistle, that you may feel assured no prison has as yet buried him in its ruins, as you predicted. But oh, Anna, while I think of it, I've something very important to say—make haste and prepare the most charming room, for a most charming young fellow whom I shall bring with me, and be sure to greet him with your most charming smile. Mind, I shall expect a commission for the introduction, for unless your little heart is of adamant, you cannot resist the attractions of your visitor. But you understand he is coming, and that is enough.

"My dear Anna, I've been thinking of late what a pleasure it would be to you could you realize what we have been doing since we left you; if I could describe to you the comfort our presence diffuses over many a gloomy confine of wretched beings, you would then see our efforts were not of none effect. A few weeks ago, I visited a cell where lay the bodies of four persons who had died of a malignant disease, ready to be carried away to their last resting-place; near these were crouched several miserable creatures who, it was expected, would shortly share the same fate; and in order to commune with the living, it was necessary to sit down beside the dead. Some of these sufferers were from foreign climes, not one speaking the language of another, and it occurred to me, how grateful I ought to be for your untiring energy in persuading me to study the modern languages.

"Well, I had remained with them but a few minutes, when I heard heavy steps approaching, and three men entered bearing something upon a bier. Quickly placing their charge upon the pile, they were about to leave when I inquired, what it was. 'Only another corpse, sir,' was the reply. 'One whom I have seen?' 'Yes, the one you spoke to awhile ago, he died just as you left him.' 'Oh, but it cannot be, exclaimed I, he could not be dead so soon, surely!' Paying no attention to my words, they began to carry out the bodies into the grave-yard. I went in search of the overseer, but found him as indifferent as his men; on returning, I discovered them in the act of lowering this body into the grave, which was a large cavity already nearly filled with its many victims. Taking a hatchet, I wrenched

the lid from the deal box that encased the body, and with my knife ripped open the sheet that was sewed round it; the flesh was warm, and the lungs in motion. I assisted in carrying him into the open air, away from the fetid atmosphere of that contagious disease; then returned to the sufferers in the cell, and had them removed from that dungeon of death, to where they could enjoy fresh air, and proper nursing. But our task for that day was not ended, until we had written to the authorities, imploring them to take into their serious consideration, the management of these buildings, where it seems it is often the case when a fever is raging, to take the living for the dead,—especially upon the day of the crisis,—as few ever recover, when once they are shut in the fetid air of these miserable abodes.

Such, Anna dearest, is the need of some one with a fellow feeling in these places where I pass the greater part of my time; nor are we unrepaid for our labors, for the man who was about to be buried, together with all the rest, except two, are doing well.

I have you and Lottie in my bosom during the day, and under my pillow when I lie down to sleep, and the remembrance of you often cheers me on my way, to minister comfort to the poor and unfortunate. But next week you will see me, if nothing happens, so I'll keep all other news till then, while you build your castles in the air concerning

Wallace Grovenor, Esquire,  
Whom all much admire;  
Fine fellow is he.  
You a lover require,  
Now here's your desire —  
Whatever it be.

But I shall not take the trouble to describe him, for soon you will see him and your tormentor, until then believe me,

Your affectionate,

ALFRED."

"And now, Anna, it's time you began to consider what room you will give your visitor," said Mr. Wentworth, as Anna finished reading him the letter. "Ah, my child, you may look very indifferent about it now, but before long you may find your heart is not proof against such impressions. You know not what it is to be in love. Think how happy Lydia must feel now that she is reconciled to Clarence; besides, she will be married before long, and can hope to be the Countess de Castello. Think of it! Ah, Anna, you know not what it is to be in love!"

"Oh yes, pa. I used to sympathize with Lyddie, but indeed I wonder how any girl can trouble herself about some one whom she believes cares nothing at all for her."

"But, Anna, that is love! you see you know nothing of this passion. Ah, but my daughter, let me bid you beware, for it too often happens when Cupid's arrow is aimed at one who has never before felt the dart, the wound is severer, the poison more deadly."

It was the evening Alfred and his companion were expected; the chamber had been duly prepared for the guest, and the fire burned brightly, awaiting his arrival. Anna was seated at the instrument playing some of her father's favorite airs, when there was the distant rumbling of carriage wheels, and soon Alfred rushed into the hall, followed by his friend, who was a young gent of medium stature, probably about twenty-three or five, with black curly hair, full, dark eyes, and a frank, open countenance, that instantly won the admiration of any beholder. As an interlocutor he proved to be humorous and jocular, with no small degree of wit, which was always to the purpose and well-timed. They played, sung, and conversed until the hour of eleven interrupted them, when they arose to separate for the night.

Christmas came, and those who had been invited came also; Mr. Grovenor was urged to pass the week with them, and remained several days after the guests had departed. As Carlotta had not taken her leave with the rest, Alfred's attention was so occupied with her, that Anna and her new acquaintance were thrown often together. At last the house always seemed dull without him, and she would count the hours for his return.

How invisible, and how much more treacherous because it is unseen, is the chain that so often links an object to us as a part of ourselves! We awake, and start as we behold its strength, we look for a flaw where we may break the tie, but vain is the search; we weep over it, but what are weak, silvery tears upon those iron-bound links, doubly wrought in the furnace of the passions, where unconsciously the will yielded submissively to their magic power? What is the refuge? Only to shrink back into ourselves, amazed at the enormity of our weakness and folly!

It was the morning of the departure, when the two who had in so short a time thrown a halo of joy round the inmates of the chateau, must for the present take their farewell of La Belle, and return to their duties abroad. In the spring, should he live,

Alfred would be twenty-one, and return to make a longer stay with them; so that Anna felt little concern in regard to him.

But Wallace! when should she see him again? probably Alfred could tell, but such an inquiry from her lips, would awaken in the quick perception of the brother a suspicion which she did not feel disposed should exist. Yet why not, in some happy moment, inquire of Wallace himself, appearing at the same time perfectly indifferent as to the answer.

Anna pondered the words. But no, she could not act the part of the hypocrite to perfection, and dreaded lest she should betray the truth; and there, she, who had so lately been one of the happiest in Prussia, stood alone in that room, watching in her wretchedness the approach of the carriage that was to convey them away.

The door opened, and turning round she beheld Wallace. A roguish smile played over the features, as the mischievous eyes were fixed penetratively upon her, while he extended his hand saying, "Well, Miss Wentworth, I'm going." There was a pause. Anna would have spoken, but his gaze so unnerved her that all utterance failed, and he was again the first to speak. "Good-by, Anna, until we meet again."

"And when will that be?"

"Do you care to know?" and the cruel, scrutinizing gaze was resumed. She felt she had not been able to withstand that searching glance, and painful as it was, she was obliged to acknowledge to herself, that he had made the unhappy discovery, that it was too late to retract. Again taking the hand, she said, "Mr. Grovenor, whenever you are in this direction, you will know where to find a welcome."

Perhaps he had also discovered that his manner had been painful to her, for his countenance wore a serious expression, as with more earnestness he added, "Anna, you are very kind to be interested in the welfare of such a reckless fellow," kissing her cheek, "I know you would like me to write, and I will. Good-by!"

He joined Alfred in the hall, they jumped in the carriage, and soon Wallace was borne from her sight.

Two months had passed, and week after week had Anna anxiously watched the mail, but no letter, except those which bore the handwriting of Alfred or her cousins; no mention was ever made of Wallace, and Anna sometimes thought he could not be living.

"Miss Wentworth," said her maid one afternoon, as she came in from a drive, "there's a gentleman waiting to see you."

"Oh, it must be Clarence," thought Anna, as she glanced at the dusty saddle of the tired-looking horse that stood at the door. As she entered the ante-room, Wallace rose to meet her. Neither prepared or inclined to conceal the pleasure she experienced at seeing him, her greeting was one of spontaneous delight.

"Ah, but you never wrote," said Anna after a pause, looking reproachfully into the bright, animated countenance.

"Oh, I forgot, or at least I thought you might have changed your mind, and would not care perhaps to hear from me;" and under the influence of his roguish smile, the face seemed more bewitching than ever.

"Indifferent creature!" thought Anna, "how lightly you regard a soul's devotion, how little to you is the life of one who exists only in your presence, to whom your name alone is rapture, and infinite delight!"

He gazed into her face, a serio-comic expression overspread his features, while the laughing eyes danced mischievously as he awaited her response. Seeing she remained silent, disappointment and sadness visibly depicted upon her countenance, the expression of his face changed, and in an earnest tone he said, as he placed himself beside her, "Oh, Anna, forgive me, I never thought before how much you cared for me; indeed, I'll do better in future."

"Oh, it's of little consequence—it's not worth while—don't take the trouble, I've no wish to hear from you." And she arose to leave.

"But Anna," detaining her, "you have a great regard for me, and even prefer me to many."

"And what is worse, you are fully aware of it. Only let me tell you, I don't wish you to pity me for my weakness, I've no desire for such sympathy as yours, but if it would be any gratification to you, Wallace, despise me for my folly; for foolish and blind have I been to throw away thoughts upon one who has often confessed he cared for no one. Don't detain me, there's nothing more to be said, except that you are not injured, and I have learned a lesson."

"Anna, I know—yes, you are right," looking contemplatively into vacancy, "I know I have said I cared for no one—for nothing that any one might think of me; but Anna, when I told you that, I had no one in the wide world to care for me, was it strange that I should care for no one?"

"No one to care for you!" Anna pondered the words, then

added quickly "but you do not deserve it, and expect no more from me."

"Very well, Anna, it's my own fault; but no matter, it will be nothing new for me to wander from one place to another, without one to care whether I live or die!" He arose to go, deep dejection rested upon his countenance; conflicting emotions struggled within the bosom of Anna, another second, and Wallace was conqueror. "Oh, Wallace, stay one moment — I never meant to be unkind!"

He turned and gazed upon her in silence, then drew her to a seat, brushed back the flaxen hair from the flushed face, and added in a low, earnest tone, "Anna, I know how great is your love for me, trust me — it shall not be ill requited. Let me once be assured I've one in the world to care for me, and you will find I am not the reckless, inconstant fellow you imagine. Good-by, love," and he was gone.

Wallace was staying with some companions at an inn not far distant, and his visits to the chateau of La Belle were frequent. He had told Anna his father was a man of rigid severity, who had in a moment of passion turned him from his roof, and gave her but little hope of her ever being presented to his family; but this was nothing to her, it was for himself, and not for his friends or his fortune, that she cared; and now that she could hope to possess as her own all that gave life a charm, she had no further anxiety, and was again the happy, lively Anna, the life of La Belle.

It was April, great things were in contemplation at the chateau, and workmen were busily engaged making alterations, preparatory to the reception of its new inmate; not that the expectations of Anna in regard to Wallace had been made known, for as yet this was kept secret, but because Carlotta was to become the future mistress of La Belle, and would before very long come to take up her permanent abode there. One striking event that was incident upon these alterations, was the following. —

One of the wings which was of the same size as the rest, was found to contain one room less than the others; the architect insisted that an undiscovered apartment must exist, and in order to satisfy himself that this was an erroneous idea, Mr. Wentworth ordered part of the wall to be removed, when lo! a chamber containing two human skeletons was open to their view. The rest remained a mystery. It was evident that murder, or suicide, or both, had been committed there, and that the room had

been enclosed upon them, just as they were discovered, and it could not but be believed, that one of these was the skeleton of the unhappy Odina, whose fate had been known probably to only a few of her family, who had been faithful in keeping her secret to the day of their death. The bones were interred in the little cemetery; and the apartment, which was now appropriated for containing curiosities, was often viewed with interest, as having been the scene of so deep a tragedy.

Wallace had taken his departure from their vicinity, and Anna was longing for the period which would again bring him back to her, when Alfred returned, and they received an invitation from their aunt to spend the remainder of the spring in Berlin, during which time the workmen could complete their task, while they could enjoy the society of their old friends, Mr. Everett and his lovely wife, who were daily expected in the Capital, where they would remain to christen a little Lydia Beatrice, about a month old, previous to their departure for Philadelphia.

By the time they reached their aunt's, Mr. and Mrs. Everett had arrived. The charming Beatrice looked much the same as when she left them, but Anna could scarcely believe her husband beside her, to be the minister she had once known within the limits of Mrs. Gilbert's gloomy abode, for the face that had haunted those confines had been pale and ghost-like, while the man before her was the picture of joy and mirth. He often chided Beatrice for loving too dearly their little daughter, while it was only too evident, as he gazed ardently upon the little beauty, what an idol he made of her himself.

It was the sixth of May, the wedding day of Lydia and also the anniversary of her birth-day, when she attained her twenty-first year. Few marriages have been anticipated with greater pleasure, or attended with more interest than hers, and innumerable were the blessings invoked by the circle of friends upon the beautiful bride and her noble husband, as they took their departure, to return in a short time, and occupy the residence bequeathed to Lydia by her grandfather. Mrs. Villiers had chosen to live principally with Carlotta, at La Belle, her native spot, although Lydia had had rooms set apart for her mother, that she and Clarence might claim her for a few months of the year.

"Anna, don't you think that Estelle is a very fine looking girl?" said Carlotta, as she led her cousin into the drawing-room, after the bridal pair had left.

"Estelle? I have heard of her, but it has always so hap-

pened that I have not been able to meet her until to-day, and I was so much occupied in thinking of Lydia, that I don't remember which young lady you introduced by that name."

"Oh well. I suppose you will soon be better acquainted, for Alfred is such an intimate friend of Mr. Grovenor, and it is he who has solicited of the count, the hand of Estelle; so that, should he be successful, as is most probable he will, we shall often have Wallace and his wife at La Belle."

Anna sunk into a seat, and for some time could say nothing. Carlotta, who was not a girl of much penetration, did not notice the change that had come over her cousin, but continued to chat upon various matters, until Anna, who had partly recovered herself, inquired, "Lottie, are they very much attached? I mean Wallace and Estelle."

"Well, I can't speak for Estelle, but I know *he* is passionately fond of her; oh, most devoted, and no wonder, there's not a more beautiful character than Estelle's."

"Then she too must love him!" thought Anna, "for such a girl could not be blind to his attractions! But oh Wallace, how base! how could you act such a false part? Who is there who seems to possess such talent as yours? And yet you could stoop to such a meanness! Oh, how cruel, how unfeeling! and yet with all your faults you are to me, Wallace, as ever!"

She endeavored to control her feelings, and appear interested in the conversation of Carlotta, but the attempt was useless, and complaining of illness, she begged them to excuse her, while she shut herself in the room that was always set aside for her.

Anna longed to see Estelle, that she might gaze long upon her who was the idol of Wallace, and often, with no other motive, would accompany her cousin to the party or opera; but so far it had happened that she had never succeeded in finding there the object of her search. Fearing she should not long be able to conceal her unhappiness, she desired to return home, and although she felt sorry to be absent from Mr. and Mrs. Everett, whose stay in Berlin would not be very long, she left, with her father, for the chateau.

It was a delightful morning in the middle of summer, and the gardens of La Belle, from their many improvements during the spring, looked more beautiful than ever. Anna had been confined to her room for more than a month, and had taken little pleasure in anything, while her father, believing the cause of her indisposition to be wholly physical, made every exertion

to persuade her to try change of air, until, finding all such propositions were irksome to her, he ceased to urge her, still using every endeavor to amuse and interest her; and it was to comply with his request that she left her room this morning to view some foreign plants in the conservatory. She was busily engaged pressing some choice ferns for Beatrice, that the latter might carry to their parsonage in Philadelphia a souvenir of La Belle, which place she was to visit this afternoon for the last time,—for the sweet little Lyddie had been christened with all due ceremony, and they were shortly to take their departure.

Anna had not been seated long at her work when she heard the distant rumbling of wheels, but knowing her friends could not be expected so early, thought no more about it, until a familiar footstep made the ferns fall from her hands, and looking up, she encountered Wallace. To Anna there was always something bewitching in the expression of that face, and it had never appeared more interesting than now; the glossy black locks fell in profusion round the fine clear brow, beneath which the full, dark eyes danced joyously, contrasting greatly with the glow of health the air of the morning had painted.

"Why dearest, what ails you? Where did you borrow such a pale face? Do tell me what's the matter?" He seated himself beside her, and carefully placing the ferns upon a table, took the trembling hand within his own, and drew her towards him.

"Leave me!" exclaimed Anna, extricating herself from his embrace, "it matters not to you whether I am dead or living, you care not for me, you are false—go!"

"I don't understand you; are you angry because I've not been here lately? Indeed, I've been very much engaged,—"

"I've no doubt of it,—"

"See, you are spoiling your ferns," added he kindly, "let me assist you in arranging them, you know it is my greatest pleasure to do anything for Anna."

"What, Wallace! utter nothing so false to me. Go back to her you prefer, and be all you have promised, but never let me see you again! Go! and don't requite her love as you have that of the unfortunate Anna; be yourself, Wallace. Be prompted by nobler motives than to trifle with those who would have yielded life itself for you!"

"But I know not to whom you refer. You are the only one, to my knowledge, who has any regard for me, so you see you have been misinformed; you, Anna, are the only one I care anything for."

"And do you make no declarations to Estelle?"

For the first time Wallace manifested embarrassment, but shaking it off he added with an air of careless indifference, "You can think anything you like, my dear, it will not trouble me."

"Wallace, leave me! never speak to me again, I will not own your acquaintance, you're not worthy of a friend — be gone!"

"I can easily do that," was his ready rejoinder, and soon the sound of wheels in the distance fell upon the ear of Anna, who stood as one paralyzed, upon the spot where he had left her.

The afternoon brought the visitors, together with the widow and Carlotta, nor were the tender sympathies expressed for the pale face, and kind influence of the aunt, without effect upon the unhappy Anna. Mrs. Villiers applied remedies to the aching head, Carlotta enlivened her with her merry chit-chat, and the lovely Beatrice captivated her with her song; so that by the evening Anna had forgotten in a measure her wretchedness, and joined with the rest in the spirit of the hour; but although everything was done to divert her during the day, no sooner was the "good-night" said, than she repaired to the solitude of her room, with the burden undiminished, for the days and weeks as they rolled seemed only to increase the barrier between her and her soul's idol, which sleeping or waking was ever pictured to her fancy; though she had spurned him from her presence, and refused him a resting place under the same roof with her, still she loved him with an idolatry that alarmed her as she dwelt upon it. As she thought of the boyish, mischievous spirit that ever characterized him, she looked upon his conduct to her as a mere freak of the playful, roguish impulse that always actuated him; she believed many others to have done the same, and that what she looked upon as a cruelty and a crime, was on his part no more than a rash act, executed without further premeditation, upon the sportive spirit of the moment. She reproached herself for the harsh words she had spoken, and longed for an opportunity when she might make retribution; but she had forbidden him to speak to her, — it was the agreement, and could she be the first to break it? Still, although she had made herself an outcast from his circle of friends, and all hope of reconciliation was at an end, there were moments of reprieve from her misery, when thinking of Estelle. She delighted to imagine her all that was devoted to the impassionate Wallace, and would eagerly have thrown herself into her presence, beseeching her to appreciate in the full,

the warmth and ardor of the love that was so largely lavished upon her, earnestly requesting her to overlook his faults, and be carefully considerate of his every comfort and happiness.

"Oh, Lottie, I've neglected to show you something," said she to her cousin, the evening before the departure of the guests. She led the way to an apartment which was to be Carlotta's dressing-room, saying, "See, Alfred has had it newly frescoed, tell me how you like this design of his? He will be sure to ask us if it pleased you."

"Oh Anna, how exquisite! I have often thought nothing could surpass a visitor's room in the house of Lady Douglas, but indeed our friends will be obliged to acknowledge that the little Mrs. Wentworth has one far superior. But, oh coz, while I think of it, Lady Douglas is to give another literary soiree three weeks from now, do come, see, here's the invitation. Keep it in case you might forget the date."

"Most of your friends attend them, don't they?" hoping to hear whether Estelle would be there.

"Oh yes; they're very entertaining, don't you remember the last? But now I come to recollect, you were not there, it was while you were ill; well, there was a beautiful little poem entitled 'Les Malheureux' read to us, and it proved to be one of Estelle's, written for the occasion by the special request of one of her friends, who is I believe a relative of the baron."

"Yes, Lottie, I will come, and don't forget to show me this daughter of the Count Castello."

"Oh, but have you not heard the sad news about her? I thought you would certainly have learned it from Wallace; you see we've so often had strangers with us during our stay, that the subject has not been mentioned. Anna, Estelle is dangerously ill. I hope there will be a change for the better before we write to our tourists, such tidings will grieve them so much."

Although Anna had no further wish to attend the soiree, as she could not confess the truth to her cousin, she was obliged on bidding her good-by, to promise to be in Berlin at the time appointed.

The guests had gone, but Anna was far less lonely and wretched than she had been for a long time; a gleam of hope had illumined the benighted spirit, and the future seemed bright and joyous; but as the evening closed, and she repaired to the seclusion of her chamber, the shades of night brought more serious reflections, and as she was about to offer up the last tribute of the day, she began to consider for the first time upon what foundation she had built these hopes. Horror-stricken she

shrunk from the thought, and loathed herself as she remembered the sin she had committed, for it had been a prospect of the death of the noble Estelle, over which she had so exulted, and now what would she not have given to have made retribution for the crime of which she was guilty; the sixth commandment of God had been broken. The enormity of the sin was now open before her. Feeling herself too unworthy to pray, and too wretched to sleep, she passed the night in uncontrollable grief, yielding herself to the misery of despair.

It was the evening of the soiree, and at the appointed hour Anna joined Carlotta, and accompanied her to the house of Lady Douglas. As they entered, several ladies crowded round them to inquire of Lydia, who had so lately been one of the belles of their circle. While they were answering the many questioners, a gentleman joined them and said, "Ladies, there's a very able oration being delivered in the next room, wont you come and hear it?"

Several began to move in the direction indicated. Carlotta joined a young lady with whom she was speaking, and Anna mechanically followed; but what was her surprise, when upon entering the room, she beheld Wallace as the orator; touched by the eloquence of the speaker, she stood spell-bound, gazing upon him. The oration was finished, and Carlotta endeavored to call her attention, an attempt which had often failed; at last she started at the touch of the fan upon her arm, and turning to her cousin exclaimed, "What, Lottie? pardon me, darling, I was thinking of something else."

"Why, look! there is the idol of your friend Wallace."

"Who? Where? Then Estelle was not to die,—oh, I'm so glad!"

"Oh, Anna," whispered Carlotta, scarcely able to repress a laugh, "well, it doesn't seem very much like it when she has grown rapidly better, but I thought you often saw Wallace, and would have inquired of him; yes, this is the first evening she has come out. I expect he dragged her here, he's very proud of being seen in her company."

"But where—show her to me—no Lottie, I don't wish to be presented to her, only show me which is Estelle."

Carlotta again pointed out the figure, and Anna's eyes were soon riveted upon the object she had so often longed to behold. Apart from the rest of the company, leaning against a pillar, stood Estelle; her cheek resting upon her hand, while she continued to gaze upon the platform Wallace had just left. From

her present position, Anna could obtain only a side view of the face, but such was sufficient to convince any gazer that the person of Estelle was no ordinary one. The figure was tall, round, and well proportioned; the complexion was of a rare hue, partaking somewhat of a brunette, yet very clear and delicate; the dark, glossy tresses were parted over the high, intellectual brow, and falling carelessly over the jewelled ears, were looped up from the neck with a few brilliant gems, that glistened in their purity among the rich, dark locks that clustered profusely round the face. Soon a selection from a comic opera was heard from the music-room, and all began to leave the saloon; but Estelle never moved, and Anna continuing to stand watching her intently, she withdrew her hand from Carlotta's, and soon she and Estelle were left alone in the room. Presently Estelle gazed around her, and heaving a sigh, looked towards the door near which Anna stood; and now the latter had a full view of the face. "How lovely a countenance! Beautiful Estelle!" said she to herself, "no wonder he loves you!" As she turned away, her eyes fell upon a mirror before her, and while she caught a full view of her own little figure, the small, pale face, flaxen hair, and large blue eyes which seemed to her so wanting in expression, she turned from the glass with disgust, and gazed again upon the beauty before her. Estelle was standing as before, the full, dark eyes speaking volumes as they peered into vacancy. Anna was about to withdraw, when a well known foot-fall fell upon her ear. She paused, and looking in the direction of the sound, she saw Wallace entering the saloon by the door through which she was about to make her retreat. She again concealed herself behind a pillar, to await a better opportunity. Approaching Estelle, Wallace bent over her and exclaimed, "What alone, love? but you don't feel as well as when you started," added he, tenderly, "come, and let me get something to revive you."

She turned slowly towards him, and placing her hand upon his arm, said with a faint smile, "No, Wallace, thank you, I don't wish anything, and indeed I prefer to be here; to be in the midst of the company seems to make my head ache. But please," taking his hand within her own, "don't let me keep you away from every one. I cannot bear to be so selfish."

"But Estelle, you know the delight it gives me to be near you, and surely you could not be so unkind as to drive me away!"

"Wallace, understand me. I want that you should mingle

with the rest, and find some one to whom your society will be an equal pleasure."

"Ah, but dearest, that is impossible; you know I never could regard any other as I do my favorite Estelle!"

"And it is that so distresses me, for have I not always told you it was not in my power to return it." She turned aside, and disengaged herself from the embrace; but Wallace again drew her towards him, and as they changed their position, Anna found she could pass from the saloon unnoticed, but spell-bound she remained fixed to the spot.

"Oh Estelle," continued Wallace, "don't say any more. If you could know with what an adoration I look upon you, you would not continue to refuse me."

"But Wallace, you care for me only because I am called handsome, and such a love I look upon as nothing. I have only a pity for those who esteem me merely for my face or my fortune, and even did you love me for myself alone, why trouble me with such a declaration, when I tell you that my affections have been engaged long, long ago, and will never again be free? No, never!"

"Oh, Estelle! don't say so! You do not know me. Why will you not listen and believe me, beautiful Estelle? But come, love," drawing her arm within his own, "you are tired, standing here."

Estelle suffered herself to be led away, and Anna was left alone in the large saloon. "Oh Estelle! cruel Estelle! How can you be dead to such an appeal! how can you look into that anxious countenance, and refuse to listen? Or hear the words of such an earnest, ardent love and not be drawn towards the one who would yield his very life for you? Oh Estelle, there is none so interesting as Wallace! Forget all other ties — take compassion on him; such a nature as his craves for some one to love him, oh Estelle, be no longer so unkind! Take pity!"

"Why, Anna, to whom were you speaking?"

"Oh Lottie, to no one; you see I was so long a recluse, that I still foster solitude. I must have been uttering my thoughts aloud, but they were nothing important. Come, let us go. But why did not Beatrice come to-night?"

"Oh, I thought ma told you, — Beatrice is too ill to leave her room, but we hope it is only a slight disorder. Come, coz, and see the tableau."

## CHAPTER XXXIV.

"Know'st thou for whom they sang the bridal numbers?  
One whose rich tresses were to wave no more!  
One whose pale cheek, soft winds, nor gentle slumbers,  
Nor love's own sigh to rose tints might restore!  
Her graceful ringlets o'er a bier were spread:  
Weep for the young, the beautiful, — the dead!"

It was now autumn, and the alterations at La Belle were at last completed; to any but a close observer, its beauty might seem but little enhanced, still, none could examine it without finding many changes, among which that of the moat being exchanged for a grassy mound that flourished in its stead. Alfred was not expected at home during this season, and they were not a little astonished one evening to see him enter, exclaiming, "Oh, I just dropped in on my way to Belgium, to see how the improvements looked by this time; and I thought I might as well bring Lottie with me to hear what her taste was in regard to the furniture. She's in the hall taking off her clogs, you know we always prefer to walk part of the way."

Carlotta brought the joyful news that Lydia was daily expected, yet was obliged to add the painful tidings that the beloved Beatrice was no better, though it was still declared that her indisposition was a slight one; however, it had been decided they should not return to Philadelphia until the spring, so that much hope was entertained of seeing the favorite in perfect health before that period.

"Oh, beautiful La Belle!" exclaimed Carlotta, as she gazed around her, "Anna, I've been thinking that this place is scarcely less attractive, surrounded by its leafless branches, than when variegated by the glories of summer. But see! surely there's some one in distress upon that mountain side, — yes, it must be, for Alfred is hastening towards them. I wonder who it is!"

The bell rang for tea, and Anna left her cousin standing looking from the window, while she went to see if the lights were all duly arranged to her taste, and everything in order before summoning the rest to the parlor; for previous to her introduction to Wallace, she had prided herself upon the compliments her father so often lavished upon the little housekeeper, for her attention to the comforts of the chateau, and although

she now took but little pleasure in anything, she had not become wholly indifferent to this. She had not remained long in the room, when the door was suddenly thrown open, and Alfred entered, exclaiming, "Here, I've found this fellow in a pretty plight,—horse unmanageable, chaise broken, and for aught I know, also, every limb of the occupant."

"Dreadful!" cried Anna, "what can we do for him?"

"Oh no, Alf," said a familiar voice upon the stairs, "nothing of consequence is broken, but the spirit of that new horse."

Alfred and Carlotta now led Wallace into the room, the former exclaiming, "Here's Anna, now you will soon be cured. Ladies are the best nurses, you know; but I must go and look to that wild animal out there;" and he instantly left them.

Wallace undoubtedly understood how painful was Anna's embarrassment, for, appearing not to notice her, he turned to Carlotta, and thanking her for her attention, added, "I was only a little faint, after I have rested awhile I shall be able to go on my way."

He sat down and seemed much exhausted, while the blood flowed rapidly from a wound upon the temple. Anna immediately attempted to apply a bandage, but turning from her, he again said something to Carlotta, who was too much engaged to notice they had not spoken, and Anna was forced to see the wound of the beloved Wallace dressed by other hands than her own. Declaring himself recovered, he was in the act of leaving, when Mr. Wentworth entered, and pronounced it most preposterous to think of venturing over the mountain with such a horse at that hour, and as Wallace gave no reason for the urgency of the case, he was prevailed upon to remain until the following day. The evening passed less awkwardly for Anna than might have been expected, for every occasion to bring her in contact with Wallace was carefully frustrated by him, and so scientifically did they take part in the conversation, that no one present observed they neither mentioned or addressed each other. Wallace was jovial as usual, his wit and ready puns flowing as freely as ever, often convulsing the whole with laughter. He was a good singer, and in the course of the evening sung several comic melodies, and joined with much spirit in whatever was introduced; so that it was late when they arose to separate for the night, and passed in their respective directions along the spacious halls, leaving Anna to brood over her own thoughts in the room in the wing.

Having passed a sleepless night she went the next morning at the usual hour to the breakfast-room; all were there but

Wallace, and she hoped as he entered he might forget to omit her in his morning salutation, so distressed was she to hear him address in kind words one after another, excepting only herself, who would have appreciated them more than they all; but soon Wallace entered, and she was obliged to discover that in this respect he was neither negligent or forgetful, for he as carefully avoided her now, as he had done the evening before.

An early luncheon had been taken, to afford the travellers time to meet the train. Wallace was out with Mr. Wentworth viewing some improvements in the grounds, Carlotta and Alfred had left the room together, probably that they might pass the last hour of his stay uninterrupted, and Anna was left alone. Unable to fix her attention upon anything, she wandered from room to room, as if in search of some diversion, and at last descended the stairs again, and entering one of the parlors, took her place at a window, and stood gazing out upon the landscape. The sun was now in the zenith, and a golden gleam tinted those cloud capped towers, that rose in majestic succession far off in the distance; but Anna took no notice of this, her thoughts were elsewhere. Wallace was soon to take his departure; whither was he going? How long to be away? A remark he had dropped to Alfred, would admit that he expected to be absent a long time, perhaps that cruel Estelle had still refused to hear the declaration of his love, and in his despair he resolved to leave his native land, to wander as an exile in some foreign clime. Sickness might attack him;—who would be near to minister to the parched lips, or lay the hand of sympathy upon the aching brow, to whisper a word of comfort, to tell there was one on earth who could never cease to love him, or to point to a better consolation above the frail, weak comforters of earth, to remind there is a home for the weary, far off in the new Jerusalem? Or, while yet unprepared, death might apprise him; who then would stand beside that loved one, and assure there was pardon for the sinner, even at the eleventh hour? Not one, perhaps; while alone, and uncared for, he might die in the land of the stranger, and uncouth hands place that cherished form in the cold grave of charity! To have followed at a distance, and learned the fate of the loved one would have been ecstasy; but no, he must go alone, and she remain behind to mourn his loss. But what did he think of her?—that she felt unkindly towards him? But he should not leave with such an impression. Before he left that roof, he should learn she was a friend, and no enemy; she would steel herself for the moment, and speak to him! There was a foot-fall in the hall,

her breath came more quickly, and her determination to speak to him had half forsaken her, when he entered the room. She had sunk upon an ottoman in the large bay window near which she had been standing, and now concealed by the curtains, could watch unobserved all that was passing in the room. Crossing the floor, Wallace took up a paper, and having selected a paragraph, stood a few moments to read; his face was turned towards her, and its expression was that of anxiety and embarrassment. Throwing down the paper, he remained lost in contemplation; then heaving a sigh, turned to depart. Without waiting for a second thought, Anna suddenly emerged from her hiding-place, and cried, "Oh, stay one minute — do for pity's sake — it's my last, my only request!" He started at the sound of the voice, and turning round, gazed upon her in astonishment, then said in a cold, respectful tone, "What do you want with me, Miss Wentworth?"

"Oh, speak to me! just one word, but in kindness, — do — I ask no more — oh, won't you speak to me?"

"But you have forbidden me to speak to you, and I don't wish you to recall your words;" and he turned again to leave.

"Oh, Wallace, don't leave me! stay one moment! there's nothing I would not willingly do for you, and will you not grant me one moment? Oh, do — stay — believe me, indeed I am sorry for the harsh words I have spoken. I expected too much of you, for I looked for a return of all the love I so passionately lavished upon you. I now see my error, I confess it; and think what you will of me — spurn me from you for my weakness — despise me for my folly, only speak one kind word to me! Tell me you will acknowledge me — own me as a friend — tell me you will not extend the hand to all others, and leave me the only exception — tell me you know I care for you — that I love you as ever! Wallace, speak to me!" She had thrown herself at his feet, and now burying her face in the skirts of his cloak, burst into tears.

"Anna, I would have no girl lose her dignity for me, you are not yourself, you speak without judgment; indulge no longer in such as this. Calm yourself." He spoke in a firm, but cold tone, then paused, and finding Anna did not relinquish her hold of him, lifted the agitated girl from her kneeling posture, and placing her tenderly upon a couch, procured some water, and having bathed the throbbing temples, kissed the pale cheek and left the apartment. Ascending the staircase, Wallace entered Alfred's room, and found him writing; standing for awhile engrossed in thought, he at last uttered several half

incoherent sentences, and Alfred closing his desk, turned to him and inquired, "What in the world do you mean, Wallace?"

"I mean it's impossible to find a girl worth thinking about. They are either proud, haughty, and defiant; or they are those weak, confiding creatures, who entwine their affections round you, until their will is your own, and in the intensity of their devotion, they will at last yield even principle itself — anything for you. No, there's not a girl worth caring for, there are but the two extremes. I begin to hate girls."

"What?" and Alfred's eyes flashed as he placed himself opposite his companion.

"I mean, once possess their love, and the whole soul is yours. to control for your own ends, be they what they may."

"Never!" and Alfred rushed from the room.

A few minutes before he had left Carlotta shedding tears as she grieved over his constant departures, and now as he remembered the meek, gentle spirit of the fond Lottie, Wallace's words struck him forcibly, and he determined to satisfy himself as to whether she could be one of those weak, pliant, irresolute beings his friend had mentioned; he determined to test the matter. He entered her room unperceived, and found her sorting some letters. All traces of tears had disappeared, and she was in the act of placing his last among many of its predecessors, which were carefully tied in blue ribbon, when he approached and said, "Oh Lottie, love, I forgot something — I wish to know if you are aware that after we are married we may be but little together? You know I have chosen for life this particular vocation, and nothing on earth, not even my love for my wife could make me give it up; and tell me, when you are obliged to part with me, will you see me go for years, perhaps, without murmuring over your hard lot?"

"Alfred, I know yours is a foolish little Lottie," placing her hand playfully upon his cheek, "yet she would even urge you to go, and never wish to call you back."

Footsteps upon the stairs aroused Anna from her unconsciousness, and leaving the couch she went to ascertain whence the noise proceeded; the sight of a valise and portmanteau bearing the initials of Wallace, reminded her it was the hour of the departure. Soon Alfred and his companion were in the hall, where Carlotta was waiting with a basket of sandwiches; Alfred had said "good-by," and Wallace had taken the hand of Carlotta, and was turning to the door, when Anna instantly placed herself before it, and offering him her hand, said, "I'll

bid you good-by." He took the hand, but when she looked up he was gone; still that good-by was never forgotten, for the cold, icy touch of that hand had chilled her to the heart.

It was a bright and beautiful day that welcomed the return of the beloved Lydia to her many friends in Berlin, after her six months' absence on her bridal tour. Anna had repaired with her father to the capital, expecting to remain there some time to enjoy the society of her beautiful cousin, but the count and countess insisted that Clarence and his bride should spend a short time with them, so that her family were forced to give her up for a few weeks, and Anna returned home to begin the preparations for the Christmas fête, when Alfred would again gladden them with his presence, which, although bringing a painful remembrance of Wallace, could not but cast around even her also a halo of happiness, for none who loved Carlotta could be uninfluenced by the joyous spirit that animated her whenever Alfred was present.

The evening of Christmas arrived; the chateau of La Belle was brilliantly illuminated, and proved the centre of attraction for miles round, when the eager peasantry who had been liberally entertained by its heir in the morning, were gathered upon the mountain sides admiring its dazzling beauty. That morning after the guests had been assembled in the hall, Alfred led the way through the snow-crested paths to the chapel on the estate, where the aged clergyman welcomed them to unite with him in offering the services of that holy festival. On their return, donations and gifts were distributed among the poor, and when these grateful recipients took their leave, the villa remained uninterrupted for the social enjoyment of its inmates.

Lydia had fairly compelled Estelle to join the party, and Mrs. Villiers had, upon accidentally meeting the baron, unthinkingly invited him to be present; consequently he and Estelle were inevitably thrown together; but their surprise was one of delight, and none who witnessed it, and knew their previous history, regretted it.

The cousins and a few of their most intimate friends were standing in a group, when Beatrice said half inquiringly, "It's a pity, Alfred, your friend Wallace could not be with us to-day."

"Oh, wasn't it dreadful, to hear of his misfortune?" exclaimed a young lady who stood near.

"But he has relations," returned Alfred, "why does he not claim their assistanæ — they are quite wealthy?"

"Oh, they don't seem to care much for him, and he is too independent to solicit their aid," answered another.

"Poor Wallace!" said Estelle, and her lip quivered, while the full dark eyes dropped to the floor.

"Indeed, it is very sad for such a gay, joyous spirit as his to be damped by the gloomy confines of a prison cell;" rejoined Alfred sorrowfully. Here they might have heard a smothered exclamation from Anna, had they not been engrossed in the words of Alfred, who continued, "I should have contrived to call upon him, although he is so far from here, had I not thought he would soon be released, and would join us, imagining we knew nothing of the matter; but to my surprise, I find every one seems acquainted with his misfortune."

"How could he have incurred such a debt?" inquired a young lady turning to Estelle; but the latter only shook her head mournfully, and Alfred again taking up the subject, answered, "Wallace is neither a libertine nor a gambler, but is thoughtlessly liberal and sometimes extravagant; but surely his friends must have liberated him by this time."

"What is the amount of the debt for which he is imprisoned?" and for the first time Anna spoke.

"Two thousand thalers," was the reply.

Anna left the group, and although no other subject was of such deep interest to her, she avoided mentioning the name of Wallace for the rest of the evening.

Wallace and the two thousand thalers were constantly before the mind of Anna; willingly would she have beggared herself to have remitted that, or any other sum to the idol of her thoughts, but she could not disturb the fortune her father had settled upon her, without his being aware of the fact; not long ago she had promised Lydia six hundred thalers in aid of a hospital, whose suffering inmates the patrons desired to remove to a commodious building, as its lease had expired and the proprietor insisted upon disposing of the ground for other purposes. Many had given liberally; still, as the contractors refused to continue without another large advance, it was necessary that a handsome subscription should immediately be drawn up in order to complete the new building before the lease of the former had expired, thus preventing the sufferers from being placed at the mercy of the city authorities. But now Anna had a new subject to contemplate, and all thought of the hospital was instantly banished. Yet, how could the two thousand thalers be obtained? The six hundred she had reserved for the

hospital would be scarcely anything towards it. It became a source of great anxiety to her, for every inquiry of hers in regard to the prisoner met the same painful response, that Wallace was still in confinement; and those around her could not but notice how great a change had wrought itself in her.

One evening she had been some time in silence, when her work dropped from her hands, and her countenance became the picture of despair. At last Mr. Wentworth, who had been watching her attentively several minutes, said, "Well my love, and pray what troubles you?"

"Oh nothing, scarcely, pa," and she instantly resumed her embroidery, "I was wishing for something I cannot have."

"Then if it is almost nothing, surely we can soon get it; tell me, child, what it is?"

"But indeed, dear pa, it's beyond my reach," with a sigh, "please think no more about it."

"Anna, nothing is out of your reach that could be necessary to your happiness, as far as I can see."

"Ah, but I want fourteen hundred thalers, pa, and then no one can know to what purpose it is to be appropriated."

"Fourteen hundred thalers! and so that would make you happy; ah, I can guess — yes, I know; it's for that hospital. No, Anna, it would be inconsiderate and rash. I've given some hundreds myself, and before the winter is over there will be hosts of other subscription papers pushed before a fellow's eyes. No, Anna, you want judgment."

At the mention of the hospital, Anna's thoughts recurred to it, and for a moment she reproached herself for having forgotten it; but again Wallace in his prison cell arose before her, and again the other sufferers sunk into oblivion, while she was very well content to allow her father to suppose it was none other than the hospital for which she required that sum. Mr. Wentworth arose and stood before the fire with his arms folded, and for some time seemed lost in thought; then uttered half to himself, half aloud, "Ah! I was once in a hospital myself! Well child, if it will remove that care-worn face, you can have the money; get me a pen, I'll write the check while I think of it."

As Anna took the paper, a mist seemed before her eyes, and she could scarcely tell what she did, so great was her surprise and delight, but by the following day she had awakened to the reality that the release of Wallace was in her own hands. The check, with the six hundred thalers in cash, was in the following note:

"WALLACE: — Please accept this — no third person will be any the wiser. ANNA."

The trembling hand then wrote the direction, and the servant was dispatched with it to the post.

Anna was in the act of closing her desk, when the door opened and Lydia entered. It was now February, and on account of the bad state of the roads, the cousins had not met for a few weeks; a painful suspicion as to the object of Lydia's visit flashed across the mind of Anna, but she had not long to wait in suspense, for after folding her in a fond embrace, her cousin exclaimed, "Oh, Anna, I'm so glad to see you so well, I've been expecting to hear from you, and as no letter arrived thought you must be ill, so came post haste to see."

"Why, nothing was the matter, dearest, how are all at home?"

"All well, coz; but Anna, why didn't you send your subscription? You know it must be settled at once, and I shall be glad of yours, because then, a great many young ladies will not like to give less than you when their means are known to be equal; you know what I do makes no impression on them as it used to, because I am married now, and they don't consider what I give as my own; so now you must take the lead. Please give it me, and I'll not wait, and indeed we shall be glad of it, for now that Clarence has given me even more than we can well afford, we scarcely know what to do for the rest."

Anna looked into the lovely face, and would gladly have embosomed to the sweet Lydia all the misery that was nearly overwhelming her, but some hidden power held her back, and she could only add, while with difficulty she suppressed the rising emotion, "Oh, Lyddie, I'm so sorry, but I can't give what I said — I can't give any!"

Upon hearing these words, her cousin gazed upon her in mute astonishment, and as Anna looked into her face she thought the countenance had never seemed more lovely; but soon disappointment overshadowed the beautiful features, and as Anna thought upon the sadness that was depicted in that sorrowful expression, and remembered what trials that cousin had so heroically borne, it grieved her to know she could add one cloud to the life of her who so well deserved a bright horizon; but though she felt much, she could say nothing, and only looked what she felt to be, the object of suffering. Lydia saw it, but she perceived also that Anna endeavored to conceal it, and therefore did not ask the cause, but turning away, said, as a faint smile passed over the sweet face, "Well, we must trust for the best. Good-by, dearie."

"Oh, stay to luncheon, and undoubtedly you will meet Lady Douglas in that train, besides, you really ought not to have ventured so far without your husband or a maid."

"Oh, but I have a footman with me, and shall soon be home. I'm glad to hear Lady Douglas has returned, most likely we shall now complete our subscription list;" and humming a lively air, she kissed her cousin, and disappeared.

"Beautiful girl!" murmured Anna, as she watched the vehicle that bore her away, "and the happy Lydia, because you do right, and always act with discretion, oh that the miserable Anna could say the same!"

The evening of the following day brought a despatch from Clarence, stating that a dear little twin brother and sister were added to the number of his household, and were ready to receive the welcome of their relations at La Belle, whenever they liked to take a peep at the new comers.

The next morning found Anna at the house of her cousin. The subject of the subscription had troubled her exceedingly, and having passed a restless night, during which she saw in her visions many a poor sufferer carried from the hospital into the street, to await the compassion of charity, she was anxious to hear what had been the result of Lydia's interview with Lady Douglas. Stealing softly into her cousin's room, she found Lydia sleeping; near her couch was a small table containing a Bible and prayer-book, and early as it was, it was evident from their position, that Clarence had knelt in this chamber to lead in the devotions of the morning. A door that led into an adjoining room was open, and disclosed the nurses watching the little cherubs who were sweetly sleeping side by side in a cradle at their feet. Clarence entered, and not perceiving Anna, approached the couch, and bending over the sleeper, gazed fondly upon the countenance; then passing into the next room, pressed the little twins to his bosom, and re-entering the chamber, took his seat beside his beloved Lydia. Taking a paper from his pocket, he glanced at it with a troubled expression, and heaved a sigh. Lydia's eyes opened, and immediately fell upon the paper; "Oh Clarence, is the amount furnished? No, I can tell by your countenance it has been unsuccessful; and to-morrow is the awful day. Oh dear! what will become of them! and here am I surrounded by an affectionate husband and skillful physicians, while they must perish! Oh, it is too dreadful! She burst into a flood of tears, and not all the efforts of her husband could console her. Unable longer to witness her dis-

treass, Anna took up the paper which Clarence had thrown aside, and looking over the list, saw the amount of one, and two thalers, attached to the names of those who had always before given many times as much. "And I am the cause of it!" murmured she as she bitterly reproached herself, "and Lydia, who has ever been such a dear friend, will surely despise me!" But great was her surprise when, as Lydia perceived her, she exclaimed, "Oh, Anna, come near dear coz,—if our little girl lives, you must be a godmother to her, and name her after yourself." A few days after, as Anna was about to take her leave of Lydia for a short time, a visitor was announced, and as she entered the parlor Estelle rose to meet her. Longing to know whether Wallace was set free, she thought this a good opportunity of ascertaining, and carefully broaching the subject, endeavoring to appear perfectly indifferent to the matter, she inquired if she had heard any mention of him lately.

"Oh, yes," replied Estelle with much animation, "I heard the joyful news that he was released, so some of his relations have befriended him at last. I was very glad to hear it, Wallace has a great many admirable traits, only, discreet as he is in some things, he has no judgment in others." The long lashes dropped, and the expression became more thoughtful; "I think perhaps that trial has been for his good, at least I hope so, for I have every kind feeling towards him, although he would not believe me; however, I hope his misfortunes are for awhile at an end, and that he will be happier than he has been, for he insisted upon lavishing upon me attentions that became the most irksome, and because I confessed how annoying it was to me, he was positive I disliked him, and reproaches me with unkindness; I'm sorry, but I cannot help it."

"He is naturally very cold and indifferent, is he not?" said Anna, unwilling to drop the conversation.

"Oh, no indeed, when once he likes you he is very affectionate and confiding, and I'm sure, to any one he cared for, he would be the most devoted; but then he is rash and impetuous as a child."

"But Estelle, you have the clergyman staying at your house, how are they all?"

"Mr. Everett? oh he appears perfectly well, but anxious about Beatrice, she's as cheerful as ever, only so very thin. The sweet little Lyddie grows a very fine child; I'm so sorry we're so soon to lose them. But I must go to Lydia."

"And Estelle, if you have heard any distressing accounts of the hospital, please don't communicate them to her, it has made

my heart ache to know how unhappy the sad affair always makes her."

"My dear, I've come expressly to tell her that the money is ready; I wrote word to Oscar, who so exerted himself in its behalf, that there need be no further anxiety in that matter, and before long, those poor sufferers will be comfortably settled in their new building."

Anna returned to her father at La Belle; a memory of Wallace still haunted her, and although she had been assured he was now released, there was scarcely anything in that recollection but what vexed and troubled her. She admired Estelle, and would have given worlds to have had only a like sympathy and fellow-feeling towards Wallace, instead of that immoderate, inordinate, and excessive love, which she now found impossible to overcome.

One evening, as she stood moodily playing with some papers upon a table, her eye fell upon an invitation which some acquaintance had sent her father to attend a ball that evening at a short distance from Halle. A thought occurred to her, and she stood long in its contemplation. The club which annually gave this fête, was one to which Wallace had formerly belonged, and it was most probable that he would be present on this occasion. How much she longed to see that face again, to look once more into the depths of those expressive dark eyes! But Wallace had now enjoyed his liberty many weeks; — had he once thought of the little recluse at La Belle, who had thus contributed to his happiness? It was most probable he had never cast a reflection upon the matter, except when he first received the billet, and then only a sarcasm upon her folly. Why should she so desire to see him? Besides, it was yet Lent — could she attend such a place at this solemn season? The bell of the little chapel was now ringing, and the sound fell forcibly upon her conscience, and while she stood contemplating whether to attend the church or the ball, several of the domestics passed the window, and disappeared down the path that led to the chapel. One moment more, and she was decided, and flew to her dressing-room.

"Miss Anna, you want your bonnet, don't you, the bell is tolling?" said her maid, as she entered the room.

"Thank you — I don't need it, you may undress me."

"I don't understand, Miss!" looking astonished.

"Mary, why don't you obey? please make haste," and as she spoke, she opened a wardrobe, and stood to select from the

many colors that hung before her; blue was said to be most becoming to the flaxen hair and fair complexion, so a robe of this hue was selected, the long tresses duly arranged, the white wreath adjusted, the diamond cross, and several other jewels which had been her mother's were taken from their resting-place, and the toilet completed she descended quickly to the carriage she had ordered to convey her to the house of a frivolous acquaintance, whose society she would at any other time have avoided; as she drove past the chapel, it seemed the horses lingered longer on that part of the hill than any other, affording her an opportunity to gaze longer upon that solemn little edifice, which generations of worshippers had consecrated as the house of prayer. The candles were lighted, the congregation were in their seats, and the venerable pastor entered the chancel; a sweet spirit of peace seemed to pervade those sacred walls, and as Anna gazed through the open door, she longed to partake of the comfort and consolation it afforded, but an instinctive power held before her the image of Wallace, and as she gazed upon that form, she longed to be at her destination. While she was thus thinking, the door of the chapel was closed, and appeared to shut her out from that peaceful abode. Then it occurred to her what an example she was setting her household, and more especially her father, who looked upon her as the pattern of a Christian, and who never had too profound a respect for religion; surely he would now deem it as more hypocritical than ever, while she, the child whom he had learned to love, would have been the means of shaking that faith which alone could ensure for him eternal happiness.

Ill at ease, she arrived at the house of her acquaintance and accompanied them to the hall where the ball was held. Those who had known her a year previous, were astonished at the altered girl who stood before them; and no wonder, for great was the change the acquaintance with Wallace had wrought in her; pale, thin, and haggard was the countenance, which had at their arrival at the chateau, been round, rosy and happy. The dancers were standing in groups round the room, which was too crowded to enable Anna to search for the object that had brought her thither. Several times she and a companion promenaded round the dancers, and at last, there, standing in the midst of a group, the gayest of the gay, was Wallace. As her glance fell upon him, her hand dropped from the arm of her companion, and she stood as one petrified, gazing upon him; her lips moved, and half audibly she uttered, "Oh, cruel Wallace! why could you not write me just a few words?" One of the

group that surrounded him, turned to look behind her, and seeing Anna gazing before her in that half unconscious state, called the attention of the rest. Now they all turned and looked upon the wretched girl. Some uttered exclamations of wonder, others jeered and jested at the melancholy spectacle, as they inquired who she was; while the rest pitied that pale, unhappy countenance that appeared before them, the spectre of wretchedness; and Wallace agreed with all these, and joined in every expression of ridicule, sometimes exercising his wit and humor upon the subject, gratifying the many who admired his sportive spirit, while he joined in the merry laugh that escaped his hearers, or united with the others in expressing sympathy for the miserable looking "Unknown," who still stood before them. Anna remained in that attitude until she could no longer discern any object in the room; all whirled around her, until finding she became too giddy to retain her footing, she turned to her companion who stood gazing first upon her, then at the group before them, and extending her arms to him, exclaimed, "Oh, hold me or I shall fall!" and was borne from the room. Those who had accompanied her, were alarmed at her strange appearance, and hastily took her home, where she passed stealthily to her chamber, and buried her tears in her pillow.

It was the beginning of spring, and all nature united in her voice of gladness to welcome the coming season of birds and flowers; but a mournful procession of carriages lined the street where stood the residence of Clarence de Castello; within that house, hung the solemn drapery of mourning, for the arch-monarch, in his round of destruction, had selected one of the loved ones from this fireside for his prey. In the centre of an apartment which not long ago vibrated with the gladness of song, was a coffin that contained the beloved form of a young wife and mother, who had been permitted but a short season to enjoy the fellowship of kindred hearts. Alone in that chamber, kneeling by a couch, was the bereaved husband. At last he arose, and approaching the bier, he removed the lid, and gazed upon her who slept the sleep that knows no waking. Calm and peaceful was the countenance, and it conveyed to the heart of the mourner the recollection that the beloved one now participated in that undisturbed and eternal repose which "remaineth for the children of God." Pressing his lips tenderly to the forehead, he yielded for the moment to the excess of his grief: the door opened, and soon the room was filled with the friends who had come to pay the last tribute to her who had long been a

favorite of their circle. They gazed upon the dead, and those who had known the history of that departed one, saw before them all that remained of the romantic maiden, the prima donna, the devoted wife, the affectionate mother, the benevolent friend of the poor; for it was none other than the beloved Beatrice who had been snatched from their midst, though not without leaving behind an enviable recollection of all that is pure and lovely in woman.

Among those who came to take a last look at the departed, were a lady and daughter, who appeared much moved. When the remains had been borne from the house, to be placed beside those of the departed Charles, they made themselves known to the sorrowing husband, as the relations of Beatrice, who had heard of her as soon as she arrived in Europe, and had watched her movements although they never recognized her. They had admired her at the opera, praised her works of benevolence, but continually urged the father to remain unknown to her, as their own fortune was nearly exhausted. They now offered the minister a roll of papers, but he refused them, saying, "I don't want it; I have a large fortune of my own to give the child of my beloved Beatrice."

"But we shall be happier," entreated they, "do accept it for the little Lyddie; besides, it is her just right. This remorse will ever haunt us, do please take it — oh, don't refuse us! at least as a token that you forgive us, as the dead would were she here, — and you will grant a favor to her only relatives?"

The clergyman's stay in Prussia was ended, and in the next steamer, he departed with the dear little Lyddie and nurse, for the shores of America.

## CHAPTER XXXV.

"Build not thy hopes upon a vain to-morrow,  
It seldom brings the good it promised thee;  
Enjoy the present — future joy or sorrow  
God's care will order as is best for thee."

UNFEELING as Wallace had proved himself to be, he still reigned as ever in the mind and memory of Anna. Although the scene of the ball-room was ever before her, and his satirical laugh ever ringing in her ears, she could neither chide him for

his unkindness, nor love him the less for his cruelty; he was Wallace as ever, and no matter what might betide, as long as life lasted, ever would be. She loved him for the roguish, captivating spirit that ever animated him. She admired him for his talent, was always fascinated by his wit; besides, Wallace was well informed, where she was ignorant; and when he chose could manifest judgment more sound and excellent than many prominent men who were twice his age; and although he was so greatly to be blamed for his unkindness to her, still there certainly were so many redeeming qualities beneath that reckless, indifferent exterior, which when considered, wholly concealed the rest. Sometimes in her musings, she would wander back to the gloomy domicile of Mrs. Gilbert, and dwell for a moment upon the trials that befell her there; but great as they were at the time, it seemed to her that, surrounded by luxury as she was now, the past was far less painful to bear than the present; and she sometimes thought of the Providence that had watched over her, and answered her prayers; but in her love for Wallace, she had ceased to delight in such thoughts, consequently they were soon forgotten.

Spring was gliding into summer, and for three months Anna had heard nothing of Wallace, so that the return of Alfred was never more anxiously awaited than now, because it was sure to afford some tidings of that missing favorite. Alfred came; but Carlotta happened to be staying at the chateau, so that during the afternoon, no mention was made of him, as Anna was always afraid of exciting suspicion by her inquiries, and she preferred waiting impatiently until some one else should introduce the subject. The evening came, and Alfred began to recount the particulars of his travels, which at one time had so deeply interested her; but now they only seemed long and tedious, while she continued to wonder whether Wallace had forgotten to grieve over Estelle, and had sought diversion in some other direction.

"Oh, Alfred," said Mr. Wentworth, as they rose to separate, "have you seen that young Grovenor lately?"

"Wallace? Oh, poor fellow, he's in trouble again; but I think his misfortunes will soon end, for he can't be long for this world."

"In prison again?"

"Oh, no, worse than that; he's in an inn near Halle, confined to his bed, and surely cannot last long, for he has taken a severe cold which seems to have settled upon his lungs."

"Has he any friends with him?" inquired Anna, as she stooped to pick up the light that had fallen from her hand.

"No, he is alone, he says he knows they don't care for him, so won't send to them. I'm sorry I've to start to-morrow in an opposite direction, but I hope my friend will not call for me until I've had time to go to Wallace. Poor fellow, he seems quite wretched."

The morning came, but before the breakfast was finished, came also the friend of Alfred, who demanded his company immediately, as some urgent necessity pressed the case. Alfred seemed much disappointed at losing the opportunity of visiting Wallace, but was obliged to abide by it, and determined to wait a week or ten days, when he might be in the direction of that hotel.

But Anna could not wait for that period to elapse, something must be done for Wallace immediately, and by herself too, for it seemed no one else could consider the comfort of the invalid, and sacrifice self for him as she could; some might minister to him from charity, but how cold is too often that ministry; and how few if any besides, would linger disinterestedly around that bed! But neither would be the motive that prompted her to sit hour after hour beside that couch, it would be the essence of a pure love that actuated her, and why should she remain in misery away from him, when he had none other to care for him? Why wander from one gallery of the chateau to another, vainly longing to be with him, when her presence might cheer that lonely chamber, pervading it with the happy assurance that there was one in the world to care for him, one who lived to love him? Why linger? he might be dying. "Wait no longer," was the reigning impulse, "Fly to Wallace!"

It was a rainy morning, and from the windows, the mountain passes looked solitary and dreary. Equipping herself in a close hood and cloak, and taking a basket filled with dainties necessary for the nourishment of an invalid, she stealthily left the house, and started on her lonely way, about a mile and a half beyond Halle. Having ridden her horse to a little ferry which she had to cross, she left him to trot homeward, while she, having paid the fee, entered the boat, and was rowed over, happy to find she was not recognized by the ferryman. On arriving at Halle, the rain fell in torrents, and the wind blowing in every direction, soon rendered an umbrella useless, and long before she reached her destination, nearly every article of clothing was drenched by the storm, and weary and cold she sunk exhausted upon the steps of the hotel. The repeated gaze of the passers-by, reminded her of her conspicuous situation, and lifting the weary limbs from their resting-place, she entered the house, and

inquired for Wallace. The porter could speak only in German, and Anna's broken sentences, and anxiety to render herself understood, made it impossible for the man to comprehend clearly her meaning; and he again inquired, "Is this sick gentleman you speak of, an Englishman? There is such a person here."

"He speaks English — yes, doubtless he is the one I seek; please take me to his room,— I think you said Grovenor was his name?"

"No, I don't know his name, he is a stranger, and has not long been here."

"Is he alone?"

"Oh, I believe he is not married, I never see any one with him but the physician."

"Thank you — please show me his room — I must see him."

The man looked at her scrutinizingly for a moment, then turning away, said, "Very well, this way then," and she followed him up several flights of creaking stairs to a landing, where a row of narrow doors was before them. Her guide knocked at the second, but no answer; having repeated the rap many times, at last it opened, and a portly, middle-aged gentleman with his head bandaged, and his arm in a sling, made his appearance.

"If you please sir," began the porter, "this woman — this girl wants a gentleman who is not married, one who is alone, and speaks English, so I brought her to you."

Thinking the gentleman was about to give some information of Wallace, Anna waited and gazed earnestly upon him. Her hood had been partly blown off, and the dishevelled hair matted by the rain, fell disorderly over the face and shoulders; nervous and excited, the large blue eyes wore a wild expression. Without speaking he looked for some time wonderingly upon her, then turning to the porter exclaimed with a scowl, "What do you mean by sending this wretch here? I've no such set after me, never had, so you can make no conquest of me, poor, miserable creature!" glancing at Anna, who was endeavoring to grope her way down the dark staircase, "Must every city of the Continent be infested with such as you? If I had my will you should all be exposed, and reap the reward of your dissolute life. Begone!" and with a force that shook the house, he shut his door.

"I must be in the wrong house," said Anna, in a terrified tone, as she reached the foot of the stairs.

"I think it's very likely," was the rejoinder of the porter, who, entering a pantry, closed the door, and left her to herself.

Finding herself again in the street, she began to consider in what direction she should proceed. The storm was not yet abated, and although not late in the afternoon, it was quite dark. Timorously Anna made her way through the deserted streets to a large building which bore the appearance of a sort of inn. Seeing a servant girl moving in the passage, she called to her, and having made the necessary inquiries, was persuaded Wallace must be there. Taking her by the hand, the maid led her into a dark lobby, and softly opening a door, Anna soon found herself in a small chamber, where the woman had left her. At first she could discern nothing, but after standing awhile in the room, she began to see better. The apartment was but scantily furnished, and wore no air of comfort for an invalid; on a bed was stretched the form of Wallace. But how altered! and Anna gazed in amazement upon that spectacle. The eyes were closed, and he seemed in a heavy sleep; yet the unshorn beard and long lashes contrasted greatly with the pale, sunken cheeks, and the expression of the whole countenance was haggard and ghastly. Wholly unprepared for the change, she was overcome as she gazed upon the sight, and as she sunk into a seat, began to realize the boldness of her undertaking; there in the chamber of a man, with whom she was really but little acquainted, and without any just excuse for the intrusion. The close atmosphere of the room caused her to cough. Wallace turned, the dark eyes opened, and fell upon her figure; but her face, as it rested upon her hand, was concealed by the cloak, so that the features could not be discerned.

As Wallace's gaze rested upon her form, a bright flush overspread the pale face, and endeavoring to raise himself, he exclaimed, "Oh, Estelle! beautiful Estelle! Come near me — let me look again upon that lovely face before I die! Oh, Estelle, come — let me clasp you but once, and I die content!"

He sunk exhausted upon his pillow, uttered a groan as if in pain, and instantly the color left the countenance ghastly as before. Anna approached the bed, and bent over the emaciated form. She placed her trembling hand upon his brow; — the colorless lips parted, and he breathed the name "Estelle," while a faint smile played over the features. Still, as though insensible to all beside comforting him, Anna began to bathe the feverish brow. The eyelids were uplifted, he looked upon her, and with difficulty raised a wasted hand to his forehead, as if to recall some image of the past; then suddenly turning from her, exclaimed, "Leave me — I don't want anything of you, go — you disturb me!"

"Oh, Wallace! Wallace!" and falling upon her knees beside the bed, her head sunk upon his breast, while her tears fell fast upon the coverlid. "Oh, do let me do something for you. If you did but know how much I would sacrifice for you, you would not refuse me." Taking a restorative from her basket, she administered it to the sufferer. He put his hand upon her arm as she raised the pillows to place his head more comfortably, and looking kindly upon her, uttered an expression of thanks, and said, "Anna, my kind, my best friend, why have you centred your affections upon one so unworthy? Dear girl, the only one I have in the world to care for me,—I would that I had more to offer you than the gratitude of the mere remnant of my existence."

Such from Wallace was all she desired, and she was satisfied. But the thought that his life was ending just when it was the most precious to her, overwhelmed her, and pressing his head to her bosom, as though she would have withheld him from the jaws of death, she exclaimed in her agony, "Oh, don't leave me in the world without you,—if you must die, take me with you! Oh, Wallace, when you are gone this world will be a blank to me!"

A noise behind her made her turn round, and she started at seeing a tall figure enwrapped in a cloak, standing before her. She at first thought of her father, but although it was very dark, a second glance told the man was a stranger to her; retreating into a recess, she sat down, and became more calm, while the man approached the bed, took the hand of Wallace, and by his proceedings, proved to be a physician. After remaining but a short time he took his leave; Anna arose, and following him into the passage, inquired whether the case was dangerous. "I think not, if he has proper care and nourishment," was the reply.

But it was late, and unless Anna desired to travel alone by midnight, she must hasten away. During the stay of the medical man, Wallace had fallen into slumber; bending over to gaze again upon that face which had so long been one fixed image in her memory, she dropped a silent tear as she recollected it might be her last gaze upon life, and wrapping the wet cloak around her shivering limbs, stole out of the chamber.

Through the storm and the darkness of night, the weary Anna pursued her lonely way homeward, and at last reached the ferry. As the lightning flashed, it brought to view the swollen waters, over which the boatmen with difficulty plied their oars. As they returned to the shore where she stood shuddering with cold and fear, they refused to run the risk again for any money.

There, unsheltered from the storm, stood the terrified girl entreating the men to take her over; but they, believing her to be a servant, still refused. At last, one of them exclaimed, "Well, she doesn't speak like one of the roughest, and will take her death standing here. I'll try it. If we're lost, it will only be two lives forfeited instead of one. Get in, Madam, whoever you are."

Some one hailed them, and while they waited for the passenger to reach them, they led Anna under the shelter of a little boat house. A man with a lantern took a seat beside her, the round, bugle light fell full upon her, and she drew her hood closer over her face while they began to question her as one of the domestics of the household. Alfred's marriage, Lydia's goodness and personal charms, Carlotta's youth and beauty, etc., were duly discussed; at last they spoke of her own benevolence, and as they sympathized with the poor and needy, Anna thought how unworthy she was of their praise, and felt, as she remembered the hospital, how much more acceptable than hers, must be the hearts of these rough-looking men unto Him, to whom all hearts are open.

The dark, lonely road was traversed, the gloomy avenue of trees passed through, and at last she reached the chateau, and fell fainting into the arms of her father.

In one of the wings of the chateau there was a room not far from Anna's suit of apartments, most cozy and inviting; the balmy air of June wafted through the open casement, laden with the perfume of the garden below, bearing the matin song of the many warblers that blended their sweet notes as they flitted from bough to bough, or soared far aloft into regions of the azure deep. Still, soft as was the zephyr, the curtains were carefully drawn round a couch that stood in the centre of the room; near it was a little table, which, from the tastefully arranged cut flowers that it contained, bore the evidences of some gentle hand.

Softly the door was opened, and a slender female figure approached the couch; the youthful face was pale, and somewhat anxious, and yet it wore a happy expression. Stooping down and parting the curtains, she said, in a low, silvery tone, "Wallace, you are better to day."

"And because I feel better, some one else does also;" and a hand was placed upon her shoulder. "Oh, Anna, why do you lavish so much upon one whom nobody else in the world would care for? When I think how you have nursed me

through this tedious illness, and wearied yourself in your devotion to me, did I not feel proud of such attention, indeed, I should regret that I have not chided you long ago. But let me tell you, I have been lying here just because you wished it; let us go into the garden," rising, "you've no idea how strong I have become." Throwing a cloak round him, Anna descended with him into the garden. The grounds had never looked more beautiful than now; besides, there was reason why they should be more attractive than ever, for it was a day of special rejoicing at La Belle, and probably there were none within its limits, but participated in the festivities with delight.

Entering an avenue of trees over which the boughs met, they seated themselves in the leafy shade, and Wallace exclaimed, "What a pretty peal of bells from the chapel! Have all the guests arrived?"

"I think so, and it's now time I went to dress, for the wedding will be at twelve precisely. Alfred likes to be punctual."

"But dearest, as soon as it is over, come to the citron grove; I've something to say to you."

The little chapel on the estate was well filled with guests when the bridal train entered. First came the bridesmaids, who were young ladies from Berlin, together with Anna and Wallace, then the pretty Carlotta and Mr. Wentworth, who was to give her away, and Alfred with Estelle. At that altar, Carlotta's father and mother had knelt to seal their vows, and there Alfred's mother had confidently united herself with one who now stood there reflecting upon much that had passed since that hour. The ceremony over, they returned to the chateau, where a collation upon the lawn awaited them; then Alfred bore his lovely Lottie away to pass a short time under an Italian sky, and as the guests began to disperse, Anna repaired to the seclusion of the citron grove. Wallace drew her to a sequestered spot, where the gay songsters, and the music of the cascade were the only sounds that disturbed the deep tranquillity. There they remained until the merry warblers had gone to rest, and as they arose to return to the chateau, for the second time in her life, Anna was engaged.

Again it was autumn. To a casual observer nothing without the chateau presented aught that was new or uncommon for that season. The murmuring breeze among the falling leaves was no more melancholy than on former occasions, and the interior told that Carlotta had come to take her place, and that the widow and Lydia were also among the number; still, that house was

one of sadness. Gloom and sorrow were seated there, and not one but felt its influence.

In her room knelt the fair Lydia, her whole frame trembling violently with the agitation of some uncontrollable sorrow. At last she arose from her knees, the face was deadly pale, and bore evidences of many tears. Nerving herself as for a painful duty, she bathed the swollen eyes, and left the room.

Proceeding through one of the galleries, she reached the apartment of the west wing, and passed into Anna's dressing-room, expecting to find her cousin, but Anna was not there. Entering the bed-chamber, she found her stretched upon the bed, but the face was buried in the coverlid, and fearing to disturb her, lest she might be sleeping, she stood and waited. Presently Anna arose, and proceeded to arrange the dishevelled tresses that hung disorderly about her; this was scarcely completed when she threw herself into a chair, and gave herself over to a paroxysm of weeping. Lydia, who was yet unperceived, watched in the greatest distress, the anguish of her cousin, and suffering the first fit of grief to subside, she approached her and pressing her to her bosom, parted the flaxen locks from the death-like countenance, wiped away the tears, and taking her by the hand, led her from the room, with a firmness of determination that could not be resisted.

Though Wallace had rapidly gained strength and spirits, and was, for a time, the life of the household, the seeds of a disease that had been sown during a life of dissipation again manifested themselves, and Wallace was once more laid low with inflammation of the lungs. Indefatigably and unceasingly Anna had watched by that couch of pain, refusing to take rest until there were signs of a change for the better. But she had now been confined to her room for many days, and during that time occasional spells of delirium had rendered her unconscious of everything that passed around her. Finding nothing could rouse her from this lethargy, it was advised that she should be taken into Wallace's room, and although the widow was staying at the villa, the task of leading her thither was left to Lydia, for Anna loved her cousin most affectionately, and when in her distracted or melancholy moments, would yield more submissively to her than any other.

As they approached the door of the room, Lydia placed her arm firmly round the waist of Anna, and drawing her into the apartment, closed the door. The chamber was darkly shaded, still a gleam of light fell upon an object before them. For a moment Anna gazed inquiringly upon that pall, then uttering a

shriek that pierced the hearts of all who heard it, tore herself from Lydia, and clasping the coffin in her agony, called aloud upon the name of the dead. It was heart-rending to witness her suffering, and the self-possessed Lydia was nearly overcome, for Anna had supposed Wallace still living, so that the shock must have been almost death to her. At last, she raised the agonized face to her cousin, and throwing her arms about her cried, "Wallace is dead! Oh, Lyddie, take pity on me! He is gone never to return to me — I cannot live without him — oh, Wallace, come back to me! Lyddie, Lyddie, pity — weep for the wretched Anna — he is gone from me forever." Her sobs ceased, for she had fainted. Lydia called for Mr. Wentworth, who carried her away, and they softly closed the door upon that chamber of death.

That night Lydia took her station beside the bed of the sorrowing girl, and watched over her broken slumbers.

About midnight Anna awoke, and as her eyes rested upon her cousin, she locked her arms around her neck, and cried, "Oh, cousin, I know it was not a dream, Wallace is gone forever!"

"Dearest, it was the will of God!"

"But Lyddie, he was all the world to me! I know I have done wrong in making such an idol of him, but Lyddie, I could'n't help it, and he had no one else to love him. Oh, cousin, I wish I could die!"

"But dearest, do not weep so violently, do, for our sakes try to be more calm!"

"I will, Lyddie, but talk to me of Wallace — tell me that you too saw much to like in him — do say that you thought him intellectual, generous, noble! Do, Lyddie, say something good of my Wallace!"

"I will, love; but I can say what is far better than those qualities. He sent for us all, and we gathered round his bed as he lay dying; no christian's last moments were ever more happy and peaceful than those of Wallace. He was so penitent for the years that were lost, so conscious of his need of a Saviour. He exhorted us to look well to our lives, that we trifled not with the precious things that belong to the peace of the eternal soul. He invoked a blessing upon you, and all who had befriended him, and commending his soul into the hands of his Maker, he died without a struggle. And now dearest, you who have loved him so well, could not wish him back again; no, Anna, you could not, and let us return thanks that he died at peace with God!"

"Wait Lyddie, I would rather kneel!"

Leaving her bed, she knelt beside her cousin, and together they offered up their thanksgiving for the soul that was gone. The words were few, and uttered amid many tears, but such are heard and accepted by Him to whom all hearts are open.

A feeling of peace stole over the cousins, and locked in each other's arms, they lay themselves down, and fell into a gentle sleep.

But I have already made my narrative far too lengthy, I forget that these of whom I delight to write, cannot be such favorites with those who are not personally acquainted with them. I beg pardon for the oversight, and would say to any who might honor these pages with a perusal, that the caprice of a foolish old lady is the only excuse I can plead. However, I will waste no time on preliminaries, but hasten to a close.

After remaining eight years in America, during which time I was subject to all the chances and changes of my precarious vocation, I began to feel a yearning for my native mountains. Changes suddenly took place among my relations, and I received the joyful tidings that I could return to the home of my childhood. I had been spending some time in the western part of Pennsylvania, but had never forgotten an incident that occurred the day I left Philadelphia. In passing through one of the streets, I beheld several carriages, and thinking it was a funeral, I inquired who was dead; the person addressed informed me that it was a wedding, and hearing that the bride was none other than the pretty Kate, I resolved to delay myself a little longer, and enter the church. It was crowded to excess, and it was impossible to enter from the street; being well known to the sexton, I made my way round to the vestry room, and thus passed into the church. Presently the tall sister Josephine, entered with a brother-in-law, — there was no other bridesmaid; and next, the bride herself made her appearance. She was simply arrayed in white, and looked exceedingly pretty. Her father was now dead, but an uncle accompanied her to take his place. They were already at the altar, and wonderingly, I looked round for the bridegroom. I heard the sound of wheels upon the carpeted aisle, it came nearer — I looked again — a chair was being wheeled to the altar, and behold! "But no," said I to myself; "my eyes must be false to me!" I looked again, and lo! it was Barrow! A sickening sensation came over me, and I endeavored to leave the place, but the crowd was too dense, and I was forced to remain; and there were others beside myself who dropped a tear as they witnessed

those nuptials. With disgust and pity I turned my face from the scene, and was glad when able to make my escape.

Now that I was about to take my leave of America, I returned to Philadelphia to bid farewell to those who by their kind hospitality to a stranger and foreigner, had endeared themselves to me. I found Mr. Everett looking very well, and very happy in the possession of his darling little Lydia, who had grown a beautiful child. Poor old Mrs. Gilbert, I was told, had one morning been found dead in her bed, and that Susan was living with Miss Pyke, who had grown quite blind; how they agreed I did not stop to inquire. I had a desire to call upon Mr. and Mrs. Barrow, and arriving at the house, rang the bell. A domestic answered the door, and hearing I wished to see Mr. Barrow also, she led the way up stairs. My name was announced, and I entered the room. The first object I beheld was the once pretty Kate, half reclining upon an ottoman. Certainly the features were as small and symmetrical as ever, but the complexion was sallow, the whole countenance wore an unhealthy appearance, and the animation that had been its chief ornament was no longer to be found there. By her side upon a couch, was that deplorable piece of decrepit humanity, which she was forced to own as a husband. The sight was painful to me, and as I turned to depart, my eye fell upon an object at the foot of the bed. "What a strange fancy," thought I, "for the old man to amuse himself with a doll!" It moved, and in amazement I discovered it to be a child!

"Our children are very small, Miss Morgan," said the same little whining voice of long ago.

I looked again, and behold, it was as he had said,—a child of theirs, but so diminutive, I dreaded to touch lest I should hurt it. The limbs seemed contracted and withered, and though the shrivelled little face bore some faint resemblance to its mother, there was in the expression a likeness of the father too pitiful to behold. I extended my hand to Kate to bid good-by, and my dress turned over something upon the floor. I looked to repair the mischief, and there too was just such a dwarf child as I had seen at the foot of the bed, only it was apparently about a year younger. "Poor Kate!" thought I, and with a feeling of disgust left the house. Since my pupils left for Prussia, we had never ceased to correspond, and upon hearing I was about to leave for Europe, they wrote so urgently for me to start for Berlin, to spend a season with them, that I could not deny myself such a pleasure; so, although my days for adventure and romance were over, in due time I found myself at the station in

Berlin, where Lydia, with her carriage, was waiting to welcome me. For, although I beheld in the handsome, full-grown woman before me, the Countess de Castello (for her husband's father had died;) I saw also the same unsophisticated, frank, noble-minded Lydia, as when eight years before, her father led the blushing girl into my presence. We drove to her house, a noble mansion, that spoke highly in favor of the good management of its young mistress. At dinner I saw her husband, and was much pleased with his convivial, courteous manner. Lydia took me to the nursery, and as I beheld the four dear children that clustered round their mamma, even in that happy moment I could not but heave a sigh of regret, that such a delight might never cheer the melancholy of an old maid, and I wondered if a bachelor's life ever experienced such repinings.

However, Lydia insisted upon my retiring early to rest after the fatigues of my journey, and soon the sighing spirit of the spinster was lost in slumber. The following day I was taken to La Belle. I cannot describe the pleasure it afforded me as I beheld in the once thin, gloomy little Anna of Claremont Place, a bright, happy looking girl, who delighted in devoting herself to the comforts of others, and who relieved the youthful Carlotta in the management of the greater part of the household. For Anna had to all appearance ceased to mourn for Wallace, and when we were alone, she showed me his likeness, and took me to the little cemetery, where a stone marks his resting-place. She assured me she could now look back upon the past, and see it was for the best; and although she should ever cherish his memory, she had ceased to grieve for him.

While I remained, Alfred returned, and I found his the same joyous, jocular spirit as ever, and regretted when the time arrived for me to leave that happy household behind me. But since that I have often seen my Prussian friends, for in the summer season I delight in taking the journey, that I may meet them all once again.

And while I am secluded among the mountains of Wales, Anna accompanies her brother upon his missions of mercy, for which the trials and hardships of her early life renders her better qualified than his lovely Lottie. Yet where is Lydia? Is not her name as well known among the wretched as Anna's? But first let me ask, are there no aching hearts among the rich and the affluent,—no fears of death in the dying chambers of the wealthy? Can good works be done only among the poor?

It is evening. The last golden beam is tinting the landscape, all nature wears the tranquillity of peace.

In a mansion situated among the dwellings of the nobility of Berlin, there is a chamber where the domestics move noiselessly around a bed, on which lies a female apparently in the last hour of her existence. The door opens, and an elderly woman approaches the bed, saying, "My dear, here is the countess who called a few days ago."

A female figure passes softly to the bed-side, and bending over the dying woman, utters low, sweet tones of kindness and sympathy. A hand wasted by sickness and suffering is placed upon her arm, while a hollow voice exclaims, "Oh, they have told me you could comfort me, but then you must tell me that all beyond the grave is a blank — that there is no eternity for the soul! Nothing beside, can lessen my suffering. My friends surround me to talk of my recovery, and buoy me up with the hope of mingling again in the pleasures of the world; but I know I am dying, and what are the baubles of earth now to me? They bring me luxuries — they tell me I may again be envied by the multitude, but oh, they tell me nothing that can comfort me! Ah, Madame, now I see who has come to visit me in this trying hour, I behold the sweet Lydia I once knew — surely you can recognize me? But no! I forgot how altered I am. No wonder you do not know the dying Fritzine. Ah, would my life had been as yours! I shudder to recall the past — I would recount it — but no, too dark — too dreadful! Doubtless you have never heard of such a life, I will not acquaint you with guilt such as mine. Happy Lydia! I have often heard of you — I know you've an affectionate husband and children to surround you, and I also might have been gladdened by the prattling of little voices, for I have had many children; but I know not where one is to be found — I left them in different parts of the Continent, wherever I could conveniently rid myself of their care. They know nothing of their parentage, and as they grow up to be scattered over the face of the earth, what will they think of their mother? Oh, can nothing blot out from the memory the awful past!"

Lydia despatches a message to her husband, nor deems the comforting of an anguish-stricken soul a small recompense for spending a night and a day in the chamber of the dying.

Now it seems to me that when any one writes a story, whether it be fact or fiction, they generally contrive to end with a marriage. I'm sure I don't know why this should be the consummation, but perhaps that is because I am an old lady, who never partook of the joys of that holy estate; however, be that

as it may, as I shall never enter again upon the literary field, after taking the trouble to scribble what I have, (which indeed is not a little for a woman of my years) I see no reason why I also should not be like other authors in this respect, so will add a little incident that occurred during one of my visits to my Prussian friends, about three months after the death of the poor Fritzine.

It was a delightful morning in the middle of spring, when as I alighted at the door of the Countess de Castello, a familiar voice exclaimed, "Oh, Miss Morgan, I'm so glad you're come in time, for we shall start in an hour." "Yes, dear Madam," said Alfred, as he met me in the hall, "and Lydia is no better pleased to see you than I am; for, although you are a maiden lady, you do not belong to that class who look upon matrimony as the most preposterous of follies, and therefore we are not anxious to dispense with your company."

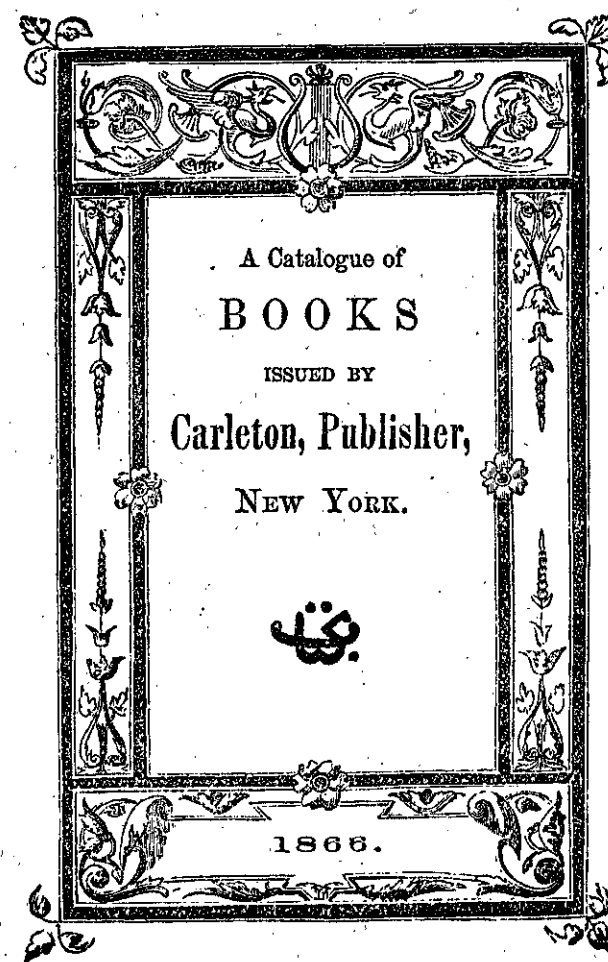
To my surprise I found every one of the family of La Belle at Lydia's. As soon as I had rested, we set out together, and joined the vast assembly that awaited to witness the marriage of the Baron de Korsa.

As I was not present at the weddings of the rest of my Prussian friends, I have only been able to echo the opinion of others in regard to them, but of this I can speak for myself, and I believe no bride could appear more lovely than did this charming Estelle. But I looked also with an intense interest upon the tall, handsome figure at her side, and as I gazed into that benevolent face, and recalled that guardianship over the departed Beatrice, I thought of the words, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in Heaven."

[NOTE. The survivors of Miss Morgan deem it in place to state that notwithstanding the exceeding length of the foregoing, and its many unnecessary details, they thought best to offer it for publication in accordance with her wish, without alteration. They would also add that every name, except one, is fictitious.]

LLANWROST, Caernarvonshire, Nov. 12, 1864.

THE END.





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