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# Sheltern:

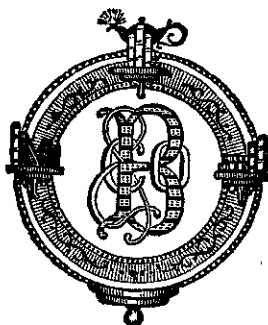
A NOVEL.

By

CHRISTOPHER CONINGSBY. *Impend.*

"Let every felaw telle his tale aboute."

CHAUCER.



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SHELTERN.

*American Indian*

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"I do love these ancient ruins ;  
We never tread upon them but we set  
Our foot upon some rev'rend history."

*Duchess of Malfy.*

I N the interior of one of the oldest Southern States there stood, some years ago, a quiet little village—the place of my birth, and the home of my early boyhood. It is deserted now and fallen into decay ; but the simple beauty of its prosperity lives fresh in my memory, though years and change have swept me far from the spot, and have wrought their sad vicissitudes in its history and mine. Along either bank of the clear and rapid Sheltern, from which stream it took its name, the little village lay ; and sloping lawns and shady groves lent an air of charming grace to the scene. Surrounding hills, as if jealous of the treasure they sheltered, shut it in from the rest of the world ; and when our eyes sought a wider prospect than our little valley afforded, they were raised along their wooded sides to meet the placid sky that seemed, to my boyish vision, to rest upon their tops. I have often thought, in later years, that I owe to those stern old hills much of that reverence which has survived with me the wreck of many a youthful feeling ; for I was taught by them to look up when I looked abroad, and every wistful

glance that travelled along the overhanging side of Walnut Hill rested at last on the serene grandeur or golden glories of the western sky. Might, Majesty, and Dominion may be born on the mountain-top; but Reverence, Simplicity, and Love are oftenest natives of the vale.

Crowning Walnut Hill stood, in the days of which I write, an old and deserted mansion, built of the small, rough brick of the last century. It had once been extensive, and though its claims to architectural beauty might never have been allowed, still it was evidently the work of opulence, and had been the home of elegance and taste. Like all ruined tenements in those old days, it had an awful reputation in the country side, and all those horrors clustered around it, which now happily survive only in the legendary lore of the past. In spite of this, however, or possibly because of it, the place became a favorite haunt of mine, and all my youthful rambles were terminated in the extensive grounds that belonged to it. Weeds had almost choked the flowers that remained, and fallen leaves strewed the stately avenues, rustling mournfully under the few footsteps that now ventured to pass along them. Looking out upon this scene of desolation, five dormer windows stared from the roof, and seemed to frown upon the curious or truant visitor that approached the mansion. Near the ponderous, old-fashioned gateway, and towering high above all other trees, stood a single Lombardy poplar, that looked like a sentinel appointed to

watch and guard those silent shades. Its trunk was blackened by age, and its boughs were for the most part leafless and bare; but its lofty crest was ever turned towards the road that approached the gate, and its branches, as they were swayed by the wind, seemed to warn away, with wierd and fantastic gesture, all who sought to penetrate the mysteries of the place. Instinct with life it appeared to me, grim, watchful, faithful to its trust as warder of the solitude around.

From the frequent visits which I paid to the spot, I grew to love it, and to regard its ruined walks as my own peculiar domain. Certain it is that no lordly proprietor ever held more absolute possession of his grounds, or had less reason to complain of the trespasses of his neighbors. Constant intercourse with the scene rendered me familiar with its melancholy loneliness; and I used to think, as I lay upon the grass, that my sentinel poplar would sometimes relax his stern vigilance and nod with kindly inclination to the wondering and dreaming little boy that dared to trust him. Even the mysterious windows that stood out from the roof gradually became more friendly in their aspect, and I was able at length to look them humbly but steadily in the face, and to wonder why it was that the searching scrutiny which they maintained upon the grounds below had once been so terrifying to me.

Up to this time I do not think it occurred to me that the place had any history, or had ever been



other than it was. It was fairy-land to me, and somehow I could not think that it had ever been inhabited by mere mortals. This illusion was at length dispelled, however, and I learned from the remonstrances which were heaped upon my truant and listless habits, that sorrow and crime were linked with the history of the old Lynne Place, and that the ruin and desolation that hung over it had a mournful significance such as, it was said, the tender mind of childhood was not fitted to know. My curiosity was thus aroused, and I set to work with the pertinacity peculiar to children, to learn what that history was, and why the place was shunned, and why I might not hear. I think I might have sought for these particulars a long time in vain, had not a lucky chance thrown the information in my way; for our villagers, like all other grave and reverend seniors, were better pleased to shake their heads and hint mysteriously at the tale they knew, than to tell it to an idle and inquisitive boy.

Among the earliest of my recollections was that of an old gray-headed man—Father Barron we called him—who often came to the village of Sheltern, I did not know whence or why. He was universally loved and honored, and a cheerful welcome greeted him at every door. A pious and reverend man he was, and deeply versed in that peculiar kind of legendary knowledge which belongs alone to extreme old age. With the history of our village and its vicinity he seemed particularly well acquainted, and

many a time as I walked with my hand in his along the banks of our beautiful Sheltern, has he delighted me with tales about persons long since dead—how they had walked and gambolled and fished where then we stood, and how death had stolen one, and how another had gone to distant wars and never had returned, and how all had been scattered and snatched away, leaving him, an old, old man, to linger wearily around the scenes of their happiness, and to tell the tale of their joys and their sorrows, their life and their death.

Late one summer's afternoon, as I lay upon the grass in front of the porch at the Lynne Place, watching the waving crest of my friendly poplar, and weaving with a boy's random fancy the insect voices of the evening into whimsical stories of the past, I was startled from my reverie by seeing Father Barron enter the gateway and approach the spot where I lay. An unusual melancholy rested on his face, and I shall never forget the sorrowful gesture with which he lifted his hat from his brow and looked with an expression akin to awe upon the scene around him. I ran to meet him, and led him to a half-ruined seat near by; and there, under the gloomy gaze of the dormer windows, and under watch and ward of the old poplar-tree, I heard the story which these pages contain.

Father Barron returned no more to our village, for he was old and full of years;—and many days have now passed by since I have seen the old Lynne Place.

The quiet village that once slept upon the banks of the Sheltern has gone to decay. Of all those that set out thence with me on life's stormy voyage, I remain almost alone; yet the tale which I heard that summer's evening survives in my memory as fresh as when first I heard it. They are dead now whom this simple story could affect with pain, and I venture at length to give it to the world.



## CHAPTER I.

"Pallida mors æquo pulsat pede pauperum tabernas  
Regumque turres."

HORAT.

IN one of the poorest districts of a Southern city stood a mean and humble cottage—one of many, the usual abodes of wretched poverty, and, too often, of squalid vice. Like others of its class, the one of which I speak was small, containing but two rooms; badly ventilated, and but scantily supplied with the most necessary articles of furniture. A woodbine, however, which clambered upon the porch, gave a semblance of comfort and elegance to the house, and the evening sunshine, as it slept upon this vine, lent an appearance of quiet and peacefulness that distinguished it from the bare and staring whitewashed tenements which stood in the neighborhood. A boding stillness, however, seemed, on the evening of which I write, to rest on the cottage, and the few passers-by that sauntered along the streets, stopped to look again into the half-open door, and wondered what it was that gave the house so mournful an air within. None knew, who passed that way, that Death had paused to knock at that lowly gate, and had lifted the latch and stalked through the open door to execute his stern and inexorable decree. Yet so it was. Within the inner room, stretched

upon a miserable bed, lay a woman in the prime of life, passing swiftly away from time to eternity. The cold touch of death was upon her brow; yet her face bore traces of remarkable loveliness, and her glazed eyes still contained a look of ineffable tenderness and beauty. Holding her hand, and watching her face with an agonizing expression of affectionate grief, sat her husband, a man of about thirty years of age, but whose haggard face and whitened locks spoke of greater age or many sorrows. Close by his side stood a boy of ten years, whose sad and wondering eyes seemed dimly to comprehend the awful mystery that lay before him. These three alone were there in the presence of the dread destroyer. The assiduous watching of devoted friends belong not to the death-bed of poverty. Grief-stricken and alone sat the father and son awaiting the impending blow that was to bereave them of wife and mother.

The dying woman lifted her feeble hand and drew her husband and son closer to her side. "Robert," she said, "go back to Sheltern now. Take Godfrey to your mother—she cannot fail to love our boy. Come closer now." The fast-receding spirit returned once more to her eyes, and lighted them again with the old, old look of tenderness and love; and gently then it passed away into the presence of its God. The sinking sun looked in upon that narrow bed, and shed its golden glory upon all that remained of Alice Lynne. Yet when his beams had stolen out again, and darkening shadows crept in beside the mourning

and the lost, that tender look still lingered in the eyes of her that was gone—the only remaining gem of all the boundless treasure of love she once had heaped on Robert Lynne.

Death in all its forms is a terrible mystery to man. Youth cannot realize the dreadful idea it represents, and age itself can learn, from all its meditations, only vaguely to define its shadowy lineaments. So closely is the body linked to the spirit in life, that it is only when the bonds that unite them are almost torn asunder and the soul is about to wing its flight, that it begins to comprehend the change that is to rend it from its habitation and to send it away into the depths of the Invisible and the Unknown. To us who live, it is still a mystery. In vain we strive to bring home the solemn truth to ourselves, that all must die. And when we stand by those whom we have loved and lost, the dreadful idea is hard to be received—impossible to be understood—that the soul has parted forever from the form we loved so tenderly, so tenderly embraced. Reason tells us in vain that the lifeless body is only clay:—we love it still. Reason may tell us that the grave contains naught that once loved us:—we stop our ears, and steal away in the silence of twilight, to tell our love and repeat again the oft-repeated vows, by the side of the little mound; and we plant sweet flowers, and water them with our tears, upon the spot which the heart will call the home of her that is gone. Let not Philosophy trespass upon this holy

domain. Scoff not at him who plants the rose and eglantine upon this sacred altar of his love; but let him always turn his steps to where the dearly loved of happier days is laid, and console his grief-stricken heart with the sweet but melancholy communion that awaits him there.

The morning dawned and found Robert Lynne still sitting by his dead wife's side. He could not believe her dead. Little Godfrey had fallen asleep by his mother, and when he opened his eyes at the return of day, he thought how beautiful she looked, and wondered why she was so calm, and quiet, and cold. The serene and placid beauty of his mother's face was pleasing—not terrible—to him.

"So fair, so calm, so softly sealed,  
The first last look by death revealed"—

that his youthful mind was rapt into pleasure by the sight, and he almost wept with joy to think that his suffering mother was well again, and that grief and sorrow and pain had given place forever to the "mild, angelic air, the rapture of repose" that had settled on her face, to leave it, as he fondly hoped, no more. But his eyes wandered soon to his father's face, and all his boyish delight was snatched away. A vague and indefinable grief rushed upon him, and he crept to his unconscious father's side and sobbed with a bursting heart.

Presently some of the neighbors came. How they had heard of it Robert Lynne never knew. He was almost angry with them for disturbing the sleeper, as

he was sure they did, when they came to dispose her limbs decently for her long, last rest.

They buried her that day:—he could not resist them as he wished to do—they were so quiet and stern, he thought, in their heartless office. Some women wept as they took her away;—this he resented more than all. What right had they to weep for his darling—for her whom he loved more than his hope of heaven? They tried to take him and Godfrey away with them from the grave, but he would not let them. She would be lonely there, and they—he and Godfrey—must stay with her. All night they remained, and God was with them; for in the still watches of the night they were not forgotten, and something like consolation came with the morning. They returned to the little house then. It was desolate—so desolate, that had the bereaved man remained in it, his heart must have broken. He took little Godfrey by the hand and they paced crowded streets: but these were more desolate than all. How chilling the desolation of a great city to a man that is stricken with grief! More cheerful by far the lonely desert or the wild ocean strand, than the heartless solitude that stalks by the suffering stranger's side as he walks amid the haunts of men.

Little Godfrey's face reflected the grief that rested on his father's—he was so young that it was his father's grief he mainly felt. How sad it is to see a bright young face overclouded by another's sorrows;—to see the shadow from a father's or mother's brow

rest on and blight the joys of unreflecting childhood ! The peculiar sorrows of children are fleeting and evanescent ; but their young lives are often overcast by another's woe. Who has not seen, and almost wept to see, a sorrowing mother walk along our streets with a child by her side that should have been bright and careless, but whose timid, wondering eyes had caught from the mother's face a look of grief that is so yearning and pitiful, because it is borrowed from another's uncomprehended woe ? So little Godfrey walked by his father a spectacle of more painful interest than the strong man with bursting heart that held his hand.

At last they left the dreary street and returned to the grave. There it was that Robert Lynne first dared to recur to the past, and to look forward to the future. He remembered the last words of his dying wife—he remembered far-distant Sheltern, and those who had so deeply wronged her that was gone—and his resolution was taken. He returned a stronger man, and went at once about his task. A few days sufficed for the disposal of his little worldly goods, and for the payment of his debts—large enough almost to consume his scanty means—and then he and little Godfrey went away.

## CHAPTER II.

"O! it comes o'er my memory  
As doth the raven o'er the infected house—  
Boding to all."

*Othello.*

LATE one afternoon in early Autumn, Robert Lynne and little Godfrey stood upon the summit of one of the hills that overlook the village of Sheltern. They were travel-worn and weary ; for they had journeyed many a mile on foot. They seated themselves on a rock by the roadside to rest.

For the first time in many years, Robert Lynne saw the scenes familiar to his childhood. Beneath him lay the well-remembered village, and through it ran the dear familiar stream—the Isis of his boyhood—along whose banks he had wandered a dreamy youth, too listless to be harmful, too useless to be aught but beloved. There was the house where his Alice had lived, and yonder was the little church where they were married. The place looked smaller now than he remembered it, but he could see that everything was unchanged.

Beyond the village, upon the summit of Walnut Hill, lay his old home—the place where he was born—and where his step-mother and brother still lived. Its portals had long been closed against him—since the day, in fact, when the village bell tolled

forth the merry tidings that lovely but lowly Alice Morrison had given him her hand.

The past was all before him. He lived over its joys and its sorrows. He thought of the loveliness and worth of his wife that was dead, and of the day when he and she were spurned from his father's house, and when they turned and went broken-hearted away to seek their untried fortunes in the great and cruel world. He thought of her sufferings so uncomplainingly borne, and of their poverty so cheered by her gentle, loving smiles—and then of her death. He thought of the long years during which he had toiled, too proud to sue for that assistance which had been so justly due him, but which had been so disdainfully denied. Something hard and stern settled at his heart as he remembered all, and began to change him who was formed for love, into a cold and unrelenting instrument of what he deemed a holy revenge. God help him, as these thoughts come into his heart! for if they take firm footing there he will be simple-minded, loving Robert Lynne no more.

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During the latter half of the last century, and many years before the time of which I have just been speaking, Godfrey Lynne left his home in England, and set out with his young and blooming wife for the New World. Possessed of an ample fortune, his object was to secure for his children, should he ever be blessed with any, the advantages which he

foresaw would attend the prosperity of a new and rising country. He purchased the estate of Walnut Hill, which he improved, and took up his residence there. His wife, whom he idolized, was some years younger than himself, and was truly excellent in all that constitutes loveliness in woman. Gentle, simple-hearted, and affectionate, her only will was her husband's wish, her only desire was to make him happy. Frail and delicate as she was, and separated by many weary miles from her friends and relations, Godfrey Lynne lavished upon her the warmest and most devoted love, and sought by every means that such love could suggest and his wealth could bestow, to alleviate the regrets which a woman always feels for the home and friends of her youth. The rude discomforts of a newly-settled country were overcome by his ample means, or were transformed by his elegant and cultivated taste into comforts such as well might supply the place of the more refined luxuries of the Old World. Such a purpose led to the erection of the mansion at Walnut Hill, and the adornment of its extensive grounds in a manner that challenged as well as merited the admiration of all who saw them.

Godfrey Lynne was a very sensitive and highly cultivated as well as a very affectionate man. Next to his wife, he loved his home and his books, and he devoted all the time which his business allowed to the enjoyment of domestic happiness and to his favorite literary pursuits. His mind was elegant, symmetrical, and sensitive, rather than strong, and

was better fitted to enjoy than to suffer. His feelings might have made him effeminate had not his good sense, and, above all, his position as head of a family in a new and rude country, encouraged him to greater activity. His wife loved him with rare tenderness and devotion, and the fond pride which she felt in his really excellent character, stimulated him to a life of worthy and exemplary usefulness.

Soon after Godfrey Lynne arrived in this country, his wife was joined by a distant relative of hers—Miss Mabel Waters by name—who came, or acted after she came, in the capacity of companion to that lady. This Miss Waters was a remarkable character in some respects, and deserves special mention at my hands. She was not pretty, nor yet was she very young and simple-hearted; but she was what is sometimes of more avail than any or all of these. Endowed by nature with a strong mind and stronger passions, with an imperious temper and a designing and envious heart, she possessed the faculty of using every circumstance for her own advantage; and seldom lacked the means of accomplishing the purposes which suited her own interest best. In consequence of this, she soon learned to despise her benefactress for her soft and amiable virtues, and, as she knew her dependence upon her bounty, grew to hate her for her better fortune. It is but the old, old story—kindness received with abject humility, yet resented with envious hatred—the kind-hearted countryman and the ungrateful serpent.

Miss Waters had been taught by poverty to be discreet. The *res angusta domi*, that has crushed many a rising spirit, only taught her to watch, to labor, and to wait—to dissemble her ingratitude, to conceal her envy, to suppress her hatred, and to treasure up, as a wrong to be remembered and expiated, every benefaction she had received. Let not any one think that this is overdrawn; for no vice is more common than the one of which I speak. Ingratitude in a dependent rarely fails to ripen into malignant hate; and human philanthropy has no more formidable monster to contend with than this. Grieved as all must be to accept it, it is nevertheless true, that from him who is dependent upon our bounty, we have too often naught to expect but envy, hatred, and malice, and all uncharitableness.

Miss Waters, then, had learned to watch, to labor, and to wait. To Godfrey Lynne she made herself useful—to his wife indispensable. Her strong mind and will soon made her the real mistress of Walnut Hill; and though she knew this herself, she was wise enough to conceal it. When Mrs. Lynne was sick, as was often the case, she won the master's confidence and esteem, by her devotion to his wife. In every way she relieved Mrs. Lynne of the duties of her establishment. When the husband came home at evening, it was Miss Waters that met him at the fireside with gown and slippers. She it was that was always at hand to perform those numberless and delicate functions which constitute the most delightful

embellishments of domestic happiness. Thus it was that she became useful to Godfrey Lynne.

Miss Waters watched and waited; and she saw with too prophetic an eye that she would not have to wait long. Fate was fast doing her work for her. It was summer now, and the young wife blushed to see how proudly and fondly her husband looked forward with a new and joyful hope to the coming Autumn that was to bless him with a father's love. Autumn came, and Robert Lynne, the heir of Walnut Hill, was born; but the gentle, suffering mother died and left him motherless in the world. Then it was that Miss Waters stepped forward and assumed the whole care of the household, cautiously, kindly, discreetly playing her part, and restoring everything to quiet order, and finally to cheerfulness. One year and a half from that day she and Godfrey Lynne were married, and she came home from church, the proud and haughty mistress of all she once had coveted and desired.

Little Robert soon knew that his own mother was dead—that he had no mother. He was strangely like her that was gone, and his father's eyes often filled with tears as he watched the beauty and grace that seemed to have descended on him like a benison from his dead mother. The little boy shrank back from his step-mother, however, for, with the marvellous instinct of childhood, he clearly saw that in her he would never find a friend. Whether it was because he was so like his mother, whose place she

now filled, or because his father loved him so, or because he might stand between her own children and the estate, certain it was that the new mistress of Walnut Hill soon learned to hate little Robert as she had hated his mother before him, only more intensely and more entirely. How strange it is that children should ever inspire hatred; yet it is true that some bad natures are capable of lavishing upon them the fiercest, wildest hate—all the more fierce because they are innocent and unresisting. The new Mrs. Lynne would have hated quiet little Robert in any case; but when her own son Cecil was born she was able no longer to disguise it. It was then the old story of King John and Prince Arthur—of Fleance and Macbeth.

Robert Lynne was a timid and sensitive child, full of generous and noble impulses; but shy and reserved to a degree that was painful and embarrassing. His father and his little half-brother Cecil he loved devotedly; but he grew to be cautious in every expression of his affection, lest it should meet with the vengeance, as it often did, of his step-mother. He became lonely and pensive in his habits, and as he grew in years he often wandered off alone and spent whole days by the side of the Sheltern. Cecil, on the other hand, was a bold, resolute child, noisy and mischievous, petted and spoiled, yet warm-hearted and generous when none of his whims were crossed and none of his wants denied. He soon learned from his mother to regard himself as his brother's supe-



rior in all respects; and though he loved Robert—for Robert was made to be loved—still he could not help despising his gentle and yielding temper, that was so greatly in contrast with his own. Cecil was imperious and enterprising, while Robert was good-natured and listless. At school they were in the same classes; and though Robert was by far the more ready learner of the two, and was possessed of the most undoubted talents, yet somehow he never turned them to account, and often, after having taught Cecil his lesson, made a worse recitation than he.

The years passed on, and the brothers approached manhood. Godfrey Lynne returned to England, to attend, as it was vaguely rumored, to the settlement of an estate that had been bequeathed to him. He reached London, and letters had been received at Walnut Hill announcing his speedy return. But the ship in which he sailed was lost, it was said, and Robert heard with inexpressible concern and distress that his father was no more.

Then it was that fortune, so niggardly before, declared open war against Robert Lynne. His brother was sent to college, but he was retained at home;—not that he was wanted there, God knows, but because a distinction must now be made between the two. Driven from home by unkindness and neglect, he sought among the humble villagers some consolation for his unhappiness. His evenings were spent at the tavern in the village, and it was there that he met and learned to love sweet Alice Morrison.

Her parents were dead, and she had been recently brought by the tavern-keeper, a relation of her own, to live with him. Retiring, modest, and beautiful, she soon won Robert's heart, and those who knew her said that she was fitted to be the wife of the richest and proudest man in the land. Simple and trusting, they recked not of the future, but were content to meet the world hand in hand, and to brave its fiercest struggles together. So it chanced that they were married one morning in the spring-time, and honest, happy Robert led her up the steep path to his home with no other thought in his heart than that there they would live and die together. What would he care now for cold words and cruel neglect? He could meet and brave all, while his Alice was by his side, and be happy still.

But the door of his father's house was shut in his face, and admittance was sternly denied to him. At length his mother came and cruelly drove him away. He was told that his wife would not be allowed to bring disgrace upon that house, and that as his rights there had been made solely dependent on her will, he would please consider them as forfeited, and take his low-born and designing wife away. Stunned and maddened by these words, he led his almost broken-hearted bride down the path again, and soon they left the village for a distant city, where he hoped, by his talents, his only portion, to earn a maintenance. Partly with a view of avoiding identification under the changed and reduced

circumstances that now surrounded him, and partly from a feeling of offended pride, he abandoned his own name and assumed that of Evelyn; and it was by this last that he continued thereafter to be known. So it was that the name of Robert Lynne was lost to the world, and Robert Evelyn, like all others, had soon almost forgotten that it had ever been. For the purposes of this veracious history, his old name will be retained; but the son that was born to him in his exile had never known or heard the name of Lynne.

What followed may be briefly told. Robert Lynne was not formed by nature to triumph over difficulties; yet, by close attention to his business, he managed to earn a scanty support. Poor Alice bore bravely up and sustained and comforted him, as only a loving wife can. Little Godfrey, too, was born; and then they were very happy in their quiet fashion, until death came and took the wife and mother away. The rest is known, and my retrospect is done.

Robert Lynne and little Godfrey were now descending to the village at the close of the day, their weary journey drawing nigh to an end.



### CHAPTER III.

"He brings great news. The raven himself is hoarse  
That croaks the fatal entrance of Duncan  
Under my battlements."

*Macbeth.*

IT was nightfall on Walnut Hill, and the extensive grounds which surrounded the mansion were shrouded in darkness. Ten thousand fireflies twinkled among the boughs that overhung the garden walks, adding deeper intensity to the gloom. The measured and melancholy cadences of the katydids that had already begun their nightly concert there, rendered still more striking the stillness that rested on the place. At the end of a noble avenue stood the house—almost princely in those old days—whose size and gloomy grandeur were magnified by the light which shone from the windows of a wing that flanked the main building on the left. In this room, which opened upon the lawn in front, sat some of the inmates of the house, to whom I will invite the attention of the reader.

Seated on a low divan at one side of the room was Mrs. Cecil Lynne, a lady of somewhat less than thirty years of age, pensive and almost melancholy, but beautiful in the soft repose that rested on her countenance. By her side sat upon a stool a little girl of eight summers, whose quick eye and nervous

gesture betrayed the desire that is almost universal among children, to move, to laugh, to play—to do anything but sit still. A profusion of soft brown curls fell round her shoulders, and softened the light that rested on a face remarkable for its childish grace.

On the opposite side of the room sat a lady of more than fifty years, tall, erect and angular, with eyebrows unusually long and straight, and eyes of that cold gray color that freezes while it penetrates. Her mouth was straight and her lips firmly set. Her most remarkable feature, however, was her chin, which was singularly long and pointed, and which gave an air of assurance and heartless cruelty to the face. In her hands she held some knitting, and her fingers moved rapidly and incessantly; but she never bent her eyes towards it, or removed them from the door, towards which she directed her eager gaze. This was Mrs. Mabel Lynne, (*née* Waters), mother of Cecil and relict of Godfrey Lynne.

"Cecil is late to-night," she said quietly.

"He sent me word that he would be detained later than usual," his wife replied; "but I think he should be here by this time," and she rose and went to the door, and anxiously looked out into the darkness.

The quick tramping of a horse soon afterwards summoned a servant to the door, and in a moment more Cecil Lynne stooped to kiss his wife upon the threshold, and passed into the room. He was tall, and finely formed, and his face was a handsome one,

though grave and stern for one of his years. A cloud seemed to rest on his brow to-night, which his mother noticed at once.

"Cecil, are you defeated?" she asked, anxiously.

"No; I am elected by a large majority," he said; "but, mother, I wish to speak to you immediately."

She rose, and taking a light, followed him into an adjoining room.

"Mother," he said, looking sternly at her, "you told me years ago that my brother Robert was dead. I wish to know why you said so; for as sure as I stand here, I have seen him to-night."

She looked at him quickly and keenly for a moment and then replied:

"Pooh! my son; does Cecil Lynne believe in ghosts? Where have you seen this apparition?"

"I have seen no ghost," he said; "but as I mounted my horse at the tavern yonder, my brother Robert came up the street and passed within five feet of me. I ought to have sought him out—to have spoken to him. I will go after him to-morrow; for I tell you it was he."

"Pshaw! my son," his mother said; "what foolish tale is this? Robert Lynne has been dead these ten long years; and how can he be here now? It was some slight resemblance that deceived you, and aroused all these foolish fears."

"I am not afraid," he said, "but if indeed it be my brother, I will bring him here; for half of these lands are his."

"Cecil, listen to me," his mother said, anxiously; "listen to me, and do not say those words again. In the first place, Robert Lynne is dead. I have the proof of his death. Should any one dare to claim what is yours, I will brand him as an impostor, and he shall suffer for the attempted fraud. Let no one dare—no, not even—let no one, I say, dare to step in between me and mine, or he shall rue it. I understand this thing, and I will manage it. It is more important than you think; for should an impostor succeed in establishing Robert Lynne's claim, you will be ruined. Mark me, Cecil, you will be ruined. Your entire fortune would not suffice to repay the rents and profits that have accumulated for ten years, and which would be recovered with the moiety of the estate. You would be reduced to penury—driven from your home, and your wife and child would be beggars; yes, beggars. Your rising reputation would be blasted; your hopes wrecked; your all would be lost, and you forever undone. Think of this, Cecil, and leave all this to me. Should this impostor present himself, I alone will see him, and I will tear the mask from his face and expose him. You shall be satisfied, my son—you shall be satisfied; but all must be left to me."

"Mother," said the son, "I am a man now, and words will no longer suffice for me. Where are the proofs that Robert Lynne is dead?"

"I can produce the man who saw him die," she said, triumphantly. "Even should this impostor pre-

sume to claim your brother's right, I can produce such evidence in court of his death as will save you. To such an arbitrament it must come, if it come at all, and there you may rest on my resources. If the courts decide against him, my son, how are you to blame? You rest solely on your legal rights, and by them you must stand or fall. Till then, I alone must meet this emergency and manage it, and you must trust in me."

Cecil Lynne had too much good sense to be deceived for a moment by these remarkable words. Indeed, he clearly saw, as any one must have done, that his mother's indignant and excited protest was the clearest possible proof of the correctness of his own conclusion. Yet, strong man as he was, he could not withstand the concentrated force of her will, and he was compelled to relinquish all thought of opposition to her views. He was anxious to escape from her presence, for he felt himself humbled and vanquished. "Be it as you will, mother," he said, and left the room.

His wife sat on a stool at his feet, and he gently but absently stroked her shining hair. To her many questions he returned kind but brief answers, and more than once he gave such evident signs of pre-occupation as would have deterred any but a loving wife from further conversation. Little Bertha stood by his side and looked up wonderingly in his face. She plainly saw that a shadow lay across her father's heart.

His mother sat in her usual seat, with her knitting, and with her cold, gray eyes fixed intently on his face. This seemed to annoy him greatly. "Mother," he said, rising and approaching her, "you must not look at me thus to-night. I cannot and will not bear it." He spoke impatiently, almost angrily. A smile came to her lips, when she rose, and kissing him, left the room.

He now endeavored to throw off his gloom, and talked for a while of his success that day. He had been elected to the Senate for his native county—a more distinguished honor than than now—by a large majority over all his competitors. His wife, fond, loving soul, was very proud of him and his success, and to see her thus, pleased and softened him. But the conversation did not last long. Cecil Lynne was tired, he said, and must go to bed. He knew, but his wife did not, that sleep and rest would scarcely visit him that night; and a sort of dim prescience told him that probably they might be strangers to his pillow forever. But he longed for darkness and the stillness of the night; for deep and silent thought-work lay before him.



## CHAPTER IV.

"God hath yoked to guilt  
Her pale tormentor—misery."

BRYANT.

CECIL LYNNE went to bed, but not to sleep. He stood, he knew, upon the brink of a yawning gulf of guilt and crime. Hitherto his life had been sternly and rigidly correct towards his fellow-man, and he had rejoiced in the consciousness of his rectitude; but now he felt that the iron was about to enter into his soul, and that the worm, the canker, and the grief of guilt had already begun to gnaw at his heart. Already he was changed, he felt, and something seemed at hand waiting to hurl him along the dark and dubious path that lay before him.

That it was his brother Robert whom he had seen, he was convinced. His mother's vehement asseverations could not shake, but rather confirmed that conviction in his mind. In the still watches of the night, that pale and haggard and anxious face rose up before him, and recalled with startling vividness the long-forgotten past. The old school days came back again. Linked with these memories came the host of gentle, simple virtues that adorned his brother's character; and these, all these pleaded, trumpet-tongued, against the deep damnation of his rejection from his father's roof. Then came the recollection of many a boyish act of injustice which he had heaped upon his uncomplaining brother—of haughty looks and cold, unfeeling words, and taunts, and blows.

And then the long, long years since Robert had gone away with his young wife—years, perhaps, of penury and want—of squalid poverty and of wretched, heart-breaking privation and suffering, far away from all who knew and loved him:—while he, his younger brother, had been revelling in the midst of wealth and luxury, surrounded with friends and kindred, forgetful, God forgive him! even of his brother's name. These thoughts, and feelings, and memories sank down a weary load to the very bottom of his heart, and there they remained forever.

Then Reason came and tried to look the future in the face. His mother's words occurred to him now. What would be the consequences should his brother's claim be allowed? Ruin, beggary and want, with all their frightful train of ills and sorrows. Where then would be the pride that was the darling of his heart—the glittering hopes and aspirations that had dawned upon his mind and lured him on so temptingly to greatness? Something whispered there that his brother would be generous, and not leave him wholly destitute; but pride took the alarm at this, and replied that it would be worse than disgraceful to be a pensioner upon the bounty of one who no doubt would consider himself an injured man. Injustice rarely goes backward. It only sees the goal ahead, and must strive to win it or fall—unmindful of the quiet and smiling pastures of innocence that lie behind. And then what part of his fortune, already too small, could proud and ambitious

Cecil Lynne give up? His trusting wife and daughter, too—how *could* he ruin them? His duty to them as well as to himself bade him be firm, and not to give way to a weak and paltry feebleness of heart. Those old days were gone now forever. What had they to do with the present? New relations, new hopes, new affections, new duties had grown up around him, and must shut out the old recollections that haunted him. No, no, it must not be. He could listen to those old days no more. He must shut his ears, bind up his heart, and struggle like a man with the difficulties around him. Was he, Cecil Lynne, afraid to do his duty to his wife and child?

And then his mother. She was stern and unjust to others, he knew; but she loved him with her whole heart. It would kill her to see him, her darling, stripped of all and driven to penury and shame. Was he, by his foolish qualms and weak indecision, to break her heart—that heart which had beat only for him? Could justice demand this at his hands? What, compared with her and with his wife and child, was Robert Lynne to him? Robert hated him, no doubt had always hated him—so his mother said, at least;—and should he ruin himself and all he loved to crown the triumph of an enemy?

Besides, the matter would doubtless go into the courts, and there it must be determined. If he lost, he lost; but *duty* demanded that he should protect the rights of those who were dearest to him. Yes, he would not see this impostor—(he almost thought

him an impostor now). His mother would manage that. She claimed to do so, and he must obey her. He had other matters to attend to; his time would be occupied.

Thus the battle was fought, and lost for Right, won for Wrong; and Cecil Lynne, with a heavy heart, bade a long farewell to peace of mind and virtue's happy consciousness of innocence; and black-browed Care stalked into his chamber, and began a long watch by his side.

Another day had dawned now, and the master of Walnut Hill arose, and looked, with eyes that sleep had not refreshed, across the broad lands that were and should be his own. The village of Sheltern lay in sight below; but, somehow, it did not look as it used to look. It looked unfriendly to him. The little church and the old tavern, and all the little cottages, looked as if they had taken sides against him. He did not think he could ever go there again. What were those people, who sat in front of the tavern, talking of? Of him, he was sure. He turned away, for a dread, vague and indefinable, had come down upon his soul. He went to seek his mother.

At breakfast he announced his purpose of visiting Camworth, a town of considerable size, some miles distant. He would not return till late, he said. It was with something like impatience that he waited for his horse, and when it was brought, he rode away.

## CHAPTER V.

"As we do turn our backs  
From our companion, thrown into his grave,  
So his familiars to his buried fortunes  
Slink all away."

*Timon of Athens.*

THE sun was not more than half an hour high when Robert Lynne and little Godfrey came out of the tavern, and sat down upon the bench outside the door. Two or three persons were sitting there; but as they were mere sojourners, probably, their faces were not familiar to Robert Lynne. Indeed, he had not met as yet with a single acquaintance. The tavern had changed hands, and, as he had arrived late and had gone early to bed, he had had but little chance of meeting those he knew. He felt like a stranger, however; for it was so strange and hard to see the places he knew better than any around him, filled with men he had never seen before. Somehow, he had expected to meet so many friendly, kindly, welcome faces in his dear old Sheltern; and he had not seen a single one of them yet. Were they all gone that he had known so well in the old days? Just then a man passed by. He thought he had seen him before. Who could it be? Ah! yes; he remembered him now. It was Joe Shelton, the blacksmith's apprentice. How large he had grown! but he remembered him. Yes, he must go

and speak to Joe, for old acquaintance' sake. He longed to meet an old friendly face, and to feel that he was not quite forgotten in the place of his birth; so he ran after him. Joe stopped at his call, but evidently did not recognize him as he came up. When he took him by the hand and told him who he was, and how glad he was to see him, a dim recollection of the past seemed to flit across Joe's honest face. "Robert Lynne," he said, musingly: "Oh yes; I remember now; you ran away, or something of the kind, a long time ago. You look tolerable hearty. How have you been? I am late this morning, and must hurry on to the shop. Won't you walk that way?"

Robert declined the invitation, and turned sadly back. He felt grieved and humbled at this cold and indifferent salutation. Joe Shelton only remembered his name, but not his face, evidently. Was he, then, forgotten? The dreams that had sustained him all along the weary road were vanishing now, and he almost wished he had not come.

He stopped upon the bridge—the bridge he remembered so well—and looked down upon the restless, rushing waters of the Sheltern. Even they seemed strangely business-like and indifferent now. The Sheltern, too, had doubtless forgotten poor, truant Robert Lynne, and had other matters to babble about. With a heavy feeling at his heart, he walked back to the tavern. The place he once occupied here seemed to have been closed up by the pressure

of other affairs; and when he came back, lo! it was not to be found. He was a stranger, where he was once a welcome guest at every house.

Most of those, indeed, whom Robert Lynne had known were there no longer. Some had died, and some had gone away. Interior villages and small provincial towns are, in the moral and political world, what nurseries are in agriculture. The most of the men they breed are, in time, transplanted to some larger field. The few acquaintances of Robert Lynne that remained had long been accustomed to think of other things. Business, other friendships, marriage, death—change in all its forms—had swallowed up his place long ago; and when he came to revive the memories that linked them to him, he found that they were dead, and faded, and sere; the freshness and bloom of early love and companionship all fled and withered away. Had he revisited Sheltern a rich and independent man, there were many there who would have crowded around his coach-and-four, eager to take him by the hand, and to express, and perhaps to feel, the most sincere joy at his return. But to poor, broken Robert Lynne, who trudged into the village at fall of night, and who walked forth next morning looking so seedy, and helpless, and pitiful, the assiduities that belong to wealth and power were not tendered. Perhaps, too, there was something in his look too pleading, too anxious to be remembered—something that told of the unworthiness of poverty, and grief, and neglect—that



shut up the hearts of those whom he approached. Alas! poor human nature! I know not whether it is more to be pitied or condemned; but, such as it was seen by Robert Lynne that day in Sheltern village, it is to be seen this wide world over.

After breakfast he asked to be directed to the best lawyer in the place. He was told that there was but one, and that he was to be found across the bridge at the second door to the right. He went there and found Mr. Dean, a lawyer of good standing, but who had moved to the place since he was there, and whom he had never seen before. He would have laid his case before him then, as he undoubtedly ought to have done, and to have taken his advice: but he had been so coldly repelled by all whom he had hitherto approached, that he failed to mark that gentleman's good-natured courtesy. He felt that everybody was opposed to him, and that he must fight it out alone. He therefore merely made an appointment to meet him at a later hour in the day, and took his leave.

He took little Godfrey by the hand then, and together they began to ascend the path that led to Walnut Hill. He had thought many times of what he should say when he reached there—of how he should demand his inheritance; but all these plans were scattered now. He only knew that he was a destitute man, returning to the house of his father. Gradually the realities of the present and the past returned to his comprehension, and then he felt, as

he drew nearer to the accomplishment of his resolve, that he was scarcely equal to the task which lay before him. He took courage, however, as he walked along, and when he reached the gate he was strong again.

He paused as he stood in the gateway and looked around him. The scene was scarcely changed from what he remembered it, and yet it looked more dark, and shady, and luxuriant than of old. Near where he stood, towered far above his head the Lombardy poplar which his own mother had planted, so they used to tell him, and which had grown up with him. It seemed a friendly omen, he thought; for there it stood to watch and guard his rights;—and as he looked upward along its slender form, his thoughts arose to a holy communion with her who gave him being. Seeing this, he took heart again, and passed along the broad avenue that swept up to the door.

A little girl was playing on the lawn near the house, and when they approached she ran to meet them with the pretty, eager little welcome that children alone can bestow.

"What is your name, my pretty one?" asked Robert Lynne, as he stooped to caress—he could not help it—the soft curls that lay upon her brow.

"My name is Bertha Lynne," she said, "and you must come with me and I will show you my pretty little rabbit that James has just caught for me; for papa has gone away, and mamma is sick, and grandmother will not come, and I can't love him

half enough by myself. Come, come," she said, and little Godfrey looked up at his father's face, and seeing no refusal there, walked timidly off by her side to explore the wonders of the little girl's fairy-land.

Robert Lynne watched her joyous, child-like grace, and his heart smote him to think that on this innocent little one, perhaps, might fall the blow which he meditated for the cruelty of others. But Godfrey turned his face just then, and the tired, care-worn, offcast look that rested there drove all such thoughts away.

"It is not for myself," he said, "that I come to claim my own; but for my father's, mother's grandchild—for the darling of my dead Alice; and no foolish tenderness must turn me back from a task that is holy, and just, and right."

He boldly mounted the steps that led to the main door; but before he reached it, it was opened, and his step-mother stood before him.

Robert Lynne shrank back at the suddenness of the apparition; but the keen, inquisitive look which she gave him, and the cold, hard, triumphant expression which succeeded, helped to restore him. Presently his step-mother assumed the inquiring look of annoyance with which proprietors are wont to greet those who intrude upon their domain, and said with a haughty inclination of the head—

"Your pleasure, sir?"

"I am Robert Lynne," the other said, "your

husband's son. I come to see my brother and to claim my inheritance."

"What strange tale is this, my good man?" she coolly asked. "Robert Lynne has been dead a long time. We have the proofs of his death. Pshaw!" she continued, looking contemptuously at him, "there is not even a resemblance to give color to this, bold attempt at imposition. How dare you, sir—how dare you attempt such a game as this?"

Robert Lynne was bewildered. He had not expected this.

"It is my brother with whom I wish to speak," he said at length. "Where is he?"

"Cecil Lynne is not here," she returned; "nor were he here, would he condescend to listen to so lame a tale as this you try to tell. Besides," she continued, "I am in legal possession yet of Walnut Hill, and it is with me that you must speak, or with none."

"Mabel Lynne," he said, rising to his full height, "you deny that I am my father's son? Look at me now, and remember. Do you remember this?" he said, raising his gray locks from his brow, and discovering a long, red scar. "Do you remember this wound that your hand inflicted long years ago, there—yes, there, at the foot of yonder walnut-tree? Do you remember the day when your son, Cecil Lynne, cut off this finger with his hatchet? Look! Do you remember me now?"

An ashy paleness had spread over her face during

the last few words, and for an instant she stood speechless with baffled rage and hate. Her self-appointed task was more difficult, more perilous, than she had expected; but with the wonderful courage of a dauntless, determined woman, she soon smoothed her brow, and rose to the height of her bad purpose.

"These are fictions, sir," she said, "and you can hardly expect me to remember what I never saw, or, indeed, heard of before. But it is useless for me to stand here longer, to listen to your insolence."

She turned away, as if to re-enter the house, but Robert Lynne sprang forward and caught her by the wrist.

"Mark me, woman—mark me!" he almost shrieked in her ear. "You and yours shall rue the day when you drove me a second time from my father's door. Twelve years ago, from this very spot, you spurned me and my young wife away. Twelve long years of want and misery have brought me back again, a withered and a broken man, to find you and yours revelling in the wealth that partly—yes, all—belongs to me. And now you dare to deny me. Again you spurn me away. But look you, woman, I am now a desperate man. This morning I came here in a softened mood, ready to be received—anxious to forgive you all—willing to leave you in possession of the greater portion of my father's wealth—to take a small part, and go

away with my orphan boy, and be forgotten. But this is so no longer. I go to prove my rights, and to claim them all—aye, even to the uttermost farthing. And when I come again it will be as lord of these broad lands, and of this, my father's hall; while you and your pampered son shall eat the bitter bread of poverty, and drink to the very dregs the cup of sorrow, and humiliation, and shame. By the blessing of my mother, that is dead—by the memory of my poor lost, murdered Alice, I swear it—I swear it."

Saying this, he turned abruptly, and walked away.

Pale, terrified, speechless with horror, his step-mother stood looking after him. Once she started, as if to call him back, but another thought seemed to come, and drive away the look of terror that had rested on her features a moment before.

Godfrey and Bertha had stood hand-in-hand near by during the conclusion of this scene, and Mrs. Lynne's eye now rested on them. There was something in Godfrey's look that startled her.

"James," she said, calling to a servant that passed just then, "take that beggar's brat away—take him to the man who walks yonder towards the gate. Watch them till they leave the grounds, and let me know which way they go."

Robert Lynne and little Godfrey walked slowly down towards the village.

## CHAPTER VI.

"Murder most foul, as in the best it is;  
But this most foul, strange and unnatural."

*Hamlet.*

CECIL LYNNE returned earlier that day than he had expected. He was restless, and could not stay away. When he had risen from an almost untasted dinner, he inquired for his mother. He was told that she was in the grounds talking with the gardener. He went out on the front porch and sat down to wait for her. She was standing at some distance from the house, giving some directions to Maurice Saunders, the English gardener.

Cecil Lynne had never liked this man. He had often told his mother that he believed him to be bold, wicked, and unscrupulous; but she had laughed at his suspicions and denied their correctness. A sort of free-masonry existed between this woman and this man. Certain it is that he had but little respect for any one but her; and she repaid his obedience with the fullest confidence. He had come out from England when Cecil was a boy, at his mother's instance, he had heard, and had been at Walnut Hill ever since. He was well known among the villagers; and, though not generally liked, still his self-possessed and determined character gave him great influence over them.

Presently the conversation terminated, and Mrs. Lynne walked towards the house, where her son sat awaiting her. He rose as she came up the steps. "Has he been here?" he asked.

"He has," she quietly replied, "but he will not come again. He will go away, I think."

She passed into the house, and nothing more was said.

Robert Lynne walked back to the little tavern, leading Godfrey by the hand. His heart was almost bursting—a fire was in his brain. He could not speak—he could not think. Seeking the solitude of his little room, he threw himself on the bed and lay there a long time, thinking of the bitter, mournful past;—the present he could not think of. At length he rose and paced across the little chamber. He sent Godfrey down at the announcement of dinner, saying that he was not very well, and could not eat.

At last, as the sun was sinking towards the west, he took his hat and went to the office of Mr. Dean. "Closed for to-day" was written upon a card that hung upon the door. Mr. Dean had just left. Robert turned and walked away. He little knew the consequences that would follow this disappointment. Returning by the tavern, and telling Godfrey to await his return, he walked down the banks of the Sheltern alone, just as the sun rested on the summit of Walnut Hill.

Godfrey sat a long time on the bench outside of

the tavern door, watching the faces of those who sat around. He felt very lonely; for they did not look at him, and they talked about things that seemed strange and incomprehensible to his young mind. He tried to listen to them; but as the shadows came down from the west, a feeling of lonely dread came over him and almost chilled his heart. He wished his father would come:—he wondered why he staid so long away. Presently the kind-hearted hostess came and took him in to supper. He sat by her at the table, and she soothed him greatly by telling him that his father had probably met some friend, and might not return till late. He felt easier when she told him this. It seemed so natural, as she said it, that he grew cheerful again, and talked and prattled on with the good-natured soul over their tea. Presently she told him that it was getting late, and that little boys should go early to bed: so he took his candle and climbed up the steps to his room, and soon was in the fairy-land of childish dreams.

The next morning he awoke early, as children are wont to do. He was surprised, however, and terrified at finding that his father was not there—that he had not slept there. Hastily dressing himself, he ran down-stairs, in the hope that he would find him there; but he was nowhere to be seen. He sat down on the bench and waited. Several persons passed along the street; but they looked so busy and heartless that he was afraid to ask them. Finally he began to cry. His good friend, the hostess,

could not induce him to eat this morning—could not quiet his anxious fears again. He took his hat and went out to look for his father. As he passed along he saw the sparks flying from a blacksmith's forge, and he went there. Joe Shelton stood by the bellows, with bare arms and a leathern apron on. Godfrey remembered seeing his father speak to Joe, so he asked him if he knew where he had gone. Joe had not seen him since the morning before, he said. He was quite attentive to the little boy's inquiries, and patted him kindly on the head; but he could give him no information. He had better go and stand on the bridge, Joe said, and watch for his father:—he would be certain to see him before long. Godfrey went back and stood on the bridge a long time—so he thought;—but his father did not come.

Crying as if his heart would break, he went at last to Mr. Dean's office:—he was there with his father the morning before. Mr. Dean was seated by a long table, covered with books and papers, writing very busily.

"What is your name, my boy?" he asked, as Godfrey walked timidly towards him.

"My name is Godfrey Evelyn," he said. "My father went out to walk yesterday evening, and left me at the tavern, and has not come back yet. Please, sir, take me to him or tell me where he is." Mr. Dean looked at him keenly but kindly for a moment.

"How should I know where your father is, my little man?" he asked.

"We came here yesterday morning, you remember, sir," Godfrey said, "and he came back again yesterday evening."

"Did your father tell you where he was going, and how long he would be gone?"

"No, sir," Godfrey said; "he only told me to wait at the tavern yonder till he returned, and then he walked away."

"Perhaps he went to Walnut Hill to spend the night—to the house on the hill yonder."

"No, sir," said Godfrey; "we went there yesterday morning, and they would not let him go in the house, but an ugly old woman quarrelled with father and made him mad; and he said when he came away that he would not come there any more till he had proved who he was, and till I had a right to play there and not be driven away, as the black man did. No, sir, he did not go there, I am sure."

Mr. Dean was interested in the little boy's anxiety, and told him to come with him to the tavern. He would inquire where his father was. On the way he asked him where he and his father had come from, and what the name of the town was where they had lived and his mother had died. Godfrey could not tell him the name of the town. He only knew that it was a long way off, and that there were a great many houses there, and that ships used to come in sight of his father's house. More than this he could not tell him.

As they approached the tavern they saw quite a

crowd collected around the door. "What is the matter, Maurice Saunders?" asked Mr. Dean, as he came up.

"A man has been found dead down the Sheltern, drowned, or killed, they say," Saunders said, and he turned and went with Mr. Dean into the crowd. Godfrey ran to the bench where the body lay. "Oh! it is my father, my poor father!" he said; "help him, help him, he will die—he is dead, he is dead!"

It was even so. All that remained of Robert Lynne lay stiff and stark on the bench beside the tavern-door, his garments drenched with mud and water, and a frightful gash across his throat.

Mrs. Thompson, the landlady, came out and took little Godfrey away.

The body was taken into the office and decently disposed, and a messenger was sent for the county coroner. Meanwhile, Mr. Dean took Maurice Saunders aside and asked him some questions.

A man and boy had come to the Hill the day before, Saunders said; but whether it was this man or not he did not know—he had not noticed them particularly. Did he remember Robert Lynne? Mr. Dean asked. Oh, yes, he remembered him quite well; but this was not Robert Lynne; oh no, he was much too old for Robert: besides, Robert was not so tall as he. Then, Robert Lynne was dead—had died years ago. He, Saunders, had seen him die. He died in prison, Saunders said; he had died childless, too. No, no; this was not Robert Lynne,

though he confessed, yes, he thought there was a slight resemblance. It was—it could be nothing more than an accidental resemblance.

Mr. Dean looked the gardener keenly and steadily in the face; but his dull little eyes and heavy features gave no answer to his inquiry. So he walked back into the house. He had the pockets searched, but nothing was found to identify the body. He observed, however, that the breast pocket of the coat was turned inside out. That was all.

Mr. Dean said a few words to the bailiff whom he left in charge of the body, and then went in search of Godfrey. "You must come with me to my house," he said to the heart-broken little boy. "Your poor father is dead; but I will be your father now."

Mr. Dean's house was situated a short distance down the Sheltern. It was old and rather small, but very neat and pretty. The lawn was shaven, and sloped beautifully down to the water's edge, which formed the boundary in front. Mrs. Dean, a gentle little lady of about forty, met them at the door.

"I have brought this little boy, Godfrey Evelyn, home with me to stay, my dear," Mr. Dean said. "His father was found dead this morning. Henceforth we must be father and mother to him." Saying this, he walked back to the tavern.

Little Godfrey burst into tears afresh as the good Mrs. Dean laid her hand tenderly upon his head, and he nestled closer to his new mother's side.

## CHAPTER VII.

"'Tis known who did this more than bloody deed?"

*Macbeth.*

THE coroner, who lived at Camworth, reached Sheltern about noon on the day Robert Lynne was found dead, and the preliminary steps to an inquest on the body were immediately taken. Maurice Saunders had remained in the village all the morning, and had become quite oracular upon the merits of the case and the probable history of the deceased. A worshipful man was Maurice, and a discreet; and so the villagers thought him. His information as to the person who had visited the Hill the day before seemed to have increased considerably since his interview with Mr. Dean in the morning. He grew quite positive at length that he and the dead man were the same. He remembered him now very well.

Somesaid and many believed that the dead man was Robert Lynne; but Saunders denied that everywhere. Robert Lynne was dead, he said. He had seen him die. This man was too tall and much too old for Robert Lynne. He had heard on the Hill, it was true, that this man had been there, and had tried to personate Robert and gain admittance to the house. But it was proven at once that he was a mere impostor,

and he had slunk away. He was in desperate circumstances, no doubt, and had hoped by this bold attempt to get some money. Putting this and that together, he, Maurice Saunders, had no doubt that the man had gone off in the evening and put an end to his disappointment and misery by suicide. That was a matter for the jury to determine, however, he said, and he had no doubt that they would bring the truth to light. Besides, his own son said his name was Evelyn.

In this way Maurice Saunders went about forming public opinion. Any one that is acquainted with the constitution of village society knows how easy it is, for one having the confidence of the people, as Saunders had, to bend the popular opinion to his own. One man takes the lead, and all the rest follow. Most of the very few who had recognized Robert Lynne the day before began to waver now, and to think that they might have been mistaken. Nothing finds readier credence in the minds of some men than the idea that those they meet are not what they pretend to be.

One or two there were, however, whose belief in the identity of the dead man and Robert Lynne could not be shaken; but, as is often the case with poor, neglected Truth, the proof seemed to incline altogether to the other side.

The coroner came, the jury was empanelled, and the investigation began. Mr. Dean attended as counsel for little Godfrey. The first question which arose was who the dead man was.

Joe Shelton testified that he had met him the morning before, and had believed him to be Robert Lynne. He had known Robert quite well when he was a boy, but that was years before, and he could not swear that he and the dead man were the same. He thought he saw a resemblance, a strong resemblance; but, then, this man looked too old. He believed he was Robert Lynne, but could not swear to it. One strong reason he had for thinking so was, that the man had recognized him the morning before, and had told him his name. This seemed quite convincing to honest Joe; but he could not swear he was Robert Lynne.

Stronger proof than this of the dead man's identity, Mr. Dean could not elicit from all the villagers. An oath is a fearful thing. They could not *swear* it was Robert Lynne. Most of those who had seemed to recognize him, no longer really thought it was he.

Little Godfrey was sent for and put upon the stand. He was greatly frightened and distressed, and could scarcely speak there in the presence of his dead father. He had but little to tell, too. He only knew that his father's name was Robert, and that his own was Godfrey Evelyn, and that the dead man was his father. The most significant part of his testimony related to his father's visit to the Hill the day before, and all that occurred there. All this Mr. Dean drew out, and it appeared to have great effect. But Maurice Saunders was at hand, and his evidence seemed to put the matter at rest.



Saunders seemed to the lawyer to be singularly anxious and disconcerted as he took the stand, and once or twice he saw him glance nervously and fearfully towards the body that was stretched before him; but the witness soon recovered his former composure. It is needless to recapitulate his previous statements of what he knew or pretended to know in the case. His testimony in regard to the death of Robert Lynne in prison was, in the main, straightforward and clear. He had been sent for by Robert, and had remained with him till he died. This seemed conclusive that the dead man before the court was not Robert Lynne. He furthermore stated that on a subsequent visit to the city of which he spoke—it was an inland city—he had heard that his widow had died soon after the death of her husband. They had left no children, he said.

He furthermore deposed that the dead man, or one much like him, had gone to the Hill the day before, and had set up some sort of claim to admittance upon some ground or other; but he had heard that this spurious claim, whatever it was, had been so completely denounced and exposed that the man had gone away in great confusion and disappointment. This was brought out on the cross-examination by Mr. Dean. To the main questions as to whether he knew the deceased and how he came by his death, Mr. Maurice Saunders answered unhesitatingly in the negative.

Mr. Dean had sent, at the beginning of this inves-

tigation, for Cecil Lynne; but that gentleman had taken the stage the evening before for the seat of a friend in a neighboring county, and his presence could not be had. There was no one else at the Hill that was likely to know the deceased, except old Mrs. Lynne, and her, after much thought, Mr. Dean decided not to disturb for the present.

A young physician who happened to be present had been summoned, and after his examination of the body, the jury were ready to consider their verdict. Their verdict was, that on the——day of——18—the body of a man, name unknown, had been found dead in the Sheltern, and that deceased had come to his death by a wound, inflicted by some sharp instrument, across the throat, and severing the carotid artery. Whether this wound had been inflicted by the hand of the deceased, or by the hand of another or others, the jury were not able from the evidence to find.

All the evidence adduced and all the facts elicited were then engrossed in the form of an inquisition, carefully inspected by Mr. Dean, signed by the coroner and jury, and the cause was dismissed.

That evening Godfrey and Mr. Dean and a few others followed the body to the little church, where it was met at the door by the clergyman, and the beautiful service of the dead was performed. And then they repaired to the little churchyard hard by, where the body was gently laid to rest.

So lived, so died, poor Robert Lynne. His weary

pilgrimage was over at last. Misfortune could follow him no further:—the only rest he had known for years could not be broken now. That head which many sorrows had whitened with the frost of age was pilloved in the grave:—that heart, so well attuned to love—so crushed and bleeding with the wrongs it never had deserved—would throb and quiver with pain no more. Near by the spot where his Alice had given her trusting hand to him, his mortal part was left alone to sleep: but his spirit had gone away, no doubt, to mingle with hers around the throne of God.

How sad the lesson that such a life and death must teach to all that can read it aright! In this poor world of ours how often do we find that goodness, simplicity, and love are slighted and despised—the wreath they deserve set on the brows of vice, and selfishness, and pride! How sublime and beautiful is that faith, however, and how sweet is the consolation it bestows, which can see, through all the ills of this world, that land and life of love which awaits the good and the true! The thorns that crown us here may burst into immortal flowers there; and the tears that here are shed may glitter yet, Heaven's brightest gems, in the diadem awarded above.

All day long Mrs. Mabel Lynne sat at the central dormer window at Walnut Hill, peering anxiously at the scene that was enacted below. Once only did little Bertha creep silently up stairs, and steal to her grandmother's side; but a glance at that stern, un-

conscious face had driven her away, and with a frightened look she descended to where her mother sat in the room below. Finally, when the evening shadows had flung their gloom across the valley, the silent watcher saw the funeral procession issue from the church and assemble in the churchyard; and then she quietly folded up her knitting and returned from her long vigil. Maurice Saunders soon afterwards came to call her to the door, and when a few low words had been spoken, she returned to the sitting-room, and resumed her knitting and her usual habit of revery and preoccupation.



## CHAPTER VIII.

"Youth might be wise.—We suffer less from pain  
Than pleasures."

*Festus.*

A NEW world now opened on Godfrey Evelyn. Hitherto his young life had known but little of the careless joys of childhood. His mother's fondness and pride had restrained him from all intercourse with children of his own station; and in all the principles of his character, he had become a man before he was a boy. Throughout the day he had been his mother's only companion—the sharer of her few and simple hopes and pleasures—the participator of the many sorrows that overcast her lot. And when his father came home at nightfall, he caught from his face the expression of serious, care-worn thought that rested there, and learned from all he said and did, the earnestness of the life that awaited him. From such companionship as this he took the coloring of his later character.

Whether in all this he was really unfortunate may be gravely doubted. An opulent, careless, and joyful childhood may make a happy child, but rarely produces a great man. So reasonable is this, that it is almost superfluous to urge it. The frivolities, the sports and pastimes—the toys and trifles that usually contribute to the amusement of the favored child

prevents the contemplation and acquisition of more serious things. The love for these trifles and the capacity to be amused by them, are too often fostered more successfully by the kindness of fortune and the fondness of parents, than the inclination to those pursuits that are the most important in all ulterior consequences in the whole economy of life. Careless happiness in childhood is surely pleasant to behold: but it is frequently the case that this happiness is bought at the expense of all that in after years will serve to dignify and illustrate manhood. The happy, playful child rarely thinks—he has no time to think. The sports and pastimes—the gleeful recreations that grow to be the business of his life exclude the culture of the mind, and leave the intellectual part of his nature far behind—often so far behind, that it ever afterwards lurks back, an insignificant agent in the purposes of his being. But the child that cannot have these trifles to amuse and engross his time—or better still, perhaps—is deprived by care and misfortune of the capacity of being amused by them, is taught and forced to think, to reason, and to look forward. The moral qualities, too, are nurtured by this hard discipline,—the virtues which adorn the earnest, thoughtful soul. The light and superficial sensibilities, the abuse of which leads uniformly to vice and crime, are restrained and kept in subjection to higher powers. The will, also, which grows imperious when pampered by pleasure and prosperity, is taught by care to be controlled by reason and the imper-

ative force of circumstance. Sweet indeed are the uses of adversity—in childhood as in maturer years.

Sombre as the early morning of Godfrey's life had been, it was doomed to be still further overcast by the two greatest calamities that fortune could inflict. First, his patient, loving mother had been taken away; and then his father too had died—died by violence—bequeathing to his orphan child as his only legacy the memory of his sorrows and the awful mystery of his death. Deeply as these losses were felt, however, they did not overwhelm him; for sorrow had been the playfellow of his childhood, and he met these cruel dispensations as the veteran meets the shock of battle. But they confirmed the serious, earnest habit of his mind, and taught that life was a stern and sad reality.

Henceforth he knew that he was alone. The bosom on which he had loved to lean, the hand that had once directed his footsteps, were to comfort and guide him no longer. Kind friends surrounded him, it is true, and kind hearts lavished their much needed sympathy and love upon him; but he had grown too old in grief and sorrow not to know that between a father's love and pride and a benefactor's kindness there lies a wide and weary difference. Calm, sedate, and thoughtful then he grew to be, attentive to the wishes of those with whom he lived; but reserved, silent, and unresponsive to the efforts that were made to enliven him. More affectionate by nature than most children, and taught in the school of affliction

to love very deeply, he met every act of kindness with the warmest gratitude; but it was a gratitude that was silent and undemonstrative. Earnest and thoughtful he was in his new home on the Sheltern, and earnest and thoughtful he continued all his life.

Mrs. Dean, his adopted mother, was childless. The greatest of all treasures that Heaven has to bestow was withheld from her. It is a beautiful instinct that is planted in the heart of woman—to desire offspring, and to look forward with yearning hope to the blessed period of maternity. To the soft whisperings of this sacred hope had Mrs. Dean listened long, but in vain. At length the sad conviction—the saddest that a woman can ever know—crept into her mind—that her life was doomed to be a childless one; and Age came on apace, and left his mark upon her brow, his snow upon her hair.\* But when little Godfrey came and learned to sit by her side on the long winter evenings, a strange joy filled her heart, and a mother's love beamed from her eye. The very thoughtfulness of the child made him dearer to her, for the period of youth, with all its tastes and fancies, had withered away from her; and there was something about his melancholy mind that pleased and interested her.

For many days after his induction into his new home Godfrey scarcely moved from the side of his new mother. In a thousand caressing ways she strove to dissipate his gloom and to alleviate his distress. She succeeded at last, and when she had

succeeded, she had quite won him to her. Fortune, that had been so cruel to him before, seemed very kind to him now. He almost thought that his past sorrows were a hideous dream; but the shadow that they had cast across his sensitive heart was never quite driven away.

After a while he learned to steal away and to explore the mysteries of the little world around him. The grounds in front of Mr. Dean's house were very beautiful. At the foot of the lawn flowed the Sheltern. There, on its grassy banks, he used sometimes to sit, dreaming listlessly of the past—the past so sorrowful, but very dear to him; and as the waters babbled by, the sounds and scenes of other days came back and wove the spell of sweet though pensive memories around him. How many tales of scenes and events long gone by—of distant days and friends once loved, now lost—of joy and grief—of happiness and woe—do murmuring waters tell to him whose ear is attuned to listen to their numbers! And there and thus it was that little Godfrey heard the requiem sung of the old life that was gone now forever.



## CHAPTER IX.

"Where village statesmen talked with looks profound,  
And news much older than their ale went round."

*Deserted Village.*

IN the times of which I write, the *tavern* was the only place of public meeting in villages and smaller towns. It was there that most of the villagers repaired in the evening, after work was over, to hear the news and to discuss the simple events of the day. The good old word, *tavern*, was still in use then, and was properly applied. The bar-room, as its office was called, was the club-room of the village; and around its cheerful fire the elders of the little community assembled to smoke their pipes in grave and thoughtful colloquy over the affairs of the nation or the simpler concerns of their own little world.

This time-honored institution, with the term that was applied to it, has passed away with the times in which it flourished. The more pretending *hotel*, with its noise, and confusion, and selfishness, and lack of comfort, has usurped its place, and the old tavern is forgotten almost in name. Men live too fast now to spare the evening around the common fire, and the world has grown too restless and impatient, too wise and too selfish to relish the serene enjoyment that such nightly meetings once afforded.

But it was not so in rustic little Sheltern in the old days. There the tavern was, as it deserved to be, the great institution of the place. It consisted of a plain wooden building, two stories in height, flanked by smaller buildings on either side, which seemed to have been added to the main building as increasing patronage had required. Running along the entire front was a verandah, consisting of a roof built upon posts which rested on the ground. Under this were benches, placed there for the accommodation of guests or loiterers in the pleasant summer weather, whose notched and scarred backs testified the existence of that almost universal propensity with the American species of the *genus homo* to *whittle* with his jack-knife while he talks or thinks.

Entering the tavern from this stoop by the only outer door, you found yourself in a large room, from which opened all the doors that led to other parts of the house. At one end was a large fireplace of the good old-fashioned kind, where logs of half a score feet in length might be laid, and around which at least twenty persons might sit with comfort and ease. At the side of this room, and fronting the entrance, was the bar, where liquors were dispensed for the refreshment of the company. It was from this that the principal profit of the establishment arose.

Over this good hostelry Mrs. Margery Thompson presided. She was a notable woman in the village, and very proud was she of the reputation which her

house had acquired. Like Martha of old, she was "a careful woman and troubled about many things;" but, like all active women, she enjoyed the care that rested on her shoulders, and could scarcely have been induced to change her simple state at the head of her well-appointed table for a life of opulent ease.

The administration of affairs in the bar-room was delegated by her to her oldest son, a young man of about twenty years of age. For this post of distinction nature had fitted that official particularly well. It was a noted fact that Jerry Thompson was the best *listener* in the whole village, and the best jokes were always reserved to be told in his presence, and to elicit his honest, hearty laugh, which never failed to spread throughout the little audience that gathered round. For this most excellent reason Jerry had the reputation, especially among the older men, of being a sensible lad, and one that illustrated by his good qualities the training which his mother had given him. The man who listens well, and seems to enjoy and appreciate what others say, is sure to receive at least his proper share of credit for good manners and good sense. More reputations have been made for capacity and information by *listening* well, than were ever gained by the manifold graces of rhetoric and declamation.

By these simple arts, did Jerry never fail to gather around the fire of which he was the tutelar dignitary, a nightly crowd of the good, gossiping souls of

which the village society was composed. Once, only, every evening, did the good landlady come in to receive the hearty salutations of her neighbors and guests, and to hear the news that might be afloat; but it was a settled conviction always in the minds of those who frequented there, that she was hovering somewhere within ear-shot. This conviction served to suppress all unseemly mirth and boisterous hilarity. Aside from this, she rarely interfered with Jerry's peculiar jurisdiction.

It was on a Saturday night, about a week after the mysterious death of Robert Lynne, that the fire burned brightly in the bar-room of Mrs. Thompson's tavern, and a little group sat round the cheerful hearthstone. The chilly nights of Autumn had just set in, and the blazing logs dispensed a grateful warmth throughout the room. Among those who sat there was our sometime acquaintance, Joe Shelton, the blacksmith; and by his side sat the postmaster, Benjamin Dodd—familiarly known as Uncle Ben—a man of great worship and of huge corpulency. Uncle Ben was quite an oracle in the village, and when he opened his mouth there was no dog of them all that dared to bark. Certain it is, that he was oracular in this, if nothing else: that the words that fell from his lips were very few and far between. If he rarely enlightened his acquaintance by his sage remarks, however, it was evident to all who knew him that this was from no lack of profound knowledge and reflection. There was always some deep

mystery about Uncle Ben's cogitations. He evidently knew more than he said, because he seldom said anything at all. Every one was convinced that his thoughts were wise and deep, because they rarely struggled forth from the depths of his great soul into articulate utterance. Whether this estimate of Uncle Ben was a correct one, was never known to his dying day; and the question—if, indeed, it be a question at all—must forever remain a question still with those who are impious enough to doubt his well-established wisdom and sagacity.

The owl was esteemed a wise bird three thousand years ago; and it would be difficult to prove even in this day of ours that he has forfeited his claim of superiority in that respect over the feathered tribe. It rarely occurs to us that some men say nothing, because they have nothing to say.

In the other corner sat Uncle Ben's opposite in size and in all things else. This was no less a person than Timothy Skipworth, the tailor—a little weazen-faced man of restless habits and inquisitive, gossiping disposition. Skipworth was the Paul Pry of the village. With a pertinacity that seems peculiar to his calling, he made everybody's business his own, and few things ever occurred about him that could be hid from his active and determined search. Everybody was in subjection to Tim; for everybody was afraid of him. Thackeray says that every man has a skeleton in his closet; and certain it is, that no closet in all Sheltern, or for miles around, ever con-

tained such a ghostly occupant long without the knowledge of this same persevering disciple of goose and shears.

"You had some excitement here last week, I understand, Joe," Tim said, stirring the fire. "Something always happens when I am away, and then I am put to a world of trouble to get the straight of it. I had been in Sheltern ten years lacking two months, and never did we have a murder or a suicide before; but the very minute I am compelled to go away, what happens but the strangest thing in the world. The whole country is talking about it. Tell me how it was."

"I don't know what to tell you," Joe said, "except that a man was found dead down the Sheltern one day, and was buried in the churchyard yonder."

"But who was he?" said Tim. "Didn't you find out who he was or where he came from? Now who do you think he was?"

"My thoughts ain't worth much," Joe said, "even if I had any, which I don't say I have. If the coroner and jury couldn't tell who he was, how could I tell?"

"There's some mighty strange tales afloat about that murder," said Tim, moving his chair across and laying his hand on Uncle Ben's knee. "That thing ain't done with yet. I wouldn't like to tell one-half the things *I've* heard about it. Somebody that is high and mighty will come down for it yet."

"What are you after now, Tim?" Joe said. "I don't

like to talk about the cursed thing no how. I've thought about it already till I can hardly sleep of nights. It might have been an ugly business, for all I know; but it's done now and can't be helped, and the less said the better."

"Jerry," said Uncle Ben, after a silence of some minutes, and taking his pipe out of his mouth, "has Maurice Saunders been down here this week?"

Receiving a negative reply, he quietly resumed his pipe and his meditations. A quick, nervous glance shot from Tim's little eye and a gleam of intelligence illuminated his whole face.

"Aye," said he eagerly, "Uncle Ben has hit it, as he always does. They *do* say this same Maurice Saunders knows more about it than he cares to tell."

"Hush," said Joe; "here he comes!"

The door opened, and Maurice Saunders entered.

"We were just talking about you," said Tim, rising to greet him. An expression something like fear came into Saunders' eye as the tailor said this, and Tim was sure that he turned paler as he took a seat by the fire. Not a word was spoken for more than a minute, when Saunders turned fiercely round to Tim and said:

"And what were you saying about me, Mr. Jack-anapes?"

"Nothing," said Tim, avoiding his fierce look, "except that you had kept yourself mighty close of late."

"And whose business is it?" asked Saunders,



visibly relieved. "I've been busy of late, and haven't had time to leave the Hill. I'm here now, however, and mean to make up for lost time. Jerry, bring me a glass of hot toddy. Bring some for these gentlemen too. It's cold to-night, and I begin to feel it as I grow older."

The toddy was soon brought, and they addressed themselves to it in silence. Tim soon found an opportunity, however, of recurring to the subject nearest his heart.

"Where's Squire Lynne?" asked he of Saunders.

"He went to Camworth yesterday, I believe," Saunders said. "From there he expects to go to the Seashore for his health."

"He ought to be here," Tim said, mysteriously. "That was an ugly business about the murdered man last week. The Squire wasn't here, was he?"

"Who says the man was murdered?" Saunders blurted out. "Can't a man cut his own throat as well as another?"

"I don't know anything about it," said Tim, "except what I've heard. For that matter, I've heard a great deal. They say there's been some foul play in that business. If there has been, the dead man's son will be grown up after a while, and maybe he'll be able to get to the bottom of it."

"Where is the boy?" Saunders asked.

"Adopted by Mr. Dean," Joe said.

"Yes, Dean is a sharp one," Tim said. "He'll be mighty apt to find out about that business, I ex-

pect. The boy ought to be able to tell something, it seems to me. I mean to ask him when I see him. They say he says his *real* name is *Godfrey Lynne*. That's strange, ain't it, Saunders?"

"It's an infernal lie," said Saunders. "His name is no more Lynne than mine is. His father was an impostor, and so is he. What put it into your head to believe such tales as these?"

"I don't believe any tales," said Tim, submissively. "But tell us how the man was an impostor. Tell us all about it."

"What little I know has been told already," Saunders said. "Everybody knows the evidence at the inquest, and that settles the matter, I should think. Jerry, fill these glasses again, and we will talk about something else. You know everybody, Uncle Ben. Do you know the name of the old man that used to live at Sherrod's Rock, down in the Fork? He's come back, I understand."

"He's got no name, folks say," Uncle Ben replied.

"He never gets any letters, then?" Saunders asked.

Uncle Ben shook his head, and relapsed into the mysterious depths of his own reflections.

A new key-note had now been struck by Saunders, and Tim at once took up the strain. The fact is, that this had long been a hobby with that worthy but inquisitive little man. Report said that his curiosity had once led him to visit the cell or hut of the her-

mit alluded to, and that his reception had been a most ungracious one. Now, however, as upon all occasions, he was ready to tell all he knew, and to draw large drafts upon the credulity of his hearers.

"There's some mystery about that man, they say. No doubt he has committed some awful crime, if we could only find it out. They say that when he sees anybody coming he runs into his hut and shuts himself in. Squire Foster rode by there one day and stopped to have a friendly chat with him, but he would not come out of his hole. He is a great scholar, they say, and reads from morning till night. He has a deaf and dumb servant, you know, who takes care of him and attends to what little business he has. For my part, I can't see how they get money to live on; for when they first came here, you know, old Dummy, as the boys call him, used to go round begging at every door. No doubt there is something wrong there, if people could only find it out."

"The old villain you call Dummy used to come to the Hill almost every day," Saunders said, "but I soon sent him tramping from there. He actually got so that he could talk to the servants in the kitchen with his signs, and used to carry on regular conversations with the cook. When I found this out I taught the old vagrant a lesson he is not likely to forget to his dying day. He hasn't been back since."

"And served him right," said honest Tim. "I wonder that the magistrates will allow such an old vagabond to go at large, for my part."

By this time many other villagers had assembled round the fire, and the conversation soon took a more general turn. Maurice Saunders drank deep that night—deeper than was his wont; but he was singularly loquacious and good-natured to every one. He was the last to leave the room, and it was after midnight when he took his way up the path that led to the Hill. Poor Jerry had fallen asleep by the fire, and when the unusual stillness awoke him, he found that all were gone.

After this Saunders resumed his nightly visits to the tavern, and was observed to be more social and agreeable than ever before. Tim Skipworth he cultivated with great assiduity, and in a short time they became bosom friends.



## CHAPTER X.

"Verily,  
I swear 'tis better to be lowly born,  
And range with humble livers in content,  
Than to be perked up in a glistening grief,  
And wear a golden sorrow."

*King Henry VIII.*

ADJOINING the estate of Walnut Hill lay that of Mr. Charles Foster, a planter of great wealth and consideration in the county. Squire Foster, as he was called, was about forty years of age—a man of some education and much good sense, but rather bigoted and overbearing in his ideas and his manner of expressing them. He was generally esteemed as a man of excellent character, and was known to be of great benevolence at heart; but the good he might have done was in some measure prevented by what was considered an overweening confidence in the importance of his own position and the claims it had to the respect of the country.

His seat, known as "The Grange," was situated about two miles from Walnut Hill. It was a stately-looking place enough, with its extensive grove of forest oaks; and the large, weather-beaten brick house comported well with the dusky, tangled boughs that overhung the grounds. It was a hospitable-looking place to a traveller on a cold winter's day; for the house looked warm and comfortable, and the large

barns and stables that filled up the background gave promise of good cheer for man and beast.

The Squire's family was a small one, consisting, besides his wife, of only a son and daughter, of twelve and ten years of age, respectively. Charles Foster, Jr., or Charley, was a fat, rubicund, noisy boy as you could wish to see, hasty and impetuous, but very good-natured, more addicted to play than to his book, and more learned in the mysteries of the stables than he was ever likely to become in more elegant and classic pursuits.

His sister, Florence, was his exact counterpart. Though younger in years, she was certainly much older in all other respects than her hopeful brother. Dignified and serious to a degree that was really wonderful to behold, she asserted and maintained a superiority in the household that none seemed disposed to question or deny. Charley looked up to her with great veneration, and never doubted in his own simple soul that she belonged to an order of being far above his own. Squire Foster joined very heartily in this admiration, and watched with great pride the development of his daughter's mind.

Autumn had passed away, and winter had just set in. Mrs. Cecil Lynne and little Bertha had been driven over to pay a visit and spend the day with their neighbors, with whom they lived on terms of great intimacy. The day had quietly passed away, as days always do in the country, and the visitors were about to take their leave. They stood upon the

porch waiting for Mrs. Lynne's carriage to drive up. Bertha stood by the side of Florence Foster, and surely a greater contrast can scarcely be imagined than the two girls presented. Bertha was a soft, brown-haired girl of winning grace and remarkable beauty—so gentle, so engaging in her ways, that to see her was to love her with that sweet and simple love that leaves no room for admiration. Florence, on the other hand, was a stately-looking girl, with a fine eye and a commanding mien, and an expression that seemed to be looking beyond all around her—an expression that invited admiration, but did not awaken love. Yet the little girls stood with their arms intertwined, and were very dear to one another.

The carriage now approached, and on the box, with whip in hand, sat Master Charley. He had just come home, and was evidently in a great glee at the exalted and enviable position he occupied. Just as Bertha was about to follow her mother into the carriage, he gallantly alighted and stepped forward to salute and assist her.

"Why, Bertha, you're going to let me kiss you, aren't you?" he asked, as Bertha shyly offered him her little hand. "There; that's right—you're going to be my little wife, you know, when we grow up, and then you'll not be afraid of me, will you, Bertha?"

"I'm not afraid of you," Bertha said, "but you're a rough, ugly boy, and you always hurt me—you know you do."

The carriage drove off and left Master Charley, like many an older boy, a ludicrous picture of love and despair.

The carriage rolled smoothly along the level road towards Walnut Hill. Mrs. Cecil Lynne had not changed since we saw her last. Some women are so plastic and yielding that they never change. Yet certain it is that she was far from happy. Her married life had never been a happy one. Love was not at fault, certainly; for her husband loved her very fondly, and it was the business of her life to return his love. But that greatest of all misfortunes had been hers. She had never been mistress of her own home. Give a woman all that her heart desires, but withhold from her the consciousness of being supreme, as every woman ought to be, at her own fireside, and all her happiness is turned to naught. The life of Mrs. Lynne had not been free from this one great drawback. Her husband's mother was over her in her husband's house. To her she had always to look, and under her quiet, but stern and austere influence, she felt that none of the dignity and authority of a wife and mother belonged to her. And then, too, she felt with unreasonable but natural bitterness, that her husband divided his confidence between his mother and herself. Like all loving women she wanted it all, and could not bear without pain to see even his mother share it. She knew that there were many grave matters which his good sense confided to his mother but withheld from her,

and she felt humiliated by this preference. Her husband had not obeyed the divine injunction, to forsake father and mother, brother and sister, and cleave only unto his wife; and the penalty fell, in this instance, with crushing weight upon her. For this old sorrow, however, there was no earthly remedy; and the gentle, loving soul bound up her bleeding heart, and patiently endured the wrong.

But of late she had had new cause for grief and unhappiness. Her husband had been much away—was absent still—and something told her that a shadow had been thrown across his life. With a woman's instinct she felt this, but she could not tell why; and a vague foreboding—far more distressing because so vague—warned her that a great sorrow hung over her head. An unutterable dread seized her soul, and froze the warm impulses of hope and happiness. Her husband's mother had changed, she thought. She had grown still more austere and imperious since her son had gone away, and had assumed still more entire control of the affairs of the household. She seemed to grow harder and sterner every day, and more reserved and reticent than ever, until at last Mrs. Cecil Lynne, God help her, began to feel like an unwelcome guest at her own husband's fireside.

It was twilight now, and the lights from Walnut Hill began to glimmer darkly through the trees, as the carriage approached the mansion. The place had a sombre and a mournful look, and the wind, as

it sighed among the leafless branches, fell with melancholy cadence upon the ear of Mrs. Lynne. She felt that a deeper gloom was closing around her heart as she was driven through the gateway and up the broad avenue to the door. She longed, oh how yearningly, for her husband's presence once again; and then she thought how happy she could be with him far away from that sad-looking spot, in poverty, in exile, anywhere where she could claim him all her own, with none but him and their darling child.

They alighted at the door and went into the house. Mrs. Cecil Lynne could scarcely believe her eyes. Her mother-in-law was seated before the fire, and by her side sat Maurice Saunders. She had always disliked that man, and had always shunned him; but he had never before intruded himself upon her presence, or ventured to assume any liberties above his station. Now, however, she saw him seated in her own chair, with the insolent air of low-bred familiarity on his face, and she could contain her anger no longer.

"Mother," she said, "what does this man here?" "How dare he come into my husband's house on the footing of an equal?"

"Your room is ready, Caroline," said Mrs. Mabel Lynne, quietly. "Go there and wait until you have reflected upon your hasty and improper language. I have business here, and will not be interrupted."

Maurice Saunders did not rise. A smile of insolent triumph lighted his dull features. Mrs. Cecil Lynne left the room, the hot tears blinding her and choking her utterance.

The conversation between Mrs. Mabel Lynne and her man-of-business was a long and earnest one. Saunders, indeed, grew very earnest and excited. He talked a great deal, and with an angry and imperious gesture, that seemed to threaten and defy all opposition. Mrs. Mabel Lynne was very quiet and pale; but her eyes were constantly fixed upon him with a watchful look, like that of a fencer, as he watches and parries his antagonist's thrusts. Tea was announced, but no one attended the summons. Two or three times Saunders rose from his seat in a menacing posture, and talked rapidly; but her steady look soon brought him down again.

It was late when the colloquy ended, and Saunders then walked away. For a while after he was gone Mrs. Mabel Lynne sat with her hands pressed against her temples; then she rose, and, flinging her arms wildly above her head, she stood for a moment an image of suffering and despair. When she came down to breakfast the morning after, she looked older by ten years; but her knitted brows and compressed lips repelled the look of anxious sympathy that rose to the eyes of her son's forgiving wife.

## CHAPTER XL

"This fellow's of exceeding honesty,  
And knows all qualities, with a learned spirit  
Of human things."

*Othello.*

CHRISTMAS with its festivities had passed, and another year began its reign. According to the custom which then prevailed, another session of the Sheltern school began with the new year. The schoolmaster was a Scotchman by birth—a man of great learning, it was said, and much sagacity; but generally considered a cross, ill-tempered man—one of those evils that must be endured for want of something better to supply its place. He was, in fact, a really learned and worthy man; but his ungainly appearance and address, together with the characteristic shell of reserve and bluntness which usually disguises a Scotchman's nature, effectually concealed the wealth of sterling worth and goodness of heart that lay beneath. He belonged, indeed, to that good old class of teachers, now unluckily passed away, who relied more upon birch than rhetoric, and who esteemed flogging as essential to discipline and improvement, as the air of heaven to life and health. "A man severe he was and stern to view," no doubt: but just in the dispensation of his rod and kind and benignant to excellence and virtue. Like all village

pedagogues, he had his enemies: but it would have been difficult for them to have traced their dislike to any fault or undue severity on his part.

Alexander McNab was the name which distinguished him, and which had been distinguished by heaven knows how many doughty Celts in his native Highlands before him. The school over which he presided was a *mixed school*; that is, a school for boys and girls together. French notions had not banished the good old customs then. Boys and girls were bred together and grew up side by side; the one restrained and refined and the other strengthened and vitalized by the intercourse. It would not be difficult to prove, I think, that from such schools as this sprang much of the modest virtue and honest, manly worth that have hitherto been the boast of our women and our men. Leave conventual boarding schools and "*Pensions*" to France. Let us adhere to the good old plan that throws the sexes together, while young, in innocent and improving intercourse; and the nameless vices of French society will never visit our shores.

To this school, then, it was determined by Mr. Dean that Godfrey should be sent. After much reflection it had been decided that he should assume Mr. Dean's name for the time, and he was consequently registered as Godfrey Dean. He had never gone to school before:—his father had never been able, and his mother had never wished to send him. Yet he was by no means an uneducated boy. His mind

was naturally quick, and he easily mastered the rudiments of education at his mother's knee. His father too had taught him a little Latin, and he had taught himself a little more. Among the few books which his father had was a translation of Plutarch's *Lives*, and every word of this he eagerly devoured. From reading this he naturally acquired a great fondness for classical learning, and he had already made advances in his reading that were remarkable for one of his years and advantages. Of Greek he knew nothing, but much desired to know. The announcement of Mr. Dean, then, that he was to go to school was very pleasing to him, and opened a new prospect before him.

At the beginning of the session, Mr. Dean took Godfrey to school and left him to the care of the master. The teacher had had some conversation with Mr. Dean about his new pupil, and already felt a deep interest in him. He took him kindly by the hand and showed him his seat, and spoke a few words of encouragement that quite won his heart, and made him wonder how he could have ever thought, as he at first had, that the master was ugly, and cross, and disagreeable. When the school was called to order, the forms all filled, and the master had taken his seat in awful state at the head of the room, Godfrey looked around to see if there were any faces that he knew. Only one he saw, and that was little Bertha Lynne's. His heart warmed towards her:—he remembered her well, and her little rabbit. And then

he thought of the time when he had seen her before—of his father and all that followed, and the tears came welling up to his eyes, and he leaned his head on the desk before him and wept bitterly.

A boy larger than he was sitting by him.

"You must not cry, little boy," he said. "Old Mac will thrash you if he sees you."

"Who is old Mac?" asked Godfrey.

"Why don't you see him yonder?" the other replied. "He's looking round now to see who he'll whip first. It ain't my turn to-day, thank goodness; for he whipped me three times the last school-day, and now I reckon he'll let me rest a while. Oh, he's a rare one! You'll catch it about day after to-morrow; so you needn't be crying now."

Godfrey looked at his new acquaintance, and was pleased at his kind, honest face.

"My name is Charley Foster," he continued.

"What is yours?"

"Godfrey Dean," was the reply.

"Charley Foster, come here, sir," roared Old Mac.

"How often will I have to whip you, sir, for whispering in school?"

Poor Charley was sorely crestfallen now; and though he escaped the flogging this time, still the escape he made had the effect of stopping his tongue for a time, at least.

Before the morning was over Godfrey was regularly installed in his studies, and was poring, with that delight only known to the boy at school, over

the opening verse of the *Bucolics*:—"Tityre, tu patulae recubans sub tegmine fagi."

Thus it was that Godfrey Dean, as I must call him now, was inducted into his school-life. At every step of progress he made, new pleasures awaited him. There is a peculiar capacity for acquiring knowledge in youth and a peculiar pleasure attending its acquisition. The memory is active and powerful then, and all the faculties of the nascent mind stretch forward to grasp the treasures of learning that lie before it. Nature is very benignant to man in this. The season of life that is unfit for thought and action is yet the season that is best fitted for preparation. The time for thought has not yet arrived—reflection and meditation do not then intrude to stop the active search for more knowledge that employs all the powers of the ambitious youth. Peculiar, too, are the pleasures that belong to this rosy morning of our life. At twenty or twenty-five at most, this season has passed, with all its pleasures, away. The time has come then for the digestion of what our youth has acquired—for thought, for reflection, for action, for the working up of the material that has been gathered into the workshop of the mind. Unfortunate indeed is he whose youth has passed idly away, and who, when that season comes, opens his workshop and finds it bare and empty, or, worse still, full of paltry and unprofitable things.

Precious to man is this time of his early youth. It is the harvest-time of his mental and moral life.



What is not gathered then can hardly be gathered at all. In this glorious spring-time, while the air is fresh and the flowers are springing among the corn, must the sickle be laid to the harvest. The season when this may be done will soon pass away forever.

Upon the threshold of manhood the peculiar memory that makes learning easy is left behind. The busy cares of life, too, begin to thrust themselves forward then, and its stern realities demand our attention. The capacity and the inclination for mere acquisition is gone. Thought, reflection, action have begun their reign, and then it is too late to think of repairing the errors of childhood. Some men are children all their lives, and can as well learn a dead language at sixty as at sixteen; but such are exceptions to the general rule, and never become real men at all. It is not of them, but of men that I speak.

It is a curious fact, and one that illustrates the dignity of childhood in the economy of life, that the child is able to master many difficulties that lie in the path that leads to a complete education, that the strong and mature man could hardly overcome. The merest rudiments of mathematics and of the languages, that are so easy to be learned by the child, would be tasks of infinite difficulty to the untutored man. The reason of this is easily enough explained by the philosopher, no doubt; but it is a fact which goes far to enhance the value of early study and application. The child who throws away these golden hours of his early youth commits a crime against himself that

the whole of a well-spent life afterwards can never atone for.

When recess came, Godfrey and Charley Foster cultivated still further the acquaintance already begun. There was something in contrast between them which produced that mutual attraction so essential to friendship. What one lacked the other had. The one abounded in animal spirits; the other in intellectual activity. The one was physically bold and independent; the other was mentally strong and self-reliant. There was no natural rivalry between these two, and that was the secret, probably, of the impulse that drew them together. What one most excelled in, the other admired, but did not attempt or aspire to. The two together formed a homogeneous whole such as nature rarely awards to a single individual; and they leaned upon and were a mutual support to each other. Such is the secret, I take it, of true congeniality of soul. Upon such a foundation must the fair superstructure of friendship be laid, or it will totter and tumble to its fall.

Between these two boys there subsisted, after a short time, the most sincere and harmonious friendship. Let not the cynic deride the notion that such friendships are to be pondered and admired. There is something very beautiful to me in the affection that children sometimes bear to one another. In the freshness of early life such affections are derived from the purest impulses of our nature, and are honorable to our common humanity. No selfishness is mixed up with them

—no interested motives can chill their ardor or abate their intensity. When years of trouble and sorrow have sundered almost every other tie that binds us to our kind, these often survive and go with us even to our graves. He is indeed unfortunate who has not preserved one of these boy-friendships, and cannot count at least one friend in the wide world whom he knew and loved as a boy. For when youth is past such friendships are possible no longer. After we have entered upon the duties of manhood, we may meet those whom we highly esteem—for whom we entertain the greatest regard; but our souls can never be knit, like David's and Jonathan's, together with theirs, as they could in the days when life was in its morning and the dew upon our hearts. In this love and friendship differ greatly—and I speak of friendship, not of love. Certain it is, that he who knows or remembers no friendship warmer than his manhood has brought him, has never known and can never know what genuine friendship means.



## CHAPTER XII.

"Canst thou not minister to a mind diseased;  
Pluck from the memory a rooted sorrow;  
Raze out the written troubles of the brain;  
And with some sweet oblivious antidote  
Cleanse the stuff'd bosom of that perilous stuff  
Which weighs upon the heart?"

*Macbeth.*

THE session of the State Legislature was over, and Cecil Lynne had returned, after a long absence, to his seat at Walnut Hill. His wife thought he was greatly changed, and she was right. The proud, happy smile that once had rested on his features had withered away. His face was haggard, and a strange look of silent misery was seated in his eye. His manner, too, once so open and cordial, was frozen with a hard reserve that even his wife and child could not penetrate or dissolve.

His wife saw and felt all this, but could not divine the cause. A thousand unhappy conjectures arose in her mind, but each left her further from the truth, and further, too, from any satisfactory conclusion. His health, she knew, was bad; but she knew, too, that there was some deeper malady—some hidden grief that the skill of the physician could not minister to or relieve. This, added to her other sorrows, was almost more than she could bear. A prophetic warning had told her of this—she knew not

how; but the reality was none the less hard to be borne. She remembered—how fondly none but a loving wife can ever tell—the time when they were first married; and she reproached herself, good, simple heart, with the wrinkles that sorrow had lately written all too legibly on his brow, and redoubled the soft assiduities of love and tenderness, to lure back again the smiles that once had made her so happy. But her gentle blandishments were all in vain. They fell unheeded upon her husband's absent and preoccupied mind. A changed man he was, and the change brought unhappiness and gloom into the bosom of his family.

His mother watched him with eager interest, and he endured her watching with strange and fretful impatience. He seemed to be anxious to avoid her: but she would not permit him to do so. Her quiet but imperious will overcame every obstacle that he threw in her way, and she haunted him with her presence and persecuted him almost to madness with her anxious tenderness. Sometimes he almost loathed the offices of affection that she tendered him. Worst of all, she seemed to him to try to step between him and his wife and child, and to envy with an inveterate jealousy the time which he spent with them alone. He wished to leave her—to leave the accursed spot—to leave all the memories that haunted him, behind—to seek some lonely place where recollection could never intrude, and where he could be at rest. But filial duty and reason forbade: and

reason, and conscience too, whispered in his ear and told him that rest and peace of mind for him had winged their flight forever.

A spell seemed to have fallen on the household. Gloom rested on every face. There was no confidence between any two of the family. Like the victims in the halls of Eblis, each seemed to hide the wound that was festering at his heart. Cecil Lynne took no interest now, as formerly, in the rural sports usually so dear to country gentlemen. With his old associates he no longer consorted. All neighbors and friends were shunned and avoided. To the village he rarely went. The church he never attended now. Reserve had usurped the place of cordial sociability, and bitterness had driven away the wonted generosity of his nature.

His mother, as if conscious of the change wrought in her son, increased her attentions to him and to the affairs of the household and estate. Though still quiet and preoccupied as she had always been, she was more solicitous about his welfare than formerly, and more patient of the contradictions which his fretful temper offered to her. She had a habit of following him about with her knitting in her hand, that provoked him extremely; and when standing near him, as she often did, with her eyes fixed upon him with an absent look of sad affection, he was almost crazed with angry impatience at her presence. They never spoke in confidence together. Neither seemed to desire it. Sometimes, when he looked at her and

saw how haggard she was and how gray hairs were beginning to silver her temples, his heart smote him with a remorseful tenderness. But a dreary sea seemed to roll between them which might not be crossed, whose sullen and angry roar drowned the articulations of sympathy and love that he wished to speak to her.

His wife, driven from all sympathy with these two sullen hearts, sought recompense in the simple love of her child. On Bertha she poured out all the tenderness of her nature. In her child's subdued but innocent and cheerful prattle she was fain to find the only balm that earth contained for her manifold and inexplicable sorrows.

One evening, in the early spring, Cecil Lynne and his wife sat alone upon a bench under the old poplar tree that stood by the gate, watching through the twilight for Bertha's return from school. Mrs. Mabel Lynne had just walked off with Maurice Saunders, and was in close conversation with that worthy functionary. The air was balmy and pleasant, and the wind that breathed among the trees was redolent of the first offerings of the floral year. Cecil Lynne was gazing with a far-off look upon the village below, and his wife was quietly stroking his hand with her own.

"Cecil," she said, looking up in his face, "Cecil, tell me what it is that makes you unhappy—tell me, or my heart will break."

He started, and looked at her with a fierce, in-

quiring look; but the tears that were falling from her eyes melted him and drove his frown away.

"There is nothing the matter with me, my darling," he said; "nothing makes me unhappy. Why do you think so?"

"Oh, my husband," she pleadingly continued, "do not tell me that. You are so much changed from what you used to be. You are so absent, so preoccupied, so unhappy. You don't let your little wife get at your heart as you used to do. Some dreadful barrier seems to shut me out—to separate me from you. Let me share your sorrow,—let me be unhappy too, or I shall die. Do not deny me this, my husband. It is all I ask—to be allowed to know and to share your sorrow with you."

Cecil Lynne was touched—was almost won by this simple appeal. Why might he not tell her all? Why might he not unbosom himself of "that perilous stuff" which had weighed so long upon his heart? Something whispered to him that in that way only could he ever regain the peace he had lost. Something strong within him urged him to kneel there at her feet, and to pour out at that holy confessional the secret sorrow of his life. But he hesitated a moment too long, and Reason, that wily advocate of wrong, had time to interfere. Then came the reflection that it was too late:—that the past could never be remedied or recalled:—that it would be cruel to lay such a secret on his wife's tender and trusting heart. No, no; he loved her too much for that. It

was for her sake and his child's that he had permitted the awful deed to be done, and he must not betray them now. He must bear it like a man, and struggle on. He stooped and kissed his wife fondly, and looked into the depths of her loving eyes.

"You must drive these fancies away, my love," he said. "The only care or sorrow I have is to see you unhappy. Let me hear no more of this, my darling; for indeed you are mistaken. Here comes our little Bertha now."

The opportunity was lost and gone, and the sorrowing wife grew sick at heart as the hope that had flickered there died out.

Bertha stood a moment in the gateway talking to a boy that was with her. Presently she gave him her hand, and then ran gayly up to where her father and mother sat.

"Who was that with you at the gate?" her mother asked.

"It was Godfrey Dean," she said. "He often walks up the hill with Charley Foster and Florence and me; and as Charley and Florence didn't come to school to-day, he walked with me quite up to the gate. I wanted him to go back before, but he wouldn't."

These simple words filled the mind of Cecil Lynne with strange thoughts. He felt almost angry with the little girl; but her innocent beauty, as she returned her mother's caresses, quite disarmed him.

His mother and Saunders now approached, and they

rose and walked towards the house. Saunders accompanied them—walked with them to the door. Cecil Lynne turned angrily upon him.

"Who asked your attendance, sirrah? Get you gone, you impudent scoundrel, and attend to the affairs that concern you."

His mother turned upon the threshold; and Saunders, after hesitating a moment and returning her look, walked away. "Mother," said the son, "that fellow's insolence is too much. He is your servant: but you must make him know his place and keep it, or he shall remain here no longer."

Tea was now announced, and the life at the Hill fell back into its old channel, in which it continued to flow for a long time to come.



### CHAPTER XIII.

"This bud of love, by summer's ripening breath,  
May prove a beauteous flower."

*Romeo and Juliet.*

TWO years had passed away in the village, and had brought but little change with them. Cecil Lynne's term in the Senate had expired, and he had not offered himself as a candidate again. Intercourse between Walnut Hill and the rest of the world had ceased almost entirely. The villagers saw the reserve that shut out the affairs of the family from their knowledge, and had long since exhausted their speculations as to the cause. Dark stories, it is true, had been afloat, but had almost been forgotten. The worthy Timothy Skipworth himself had given up the search after the truth, in despair, and what he despaired of there were none hardy enough to hope to attain. A sort of mysterious gloom veiled the life at Walnut Hill from the public gaze. Bertha, now grown to be a beautiful, winning girl of twelve, carried the only sunshine with her that ever penetrated those shadowy portals; and she was the only link that bound the people there to the rest of the world.

Mr. Dean, who never doubted in his own mind who his adopted son was, and what were his rights, cast about for a long time for the evidence neces-

sary to establish his legal claim, and exhausted every effort to determine the mystery of his father's death. But though there were many who thought as he did, the necessary proof was wanting, and could not be found. What his investigations were, need not be told here. Some unseen agency seemed to walk before him and to remove every trace that he wished to discover, until at length he gave up the search.

It is more than probable that in his heart of hearts, Mr. Dean was pleased at his want of success. He had grown to love his boy with a father's love. He had watched the growth of his faculties and the development of his manly and attractive qualities, until he began to feel that he could not give him up. He almost blessed the chance that had given him such a child, and the obscurity that allowed him to keep him. To his wife Godfrey had become dearer still. He supplied the one great want of her life. She too nursed the hope that the truth might never be known—that her boy might live and die her son.

He had indeed developed into a handsome, manly, and promising boy. He was kindly spoken of by all the villagers:—by the schoolmaster he was extolled as a prodigy of mind and morals. Joe Shelton would leave his forge at any time, to take him by the hand as he passed, and to have a talk with him at the door of his shop. Even Uncle Ben awoke from his habitual meditations when the lad came by, and something like a smile rose from the depths of his contemplative eye as he listened to the cheery,

harmonious greeting which Godfrey always offered to that worshipful dignitary.

At school Godfrey was greatly esteemed by all his play-fellows. He had but one intimate friend among them all, however; and that was Charley Foster. There was something about the boy that made him shy and reserved; and he was too quiet and thoughtful to be a universal favorite among youths of his own age. He lacked that uproarious hilarity of temper and of animal spirits that makes a boy the leader of sports on the green. Perhaps it was partly because he was too old in most of his feelings to delight in what most boys delight in. But it was mainly due, no doubt, to the fact that his younger days had known no childish companionship, that he now found himself unfitted to mix in the frivolities of the playground.

But Godfrey was a manly boy for all that. There was an unusual dignity about his bearing that impressed all who came near him, and made all who associated with him look up to and respect his character. He had that unusual dignity which familiarity does not detract from or diminish—a quality which is always founded on good sense and real worth. Charley Foster admired as well as loved him. The two boys were always together. Their attachment grew with their growth and strengthened with their strength. Their characters grew more diverse as they grew older; but that seemed to strengthen the tie that united them.

Master Charley had become, in fact, what was usually considered a rapid youth. He took great delight in horse-flesh, and was accounted a reckless rider. He had owned a wonderful pony with spotted sides and flaxen mane and tail, that was the delight of the admiring youth about the village. He had lately succeeded to a larger horse, and the capers that he used to cut along the quiet streets were a marvel to behold. In truth, he did many a reckless and desperate deed of horsemanship; and careful parents used often to shake their heads and point him out to their own envious offspring as a graceless lad that must one day come to a violent end. In the thoughtless exuberance of his gay young heart, he gave all too much occasion for such comments as these. Many a harmless freak of his was used to point a moral and enforce an admonition; but the greatest caviller of them all could never find aught in what he did that was really reprehensible, or that discovered aught but the goodness and fullness of his heart.

Bertha Lynne and Florence Foster were growing up in these years that I have allowed to pass by. The contrast that they too presented was scarcely lessened by advancing years. In the school-room Florence was unquestionably the superior of the two. But she lacked the feminine grace and engaging manner that belonged peculiarly to her companion.

In their attendance upon these two girls, Godfrey and his friend were together, as in all things else.

Godfrey rarely failed to accompany them a part of the way to their respective homes, and he sometimes ventured as far as the gate at Walnut Hill, where he was fain to linger a while with Bertha ere he retraced his steps. But that young damsel had grown very shy of late, and would seldom linger with him. Sometimes, indeed, she would shut the gate in his face and fly like a lap-wing along the avenue to the house, leaving him in a state of mingled vexation and delight. But she would always stop when she reached the porch and look shyly back, and sometimes she would stand there with her bonnet in her hand and watch him until he had descended out of sight. When this was so, a peculiar feeling of joy filled his heart, and he would walk back to his quiet little home in a state of ecstasy that was as inexplicable as it was delightful.

How beautiful are the coquettish graces of girlhood! How sweet is the passion they engender! Who has not one or more of these bright memories to smile over and to make him happy? How fair is the earth, and how pleasant the flowers, when we first begin to feel the throbbings of the master passion of our being! With what devotion, too, do we worship the little goddess who has cast the witching spell for the first time about our hearts! When the agency of love is first invoked by the glance of an eye or the laughing dimples of a saucy cheek, how rosy are the hours, how gladsome, how glorious! The love of riper years is more lasting and profound,

no doubt; but let us not laugh at or deride these warm gushings of the spring-time of life. Let us remember the time rather when we too were boys, and when for the first time over our lives were cast "the bloom of young desire, the purple light of love."

On Saturdays and holidays, Godfrey and his friend used often to take horseback excursions together. The kindness of Godfrey's adopted father had furnished him with a horse, and it was his favorite recreation to ride out with Charley to visit the notable sights and scenes of the neighborhood.

One Saturday, in the latter part of Spring, the two boys were riding gayly along the road that led towards the village, about two miles distant from that place. It was early in the afternoon, and they were discussing with much glee the amusements of the morning. Presently they came to an obscure bridle-path, that led off to the right, and here Master Charley reined up his horse.

"Godfrey," said he, "suppose we ride over to Sherrod's Rock. Two funny old chaps live over there, they say. Nobody has ever seen one of them, and nobody knows their names. Let's take them by surprise, and see what they are doing."

Godfrey assented, and they turned their horses' heads down the blind road that led to the right. Charley now told Godfrey all he knew about the singular characters they were going to visit. That, indeed, was but little. It amounted to this: that



these two mysterious men had come to the place of their present abode several years before, and had quietly gone to work and built a sort of cabin, in which they lived, without asking leave from any one. That one of them was deaf and dumb, and that the other had never been seen, except at a distance; for he had always shunned observation, and would secrete himself when any one approached. What their means of living were was unknown. When they first came there, indeed, the deaf and dumb one used to go round and beg; but the gardener at Walnut Hill had driven him away one day, and he had not been begging since. It was a mystery that none could solve, who they were, whence they came, and how they lived.

Many anecdotes were then told, how different persons had attempted to gain admittance to their retreat, and how all had been refused. How entreaties and expostulations had been in vain; and how strange stories had been afloat as to their occupations and their origin. All these served to beguile the time consumed in riding over the two miles of their route.

Charley now proposed to devise some stratagem by which to gain admittance to this mysterious abode: but Godfrey, having heard thus much of the singular habits of its inmates, suggested that it would be manifestly rude and wrong to force themselves upon them, even if such a thing were possible. They agreed, however, to reconnoitre the premises, and to learn what-

ever chance or good fortune might throw in their way. They now drew near the place; it was situated at the confluence of a smaller creek with the Sheltern. This creek, contrary to the usual course, flowed in a direction almost opposite to that of the Sheltern, forming an obtuse angle above and an acute angle below, so that the fork, to use a common term, was below the confluence instead of above it. Near this junction of the two streams was a huge boulder of granite, called Sherrod's Rock. The neck of land upon which this lay was covered with fragments of rock, and was too sterile to admit of cultivation. The place was remote and unfrequented, and was singularly desolate and lonely in appearance. A few dwarf cedars sprang up among the rocks: but, with this exception, it was bare of all forest growth.

Near the rock spoken of, and in a manner leaning against it, was a rude cabin, constructed of the odds and ends of an old house that formerly had stood on the opposite side of the Sheltern. It had been erected by the present inhabitants, and was clumsily enough constructed. The main part of the tenement was surrounded by a sort of shed that had no floor, where the wood was kept, and in one part of which the cooking was done. The whole building had a rambling, unsteady appearance, and promised, indeed, no great amount of comfort or elegance within.

No one was visible as our two adventurers drew nigh. They dismounted and tied their horses at some distance from the house, and approached it on

foot. The place had so mournful an appearance that they were quite overawed by the prospect, and began to feel more like retreating than advancing. Master Charley was especially overcome by these feelings. "Godfrey," said he, "I'm not up to this sort of thing. Do you go forward and knock at the door. I'll wait here, and come to your assistance if you need it." Godfrey left his friend sitting on a rock, and walked towards the low doorway. As he entered the door of the shed a man rose from the farther end of the apartment and ran, with looks of evident alarm, towards the door of the main building. In his agitation he threw the door wide open and discovered a large, dim room, at the farther side of which sat a man of exceedingly venerable appearance, with a long white beard and silver hair gathered up into a queue behind.

At the announcement of Godfrey's presence, made with many gesticulations by the person who attended him, the old man rose and came towards the door. Godfrey thought he had never seen a man of so majestic appearance before. He had a certain dignity that inspired awe and demanded reverence. His eyes were preternaturally bright, and seemed literally to burn in their sunken sockets. So lurid were they, indeed, that it required all the boy's courage and nerve to withstand their gaze. There was something about the old man's mien, however, that was so quiet and easy that Godfrey was soon reassured, and stood before him in an attitude of respectful si-

lence. The old man started presently and drew his hand before his eyes. "What is your name?" he asked. "Godfrey Dean, father," was the reply. "Godfrey—Godfrey Dean," the old man said, musingly. "Dean! I don't think I ever heard that name before. Yet your face looks very familiar to me." The old man turned his head away and looked vacantly upon the ground. "I'm getting very old," he muttered; "yes, very old," and relapsed into his former reverie. Presently recovering, he said with great severity, "But what brings you here, rude boy? Strangers are not allowed to come beneath this roof, and idle curiosity cannot be gratified here. Begone, and forget the road that brought you hither. Yet stay—I like thy face, too, my boy; it reminds me somehow of something that I've been trying to remember. I'm getting very old, and can't think as I used to think. Yes, it will suit my purpose. Come back to-morrow, boy. It is what I have wished. I like to look on thy honest young face. Thou art an honest boy. Come back at this hour to-morrow, but come alone; and I will speak with thee."

He turned and left him, closing the door. Godfrey stood a moment too much bewildered by this strange scene to think or act; when the man that had announced him took him by the arm, and pointing to the door, motioned him to begone. He walked back to his horse, and mounting him, rode across the ford and turned up the Sheltern towards the village. "Godfrey," called out Charley Foster, galloping up behind,

"what's the matter? You look like you've seen a ghost. Did you see anybody? I believe you forgot that I was waiting for you."

Godfrey told him in a few words the result of his adventure, and then cautioned his friend to say nothing to any one of what they had discovered. "But you're coming back again?" asked Charley. "Yes," said Godfrey, "but I must come alone; for I promised to do so."

Charley was all excitement and curiosity, and insisted upon telling of their success when they reached the village. But when Godfrey reminded him that they had no right to destroy the retirement which the old man sought to preserve, it was agreed that their visit and its result should remain a secret with them. As Godfrey had promised to return, it would be right and proper, of course, for him to consult his adopted father; but farther than this they determined their secret should not go.

The boys stopped at Mr. Dean's little gate. Charley went in to pay his respects to Mrs. Dean, but soon mounted his horse again and rode away to The Grange.



## CHAPTER XIV.

"This wretched brain gave way,  
And I became a wreck, at random driven—  
Without one glimpse of reason or of heaven."

*Lalla Rookh.*

THE next morning passed away slowly enough—so Godfrey thought. The service at church, which usually interested him so much, seemed strangely tedious and dull. The clergyman preached one of his best sermons that day; but Godfrey heard scarcely a word of it. He kept his eye, it is true, upon the good man as he preached from the lofty, old-fashioned pulpit; but his mind was absent and inattentive. He was thinking of the adventure of the evening before, and of the tryst that awaited him.

Mr. Dean was scarcely less absent. To him Godfrey had told all, as in duty bound. In common with every one else in the little community, he had long felt an interest in the strange characters that lived at Sherrod's Rock, and had no little curiosity as to their history. Godfrey's narrative had excited all these feelings afresh. That the hermit, who somehow was reputed to be a scholar and philosopher, should have taken an interest in his boy, Mr. Dean did not wonder. But it was singular that chance should award to Godfrey what had been denied to the most persevering inquiries of others.

He, too, was a bad listener to the good rector's sermon that day, and thought the service unusually long and tedious.

Evening came at last, however, and Godfrey mounted his horse and rode away. Upon reaching his destination he found "Dummy" seemingly awaiting him. He took his horse and led him to the other side of the house, out of sight, where he secured him, when he returned, and, motioning Godfrey to follow him, ushered him into the inner room. The hermit was seated by a table near a small window, the only one that lighted the room, poring very intently over a book that lay open before him. From this occupation the entrance of his visitor did not arouse him, so that Godfrey had ample time to take a survey of the furniture and fixtures of this strange abode. These, indeed, were simple and rude enough. A low bed occupied one corner of the apartment, the drape of which was comfortable, and even rich; but the bedstead was exceedingly rude in construction, having been made, apparently, of old boards and pieces of plank that had remained after the house was finished. On the floor near by, a mattress and some blankets were rolled together against the wall, constituting the bed, evidently, of the person who officiated in the capacity of servant. A plain table and two chairs completed the furniture of the room.

The recluse continued for a long time in an attitude of close attention over the contents of the volume before him, totally unconscious of the presence of any

one. Godfrey had seated himself at the silent bidding of his conductor, and sat looking with intentness on the remarkable face before him. It was a sight well calculated to inspire awe and reverence. The old man was clad in a loosely-fitting wrapper or dressing-gown of an old and worn appearance, but of fine material, over which his long, white beard fell in front, imparting to him an aspect of patriarchal dignity that well befitted his majestic mien and thoughtful attitude. His small, fresh-looking hands and spotless linen, disclosed by the loose folds of his gown, bespoke the gentleman and man of leisure; all contrasting strangely with the rudeness and wretchedness of the abode in which he lived.

After some time he closed the book before him and turned his eyes towards where Godfrey sat. Presently a sort of recognition succeeded the look of abstraction which had emanated from them, and he motioned him to draw his seat nearer.

"Young man," he said, "you are the first stranger that has ever come under this humble roof of mine; yet you are welcome. Something, I know not what, has won your way to this inhospitable retreat—something about you has almost won its way to a heart that has long been closed against its kind. When I first saw you I was reminded of something that I loved in better days. What it was I cannot remember now. It has been my business to forget, and many things I have forgotten. Would God that all might be forgotten. But I'm growing

very old now—too old to remember the sorrows—the bitter wrongs that have driven me from the face of man—too old, God grant, to do aught but forgive them. My youth has been a delusion—my manhood a retribution for wrongs that others have done, and my old age had almost been a season of hatred—of imprecation and despair. But I would wake now, if I could, from this long, wild dream of grief and misery. I, who have loved and lost all I ever loved, would love again if it may be; for I need something to bring me back again to reason and to God. God has sent you to me, my boy, and you must save me from the dark abyss in which I have been plunged—from which I have been but recently rescued. Listen; this house has long been a *mad-house*."

So wildly was this spoken, and so fearful was the import of this last dreadful word, that Godfrey sprang from his seat in alarm. "Sit down," the old man said. "The only madman here sits before you. You have nothing to fear. These hands have never been raised to do violence. Here in this lonely retreat have the dark hours of my life passed away, and they have left no sting behind them. Philosophy has been my only pursuit—my study, my devotion. I had a hope once—a dream it may have been—but that is forgotten now. These alone," continued he, rising and drawing aside a curtain that concealed several shelves of books, "these alone have been the companions of my

solitude—the solace of the dark hours of my sorrow. They alone, of all the friends I ever knew, have not betrayed me. But they cannot feel, they cannot appreciate my love for them. I can talk to them, reason with them; but they lack the warm vitality of love and life. Boy, can you prove yourself worthy to be trusted by one who has always trusted in vain? Yet I ought not to say always. There was a time—but I cannot remember it now. I have forgotten the wrong thing:—God help me—I've forgotten the wrong thing, after all."

The old man bent his head on the table before him in an attitude of helplessness that contrasted painfully with his former dignity, and was for some time silent.

"But it cannot matter now," he said. "I want something to love now—something to trust again. Are you worthy of my trust?"

"Alas! father," said Godfrey, "I am but a little boy, and can do nothing for you, I fear. But you have some one to love that you have known a long time, and I am sure he is worthy to be trusted—your old companion here."

"Hush, boy. You know not what you say. Barron has been very kind, no doubt, and very faithful; but he is mad, too—as mad as I am. All old men are mad. You never knew that before; yet it is true. Young men alone are not mad. They have not awoken, as old men have, to the falsehood

and baseness of their kind. This is what I want with you. I've been old a long time, but I am about to become young again;—the glorious season of my mind's second childhood lies just before me. Barron will die before he is a boy a second time. I shall soon want a boy to be my companion. We each will have advantages which the other does not possess, and which will prove mutually beneficial. I have learning, you have vitality. The dignity of years is mine, the unsuspecting candor and freshness of youth are yours. You need me to make you wise, I need you to make me simple. The dewy freshness of Spring is yours, the ripe fruits of Autumn are mine. Let us mingle our blessings, and enjoy them together."

"But, father," said Godfrey, "I am little, and you are big. How can a little boy like me be a fit companion for you?"

"Alas! my son," was the reply, "in many respects you are my superior. The advantage of the difference is all on your side, not mine. Vitality and strength are yours, age and decrepitude are mine. Mental superiority is yours, too; for care and sorrow have not cast their shadow across your soul, as they have across mine. The only pursuit worthy of man's highest powers is the discovery of truth; and truth can, in many instances, be better discovered by your young powers than by mine. Though we both shall soon be boys together, yet I shall be a weary boy, and a dull one too, I fear, and

will have to lean on you, not you on me. There are many questions, doubtless, which my wisdom, if you call it so, can answer for you; but there are graver questions still which I must ask your strength and clearness of vision to determine for me. The flowery fields of fair philosophy will lie before us. Every winding path and every grateful bower is familiar to me. In those pleasant shades that are yet unknown to you, we may disport ourselves, and together pluck the flowers, and, like bees, distil their sweets. The skill is mine, but it shall be imparted to you. And when the summons comes, as soon it must, to call me away to another scene, I will leave you master of that fair domain, and in you will be united what now we together possess. For many years I've trod these pleasant paths alone. Long years I've tilled the soil, and it is only now that the flowers begin to bloom, to repay me for my toil. Long years the soil was sterile and bare, and the kindly sun was hid behind the envious clouds of sorrow; and thick darkness veiled the landscape. But now the skies are bright again. The sun rides high in the cloudless heavens, and the garden I have worked so long is blooming with the freshness of May. The spring-time of mind has dawned again for me. I only need a little child to lead me by the hand, and to point out to my failing sight the beauties which spring around me. You do not understand this now, but I will teach you to understand. What I

say is none the less true, because it is seen only by the eye of the mind."

The old man's eyes were kindled with the light of an intense enthusiasm. There was a pleading earnestness in his tone that was singularly affecting;—it accorded so little with his venerable aspect and the dignity of his years. Godfrey could not comprehend all this. It seemed like a dream to him. The old man's enthusiasm frightened him—it was so unnatural. He knew instinctively that he was really in the presence of a madman, and that the wild words to which he had been listening could only have been suggested by a crazed and unsettled imagination. But there was a fascination about him, and he felt himself drawn into a sort of sympathy with his thoughts and feelings. He knew him to be mad, yet he sympathized with his madness, and wished, if possible, to assist and relieve him. To do this he felt ready to make any sacrifice, so entirely was he intoxicated with the phrensy that possessed his older companion.

"I will try to be your friend, sir," Godfrey said, in answer to his look of inquiry, "if my father will consent, and it lies in my power to serve you."

"Your father!" the old man said. "What is your name? I have forgotten."

"Godfrey Dean," was the reply.

"Godfrey Dean? No, no, that cannot be your name," the other replied, looking at him intently.

"Dean is a name I never heard before, and your face

is too familiar to me to bear a stranger's name. Where is your father?"

"My own father is dead, sir," Godfrey said, "and Dean is only my adopted name. My own father and mother too are dead; they died when I was a very little boy."

"Aye," the old man cried, eagerly, "I knew it must be so. Tell me how it was. It may help me to remember something I've forgotten. Tell me all about your history."

Godfrey, willing to divert his mind, told him the sad story of his life as far as he could remember. He had never told it before since Mr. Dean had advised him against doing so: but he forgot that injunction now, nor indeed had he remembered it could he have withheld the relation at the bidding of his strange host.

During the brief but touching recital, the old man became greatly agitated. He laid his head upon the table before him, and strong convulsions moved his body. At the close of the story he was silent for a moment, and then a loud shriek burst from him. Barron, as the servant was called, rushed into the room, and seizing Godfrey's arm, hurried him to the door.

"His dark hour has come on him again," he said. "Anything that moves or excites him never fails to bring these fits upon him. Do not venture to return here in less than a week from to-day. Be silent and discreet, for much depends on it. Tell no one that you heard me speak; for all must think that I am a mute."

The door was closed, leaving Godfrey in a state of bewilderment, from which he did not recover until he found himself mounted on his horse and riding homeward. He could scarcely think soberly of the strange interview that had just passed. For the first time in his life he had met insanity face to face. The abrupt and frightful termination of his visit had been caused by a paroxysm of madness such as might frequently occur, and such as would render impossible, he feared, all future intercourse with the singular being who had so won upon his sympathy—so enlisted his admiration. Then he thought of what that solitary life must have been in the long years gone by. The mystery of the hermitage was unravelled now. The seclusion that had been so carefully preserved had concealed from the inquisitive gaze of the world the ravings of a madman. He reached home late, and communicated as nearly as he could the particulars of his visit to Mr. Dean.



## CHAPTER XV.

"I had much rather see  
A crested dragon or a basilisk ;  
Both are less poison to my eyes and nature."

DRYDEN.

ANOTHER week passed by in the usual routine, bringing nothing new or of unusual interest. Godfrey, at Mr. Dean's injunction, had kept the secret of his visit from all his companions, and had cautioned Charley Foster not to reveal what he already knew. Mr. Dean himself was deeply interested by what Godfrey had told him. The melancholy condition of the old hermit at Sherrod's Rock had enlisted all the sympathy of his generous heart, and the glimpse he obtained of his life and pursuits strongly interested his inquiring and intelligent mind. But he gravely doubted the propriety of allowing his adopted son to return to any intercourse with so singular a character. The influence exerted upon so tender and susceptible a nature as his, by the presence of such strange insanity, might prove unwholesome and pernicious in its effects ; and the brief insight he obtained from Godfrey's account, of the sentiments and feelings of the recluse and philosopher, caused him to fear that the teachings which might be administered would prove dangerous rather than beneficial. He therefore



thought it prudent to interdict all future visits to Sherrod's Rock except by his express permission.

This conclusion was discussed, however, with Mrs. Dean, and did not so readily obtain that worthy lady's assent. She thought that Godfrey ought by all means to return, and endeavor to cultivate the acquaintance so strangely begun. It might be that he would be able to drive away the cloud from the poor old man's mind, and in reality "bring him back to reason and to God." It was his duty, she thought, to respond to that pathetic appeal for help, and she felt sure that harm could never come from so praiseworthy an undertaking. She was convinced, on the contrary, that some great good to Godfrey would grow out of all this. But she could not answer Mr. Dean's logical reasoning against such a course. She could not give reasons for what she urged. What woman ever can? She argued from instinct, as women almost always do. Reason has but little to do with their conclusions. They depend upon a power that is clearer—I sometimes think, higher—than mere reason, and hence it is that they are almost uniformly right. But Mr. Dean had very logically reached his conclusion, and he as logically defended it; and Mrs. Dean, after the manner of her sex, yielded her assent, though not her conviction. So it was agreed that Godfrey should not again visit Sherrod's Rock unless some special reason, thereafter to arise, should call upon him to do so.

The week had passed away, and another Sunday

morning had come. Among the letters which Mr. Dean found on the breakfast-table was a squarely folded missive with the old-fashioned superscription, "To Richard Dean, Lawyer, these." It bore date the evening before, and ran thus: "If your leisure will serve you, you will be welcome, unattended, at Sherrod's Rock." He handed it in silence to his wife, and, hastily finishing his breakfast, he called for his horse and rode away.

Mrs. Dean did not attend church that day: so Godfrey went alone. After service was over he met Bertha Lynne and her mother, accompanied by Florence Foster, at the church door, and walked with them towards the Hill. Mrs. Lynne had never met Godfrey before. She was pleased with the boy's open, ingenuous face, and his graceful and respectful bearing. Many years had passed since she had seen a sight so pleasing as the artless and innocent enjoyment of the children as they walked by her side. Godfrey's conversation especially attracted her attention. It was so frank, so manly, so thoughtful, that she felt great surprise to hear it from one so young in years. When they reached the gate, she invited him to come in and dine with the girls that day. Her husband, she was sure, would be pleased to know a boy so promising and so thoughtful, and would appreciate the many graces of his bearing and conversation. To Godfrey's objection that his mother would expect him, she replied by calling a servant that was

at hand and sending him with a proper message to Mrs. Dean; and Godfrey, for the second time in his life, passed through the gate and under the poplar-tree and up the broad avenue that led to the door.

Mrs. Lynne left the children seated on a bench, and went into the house. They sat there for a little while, under the boughs of the budding trees, and then they strolled away through the soft and grateful mixture of sunshine and shade, the heart of each brimful of the happiness that the serene glory of the sacred day always brings to childhood. Bertha had lost her shyness now—her mother's sanction had removed that—and Florence, usually so stately, listened more kindly than was her wont to Godfrey's efforts to amuse and interest her. As for Godfrey, he was never happier before. The shades of the thickly-wooded grounds were stripped of the gloom that once had seemed to rest there, and the garden where they walked became an enchanted spot for him. Charley Foster had ridden over from The Grange, and came and joined them now. His merry, ringing laugh soon echoed through the grove, and every accessory to their happiness seemed present and complete.

Presently the summons to dinner called them to the house, and put an end to their frolicsome ramble. At the door they met Mrs. Cecil Lynne, looking anxious and distressed, Bertha thought, though she could not imagine why. Cecil Lynne joined his wife as they came up; but the frown upon his brow

drove all gladness from the faces of his youthful guests. To Charley and to Florence he gave a kindly but an absent greeting; but to his wife's timid mention of Godfrey's name and presence he gave no heed whatever, abruptly leading the way to dinner. They were scarcely seated when Mrs. Mabel Lynne entered the room. Godfrey felt a chill at his heart as he encountered her steady and searching gaze.

"Who is your guest, Cecil?" she asked, as she took her seat.

"It is Godfrey Dean, mother," said her daughter-in-law; "a school-friend of Bertha's, whom I invited here."

Mrs. Mabel Lynne started from her seat, and turned to leave the room. "Cecil Lynne," she said, "what mean you by this? How dare you, madam!" turning fiercely to her son's wife, "how dare you insult me thus? Who authorized you to bring that beggar's bantling to my son's table?"

"Mother," sternly interposed Cecil Lynne, "this table is mine, and my wife is its mistress. Her guests are mine, and they shall not be insulted at my board. If you do not like my company, you can dine alone."

Mrs. Mabel Lynne stood petrified with anger and astonishment. Her lips refused their office. Mrs. Cecil Lynne had buried her face in her hands, and Bertha's eyes were suffused in tears. Godfrey and Charley had risen from their seats in astonish-

ment. "And after all it has come to this," said the enraged old woman, as she left the room.

"Sit down, young gentlemen," said Cecil Lynne, "sit down, and forget this disagreeable scene. Caroline, you will please take your seat at the head of the table, where you will in future sit. Let me ask you, young gentlemen, to remember that this table is mine, and that you are welcome here. Mr. Dean, be seated, I pray you."

But Godfrey would not be persuaded to remain. With a dignity beyond his years he excused himself to his now importunate host, and with rare tact and delicacy succeeded in making his retreat. Painful and embarrassing as his position was, his dignified yet respectful withdrawal rendered that of his host still more so, and Cecil Lynne followed him to the door with an obsequiousness that contrasted strangely with his former cold demeanor.

Godfrey was joined by Charley Foster, and they walked in silence towards the gate. Godfrey then remembered that other visit of his long years before, and a feeling of self-reproach came over him that he should have allowed himself to be beguiled to seek admittance again under that roof. Though he did not know the whole history of the past, and did not comprehend anything of the relation that had subsisted between his father and the inmates of that house on the occasion of his last visit there, still he had an indistinct idea that he ought never to have gone there a second time. He had not thought

of this before; but now a bitter feeling of offended pride came into his heart, and a vow rose to his lips never again to enter the limits of that hated place.

He was too deeply offended and hurt to reply to his friend's sympathetic assurances of indignation. He merely thanked him for his kindness, and begged him not to speak of the matter again. But Charley, with a generous feeling, took all his friend's wrongs to himself. Godfrey was too much moved to attend to this now, and they separated, Charley going for his horse, and Godfrey taking the road to the village. With the instinct of true friendship, however, Charley rode after him, and accompanied him a portion of the way home.

Godfrey determined not to tell his mother of this; for he knew it would wound her deeply. To Mr. Dean, however, he would tell all; for he much desired to know upon what ground his mal-treatment could have been founded. The insult he had received was too severe to be forgotten or passed over in silence.

Upon his arrival at home, he found that Mr. Dean had not yet returned. He walked to the foot of the lawn and seated himself upon his favorite seat by the Sheltern. Earth, sky and air, that had seemed so fair to him but a few hours before, were darkened now; and gloomy thoughts banished all happiness from his mind. The old, old past came back unbidden to him. There was a mystery about it all that he could not unravel or understand. Engrossed by

these sorrowful memories and reflections, he did not observe Mr. Dean's arrival, and was unconscious of his return, until he saw him and his wife pass along within a few feet of him, engaged in a low and earnest conversation. He waited there a long time for their interview to terminate; but the hours sped on, and twilight found him still waiting. After a while Mr. Dean called Godfrey from where he sat, and they entered the house together.

"Godfrey," said the former, in a grave tone, "I have been to see your friend at Sherrod's Rock. He is much better now, and will do well, I think, in future. He is much pleased with you, and inquired after you very kindly. At his own request it has been agreed that you will visit him as frequently hereafter as your school duties will permit. On Wednesday evening next we will go there together. You will tell no one of this; for the old man wishes to avoid the impertinent curiosity of the world."

Nothing more was said of the matter then. At bedtime Godfrey asked Mr. Dean to accompany him to his room, and he then recounted the strange occurrences that had taken place at the Hill that day.

"You must not go there again," Mr. Dean said. "You should never have gone there. I cannot tell you why now. Suffice it that your safety as well as your honor will be involved by so doing. Do not let this disturb or distress you. The insult you received has no meaning that reflects on you. Keep your own counsels, and you will understand it all one day. Good-night."

## CHAPTER XVI.

"And scenes long past, of joy and pain,  
Came wildering o'er his aged brain."

*Lay of the Last Minstrel.*

INSANITY, from whatever cause arising, is in some respects an incomprehensible mystery. Disease, decay, and infirmity are natural to the body and to all things mortal; for what is mortal must inevitably perish and die. The physical part of our being must always be subject to these evils so long as the curse of our father Adam's transgression remains upon us. These the eye can survey or the physician's scalpel can explore. We can watch their progress, divine their cause, and often alleviate their intensity. But with man's immortal part it is not so. The skill of the physician cannot minister to the mind diseased. The surgeon's knife cannot reach the seat of that infirmity which saps the foundations of reason, and scatters disease and decay throughout the functions of the soul. The eye cannot mark its beginning. Its remedy cannot be prescribed—its end cannot be divined. Through forms as various as the causes of human sorrow are, it runs its course. Sometimes it comes on unawares, with no warning beforehand, and all at once works its dread and inscrutable ends. Sometimes it lurks for years in the

unconscious bosom, and suddenly breaks out in the intensity of its fearful power, turning the light of reason into the darkness of melancholy and despair. Sometimes it assumes the form of raving madness, and images of horror and of cruelty usurp the places where love, and pity, and tenderness once dwelt. Sometimes it lifts the soul into a state of purer and better feelings and instincts than it ever knew before. This man it transforms into a demon whose clanking chains and horrid imprecations are music to his ears. That man it soothes into the dreaming languor of tranquillity, or raises to a place "a little lower than the angels."

Its causes are as numerous as they are inexplicable. Sometimes it is hereditary, and descends like a malison, from father to son. But sorrow is the chief of all the causes that drive men to madness. The learned and ingenious author of "The Anatomie of Melancholie" has said sorrow to be "the mother and daughter of madness, her symptom, her epitome and chief cause." In this pithy declaration lies the history and description of Father Godfrey's insanity, while he remained buried in seclusion at Sherrod's Rock. Whatever the sorrow might have been that had dethroned his reason, it had reproduced in the phenomena of his madness a melancholy that had driven him from the face of man, and had implanted in his bosom a deep seated aversion to all intercourse with his kind. It had made him a hermit, and had left him enough of sagacity to maintain

his seclusion against the persevering inquiries and intrusions of all who sought to thrust themselves upon him.

As is not unfrequently the case, the shadow of some hope that he had long forgotten—the ghost of some love he had lost, had haunted him through his insanity, and probably had protracted and intensified it. From his first conversation with Godfrey it is discovered that the one end and aim of his life had somehow been snatched away, and he had groped about through years of darkness, always seeking but never finding it. The recreations of philosophy could not beguile him of his yearning after this lost hope. Much as they had interested him, they could not restore him to reason. Conscious at times of the disease that preyed upon his mind, he had looked in vain for some remedy for it. Long years he sought to rise above his malady, or to leave it behind in the pursuit after philosophical truth that engaged him. But in this he did not succeed. "*Post equitem sedet atra cura.*" The dark demon clung to him still. In this condition he was when Godfrey first intruded upon his presence. Whether it was the sight of a stranger face, or something about the boy's honest, manly presence, or the dim recalling of some lost idea of his life, that produced this result, certain it is that he fastened upon him as upon a remedy that was to make him whole again. In the loose and disjointed method of his thoughts, it occurred to him that he was a boy again himself, that the period of his second

childhood had dawned upon him, and that the one and only need of his life was some boyish companionship from which, as he expressed it, he might derive vitality and rejuvenescence. In this he was partly right, it may be. It may have been that a constant intercourse with a strong and healthful mind, might have vitalized his own failing mental energies, and have restored him to sanity and reason.

It would have been pleasant and instructive to have watched the progress of such an influence, and to have marked, step by step, the process of such a regeneration. But Father Godfrey's deliverance from the shadowy thralldom of madness was nearer at hand than he thought. The tale of Godfrey's life had thrown him, as has been seen, into a violent paroxysm of insanity. How this was, or from what cause it came, need not now be investigated. By this shock he was healed. When he awoke from this paroxysm he was able, for the first time in many years, to calmly contemplate the past, to accept the present, and to await the future with resignation. The false enthusiasm that madness had engendered had left him, and he was much older and feebler, no doubt, than before. But memory had returned to him again. The purpose of his life, it may be, had been found, or else he was able to understand that it had been lost, and to reconcile himself to it. In short, he had awoke at last from a long and confused and distressing dream, and could once more see and feel the re-

ality of things around him. Of the causes that led to this I shall speak more particularly hereafter, when his history is proper to be given. What is here said will suffice to explain how it was that, when Mr. Dean and Godfrey stood again in his presence, he seemed to Godfrey to be a changed man.

He was seated at his accustomed place by the table and near the window; and Barron, his faithful companion and friend, was seated near him, arranging some papers that lay upon the table. A visible change had, indeed, been wrought in Father Godfrey's appearance. It seemed to Godfrey that many years had set their seal upon him since he had seen him last. The fire of intense enthusiasm that had burned in his eye was gone. He was more weak and helpless, less nervous and impassioned, than in the last strange interview they had had together. The same venerable and dignified mien was there; but it was a dignity that excited pity—not admiration, as before. He had been a mystery:—he was now a man.

Upon their entrance, Barron arose and offered them seats, with many expressions of pleasure. Father Godfrey was too feeble to rise, but bade them a most hearty welcome. Calling Godfrey to him, he took him by the hand and looked at him long and earnestly. Embracing him tenderly then, he bade him to be seated, while the tears that coursed silently down his cheeks gave evidence of much emotion.

"Godfrey," said he at length, "I am much better now than when you saw me last. I fear I said many strange things then. Let them be forgotten. You are henceforth to be my friend, and as often as you will, my companion. I am an old, old man, it is true; but my blessing shall be yours, and it may be that in the long years of my seclusion here, I have picked up some grains of wisdom that may benefit you. Let the past be forgotten. The future—your future—shall engage our attention. Let us survey the prospect together; and if, in my declining years, I can serve you, I shall die a happier man than I once hoped or expected. Barron, bring these gentlemen some refreshments. The offices of hospitality, simple and humble though they be, must not be forgotten."

Barron soon brought some apples and some cool water from the spring near by. "These," continued Father Godfrey, "are all I can offer. We are simple bodies, and live frugally. The costlier meats and more generous wines that pamper the pride and luxury of the rich are not mine to give. I might almost say,

"'But from the mountain's grassy side  
A harmless feast I bring;  
A scrip with herbs and fruits supplied,  
And water from the spring.'

Though Barron and I are not altogether so vegetarian yet, still our larder is but little dependent upon the shambles or the cellar for its supply. One of

the greatest blessings which retirement and seclusion bring is, that it makes us simple and frugal in all our indulgences. The weeds of luxury and indulgence grow not readily in the cell of the anchorite."

"Then you think, father," Mr. Dean said, "that vice is fostered by society?"

"Not all vices, but some certainly are," the other replied. "Society—and by society I mean intercourse with our fellow-men—society has its peculiar vices, and so has solitude. Among the former may be classed all kinds of indulgences. Drunkenness, for instance, is the result of a depraved appetite, and that appetite is almost always created by society—by what is usually termed boon companionship. So with most other vicious indulgences. He who dines alone rarely cares to linger long over the pleasures of the table, and soon learns to despise them. I question if even an epicure could long preserve the daintiness of his palate, were he doomed to always dine alone. Barron and I are here together, it is true; but we have been so long together that we have become merged, it may be said, in our tastes as well as our habits. I doubt if both of us could do one man's part at a well-appointed table."

The conversation now became general, and Father Godfrey evinced, in the course of it, much gracefulness and vivacity of thought. His reading had evidently been extensive; and the ease and even pleasure he exhibited contrasted strangely and delightfully to Godfrey, with the severe and painful enthu-



siasm of his manner upon the occasion of his former visit. The faithful and attentive Barron was quite overcome with joy at witnessing this pleasing scene. Tears filled his eyes, and he could scarcely contain his transports. "To see your honor thus," he cried, "makes me young again. Surely Heaven has been kind to us in sending young Master Godfrey here to cheer and enliven this home of ours."

"Thou art right, good Barron," Father Godfrey said. "I feel happier to-night than many years have allowed me to be, and something tells me that our path down life's decline will be easier henceforth than we some time hoped or expected it would be. The world has something yet to live and hope for."

"Then, father," Godfrey said, "you do not intend to shut yourself out any longer from the world? It has many pleasures yet, I am sure, in store for you: and the good that may be done is sufficient to tempt you to mingle with it again."

"Alas! no, my son," Father Godfrey gravely said. "These narrow walls, or, at most, this little spot of ground, must continue to be the world for me. For many reasons, which need not be recounted, the world of which you speak has, and can have, no charms, no pleasures for me. The only pleasure I could know would be left behind when yonder stream was crossed. The little good that remains for me to do must be done in the retirement in which I have lived so long. But come, Godfrey, tell me who your schoolmaster is, and what he has taught

you. Let me judge whether you are as well advanced as you are reputed to be. I have undertaken to extend some care over your education, my boy, and I must see how far you have gone, and where you now stand."

Godfrey soon recounted the sum of his acquirements, and replied to the many questions asked. The remainder of the evening was spent in these inquiries, and the remarks made thereon. Two branches of Godfrey's education had indeed been sadly neglected. Of history he had read but little—of general literature, nothing. Of this part of his education Father Godfrey now proposed to assume the charge. He and Mr. Dean conferred earnestly on this and kindred subjects. The details of education, such as are usually taught in schools, were necessary, the former allowed, and useful chiefly in the mental training which they conferred; but it was important, he insisted, for the mind to be stored with the riches of literature while it was fresh and young, and while they might be easily acquired. In after years, when the time for thought had arrived, a store of material would then be already laid up, which could not fail to be highly useful. In this he proposed to become Godfrey's instructor and guide; and tendered also the use of his really valuable library to him.

At length, when they arose to take their leave, Father Godfrey said, "It will be best, I think, for my—my young friend to come here as often as he can. He will always find a welcome, and it will be my



happiness to make it pleasant to him. I trust he will remember that the oftener he comes the more he will contribute to the happiness of an old man who wishes to be considered his friend. For yourself, sir, as often as your pursuits will permit, you will be most welcome here too. My gratitude, as well as the esteem which your worth has inspired, unite in causing me to wish to see you often at my fire-side. Do not forget what we agreed to when you came to me before. Good-night."



## CHAPTER XVII.

"Heaven lies about us in our youth."

WORDSWORTH.

UNDER Father Godfrey's guidance and instruction, Godfrey rapidly advanced in the studies that were suited to his years. He became quite domesticated at the hermitage, and spent many of his most pleasant hours there. When winter came, the long evenings were employed in amusing and instructive intercourse, and many sage counsels and weighty admonitions did the aged recluse impart to his attentive guest. All this was peculiarly delightful to Godfrey. One great need of his life was supplied. A fountain was now opened for him from which he might drink at will to satisfy the cravings which every inquiring mind must feel. A friend and counsellor was at hand who understood the vagaries of his thoughts and removed every difficulty that lay in his path. The mind of a child is much more inquiring than that of a man. It has been truly said that a child can ask more questions in an hour than a philosopher can answer in an age. Inquiries are continually arising in the progress of their intellectual development, which ought to be answered, or at least explained. By this means alone can the child be induced to continue to think and to

speculate. Many an active young mind has been stopped in the pursuit of knowledge by some ugly question such as an attentive parent or instructor might easily have answered, but, for want of which assistance, discouragement and disgust have ensued. In this respect the kindness of Father Godfrey was of incalculable benefit to his young friend. It was his delight to answer any question he might ask, and to encourage him to propound others still more difficult. In short, Godfrey sat henceforth at his feet, and learned from his teachings many of the most useful lessons of his life.

Meanwhile, the school-life went on much the same as before. Godfrey's intimacy with Charley Foster increased as the time rolled by. Their amusements and recreations were, for the most part, the same, and they often spent the night together at the house of one or the other. Even Father Godfrey's interdiction was withdrawn, at Godfrey's request, from his companion; and he sometimes accompanied him to Sherrod's Rock. But Charley, it must be confessed, did not take as kindly to those evenings of instructive intercourse as Godfrey did. He had other things to think about, and generally devoted that portion of his time to the stables or the chase, which his more thoughtful companion spent with his venerable preceptor and friend.

For some time after Godfrey's unlucky visit to the Hill, all intercourse between him and Bertha had ceased. Bertha seemed more shy of him than ever,

and he indignantly imputed her evident desire to avoid him to an aversion which her father and grandmother had created. When they passed each other on the play-ground, their eyes never met; and Godfrey grew cool and haughty in his manner, and Bertha became more timid and exclusive than before.

Near by the school-house was a beautiful spring, where the boys and girls always met, and where many a harmless joke was enjoyed and many an amusing incident occurred. Near this spring was a little grove where the larger boys had built a number of play-houses for the girls. One of the largest and most complete of these, Godfrey and Charley had built for Bertha and Florence. One day Florence said to Godfrey, as she met him at the spring, "Godfrey, you must come and help me fix our play-house. One side of it has fallen down." He readily assented, and they walked off together. "Godfrey," she presently said, "what makes you treat Bertha so? You never speak to her now, as you used to do. She has been crying about it all play-time. She says you are angry with her. What is it about?"

"I am not angry with her," Godfrey said. "It is she that is to blame, not I. You know very well that she has avoided me, and you know the reason, too. She hates me because her grandmother does. It is not my fault, Florence, you know it isn't."

"But you must be friends again, Godfrey, indeed you must. It is not her fault if her grandmother

dislikes you, and she has been crying about it every evening since. Here she is now. Come and be friends again."

Bertha came forward, with her head averted, and her eyes full of tears. She placed her little hand in his, and then, without speaking a word, went back to her seat in the play-house, looking very shy, but very happy. Godfrey lingered a long time at the door, and after that they were good friends again. The walks homeward together in the evening were not resumed; but in all other respects the happiness of the old days returned to them. Boys and girls are but little men and women. Laugh not, O sapient reader, at this simple scene, for there are ten chances to one that you have acted your part in a similar one, when you did not have even childhood to excuse its folly.

Months passed away, and finally Bertha and Florence were removed from the village school, and consigned to a seminary for young ladies, that flourished at Camworth in those days, under the auspices of Dr. and Mrs. Stowning. Godfrey never saw them now except at rare intervals, when he met them at "The Grange" during their vacations.

His own education was now considerably advanced, and it was determined to send him at the opening of the next session to college. Charley Foster was to accompany him, and the two boys looked forward with great pleasure to their advent into that new life. The summer passed rapidly

away; old rides were taken again, perhaps for the last time. The last few weeks before leaving were divided by Godfrey between home and the hermitage at Sherrod's Rock. The days of his boyhood were over, and the curtain fell upon the first two acts of his life.



## CHAPTER XVIII.

"The dusky walls  
Hold the fair germ of knowledge, and the tree,  
Glorious in beauty, golden with its fruits,  
To this old college traces back its life."

STREET.

THE most interesting event, it may be said, in the life of boy or man, is the beginning of his college career. Before it is attained, the ambitious stripling looks forward to it with longing anxiety, and all the day-dreams of his fancy cluster around the glorious time when he is to become a college-boy. Compared with this, all dignities and honors are as naught in his eyes. It is the *grande pas* of his life—the one event that is to lift him above his fellows—to redeem him from the mere drudgery of school-life, and to invest him with the glorious privileges of manhood. No Roman youth ever longed more yearningly for his investiture with the *toga virilis* than he for the student's gown. The world, he fancies, will then be all his own. Before the advantages that must attend him then, every difficulty in his path will vanish like the mist before the morning sun. Cheered by this blissful expectation, the labors of the village school are encountered with the most heroic resolution. Even the pitiless strokes of the birchen-rod are borne with the fortitude of a

martyr, who sees through the pains and ills that beset him here, a new and delightful life awaiting him in the Elysian fields that lie beyond. The dusty road and the toilsome way lead only to the shady groves of Academia, and he strains forward to the goal with all the impetuous speed and eager haste of an athlete striving to win the laurel crown.

And then, with what bustling pride the preparations begin for his final departure! The wonderful clothes that are bought, and oft admired and often tried on, but never worn before they are packed up, are a marvel to see. The new trunk, too, with all its novel fixtures and conveniences, how beautiful it looks, with the name of the owner printed thereon! How he delights, when no one is by, to look at that name—never printed before—and to study the formation of each separate letter, and to admire the wonderful effect of the whole! And then comes the crowning honor of all, the dearest idol of his heart—the beautiful watch with which he is invested, and which drives sleep from his pillow for more nights than one, as it loudly ticks from the elaborate watch-pocket which hangs at the head of his bed. *O gracilis puer!* how rosy are the dreams of this spring-time of thy life! The chrysalis is bursting forth into a new and happier existence, and the wings are expanding that are to bear thee, thou fondly hopest, high up into the empyrean heights of everlasting fame and honor. Alas! that the wings of the butterfly should inspire the poor caterpillar's

heart with hopes that none but an eagle can mount to realize and enjoy.

It is a momentous step which he is preparing to take. It is the entrance into the world for him. The days of childhood are forever left behind. The jealous care of parent or guardian is about to be withdrawn, and he is to launch forth alone upon the untried sea of life. The haven may be landlocked and secure where he spreads his canvas, and the waves may ripple softly beneath his prow; but he now, for the first time, is to stand at the helm and to trim his own sail to the freshening breeze. Momentous indeed is the epoch to him, and full of the issues of life and death.

Yet it is a trial meet for him to undergo, and one that he is fortunate to have the opportunity of making. There is no step more useful to prepare him for future life, no tutelage more beneficial to the growing man. It is, so to speak, the mock battle where he tries his arms and tests his skill before entering upon the great conflict with the world. All the temptations that can ever beset him may beset him here; but here the "coigne of vantage" is his. This is well; for he may prepare himself for the time when, in the wide world of manhood, they will rush down upon his soul and almost overwhelm it with their pent-up force and intensity. It is the furnace in which he is to be tried and mayhap refined: and he who uses this advantage aright may come forth purified of much of the dross that belongs in common to us all.

The real benefits of a college-life are not confined to the mere academical advantages, great as they undoubtedly are; for they may be enjoyed elsewhere. The peculiar benefit lies most in the fact that it is a probationary period, in which the reality of life is taught to the inexperienced youth. He who is college-bred is, in a great degree, trained, and drilled, and disciplined, before the real campaign begins. And then there is much, too, in the fact that his hopes and his ambition are elevated by the training he receives. He learns to look high and to aim high, without which no man ever yet accomplished anything really great. The generous rivalry that is maintained in the lecture-room and in the debating-club, incites him to vigorous effort and self-reliance; and when the desire to excel is strongly excited in his breast, it is sure to bear its fruit in due season. Let me not be misunderstood. Many good, and wise, and great men there undoubtedly are who have never been within the walls of a college, and many a dunce and a dullard begins life, only to fail ignominiously, with a parchment certificate of collegiate advantages and even honors in his hand. But it cannot fairly be questioned that the first are great in spite of the wanting advantage, and that the last has been proof against all the opportunities he has enjoyed. The exception only goes to prove the rule.

"*Nunc ad inceptum redeo.*" Godfrey's simple preparations were completed, and he at length beheld the dawn of the day that was to be celebrated by his

departure. An early hour found him and Mr. Dean at the door of the tavern, impatiently awaiting the arrival of the stage-coach that was to take them on their way. Collected around him were many of his village friends, among whom were Joe Shelton and eke Uncle Ben, and Jerry Thompson and the good Dame Margery herself, all full of pride in their young favorite's promising career, and bidding him many a God-speed upon his journey. The worthy Alexander McNab was also there, with umbrella under his arm and snuff-box in his hand, looking with great pride and affection upon his young pupil, and hardly able to drive back the tears as he thought how dear the boy had become to him.

Presently the coach came thundering across the bridge in gallant and dashing style, the six smoking grays throwing great flakes of foam from their bits and prancing gayly up to the tavern-door. The box and trunk were soon strapped up behind, the heartfelt "good-bye's" were said, Mr. Dean and his charge climbed up to their seats by the driver, and away rattled the coach across the common and up the hill—the stage-horn waking every slumbering echo with its glad and merry peal. Walnut Hill was quickly passed, and on they sped until the horn announced the approach to The Grange, where, sure enough, stood Charley Foster by the roadside, surrounded by father and mother and all the household servants awaiting the arrival of the coach. A few minutes sufficed to see his luggage on, the adieus were said,

some words of instruction were spoken by Squire Foster to Mr. Dean, and off they started again, Charley seated at the driver's left, looking at the horses with much delight, and longing to take the "ribbons" into his own charge and show the admiring world how he too could drive "six-in-hand."

How many days were consumed in their journey matters not; nor is it necessary to recount the "moving accidents," many or few, that befell them on their route. Suffice it that one bright afternoon not many days thereafter, as they were just mounting the brow of an eminence, from the foot of which the landscape stretched away for miles in beautiful prospect, the driver pointed with his whip to a distant spire rising gracefully from among the trees, and announced that "yonder steeple is the College, and those white houses just beyond is the town of Tidmouth, where you and your guvner's going." On rattled the coach, and merrily the houses flew by, until the road brought them along by the handsome college grounds, with their broad gravel walks, towering elms, evergreens, oaks, and the tall and stately college buildings, with their many windows and venerable aspect. Wistfully did our boys gaze at their future home, and wonder which of the many windows was to be theirs. But the coach did not linger for these reflections. They soon found themselves tearing along the neat and quiet streets, and by the post-office, and up, at last, to the door of the tavern, whose ponderous sign announced that "en-

tertainment" was there to be sought and found. The landlord welcomed them at the door, and officious servants appeared to take charge of their luggage, and to marshal them, with a "This way, sir," to the bar-room fire.

Around that fire were seated several exquisitely dressed young gentlemen, with cigars in their mouths and wonderful walking-canes between their knees, whose air of conscious superiority and graceful *abandon* at once proclaimed them to be worshipful "Sophomores" or "Juniors" of the College hard by, and who eyed our new-comers with all the quizzical interest that never fails to greet a "fresh" upon his first arrival. For these worthies Godfrey and Charley at once conceived the most immense respect; and their delight, when one of them condescended to open a conversation with them, and to inquire, with really fatherly solicitude, where they came from, and what class they intended to apply for, passed all bounds. In a few minutes several of these gentlemen had made themselves known to Mr. Dean, and had made many offers of their valuable services in introducing his young charges to the mysteries of college-life. The sly wink that passed between them was unnoticed by our young freshmen, who at once found themselves at home and in the midst of true and trusty friends.

The next morning, at an early hour, Mr. Dean and the two boys walked out to the College and called on the President, who received them in state in his handsome and well-furnished library, and

listened with great politeness to Mr. Dean's account of the acquirements of the young men. Rooms were then chosen, and furniture bought and put up, and a convenient boarding-house selected near by. The evening was consumed by the preliminary examinations, which were declared satisfactory, and Godfrey Dean and Charles Foster, Jr., registered their names in sprawling, school-boy hands, on the college books, and found themselves regularly installed matriculates of the University of ———

That night they returned to the tavern down town with Mr. Dean, who consumed most of the time in dealing out all kinds of advice and admonition, to which they listened with becoming attention; and next morning bright and early the guardian took the stage-coach for Sheltern again, leaving the boys alone. A sad, heavy feeling of home-sickness came over them, and they felt very lonely as the coach disappeared, and they walked back to the bar-room fire. But the bright sun soon came out, and they walked with lighter hearts towards the "Campus," just as the heavy bell pealed out upon the morning air announced that the exercises of the college were about to begin. Upon their arrival, they found the students gathering together in groups under the oaks that stood in front of the dormitories; and at the second peal of the bell they joined the crowd and took their designated seats in the chapel, where they listened to the deep-sounding voice of the venerable President, as he invoked the blessing of Heaven upon the beginning of another scholastic year.

## CHAPTER XIX.

"I'll keep this secret from the world,  
As warily as those that deal in poison  
Keep poison from their children."

*Duchess of Malfy.*

THE history of Godfrey's college life, is not hero proposed to be given. The temptations that usually beset young men in similar circumstances, beset him too ; and the faults and follies that belong to his class, he was by no means exempt from. The easy swagger and the impertinent grace that usually adorn the ingenuous college youth were soon acquired by him, and he passed, as all lads of spirit do, through the various gradations of dandyism and fashionable folly. Marvel not, O cautious parent! if your son, upon his first return home, appears to your watchful eyes to have brought nothing with him but expensive clothes and dandified habits. He is only passing through the ordeal through which all youths must sooner or later pass, and if he be a worthy boy and a sensible, the airs that so much offend you now will leave him with his Sophomore year, and he will be all the better for having sported them and left them behind. But dandyism was not the only crop, it must be confessed, that sprang from the "wild oats" that our freshman sowed with no illiberal hand. Ten chances to one that he has come home to his

room more nights than one with a "drop too muckle in his e'e;" and it is certain that he succeeded in a wonderfully short time in establishing a reputation among his admiring companions, of being a "glorious fellow" and a "regular brick." But the lad took kindly to his books for all that, and soon became too much enamored of them to rove widely in quest of unprofitable amusements and unlawful pleasures.

Charley Foster, who roomed with Godfrey, was the participator of all his frolics, and kept pretty even pace with him in all things out of the lecture-room. But the boys were merely sowing the inevitable wild oats, and settled down before the year was out into two as respectable freshmen as the whole college could boast. Rowdyism, indeed, they were never guilty of. They were far above that. If they ever drained the "jovial bowl" at "Uncle Tom's" down town, during that time of breaking in, or forgot the sterner duties of their student life over a dish of oysters and bottle of claret at "Uncle Dick's," they always did so in good company, and had nothing worse than a headache to remember after the frolic was over. Even these amusements they learned to contemn when they rose to the dignity of "Juniors." It was only as Freshmen that they were so recreant to the duties of their high position. For my own part, I cannot deal with them very hardly for all this. Commend me to your generous, hair-brained freshman, who is not innocent, in the unsuspecting goodness of his heart, of an occasional gentlemanly spree, but



who would scorn to do a mean action ; and deliver me from the straight-laced spooney who never tasted wine in his life, and who is willing to be despised by his fellows provided he can only win, by dint of much toadyism, the favor of his professors. The former, if he have any good in him, will come through and be a man after all ; while the latter will be a milksop all the days of his life.

How Godfrey emerged, then, from this initiatory state of generous folly, and assumed the airs of a dandy at length, and devoted much of his time to the fair of the neighboring town, it is needless to say. How, too, from being a mere dandy in the matter of fine clothes and exquisite walking-canes, he was after a time fired with a loftier ambition and aspired to become the leader of his set in letters and in learning, it is equally useless to recount. Suffice it that he ran the old, old course, and that the end of the first year found him a handsome, accomplished, and promising boy, with a reputation among his companions for the first talent in his class. The professors, too, admired him for his honest manliness, and the sturdy independence of his character ; and his performances in the lecture-room excited their highest opinion of his abilities.

I might go on and write many chapters about this period of his life—I might follow him with great interest, to myself, at least, through every succeeding stage, and participate every joy that his hopeful young heart knew. It makes me young again to

contemplate the serene happiness that attends the life of an honest, manly student. The friendships, the pleasures, the companionships—the happy morning walks, and the social evenings at some blazing fireside, with pipe and friends—the exercises in the debating-club, and the generous rivalry of the lecture-room—the expanding joyfulness of heart as the prospect widens before the mind at each successive step along the shady walks that climb the heights of knowledge—all these might well tempt me to linger.

Tossed and buffeted we may be by the storms of life, and weary and seared may the heart become through sorrow, misfortune, and disaster ; but such memories as these will sometimes steal over us to make us young again.

Who would not wish to live such years over again ? Who does not look back upon them with fond regret, and sigh to think that days so happy have been so few, and that they can never be recalled ? The friends we then loved may have been swallowed up by death, and we may stand alone of all that happy crowd, who set their sails on that bright summer's day, when we left the college days behind ; yet there are moments when the wind blows fresh down the river, and we may turn as we drift still further away, and exclaim, with all the pathos of Gray's sad song to the distant scenes :

"I feel the gales that from ye blow,  
A momentary bliss bestow,

As, waving fresh with gladsome wing,  
My weary soul they seem to soothe,  
And, redolent of joy and youth,  
To breathe a second spring."

Here, then, I propose to leave our hero for a time, confident that he will not altogether neglect the opportunities that are his, nor throw the golden moments away. The incidents of my story call me back again to the banks of the quiet little Sheltern.

It was just at twilight on an evening in the early summer, nearly a year after Godfrey left Sheltern, that Squire Foster rode across the bridge, tied his horse to the rack in front of the tavern, and walked into the bar-room, where some of the *habitués* of the place were already assembled. He had been to visit an estate of his that lay several miles distant down the Sheltern, and now stopped to see some of the villagers on business. Supper was already over, and he found several acquaintances at this place of village resort, among whom he spent quite an hour, conversing about the current topics of the day. When at length he tore himself away from the circle of admiring listeners that had gathered around him, he found, to his great annoyance, that his horse had broken his halter and run away. After some time spent in fruitless inquiries after the missing animal, and declining the many kind offers that were made to him, he set off to walk the two and a half miles that lay between him and his home. The night was beautiful, and the air being cool and grateful after the heats of the day, gave promise that

his walk would be a pleasant one. Taking the foot-path, he soon approached the gateway at Walnut Hill, and wishing to avail himself of a shorter route that lay through the grounds and the orchard and garden in the rear, he passed through the gate and up a walk that led off to the left among the trees. The moon had spread a mottled mantle of darksome shadow and silvery sheen upon the ground as it shone among the leafy trees, and the soft hush of night had settled over the scene, only disturbed by the distant sounds of music and dancing that stole across the fields from the negro quarter which lay beyond. In the rear of the grove, and just at the entrance to the orchard, stood a neat little building, consisting of two rooms, the residence of the gardener. The lights in the mansion near by had been extinguished, and the family had apparently retired to rest. A single candle burned in the window of the gardener's lodge, but revealed no one within.

Following the path, Squire Foster passed just under this window and by the lodge, when suddenly his attention was attracted by the suppressed tones of an angry voice near by. Following with his eyes the direction of the sound, he saw, in one of the garden walks, two figures moving slowly up and down—a man and a woman—the man talking in an excited undertone, and frequently pausing in his walk to give more emphasis to what he said. Squire Foster was about to pass by them, and proceed on

his way, when a single word caused him to pause unconsciously, and to listen to the colloquy that passed between them.

"I tell you it must be done," said the man. "I've done your dirty work long enough. You cannot and shall not deceive me. You must choose between that bastard and me. Give him his portion, a liberal one if you will, and send him away; or come with me, and leave him here in possession; but your promise must be fulfilled. I have not run my head into the halter a second time for him. You must now make a decision. He shall lord it over me no longer."

The woman replied in a low tone, and but a few words of her reply could be heard. Among these were the words "health so bad," and "looking wretchedly," and "little time," all spoken in a pleading tone and with an appealing gesture.

"Don't talk to me of delays!" the other blurted out. "What do I care, and what should you, for his health? He shall bully me no longer! If he does, I tell you I feel that another ——" here his words were lost in the increasing distance, as they walked to the further limit of their promenade. They stopped a long time, and a striking and impressive pantomime of anger and rough impatience on the one hand, and of the most agonizing entreaty on the other, was all that revealed to Squire Foster the nature of the conversation.

Presently the man turned roughly away and

walked a few paces off from the other, leaving the woman in a position of seeming despair. Her arms hung listlessly by her side, and she appeared almost ready to faint from the violence of her emotions. After a little time, however, she recovered herself, and walking with something like a reassured air to the man, who stood apart, she laid her hand on his shoulder, and talked for a few minutes rapidly, and then turned as if to leave him. He caught her hand as she turned away, and the more subdued tone in which he spoke, and the more conciliatory gesture which he used, seemed to indicate that a better understanding had at last been arrived at between them. She listened to him approvingly, and they then left the orchard and passed to the deeper shadows of the grove near by. Stopping near Squire Foster, the woman said: "It shall be done within a week, and then we can consider: do you agree?" "Upon the condition which I named," the other replied, and the two separated. As the woman passed by, Squire Foster was greatly surprised at recognizing her to be Mrs. Mabel Lynne. Bewildered and confused all this time that he had stood there an unwilling listener, he was now quite confounded at the recognition he had just made. He stood rooted to the spot;—then a feeling of fear, of dread of discovery, came over him, and almost froze the blood in his veins. From shadow to shadow and from tree to tree he slipped away, until he had gained a considerable distance, when he hurried across the orchard and into the road beyond.

The strange scene of evident passion and misery that had been enacted in those silent garden walks haunted him on his way. Passing by the negro quarter, he saw the merry dance and gleeful sports of the negroes, young and old, as they kept time to the music of the banjo; and he could not help comparing the happiness that abounded in that little village with the silent sorrow that seemed to rest like a pall upon the mansion hard by. How nearly universal, he thought, is the truth that the slave is happier than his master; and how short-sighted and false is that philanthropy that would rend these happy creatures from their homes, and strive to replace the content of their simple lot with the care, and grief, and sorrow that belong to the free and independent man! Beguiled by these reflections, he soon found himself at his home; and having revolved in his mind the mysterious nature of what he had so unintentionally seen and heard, he determined to reveal to no one the incidents of his homeward walk.



## CHAPTER XX.

"It were all one,  
That I should love a bright particular star,  
And think to wed it."

*All's Well That Ends Well.*

A FEW days after the event narrated in the conclusion of the last chapter, Bertha Lynne and Florence Foster returned from school to spend the summer vacation, and it was determined that they should join Cecil Lynne and his wife in a tour that was projected among the mountains. Cecil Lynne's health, indeed, had become an entire wreck. Joined to his ill-health were the most distressing fits of despondency, which threatened to overwhelm his reason. For years past he had been a recluse at Walnut Hill, and the repeated efforts of his family physician, united with the tender entreaties of his wife, had hitherto failed to induce him to seek relief in a change of air and scene. Now, however, his mother, who still retained by the strength of her affection much influence over him, urged him to travel a while, and urged him in such a manner that he could not refuse. He reluctantly consented, and the little travelling party soon thereafter set out across the country to a rustic watering-place that lay among the mountains at some distance from Sheltern.

Hence it was that Godfrey, when he came home for the vacation, did not meet Bertha and Florence. Charley Foster, after spending a few days at home, set out to join the party at the Springs, from which place he proposed to proceed to college at the beginning of the next session.

Godfrey did not accompany his friend on this expedition, for obvious reasons, but spent his time at home and at Sherrod's Rock. The pride of Father Godfrey in the handsome and manly boy passed all bounds. With all a parent's fondness he welcomed him on his return, and insisted that he should be a more frequent guest than ever at his fireside. A large portion of his time was accordingly spent with his venerable friend in the improving and delightful intercourse which his society afforded; and the summer soon slipped away and brought back again the beginning of another collegiate year.

Charley Foster found his friends comfortably installed in a neat little cottage on the banks of a lake among the mountains. The place was a very beautiful one, surrounded by lofty mountains and embowered by a rugged and almost impenetrable forest. The number of visitors was small, and each family or party occupied a separate cottage, thereby rendering the society as exclusive or as sociable as each might choose for himself, and depriving it of that publicity which renders the word "retreat" a misnomer of most places of summer resort to which it is applied. Cecil Lynne's health was visibly improved;

and as for his wife, she was happier than she had been for many a long year past.

Bertha was now sixteen, and had already developed into the surpassing beauty which her childhood had promised. Tall and slender, yet with a form of matchless grace, every action abounded in that exquisite poetry of motion which is only embodied in the elastic movements of a beautiful, and blooming, and innocent young girl. Her hair was of that fair auburn hue which poets so often have described, yet which is so rarely seen; and her eyes were deeply and darkly blue with an expression of softness and timidity, and sometimes of "sad surprise," that is so dangerous because it is so beautiful. A very lovely girl, indeed, was Bertha Lynne, and so gentle and simple that even envy was disarmed, and all who saw her yielded to her unaffected grace the tribute of their love. Around her father's gloomy heart she had twined herself like the tendrils around the rough oak-tree, and he idolized her with a devotion that knew no bounds.

Charley Foster was deeply impressed with the rare beauty and grace of his old sweetheart and companion. The devotion which he had hitherto paid to her was of that noisy and boisterous kind which school-boys often display towards their little loves, and which has no deeper source, most frequently, than the desire that exists in every boy's mind to assume the protection and proprietorship of some dependent little piece of feminine humanity, in order to show his

own superiority and manliness. Now, however, this feeling gave place to another, more subdued, yet far more profound and engrossing. His boisterous and often rude self-complacency was succeeded by the most modest and fearful bearing while in her presence. Her slightest word became his law, and he attended every look and motion of hers with the obsequiousness of an Eastern slave.

Bertha did not seem to notice this change in her old companion. Her manner towards him was the same that it had always been—open, candid, and sincere. Sometimes, indeed, she rallied him upon his loss of spirits, and wondered what had become of his old ringing laugh that they needed so much, she said, to wake the echoes that slept among the hills. Poor Charley was indeed as gentle now as he had been noisy before. He became addicted to poetry, and even flowers; and the ludicrous blunders that he sometimes made in his awkward attempts at sentiment, provoked the merriment of Bertha, and the displeasure of his watchful and accomplished sister. "Charley," the latter would sometimes say to him when they were alone, "what has possessed you of late? Don't you know that you are pursuing a wrong plan? Leave poetry and flowers alone, and be a man as you used to be. You are more likely to please somebody by your natural good sense and your cheerful spirits than you ever are by this twaddle that you yourself do not understand. The flowers that bloom on Parnassus are too delicate to be plucked by your

rude hand, and even after they are plucked, you have not skill enough to arrange them into an acceptable offering. Be natural—be yourself again, and you will do much better."

But Charley did not understand all this. He was moon-struck, poor boy, and only sought to approach with the sweetest offerings the shrine of the fair goddess whom he adored.

Thus the summer passed away. Boat excursions on the placid little lake, by night and by day, and long rambles and rides among the hills, stole the moments away, until Autumn began to fling his mantle of red and yellow over the forest, and to admonish our party that it was time to return home. The day at length arrived that was to take them away from the little paradise they had found, and Charley left them all standing upon the porch of the little cottage among trunks, and boxes, and baggage,—and rode away with a heavy heart towards Tidmouth, where the duties of his college-life were awaiting him, and where, indeed, he had been due more than a week before.

"Godfrey," cried out Charley, as he entered their room upon his return, "I've had a glorious time up in the mountains this summer! You ought to have been with us, my boy. Such beautiful moonlight rides on the lake, and such delightful pic-nics among the hills! You haven't seen Bertha Lynne in some time. Ye gods, how beautiful she has grown! Such eyes! She inquired after you one day, and asked

why you did not come. By-the-way, I've got something for you—some flowers or something of the sort—if I haven't lost it. Oh, here it is. Where's old Dick? I must make him bring up my traps."

Godfrey took the little sealed package from his friend's hand and opened it with eagerness. It contained some wild flowers pressed and bound with a piece of ribbon and a note that ran in these words:—

"As you could not, or would not, join us this summer, I beg to send this little gift from the mountains, in token that you have not been forgotten by

"FLORENCE."

When Charley came back into the room, he found his friend immersed in the clouds of Aristophanes, with a lexicon under his nose, and the flowers lying among the books on the table. "Hallo!" said Charley, "have you turned cynic since I left, that you toss the fair flowers of nature to one side to botanize among the dead roots of that horrid Greek? What's the matter, man? You look like you are sorry to see me." Godfrey stammered something about his Greek recitation being due in a few minutes, and threw his books on the table; and in a minute more he and Charley were gayly discussing their respective amusements during the summer that was past.

About a week after this the whole college was thrown into a state of the most intense excitement

and confusion. Godfrey and Charley had been spending an hour or two in the early part of the night at the rooms of a friend on the opposite side of the Campus from their own apartments, and Godfrey had set out to return, leaving Charley to come after him later. Charley was cozily seated in the seat of honor at the fireside, and gracefully evolving vast volumes of smoke from his long-stemmed pipe—(all college boys smoke pipes with long stems)—when a cry of horror suddenly reached him from the Campus near by, and two students rushed into the room crying out that Dean was lying dead on the walk below. Charley ran to the spot, and found Godfrey lying on the ground apparently lifeless, his clothes all drenched in his blood. Taking him up in his arms, he carried him into the nearest room and endeavored to ascertain the nature and extent of his wounds, while messengers were dispatched for medical assistance. It was discovered that life was not extinct, though there were several stabs upon his person, and a large contusion on the back part of the head. A physician soon arrived and succeeded in stopping the hemorrhage from the wounds, when he declared that no vital part was touched, and that with care and attention the patient would recover. The alarm had been immediately given, and the students had turned out in a body to discover and arrest, if possible, the perpetrator of this bloody deed.

Towards morning Godfrey had so far recovered his strength as to be able to speak, when he was

questioned as to what he knew of the assault that had been made on him. That, indeed, was but little. Upon emerging from the entry-door of the building on his return to his own room, he had noticed a tall man muffled in a long cloak, and with a slouched hat over his face, skulking behind one of the oaks that stood near by; but thinking it to be some wild student, he had passed on without further notice. Walking, on, into the moonshine, he had heard a quick step behind him, however, and turning, he had seen the same person following him. The moment after he was felled to the ground by a blow on his head, and after that he remembered nothing. He was quite confident that the man was not a student, though he could not tell why. He had a confused recollection of such a conviction entering his mind at the time the blow was struck, though he could not remember how or why.

All now became confusion and alarm. The exercises of the next day were suspended, and the police of Tidmouth were put in search of the assassin. The town and country for miles around were scoured; but to no purpose. All traces of the assassin had disappeared. There were no grounds even for suspicion. Godfrey could think of no one who bore him such ill-will, and was unconscious of having in the wide world an enemy that was capable of committing so dastardly an outrage. The mystery that hung over the whole affair was the most alarming feature of all, and the wildest excitement

prevailed; but inquiries and even conjectures failed to reach any satisfactory conclusion. The college authorities were unanimous in advising Godfrey to return home for a season as soon as he was sufficiently recovered, and to place himself under the protection of his friends. But the day after this startling event happened he received a letter that gave him much concern, and induced him to determine not to acquaint Mr. Dean with the assault that had been made upon him. He saw, or thought he saw, that his removal from college life altogether would be the result of such a disclosure, and he determined to keep the entire matter to himself. A promise was obtained from Charley that he would be similarly discreet in his own letters home. The reason for this precaution may appear from the contents of the letter which had just been received. It ran thus:

“SHERROD’S ROCK, Oct. 12th, 18—

“MY DEAR GODFREY:—Circumstances which need not be stated urge the propriety of my quitting this place for a time. I have already remained too long, it may be, and have exposed myself and others to a risk that it is my duty to avoid. If it be not too late, however, I shall feel more than compensated for the danger, by the delight I have experienced in watching your growing promise, and in doing all I could to promote your welfare. My greatest regret at leaving this spot, to which I am bound by so many



associations, is, that I am leaving you behind me. It may be years before I can see you again, and I must declare to you that this hard condition of my departure I have not been able to consider with equanimity or resignation. The necessity is imperative, however, and must be obeyed.

"I would to Heaven, my son, that I might impart to you, through the cold medium of written words, the intensity of my anxiety for your welfare, and the affectionate regrets which I feel at being hurried away from your companionship. The future alone can tell you all this, and I must not forestall its revelations. Your fortune will be known to me whither I go, and I shall still continue to watch over your career with feelings of the greatest interest.

"One word to you by way of warning: An unseen and unknown danger follows your footsteps. Do not forget this, but seek to know no further. Shun solitude by night as well as by day. Keep in the midst of your friends. At the first indication of danger, fly to Mr. Dean, who knows all, and will protect you. He will be properly advised of my whereabouts, and in due time will send you to me again. Be vigilant, be honest, be true, and God will reward and protect you. Farewell.

FATHER GODFREY."

A postscript followed, written by Mr. Dean, which reiterated, but in terms equally vague, the warning contained in the above letter, and which

expressed even greater anxiety. The mystery that hung over all this was very perplexing to Godfrey, and he was deeply grieved at the departure of his kind old instructor and friend. Coming at the time the letter did, there seemed to be a peculiar and startling significance in the event of the preceding night. But Godfrey could not unravel it, and he determined not to alarm himself with useless conjectures. He was confident, from the tenor of Mr. Dean's postscript, that the intelligence of the danger which had menaced him would insure his recall from college; and such a result he felt it to be his duty to himself to avoid. The danger—though he could scarcely reconcile it to himself that it had been aimed at him—was now passed, and he would guard against its recurrence in the future. He could not brook the idea of being torn from his opening career and checked all at once in his cherished pursuits at college, by an unsubstantial and mysterious agency, that after all had probably resulted in nothing more than some strange mistake. He therefore determined to run all risks, and to keep his counsels to himself. Had it been the safety or welfare of another that was involved, he had decided differently; but surely he might determine this matter for himself, as himself only was concerned. So Charley was muzzled by Godfrey's earnest request; and his next letter to Sheltern spoke only of a temporary indisposition, from which he would soon recover.

## CHAPTER XXI.

"Absence, with all its pains,  
Is, by this charming moment, wiped away."  
THOMPSON.

TWO years and a half passed away without special incident, and another summer had dawned upon the village of Sheltern. Cecil Lynne and his wife and daughter had spent the two preceding summers travelling about from place to place, and Godfrey had not met them during his vacations at home. On one of these excursions Florence Foster had accompanied them, but she had remained at home the preceding summer, in spite of the earnest solicitations of Bertha to the contrary. In this way Godfrey had seen much of her. She had grown up into a tall and stately woman, with fine eyes and hair, and was certainly very handsome, if not beautiful. In accomplishments she had answered the anticipations of her friends, and in the development of her mind she had surpassed them. In her society Godfrey felt a charm which he did not care to repress or conceal, and her conversation fascinated him by its brilliancy and comprehensiveness. She interested him, in fact, and the large share of his time which he spent in her company gave ample proof of it to all who saw fit to observe it.

Charley had spent the two preceding vacations, like the first, in close attendance upon Bertha Lynne. From him Godfrey heard the most elaborate accounts of that young lady's perfections and graces, and of all the adventures that befell them. But Charley, though a devoted, was a lingering lover; and while he gave the most unmistakable evidences of his devotion every hour in the day, he had always lacked the courage to put his fortune to the test.

Bertha and Florence had just finished their education, and come back to their homes. Cecil Lynne, who had returned from the Southern sea-coast, where he had spent the three preceding winters, was projecting a visit to the Northern States with his wife and daughter, during which it was determined to spend a long time at Newport, then in the meridian of its celebrity. After much persuasion, Florence was induced to join them, and the party set off on their travels.

Meanwhile the time had arrived when Godfrey and Charley were to be graduated, and were to cut loose from their college moorings forever. Charley, who made no pretensions to ripe scholarship or extraordinary attainments, had yet succeeded, by tolerably close application and good behavior, in taking a respectable stand in his class. Godfrey's career, however, had been an unusually brilliant one. He justly enjoyed the reputation of being the first man in his class, and he left his name enrolled among

those college worthies whose fame is handed down from class to class with a sort of traditionary veneration that none but a college boy can understand. The final day of triumph came at last, when the graduating speeches were made, and the long-dreamed-of diplomas were delivered; and then came the last festive gathering in the college hall—the Annual Commencement Ball. The next morning brought the sad adieus to friends and scenes that were to be left behind forever.

Godfrey had been at home among his friends but a few days when Mr. Dean proposed that he should spend the remainder of the summer and the autumn travelling, before beginning the more serious task of preparing for the pursuits of after-life. To Godfrey's objection that he did not wish to burden him, who had already been so liberal and kind, with that additional expense, Mr. Dean replied that he had been at far less expense than he supposed, probably, and that the plan had already been discussed and agreed upon between Father Godfrey and himself, before that gentleman's departure. He furthermore stated that the time so intended to be consumed would have to elapse before he could receive certain advices from Father Godfrey, which, he said, were desirable to be received before Godfrey should settle himself in life. Further than this vague hint, Godfrey could obtain no intelligence of his old friend of Sherröd's Rock, nor any information that threw any light upon his history, and the somewhat singular

interest taken by him in his own affairs. So earnestly, however, did Mr. Dean insist upon the proposed tour, that Godfrey felt no hesitation in consenting; and it was accordingly arranged that he should accompany Charley Foster on an expedition to the Northern States, which that young gentleman proposed to make.

Travelling in the days of which I write was not so trifling and expeditious an affair as it has since become. The laborious stage-coach constituted the only public vehicle of overland travel. But the world was not so fast then as it has since become. The tedious modes of travel which then prevailed were quite fast enough for our more sober ancestors; and, as travelling was a luxury not attainable by all, it was far more highly enjoyed. The trip which our travellers undertook was a long and tedious one, according to the ideas which now prevail; but it was quite rapid enough for them, and was unquestionably far more pleasant than the short season of noise and hurry and confusion, that would now serve to accomplish the same distance.

In due course of time, our adventurers reached Paulus Hook, opposite New York, and stepped into the horse ferry-boat that was to carry them across to the city. New York was a baby then compared to what she has since grown to be; but she was even then a marvel and a wonder to their untravelled eyes. The river crowded with masts flying every flag under heaven, the busy bustling streets,

and the noise and confusion that seemed everywhere to prevail, presented life to them in a new and intoxicating form. Charmed and almost bewildered by the succession of splendid sights and fascinating pleasures that engaged their attention, several days passed before they had the courage to stop and think out their respective plans for the future. After a week, however, the two friends separated—Charley going to Newport in search of his lady-love, and Godfrey up the Hudson towards Lake Champlain and the Canadas, in search of the beautiful as it is embodied in the fine scenery which those regions afford.

Godfrey proceeded up the Hudson until he reached the quaint old city of Albany, whence he set out across the wilderness that lay between him and Lake Champlain. After spending some days among the romantic scenery that surrounds that beautiful sheet of water, communing with Nature in her wildest and most attractive forms; and having visited the ruins of Fort Ticonderoga, the scene of Abercrombie's bloody disaster and of rough old Ethan Allen's bold and daring exploit, he crossed over to the ancient little town of Burlington, where he proposed to rest a few days before plunging into the deeper wilds that lay between him and Quebec. The morning after he reached Burlington a letter arrived for him from Charley Foster. It ran thus:—

“NEWPORT, R. I., Aug. 1st, 18—.

“Wherever thou art wandering, O most errant knight, deign to raise thy visor and lower thy lance's point, while the faithful friend of thy bosom recounts to thee the joys by which he is surrounded. Doubtless long ere this the regions wherein thou hast wandered are freed from the presence of all monsters and dragons whereby the inhabitants have been held in fear and dread, and many a maiden bright has bound her token on thy shield as a reward for deeds done in her defence. Thy red right hand is surely weary of thy work of deliverance. Listen, then, to the tale of rest I can tell, and come to receive the reward that here awaits the true and the brave. Certainly Calypso and her nymphs have left their island home in the distant Ægean Sea, and have come to spread fair bowers here, and to weave the songs of melody and love sufficient to tempt even homeward-bound Ulysses to stop a while and enjoy the delights they offer.

“Seriously, we are having a glorious time here. Crowds of people and plenty of fun. More stars than the galaxy can boast of, and foreign counts and nabobs enough to furnish a kingdom. Found Florence and the Lynnes here comfortably located, and unmistakably bent on staying the season out. Bertha looking gloriously beautiful, but as arrant a little coquette as ever flirted a fan. She cuts me dead five evenings out of seven, and makes me more in love than ever with her, by making up with me in

the morning. I can't understand her. Come and help me, old boy. You know I'm only half a man when you're away. You're my "*pius Æneas*," and I will try to be your "*fidus Achates*." What that same Achates would have done on the Libyan Strand, but for the superior judgment of his godly friend, Virgil only knows. Come, then, and give me the benefit of your counsels. Turn before it is too late, and hasten to the assistance of

"Yours, as ever,

"CHARLEY.

"P. S.—Florence wishes to be remembered to you, and says that your solitary career has doubtless been splendid enough to warrant your giving at least a short season to the duties of *civilized life*. Alexander the Great, she bids me remind you, turned *sometimes* aside from his course of conquest; and even La Mancha's still more famous Knight would rest at times from the deeds that made him famous. Bertha would no doubt have sent some such naughty message, but she has gone with her father and mother on a boat excursion this morning under the auspices of some infernal foreign count, and has left me all forlorn.

"Yours dejectedly,

"C. F."

Godfrey was in fact somewhat weary by this time of his solitary wanderings, and it required but few of

the promptings of friendship to induce him to incline seriously to the proposal contained in the above letter. Turning aside, then, from his proposed visit to Quebec, he retraced his steps, and hastened back to New York. The next morning after his arrival there he stepped on board a small coasting vessel and ran down the Sound, past the green and smiling coast with its sloping, sunny lawns, and beautiful mansions, until the gay esplanade and crowded wharves announced to him that he was at Newport.

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## CHAPTER XXII.

"This is the very ecstasy of love."

*Hamlet.*

NEWPORT, at the time of which I write, was, *par excellence*, the great watering-place of America. Its extensive hotels were thronged during the summer with the wealth and beauty of the land; and even foreigners flocked thither across the Atlantic, —the wealthy and cultivated to recruit their health, and the needy and the adventurous to recuperate their fortunes.

Among the most distinguished parties at Newport in the year of which I write was that composed of Cecil Lynne, his wife and daughter, and his daughter's friend. Few men were better calculated to shine in a cultivated social circle than was Cecil Lynne. He was a man of much cultivation, and of urbane and delightful manners when it suited him to make an effort to please. Surrounded as he was by all the delights and fascinations of society, his gloomy habit of thought gave way to a more healthful tone of mind, and his health had almost been restored to its original freshness and vigor. His wife, too, reflected the glad change in her husband's mind, and all her old beauty returned. The flush of health and the light of happiness glowed on her cheek and sparkled in her eye.

Bertha, blushing with the manifold beauties and graces of womanhood, was charmed beyond all expression with the life around her. As this was her first season in the great world of fashion, so she enjoyed, with that vivacity that is so admirable in a lovely and innocent young girl, the numberless fascinations that presented themselves to her. Beautiful, and conscious of her beauty, piquant, cheerful, and something of a coquette, as every beautiful woman is, she trod the gay round of harmless pleasures with elastic step and brightening eye, and with a heart that was brimful of delight. Her admirers might have been counted by scores, and all were intoxicated by her rare beauty and the soft and feminine graces of her character. Yet it was easy to see that in the midst of all this her heart was untouched. She was much too sprightly, and entered into the amusements of the place with too much zeal and zest, to have felt the subduing influence of love. Her laughing eye and careless, happy manner told plainly enough that she was fancy-free; and the readiness and complacency with which she adapted herself to the situation in which the admiration of all around placed her, gave evidence that the harmony of one passion had not cast its engrossing spell over her heart. Beyond the smiling present she did not care to look; and certain it is that not one of her devotees had yet succeeded in catching a smile more bright than she bestowed on all alike.

Florence Foster, too, was much admired for her stately beauty; but she lacked the plastic and engaging manner of her companion, and often failed to attract and please by the very strength and force of her character. The two girls were always together, and participated in all the pleasures of the season.

Godfrey landed from the vessel that brought him thither, and, following the narrow street that rose with a gentle acclivity through the older portion of the town, soon found himself in the neighborhood of the great hotels that crowned the highest part, and overlooked the bay. He was speedily installed in comfortable apartments, and dispatched a servant with the announcement of his arrival to his friend, Charley Foster. A few minutes sufficed to bring that vivacious young gentleman.

"Hullo, Godfrey, here you are; knew you'd come; delighted to see you. How are you, and how have you been? You're looking glorious. That comes of going to the lakes."

"Yes; but you're looking somewhat used up, Charley. What is it? I hope you haven't enticed me to a place where all my dear-bought roses will fade away as yours have done."

"No," said Charley; "but I have got an infernal headache to-day. Was trying to sleep it off, when your Mercury woke me up. The fact is, I am feeling devilish seedy, and no mistake."

"But I thought you never had headaches now-a-days, Charley."

"Well, if you must know, I am afraid that I fell into the time-honored mistake of attempting to drown my sorrows in the jovial bowl last night. Nothing heavy, you know; only a glass or two too much of that confounded punch. I was driven to it, old boy," said Charley, ruefully; "but I rather think that I found the remedy worse than the disease."

"Driven to it! Why, I thought your life was all sunshine here."

"Well, it ought to be, but it isn't. I tell you, old fellow, I was desperate last night. How can I help it? *Que voulez vous?* My Phyllis frowns, and I am all undone. I can't understand her, Godfrey. She's a mystery to me. I sometimes believe that she's using me; and then again I think that the difficulty lies in her not even suspecting that I am in love with her. The truth is, I am almost crazy, and if you don't help me I'll abjure your friendship forever."

"Why, Charley, you rave already, man. Your talk is full of mysterious 'she's' and 'hers,' without ever telling me who you mean. Sit down and tell me what is the matter."

"Send for a glass of wine, then; I'm not equal to it without." The wine soon came, and the two friends were about to regale themselves, when Charley ran to the window.

"Yonder she is now. Run, Godfrey. 'Saw ye ever the like of that, man?' She and her father and mother and Florence are going to take a boat-ride. Let's go with them:—but then that cockle-shell of Squire Lynne's won't hold us all, will it? Well, let her go. We'll finish our wine. I'll tell you what we'll do. We'll go to walk down the beach, and be the first to meet them on their return. What do you say? Oh, you haven't made your toilet yet. Well, hurry up. Let your devotions be short, though sincere."

"I'll take a walk with you, Charley," Godfrey said; and, hastily completing his toilet, the two strolled down the beautiful beach that bordered on the "much-resounding sea."

Whether the walk soothed Charley Foster's excited feelings, or the irremediable absence of his lady-love for a time restored his reason, he talked long and earnestly to his friend about the perplexities that surrounded him, and of the hopes and fears that alternately sustained and harassed him. Godfrey listened to all this with grave and serious attention, and sincerely commiserated his sufferings. But when his opinion and advice were asked, he courteously declined to give them, saying that in a matter of that kind no third person could interfere successfully, or even advise with judgment and correctness. In an affair so important as he esteemed this to be, he would not run the risk of advising wrong; and he prized the friendship of his companion too highly to

subject it to the hazard that always attends that kind of confidence. He therefore earnestly assured him of his best wishes for his success and happiness; but begged him not to ask his advice, and even to withhold his confidence in future, as it related to a matter in which he could be of no assistance to him whatever. A little reflection soon showed Charley the wisdom of this, and he promised to fight the battle out alone. His own good sense told him that the warmest friendship could not serve him in the enterprise before him, and he saw at once, too, the delicacy of Godfrey's motive in declining to interfere.

Godfrey himself was sadly perplexed at the attitude in which he found himself. He deeply sympathized with the sufferings of the large-hearted man who walked beside him; but he knew human nature too well not to know that there is nothing more delicate or dangerous in this world than an attempt to serve another in matters of this kind. The long friendship that had subsisted between him and his companion he knew would be endangered, probably sacrificed by such a course; and he wisely resolved to hold himself aloof from it. Underlying all this there may have been another feeling—a hope, a fear—which I need not name; but of this Godfrey was certainly unconscious at the time. Deep in the inmost recesses of the heart there often lurks some motive that shapes our thoughts and actions, of whose existence we are unaware, or which "we name not to ourselves and trust not to each other." From



such an agency there sometimes spring the most virtuous deeds and high resolves, the origin of which, if the truth was known, is little better than mere selfishness or personal ambition.

Be that as it may, the two young men arrived at the understanding given above, and returned to the wharf just as Cecil Lynne and his little party were approaching it from the water. Godfrey did not go with Charley to meet them. He had not met Cecil Lynne since that memorable day at the Hill, and he did not care to throw himself in his way under such circumstances as these. He turned instead, and disappeared in the narrow street that conducted him to his hotel, just as Charley was engaged in assisting the young ladies out of the boat.

The company that met in the ball-room that night was one of the most brilliant, perhaps, that had ever assembled in America. Beauty and fashion united their attractions, and music and the dance lent their assistance to the high carnival of pleasure that reigned supreme. The scene was almost dazzling to Godfrey as he and Charley entered the rooms together. They were rather late, and the dancers had already taken their places on the floor. Godfrey had ample leisure then to take a survey of the room. He had nearly completed his tour, when he felt the tap of a fan on his shoulder, and, turning, saw Florence Foster before him with her hand extended.

"Welcome to Newport," she said. "When did you arrive, and why have we not seen you before?"

Is it true that your travels among those horrid mountains have quite barbarized you, that you neglect us so? or has some rustic damsel stolen your heart and rendered you indifferent to the claims that old friends fancied they had upon you? Come, Sir Knight, explain yourself, or I will declare you recreant by all the laws of chivalry."

"Miss Foster does me too much honor," Godfrey laughingly said, "in asking my motives so exactly. Will it suffice to tell her that I have but just arrived, and that I have ever since counted the moments that must intervene before I could meet her?"

"No; but I saw you this evening, though, when, had you been disposed, you might, at least, have paid your respects. You positively ran away from us—you know you did, and left poor Charley to assist us in our perilous ascent from our wandering bark. But I've been waiting for you, and have actually reserved my first set for you. The floor is now filled, however; so, if you please, we will take a peep at the beauties and worthies of Newport. I fear that Charley made but a poor *chaperon*, from the readiness with which he deserted you when I came up. Let us see if I cannot excel him."

She took his arm, and they repeated the promenade round the rooms, talking more about the past and themselves, however, than about the present and those around them. The time consumed by the first cotillon was thus occupied, the two passing back and forth among the dancers several times.

"But you haven't seen Bertha yet, have you?" Florence asked, presently.

"I haven't had the pleasure, certainly," Godfrey said. "I had but just entered the rooms when I met you, and I need not assure you that my attention has since been too pleasantly engaged to wander."

"Ah, well, come along, then. We will go and find her. You can have no idea how beautiful she has grown, unless that poor brother of mine has been raving to you about her, which is most likely. Yonder she stands now."

Godfrey, indeed, had discovered her long before, and was well aware, too, that she had seen him; and that those glorious eyes had followed him more than once as he had passed the set where she had danced. It was well that his companion had engrossed most of the conversation, for, otherwise, she must have perceived that some magnet had before this disturbed him, and drawn his attention away.

They now approached where Bertha stood surrounded by an admiring group; but that young lady, after the manner of her sex, chose to seem unaware of their coming, and had turned her back towards them. She even tried to counterfeit a look of surprise when Florence led Godfrey up; but it was a poor counterfeit, and gave place immediately to a bright look of pleasure as she extended her hand to him, and a quick blush mounted to her cheek, making her appear more beautiful, Godfrey thought, than he

had ever seen woman before. The other gentlemen gave way before that look of welcome, and Godfrey found himself at once master of the field. An embarrassing silence succeeded for Godfrey; for Bertha said not a word—not even that stereotyped phrase of meeting at watering-places, "When did you arrive?" But he was reassured by the look of genuine pleasure that rested on her face.

"Miss Lynne has not forgotten me, then," he said. "The long years that have passed since we met have been less invidious than I feared, since they have not quite effaced all recollections of her old school-friend."

"No, no," she replied, "you should never have thought that. You were disposed to judge me by yourself, I fear, since this is the first effort you have made to renew the acquaintance of which you spoke. And even now I doubt whether you would have come, had it not been for the fair 'captivity that led you captive' to my very presence."

"I trust you know me better," Godfrey said.

"Yes, I will be more generous than you were inclined to be," Bertha said. "I am too glad to see you again, to pour out the vials of my wrath that have been so long accumulating, for—for not coming to meet us at the boat this evening," she confusedly explained, a pretty blush again mounting to her cheek. "Florence was quite angry with you for running away when you saw us coming."

"Miss Lynne was fortunate in commanding and

receiving a more agreeable attendance than I could have rendered; and hence it was, I suppose, that Miss Florence *alone* was angry at my unfortunate retreat."

"What do you mean?" Bertha asked, her eyes dilating with a look of surprise. "Oh, you mean Charley. Yes, Charley did come, it is true; but I am not aware that his attention could excuse your neglect. But here comes Florence with her partner to make up another set. I'm so sorry that I'm engaged for every set. Do you intend to dance to-night, Mr. Dean?"

"Not if Miss Lynne is engaged for every set," he replied; and giving place to the gentleman that now came to lead Bertha upon the floor, he strolled away.

The night was very beautiful, and from the balcony where he stood he looked out across the bay. The soft shimmer of the moonlight was broken by the restless motion of the waves as it gleamed upon them. His soul was in harmony with the scene, and a suffusive swell of tender recollections came over his mind. Like the distant sails that skirted along the shining horizon, he saw the memories of other days steal softly by, and the olden time came back again and threw around him the spell of its enchantment. The old school-days returned, and with them came trooping back in merry guise the many hopes and joys that made them dear. The Sheltern babbles sweetly near, the path that leads to Walnut Hill

ascends before his eyes, the mocking-bird pours forth her melody of song from the overhanging boughs, and a little fairy flies along the avenue till she reaches the door, and then looks timidly back—all these he sees, and is rapt away from the present and the scene around him, into the distant past. Like the heroine of Wordsworth's charming city pastoral, "He looked, and his soul was in Heaven." Ah, who can tell how sweet the memories of childhood often are? "Like breezes from the Spice-Islands," indeed, they come across the weary waste of years and make us young again.

Godfrey Dean staid long away on this pilgrimage to the past—so long, indeed, that Bertha and Florence both came in search of him. "Where have you been?" said Florence. "We've been looking for you everywhere, and Charley has gone at last on a more extended search."

"I've been back to Sheltern," Godfrey said, "and am the fortunate bearer of many messages of remembrance and love to you and Miss Bertha here. Shall I deliver them now, or wait until another time?"

"Oh, now, by all means," Florence said; "but tell us first by what marvellous means you accomplished so great a distance in so short a time. Have you a pair of wings in your pocket with which you made your flight, like Icarus, but with more success, or are you in reality a second Mephistopheles with power to annihilate time and space?"

"The wings I rode on," Godfrey returned, "were

simply the happy memories which meeting you and Miss Bertha inspired; and whither, indeed, should they have carried me but to dear old Sheltern? Since I saw you I have taken many a well-remembered walk in their company, and the messages I bring are from those old days and from those old joys and pleasures which, though simple, yet love you much, if their remembrance gives you half as much pleasure as it has given to me."

Bertha stood gazing across the water. "I wonder if we shall ever be as happy again," she softly said. "Do you often think of the old days, Mr. Dean?"

"More often than I ought, I fear," he said; "but never so fondly as to-night."

There was something in the tone in which this was said that caused Florence to start and look him keenly in the face; but Bertha remained in the far-off revery which all the while had engaged her. She stood by a column and leaned her head against it; and as the moon, which was sinking towards the west, shone on her face, a pensive and tender sadness rested there, which gave an ineffable charm and grace to her beautiful features. A long silence ensued, which none seemed disposed to break. Finally Florence said, "Bertha has gone to Sheltern too. Shall we let her take her time as you have done, or shall we call her back? The dance is over, and it is growing late."

Bertha quickly turned, and with Florence left the

balcony just as Charley came back from his useless search, and was rallying his friend on his absence. The rooms were now deserted, and the two young gentlemen walked back together to their lodgings.



## CHAPTER XXIII.

"I long  
To hear the story of your life, which must  
Take the ear strangely."

*Tempest.*

THE days that followed were mainly spent in the diversions that usually characterize life at a watering-place. There were the usual excursions on land and on water, the rides and the drives, the pic-nics and adventures wherewith such days are beguiled of their *ennui*, to be succeeded by the inevitable balls and masques, and flirtations and heart-aches that the nights brought in their course. Charley Foster was still ardent in his love, yet timid in its expression, and alternated between hope and fear with a regularity of rise and fall that would soon have proved monotonous to any but a moon-struck lover like himself. This ebbing and flowing tide, however, began at length to tell upon the young man's elasticity of spirits, and his worn look and dejected air scarcely confirmed his own previous commendation of the health-restoring qualities of Newport life. Bertha and Florence continued to tread the same round of innocent pleasures; and though an attentive observer might have observed a slight falling off in their gayety and enthusiasm, that effect was doubtless due to their greater familiarity with the amusements

which the place and season afforded. Even Newport and all its pleasures can be exhausted after a while, and it may be that our young ladies began a little to weary of the continual succession of amusements that were no longer new.

Godfrey Dean was rather an observer of the happiness of his friends than an active participant in the pleasures and pastimes of which it was composed. The quiet and reserved temperament which his youthful life had bestowed on him scarcely fitted him for the noisy merriment and happy *abandon* which belonged to Newport life in the olden time. Something there was, at all events, which made the young man particularly retiring and reserved, and even Charley Foster's repeated appeals failed to draw him fairly into the vortex of fashionable pleasures. He frequently met Florence and Bertha in their morning rides or at the evening balls, but the hearty intercourse of the first evening of his arrival was scarcely renewed between them. Bertha seemed shy and distant, and Florence was more stately, Godfrey thought, than he had ever seen her before. So the rides, and drives, and excursions, and pic-nics were almost all taken without Godfrey, who often walked alone by the seashore, or spent the mornings in long and listless horseback excursions in the adjoining country.

One day Godfrey had ridden some distance from the town, and had reined up his horse on a gentle eminence, from which a beautiful landscape

stretched for miles away. His reins had fallen from his hand, and as he gazed upon the pleasing variety of hill and dale that lay before him, a melancholy mood came over him, and ravished his mind into a deep and pensive revery. Sweet and bitter fancies were evidently mingled with the prospect before him, and imparted to his attitude and demeanor an expression of meditative sadness that harmonized well with his solitude. He was startled by the quick trampling of a galloping horse in a field near by, and as he turned, Charley Foster leaped his horse over the stone fence and reined up beside him.

"I'm glad I found you, Godfrey," Charley said, "for you look almost as miserable as I feel; and misery loves company, you know. We were just returning from 'The Lily Pond' by the road yonder, when we saw you sitting here. Bertha and Florence sent me to cheer you up, you most melancholy-looking man! but in truth I have come to seek and not to offer consolation. First let me sing the 'Iliad of my woes,' and then I'm sure you'll swear you're the happiest dog in Christendom, if for no other reason than from comparing your imaginary ills with the real tortures that I feel."

"Well, Charley; but let us first take a gallop across these fields to the 'Old Mill' yonder, and then if you don't feel better, we'll pull up under the shade of that 'Tower of the Vikings,' and you shall do your story in 'King Cambyzes' vein.' A brisk gallop will make your eyes look red, too, my boy;

and then, like Falstaff, 'it may be thought you have wept.'"

"No more galloping for me," Charley said, dismounting; "throw your rein over that thorn and come and sit here on the fence by me, for I have got something to tell you sure enough."

"Godfrey," Charley continued, as the former dismounted and approached him, "what I'm going to talk about is all very foolish, no doubt; you know what it is; but I can't help it, and I tell you I can't keep it to myself any longer. This sort of thing is wearing me out. I'd rather know my fate at once, whatever it is, than endure this suspense. I don't believe that Bertha ever suspected that I loved her till a few days ago. I never told her, and couldn't, somehow. I'm such a blundering, timid ass, and could never say the thing I wanted to say; or if I tried, it didn't mean what I wanted it to mean when I said it. But, a few days ago, I think, she found it out; and now I know less what to make of her than I did before. She's too devilish kind to me, you know. That's what I want her to be, God knows! but it looks too much like she was sorry for me. Oh! she's the tenderest-hearted little woman in the world! She's an angel, and I'm—I'm a great cowardly ass; and she has known me too long and too well, you know. That's what's the matter. I wish I had never seen her—that is, I mean I wish she had never seen me until now, you know. She might think something of me then. I used to think

sometimes that she was a flirt; but I don't think so now. I wish I did: there'd be more hope for me than there is. And yet I don't know why I say that. I'm such a fool—I've never asked her. What do you think, Godfrey? Do you think she *could* love such a fellow as I am? Give me some advice, for God's sake!"

"My poor Charley," Godfrey said, taking his friend's hand, "what can I do for you in a matter of this kind? I sympathize deeply with you, but this is beyond any assistance that I or any man can give you. Bertha knows that you love her, you say. She knows you too well not to know the value of such a love as yours. How she feels towards you you cannot tell, perhaps. She may not know herself, yet. Women are all enigmas to me, Charley, and to themselves too, I think. Why not tell her at once that you love her? That is the only way, I suppose. And yet you say she knows that already. Why not ask her for her love in return? But then it might be better to wait a little longer. No, Charley, I cannot, must not advise you in this; I might advise you wrong. Don't ask me, I beg of you. Let us go, Charley, it's getting late. It will all turn out better than you fear, I am sure. Come, let's go."

"Hold on, Godfrey," cried out Charley, "I'll ask her to-morrow. I can't stand this. You don't know what I've suffered. I sometimes think you don't care for me like you used to do. No, I don't think

any such thing. You're the best friend I've got in the world; but I know you can't help me in this. What a fool I am! I'm a most valorous sheep, am I not? I hate myself for being so cowardly about this thing. I'll be a man for once, and know the worst. It can't come but once, you know, can it? And what is to be, must be. Well, I'll know to-morrow, come what may. We'll take that gallop now. Here goes—I'll beat you to the 'mill.'"

Godfrey did not accompany his friend that evening to the accustomed dance, but walking out in the moonlight, revisited a spot which was a favorite haunt of his—the beach where Bishop Berkeley long ago, it is said, when he lived near Newport and before he was known to fame, used to walk in the morning and meditate upon the philosophy which has made his name immortal. There in the quiet moonlight and under the everlasting stars, he fancied that he could see and feel the influences which had kindled Berkeley's soul, and taught him a system which first demonstrated to man the great ideal Truth which his philosophy contains. It is certainly a spot that ought to be dear to every devout lover of truth.

Seven cities are said to have contended for the honor of having given birth to Homer. Newport is more highly honored still in having been the birth-place of the philosophy of Idealism, a philosophy that has revolutionized the world of thought, and suggested at last to man that mind and soul alone constitute the great universe of God.

Godfrey had paced backwards and forwards a long time in this lonely spot, revolving in his mind the present and prospective result of Berkeley's philosophy, and endeavoring to penetrate as far as mortals may into that wonderful realm of Soul, and Thought, and Love which fills the Infinite, and from which, to him and to all men, the merely sensible universe shall one day vanish and be no more. The beautiful lines of Prospero, Shakspeare's purest and loftiest creation, recurred to his mind:—

"The cloud-capped towers, the gorgeous palaces,  
The solemn temples, the great globe itself,  
Yea, all which it inherit shall dissolve;  
And like an unsubstantial pageant faded,  
Leave not a rack behind. We are such stuff  
As dreams are made of, and our little life  
Is rounded with a sleep;"

and for the first time he discovered the germ of prophetic inspiration which those lines contained. The philosophy upon which he was meditating was but the development of the idea which Shakspeare had long before conceived—and which had slumbered for decades of years until a Berkeley was born to follow it to its legitimate conclusion. How true it is that Poetry in its highest sense is true Philosophy; and that the Poet, like the Seer of old, often sees by the light of this inspiration the profoundest truths, far in advance of the painful and laborious march of the mere Philosopher!

Godfrey was about at length to return, after making such application of the truths he was meditating

upon, to the events of his own life, as moralizing youth is ever prone to make, when a voice accosted him, and he turned to see Cecil Lynne approach. He had not met this gentleman at Newport before. Both had avoided a meeting. His voluntary approach at such a time and place as this surprised Godfrey not a little.

"You walk late, Mr. Dean," Cecil Lynne began; "and I have noticed that it is a habit of yours; for I am often that way inclined myself. I trust you will pardon me for intruding upon your solitary ramble; but the loneliness of the spot and the hollow murmuring of the sea, though pleasant to me for a time, had begun to grow oppressive. You have been at Newport some little time, I believe?"

"A little more than two weeks," Godfrey said. "I am glad to meet you, sir, and shall be honored by your company."

"I thank you," the other rejoined. "I fancy that our characters may not be very unlike, for I observe that you are not always fond of company, especially of gay company. It has struck me as rather singular in one of your years; for though I have not had the pleasure of meeting you here before, I have oftener seen you in your morning rides and evening walks than you are aware, perhaps."

"It is a habit of mine, I will confess, Mr. Lynne, to spend much of my time alone. It is not because I am different from other young men, I trust, in the warmth of my friendships or the strength of my feelings, but because my early youth was a solitary, and



I may add, a sad one; and I seem to have been rendered by that in some degree unfit for many of the pleasures of mere society. But I need not weary you with these dull reasons. You say I resemble you in this respect. You understand them, perhaps, better than I can explain them."

"No, no," the other replied; "my boyhood was a noisy and a happy one, and I was once as thoughtless and as gay as any you see here. But that was years ago. I can scarcely remember that old time now. I sometimes think that I am a different being, and doubt the doctrine of the individual identity of the soul. Who knows? Some usurping spirit might, in an unguarded moment, depose the soul you once had and reign in your body instead. I often think that such has been the case with me. But that is an old man's vagary. I trust you will pardon me, Mr. Dean, but I have often thought of late that I should like to hear you tell the incidents of your early life—those, I mean, which you say rendered it less happy than it might have been."

"They were very simple, Mr. Lynne," Godfrey returned, "and would scarcely interest you, I fear. My first recollections are of the quiet and unobtrusive life of honest poverty in a distant city whose very name I do not know. I had no brothers or sisters and no companions, except, indeed, my father and mother; and they, I think, were quite as young in their feelings as I was. My mother died when I was very young, and my father and I came to Sheltern—but

the rest you may have heard. I have had the best friends since, but my childhood, if I ever had any, had passed away long before."

Cecil Lynne seemed much affected by this simple little story, and sat down on a large stone which they had approached, and motioned Godfrey to sit beside him. He leaned his head on his hand, and was silent for some minutes. "Do you remember your father?" he asked at length, his head still half averted.

"My recollection of him is not very distinct," Godfrey said—"not so distinct as of my mother. I remember that he had the saddest face, however, that I ever saw, and the noblest and the best. He was a man, I think, rather formed to suffer nobly than to perform heroically. Who can tell which is the greatest part? I often think the former is."

"You do not remember his name—that is—I suppose—in short, all you remember is what you have just said?" the other somewhat abstractedly and confusedly asked.

"I do not remember his name," Godfrey said, "except that my mother called him Robert. I was too young to know much, and I have found none to tell me more as yet."

"As yet?" Cecil Lynne repeated. "Do you expect to find any one, then, that will hereafter tell you more?"

"I scarcely know," Godfrey replied. "I do not know whether I wish to know more than I do. Who

can give me my father and mother back again? and why should I seek to dispel the beautiful dream, for dream it seems to be, which my recollection of their love, and which the mystery that now invests them, have created? And yet I suppose I will know more some day. My old benefactor and friend—he of Sherrod's Rock——”

“Aye, what of him?” Cecil Lynne quickly asked, interrupting him. “Tell me all you know of him. I've heard of him. Who is he? Whence came he? Why was he so much your friend?”

“Most of the things you ask I cannot tell you,” Godfrey said. “I know nothing of his history before I chanced to see him, and I cannot even conjecture why he has been so much my friend, except, indeed, that he is the best of men. The little that I know of his manner of life I cannot, in deference to his request, speak of, except that he was a recluse and a philosopher. The only name I know him by is Father Godfrey.”

“Father Godfrey! Your own name, and—it's very strange!”

“I've often thought of that,” Godfrey replied. “The name is not a common one in this country. The accidental coincidence of our first names may have accounted for his taking a fancy to me; for he was very old, and may have allowed so slight a thing to influence him; and he seemed to want some one on whom to bestow his generosity. My adopted father, Mr. Dean, knows more of him than I, I think.”

“Where is he now—this—this old man?” Cecil Lynne inquired. “He is not dead?”

“I trust not, sir; I hope soon too to see him again, or at least to hear from him.”

“Where is he now?”

“That, sir, I cannot tell. My father, Mr. Dean, told me I would soon hear from him. He left Sheltern some time ago, and I know not where he went.”

“But Mr. Dean knows?”

“I think so, sir.”

A long silence ensued, during which Godfrey had time to reflect upon the strange nature of this interview, and to wonder why he had allowed himself to be drawn into such familiar intercourse with a man whom he had once regarded as almost an enemy, and to whom he had never spoken but once before. An uneasy consciousness that he had allowed himself to speak too freely of matters of which he had not been accustomed to speak at all, caused him to desire to terminate the interview, and he rose to bid his silent and abstracted companion good-night. The other seemed to divine his purpose, and rising hastily, followed him. “I ought to have known these things—that is, I wish I had known you better before, Mr. Dean,” Cecil Lynne said, as they walked away. “What you have said has interested me much, as you have probably observed. I think—nay, I am sure, it is due to you, sir, for me to explain, that if I have ever been rude to you—when you were a boy, I mean—that I wish to tender my apology for

it, as I do now. I wish to know you better; I trust I shall see you often here."

"I shall be much honored, sir," Godfrey replied; "but I propose to leave Newport very soon—tomorrow, perhaps."

"Not so soon, I hope! I may have much to say to you. I should like to know you better before we part. And yet, do you return to Sheltern from here? I may return myself at once."

"I shall not return to Sheltern till some months later," Godfrey said; "my idle time is hanging heavily on my hands, and I must try to diversify it with change of scene. I have remained here too long already."

"That can scarcely be," the other said. "Mr. Foster is here—your old friend, I think. You will not leave him. Does he go with you?"

"I think not, sir. He is indeed my excellent friend, and we left Sheltern together; but he is very happy here, and I cannot expect him to follow me in my capricious travels." Nothing further was said until they separated for the night.



## CHAPTER XXIV.

"If I lose thee, my loss is my love's gain;  
And losing her, my friend hath found that loss."

SHAKESPEARE.

THOUGH it was quite late when Godfrey reached his room, he found Charley Foster there waiting for him. "Godfrey," the latter said as his friend greeted him, "it's all over. I know the worst. I'm glad I do. The devotion of a lifetime is thrown away. I wish I had never come here,—that I had died before I came. God bless her! I love her more than ever. But it is all useless now. I ought to have known it before; but I was purblind, and couldn't see. I will sleep with you to-night, or rather I will try; for I couldn't stay at my own room. May I do so?"

Godfrey was leaning on the mantel, and did not seem to hear his friend's question. A silence of some minutes ensued, and Charley walked to the window and looked out into the night. "My dear friend," Godfrey said at length, laying his hand gently on his arm, "I pity you from my heart. But do not despair so utterly. It may be that you should have waited longer. You may have been hasty—rash. She may change her mind within a month or a year, or at last. Persevere. The prize is worth it, Charley. Do not give entirely up. Stay with me to-night, and we will talk it all over."

"It is foolish, utterly foolish to hope, Godfrey," Charley said. "I am wiser in this, at last, than you are. She is not to be won. I know now that she can never love me. If she were less pure-hearted and simple-hearted, I might hope. If she hated me, I might hope. But she esteems me too much to ever love me. I tell you she suffers almost as much to-night, if that were possible, as I do; not on her own account, but on mine. No, no. She will never love me. She never can. Yonder star is not more unattainable to me than her heart. Come, let us sit down. I must bear it like a man."

Godfrey made no reply, but stood at the window looking out on the water. After a long time Charley rose and said:

"Godfrey, I shall leave Newport to-morrow. I can't stay here any longer. It is nearly daylight now, and I will go and get ready. Will you go and help me?"

"Wait, Charley," Godfrey said. "Sit down for a little, I have something to tell you now. You think, I fear, that I do not feel for you as I ought. Yet I do, my friend, for I have suffered more than you. Perhaps I ought not to tell you this; but I think it is due to our friendship to tell you all. I have only been deterred from doing so before, because I thought it my duty to be silent, when not to be silent might have cost me my friend. I too love Bertha Lynne, and have loved her longer than you."

"And have you told her so?" Charley said, start-

ing up. "You've played false with me, sir, and are no friend of mine."

"You wrong me, Charley. Let me tell you all. No words of mine ever breathed this before. She herself is doubtless as ignorant of it to-night as you were a moment since. Look back and try to remember. Have I not known you loved her? When have I seen her since the old school-days, till I came here? and how often have I seen her here? You, sir, should be the last to accuse me thus. I have never hoped to win her love, or even to tell her of mine. I should have rejoiced at your success, though it would have been the death-blow to all my hopes of happiness. But, Charley, your failure brings no hope to me, as you seemed unjustly to think. My friend has lost, but how could I hope to win? Something has always told me that mine was a hopeless passion, and I had intended that it should die with me a secret one."

"By Jove, she loves you, sir. I see it now, and I humbly wish you joy."

"Charley, how can you wrong me thus, and Bertha too? How can she love me, who have never sought her love? I tell you that I am more to be pitied than you, for my love is more hopeless than yours, and harder to be borne; for it has been secret and unavailing. I should not have told you this; though God knows my only purpose was to show you how much more a friend I was in the brotherhood of our despair."

"Forgive me, Godfrey," Charley said, "forgive me, if you can, for my unjust suspicions. I know you too well to do you more than a momentary injustice. I see now how nobly you have acted. But the magnanimity must not all be on your side. I seem to have had my eyes opened to-night, and can see things that you cannot. Bertha has been changed ever since you came to Newport. Before Heaven, I believe she loves you, though she may not know it herself. Forget me and my misfortune, my friend. I will try to make it my consolation that you, who are worthier than I am, have profited by my loss."

"It can never be, Charley, it can never be. Something has always told me so, and never more plainly than to-night."

"I can't reason with you now, Godfrey. I must be selfish a little while, till I can learn to think of these things with some composure, if I ever can. And now I have a favor to ask of you. I shall sail for Europe soon. My father wished me to do so when we left home, and will not be surprised at my change of purpose. I leave for New York to-morrow, where I will make some necessary arrangements and write home from there. The favor I have to ask is, that you will give such assistance to my sister Florence as she may require and your own plans will permit. The Lynnes may not return to Sheltern this year, and she may need your escort home. Will you promise this? Thanks. Let me see you before I leave. Good-night."

Charley Foster was gone, and Godfrey was left with strange thoughts for his companions. A feeling of self-accusation came upon him; a feeling which vanished before his self-scrutiny when he sought to recall the reasons upon which it was founded, but which hovered over him still, and returned when he thought he had driven it away. That he had not been false to his friend he knew; and that he had never come between him and his love. So also he knew that from his heart he pitied him, and sympathized deeply and truly with his suffering. While he reasoned thus, he felt that he was all that he had declared himself to be to his friend. But the moment that he drew off from the pursuit of this wily feeling of self-crimination, it returned. It may have been that a hope had been born, and that the new-born pleasure it created, grated with incongruity against his sympathy with his friend. Strange mystery of the human heart! He could not tell why or whence it was as yet; he only knew that he was "perplexed in the extreme." And then the memories of the old days crept over him and lapped him in their sweet Elysium. These, more potent than reason, soon drove the accusing spirit quite away. He went to bed, but could not sleep; a vision of past hopes, not dead, but blooming fresh again, rose before him—and then the mighty passion, which had slumbered so long, burst upon him, and swept him headlong, prone upon its tumultuous bosom, far away from the remembrance of his friend's suffering and sorrow, towards a heaven

of happiness that opened before him. He struggled no longer with it now;—for once, at least, he would let it bear him whither it would. Ah! little indeed can he resist it now, if he would. He has cut loose from his old moorings forever; and far beyond the hope of return he rides upon the rosy tide, never to drop anchor again, it may be, till he reaches the shores of eternity. Poor Charley, indeed, is wrecked, and lies stranded and helpless far behind, the waters rolling over him, and all his freight of precious hopes scattered over the boiling waves. But Godfrey could not help him now. Was this selfish? No! Heartless? No! The winds and currents of the ocean sometimes drift a ship swiftly past the stranded bark, whose signal-guns are tolling through the storm for succor and relief in vain. And so was Godfrey borne still more resistlessly upon the mighty current of Love that had burst upon him. Whither will it carry him? There are rocks and shoals thickly scattered all along its course. Will he fall upon them? We shall see.



## CHAPTER XXV.

"But you have made the wiser choice :  
A life that moves to gracious ends,  
Thro' troops of unrecording friends ;  
A deedful life, a silent voice."

TENNYSON.

CHARLEY FOSTER left Newport next morning, and Godfrey, restless and uneasy, strolled in the afternoon into the Redwood Library, to spend a listless, where he had spent many pleasant hours. He found Florence Foster there, seated apart, and holding a book absently in her hand. He could not but observe how sad she looked, as he seated himself beside her.

"Poor Charley is gone," she said. "He has told me all—all," she repeated, looking earnestly in her companion's eyes. "I always thought it would come to this; but I have known what the end would be for some weeks now. I might have warned my poor brother, but what would it have availed him? You saw him off, Mr.—or rather, Godfrey? I may call you Godfrey now, may I not?"

"You have always called me so," Godfrey said. "Please call me so still, and always, if you will."

"Bertha is sore distraught to-day," she continued, "and Mr. Lynne, I have just heard, is very ill. He was thought to be greatly improved in health, but

he exposed himself last night, I believe, and his wife is much concerned about him."

"Indeed, I am sorry to hear that he is ill," Godfrey said. "I met him last night in one of my accustomed rambles, and may have contributed unwittingly to his undue exposure, for we had quite a lengthy conversation. I trust he may soon recover."

"I trust so. I have known few men whom I esteem more highly, and whom I understand so little, as Mr. Lynne. His character is an enigma to me, and yet what I know of it convinces me that it is a rare and an excellent one. There seems to be an impenetrable shadow of reserve always hanging over him, which obscures and almost conceals his natural qualities of head and heart. Yet this does not seem to have been always so with him. Somehow I can't help thinking that he has a history which no one knows, perhaps, but himself; and often, when I look at him, I feel that I would give the world to know what it is."

"I have seen Mr. Lynne but seldom," Godfrey said; "but I will confess that his character has struck me as being an interesting one."

"I have never known such devotion as his wife and daughter feel for him. How much alike Mrs. Lynne and Bertha are, and how beautiful they are in the simplicity and purity of their characters! I used to wonder, Godfrey, why it was that such women, soft and almost weak in their mental en-

dowments, should be so universally admired and loved; and I sometimes thought that gentlemen were foolish or mistaken in their devotion to them. But I do not think so now. Of such women are the wives and mothers composed who elevate humanity and smooth the rugged way to heaven. Such women alone are fit to be what Eve was intended to be for Adam—an helpmeet and companion. What man wants is not strength of mind or energy of character. Not those qualities that would render his wife his business partner, or his business adviser. If he is a man, indeed, he wants not these, but something higher—nobler. He wants truth and love—such truth and love as none but a single-hearted and gentle and simple-minded woman can bestow upon him. And such women are stronger in a certain and very exalted sense than women who claim to be their superiors in mental endowments. There is a fidelity to truth and an instinct which love teaches such women, that reason and learning, and culture can never confer; and she who tries to be more than a mere woman in all these, aims at that which she can never accomplish, and too often sacrifices them all in her fruitless attempt. I wonder what this world would be," she half-sadly continued, "if all women were what I once dreamed of being—what, perhaps, I am. What would become of all the trivial, yet beautiful and touching, household duties and endearments which some women affect to despise as beneath them, yet which

constitute the only real happiness that can ever be known in this world, if all women aspired, as some do, to be great, and wise, and strong? I once thought the gentlemen were wrong. I see now that they are right. But I fear I weary you with too much moralizing. It is indeed my mood to-day; and yet I must not ask you to express your assent to these views of mine, though I cannot but see that you do. Charley has told me that you kindly promised to render me any assistance I might chance to require. Do you return to Sheltern soon?"

"I had intended to leave Newport very soon," Godfrey said; "and a little later to wander back to Sheltern. But I have no fixed plans, and shall be only too happy to wait upon yours."

"I am tired of Newport," Florence said, "and would gladly return home; but I cannot leave Bertha and Mrs. Lynne now. When Mr. Lynne recovers they may go South with me. Our plans are all unsettled. Can you wait and see? or will you return to your mountains in the mean time?"

"I shall remain at Newport, I think," Godfrey said. "There are many things about this old place that interest me much; and then, I can be of readier assistance to you, should you chance to need any."

"I thank you. And yet," she continued, rather archly, "I think I know a reason worth two of that. I've got a woman's eyes, you know, and you gentlemen sometimes know less about yourselves than you think—or, probably I should say, you know more

about yourselves than you appear to think. Well, well; I will not ask you to confess. I don't feel auricular to day, though I have been a little oracular. I only ask you to be my friend, as you have always been. Did you come here to get a book, or to read up on the antiquities of Newport? No? Then will you see me to my hotel? It were a pity I should return unattended, as I came, when I have just met a *preux chevalier* whose *only* business at Newport is to serve me."

When they reached the hotel Godfrey sent up his card, with an inquiry after the health of Mr. Lynne. The reply was, that he was quite sick, but they hoped not dangerously so. Returning to his own lodgings, he ordered his horse and rode far out into the country. The horse he rode was a noble animal, and his airy and elastic motion consorted well with the buoyant and exhilarated feeling that had made him so restless all the morning. What a safety-valve horseback exercise is for the young! A gallop across the country works off the ebullitions of the mind or of animal spirits that, undischarged, often lead young men into the excesses of dissipation, just like the rapid motion of the locomotive works off the steam that otherwise would explode it. I often think that if every young man had a horse and would make it a rule to take a mad gallop every day, the world would be better in every sense than it is. Let some philosopher develop the idea, and in place of "Societies for supplying the little savages of the South Sea



Islands with red flannel shirts and moral pocket-handkerchiefs," we may have "Societies for the elevation of youth and the diffusion of horse-flesh," with far more practical results.

So Godfrey galloped across the country, and soon found himself in one of those beautiful green lanes peculiar to New England, at a considerable distance from Newport. He approached a large square farmhouse, whose rear (I'm not an Irishman) fronted on the road, and in the yard surrounding which stood many apple-trees apparently a century old, which imparted an air of that peculiar comfort and utility to the place which your regular "Yankee" knows best of all men how to blend together around his home. Godfrey's rapid ride had made him somewhat thirsty, and he had determined to stop at this inviting place and ask for a glass of water, when a wagon drawn by two sleek, well-fed horses overtook him, driven by an elderly man with a broad-brimmed hat, of a remarkably hale appearance and with the inevitable side whiskers trimmed close, and the inquisitive twinkle of the eye, which proclaimed him at once a native and a "deacon." Returning Godfrey's salutation, he reined his horses to a slower pace, and proceeded at once to *business*.

"You be just from the 'Port,' I guess?"

"Yes, sir, I am just from Newport," Godfrey said.

"Any news there?"

"None, sir, that I know."

"Considerable people there this summer?"

"I have never been to Newport before, but not more, I *reckon*, than usual at this season."

"Wal! I guess you would be from the South. Here we be to home. Whoa! Won't you stop and take a glass of milk? We have famous good milk."

"I thank you," Godfrey said. "I am rather thirsty, and will do so with much pleasure."

"Hitch your hos there to that post and get down. Ben! Why Ben! take the wagon into the barn-yard; and mind, don't let the horses drink. They're too warm. Come in, sir, come in. This is an old place of mine. Ben standin' here just as it is this hundred year. Here's a bullet-hole the red-coats shot into the house when my father was a boy; and here's a name Capt'n Gibbes, a Britisher, cut with his knife in 1763, afore the Revolutionary War. My old woman won't let me have the house painted again, for fear I should spile it out. Dorothy! get the gentleman a glass of new milk; sit down, sir. So you're from the South? From — State, I guess?"

"No, sir; I'm from —."

"From — State? Dew tell! Then may be you've been in Sheltern village?"

"I live in Sheltern," Godfrey said, "and am recently from there."

"Sakes alive! Then you'd know Benjamin Dodd that lives there, or used to?"

"I know him well, sir. He is our postmaster, and my good and respected friend."

"Old woman! old woman! run here. Here's a man as knows Brother Ben! Why, sir, he's my brother, and I haven't seen him this forty year."

"I'm glad to have met you, sir. Your brother was very well a short time ago. But I don't think you resemble each other much."

"Resemble each other! Why, we're no more alike than a wagon and a wheelbarrow. He's only my half-brother, you see. We had the same father but different mothers. So he is a postmaster, is he?"

"Yes, sir, and is most highly respected by everybody."

"Wal! Wal! Forchanded with the world, I guess?"

"Yes, sir; he is in most comfortable circumstances."

"Dew tell! I'm glad to hear on't. Talks as much as ever?"

"I never heard him say a dozen words at one time in my life, sir. He talks very little."

"Ha! ha! ha!" roared the old man; "listen to that, old woman! He says he never heard Ben say a dozen words in his life. Wal, sir, he never talked none here. I'm blessed if I ever heard him talk any, either. He never spoke a word, they say, till he was four years old. He went to York State once to buy a famous good cow we heard on, and he never said but three words till he got back—'What'll you take?' and the farmer told him 'three pound five,'

and he turned round and come back. So he's postmaster, is he? He was always a deep fellow, Ben was. Everybody as knew him said he was the smartest lad in the *hull* town, and had more sense than any of them. I always knew he'd make his mark. Is he fat?"

"Yes, sir, he is a very large man."

"There now, old woman! You see, sir, he was fat when he was a boy afore he was big enough to go to market; but when he growed up and had to go to market, for I was sick mostly then, he couldn't get along in these parts, somehow. He began to fall off. Folks was always *speerin'* questions at him, you see, and trying to make him talk, you see, and he couldn't stand it. He used to go to meetin' regular, and one day they got him to join a debatin' club somehow down in the village: and one day he went there and they told him it was his turn to speak next, and unless he made a speech he'd have to pay a fine; and he come home lookin' white as a sheet. So he beckoned me to come to the door, and when we got to the barn yonder he took me way behind it and says, says he, 'Ephraim, I'm going South.' 'No?' says I. 'The climate don't agree with me,' says he. 'Tell the old man,' says he; and he walked back into the house. I knew it was no use to talk to him. So did all of them. And he left, sure enough. So he's postmaster, is he? Wal, I swan. He never writ me that. How long has he been postmaster?"

"More than ten years that I know of, sir."

"Ha! ha! ha! Wal! he writ me a letter only last year, and never said a word about it. This was all he writ: 'All well. How's all?' So he's forehanded, is he? He'll maybe go to the Legislater some day?"

"I should not be surprised, sir. He is highly respected, and very popular."

"But do they talk much in the Legislater down your way?"

"I've heard it said, sir, that they don't do much else," Godfrey said, highly amused.

"Sakes alive! Don't let 'em send Ben, then. It would be the death of him. Remind him of the debatin' society, and he won't run. Ha, ha, ha! Don't forget to tell him that. What, you're not bound to go? Stop all night. You can't? Wal, come and see us again afore you leave. I've got a heap of questions I want to ask you. Anybody will tell you all about Deacon Dodd. That's my name. What might be your name? I swan, I like to forgot to ask you."

Godfrey replied to this and a dozen other questions, and finally took his leave of the worthy Deacon, much amused, and ruminating much on this strange freak of dame Nature in bestowing "Uncle Ben" upon the world in such a land as this and with such a brother. Of "Uncle Ben's" sagacity, however, he no longer had any doubt, if he ever had. For he felt right well convinced that had he remained "in these parts," it surely would have been "the death of him."

## CHAPTER XXVI.

"There is sweet music here that softer falls  
Than petals from blown roses on the grass,  
Or night-dews on still waters."

TENNYSON.

CECIL LYNNE'S illness proved more serious than was at first supposed, and for some days the greatest fears were entertained for the result. His wife and daughter never left his bedside, but watched over him with that tender and tireless devotion which constitute the glory of their sex, and which in this instance, as in thousands of others, no doubt saved the life of the patient. During all this time Godfrey never saw them, nor did he seek to do so. The offices of domestic affection are sacred and retiring, and not to be profaned by the assistance of stranger hands. At length, however, the patient was declared to be out of danger, and Godfrey ceased his daily visits of inquiry, and fell back upon his old listless and truant habits. Deacon Dodd was not forgotten in his rambles, and the inquisitive curiosity of that worthy functionary was as nearly satisfied by the young man's communicativeness, as lay in the power of mere humanity.

One day Godfrey had returned from a visit to the worthy Deacon, and seeing Bertha and Florence seated in the grounds that surround the Redwood

Library, he joined them. Bertha was looking somewhat pale from her long confinement to the house, but more beautiful than he had ever seen her before. She made no reply to his greeting, but he thought he saw a quick flush steal to her cheeks, and he was sure her hand trembled as she placed it in his. He was fain to retain the trembling little hand too long, it may be; for it was presently withdrawn; but so gently that he almost fancied he held it still.

"I am very glad to meet you," he said. "I saw you and Miss Florence here, and could not forego the pleasure of offering my heartfelt congratulations. Am I *mal apropos*, Miss Florence?"

"Oh, no," Florence said. "Sit down, pray. I had been speaking of you a moment since; and Bertha was thinking of you, no doubt, for she had that far-off look in her eyes which you remember on the balcony the first night you came. Nay, I'm sure of it. This is an Italian afternoon, is it not? Come, help us enjoy the '*dolce far niente*.'"

"I'm on the banks of the Arno already," Godfrey said, "and will dream with you till the stars peep out; yes, and until they fade again, if you will stay so long."

"What shall we dream about, then?" Florence asked; "for if you and Bertha don't tell me, I'm sure you two will soon wander off together into the dream-land of Sheltern in the olden time, or some other fairy country, and I shall be left alone."

"Let us dream of the future," Godfrey said. "Perhaps we may all travel together through that 'undiscovered country;' and pleasant as the past is, the future interests me more."

"No, no," Bertha said; "let it be of the past, and of dear old Sheltern. I like not the future. The future is too dark for me sometimes."

"Yes, but, Bertha, we can often read the future by the light of the past," Florence returned. "However, you see how it is, Godfrey. I'll run and get a book I want, and speak to that dear old librarian. Do you know he's in love with me? Who knows but I may some day be first assistant librarian to the famous Redwood Library? Heigh ho! An old man's darling is better, etc., you know. If I stay too long don't hesitate to call me." And away she ran.

"Florence tells me," Bertha said, "that you have fairly explored all the country round Newport; that you have become quite pastoral, in fact. What rosy-cheeked Yankee lass has won your heart?"

"Ah, Miss Bertha, it is very long since I've had a heart to lose. How strange it has been, that I should have seen you so little during the month I've been at Newport!"

"Not so strange, I think," she said. "When you first came, it was your own fault, was it not? Or rather I should not say fault. But I used to see you every day then, did I not? and I'm sure I was much gratified by your constant inquiries after my poor father during his recent illness. He often spoke of it, and my mother wishes much to thank you."

"But when I met you, Miss Bertha—before your father's illness, I mean—we rarely exchanged a word. I fear you thought me very inattentive."

"Oh, no, indeed, Mr. Dean; I never thought of that. Do you know, I do not value my friends for what they say to me. I'm sure it gave me as much pleasure to meet you, and—and hear you talk with Florence—a great deal of pleasure, I mean. But do you return to Sheltern soon? How distant it seems to me now, and how far, far off are our old school-days! Do they not seem so to you? I often, often think they were a dream, indeed."

Then they spoke of the old time—prattled on as only lovers and children talk, toying with each fond memory, and returning again and again to each well-remembered scene. Bertha talked little, it is true, but looked away and saw the stars peep out, and heeded not their coming, while Godfrey beguiled the happy hour with the dulcet tones of love. Not that he told his love in words; that was unnecessary. There is a language which you and I have heard, gentle reader, and which haply still is yours, whose accents shape not themselves in words, but a language, for all that, which is spoken in every clime and is understood everywhere alike. Among the fabled hills of Greece, and by the rapid Po, along the storied banks of Father Rhine and deep among the wilds of Indian forests, the same sweet language is spoken and understood—the universal language of man—the only language that survived the confusion

in Shinar's plain, and still survives and must survive while Truth and Beauty last, and human hearts can love.

Finally, Florence rejoined them. "Are you here yet?" she said. "Don't you know it is getting late? I don't believe you ever would have called me. Why, I've been half through the Talmud, and discussed ever so many Rabbinical theories with that dear, dry old librarian, since I left you. Come, Godfrey, on the way to our hotel you shall tell me what you were saying all this time, if Bertha will let you."

They hastened on their way, for Bertha all at once became anxious to return as soon as possible. But little was said, as may be supposed, except by Florence, whose hour's conference with the Rabbins seemed to have rendered unusually voluble, though not in regard to them or their mysteries. When they reached the hotel Bertha quickly disappeared, and Godfrey thought again of the little nymph at Walnut Hill who used to fly along the avenue to the door while he stood lingering at the gate.

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## CHAPTER XXVII.

"Time's glory is to calm contending kings,  
To unmask falsehood and bring truth to light.  
To set the seal of time in aged things,  
To wake the morn and sentinel the night,  
And wrong the wronger till he render right."

*Rape of Lucrece.*

WHEN Godfrey returned to his lodgings, as he did an hour later, he found a note from Cecil Lynne requesting him to call, if convenient, in the course of the evening. The note had been left at his rooms early in the afternoon. He waited on him immediately, and was received by Mrs. Lynne, who, at her husband's request, retired at once from the room. Cecil Lynne was sitting in an easy-chair, and looking much reduced and older by at least ten years than when Godfrey saw him last. He motioned his visitor to a chair, and sat for a long time as if in a painful revery. After a while he said :

"I have requested you to call on me this evening, sir, to say that to you which I never yet have spoken to any, and which I trust you will preserve inviolate for a little time longer. Perhaps I should not speak it yet; but something impels me to it which I cannot resist. I feel somehow that my life as well as my happiness depends upon my candor to-night. The best years of my manhood have been one un-

coasing struggle against the impulse which I am about to follow now. At your age, young sir, I was as happy as the days were long, and as innocent and guileless as a child. A bright future seemed before me. All that wealth could bestow or ambition desire appeared within my grasp, and I had a heart to appreciate and enjoy them all. A pleasant home and affectionate friends, a gentle and devoted wife—all things seemed to conspire for the assurance of my success and happiness. And yet this assurance was suddenly snatched away, and my life has been one of utter and despairing misery. On the very day that I was elected for the first and last time to any public office, and all my ambitious dreams seemed in the full course of being realized, a train of events began which shattered all my plans, and made me what I since have been, a wretched, helpless, hopeless man. Do you remember the day when you and your father came up together to Walnut Hill, and do you know what his purpose was in coming?"

"I remember it very well, sir; but I was too young to understand why my father went there, if, indeed, he ever told me," Godfrey said, much surprised by the words and manner of his host.

"Your father, sir," said Cecil Lynne, looking anxiously round the room, and speaking in a low tone, "was my elder brother—my half-brother, and he came to claim his inheritance. Have you never suspected this before? Did no one ever tell you this? Strange! and yet, I remember, you could not

have known it. The night before, I had seen him and you, as you walked up to the tavern, and, coward-like, I did not speak to him, though I knew him then, and have seen his haggard face many a weary night since. Coward-like, most coward-like, I rode away, and when I reached home I told my mother. She had told me that my brother Robert was dead, and I had believed her. She reasserted it, and with the imperious mastery she had over me, she refused to listen to my expostulations, and commanded me to leave the future to her. Then it was that I committed the crime for which my life has been one long expiation. I did not believe, but I obeyed her. She told me, and I knew, that the success of my brother's claim would make me a beggar, and I weakly trusted to her. Ah, sir, that I should have to accuse my mother thus! Her life has been one of untiring devotion to me, and if she has done wrong, it all grew out of love for me. No, no, the sin was mine. I should have disobeyed her to have done right—should have followed my own good impulses—should not have played the coward's part as I did. Next morning I left home purposely—purposely to avoid doing right. While I was gone your father came, and what occurred I never knew—I never had the heart or the courage to inquire. I only know that your father came and went heart-broken away, and that the same day he committed suicide down the Sheltern, and left you an orphan in the world. From that day I was a changed man. The fools, the dullards in the

village, suspected nothing; or, if they did, they gave their thoughts no utterance. Oh that they had! How often have I wished that Mr. Dean had come forward and asserted your origin, and given some aid to my cowardly resolution in helping me to repair to you the wrong that had been heaped upon your father. But my mother, sir, held me in the most abject thralldom to her will. We never spoke on the subject, but I had no more strength to resist her wishes than a child. I weakly, basely, allowed her still to govern me, but I writhed under her control. I should have gone on thus, no doubt, had I not chanced to meet you the other evening on the beach. There you told me what has nearly cost me my life or my reason, but in it I now see a happy release from all my misery. *Father Godfrey is my father—and your grandfather!*"

"Your father!—and my grandfather!" cried Godfrey, starting to his feet. "No, sir, that cannot be!"

"Aye, but it is. I feel it. I know it. Fool, fool that I was! I never dreamed of this before. They told me that my father was lost at sea—so it was reported and believed. I had heard, indeed, of a strange old man—a hermit at Sherrod's Rock; but I never saw him, and never made special inquiry about him. But the truth burst upon me, I know not how, as I talked to you on the beach, and now I know it all. Ah, that I had known it before! He lives, you say? Thank God, thank God. I know it now, and Walnut Hill is his, not mine—not mine, and never

shall be—it is his, and shall be yours—shall be Robert's son's. Thank God I now see my way to happiness again." He rose from his seat and raised his hands, trembling with emotion, as if in thankfulness to Heaven.

Godfrey rose also in speechless astonishment. He had never heard or dreamed of this before. He could not fully understand it now. Of his father's and his grandfather's history, which the reader already knows, he had heard nothing. He could not believe it. He did not dare to believe it. And yet there was a certain congruity between the tale he had just heard and many mysterious and unexplained events in his own life that almost forced him to believe. He could not speak—he scarcely could think, so utter was his amazement. Cecil Lynne sat down, and asked his guest to sit also.

"It is over now," the former continued—as if speaking to himself—"it is over now, and I am safe. I've told it all at last: my mother can't drive me back from my purpose now. Had I seen her first she might have controlled me still, but now it is too late. And now, sir, though you must hate me, and I deserve your hate, I have one request to make of you. I know I am at your mercy, and I have one boon to beg of you. Do not disclose this for a little time—till I have done something to save those who love me from the consequences of my crime. My wife and daughter have no knowledge of this. Help me to shield them from it by your silence for a little

while. I should not have told you yet, but that I was afraid to trust myself, with this untold, to my mother. My plans are these: My wife and daughter must not know this. It would kill them. I will leave them here, and to-morrow I return to Sheltern. I am strong enough—I feel better than I have felt for years. I will there tell my mother all, and bring her away with me. Yes, I will bring her away with me; for I have had the strength to do that to-night which will make me her master now. I will take her—for she loves no one on this earth but me—and my poor wife and child, and we will go to Europe—to Italy; and when I have left them in some quiet and secluded spot, I will go and find my father and return him his own—his own and Robert's—yours. Mr. Dean, you say, knows where he is. My wife has a little fortune of her own, recently bequeathed to her, and that will amply suffice for our wants. Walnut Hill, with all its improvements and its increased value, will be restored to its rightful owner; and then when I have found my father, and on my bended knees asked him to forgive me, I shall be happy again. Will you allow me to do this?"

"Mr. Lynne," Godfrey said, with great emotion, "I cannot comprehend all this that you have told me. I must believe that you are mistaken. Yet even if all you say be true, I think you blame yourself unjustly. Of my poor father's death I cannot see that you are guilty, or that you are to be blamed



for more than a momentary indecision which has produced all these evils, and which you have expiated a thousand times over. Why, then, sir, from a mistaken notion, should you rob your wife and daughter, banish them and yourself from your country, and, it may be, make them miserable for life? If, indeed, Father Godfrey is your father, how can he fail to love you when he knows what you have told me to-night? For my father's portion of Walnut Hill, I need it not—my friends have given me enough, and more than enough, already—nay, I will not have it! The rest is yours, and all shall be yours if Father Godfrey will so allow. I will seek Father Godfrey—it is I that must seek him and tell him these strange things, and I will beg him to forgive you—to come to you and to give you all. I need it not—he knows I need it not, and I will tell him that I will not have it. This I will do. And for your part, sir, let me tell you from my heart that if you fancy you have done me wrong, as perhaps you have, though I well can understand how your unhappy fortune has driven you to it—if you desire my forgiveness, it is freely given, and I shall be glad to be considered your friend.”

“Sir, you are generous, and I thank you. But I will not be turned from my purpose. The way I propose to take is the only road back to honor and happiness. I would not continue to hold Walnut Hill for all that earth can bestow. My wife and daughter will be happy with me. That I know.

They are only unhappy when I am so. My plans are fixed. Nothing can change them. I leave to-morrow for Sheltern.”

“Mr. Lynne,” Godfrey said, rising and approaching him, “this is not the time, perhaps, for what I am about to say to you; but I think it due to you and to myself to be frank and candid. I love your daughter, sir—I have long loved her, though, until lately, with a hopeless love. Hopeless I fear it still may be, but I have dared of late to dream of success, and I had intended, as soon as I might see you, to ask your permission to seek her hand. Should you give me your permission, and I now ask it, let this be another bond between us, and let this influence you to yield to my plans in regard to your future action. I have loved Bertha from a child, and all my hopes are centred in her. Grant me your favor, and it is all I ask. Call me selfish in this, if you will; but I love your daughter, sir, and if I win her hand I shall be happier than all the wealth of this world can make me. Without her the wealth of the world would be worthless to me.”

“Have you told her this, young man?” Cecil Lynne asked, his old stern expression returning to his face. “Does Bertha love you?”

“That I cannot tell, sir. I have never told her that I loved her. Without your consent I would not dare to ask her for her love in return. I beg of you, sir, to think of this, if you cannot give me your consent now.”

"This cannot be, sir," Cecil Lynne said, sternly, after a little; "this cannot be. I am about to extricate myself and my family from the old trouble; this looks too much like reviving it. It cannot be that you are taking advantage—no, no; I do not believe that, and I ask your pardon," continued he, more gently, taking Godfrey by the hand. "I see, sir, that you are worthy of her, and I wish to be your friend. But do not ask this. My daughter is too young—my plans forbid it. I cannot give her up. She would not consent to leave me. Let me beg of you to forget this youthful passion. How unfortunate this is! Let me beg of you to dismiss this from your mind. Believe me, it must not be."

Godfrey bowed his head in speechless grief. All the wonderful things he had heard were quite forgotten. He was prostrated by this last blow, and stood utterly oblivious of everything but his own sorrow. The rosy dreams that had led him on were all vanished now. He stood forlorn and helpless among the ruin of his hopes, more utterly wretched than he had ever been before. Cecil Lynne laid his hand on his arm.

"Sir," said Godfrey, "this last blow quite unmans me. I can only say that you cannot give me Walnut Hill, and that whether or not your daughter is ever mine, she shall never be deprived, if I can prevent it, of the home of her youth. She shall never know what you have told me to-night through me. Though you will not consent for me

to seek her hand, I can love her, and shall make it my purpose all the same, so far as in me lies, to shield her from every harm. I shall hope, sir, to see you again before you leave. Good-night."

"One moment, sir," said Cecil Lynne, following him to the door. "I cannot find it, in my heart to do you wrong. I feel too deeply how much I have wronged you already. Let me think of this strange, this most unexpected request of yours. Let me first carry out the plans I have laid, and then, as events may determine, shall my answer be. Believe me, I am greatly moved by your generous sentiments. Give me and my affairs a little time, and then if my daughter loves you—at all events, I can better think of this then than now."

"Sir," said Godfrey, taking his outstretched hand, "I cannot thank you enough for this, and for the hope which it gives me. In all that I can do to prove myself worthy of your kindness, please command me. Good-night."

The next day Cecil Lynne left Newport, and we must now follow him back again to the banks of the Sheltern.



## CHAPTER XXVIII.

"A fearful sign stands in thy house of life;  
An enemy, a fiend, lurks close behind  
The radiance of thy planet."

COLERIDGE.

GOOD Mistress Margery Thompson has been growing older during the years that have elapsed since we saw her last. She is still at her post, however, and her tavern is still the pride and glory of the village. The redoubtable Jerry is still on hand; and easily does he wear his honors, for he has grown fat in his vocation, and is, if possible, a better listener than ever. Sometimes, indeed, he falls asleep behind his bar, or in his corner, at night, when unusually prosy tales are being told; but no one ever knows it, for he has a happy faculty of waking up in the nick of time, and can laugh just as well then as if he had seen the point of the lazy joke that was being told. Strange to say, Jerry never married, though many a bright-eyed village girl "set her cap for him." Probably he recognized the fact that he was a public functionary, and could not, with justice to his official duties, divide his time with the meaner concerns of domestic life.

One summer evening a little later than the events described in the last chapter, the candles were lighted in the large bar-room of the tavern, and the ac-

customed loiterers of the village had assembled, as of old, to discuss the news of the day. Most of them, attracted by the light, had gone in and had seated themselves in a kind of ring about Jerry, who was lounging on the bar, ready to listen and to laugh at anything that was told him. 'Uncle Ben,' however, sat a little apart in a chair just outside the door, seemingly engaged in an unusually profound cogitation. Joe Shelton, now a well-to-do burgher, sat a little farther off, watching Uncle Ben's face with much attention, and apparently trying in vain to divine his thoughts. Under this scrutiny, however, and in spite of the roars of laughter that occasionally followed some joke within, Uncle Ben sat serene and imperturbable in the midst of his meditations.

"Joe," he said presently, in a low voice, "who is Maurice Saunders?"

"He's old Mrs. Lynne's gardener," Joe said, "and that's all I know about him. You know as much about him as I do. I don't want to know any more about him, for my part."

"He opens her letters," said Uncle Ben, presently.

"What's that?" said Joe, moving his chair closer to Uncle Ben. "Opens her letters, you say? I've heard that he was lord and master on the 'Hill,' but I didn't think he'd dare to do that. What letter was it, Uncle Ben? Where was it from?"

"Newport," said the postmaster.

"From Squire Lynne, I suppose," said Joe. "Maybe he had orders to open his letters, as he is the head man of business on the Hill."

"He tore it up," said Uncle Ben.

"Tore it up!" said Joe. "What! a letter to old Mrs. Lynne? That's strange! What did you let him do it for, Uncle Ben? Why didn't you knock him down? There's something wrong about that villain. I always knew it."

Uncle Ben rose slowly from his chair and walked off about ten steps, when he turned round and beckoned Joe to follow him. He took him without saying a word down to the Sheltern, just under the bridge. "He threw the pieces there," said he, pointing to the water. "I watched him." Saying this, Uncle Ben walked back again to his former seat, and relapsed into his meditations.

"Uncle Ben," said Joe, laying his hand on the postmaster's knee, "you ought to let this be known. Tell Squire Dean about it, and get his advice."

Uncle Ben raised Joe's hand gently from his knee, and shook his head slowly from side to side. Seeing Joe about to remonstrate, he rose again and took his chair inside, where he sat down and lighted his pipe. Mr. Foster—or, as he was called, Squire Foster—had ridden up during his absence, and was chatting familiarly with Jerry and the group around him. They had all been invited by Mr. Foster to take a glass of cider, and he now asked Uncle Ben to join them. Jerry did not wait for an answer, but

drew a glass and handed it to him. Some one rode up at this moment to the door. "Jerry! Jerry Thompson!" said a voice. "Is Saunders here?"

"Why, that's Cecil Lynne," said Mr. Foster, walking to the door. "Why, hallo, Lynne! is that you? Got back from Newport? How are Florence and all? Did they come with you? You don't look well. Anything the matter?"

"No," returned the other. "Florence and all are well. She will come home soon. I am called home on a little business. I'm glad to meet you, Foster. You have been well, I hope. Come over and see me to-morrow, if you can. You say Saunders is not here? I must go. Good-night."

Uncle Ben put down his glass untasted, and went out to where Mr. Foster was standing. "Go with him," he said, pointing to Cecil Lynne. "Hold on, Lynne!" shouted Mr. Foster, "I'm going your way;" and he mounted his horse and rode rapidly after him.

When the two gentlemen reached the gate at Walnut Hill Mr. Lynne invited his companion to stop and take tea with him before returning home, to which the other consented. A light was burning in the southern room that opened on the lawn—the usual sitting-room; and when they dismounted, Mr. Lynne's mother came to the door. "What! my son," she said, embracing him. "Welcome, welcome; but I did not expect you so soon."

"Didn't you get my letter, mother?" he asked. "I wrote you before I started, and intimated the busi-

ness that brought me home. You didn't receive it? Well, I am here any way, and can probably tell my business better. Mr. Foster, mother. Walk in, Foster."

They found Maurice Saunders seated in the room, who rose sulkily as they entered. Cecil Lynne forgot everything else at the sight of this, as he considered it, inexcusable license, and walking quickly up to him, said angrily, "What are you doing here, sir? What means this insolence? Leave my house, sir. I'll teach you to know your place better."

Saunders said, humbly, "I heard you come, Mr. Lynne. I was waiting to speak to you. I wish to say something important to you, if you will give me a moment. I'm glad you've come, sir."

"Sit down, Foster," said Mr. Lynne, following Saunders to the door. "Excuse my impatience with this fellow. He provokes me sometimes. I will be back in a moment."

Mrs. Lynne looked uneasy as they walked out of the door; but seeing Mr. Foster's embarrassment, she sat down. After a little while they heard loud voices out on the lawn, and then a struggle. They both rushed to the door, and saw Cecil Lynne reel, and fall backwards to the ground. Like a tigress Mrs. Lynne sprang forward and wrenched a dagger from Saunders' hand and plunged it in his heart. All this was done in a moment, before Mr. Foster reached them. Mrs. Lynne knelt down by her son. Saunders walked to a walnut-tree near by, and when Mr. Foster reached him he was dead.

The servants of the household now gathered round, and Mr. Foster endeavored to ascertain the extent of Cecil Lynne's injuries. Presently his mother rose, and said, in a low, hollow voice, "He is dead! My son, my son is dead!" The moon was shining, and by its pale light the expression that appeared on her haggard face and in her fixed and glassy eyes was more appalling than the awful presence of death in which they stood. Mr. Foster seized the dagger which she still held in her hand, and which she at once gave up, and led her, unresisting, back into the house. She quietly got her knitting, and seating herself without a word in her accustomed seat, began at once to ply her fingers and thread; but the stony glare of her eyes told all too plainly that she was insane—that the light of reason had fled, perhaps, forever. Bidding some of the servants remain with her, he went back, and found that what he feared was indeed too true. Cecil Lynne lay stark and cold on the sward in front of his door, while his murderer—his crime already avenged—sat leaning stone dead against a tree a few feet away. With the assistance of some of the servants, he removed Cecil Lynne's body into the house through the main entrance, and conveyed it to his own room. When this was decently disposed, he returned, and found that the other servants had already carried Saunders to the gardener's lodge, which stood at some distance in the grounds. He sent at once to the village for Mr. Dean and others, and walked back into the room where Mrs. Lynne was.

She sat where he had left her, knitting busily, yet in other respects motionless as a statue, with her unconscious eyes steadfastly fixed upon the door. She made no reply to him when he addressed her—she did not hear him. She appalled him as he looked on her, and he left the room terror-stricken. He walked out upon the lawn, and tried to remember what had occurred. The wailing of the negro servants, who had gathered in large numbers from the "quarter" near by, formed a fit accompaniment for the horrors of the scene. Gradually the whole, in its awful reality, burst upon him. He felt like flying from the spot, and a terror something like that which seizes a murderer hot from the perpetration of his crime, rushed upon him. It seemed an age before any one came from the village.

Finally, Mr. Dean, accompanied by a physician, the clergyman of the village, and several others, arrived. Mr. Foster met them at the gate, and told them what he knew. After a while they all proceeded to the room where Mrs. Lynne was, and found her still sitting where she did, silent and unconscious as before. To all questions and entreaties she made no answer, spoke no word. All night she sat there, the terror of those who looked upon her. Next morning, when they attempted to remove her by force, she rose with a look that frightened them, and going to the upper floor, seated herself by the central dormer window which overlooks the village, and still plied her knitting as before. They tried to

arouse her, but in vain. All entreaties to induce her to eat or drink were unavailing. She made no resistance to anything but their attempts to remove her. That they could not do. They took her knitting away from her; but she moved her fingers still, as if unaware of the loss. The coroner came, and a legal investigation was had. They tried again and again to elicit her testimony, but in vain. Her son was buried, and an immense concourse of people came to attend his funeral; but she seemed utterly unconscious of it all. She never ate, or drank, or spoke, or moved from her seat. For five long days and nights she kept her awful vigil there by the central dormer window at the old Lynne Place, where she had sat long years ago. They never knew exactly when she died. Those who watched her one day noticed that her fingers were still, and when they felt for her pulse they found that she was dead!



## CHAPTER XXIX.

"News, fitted to the night ;  
Black, fearful, comfortless and horrible."

*King John.*

THE excitement and horror produced by these events in the surrounding country can be imagined, but not described. All business was suspended, and universal gloom prevailed. The family at Walnut Hill had long been regarded with an unfriendly eye. A sort of mystery not favorable to confidence and esteem had shut them out from the world. Cecil Lynne, indeed, had long ago abjured the society, and almost the acquaintance, of those around him. There were those at the tavern on the night of his murder who had not seen him for years, though born in the village. His mother was even less known, and more disliked ; for she never went abroad, and the invidious gossip of the village had not failed to ascribe to her the worst character which even village people can heap upon those they dislike. But Cecil Lynne's tragical death produced at once a complete revolution in his favor. It was remembered that he was a just and munificent man in all his dealings, and his late mysterious reserve was allowed no longer to conceal the many sterling qualities of his head and heart. The older villagers recurred to the time of his youth, and to the many so-

cial qualities and virtues that had then made him so popular. His early promise was descanted upon, and the strange conduct on his part which had disappointed this promise, forgotten. It was no doubt true his eccentricities had made him, after his death, more beloved and lamented than he otherwise would have been ; for people—especially village people—like the uncommon in all things, and are never so well pleased as when they have something whereat to shake their heads and moralize. The crowd that gathered at his funeral was immense, composed of all classes and conditions of men. Not the least sincere among the mourners who followed him to the grave were the family negroes, who attended in a body next to their dead master, and whose fast-falling tears and deep lamentations attested the sincerity of their sorrow.

So Cecil Lynne was buried, while his family was far away, ignorant as yet of his awful death ; and with no one of his blood and kindred to follow him to his grave. From the same church from which years before his brother Robert had been buried—that brother whom he had disowned, but could not forget, whose fate had haunted him through years of unavailing remorse and misery—whose tragic end had likewise been his own—from the same church, to a like grave of blood, he was borne. A few yards only separated them now. Long years the younger brother had wept in secret over his sin, and all the hopes of his life had been blasted by the crime into

which he had been betrayed. Better, far better, had poverty, suffering, and want been his lot, than the golden sorrows he had so dearly bought. And then, his life having been worn out in grief and regret, just as he was about to feel, for the first time in years, the rewards of an approving conscience expected from the expiation he was about to make, death, more relentless in its retribution than life, dashed the cup from his lips, and visited his brother's doom upon him. Let us hope that these sufficed, and that when he died, he died forgiven.

To Saunders, the murderer whom speedy vengeance had so swiftly snatched away in the very execution of his bloody purpose, no such obsequies were paid. At night, by torchlight, the negroes, as a matter of unwilling duty, hid him in the earth, and his name was remembered only to be execrated. As in life he had done no good, so in his death he left no friend to regret him.

But while these last rites were observed, and while people were talking in whispers in the streets of the village, the saddest and most terrible fate of all was that which had transfixed the mother of Cecil Lynne, and left her bereft of all power of regret or repentance for what she had done. The people shook their heads, as they pointed to the window that stared out from the roof at Walnut Hill, and shuddered and passed on, as if afraid to speak of so fearful a thing. The news of her death was a relief to the people of the village; for before, they had looked askance at

the deserted house as they passed along the streets on their business, and when night came they shut the doors and windows that opened out in that direction. Few, indeed, felt for her even in this last terrific calamity, and very few followed her to her grave. She was buried by the son she had loved; but his very grave, which had been hallowed by the tears of the sorrowing villagers before she died, was rarely visited after she was lain there. In life she had isolated him from the world by her love, and in death she claimed him still. For all the wrong she had done out of her abounding love, let us try to remember that unto her that loveth much, much may be forgiven.

As soon as was possible after the horrible events that occurred on the Hill, Mr. Foster and Mr. Dean set out for Newport, to break as gently as they could these dreadful tidings to Mrs. Lynne and her daughter. They had decided not to write, as they felt that it would be better to be there when this terrible blow should fall upon them. Mr. Dean's more special purpose was to find Godfrey, of whose history he already knew enough to know that these things were of interest to him; and as he did not know his precise whereabouts, he consented to accompany Mr. Foster to Newport. He was a lawyer, and therefore cautious and reticent; so he made no mention of what he suspected or knew to be Godfrey's relation to the family that had just been so



awfully visited. Mr. Foster remembered the remarkable scene he had witnessed some years before in the grounds at Walnut Hill, and recounted it to his companion on their way: but neither could make anything out of it. It was evident that some mysterious connection had existed between old Mrs. Lynne and Maurice Saunders, and that the latter had long cherished a strong resentment against her son. What the reasons of these things were they could not even conjecture.

In due course of time the two gentlemen accomplished their journey, and reached Newport one afternoon in September. Many of the summer visitors had left, and the place was beginning to assume that melancholy appearance peculiar to deserted watering-places. Upon inquiry, they found that Mrs. Lynne, Bertha, and Florence had gone out to take a walk, and after some trouble Mr. Dean ascertained that Godfrey had gone to Boston the week before, whence he had proposed to visit the White Mountains. They waited at the hotel until the ladies returned, in anxious suspense and suffering. To Florence, then, was delegated the painful mission on which they came. I need not tell the rest. These sad misfortunes were destined, as usual, to fall heaviest on the least deserving heads. We will not seek to know the dreadful agony that followed that awful disclosure. There are some sorrows too deep for words—too holy to be described.

Mr. Dean left next day on Godfrey's track, and found him at last among the mountains. He was deeply affected by the news the former brought him. He related to his adopted father, under the seal of secrecy, the revelations Cecil Lynne had made to him before he left Newport, and learned from the latter that Mr. Lynne's conclusions in regard to Father Godfrey were correct. He also told Mr. Dean of Mr. Lynne's purpose in returning to Sheltern, and of his plans afterwards. His own purpose, too, he reiterated—not to allow Mr. Lynne's innocent family to be deprived of their fortune, if he could prevent it; and, after much reflection, it was agreed between the two that all this should be kept profoundly secret between them, and that Godfrey should at once seek Father Godfrey, and lay the whole, with his wishes, before him. Mr. Dean had had letters from Father Godfrey recently, stating that he was in England, whither he had returned about a year previously, and that he was living in his customary retirement at Chelsea. Godfrey proceeded to Boston, and soon afterwards sailed thence to Europe.

Upon Mr. Dean's return to Newport, he found that Mrs. Lynne had been quite prostrated by her great grief, and that Bertha was only sustained by her anxiety for her mother's recovery, whose life, indeed, was for a long time endangered. Florence now was their good angel, alleviating their affliction with true womanly tenderness, and sustaining and

supporting them by her strength of character. It was decided that it would not do for Mrs. Lynne to return to Sheltern, and Mr. Foster, whose wealth and leisure permitted, readily seconded the advice of the physicians for a change of scene, by proposing to return to Sheltern, and arrange the affairs of Cecil Lynne, by leaving Mr. Dean in charge, and, bringing Mrs. Foster with him, to accompany them to Europe, where he proposed they should spend the coming year. This being decided, the two gentlemen returned to Sheltern, and, later in the autumn, Mr. and Mrs. Foster, Mrs. Lynne, Bertha, and Florence sailed from New York, and spent the ensuing winter in Paris.



## CHAPTER XXX.

"This secret is so weighty, 'twill require  
A strong faith to conceal it."

*Henry VIII.*

GODFREY found his old friend and patron living in seclusion at Chelsea, but surrounded by all the comforts that his advanced age required. His old servant and companion, Thomas Barron, was still with him, and great were their surprise and delight when Godfrey arrived. A room was at once prepared for him, and he found himself quite at home. The day after his arrival he acquainted Father Godfrey with the strange events that had transpired during his absence, and with the disclosures that had been made to him by Cecil Lynne before his death. The old man was greatly affected by this news, and shut himself up in his room for the remainder of the day.

The next morning he sent for Godfrey and related to him the events of his past life. Such of these as the reader does not already know are as follows: Many years before, he had returned to England, as we have seen, to attend to some business affairs, leaving his second wife and two sons, Robert and Cecil, at home, and expecting to return to America the same year. On visiting the North of England on some business, just previous to his intended re-

turn, he happened by accident to make a discovery so dreadful to one of his refined sensibilities, that it deprived him of his reason for many years. His second wife, Miss Mabel Waters, a distant relation of his first wife, was the eldest daughter of a country clergyman in the North of England, and was celebrated in her youth for her ambition and her accomplishments; and, though poor, had had some excellent offers of marriage. For some unaccountable reason, however, she had fallen in love with a man of the worst character in the neighborhood, a younger son of a baronet, a sporting character of the lowest description, and a reckless, unprincipled adventurer. In the hope of preventing so unwelcome a match, her father had consented to her going to America to visit her relation, Mrs. Lynne, who had invited her to come and live with her; but her lover—Richard Harbuckle by name—persuaded her before she sailed, and after her father, who had accompanied her to London, had returned home, to change her plans, marry him, and remain in England. This she consented to do, and they took up their residence in York, where they lived a short time on the precarious support which Harbuckle's mode of life provided.

About six months after his marriage, Harbuckle murdered a gentleman as he was returning from the races, and robbed him; but he was discovered in the fact, and fled. In those days the detective police was not organized in England as at present, and he found no difficulty in eluding his pursuers, and finally

in making his escape to the Continent. Soon after this, his wife actually sought a home with her relation in America, as her friends thought she had done before, and from whom she managed to conceal her delay; and appeared at Walnut Hill under her maiden name of Mabel Waters. After her marriage with Mr. Lynne, Harbuckle, driven to desperation by his course of life, suddenly turned up at Walnut Hill, and obtaining a private interview with his sometime wife, it was finally arranged that he should assume the station and discharge the duties of gardener, under the assumed name of Maurice Saunders. More than this Mrs. Lynne, as she now was, with all her entreaties, and with all her force of character, could not extort from him. With the sullen pertinacity that belonged to his nature, he suggested this plan, and doggedly adhered to it, threatening that if she did not consent, he would expose her at once to her husband and to the world.

When Mr. Lynne reached York, he found among the letters intrusted to him to deliver, one written by Saunders, and addressed to one Jeremiah Stiles, who, upon inquiry, Mr. Lynne found to be at that time a waiter at the very inn where he was stopping. He sent for the man, who, it afterwards appeared, had been one of Harbuckle *alias* Saunders' old pals, to deliver him the letter with his own hands. Stiles, thanking his "honor," and saying that he could not read, asked Mr. Lynne to read it for him. Thus it was that he learned the terrible truth. Saunders

boastingly and exultingly related the particulars of his good fortune, and asked his old friend, who had once been a most "convenient villain," to come out to America at once, as he had work for him to do. I have already said that Godfrey Lynne was a man of great strength of affection and of exquisite sensibilities, rather than of a robust mind. He loved his second wife devotedly, and she had gained a complete mastery over him. This shocking revelation quite overcame his reason, and as he had no acquaintance in York, and nothing was ascertained as to who he was, or where he came from, by the superficial inquiries that were made, he was sent to a mad-house in the city, in the hope that he might soon be restored to reason.

During the lucid intervals that followed, he succeeded in persuading one of the attendants and servants at the asylum where he was confined, to connive at his escape, and to accompany him in his flight. His sole purpose now, as he truly told his coadjutor, was to return to America and bring away with him his son Robert, the son of his first wife. With that cunning and adaptation of means to the accomplishment of a purpose which often characterizes insanity, he returned to London, transacted his business with perfect accuracy, and invested the large fortune which had recently been bequeathed to him in the funds, giving his business in charge to a banker, when he and his accomplice, Thomas Barron, set out for America. Arrived in the vicinity of

Sheltern, they learned that Robert, his son, had married and been driven away, and had gone no one knew whither. For a long time they searched for him in vain. To find him and take him away became now the one controlling idea of the old man's life. For the accomplishment of this purpose he arranged all his affairs to meet his end. But his son was nowhere to be found. Finally, he determined to wait for him in the neighborhood of Sheltern, firmly persuaded that fortune would sooner or later restore him to him. He and his companion thereupon settled, as we have seen, at Sherrod's Rock, and Barron was sent begging from time to time, both to get information, and to conceal their manner of living. To avoid recognition, he lived in the strictest seclusion, and having procured a well-selected library from a neighboring town, book by book, he devoted himself to study while waiting for the return of his son, whom he all the while expected. Finally, his reading and his long and unsuccessful watch for Robert's return began to impair his memory, when Godfrey chanced to visit his retreat, and by disclosing to him unwittingly his son's death, he was by some strange process restored to reason. At his subsequent interview with Mr. Dean, his course for the future was determined upon. We have seen how this was carried out. The estate at Walnut Hill he determined to leave as it was. His wealth was ample, besides, and he loved his son Cecil too much to ruin him for life by disclosing what he knew.

Any step he might take either in making himself known, or in securing the punishment of the *ci-devant* Harbuckle, would have this effect; so he forbore. Meantime the family at Walnut Hill, supposing that he had sailed in the ship in which he had intended to sail, and his friends in England, having no tidings of him, supposing that he had done so, it was concluded, as we have seen, that he was lost at sea. Once Saunders' curiosity induced him to visit Sherrod's Rock, and certain words which he let fall in the presence of Barron, whom he thought a deaf-mute, as we have seen, induced Father Godfrey to leave Sheltern, and to write Godfrey the letter which he received soon after the assault was made upon him by some unknown person while he was at college. Since that time he had returned to England to attend to his affairs, where he continued to avoid recognition, and from which place he constantly communicated with Mr. Dean. The rest the reader already knows.

The mystery that had hitherto enveloped Godfrey's life was thus at last explained. Of the particulars of his father's death, indeed, he could only conjecture. Whether he died by his own hand, or by the hand of another, could never be certainly known. The secret of his death had probably died with Saunders and his wretched mistress and wife. We will not seek to disturb it, but let it rest.

From the foregoing narrative the reader can easily understand the nature of the relationship

which always existed between Mrs. Mabel Lynne and Maurice Saunders. From a study of the peculiar characters of the two, we may also conjecture how that relationship had been limited, modified, and controlled. Saunders, a man of the lowest instincts, and driven to the direst necessity, sought a refuge in the house of the man who had been deluded into a marriage with his own wife, and forgetting or disregarding the wrong perpetrated against himself, consented to become a pensioner on his bounty, in the hope, it may be, that he might one day succeed to his fortune. Against his claims and his importunacy his sometime wife had naught to oppose on the one hand but threat, and exposure, and punishment for his former crimes, or such maintenance and support in her very presence as he demanded, on the other. Already the two were linked strangely together in crime. The exposure of the one would insure the destruction of both. This fact drew them nearer together. Though they might have hated each other, yet were they indissolubly chained together. Saunders would not leave her. She could not drive him away. He dared not claim her as his wife. She dared not denounce him for his crimes. With that dogged prostitution of all pride, honor, and self-respect, which characterizes the unprincipled and hardened villain, he used his advantage well. But there was a limit which he could not transcend. The woman with whom he had to deal held him in subjection to her own marvellous

will; and while she could not rid herself of him, she yet controlled him. Against his brutal cunning and remorseless villainy she opposed a strength of character and fixedness of purpose almost sublime. One passion she had to which he could never ascend, and whose dictates he could not transgress; and that was her abounding love for her son. That, indeed, became the master passion of her being, and before it she made everything bow. Armed with this, she waged a ceaseless war with her wily and remorseless adversary, and even he was subdued by it. How wonderful, how almost sublime, must this dread contest have been! Bravely and unflinchingly she had fought the fight against fate, against nature, against villainy, against all, still throwing herself undaunted and undismayed between danger and her darling child, and had almost come out a conqueror in the end. That Godfrey Lynne was dead she never doubted. That rock she never dreamed of. Long years she had restrained, with iron grasp, the chafing and ferocious instincts of the fiend who was her arch-enemy, yet her more than friend. Day after day had she held him in subjection by her will; and often at night, while others slept, the battle still raged, and still was won. But the end came at last, and all was lost. Even while she stood on the ramparts a breach was made, and ruin, worse than she had dreamed of, overwhelmed her. While such a life and death cannot command our respect, they surely may excuse our wonder and our pity.

These events, which had been kept secret so long, it was determined should be kept secret still. The actors in this complicated tragedy of crime had been swept at one blow from the earth, and the grief and shame which would ensue from their discovery to the world could only fall on the innocent and unoffending. At Godfrey's earnest entreaty it was even agreed that he should not resume the name, of which he had been so cruelly bereft years before, since such a procedure might too clearly point to his own, his father's, and his grandfather's lost identity. In regard to the estate of Walnut Hill, he found, to his great delight, that Father Godfrey's views coincided with his own. Error and crime had done their worst, and had wrought many fearful wrongs; but they had been buried in the grave, and there it was agreed they should rest. Five persons alone, of all who then survived, knew the facts I have related, and many years elapsed before they were told to any other.

## CHAPTER XXXI.

"She is mine own,  
And I as rich in having such a jewel,  
As twenty seas, if all their sands were pearl."  
*Two Gentlemen of Verona.*

LATE one afternoon in September of the succeeding year, Godfrey Dean alighted from a post-chaise at the door of the principal *auberge* in a small village in Savoy. He had made many devious wanderings along the Rhine, and among the Alps of Switzerland, but he had seen nothing that struck him as more picturesque than the romantic beauty of this ancient little town, and of the scenery which surrounded it. He stood outside the door looking at the lengthening shadows, which the setting sun cast over the valley, when a hand was laid on his shoulder, and a voice accosted him with:

"Unless I greatly mistake, this is one whom I knew in the flesh as Godfrey Dean. Why, Godfrey, don't you know me? God bless you, my boy! I've been looking for you at every town and all along the roadside since I left Florence. So here you are at last."

Charley Foster—for it was he—was indeed so changed that his friend hardly recognized him at first. A huge pair of reddish whiskers covered his face, and he was so completely European in his dress

and air, that he was almost entirely disguised. His voice soon discovered him, however, and Godfrey saw with pleasure that his old friend was the same warm-hearted, jolly Charley Foster as of yore.

"Why, Charley, is this you indeed?" he said. "How well you look! This is indeed a pleasure. I thought to find you in Florence; but here, of all places in the world! What good fortune sent you here?"

"My roving humor, Godfrey—my roving humor. Besides, I knew you were coming, and thought I'd take you on the wing."

"But do you come from Florence, Charley? Is your father's party with you? Why then did you leave?"

"To tell you the truth, Godfrey, I couldn't stand it any longer," Charley said, ruefully. "I tried it three weeks, and the Governor insisted on my remaining till he left; but I thought I had better not. You can guess why."

"Yes; but, Charley, my friend, you must turn back with me, I insist."

"No, no. Godfrey, you mustn't ask me to do that. I am tired of Europe now, and I am on my way back to America, you see. I've been everywhere, you know, and have done it all. So I am hurrying back 'to home and to duty.' But come, let's get our room and have some dinner. I'm hungry as a wolf, and so are you, I know. We'll compare notes over our wine and get even again. You're looking first-

rate. You're changed almost as much as I am, I think."

The two friends sat up long over their wine, and discussed with great interest the incidents that had befallen them during the past year. Next morning they parted—Charley proceeding by post to Paris and Godfrey to Florence. The fullest confidence had been revived between the two friends, and each knew the purposes of the other.

In due course of time Godfrey reached Florence, and found Mr. Foster and his party duly installed in a *palazzo* in the fashionable quarter, and enjoying that strange mixture of inconvenience and magnificence—of discomfort and delight peculiar to the palaces of the Tuscan capital. Everybody who goes to Florence lives in one of these same palaces, which are as plentiful there as counts and princes, and quite as cheap. Mr. Foster had taken one for the season, furnished after the manner of the Florentines, and roomy enough and gloomy enough to satisfy the most extravagant notions of European antiquity and grandeur.

Upon hearing of Godfrey's arrival, Mr. Foster called on him, and stating that the ladies had driven out to the Cascine, proposed that they should join them there. It was one of those lovely afternoons so rare even in Italy, but beautiful enough to redeem all the faults of that most capricious climate. The magnificent avenues of the Grand Duke were filled with splendid equipages, and the walks were crowded with

the beauty and wealth of Europe. Some were still in their carriages, whose horses moved slowly along as if in time to the music, and some, promenading back and forth along the shady walks, or seated in groups under the trees, while silvery laughter and the music of happy voices filled the air. The world seemed to have put on holiday attire, and work and grief and pain could only be dreamed of in such a scene as this.

After a while they found the ladies sitting in their carriage, which had stopped near a group of musicians, whose picturesque costume had attracted their attention, and to whose performance they were listening with that pensive yet exquisite pleasure, which is possible only under an Italian sky. The two gentlemen joined them, and Godfrey was warmly welcomed by the ladies, who had expected him, but not so soon. At length the younger ones strolled away and wandered long among the walks and along the banks of the Arno, whose sluggish stream disappointed them greatly at first, but over which they contrived to grow poetical after a while; and old remembrances of Newport and of Sheltern were recalled, though not much spoken of, and all the wondrous and beautiful things each had seen and heard since they met last—all these they talked of and thought of during their walk and through the glorious twilight, and even into the night, if that could be called night which was only less light than the day. Bertha was looking beautiful, and her pensive



style of beauty, saddened by the weeds she wore, harmonized well with the scene. She was no longer the timid girl that Godfrey remembered her, but a tender and gentle, yet lovely woman, in the depths of whose soft blue eyes shone a world of loyalty, and innocence, and truth. She was no longer shy and distant now; but in her demeanor there was a lofty yet confiding simplicity which seemed to distinguish her from the world around her, and elevated the love which Godfrey already felt for her into devotion and idolatry. To the reader of this veracious history I need not say that Godfrey had never ceased to love her, and that all his devious wanderings on the Continent had been constantly guided by the pole-star of his hope; but when he saw her he was ravished beyond all power of words to describe—by a devotion more intense and profound than ever he had felt before.

A long time they wandered thus, talking of the past and thinking and feeling "unutterable things," when at last Mr. Foster's coachman summoned them back to the carriage, and to a recollection of what was around them. The ladies were driven away, and Mr. Foster and Godfrey walked back to the city, where the latter soon went to bed, to dream about his first day in Florence.

It is not my purpose to linger long over the events that now transpired, nor to follow our lovers along the walks and drives they took, or among the wonders of ancient and modern art, which they saw

and admired together. They had loved each other long, and did not conceal their love. What followed, gentle reader, can be better imagined by you than described by any words of mine. Perchance your memory may recall a time,—one only time,—green in the desert of years and smiling with flowers that bloom immortally, when the hopes and fears that tortured Godfrey's breast, or the tender yet modest delight which mantled Bertha's cheek with the roses of Love's young dream, were yours. Or if, indeed, that happy time lie still in the future for you, wait for it to come, and seek not to divine what happiness it will bring you; for when it comes and throws its spell about you, you too will clearly see how vain it is to attempt to describe it. To your memory, then, if haply this golden hour has passed with you, or to that cherished hope which, though often silent, yet sometimes whispers in your heart of that hour yet to come, I now appeal. These will tell you far better than I, even though my bungling prose were fashioned by the poet's hand into strains of melting harmony, how Godfrey loved, and hoped, and feared, and how he pressed his suit, and how at last he won.

The same year Godfrey Dean and Bertha Lynne were married at Florence, Father Godfrey came from London and gave the bride away—an office which he asked to be permitted to perform, though none but Godfrey knew why it was peculiarly fitting that he should do so.

A few more happy days passed swiftly by at Florence, and then the whole party returned to Paris, and thence, after a short interval, to London. There they separated, Mr. Foster and his family sailing to New York, Father Godfrey accompanying them, while Mrs. Lynne and Godfrey and Bertha determined to remain in England until the ensuing Spring. Spring came, and they too returned, when Godfrey, upon whom Father Godfrey had settled an ample fortune, purchased a beautiful residence on the banks of the Hudson, and there they spent the rest of their lives. They were very happy in their quiet fashion; too happy, indeed, for me to attempt to describe. Their hopes were all realized, the rocks and quicksands were all passed, and the harbor of tranquil love shut them in from the storms of the world. Mrs. Lynne remained with them, and grew to be serene, if not happy, in the remembrance of her sorrows, and lived and died as all good women do, in the calm and quiet enjoyment which purity and innocence never fail to bestow, and which grief and sorrow cannot take away. She and Bertha never returned to Sheltern. They never knew who Godfrey really was, or the crimes which had bereft him of his father's name. With constancy to his generous purpose, he concealed what he knew of the history of their family, and on the tomb to-day which marks the spot where he and Bertha sleep, are written the names of Godfrey and Bertha Dean.

## CHAPTER XXXII.

"And so, without more circumstance at all,  
I hold it fit that we shake hands and part."

*Hamlet.*

**B**UT little of this story remains now to be told. Father Godfrey, accompanied by the ever faithful Thomas Barron, returned with Mr. Foster to Sheltern, where he lived with Mr. Dean. He had a melancholy pleasure in revisiting the now deserted house at 'Walnut Hill,' and often spent many hours there alone. The people of the village never knew that the former hermit of Sherrod's Rock had once been the master of the place, and attributed his frequent visits to the haunted house, as they considered it, to the whims and vagaries that had formerly made him an anchorite and a philosopher. He died soon after, and was buried near the spot where his first wife lay. His old servant, whom he left in most comfortable circumstances, survived him many years. His former habits had made him restless of restraint, and he spent the remainder of his days in wandering from place to place, returning now and then to Sheltern, where he was regarded with much reverence; for he did good everywhere he went, and seemed to have no purpose in life except to relieve the needy and distressed. He lived to be an old man, and he it was who related to me when a boy, as I have

already said, the facts upon which this history is founded.

Mistress Margery Thompson died at a good old age, and left Jerry, her son, the sole proprietor of the famous tavern over which she had so long presided. But Jerry found himself much troubled by the burden which was thus cast upon him. The fact is, Jerry had officiated so long in the bar-room, that he found himself unfit for anything else. He had listened to the jokes of the villagers so long, and had become so necessary to the place and the place so necessary to him, that he could not leave it, or even divide the time which he had been accustomed to bestow upon it so worthily, with other and more extended duties. So he told his story—the first he ever told—to Joe Shelton, who had by this time retired from the anvil and forge, and persuaded Joe to buy him out, upon the important condition that he, Jerry, was to remain, as he had always done, at his old post in the bar-room. I remember him well in that capacity, and used often to sit upon his knee, when a boy, and tell him wonderful tales just learned at school; how pious Æneas fled from burning Troy, which the famous Grecian horse had taken at last, and how the widow Dido had been married and deserted by him, and how she invoked the vengeance of her countrymen against him and his race; and how he wandering came to Italy and founded there the race from which the Romans sprang: and how in later times the Punic Wars sprang out of

this old hate, and Rome was conqueror at last, and Carthage fell to rise no more. These things to hear would Jerry seriously incline, faithful to the last, and always ready with laughter or tears to reward the tale that was told. Peace to thy memory, honest Jerry! Fain would I hold up thy example to men who now-a-days talk all and listen none. Would that thou wert still alive to hear this artless story of mine; for then I could count on one at least who would hear it with patience, and reward it with the friendly smile or sympathetic tear which I fear may not welcome it now.

Uncle Ben grew in wealth and honors as he increased in years, and no one ever had cause to doubt that he was the wise and profound thinker that he had been reputed to be. So great was his popularity, that he was at last elected, much against his will, to the Legislature for the county in which he resided. No one dared to oppose him. Godfrey was absent at this juncture, or he might have reminded Uncle Ben of the "Debating Society," in obedience to the "Deacon's" suggestion, in which event Uncle Ben surely would have fled a second time from the honors that were about to be thrust upon him. But this precaution omitted, Uncle Ben, in a moment of weakness, and having been unanimously returned, consented to serve. As a member he was true to the principle of his past life. Though everybody was convinced that he *could* speak, he never made the attempt. It was observed,

with great wonder and delight by his constituency, that he always voted on the strongest side, and the strongest side was always the popular side in his county. In doing this, Uncle Ben gave another instance of the sagacity which had always characterized him. To ordinary men it would have been an impossible task to have *always* known how to vote with the majority, inasmuch as his name, commencing with a "D," was among the first called by the clerk on a division of the House. To this great difficulty, however, Uncle Ben was always equal. When his name was first called by the clerk in taking any vote, he was always too deeply engaged in meditating upon the question to respond; but when the vote had been taken, Uncle Ben would rise with great dignity, and say, "Call my name, Mr. Clerk," upon which he would give his vote for the stronger side. On one or two occasions, it is true, when the division was exceedingly close, he did not demand a second calling of his name, and did not vote at all; but the reason of this, he confidentially explained, was, that he "didn't agree with either side on *that* question."

Thus it was that Uncle Ben wore his senatorial honors, and waxed greater in the estimation of his constituents, and of all men. But the proud and happy people of Sheltern forgot themselves one day, and forced him to resign. It had been determined to present him with a testimonial upon his first return from the capital, and a delegation met him at

the limits of the county to escort him with due honor into Sheltern. They told him that an address would be made, commending his services, to which he must make a reply. He remonstrated, but in vain. He rode on in silence with his escort until he reached Camworth, when he dismounted, went to the principal tavern, and went to bed. They wanted to send for a doctor; but he sent for a lawyer instead. He was closeted with him for an hour, when the lawyer announced that "Benjamin Dodd, the distinguished member from the county, had resigned on account of ill-health," and the announcement was made public the same day in the columns of the county newspaper. All entreaties to induce him to change his determination were useless. He remained at Camworth confined to his room for a week, at the end of which time he returned to Sheltern. He never would consent to be a candidate, or to serve again. In the walks of private life, however, he was as much admired and respected as ever. His last achievement was to write an epitaph for Tim Skipworth, the inquisitive village tailor. Like everything else he ever did, it was brief, but appropriate. Should any of my readers ever visit Sheltern they will see it on Skipworth's tomb. It consists of the name of the deceased in large letters, and underneath these is a huge interrogation point—thus:  
*Timothy Skipworth.*

(?)

Neither Charley Foster nor Florence ever mar-

ried. After the death of their father and mother, they continued to live at 'The Grange' together. Charley devoted himself with exemplary zeal to agricultural pursuits, and was deservedly esteemed by all who knew him. Florence divided her time between literary pursuits and works of charity; and when she died she bequeathed her large fortune to the erection and support of the school at which I myself was bred. Mr. Dean amassed a handsome fortune, and rose to the highest position and popularity, Uncle Ben's always excepted. Every summer he and his wife, accompanied by Charley and Florence Foster, paid Godfrey a visit at his home on the Hudson. These yearly reunions continued, until, one by one, all save Charley, had dropped quietly into the grave. Him I remember well; but he too is gone at last, and no one survives who can remember the facts out of which this simple tale is wove, save he who writes it; and he too, with what he has written, must soon die and be forgotten. An old man's story is ever accounted dull, perhaps with reason. Yet it may be that what is here told will serve again to bring to mind some needful moral to help the right and guide the erring; and if it do, the writer will feel that Father Barron's story was not told to him in vain.