

# HOME STORIES.

BY

*Nov 1869*  
MRS. ALICE B. HAVEN

("COUSIN ALICE").

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*LC is the same*

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## PREFACE.

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"THOSE who admire the productions of Mrs. ALICE B. HAVEN, may not all of them be able to define her particular merits, nor the real secret of her great success. We wish to draw attention to these points, partly to pay a tribute—richly deserved—to Mrs. Haven, and partly to set before our young readers a model worthy of their earnest study, if they have any ambition of becoming literary. To do this, we shall give extracts from a long and very interesting letter from one eminently qualified to judge in these questions of popular literature."—*Ladies' Book*.

### "THE SENSIBLE SCHOOL.

"Mrs. Haven is one of the best writers of what may be termed 'The Sensible School'—a school which, with no illiberal restrictions in regard to

opinion, with the largest range of thought and style, has never numbered many followers. It is not that remarkable gifts of genius are requisite to enable one to rank with this chosen band, for many, even of those who have failed in a different line, have shown that they could have written well, if they would only have written common-sense. Unfortunately, while they possessed this ability, they did not know that it was worth any thing. Here is the one essential thing—not so much to be able to do what is good, as to know what is good to do. . . . Miss Austen may, perhaps, be considered as the founder of 'The Sensible School,' and Mrs. Haven, although she has undertaken nothing so elaborate as Miss Austen's novels, shows the same union of sweetness and sense. She has not adopted the vulgar and pretentious maxim that it is better to do a great thing badly than a little thing well. She does not introduce her readers to that marvellously aristocratic society which nowhere exists but in the novels of 'high life,' and where the Dukes of Fitznoodle stalk distressfully through the book, as if longing for some friendly trap-door to hide them from spectators. She does not even endeavor to impart a raciness to

her stories by a catalogue of the upholstery of a parlor, or pillage from a milliner's advertisement, to make her heroine interesting. Mrs. Haven delineates with ease and skill the characters of every-day life, and invests them with the charms that only fidelity to Nature can impart. . . . Paint what you see, and trust Nature for being interesting enough. Mrs. Haven trusts her. She gives no sketches, like some of her contemporary writers, of dreadful caverns in New York, nor of savage bandits in Boston, and call it 'grandeur;' nor does she weary us with verbal blunders as impossible as they are uninteresting, and call it 'humor' or 'real life.' Her humble heroine does not impress us, at the outset of a story, with an uncomfortable presentiment that she is to be a duchess before its close. . . . We are not to be surprised with the sudden movements of natural affection; nor are we to be startled with the death-bed disclosure of a State-Street millionaire that the heroine is the heiress of more than we can count. This reticence on the part of Mrs. Haven we are sure of. Her simple, clear English, her natural sketches of character, her stories, in which incident has a small, and character a large part, afford to us all an

inexpressible relief and real pleasure; and we are grateful for the easy, graceful, sensible, and unpretending stories of 'Cousin Alice.'"

All who have been familiar with the writings of "Cousin Alice," will appreciate the foregoing tribute. A wish, expressed by her children, that their mother's stories should be collected and published in book form, has induced me—with the permission of her early patron, counsellor, and esteemed friend, Mr. L. A. Godey—to make a selection of them for publication. I trust they will be reperused with pleasure by her old friends, and cordially welcomed by the public.

SING SING, N. Y.

E. H. H.

*SPRING WINDS.*

## SPRING WINDS.

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### CHAPTER I.

Young trees root the faster for shaking.—BOGATZKY.

It was Augusta Colburn's monthly holiday; that is to say, the third Friday in the month, when she was allowed to go home from Madame Arnaud's school and stay until the Monday following. A day on which all the regular boarders envied her, and came to the door to see her off, kissing her a great many times, and reiterating any quantity of commissions they had charged her with. She was an extremely popular girl for these reasons; she was handsome, and always well dressed, with abundance of jewelry, and bonnets of the very latest style. Her father lived in a handsome house, and allowed her plenty of pocket-money; he kept a carriage also, and the carriage was at the door the afternoon in question, while the girls detained her in the hall.

"Don't forget to have that embroidery pattern stamped at Doubet's, there's a good child; and some more of those pearl beads, you know, for that *gants sachel*."

"And my crimson floss, and a quarter of a pound of chocolates, you angel;" that was her room-mate, Virginia Pryor, who was of course the devoted friend.

"Think of us, Gussy," groaned out Adelaide Rovenel, a Charlestonian, with large gray eyes, and a very elaborate style of hair-dressing; "pity us shut up here with old Solfeggio, and that everlasting ah, ah—ah, ah!"

"Yes, and the usual half slice of Charlotte Russe for dessert to-morrow. Oh, how I envy you!"

"Is she gone? Oh, I thought that stupid Italian lesson would never be over! Don't forget those assorted chenilles, and a fancy basket, and the cherry satin to line it with," called out a breathless arrival from the recitation-room.

"I shall expect a note by the penny post, mind now," and Virginia wound her arm about her friend's waist to go down the stone steps to the carriage with her. "It will be a perfect *age* till you get back."

"Not to me. I only wish you were going, too; but I'll beg mamma to write a regular invitation next time, madame is so strict. Good-by, darling!"

"Good-by, precious!"

Miss Colburn seated herself comfortably on the stone-colored, satin damask cushions, and called out rather authoritatively for a school-girl—"Drive on, Davis!" while Miss Pryor returned lingeringly to bondage, kissing her hand till there was not the least possible excuse to balance her pretty feet on the door-sill a moment longer. Miss Colburn's reflections were extremely agreeable as the carriage rolled smoothly over Union Square. She thought of the

good dinners—three of them—that awaited her; of the shopping expedition for a winter bonnet with her mother the next morning; she wondered what special present her father would surprise her with; and whether the new drawing-room curtains had come home. Thinking of this, she put her head out of the window as the carriage turned into Madison Avenue. The drawing-room shutters were closed; in fact, the whole house had a dull, shut-up look, and there were two men raking tan in the middle of the street, directly in front of the house. She had a vague idea that tan was only used in cases of extreme illness. What could be the matter?

"Davis, who is it? Why didn't you tell me some one was sick?"

"I thought you knew it, miss; it is the mistress, an' it's three days since she took sick."

Augusta had never questioned herself about loving her father and mother very much. Long ago, when she saw a great deal more of them, she could remember waking up in the night and crying, lest they should die and leave her alone in the world; but, of late years, every one seemed to go their own way in the Colburn family. Mr. Colburn was more and more absorbed in business; Mrs. Colburn in shopping and visiting; Arthur, her eldest brother, kept a horse, and had the billiard-room entirely to himself and his young companions; Laura, the sister next to herself, passed a great deal of time in the country with their grandmother, for she was very delicate; and the children had a French nurse and nursery-maid, and their own table. Augusta had

seen less of her mother than ever since she had been entered at Madame Arnaud's as a regular boarder; but, when she was at home, she was petted and indulged, and greatly praised, for Mrs. Colburn was growing proud of her fashionable-looking, stylish daughter.

A faint sickness swept over her for a moment as she inhaled the odor of the tan. Her mother must be very ill! Why had she not been sent for? She was almost afraid to ring, till Davis closed the carriage-door gently, instead of its accustomed loud snap, and drove off toward the stable.

"How is mamma, William?"

The waiter looked a little bewildered. "Indeed, I can't say, Miss Augusta; but two doctors have just been and gone, and it's the first day since I came to the house that it was twelve o'clock before Mr. Colburn went down-town, and he isn't back yet. Shall the dinner go up?"

"Oh, I don't know, indeed! Wait till he comes! O mother!" rose to her lips, like the sob of a child in the dark. It was the first time in all her life that trouble or sickness had cast a shadow on her path, and she hurried up the velvet-carpeted stairs like one in an evil dream.

A strange nurse met her in the little dressing-room that adjoined her mother's chamber, and warned her back from the door. There was a subtle lingering atmosphere of drugs and restoratives that confirmed her apprehensions.

"It is Miss Colburn, I suppose," the nurse whispered, with an official gesture of silence. "I was to

say that no danger was thought of till last night, or you would have been sent for."

"Is my mother very sick? Can't you let me see her? Only one moment!"

"Not now; every thing depends on quiet."

"Is there any change, nurse?"

Mr. Colburn had come up the stairs with the same hushed movement that pervaded the whole house. Even the anteroom had been darkened, and he did not see his daughter for a moment.

"Oh, papa, is she going to die?"

Mr. Colburn put his arm around his daughter and kissed her forehead.

"We can't tell, Augusta; we don't know, my child! it's so sudden! Your poor mother—those poor little children! It's brain fever they think now, and we did not dream of danger till last night. Won't you go to the children?"

"Will you come and tell me all about it, papa?"

And with his gesture of assent she was forced to be content for the present. The nurse motioned her toward the open door, and closed it upon her as she stood a moment in the dark hall, trying to understand this sudden calamity; and then she turned mechanically toward the nursery.

It was a suite of three rooms, extending back over the library and dining-room; for the house had been planned and built regardless of cost, and united every comfort and luxury. Certainly the little Colburns should have been happy children; they were, in their own way; but even their lives had become artificial, and they wanted constant change and ex-

citement. The poor nursery-maid had a weary life of it; the *bonne* did her duty in chatting French with them, and arraying them in their costly little garments; in teasing Miss Lily's hair into curl, and bribing Master Morton to submit to a lengthened toilet that prepared him to go down Broadway on the carriage-box by Davis, who advanced his education in certain phrases peculiar to grooms, while Marie lolled on the front seat with Miss Lily in her lap, as the horses pawed and stamped in the long line of vehicles that gave "Beck's" its aristocratic connection.

"Ah, *ciel, pauvre madame!*" she commenced, as Augusta opened the door.

"Hush, Marie! Poor little Lily; come to sister, Lily! Oh, Bridget, take that drum away from Morton; there must not be a breath of noise! Give Bridget the drum, and come and see sister, there's a good boy!"

"No, I will have it; and I'm going to ride on my rocking-horse, too, and go two-forty on the plank!"

"You dreadful boy! You will kill poor mamma!"

"I don't care. Davis is going to give me a ride on Arthur's horse, so he is. No—no—no—you shan't have it! let me alone! let me alone, or I'll kick you, so I will!"

It was a relief to hear that dinner was on the table. No one but Lily seemed to give her any comfort.

"Won't you take me to see mamma? Why doesn't she come and take me out to ride? Let Lily

go, too!" And the little creature clung tightly to her sister's hand.

"I will come again, Lily—yes, indeed, I will; but I must go and see papa have his dinner now."

It was strangely unnatural to take her mother's place at the table, but her father seemed to expect it, and he talked much more than was usual for him, telling her how her mother first took the cold, as they supposed it to be, and what the doctors had said at their consultation, quite hopefully, for he would not look at the dark side. He had summoned the best medical skill in town, and called in an experienced nurse. Now that the first shock was over, and sick-room routine organized, and Augusta at hand to see after the house and the children a little, his mind was greatly relieved of the burden it had borne the last three days.

Arthur was not at table, and was not even inquired for. He took his meals at all hours, just as it suited his own convenience; and when Mr. Colburn, who could not bear the restraint of a sick-room long, subsided into his newspapers and *Merchants' Magazine*, it was dull enough for Augusta. The little ones were in bed. She could not settle her mind to read, and all her fancy work was left at school; there was the piano, but not to be opened, and she sat drearily enough before the fire, missing the eager outpouring of school plans and school incidents, which her mother was always the recipient of on Friday evenings, and thinking how dreadful it would be if she never sat there again, and what would become of them all. Her father sat with a

glass of ice-water on the table before him, and she noticed that he rose and refilled it more than once—that he coughed now and then, a short, dry cough, and seemed to look very thin and worn; but that was natural enough, when he was so anxious about her mother.

It was the commencement of a dreary time—four more such days, alternated by fears and hopes, that only mocked the anxious watchers, ending in a sad certainty of the end, and then it came. Twice Augusta had been admitted to the darkened room, to see her mother breathing out her life in unconscious lethargy. Once more the door was opened for her, and this time all the family were gathered. The children were brought in to look wonderingly around, hushed for the moment by the unnatural quiet and the strange scene—their last dim recollection of a mother's presence—Arthur with a pale, horror-stricken face, at this, his first contact with death; Laura, just recalled, came clinging tightly to her sister's hand; Mr. Colburn mute, aged, and haggard by the watch of the night just past; and Augusta kneeling, with her head buried in her arms, trying to pray, struggling for self-control, and with the thought that she was motherless.

"Just gone, poor lady!" the nurse said, as the physician came in among them; and then she drew away, one by one, the pile of pillows that had supported that poor head, closely shorn of the glory of its flowing hair.

Augusta caught one startled glance of the rigid outlines that made the face so strange, even to her

children, and a shudder crept through her; she thought she might be dying, too. The room grew dim—her father's face wavered before her; she clutched at the drapery of the bed, for she felt that she was slipping away from life; and then, when the whirling rush had ceased, she found herself on the couch in the dressing-room, and heard the doctor saying, "It is hard for her, poor girl, to be left so early with such heavy responsibilities." She had not strength to uncloset her eyes as yet, or to lift her hands to stay the stinging icy drops of water they were sprinkling on her face; but she wondered what he meant. She had only brooded before on the loneliness she would feel; she had not realized that any burden had been laid upon her the past dreadful week.

Prosperity had been a snare to Mrs. Colburn; let us hope that it had not stolen away the seal of her heavenly birthright. There were many traces of the time when it had been very near and very precious to her; those who found them could trace a life distinct from that outward show which of late had seemed all-engrossing. There were written records of self-devotion, books well worn and carefully pencilled, that Augusta could remember seeing on her mother's work-table years ago, and these she took into her own room, with a half-reverential, half-superstitious feeling. Perhaps they would teach her how to be good, and prepare her to meet death when it came. Terrible mystery! it haunted her, waking and sleeping, the horrors of the moment of dissolution and the uncertainty of all that lay beyond. It

is true there was a certain mingling of worldly and inconsistent feeling, especially when the servants began to come to her for orders, when she first went down, dressed in her new mourning, to receive the visits of condolence from the friends of the family. She realized the sudden accession of importance, even on her first meeting with Madame Arnaud and Virginia Pryor, who came almost immediately after the funeral. Madame was so deferential in her inquiries as to whether she would return to school; and Virginia, after they had kissed a great deal and cried a long time, holding each other's hands, found eyes to see how much taller and more womanly her friend seemed to have grown, and tried to console her by saying so.

"Oh, we all felt so dreadfully for you! You have no idea how we cried! Oh, how dreadfully shocked Adelaide and I were! We could not eat a mouthful of breakfast (madame saw it in the paper, you know)—could we, madame? And we got excused from 'Middle Ages' and German that morning; and Adelaide could not touch that beautiful night-gown *sachet* she had commenced like yours, for days, it reminded her so of you. What will you do? How awfully lonesome it must be here! Oh, do come back!" The lively girl shrugged her shoulders, and looked down the long suite of rooms that had put on a straight, formal air for the funeral, and it had seemed to cling to them ever after.

Yes, it was lonely, very lonely, after the excitement had passed away, and the novelty of being her own mistress, and coming into possession of her

mother's elegant furs, and seeing all her jewelry and lace put up, with "Augusta Colburn" marked on the packages, had gone by. Her father stayed down-town very late, and Arthur was never at home. The care of the children was irksome, because they disobeyed her, and Marie continued to have her own way in every thing with regard to them. As to the house, it took care of itself. The servants were well trained, and very glaring discrepancies never manifested themselves, though the theft and squandering of the kitchen would have been revealed to a less liberal employer.

Still, it was a joyless, unsatisfactory life that Augusta lived that winter. She had her own hours of quiet thought, when she felt that unlimited novels and confections did bring satiety—when she saw that Arthur was no comfort to their father, and the children were growing very rude and untruthful under Marie's rule. Her father, too, coughed more and more, and stooped like an old man. Sometimes he dozed away whole evenings in his easy-chair, and then again walked the floor restlessly till long after every one else had retired for the night. She wanted to be different, less selfish, less idle, but she did not know how to begin. She tried reading the good books, her mother's unconscious legacy, but they sounded like the dreariest abstractions, very far off from her daily life. It was not an ennobling one—indulging in morning naps, until the latest possible moment; sitting with her feet on the fender, novel in hand, until lunch-time; driving down Broadway after that, and wasting money for every trifle that

seized her fancy—tired of it, perhaps, before she reached home; coming home to be met by a sense of empty loneliness on the threshold, and giving way to low spirits and fretfulness by the time evening came. She drew a little, and embroidered a little, but there was no one to help her admire it, only Virginia, who was allowed to spend all her monthly holidays in Madison Avenue now, and she did not seem to care half as much about Virginia as she had done. There was a great gulf suddenly opened between her thoughtless school life, and school companions, and her present existence.

So it was that Augusta commenced her journal. It is a young girl's habit, and belongs to the album age; very few keep up the practice when there is really any thing to record. It comes from a restless, unsatisfied life, that has more yearning than endeavor, but one through which almost every thoughtful person passes at the threshold of womanhood. It is not well to ridicule it merely, for it is the natural outgrowth of just-wakened powers, before the objects on which they are to expend themselves are described; but no crisis requires more judicious sympathy, lest it is encouraged into morbid sensitiveness by over-fondness, or turned by jests or harshness into a well of concealed but bitter water, that poisons every spring of feeling and action.

To this "misty morning-land" the young girl had come, and she seemed destined to walk through it without aid or guidance. It was her eighteenth birthday. "February 28" was the date engraved on the bracelet her father had placed on her plate at

breakfast. It was not so costly as his gifts usually were, but far more precious than any jewels in her eyes; she did not know that the light elastic strand of her mother's hair had been woven by the rarest skill Paris could boast, or that the golden clasps had there received their delicate tracing from the engraver's touch. Her love for her mother had arisen so silently, so hopelessly, that even her father did not know how much she valued this token of the dead; though he saw her lips tremble, and the tears come quickly into her eyes, as she looked up to him, when she recognized it.

"Many happy birthdays to you, my daughter!" he said, kindly; but he knew this was not a happy one. There had been many plans laid for it when the last one had been celebrated; Augusta was thinking of that when she set down the cup of coffee that she could not drink. Her father was silent too; he remembered another birthday, when a little daughter had come to brighten a very humble but happy home, when he took the baby in his arms with a strange thrill of tenderness for the helpless little thing, and a prayer of thanksgiving that its mother's life had been spared.

Augusta went to her room heavy-hearted, and as she sat down by her little writing-table, the special gift of her mother the year before, and looked from the bracelet on her arm to the picture over the mantel, she made herself a promise that she would live a more worthy life, and sealed it by a prayer for guidance to the Heavenly Father whose love she could not as yet discern, even dimly, in taking her mother's

care away from her, just when it seemed to be most needed. She had yet to learn

"Our cedars must fall round us,  
Ere we see the light behind."

The date on the bracelet was the first entered in the little volume which we unclasp this morning, and read, not with idle curiosity, but that others may perhaps find a clew out of the labyrinth which spread around her.

*February 28, 18—.*

My eighteenth birthday! Who could have believed that it would have been so sad? We were to have had a large party to-night—my coming-out party—and mamma even talked of the dress she should order for me; she wished it to be simple, but very elegant. I should have left school at New Year's, even if this had not happened, and papa thought it was useless for me to recommence; besides, he thought I ought to be in the house with the children, when he was absent so much. I might as well be miles away, for all the good I am to them. It is one of my greatest troubles. Morton is a very bad child indeed, and Lily is selfish and untruthful. Marie bribes them and threatens them, I am sure, and keeps them from loving me, though I do get provoked and angry when I try to make them mind. I am almost frightened, sometimes, at the wicked feeling that makes me slap Lily, or push Morton away from me. He fell against the lounge yesterday, and ran screaming to Marie as soon as he could speak. I thought, "What if I had killed him or

lamed him!" I have heard of such things. I believe, if I could send Marie off, I could do better with Bridget alone; but there must be some one to see to their clothes, and she does dress them so sweetly that I am always proud when people turn and look after the carriage. Besides, it would be a great pity to have their French broken up; they chatter now more easily than I ever shall, with my four years at madame's.

Then, Arthur is very wild, Mrs. Gardiner says, and I ought to use my influence with him; I haven't any, I am sure. We always did disagree; he is dreadfully selfish. I never know where he is, and scarcely ever see him. How can I influence him? Papa worries over him, or something; something more than just his loss of mamma troubles him. I have a terrible dread, lately, that papa is going to die, too. What would become of us all?

I had a letter from Laura this morning, with a pretty purse she had crocheted herself for my birthday. I let hers go by without remembering it; but she always thinks of every thing; I suppose it is living with old people so much. I scarcely know Laura, she is so plain and so undemonstrative, and we have been so little together. I sometimes think she could help me, if she were here, but I don't know; I don't know that any thing could. I don't know where to begin, there seems so much to do. I wish I had some one to go to with all my troubles, but grandma is such an old lady, she could not understand, neither could papa; he always says, "Do just as you like, my dear;" and Mrs. Gardiner is too much of a gos-

sip—I have heard poor mamma say that often enough. Poor mamma! dear mamma! Oh, my heart aches to see you again! Cannot you speak to your child, to your lonely, lonely daughter? Oh, forgive me for all my selfishness, and all the trouble I gave you! I wish I was lying in Greenwood beside you, if I was only ready to die. How shall I begin? I do not see any way out of all these things that make me so fretful, and selfish, and useless!

March 5th.

I am getting old very fast now; I feel as if I must have gray hairs, or look pale and wrinkled. But my face has not altered; no, not a day older for all that has happened. This will not be my room any longer, and I do not know that I shall ever have time to go on with my journal that I meant to write in so regularly. Papa has failed. It is a dreadful thing, I know, and I have done nothing but cry since Friday night. Arthur came home very early—I did not know what to make of it—and he was so savage, a great deal more than usual. He flung his hat down on the table, and kicked poor Lion, his own dog, off the hearth-rug. Then he called out—“A pretty mess papa’s gone and made of it! We must all go to the poor-house, I suppose.”

“Oh, Arthur”—and I felt as I did when I first heard mamma had brain fever, only worse—“*that can’t be papa!*”

I thought right away of what had been in the papers in the morning about some one who had cheated a railroad out of a great deal of money—some one, it said, who had stood so high that they

would not give the name until it was positively proved against him. I believe I felt as people do when they say, “their blood curdles in their veins,” and for a moment I was glad mamma was dead, and in her grave. It would be a great deal worse than dying to see papa’s name in all the papers, and perhaps have him shut up in prison, and not be able to reach him or help him. I did not have a thought about ourselves then, only for papa; and all this flashed through my mind before Arthur growled out—“I don’t know what you mean by *that!*” Colburn and Gardiner have failed, if you know what it means. It was all over the street this afternoon, and Joe Bloodgood had the impudence to ask me about it, and offer to buy my horse!” And then he cursed him, a horrid vulgar oath. They have always been so intimate, too. I almost felt that I did not love Arthur any more than if he had been a stranger then; but I thought of papa.

“Hasn’t he got any thing left, Arthur? Oh, what will he do!”

“Yes, I’d like to know; so would he, I guess. It’s mighty little satisfaction to hear people say that he’s given up every dollar! Nobody is expected to do that in these days; there isn’t one man in ten thousand but saves enough to set himself agoing again.”

“But he hasn’t done any thing wrong, has he? That’s what I want to know. I don’t care a bit about the rest.”

“Ha, *don’t* you?” said Arthur, in his provoking way. How like a bear he did look, in his rough overcoat, both legs stretched out over the rug, and his

hands in his pockets! "I guess you will, my lady, when it comes to hard work and no wages. See how you'll like it!"

We neither of us heard papa come in, but there he stood, looking at Arthur in such a way! I don't wonder that he jumped up as if some one had struck him, and offered papa his own chair. "I can wait on myself, sir, as you will have to after this." I wouldn't have been in Arthur's place for a great, great deal. He slunk out of the room, just as Lion had done when he kicked him off the hearth-rug, and papa sat down, looking much more cheerful than he has done in a long time. I wonder if it isn't a relief, when people have such things hanging over them, to have everybody else know it? Then papa talked to me quite as if I were a grown-up woman, and told me all I could understand about it—how he hoped to pay all his debts, and have something left, but perhaps that might not be. He said he was glad poor mamma was not here, for he was afraid she would have felt the change too greatly; but we were young, and it might be better for us in the end.

I don't see how it can be better to have such a great misfortune happen, and be obliged to sell every thing, and go and live in the country. I never liked to make a long visit at grandmamma's even, and to have to live out of town summer and winter seems dreadful. To do with one servant, too! I'm sure I never shall manage! But then any thing is better than what I was afraid of first—if papa would only get over that dreadful cough. I know he went to see Dr. Clark to-day about it.

## CHAPTER II.

Young trees root the faster for shaking.—BOGATZKY.

*May 21st.*

It is three weeks since we came to this queer old house—since I began housekeeping. I pretended to it all last winter, but I did not have the least management or control. Here I have to see to every thing and do a great deal myself—many things that I never tried before. It has been hard work; it is now, and particularly to-night, I feel so utterly discouraged. Laura, dear child, says it is because I am so tired out; that I shall feel brighter in the morning. She is the greatest help to me, just like a little old woman.

Well, we said good-by to Madison Avenue the 1st of May, the Bloodgoods taking the house and most of the furniture. It made Arthur very "hateful" from the moment he knew it was going to them; but I did not care, so long as it helped papa. That was all he had left, the house and furniture, after every thing was settled up, and Mr. Bloodgood offered him twenty-one thousand dollars, as it stood. Papa says it cost him twenty-five thousand, and that he has done very well with it; so we have just that to live on—twelve hundred dollars a year, I believe—and Arthur will have enough to help clothe himself, with the salary he is to get. Laura has her allowance, and is quite independent, with what Aunt Laura left her for her name. Papa says that many people would consider us quite rich; but, dear me! when I think that mamma used to

spend half as much on her dress, it doesn't seem as if we could get along at all. I am to have an allowance for housekeeping; little enough it is, not as much as the butcher's bill used to be in Madison Avenue; but then there were two men and five women in the kitchen, and that makes a great difference. We have only Ellen here—she was our waiter in town, and I always liked her best of the whole of them. She says she learned about kitchen-work helping the cook, and as soon as she heard we were going to the country she begged to come. She knows all about the country, and doesn't mind its being lonesome at all. Mrs. Gardiner said I never would get a girl to stay.

We have a vegetable-garden, all gone to weeds, and a tumble-down stable, a front yard, with old-fashioned roses and lilac-bushes, and great bunches of phlox and ragged-robins, growing here, there, and everywhere; it looked dismal enough all the while it rained so, ten whole days without the sun, and I never worked so hard in all my life, getting to rights.

We had furniture enough that we had taken from the Madison Avenue house—I was going to say from home. It looked scanty when it was all arranged, but papa said it must do for the present. Laura knows how to contrive chintz furniture, and is working away at a lounge, and some boxes for the bedrooms—she calls them divans! She proposed that we should put some curtains up to the windows, to take off the dreadfully bare look; I have found a great bundle of the shabby ones Mrs. Bloodgood did

not want, and we are going to look them over to-morrow.

Oh dear, how tired I am! I ache from head to foot; but I am just so tired every night, and I know I never should write any more in my journal if I did not make a beginning. It's the worry that tires me most; I am so afraid I am not going to make any market money last, and it is so dreadful to see Arthur so sullen and miserable. I can't talk to him; he hates business so, and hates the country, and he has to be so regular, too, to come out and go in, just such an hour. It is new to him, and chafes him, with not a soul that he knows out here, or would care about if he did know them. The children are running perfectly wild. Lily has torn her nicest dresses to bits, and Morton is as dirty as a little pig from morning till night. They tire me; but I am rid of Marie at all events. She was the trial of my life, and they really begin to mind me better since we have been here.

Papa is my great comfort; he never finds fault with any thing, not even when Ellen smoked the beefsteak at dinner, and it was all the meat we had, or when Morton pulled over the inkstand on his desk. I almost hope he does not cough as much as he did; I don't believe he would if it ever should come out real dry and warm.

*May 27th.*

We finished putting up the curtains last night, and it has given the house quite a different look. We found three white muslin ones, and papa allowed me to match them, as near as I could, when I went

in town with him on Friday. They used to be at the nursery windows, but we think them quite grand now in the parlors; then there was the blue and white dimity set, from the third-story back room, and some old chintz ones that belonged to the nursery in winter. Some of them were stained, and one muslin one torn right across; they came out wrapped around the pictures—mamma's, and Lily's when she was a baby; but these windows were so much lower that we cut out the spots, and Laura pieced them very neatly. I should not have had the patience; and I don't believe I could have managed anyhow.

I find the sewing of the family is going to be the hardest thing of all. I never thought of that till I found Lily had scarcely a decent dress left, and Sarah said those muslins and lawns were not fit for the country anyhow. I took prizes two years at Madame Arnaud's for fancy work, but I don't believe I could make Lily an apron even. Laura is so handy with her needle, and, what is more, with her scissors; she can cut and arrange work just like a seamstress; but grandmamma always taught her to cut and make her own clothes, she says. It seems that I know every thing that is no manner of use, and nothing that helps me now. As for my piano, though I know papa could hardly afford to keep it, I have opened it only twice since I have been here.

Well, to go back to the curtains; Laura's upholstery was really quite wonderful; a little puckered and awry, some of it, but we managed to put the stretched sides next to the wall, and the lounge and boxes are great additions to the dining-room and the

bedrooms. When we got the curtains done, papa came in and hung them for us; even he saw the difference, and praised it. I believe I never was more delighted, particularly as dinner was just ready, and Ellen had made a famous veal pie, with splendid gravy, papa said, and my pudding (tapioca flavored with bitter almonds) turned out beautiful. We had asparagus from the village, and a dessert of stewed pie-plant. I don't think I ever enjoyed a dinner more; papa said he never did, and he ate more than I have seen him do for a long, long time.

Dr. Clark has helped me to conquer my dislike to seeing after the cooking. He came out here a week ago, and stayed to tea; after tea, he came and sat down on the step of the porch by me, and told me how anxious he was about papa. He said that most physicians would say he had the consumption. It made me turn cold when he said so, every thing starts me so now since mamma's death, and I have had this same dread about papa since last winter. Dr. Clark says he hopes every thing from a quiet mind, and the country air, and *good plain food*. He talked a great deal about that, and said it would be giving papa poison to set him down to a badly-cooked dinner. So I began the very next day, and I make the dessert myself, and see that Ellen does not hurry things; that is her great fault; no wonder, when there is so much to do.

June 1st.

Sunday evening! It has been such a nice day, and I have been to church for the first time since we came out here. Papa never cared about church in

town, he was always so tired Sunday mornings, and breakfast was late, and mamma took so long to dress. She did dress more elegantly than any lady in Calvary church, I think. Papa used to laugh at her "Sunday finery," and tell her the very name of her church, "Calvary," ought to put all such things out of her mind; and he thought it was the wrong name for a fashionable church, any way.

When I asked him to go this morning, he looked quite surprised, and did not answer me; but when we were wiping the cups, he came in from the porch, and said, "Yes; Laura and I ought to go, and, as we were strangers, we could not go alone."

I must go back to the day after we first came here. I was feeling very disconsolate indeed, with every thing to unpack, and the house looked so small and dark. I was standing by the window looking out, much as Lily does when she gets those terrible sullen fits, when I saw the people driving by to the depot—we are very near it; that was one reason papa took the house, because he could walk to it; for we cannot even keep our poor old horse. We came over the night before in a wretched old hack, and just as I was thinking about it, a pair of coal-black horses, with arching necks and flowing manes, came dashing along with a light open wagon, almost as handsome as a carriage, and such a nice-looking party in it—a gentleman and his sons, I should say one about Arthur's age, and one older, and two school-boys, with a strap full of books—three seats full with the driver. A bitter, wrong feeling came over me; they seemed so happy and rich, dashing

along, when poor papa and Arthur had trudged off on foot. I have noticed them very often; sometimes they drive in a *coupée*, much like ours in town, and ladies with them, always a large party, and so merry! I wondered so much who they were till papa told me the gentleman's name, and when I tried to find out more about them from Arthur, he called them "snobs," and some other disagreeable name, and said they lived in that great brown house we can just see over the tops of the trees when we come from the depot.

Well, to-day the sexton was very civil to papa, and showed us into a nice pew, with carpets and cushions. When I looked around, who should be in the next pew but all the Waldron family! It was a great, square pew, as roomy as their carriage, and every seat full; it was just like a picture. Mrs. Waldron, I suppose it was, sat in one corner, and Mr. Waldron by the head of the pew, and a young lady, I should think about my own age, next to him; the two young men sat opposite, and all sorts and sizes of children between; they all seemed so amiable and pleasant. The young man, Arthur's age, found the places for his mother, and the other one handed papa a prayer-book; there was none in our pew, but Laura and I had ours. He is the plainer of the two, but he looked as if he was very honest and good. I hardly know how to describe it; I suppose I was looking at him very hard; I know I was, for I was thinking how unlike Arthur's behavior his was, and his eyes met mine; he did not stare rudely, but it was a friendly look. His eyes are just like his

mother's. I saw her face, coming out of church; it is very sweet and kind, and so is his sister's. I am sure we should be friends if only we were rich people, I mean; but of course we never shall know them living in this plain—I was going to say mean way; it must seem mean to them, with their horses and carriages and servants.

But I never shall have another intimate friend. Virginia, and Cora, and Adelaide have behaved so unkindly! It was just like Cora, and Adelaide always followed her; but I did think so much of Virginia, and we had been so very intimate, and she had stayed at our house so often. I did not write it down, for it hurt me too much last week. It was at Stewart's, when I was choosing those curtains, I saw her in the mirror; she was with Miss Jones—Miss Jones that is so fashionable, and she tried not to see me; I know she did, for there was the mirror right before me. I could not have believed any thing but my own eyes; and when I turned around as quick as lightning, for I was so angry, she blushed as guiltily as could be, and Miss Jones gave me such a distant bow, and moved along. I felt too angry at the time to know how much it hurt me, but I came home and tore up all Virginia's letters, those last miserable little cold notes after papa failed, and all. I might have known from them that all she cared about was our house and the way we lived. "Dear me, Augusta! is that you? Why, how are you, child? I must hurry after Miss Jones. *Au revoir!*" I can see her now, and Adelaide, and Cora, whispering together over the organdies. I would not see *them* after that.

I know very well they were talking about me. No, I can never trust any one else, or have an intimate friend!

*June 4th.*

Something so pleasant and surprising has happened. Just as we were sitting down to tea to-night, the black horses came dashing up, and stopped at our gate! I thought how mean the table looked, with only bread and butter, and no silver, and flew up and shut the dining-room door. For once Ellen heard the old knocker, and happened to have on her clean dress and apron before tea; she is generally too hard at work to dress. She showed the visitors into the parlor, and presently came back with their cards, Mr. and Miss Waldron, Mr. Charles Waldron, for all the family. Arthur growled out, "I'm not going in, for one;" but papa was quite decided, and said the young gentleman's call was meant for him, and he was to go to the parlor.

Mr. Waldron introduced his daughter, and papa me, while Arthur, who can be a gentleman when he likes, came forward in his best manner; I was quite proud of him. Mr. Waldron began talking to papa about Dr. Clark, who is an old friend of his, and, after a while, they went out together to look at the weedy old garden, and Arthur talked "horse" to Mr. Charles Waldron, who is much handsomer than his brother, though I do not fancy him so much.

Miss Waldron is not pretty, but she is very nice, with such a gentle, homelike way, and she was dressed quite plainly, in a gray dress, with linen collar and sleeves, and a silk mantle, not at all a "re-

ception toilet," which poor mamma always made so much of for first calls. She noticed the books and the engravings in a very pleasant way, and she likes some of my favorites, which Virginia never did—"Amy Herbert," and "Cleve Hall," and "The Heir of Redclyffe," for books, and the "Christus Consolator." Since mamma died, that has been my favorite engraving, and papa allowed me to have it in my own room; now it hangs between the windows in the parlor, opposite mamma's picture.

Miss Waldron has asked us all to tea on Friday evening—to-morrow evening. It is very informal, only a family party, or papa would not go. I shall be only too glad to see something else besides this house; I am tired enough of it, and Miss Waldron is so plain in her ways that I almost felt I could ask her to tea in our little sitting-room in return. Arthur is going; I am very glad of that. Mr. Charles is going to row him out upon the bay, and that is the inducement. As for dress, mourning is always the same, and I am always ready. Poor mamma!

*June 6th.*

How kind they all were!

After papa had promised to go, and I was quite elated, it suddenly came across me that they lived so far off, and how dusty and dragged we should look if we walked. But Mr. Waldron sent the light wagon for us in the kindest way, quite early, for it is not dark now until almost eight, and their tea-hour is seven. It seemed perfectly delightful to be dashing along in a carriage again; I don't think I ever enjoyed a ride more. The foliage is so exquisite, not

dusty, as it is in Madison Avenue by this time, and the fences bright with blackberry-vines, and elder-flowers, and wild-roses. Laura knows every wild flower, and bush, and vine, I believe. She was to come, too, Miss Waldron particularly said, though I told her Laura was only fifteen, and of course "not out."

There is a beautiful avenue of elms and maples leading to the house from the main road, and the house is not high or grand, as it looks from the road, only built on high ground. It is very odd, with wings and additions "just as the family grew," Mr. Waldron says. There is a great hall through the centre of the house, with book-cases and pictures—no regular library, but a very cozy reading-room—on the dining-room side.

We did not go into the large parlors before tea, for Miss Waldron met us at the door, and took Laura and me up-stairs to the sweetest little room, furnished with cottage-furniture, white and gilt—her own room has a blue set—and we sat there quite a while, till Mrs. Waldron came out of an opposite door, looking so fresh and sweet in a clean lawn dress and white cap, and came to be introduced to us. She kissed us both. I can't tell how it touched me: not the kiss Mrs. Gardiner always gives, or Madame Arnaud's, such a cold, matter-of-course touch of the lips, but she put her arm quite close around my neck, and said, "I am glad to see you here, my dear child."

I like Angelé Waldron, and her father, and all of them; but I like Mrs. Waldron best. I had a long, lovely talk with her after tea. The young gentlemen

went out rowing with Arthur, for it was almost as bright as day after the moon rose. Miss Waldron brought her crocheting to learn a new stitch of Laura, who understands all those things, and they went into the sitting-room where there was a stronger light; the only one in the parlor, the drawing-room I mean, now, was enclosed in a shade of lovely transparencies, as soft as the moonlight. Such a sweet, sweet summer evening it was! so still that the breath of the roses and honeysuckles made the air almost too heavy with perfume. There were cut flowers in the room, for they have a green-house; but Mrs. Waldron astonished me by saying that her sons and Angelé took care of those beautiful borders themselves; and she thought that Laura and I could make a great deal out of the front garden if we chose. She knows the house very well. The clergyman used to live there before the parsonage was built; and he was very fond of flowers, and planted the roses and many other things I do not know the names of, that are almost eaten up with weeds. That was after papa and Mr. Waldron went into the dining-room, so that we were quite alone.

I told her that, even if we knew how, we never should find time; and then, I'm sure I don't know how it came about, I poured out all my troubles to her, even to the sewing, and how I struck Lily only that morning when she and Morton were quarrelling in such a hateful way, and answered me back. I am sure I did not mean to, and if any one had told me that I *could* have talked so to a person who was almost an entire stranger, I would not have believed it.

But she seemed to understand it all, every bother and worry that I have, and she helped me so much! She did not seem shocked when I told her how I slapped Lily; but said, what I know is true, that I never could expect them to mind me when I allowed them to see me angry, and that it would be a good help to self-discipline. She says every mother who tries faithfully to do her duty learns self-control that way; and that these worries—all the worries in life that we have not brought on ourselves by wrong-doing—are just so many helps sent by God to make us gentle, and patient, and strong. I seemed to see it all in quite a new light. I told her *how much* I wanted to do right, how hard I tried, and it seemed the more I tried the worse I grew; and about reading those books of mamma's, and how hard it was to fix my mind on them, or understand them.

She smiled so pleasantly, and said: "Milk for babes, but you have begun on strong meat." Then she asked me if I had ever tried reading the Bible for myself. I felt quite proud to be able to say I had read it all through in one year—three chapters a day, and five on Sunday, as mamma said she did when she was young; but I had to confess that I did not understand the Bible either; it was all so misty and confused. She explained that so nicely—she asked me if I supposed even Herschel or Lord Rosse understood all the sky at a glance, and had known stars by name, and had been able to arrange them in their constellations. "It is all misty and confused, the sky is now to you, my dear." I told her that I knew nothing of astronomy; but to them the whole

host of heaven is marshalled into order and beauty; and so it was with the Bible, a perfect plan, all order and harmony, only waiting diligent study to comprehend it, and make it a daily joy to us, "if we have the Shepherd's Glass of Faith," she said; and I know what she meant, for I remembered the picture in mamma's elegant copy of "Pilgrim's Progress."

When I told her so, she advised me to read the whole book, as one of the best helps I could have, and she gave me another, "The Words of Jesus," and asked me if I would not try and read them for myself in the New Testament, little by little, asking God always to help me understand what I read. She did not seem to think much of reading the whole Bible in a year. And when we were through our talk—not through, for I could have stayed by her all the evening; but we heard the rest coming in—she kissed me again, on my forehead, as I sat by her on a low ottoman, and said, "God bless you, and help you!" It was almost like mamma; only mamma never talked of *such* things in that plain, simple way; but it was affectionate, like her, and I was glad the light was so dim, when Laura and the gentlemen came in. I feel so encouraged, and so much happier, I believe I shall never get into that miserable, fretful way again.

June 15th.

All wrong again! Oh, it is so hard to find myself break down when I am trying my best!

I was up very early to-day, by half-past six; Laura and I had agreed we would be, and begin to work in the garden. It was very hard work to get

up, and I felt as if I had made a monstrous step in self-denial. Just as we were ready to go down, the children woke, and insisted on being dressed. I dress Lily, and Laura Morton; and they set up such a scream when I told them to wait, and go back to bed again until it was time! I hate the business, at best; it is a regular drag to have to wash that child's face and hands six times a day, and I can't make her hair curl as Marie did, try all I can. She is always a perfect fright. I do not believe I love children as some people do, who say it is only a pleasure to take care of them.

I went out feeling very cross, and began cutting and pulling up the weeds, hacking away with a kitchen-knife. The dirt flew up into my eyes, and over my clean white stockings and petticoat, and the earthworms crawled out, and made me sick; but it was very fascinating, after a little while, and the tougher the roots were, the more determined I was to have them out. I knew it was getting late, but I had made up my mind to go from the snow ball to the white rose-bush, and I worked away till the breakfast-bell rang. Then I was such a figure! my shoes wet through—they were my dressing-slippers—the front of my petticoat soiled, my hands muddy, and my hair all over my eyes. I hurried into the house, for there was Lily in her night-gown yet, calling out of the chamber-window, and found the dining-room just as I left it last night (it was my place to put it in order), the dust an inch thick on the mantel. I flew out at Ellen for ringing the bell without calling me first, and then at Arthur, who

asked me if I was going into the market garden-line, and, I am sorry to write it, boxed Lily's ears, because she would not hold still and be dressed, so that she ran screaming and complaining to papa, who spoke to me quite sharply, and said he had noticed I was very unkind and overbearing to the children. It seemed too hard, with all I do for them, working from morning till night, going to bed so tired, that I don't know how to get up sometimes. I felt the most frightfully angry feelings toward him, it really did frighten me, for I never felt so before; but I said I wished I was dead, and out of every body's way; and got up and went to my own room without pouring papa's coffee, and stayed there until he was gone to town, without wishing him good-by. But I have suffered enough for it. What if any accident should happen to the train, and I should never see him alive again! It almost makes me wild!

Then, too, Laura is very trying at times. She is industrious and orderly, and not impulsive; she never "flies out," but she is provokingly self-willed and obstinate. Her way is always better than mine; she never will give up at all, because she is the youngest. She finds fault because I leave things around, and slops in the basin when I dress; but I have always been accustomed to a chambermaid, and it is very hard to learn to wait on myself and other people too, at the same time. She has no care either; papa does not look to her for any thing, and the care is the hardest part of all.

I read the Testament, as I promised Mrs. Waldron, four or five verses every day, but so far it does

not do me a bit of good. I know the whole story, and it does not seem at all different; I wish it was all made up of rules, as the Old Testament is, part of it, and told me "You must do this, and you must *not* do that," so I should know all about it.

Mr. Ralph Waldron is religious. It seemed so strange in such a young man, but he stayed to the communion service Sunday before last, and looked surprised when papa rose to go out, and we all followed him. I am so glad we have that nice pew next to theirs; it was the only one to let, except near the door, and I was delighted when papa told us it was ours. Somehow I feel as if I had known the Waldrons all my life, they are such friendly people; and though I never can be intimate with any one again, I like to talk to Angelé almost as well as her mother. She brought some sewing, and sat with me Tuesday afternoon, and Mr. Ralph came for her, and brought us some beautiful flowers. He reads German, and thinks it such a pity that I should give that and my music up. I really enjoyed playing that dear old *marche funèbre* for him last night, for there are so many people who do not enter into it. He likes Chopin's music, and I have played over several of my old pieces this afternoon, to freshen them up a little. I believe it was the music that first took away this heavy pain from my heart. It has been a real pain every time I have thought of papa to-day.

June 17th.

I am glad now that papa was so displeased with me the other night when he came home, though it

almost killed me then. I had been so restless and anxious about him all day, and so thankful to see him come home. I *flew* over the stairs, and said, "O dear papa, I am so glad you are safe home!" I almost forgot that I was so greatly in fault, until he said, "Any one would think that you loved me, Augusta, if they did not know better." So cold and hard! His eyes looked so, too. I turned away without a single word, but I felt as if I was choking to death. When I *do* love him so! and try so hard to please him and make him happy. He never will know half how hard I try; nobody but God does! How hard it has been for me to learn to work, and go without things, and manage so as to make him comfortable!

I bolted the door and threw myself down by the bed, for I was so wretched that I could think of nothing but praying, just as it was when mamma did. I cried out just like a little child, "O God, please show me the right way!" Only that, but I said it over and over again, sobbing as if my heart would break, for I felt if papa began to be displeased with me, I might as well give up trying to do any thing. After a while I grew quieter, and went to the window, and leaned my head against it; and in the window-sill my Bible was lying. I remembered that I had not read my verses, so I turned to the place, and thought I could do that at all events. It was the last part of a chapter, about hiding things from the wise and prudent. So I read till I came to this—

"Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

"Take my yoke upon you and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly of heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls."

Certainly this was meant for me; for was I not struggling along, laboring, and heavy laden? How I longed for rest! how I have longed for it the past weary months, ever since my care came! How was I to find it? I read it over and over again, just as I had prayed, until I saw that it was by coming to Jesus to help us be like Him, that it meant that He was meek and lowly, and we must be so too.

I *did* ask Him to help me, the first time I had ever thought of Him as being able to, and then I thought, how can I begin? It seemed right for me to go to papa and tell him I had done wrong, hard as it was, and ask him to forgive me, because that was being "meek and lowly." He was talking with Arthur, and Laura sat in the room sewing. It made it very hard, particularly as Laura had heard what papa said, and looked up at me in a very provoking way when I came in. But I went straight up to the table and said, "Papa, I was very rude and impertinent this morning. Will you please forgive me, and I will try not to offend you again?"

I could not help my lips quivering, for all I tried to be so brave, and I know papa must have felt that I was really sorry, for he drew me down and kissed me without another word. I don't think any caress he ever gave me went to my heart so, and all the dreary feelings melted away. Laura went out of the room, and Arthur was much pleasanter than he had been for a long time, and did not make a single

disagreeable remark. Lily was in trouble about something, and came in crying after a little while, so I proposed putting her to bed myself, though Ellen has always seen to them at night.

She seemed glad to go, for she was very tired and heated; I sponged off her little hot face and neck and arms, and she looked up so gratefully and gave me a loving kiss, quite of her own accord. Then I took her in my lap and told her a little story, and after she had said her prayers, and her dear little head nestled into the pillow, she made me stoop down to give me "a great hug," and said, "I do love you ever and ever so much."

I have not felt so light-hearted in a long, long time, or so happy, as I did then, and have ever since. It woke with me to-day, instead of that miserable, tired feeling. I don't know why, but I keep thinking of Christian when he came to the cross that stood in the way, and the three shining ones met him. I almost feel as if I could "give three leaps for joy," as he did.

### CHAPTER III.

Young trees root the faster for shaking.—BOGATZKY.

*July 1st.*

I MUST write down Mrs. Waldron's rules before I forget them, for I believe they will be a great help to me. We had a little precious bit of a talk last night, when we walked down there to choose some

bedding plants, which Mr. Waldron was so good as to offer Laura and myself. We have cleared away most of the weeds, not with a "kitchen-knife," however. Papa surprised us with a lovely little set of English garden-tools, and, what was kinder still, came out of his study and rooted out all the dock and plantain, things that were altogether too hard for us. He trimmed off the great clumps of balm and phlox, so that they are quite ornamental now; and some exquisite white lilies have opened on what we thought were only those blue weedy "flower de luce," as Ellen our cook calls them.

The roses are in full bloom, the season being so late and the garden so shaded; many of them seem to be quite excellent varieties. I never saw a little creature so fond of flowers as Lily is. They keep her quiet by the hour, the columbines and "Marguerites"—as I prefer to call the "white weed" that grows so profusely in the back garden—clover-tops and "widow's tears," every thing in the shape of a blossom that she can lay her little hands on, snapped off close upon the stem, of course. She trots about with them, and presents them to me at the most inconvenient seasons, when I am stitching away for dear life, or, with my hands all red and dripping with currant-juice, preparing fruit for the table. We have been great friends ever since the night I put her to bed. I try not to drive her away from me, if I am ever so busy, but listen to her little troubles, and settle her disputes with Morton at once, not allowing him to impose upon her because he is a boy and the oldest.

I find I do not lose so much time after all, for sometimes they are quiet by the hour, Lily with her flowers and a doll, and Morton digging away, in imitation of Laura and myself, with a kitchen shovel borrowed from Ellen, who is unfailingly good-natured to both of them. They are both as well as possible, and papa seems better; he coughs less, and has lost that weary-looking expression that distressed me so all winter. He takes a day now and then, for the worst of his business cares are over, I imagine, though it will be fully a year before all is settled. He has worked in the back garden as well as the front borders since the tools came out, and cleaned up the paths and the rank growth from around the currant and raspberry bushes. We shall have a good supply of fruit from both. Ellen and I made some lovely gooseberry-pies to-day. I must not forget that! My first pies! studied out of a cook-book, and made through many misgivings and much weariness to the flesh. My arm aches yet with the rolling, and pounding in the butter; but papa will open his eyes, and they are Arthur's favorite dessert.

It is such a comfort to me that Arthur has taken a fancy to the Waldrons! The boats were the first thing that took him there; they have a pretty little yacht—"the Angelé"—besides the row-boat, and invite Arthur very cordially to go with them. Their influence is so good; I can see it already on Arthur. He was always afraid to speak disrespectfully to papa, but now he seems really attentive, just as Ralph and his brother are to Mr. Waldron, and is positively brotherly to Laura and myself, for the first time in his life.

When we said last night that Mr. Waldron had offered us some bedding plants, as it was too late to do any thing else with the garden this year, he proposed, quite of his own accord, to walk there with us. Papa looked over his *Evening Post* in astonishment. We had a lovely walk; it did not seem half so far as it did the first time; and Angelé saw us coming, and met us away down the avenue. She and Ralph walked part way back. They are special friends and confidants.

It was after Dixon, the gardener, had set aside the pink and scarlet geraniums, the heliotropes, and petunias we are to have, that I had my talk with Mrs. Waldron. She was in her own room, and sent for me; her dressing-room, I should have said. It reminded me of the oratories we read about, in the castles and palaces, in old times. The walls were hung with Overbeck's illustrations, and my own favorite "Christus Consolator," which was why Angelé noticed it at our house the first call she made. A little vase of cut-flowers stood in the middle of the table, and around it were laid devotional books, some like mamma's. Poor mamma! I think she would have liked Mrs. Waldron so very, very much! Mrs. Waldron says that when I am further advanced I shall like these books, but that I want the simplest instruction now, "like a child in the spelling-book," she said.

I told her how much lighter things had seemed the last few days, only that I could not help getting hurried and irritable, and so tired that I *had* to go to bed in the afternoon, and lost so much time, and got

up so cross. She asked me if I liked mottoes, and took a little book-mark from her "Keble," and gave me—

"Haste not, rest not."

She said the true way to accomplish a great deal was never to be in a hurry about any thing, and to be willing to lay aside one duty the instant another required us. She read me something from the "Life of Mrs. Schemilpeninck," a new book she had just received, about routine; that everybody who had been very successful or useful in life had accomplished it by routine; that is, rightly dividing life, so that every duty had its proper place.

I had confessed that working in the garden had so fascinated me that I disliked to go into my sewing, and that when I commenced practising, or had taken up a German book, and the children worried and bothered me, it made me fly out and send them off crying and complaining to Ellen. So she read me some rules from a life of Mrs. Fry, and afterward lent me the book, asking me to read it instead of "Guy Livingstone," which she said would do Arthur more good than it would me. Now for my rules:

1. Never to lose any time.

I do not think that lost which is spent in amusement or recreation; to devote a portion of every day to this, but always be in the habit of being employed.

2. Never err the least in truth.

3. Never say an ill thing of a person when thou canst say a good thing of him; *not only to speak charitably, but to feel so.*

4. Never be irritable or unkind to anybody.

5. Never indulge thyself in luxuries that are not necessary.

6. Do all things with consideration; and, when thy path to act right is most difficult, feel confidence in that Power alone which is able to assist thee, *and exert thine own powers so far as they go.*

Mrs. Waldron drew a pencil under the last sentence. She said that people talked a great deal about "relying on Providence," and then wondered they were not helped, when they had not put forth an effort. "We are to remember to exert our own-powers so far as they go."

July 6th.

We have a new member added to the family, a gentle, snow-white cow; the children both call her "Snow-drop."

No one can tell the comfort she is, and the help the milk and butter will be, for Ellen can make butter; we have two beautiful golden pats put away to surprise papa with. The cow was all Ellen's idea, and I bought it, or paid for it. Papa gave me permission to sell the diamond ring Mrs. Gardiner gave me when I was sixteen. He always said it was a piece of foolishness. I confess I did not like to think of selling it, but when Mrs. Phelps said, the other night, that all papa wanted was plenty of good milk, and butter, and cream, and Ellen happened to say, the next morning, "What an illegant barn the stable would make, and there ought to be a cow in it that very minute," my ring flashed into my mind, and I made myself give it up. How proud I was when I

first had it! I remember taking off my glove in the omnibus to show it, and wearing it *outside my glove* on examination-day, as if it would be noticed. What a little fool I was!—about more things than one, for that matter. I used to imagine I was fond of Joe Bloodgood just about that time, and now he seems so coarse and so silly to me, as I look back at him. I don't believe he has two ideas, except horses and wine-parties. So different from—well, from young men that read, and stay at home *one* evening in the week.

July 8th.

I have actually made two dozen glasses of currant jelly! I don't believe I was ever so proud of any thing in all my life before, not even of the cow, when I went out and held a light, so that Arthur could see her, after he came home that night.

And then to see papa eat those famous light rolls I have taught Ellen to make, and that great saucer of raspberries and cream, and his coffee as yellow as gold! It has been a delightful day, tired as I am. The butter, and cream, and milk, and fruit help my market money along amazingly, particularly as papa says, since I paid for the cow, he would pay for the pasture, so there are the five dollars a month I used to spend for the milk all clear.

Drawbacks. Cross to the children when they come to learn their letters. Lily so obstinate, and Morton so full of play! How I pity people that have to teach A B C schools! they earn all they are paid.

Had a tiff with Arthur about keeping his room so untidy, when I made such special resolutions to be

a good sister, and when I can see for myself how much a kind word and little attention will do for him. But Mrs. Phelps—she is a friend of the Waldrons—had brought another lady, Mrs. Lane, to see us, and Ellen had left the door of Arthur's "den" open, and they had to pass directly by. If I were not afraid to sleep down-stairs, I would change with him.

July 18th.

I must acknowledge that I have felt very uneasy about making so many new acquaintances lately. It was very kind in Mrs. Waldron to bring them, and in them to ask me to join the "Dorcas" society, which meets once a week to sew for the poor, so that I begin to feel quite at home here, and Laura has found a number of companions near her own age. But when I came to think of it, how was I ever going to keep them up without so much as a vehicle for a single horse, or "so much as a horseshoe in the family," as Arthur said? Papa told me I could hire the hack at the livery stable, a shabby old thing, and every one knows what it is, too. I did not know I had so much pride remaining; but when I thought of our elegant close carriage, and the *coupée*, and all, I could not help feeling badly. I know that it was wicked, though, when God still gave us all we really needed, and such kind, kind friends, and I tried to get over it.

Now all is right. Dr. Clark has said so much to papa about riding on horseback—he told him it was an expense as necessary as his food and clothes—that he has bought back Arthur's old pet, "Jenny." Poor Arthur! I did not realize how hard it must

have been to part with her till to-night, when I came home with Angelé, and the children met us at the gate, and shouted the news. We ran directly to the stable, Angelé and I. There was poor Arthur, in his linen duster, just out of the cars, with his arm over her, and his cheek laid up against "Jenny's" neck. He started up fast enough, but his voice sounded "a little shaky," as he would have said himself.

*August 15th.*

It is almost a month since I have written a line in my journal. I hardly know why, except that I have been very busy and very happy, and all the happier because I was busy, I suppose. When I look back at my idle, useless life last winter, it frightens me. No wonder I was so unhappy. I think I can write for myself the verse that I felt so in the psalm yesterday—"Before I was afflicted I went wrong;" I wish I could say as truly—"but now have I kept Thy word." I *do try*. Still it frightens me to think of confirmation—there is to be one the first of next month, and there was a notice of it given yesterday in church. I was up in the choir for the first time; Mr. Allen, who usually plays the organ, is taking a summer journey, and his wife is with him, so Angelé was asked to take Mrs. Allen's place, and she wished me to go up with her. It was in the afternoon; they did not get along very well in the morning, and wanted more help. I was so surprised to find Mr. Ralph Waldron seated before the organ, and he welcomed me so pleasantly! He had already commenced the voluntary, but he looked up and smiled.

How rich and deep that voluntary was! He plays far better than Mr. Allen, so much more feeling, and more devotional music. Mr. Allen gives us quite too much of "Lucia" and "Favorita." I shut my eyes and put my head down to listen. Every thing seemed so quiet and peaceful! The congregation was small—it always is in the afternoon—and the little church is so beautifully shaded. Mr. Brooks, our rector, made up the picture, in his flowing white robes, as he came and stood by the lectern; and then that heavenly music, rising, throbbing, dying away in such deep, sighing chords! I love the organ more and more. Ralph said so truly, last night, it seems like a foreshadowing of the vast harmonies of heaven, lent to us as the flowers are, symbols of the beauty and happiness to be.

What a long, long talk we had!

But to go back to the confirmation. It startled me when the notice was given out; I can scarcely say why, for it never seemed to have any thing to do with me before. When Mr. Brooks was urging it yesterday, I felt in my heart that I ought to think of it, and when I turned, perhaps I looked agitated, for I felt so. Ralph was looking at me with a strange, grave, questioning look, as if he read what was in my mind.

When we were coming home he walked with me, for both carriages were full (they have visitors), and we did not talk much until we were almost home, and he said, as we reached the gate—"Won't you ask me in, and let me explain this to you?"

We had just begun to talk about the waiting un-

til we were really good ourselves before we were fit to come to confirmation, at least that is what I told him I felt people ought to do; I imagined he did not see I was thinking of myself. There was no one in the parlor; papa had taken the children to walk, and Arthur had "Jenny" out, as he always will do on Sunday afternoon, instead of going to church; he goes to ride, and Laura takes a nap, so I am the only one for church in the afternoon.

Ralph—I hear Angelé call him so so much that I am always afraid I shall do so myself some day—Ralph went on with what we were talking about, he sitting by the window, and I on the sofa—the first time we were ever quite alone before. I wonder if he thought of it! He said that was the mistake so many people made, staying away to be good when they really desired, with all their hearts, to become so, and this was a help held out for them. It is only a year since he was confirmed. "But then," I said, "you were always good!" He has always seemed so to me at all events; too good! it made me a little afraid of him at first.

"Oh, no, no! do not say that!" and he seemed so distressed. "I have been the worst heartache my mother ever had." And then he told me he had once belonged to a set no better than Joe Blood-good's, and went to races, and lived a very idle, wretched life, until his father moved out of town to break up his intimate associations, and he lost the excellent situation he had been provided with for his misconduct and negligence. "I was home for a whole year. Oh, such a wretched time as it was at first!

But mother, and Angelé, and papa were all so good to me, never taunting me or alluding to my disgrace, and doing all they could to make me happy. It was the disgrace that cut me so, and made me see just where I was driving to. I understood perfectly well how it would tell against me in business life, for I saw it; it seemed impossible ever to get to work again. Papa's own friends told him they were afraid to try me, and there was no room in his firm; Mr. Alden has a son, and papa my cousin Lewis, so that would not do."

He told me the whole story, just how morbid, and forsaken, and ashamed he felt, and that his father's kindness through all made him feel how God had borne with him patiently and lovingly, and how much he owed Him. It was almost like the parable of the Prodigal Son. Ralph spoke of that, and said "nothing ever made him feel God's readiness to help us, the moment we 'truly turned to Him,' like that, '*when he was yet a great way off*,' his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him."

He made me see it all so clearly, and talked so beautifully, that I asked him why he had not become a clergyman. I had often wondered about it before.

He had thought of it too at first. He said his father did not oppose it, but asked him if he did not think he could find plenty of work in the world. That he thought—Mr. Waldron, I mean—that people needed religious influence in daily life quite as much as pulpit preaching; that as good a sermon could be preached on 'Change as in the church, and the time

had come when wealth, and energy, and practical business talent were to give a new impetus to all Christian benevolence. After a while Ralph felt as his father had done. He is not in business for himself; that misfortune, or folly as he called it, has been against him, and, though he is twenty-four, he is only a clerk still.

He told me all about it, just as if I had been his sister, and I don't think either of us knew how the time flew by, for when papa came in, and Laura came down, tea was on the table, and papa made him stay and take it with us, just as much at home as if he were one of the family. It was silly—I knew it perfectly well—but I really enjoyed pouring out tea for him; it seemed so friendly and pleasant to have him at our table, Sunday of all nights.

*September 2d.*

Let me try to think over some of the events of to-day—a day dreaded and yet longed for since my resolve was made.

They were all in church—papa, Laura, Arthur, and even the children. When the call was made for us to come forward—those who were to be confirmed—and I stood up alone for a moment, among them all, my hand shook so that I could scarcely untie my bonnet; I looked toward papa, and saw his lips were quivering, and his eyes had such a strange expression. He has been very kind to me ever since the day that I asked his consent, and explained to him why I thought I ought to come. But oh, how my heart leaped for joy when he rose too, and came out of the pew with me, and gave me his arm! All my dread

left me, though at first I only thought he was going up to take care of me; but he knelt by my side, dear, dear papa; and when I felt the bishop's soft hand laid upon my head, I knew that he was blessing us together. I could scarcely listen, for happiness, to the address afterward; and oh, how I longed for mamma then! but perhaps she saw it, and was there to bless us too. There were ten or twelve altogether, and before we returned to our seats, the Bishop told us that our charge was to "keep ourselves unspotted from the world, and to be Christ's faithful soldiers and servants as long as life should last, *never being idle in His service*, or ashamed to confess Him before men; and ever to recollect that we had by our own solemn promise forsworn whatever business or pleasure or worldly amusement we might find, from the experience of others, or from our own, drew us aside from our duty."

It seemed so hard to tell papa, or to go in the face of Arthur's ridicule; but to think that papa is with me, and Arthur sat there so grave and thoughtful! oh, I felt as if God was too good to me, and had given me even more help than He had promised to those that put forth their own efforts..

*September 12th.*

Our little borders make quite a gay appearance now—the bright geraniums and petunias, the sweet-scented verbenas and my favorite heliotrope. Laura and I have great plans for next year, and we are to have a regular vegetable-garden, and not be dependent on the village for supplies. We can cut a bou-

quet daily, and not miss the flowers, indeed we are never without a bouquet from the Waldrons; sometimes it is Ralph and sometimes it is Angelé who brings it. Angelé and I have been reading together regularly for several weeks, and we have such long, long talks afterward, for she brings her thimble, and insists on helping me with my work-basket. She told me yesterday that Virginia is engaged to Joe Bloodgood. She had a friend at Newport, when they were all there, who gave her the news in her last letter. How often we have talked about our weddings, as school-girls will, and who should be asked, and who the bridesmaids! I was to be Virginia's, of course; and now I have not even heard from her since we lived here. I am glad I wrote the last letter. After all I have said, I believe I have another friend. Angelé and I never say that we love each other, and make no promises or protestations, but, whenever I am with her, I think how good and right-minded she is, and I desire to become so. When she went away last night, she turned back suddenly and kissed me full on my lips. I never had a kiss that said more; but the Waldrons are all so friendly and sincere. How heartily Mr. Waldron shook papa's hand the day after confirmation, and how good and pleasant Ralph was!

Mrs. Gardiner has been out to see us. What a difference there is in people, as I have just said; with Angelé and her mother, or with Mrs. Phelps, I always desire to grow better; I feel that I am better for the time, and when I leave them there is a happy glow whenever I look back upon the conversation.

Now there is Mrs. Gardiner, so different; I said such disagreeable things of Virginia Pryor, contrary to my new rules, and felt provoked with myself then, and so disturbed afterward, when I came to realize how uncharitable I had been; and so envious and jealous when she described the elegant presents the Bloodgoods have sent her, and the dozens and dozens of clothes that are ordered at Genin's. Mrs. Gardiner always made me feel uncomfortable, even when she flattered me the most. Yesterday she "pitied over me so," as Lily says, about being so lost to the world with all my elegant accomplishments, shut up and tied down to such a forlorn routine. She said it would have broken mamma's heart; and then to see the children so stout and brown, and "countrified;" Lily forgetting all her French.

It was all true after a fashion, and yet I might have made her see things as I see them when I am alone: how much better it is for us all in many other ways! But I did not try to; I indulged myself in selfish repining. I can see now how I came to give way to the temptation. I hurried so all the morning, I was so anxious that every thing should be in good order, and looking its best, that I did not stop to say my prayers, and had no right to expect defence in temptation, when I had not asked it. I find it is certainly true that, if I do not ask for help, I do not get it, but give way more and more.

When I drove "Jenny" to the depot with Mrs. Gardiner, in the afternoon (I am getting to drive quite nicely now, and it gives the boy, Lanty, just so much more time to help Ellen when I do carry

papa and go for him), we met Angelé on the platform, seeing some of *their* friends off. Mrs. Gardiner noticed the handsome carriage, and asked who they were, and seemed quite astonished at our apparent intimacy.

She said they used to be called a very proud family, that Mrs. Waldron was a Miss Trumbull, one of the best families in the State; and when she met her, years ago, at Sharon, she held herself quite aloof from every one, and that she, Mrs. Gardiner, could never get near her at all. I can understand that. Mrs. Gardiner is so worldly and so fond of dress, there is nothing at all in common; and besides, Mrs. Waldron spoke of that very visit to Sharon not long ago. It was when little Alice had some illness, and they were ordered there. Mrs. Waldron was saying that we ought never to miss any opportunity we had of kindly intercourse with others, if we did not feel that they had a positively wrong influence over us, and said it used to be a great fault in her to keep away from all but congenial people; but something happened at that very time to prove to her what a great mistake it really was, and how she missed opportunities for comforting and helping others.

I was wrong again. I knew it was vanity or pride that made me take such satisfaction in showing Mrs. Gardiner what friends we were. In my heart I do not care one bit more for Angelé because the family is rich and aristocratic. No, that would be too much like Virginia's conduct toward me; I liked them because they were kind to me when I needed kindness so greatly, and because they are sincere,

cultivated, large-hearted people; but yesterday I was glad that the best carriage was out, and Angelé in her freshly-trimmed fall hat and India scarf.

Yes, I did; I am ashamed to own it. I am just as bad as Virginia, and perhaps I have not tried enough to overcome my feeling toward her. I will try to be more true in my love for Angelé.

#### CHAPTER IV.

Young trees root the faster for shaking.—BOGATZKY.

*September 20th.*

I HAVE not been quite happy since Mrs. Gardiner was here. Her visit seemed to disturb every thing, and we were going on so nicely before. I am getting nervous and irritable, just as I was early in the season, and I can scarcely tell why, either.

Virginia is to be married on the 10th of October, in Calvary Church. I found I was growing very unhappy and envious whenever I heard any thing about her affairs. I used to be the one to have the most attention, and she was glad enough when I shared with her; but since her aunt came to live in town, and boarded at the "Clarendon," they have made a great display. There are people who say it is just to marry Virginia off, and all this outlay is a regular investment; and I have been ill-natured enough to repeat it. I never used to think myself in the least envious or uncharitable. When the com-

mandments were read, I never felt that I had any thing to do with "Thou shalt not bear false witness," and "Thou shalt not covet;" but lately both make me feel guilty. I had no right to repeat what I did not really know was true, and I have felt it was hard that Virginia should have such quantities of things—dresses without number, point d'Alençon, and Brussels point sets, when I have to be so careful of every penny, and have worn one hat ever since last April, a thing I never did before since I was as old as Lily.

How can I feel so when I have things she has not—a dear kind father, and brothers and sisters, and a higher aim in life, and purer happiness? For I know that all the lace and jewelry in the world never could have given me the pleasure that some of this year's self-denials and self-conquests have been repaid by.

I have thought of a plan to help me to another self-conquest. I have an exquisite piece of embroidery, commenced at school last winter for a *gants sachet*, and all the materials to finish it with; six dollars I paid at Doubet's for them, and it will be quite handsome enough even for the French gloves that I hear were ordered with her bonnets. She shall see that I do not retain ill-will, and that I have not forgotten her. I cannot but feel kindly when I am doing any thing for a person; and Mrs. Fry says "not only to speak charitably, but to feel so."

But I have other things that make me low-spirited. It is all well enough in the country in bright, pleasant weather, when one can be out of doors; but

how forlorn it will be in winter, with leafless trees, bare lawns, and muddy roads! It makes me dull to think of it; no gardening, no walks, no flowers, no "out of doors" at all! And the children shut up too—that is the worst of it—tearing every thing upside down, and deafening me with noise. No society either. Almost all our acquaintances go to town in the winter. The Waldrons always go. I did not know it until the day Mrs. Gardiner was up, though it is odd. Angelé's aunt said, "I hope we shall see a great deal of you when you come to town this winter." It made me feel as if some new misfortune had happened. If papa only could afford to take us, even if we boarded! Half of my life will go out, that is the truth. I never realized before how much *they all* were to me.

Ralph said last evening that even his little brothers, James and Willie, watched for my weekly visits; for it is quite a settled thing now that I am to take tea with Angelé once a week; papa comes for me, and I enjoy it all the more because I know he is having a pleasant evening with Mr. Waldron. We had a children's party last night—the Phelps and Lane family, the little Waldrons, and *my children*. I dressed Lily myself, and Laura always keeps Morton in better order of the two. Laura is very neat and very industrious; I never could keep house without her, and though she does "say things" sometimes about my intimacy at Beechwood, I don't think she is at all jealous, as I am apt to be.

I really was proud of the children, they were so well-behaved and obedient, not at all like those rude

little Lanes. I should have been so mortified if Lily had made me speak four times to her, as Anna Lane did, and not mind at that.

It was a dry, clear moonlight night, and we walked on the piazza a long time. Ralph was so thoughtful. He went after my *raglan* himself, and wrapped it around me, and made me tie my handkerchief over my head. I don't think any one missed us, but Angelé; she is a dear girl! She came to the door and looked out, but only kissed her hand and said she had to play "Oats, peas, beans" with the children, when we asked her to come and walk.

Ralph said the winter would be very long to him!

*October 3d.*

Day after to-morrow is Virginia's wedding-day. I sent my box this morning. I have so little time that I did not get the *sachet* finished until Monday afternoon, though I have been up at half-past five every morning for the last ten days. It is quite dusky when I first get up, and I have wondered if it could be I, more than once, when I have been brushing out my hair with chilly hands!

The *sachet* looked beautifully; Angelé says she never saw any thing look so exquisite. The ground is mazarin blue velvet, and the letters and motto are in silver thread and pearl beads. I quilted the white satin lining in the finest diamonds, and quilted satin ribbon all around it. There was a superb blue and silver gimp for the outside; even papa admired it, though I know he thought it odd in me, when he knows how Virginia behaved. But I am glad I did it, for keeping Virginia constantly before me is the

pleasantest way, and feeling that I was going to give her pleasure, it destroyed every particle of unkindness I ever had.

When I wished that she might be very happy in my note, I really did wish it, and hoped the marriage will turn out better than I fear it will. But I have always had a miserable opinion of Joe Bloodgood; he led Arthur into so much mischief. If papa's misfortune had never done any thing more for us than to break up that intimacy, it would have been a good thing.

Arthur grumbled at leaving my parcel, and said I never should hear from it again, and they would only think I wanted to be taken notice of; but I did not care. Perhaps Virginia will not even thank me, but I have been already repaid, and I did not send it until all the invitations were out, so they cannot say I expected notice.

*Evening.*

Oh, I must add Virginia's note to to-day's journal, it was so unexpected, and made me so happy. I will never hesitate again to do what I feel is right, no matter what others may think:

"DEAR GUSSY: It is so very, *very* kind in you to remember me when I have acted so *shabby*. The *sachet* is *perfectly lovely*; aunt and every one goes off in *ecstasies* over it. I remember so well going to Doubet's with you the day you chose the things. It made every thing come back to me in a moment, and how intimate we used to be, and I felt so *ashamed of myself*. Do forgive me, and come to my wedding,

and let us be friends again. I am in great haste, for Joe is going to take this down town for me, and is waiting in the parlor, for I wanted to thank you at once. Oh, how I wish I could show you all my things, and my presents, and the lovely, lovely set of pearls Mr. Bloodgood has just sent.—Your devoted  
“VIRGINIA.”

It sounds just like her; she is not an Angelé! I never realized before how different they are. But it was kind in her to write when she must have been so hurried, and I know she means it. Arthur threw *his* cards in the fire—they came with the note—and of course I shall not go, and probably never shall see Virginia again; but I am glad that I sent the *sachet*.

October 15th.

I have had a dreary week; I seem to be falling back so fast; perhaps it is because I have been too well satisfied that I was doing right. It is thinking so much about next winter that makes every thing drag so; but how am I to manage with, not only all our friends, but papa gone?

Papa will go the first of December to New Orleans. There is some business of the firm to be arranged, and it is thought best for him to attend to it himself. He may be gone all winter. It will be such a great responsibility for me—the care of the house and the children, and I shall feel as if I were burdened with Arthur, too; for, if papa can scarcely restrain him, he will go back and be as bad as ever when he is left to his own devices.

Then, too, I am to take charge of money matters,

and draw on Mr. Gardiner, not only for market-money, but for a certain sum that *has* to include every expense; no going to papa for a dollar or two, or allowing a little bill here and there. I am sure I never shall be able to do it, and I shall be lonely beyond all measure.

There has been just one ray of comfort about papa's going. He talked to me quite soberly about it last night. He said that it was very hard to leave us, and he should not think of going but that there seemed a prospect of realizing what was considered a bad debt, and that he thought he could trust me to manage. “You remind me more and more of what your mother used to be, Augusta, when we were first married. You have not her experience, of course; but I believe, so far as you know, you try to do right, and sometimes your prudence and good management are quite beyond your years. I feel that I can trust you.” That was a great deal for papa to say, and a great deal for me to hear. *Quite as good as Virginia's pearls.*

October 16th.

Just as I was writing yesterday some one called. I knew very well who it was before Lily came trotting up-stairs to tell me “Mr. Walph was in the parlor.” I wondered what had brought him up in the early train, and how he came to be walking to Beechwood. My eyes were undeniably red, for I had been crying over the dismal prospect of next winter as I wrote; one thing more dismal than all the rest, which I did not mention, that I should not be likely to hear, “Mr. Walph was down-stairs” all winter long; but I

bathed them, and smoothed my hair, and went down, feeling—yes, I did feel as if something was going to happen; not just what did—oh, no! only I did feel glad that Laura had gone to pass the afternoon with Lovy Phelps, and that we were going to have one of our nice talks all alone.

Ralph saw that I had been crying right away. He got up and came to meet me, and when I gave him my hand, he did not just shake hands and stop, but held it while he led me to the sofa.

"Some thing has vexed you; won't you tell me what it is?" he said.

He did not say "Miss Augusta," as he usually did, only "you," as if I should tell him that part of my tears were because he was going to be in town all winter! Not then, at all events, though I did confess it afterward! I told him at first the news about papa's going away, and how I shrank from the responsibility and the loneliness; and that only last year at this time I had not so much as the care of keeping my own wardrobe in order; and how I had to learn every thing all at once. I could not help talking about myself he went back to it so, and led me on to do it. I grew excited and nervous, for I began to tell him about mamma, and her death, which I have never spoken to any one about. And then he said, "Do not grieve so, Augusta; it was all for the very, very best for you, and you must not feel that you are lonely. My mother loves you for these very things, because you have fought your way along so bravely; she loves you as if you were her own daughter, and she hopes—let me tell you now, dear—that you *will*

*be so*—that you will love me as much as I love you, and let me take you home some day to be really her daughter. Oh, Augusta, you know I love you!"

He said the last so passionately! his voice sounded like a sob! and I just sat still and cried as if my heart were breaking; but it was not because I was unhappy. He knew that very well, for I laid my head on his shoulder when he drew me to him, and he soothed me, as I do Lily sometimes, until *I could speak*.

I have loved him this long, long time—~~ever~~ since that Sunday in the choir, I think. I liked him from the very first, and *respected* him more than any gentleman I had ever seen, he was so unlike those I had been accustomed to. Now, I can see that it was this feeling, and the fear that I was mistaken in thinking that he cared for me any more than any other friend of Angelé's, that has made me so easily initiated lately. I have not been at peace with my own heart, and I could not be at peace with others.

Ralph told me last night that he saw us at the depot when we arrived to come to this house. That was the first time he ever saw me. Of course I did not notice him. Little I knew that night, when my heart was so heavy, and every thing was so forlorn and discouraging, that a lifelong happiness stood there in the shadow, waiting for me! I told Ralph about my first glimpse of him and the "coal-black steeds" the next morning, and how I wanted to know them all, and felt sure I should like them.

But I must not spend my whole day over my journal; only that I am still so restless and excited

that I cannot settle myself at any thing. I am to go to Beechwood to tea, and, though I long to see them all, I dread it. Ralph stopped and asked me this morning; he said his father and mother would come to see me first, if I preferred it; but his mother thought it would be pleasanter for me to meet them all at home. How strange it seemed to meet Ralph this morning, and see in his very eyes that he loved me, and feel that it was quite right to stand there talking on the porch all by ourselves, without starting or turning at every footstep!

Papa was so kind last night! I am sure he was surprised—indeed, he said so—surprised that we had found out that we loved each other so soon; he said that he had guessed it for some weeks past. He told Ralph that he would have chosen him from all the young men he had ever known, if he had been given to match-making. I think Ralph could not have asked for more. I was the more proud and glad of it, because Ralph had felt it only right to tell papa what I had known so long—how wild and foolish he had been, and how it had kept him back in business, and he didn't know how papa would take it. That was what made him speak so heartily, I suppose. He told us that we were both young enough to be patient. He need not have said that, for I don't suppose Ralph wishes to be married (how strange it seems to write that of him and myself!)—oh, for years; and I could not leave papa.

I did so hate to have Arthur and Laura know it. That was the most unpleasant thing of all; but Arthur was so astonished, and pleased too, I am sure,

that he forgot to say any thing uncivil. Laura took it quite as a matter of course, just as she does every thing else; and said, directly, that she should be sixteen in the winter, and old enough to keep house by another year.

*October 17th.*

I am really "engaged." How strange that sounds! but it is true, and I have a dear ring in my hand that will not let me forget it.

Ralph brought me a note from his mother yesterday. She said that she knew etiquette demanded a call from all of them; but she was not too odd to remember how embarrassing the formal visit of congratulation from Mr. Waldron's family had been, and she thought, if papa were willing, it would be better for me to come to tea as usual in the afternoon (it was my day for going there). I hesitated at first, but Ralph begged so hard, and said he should never realize that I belonged to him until he had seen me in his own home; and Mrs. Waldron's note assured me so heartily that Ralph's father and all of them were delighted with what had happened, that it seemed foolish in me to say no, particularly as papa's answer was, "You had better go," when he had read the note.

I had not more than shut up my journal when I heard some one say, "Where is she, Laura?" and Angelé came flying up-stairs; but I could not write all that *we* had to say, if I should give myself a week to do it in, I think. We talked and talked, until the carriage came for me, as it always does on Thursday, before going to the train for the gentle-

men, and there I was in my gingham dress, and black-silk apron. Fortunately, my hair was braided before I commenced to write, for it is so long, I always dread it so, that I do it directly after dinner, to be ready for calls at a moment's notice.

Angelé helped me dress, for she said it was her fault, and Laura was very good-natured, and offered to put Lily to rights of her own accord, when she came to tell me the carriage was at the gate. I think Laura is pleased at the increasing intimacy with the Waldron family. She heard what Mrs. Gardiner said the other day, and she hears from the Lanes and others how high they stand in the county. It would be an unworthy feeling in me, and I am glad that I discovered it and cast it out before *this* happened.

"Oh, Angelé," I said, as we turned into the avenue, and the great iron gate swung to behind us, "only think that I came here quite a stranger three months ago. How *very* well I remember that evening!"

"And now you belong to us; isn't it strange? But Ralph always seemed to fancy you; that very night I knew he would much rather have stayed in the house than gone out boating with Charles and your brother. You won't be vexed at Charlie, will you? but he has always called you 'Ralph's lady-love,' oh, this long time. It began in fun, of course; but I knew how much earnest there was in it."

I was thankful to have Angelé with me, for all I knew that only Mrs. Waldron was at home. My courage failed me as we reached the house. I began to fear that she would not think me good

enough for Ralph (for I know he is more than most sons are to their mothers), and that she had written kindly only because she was kind-hearted; though Ralph assured papa that both his father and mother were pleased at the way things had turned out. I knew very well that she might have expected him to marry beauty or fortune, or both, and since papa was poor, there was nothing but poor me for Ralph to receive.

"Mother wished you to come directly to her room," Angelé said. But there Mrs. Waldron was at the door waiting for us, and she held out both hands as I came up the steps, and kissed me just as she did the first night we talked together, only more affectionately, and said, "*Almost* my daughter" as she did so. Her voice trembled, too, I could *feel* that, just as Ralph's had done when he told me that he loved me; and she almost carried me up-stairs into her own room, taking off my bonnet with her own hands.

"I wanted you all to myself a little while," she said, "to tell you how very glad I am that you are going to be my dear boy's wife some day. My heart yearned over you when I first saw you at church, a motherless child, striving to be a mother to that little flock, for Dr. Clark had told us about you and your many cares." Then she told me that she longed so much to help me that very first day when she saw us in our deep mourning at church, and had led the way to our first conversation, and had prayed for me with her own children, "little thinking at first that I should be one of them."

"But I should have chosen you," she said (almost the words papa had used to Ralph), "because I know you are not like most of the girls nowadays, who look no further than the wedding-ring and the wedding-presents."

I almost shrank from my promise to Ralph as she talked, for she made love and marriage a much more solemn thing than it had ever seemed before; "a lifelong friendship, in which both promised to bear and forbear, to do their very best for each other, through sickness and poverty, and misunderstanding, perhaps, that would try our love to the utmost." I said so to her, that I was almost afraid to undertake such a promise, but she only said, "Not in your own strength, dear, not of yourself."

Then we talked about Ralph—about that weary, weary time when his mother said she rose up and lay down with the heartache for him; and that it was the greatest trial of faith she had ever known; but how one verse of a psalm came over to her mind in her darkest hours; and then she clasped her hands, and, with her clear liquid eyes so full of faith and earnestness that she looked like the picture of some saint, repeated—

"God's time with patient faith expect,  
Who will inspire thy breast  
With inward strength; *do thou thy part,*  
*And leave to Him the rest!*"

How good I ought to be with such a friend, such an example—shall I write it?—such a mother!"

I think it is no wrong to mamma's memory; I'm sure it makes her happy if she can see it. Oh, how

I have longed to tell her all these things! to have her know Ralph. It is the only drawback on my happiness; I am continually thinking that I *must* tell her. But I must not forget my meeting with the rest of the family.

The bell rang for tea, and we heard Mr. Waldron in the next room, while we were talking. Mrs. Waldron said it was the first time for a year that she had missed meeting him at the door; they always pay each other such *old-fashioned* little attentions, just like lovers. When we went down they were ready to seat themselves at table, and, thinking of the "sobering" things Mrs. Waldron had said, I almost forgot what had happened for a moment, for Ralph had not come in until I found that his place had been changed with Charlie, so as to bring him next to me, and on my plate was a napkin-ring, exactly the same pattern as the rest. I thought it was Angelé's at first, and that I had taken the wrong place, but she whispered, "Look again," and I found "Augusta" was engraved on it. I don't think any thing could have *satisfied* me more that the family were pleased than this thoughtful, silent adoption. When I looked up I met Mr. Waldron's eyes with such a roguish twinkle in them, and I know I blushed up to my forehead; but Ralph came in and took his new seat, and I was so glad to see him again, and really to find myself belonging to him as it were, that I was too happy to mind. He drove me home in the buggy—the first drive we have taken alone, and he gave me my ring; it is plain gold, not so much as a turquoise in it, when we were almost home, and he kissed me

"good-night" for the first time. He said, "You know I do not ask my father for any thing, and my ring is plain like the giver; but we can wait for the diamond, *darling*."

He has given me one with it, for I feel in my very heart that his love is sincere and disinterested, and as pure as any diamond. I do not envy Virginia now.

*November 19th.*

The first anniversary of mamma's death. How many, many things have happened this year! it is so crowded, so miserable, and yet so happy! Then every thing was so dark and vague, I did not know what to turn to first, or how to grope to the light; and now I *hope* I have passed through the "Wicket gate," and my way is plain before me. I believe I must be still lodging at the "Interpreter's House," for every thing has been made so easy, and I seem to learn so much. It is not pleasant to think of the rough places yet before me—of the dreary "Hill of Difficulty" and "the Valley of the Shadow of Death," but I will believe they are a great way off, and then, when they come, help will come too.

Perhaps this winter is my "Hill!" Papa has only waited to spend this day with us. How sad he looked at prayers this morning! But I think it was a lovely way to mark the anniversary, to commence having prayers; only it will be hard for me to go on with them when he is away.

And my last visit to Beechwood for four long months is paid. Ralph talked so kindly of Arthur when we were coming home, and said that he had

much more mind than most young men of his age, educated as he had been; that is, allowed to do just as he pleased. I know papa feels that it was wrong, and it has made him very patient with Arthur. When he spoke of it he said that was one of the misfortunes of prosperity, that it drew a man away from his own family, and exposed them to habits of self-indulgence.

But I can see a great change in Arthur, being so much with Charlie and Ralph. He admires Mrs. Waldron, too. I really believe he tries, "not only to act rightly, but to feel so," when he is near her. What a strange thing influence is, the unconscious influence of character and example! I have always felt it so in Ralph and his mother. It frightens me to think what mine may be.

*December 27th.*

It was not such a dreary Christmas after all, with Mrs. Waldron's kind invitation that we should leave the house to Ellen and Michael, and spend it with them. Laura was going to grandma's, however, and Arthur had to take her, so with only the children and myself I thought we should not be too burdensome. There was such a famous long letter from papa—Mr. Waldron had it for me; and he is so well, and doing so well. Presents for each of us, just the same as for the rest of the family, from Mr. and Mrs. Waldron. Ralph's to me was just what I so much wanted, an imperial photograph of himself. It hangs here over my writing-desk, and I do not feel half so lonely now. He comes up once a week to see that all is right at Beechwood, and spends the evening with

me. He said last night, "No prospect of business yet, Augusta, with the new year," and he seemed more downhearted than I have ever seen him. But I tried to comfort him, and told him it were better so, or we should get impatient; and we could not be married yet awhile if he could take care of me twice over, for Laura is to go to school for a year, and she will commence on the fifth, living with Mrs. Waldron as long as they are in town. Mrs. Waldron wrote to papa and to me about it, and said she was sorry to take any thing more away from me; but she thought it was wrong for Laura not to improve the present, and she knew I would see it in the light of a self-denial to spare her in papa's absence. It will be dull enough, not a soul but the children and Ellen to speak to all day; but Arthur is so much more pleasant than he used to be! and Michael is so much assistance to Ellen, that I can manage very well with the work alone, particularly in papa's absence.

I must not forget that Virginia came to see me. I don't think I should have sent her my card, but Angéle and I met her at the Aspinwall Gallery one morning, and she came the next day of her own accord. Arthur said it was only because such a family as the Waldrons had "taken me up," but I would not mind him; though, I must confess, I knew all the while my engagement had much to do with her warmth, and especially her aunt's. Virginia was superbly dressed, and is going out constantly. She said she was as happy as she could possibly be, but she did not look well; she was thin and restless, and her eyes had an eager, unsatisfied expression, that

worried me. I can see that she lives on excitement.

Mrs. Gardiner came to congratulate me, too; she said things that hurt me, though they sounded coarse and unfeeling, about "having managed my cards well," as if I had plotted to make Ralph love me, and ingratiate myself with his family. If I know my own heart, I never, for one moment, tried to win any of them, least of all Ralph, who always seemed so much too good for me.

I made the acquaintance of several of his relations, who called upon me, and invited me to little family gatherings, that were very pleasant, when they found I did not go into general society. They all seemed friendly people.

*March 22d.*

I have tried to say and to feel that the winter has not been dreary; indeed, it has not been so by comparison with last year, I have been so constantly employed for one thing, and that is the secret of every-day happiness, I begin to believe. Then there has been Ralph to think about, and the future to dream over, when we shall have none of these long separations, but be always together.

I had written so far, last night, when I heard carriage-wheels at the door, and such a shout from Ellen, "The master's come!" and sure enough, there was papa, looking so well. I noticed, the first thing, how broad and sunburnt his face was. So delighted to get home, he was almost boyish, and the children, who were roused out of a sound sleep, got so wild, that I did not know as we should ever get them back to bed again.

Papa said he could see into the room as he drew up; we do not put the curtains down half the time, until the shutters are closed for the night, having no neighbors, and Arthur and I looked so cozy on each side of the round table, with the bright light and cheerful fire. Well, we have had some nice evenings, for Arthur has made it a point of honor never to leave me alone, and I made it a matter of duty, before it became a pleasure, to learn chess to play with him, and to give him lessons in counting-house French, which he needs very much with Shipman & Co. Arthur was as shy as possible about his good behavior, but I know it pleased him to have papa notice and commend it. He thinks the children are very much improved, too; so my winter of hard work has not been unappreciated.

*April 1st.*

This has been a very eventful day, and every thing looks so hopeful. Things have come about so strangely. Dr. Clark came out to dine at Beechwood—the dear old house was opened last Tuesday—and passed an hour with papa on his way. He has been doubly good since my engagement to Ralph, who is one of his great favorites, and I have always felt that I owed part of Ralph's love to him, for he said such kind things of me at Beechwood when we first came out. But the best thing of all was, he told papa to-day that he believed his Southern winter had been the most providential thing that could have happened, that it had confirmed the improvement in his health, which rest and good air had commenced, and that he considered him fairly out of

danger if he were moderately prudent. "In fact," Dr. Clark said, in that hearty way that I like so much, "I consider your business misfortunes the greatest piece of good-luck that ever happened to you."

Papa said that he began to see it so now, not only as to his health—and then he looked at Arthur and me.

Dr. Clark nodded. "It's been the making of both these children."

"Yes," said papa, "I believe it has; and yet the hardest thing of all, last year this time, was, that I had ruined their prospects."

"Did you ever hear, Augusta," said Dr. Clark, "that spring winds, even the roughest, have a great deal to do with the healthy growth of young trees?"

And as for papa, as it says in "Pilgrim's Progress," "the water stood in his eyes."

But when the carriage brought Dr. Clark from Beechwood to the depot, it stopped at our house again, and left Ralph's father; and when Dr. Clark was fairly off, Ralph himself came, strange to say, not to see me! I must confess that I was in a perfect fever of suspense and expectation, for the conference with papa lasted a long, long time, and kept tea waiting till it was quite dark.

Then Mr. Waldron drove home, leaving Ralph; and papa was very sober at tea-time, so was Ralph. I could not tell what to make of it, till after tea, papa said, "Have no secrets from Augusta, my boy; you can always trust her good sense and discretion,

and that is as much as can be said for any woman, young or old."

So it came out that they have been discussing a plan for papa to go into business again, now that he is honorably discharged from all the affairs of the old firm; and his creditors *that were*, for they are fully paid, urge him to do it, only he lacked capital. Mr. Waldron thinks it will be an excellent opportunity for Ralph, so he is to go in with papa, and Mr. Waldron will furnish what papa needs, to make up the amount in Ralph's name. Arthur is quite carried away by it, for he feels that he can be of real use now, and he is so fond of Ralph, and looks up to him so.

It seemed too much good fortune, after what Dr. Clark had said about papa's health! I did not know which to be thankful for first. It did not seem as if I had a thing to ask for; Ralph was so happy in a certain prospect of our marriage. He begs that it may be next fall, if they are at all successful; for Mrs. Waldron has always wished us to stay at Beechwood for a year, and Laura leaves school, and I could be near to help with the children, and look after papa's comforts. It all seems fair, and as though papa would have all but poor mamma restored to him. Even if we only have enough to be comfortable, I shall never regret my experience the past year. I think I see the good of worldly trouble, particularly when we are young.

We were walking down the avenue, at Beechwood, yesterday, and I said to Mrs. Waldron, "How much thicker the white clover springs on the edge of the road!"

"Yes," she said, "because people walk there, and it is like camomile, 'the more you tread it, the more you spread it.'"

When we came in she went up-stairs for "The Golden Treasury," a little book she is very fond of, and brought a pencilled passage for me to read, saying, "That always reminds me of your life, daughter." She often calls me so when she is most affectionate. This was it:

"Stars shine brightest in the darkest night; torches are better for beating; grapes come not to the proof till they come to the press; spices smell best when bruised; *young trees root the faster for shaking*; gold looks brighter for scouring; juniper smells sweetest in the fire; the palm-tree proves the better for pressing; camomile, the more you tread it, the more you spread it; and grace, that is hid in nature as sweet water in rose-leaves, is most fragrant when the fire of affliction is distilling it."

*CARRIAGE FRIENDS.*

## CARRIAGE FRIENDS.

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### CHAPTER I.

ANNE HARRISON had passed a very useful and happy morning. She was the only grown-up daughter at home, and relieved the mother of much household care. The Harrisons were very plain people, but highly respected in their little circle, and had quite as much cultivation and refinement as many families whose income was twice their own. Mr. Harrison had left his widow a house in Ninth Street, and a small property, safely invested, so that there were no actual pressing cares of poverty. Still it was very little to clothe and educate five children upon, and the strictest self-denial and economy were necessary in order to leave no large bills for quarter-day; and there was nothing over at the end of the year.

Mrs. Harrison's face grew more anxious and careworn in expression daily. How could it be otherwise, when she knew expenses increased instead of diminishing? The boys were being well educated at the excellent public schools, which Philadelphia may well be proud of; but James, the eldest, was getting

beyond the skill of her scissors and thimble in the way of jackets and trousers; Maggie, coming next, could not conveniently be clad in his outgrown habiliments, and already thought herself too old for made-over dresses, already worn by her mother and sister. Truly, there was not much lustre and freshness about them when they fell to Maggie's lot. Alick, an urchin of seven, was particularly "hard on shoes," and had a most unhappy faculty of damaging hats and caps in his street-play with rude boys in their neighborhood. Lucy, the youngest, was very little trouble at present; but Mrs. Harrison looked forward to her school-bills with a sigh when she saw her amusing herself with a set of alphabet-blocks, or heard Maggie's reiterated desire to be sent to Miss Gardell's, instead of the plain day-school kept by two Quaker sisters, which she now attended.

"And only *just so much* coming in, rain or shine, Anne," she said to her chief confidante and adviser, as she puzzled over and over a column of figures with the stump of a well-worn leaden pencil, attached by a string to her market-book.

"Butter has risen five cents this last week, and the butcher's bill for the month is not paid yet. Dear me! I never knew how well off I was when your father was living. To be sure, I always had my regular market-money, and tried to be as economical as I could. But then, many's the half-dollar that came out of his pocket, and nothing said about it, when it wasn't convenient for me to get at my purse. And then, he was always sending home things, a ham, or a smoked salmon, that go a great

ways in a family; and there was my birthday silk dress, as regular as a birthday came; or a piece of muslin, which I did not have to reckon. Oh, there were a thousand things! Besides, I always knew that if the worst came to the worst he would see the Christmas bills paid somehow. But now"—and Mrs. Harrison paused, as she set down an amount—"but now, seventy-six and three to carry, that makes nine dollars and seventy-six cents more than last month, Anne. Only think of it! As I said before, there is nobody really to turn to, and it makes it very hard."

"I am very sorry, mother; perhaps I can get another scholar in the fall, when people come back from the country; and James is almost ready to enter the high school, and then there's only three years more before he will be earning something."

"Three years is a long time, my dear child;" and Mrs. Harrison shook her head in a melancholy way that had become habitual to her. "And everybody teaches music nowadays, so there is very little chance for you, especially as we know so few people. However, the ten dollars you get from Harriet Brooks is something. I shall always be thankful your father concluded to get your piano that year, though we did have to pinch and save every way. There never has been a time you could have had it since."

"Poor father!" said Anne, with a faint mistiness in her blue eyes. "How good he always was to me! I always feel that I ought to do twice as much for Maggie, because she will never know what he would have been to her. Are we done now, mother?"

"I believe so. You can take up the stockings; they are well aired, and leave them on my work-basket. And there's your white basque, the flies are so troublesome now, and Lucy's pantalets."

Anne stooped down, very good-naturedly, to have her arm piled full of the clean clothes she had been assisting to iron, and then gladly escaped from the little, hot basement-kitchen to the cooler air above.

She opened the parlor-door as she went along, and thought how particularly neat and pleasant it looked; every thing made the best of, and kept in perfect order. "No one would ever think how the carpet had been pieced, and that great darn in the window-curtain comes just under a fold," she said to herself, approvingly. The piano was really very good, being almost new, and set off the plainer articles of furniture, that had never been removed since her mother's marriage; and her father's bookcase, choicely filled, was a never-ending resource, as well as an ornament.

The stair-carpet was sadly dilapidated beneath the tidy linen cover; but the edges were still bright, and the rods were clean and shining. The upper hall was too small and dark to make its arrangement of much consequence; and Anne's own room, opening at the head of the stairs, was like the parlor, the best made of every thing. Her mother had the larger chamber in front of the house, but that was the general sitting-room and rendezvous for all, and the furniture bore witness to it; while overhead was the boys' room, and back of that a kind of store-closet, where the one servant-maid slept.

Anne laid the large pile of clean stockings on her

mother's never-empty work-basket, and entered her own room with much satisfaction. She thought how very pleasant it looked with the window-shutter bowed so as to keep out the glare, while it admitted a nice breeze. Her arm-chair and footstool stood in front of it, and under the glass was a little round table with a vase of flowers, and a fancy work-basket, which went down to the parlor evenings.

She was half-tempted to throw herself on the bed, she felt so tired; but it looked so straight and even, that she did not like to disturb it, and sat down by the window instead, and admired the grape-vines over the trellis of a larger house next door, and the few verbenas and geraniums she had coaxed into blooming in the very narrow strip of ground that bordered the brick walk of their own yard.

She felt that she had deserved her half-hour's rest before the noisy feet and voices of the children should announce dinner, and she took out of her pocket a letter she had only read once, from her particular and intimate friend, Alice Brooks, the elder sister of her one music-scholar.

Alice was at Cape May, a fortnight's holiday, which her indulgent father always granted to his family the last of August. "We get better rooms after the rush is over, and are not elbowed by the fashionables," he was accustomed to say.

The Brooks family were by no means fashionable, though very well off as regards this world's goods, and very kind to those who had less of them. Mr. Brooks was a wholesale shoe-dealer in Second Street; and Mrs. Brooks, who had less refinement than the

rest of the family, furnished her parlors very showily, and loaded her table with all that was to be had in market. Alice, unlike her mother, was gentle and reserved, older than Anne, and much looked up to by her; and there was a brother, older than herself, in an excellent Market-Street business. One of Anne's chief pleasures was attending lectures and concerts with them; for, as she had no other escort, that would have prevented her enjoyment of these recreations, even if they had been able to afford them. As it was, Elliot Brooks seemed to consider it a settled thing that the second lady's ticket was engaged to Anne Harrison, and paid her many other kind and brotherly attentions, for which she felt very grateful.

"Dear me, how nice it must be to go to Cape May!" was her inward reflection, as she reread the account of the riding, and bathing, and evening walks Alice had written; "or to go anywhere on a journey. There's the Reads in the country, and the Perrys at such a lovely boarding-house in Germantown. Quantities of beaux, Ellen says; and Julia Barry gone to Niagara. I wonder if I shall ever stir out of Philadelphia!" And a very natural longing came over her for the close-shaven meadows and green foliage, and flickering shadows she caught glimpses of at Fairmount, or on her rare sails up the Schuylkill in the little ferry-boat, which was all of journeying or the country that she had ever known since her childhood. She was almost tempted to think her lot very hard indeed, for the morning's fatigue began to be felt, and have an effect upon her spirits,

She had to be steadily industrious, and to think of every penny she spent twice over, and dress so very plainly. There was not a single young girl of her acquaintance who had so little variety in her wardrobe, or who wore the same bonnet two seasons, as she had to do. And then, as her mother said, things were getting worse instead of better. There was more sewing and ironing to be done every week, the children were so romping and careless; and where was the end of all this saving and toiling? Her life had fallen into a very dull routine of late, it must be confessed, and the inherent longing of the young for change and excitement began to be felt accordingly.

Guests so new as repining thoughts, were not made very welcome, and the children's voices quite banished them for the time. There was graceful little Lucy, just through with her morning nap, and looking like a fairy with her flushed face and tangled curls. Alick was less noisy than usual, and neither dropped the butter-knife, nor spilled the gravy on his neighbors. Maggie had to be put down for dictating to him, and James was full of a new-school triumph, which was not complete until shared by those at home. She was busy in a moment, carving and helping to relieve her mother, and her spirits rose with her usefulness. Suddenly the bell on the stairway sounded a loud, startling peal.

"There goes the front door," said Alick, down from his chair in a moment, and flying, with all the curiosity of his age, to answer it.

Anne started up as quickly. "It may be a visitor. Here, Alick, come back; remember we are at

dinner." But Alick did not heed the threatened detention. "Dear me, how provoking!" Anne was always alive to appearances. "He's so headlong; if it was a visitor, he would show them right in, and never think of shutting the parlor-door, so that I could get up to dress. There! I declare he has, and it's a gentleman, and he's showing him right through the hall. What *shall* we do?" And, contemplating flight to the kitchen herself as the nearest refuge, she looked with dismay at her mother's old cap and the soiled dinner-aprons of the children.

"It's only the tax-gatherer, it is likely," suggested her mother, to whom that functionary was an ever-present "phantom of affright."

The heavy tread sounded, with the boy's boisterous laughter, nearer and nearer on the stairs, at the very door. There was no chance of escape.

"Mr. Clark! well, I declare!" was Mrs. Harrison's relieved explanation, as a benevolent-looking, middle-aged gentleman, with a shining forehead, bedewed at that moment with perspiration, made his appearance in the doorway. "Why, we thought you were safe at Bordentown. Do come in! How's Mrs. Clark? When did you get home?"

"Why, we're not at home yet, or I should not be here, that's self-evident." And a hearty chuckling laugh showed what manner of man Mr. Clark was. "I mean that Mrs. C. is still at B.—there! there's a rhyme for you, Maggie—and I, being in town on business, just dropped in for some dinner, not having any house of my own to go to."

Mr. Clark dropped into Alick's empty chair very

unceremoniously, and told him that he was the youngest, and could squeeze in on the other side of the table. Anne considered that there was still a mutton-chop left, and plenty of tomatoes and corn, so things were not so bad as they might be, since no one had been expected.

"And there's an Indian pudding to come," said Alick, who felt himself bound to entertain their visitor. "We always have Indian pudding on ironing-days, because there's such a hot fire to bake it."

Anne interposed to spare any further revelation of household economies, and helped Mr. Clark to all that was within her reach. He was fully able to entertain himself when it was set before him, and ate like a hungry man, as he was, until his appetite was appeased.

"It takes so long for Indian pudding to cool; that's my only objection," said Mr. Clark, accepting nevertheless a bountiful supply of the rich brown and yellow dessert. "I was always fond of them when I was a boy. We used to have pudding first in those days, and it was 'the one that eats the most pudding shall have the most meat.' Ha, ha! Alick, corn-meal cost less than beef; so did rice and milk! Well, now, Miss Anne, suppose we come to business. I suppose you did not know I was going to run off with your sister, James, at my time of life, too?"

Mrs. Harrison laid down the pudding-spoon, and Anne looked up with eager expectation.

"I am, though, and, what's more, Mrs. Clark told me to. Pretty wife, isn't she, conniving at such things? Ha! ha! How long does it take you to

pack? that's the question," continued this now welcome visitor.

"Oh, how fortunate!" thought the repentant young lady of the house, "that Alick *did* fly to the door, and I didn't have time to send James and say that I was engaged—that mother was, I mean! Why doesn't he go on, instead of stuffing down that pudding so? I wish it would choke him, or burn him, so he'd have to stop! I wonder if he does mean to take me back to Bordentown with him?"

"When people elope they don't stop for travelling-trunks, do they, Maggie? You read the love-stories in the magazines, I know. Children always do like candy and trash, Mrs. Harrison. Get enough of it after a while, though; I always allow mine a surfeit—ha! ha!"

Mr. Clark's allusions to his children were rather more frequent than if he had been patriarchal in that respect, the fact being that the lack of them was good Mrs. Clark's one life-long trouble.

"I'd like to see some of your children, Mr. Clark. Are they good boys to play?—Oh, mother, I didn't tell you that Bill Johnston and Luke Taylor had such a fight, and Luke whipped—"

"There, there, Alick, Mr. Clark is talking, my son," interposed Mrs. Harrison, mildly, seeing that Anne's impatience to have their visitor come to the point was quite as great as if he had been about to propose an elopement, and she had made up her mind to accept it.

Mr. Clark seemed to think he had been sufficiently explicit, however. "Come, now, Miss Anne, fly

around!" he said, pushing his empty plate back with a force that made the glasses ring, and starting up from the table as he did so.

"Without ever asking to be excused," whispered Lucy, who had been taught that the offence was capital, and to be punished by side-table banishment.

"But what am I to do, Mr. Clark?" asked Anne, relieved at being able to ask questions without seeming impolite.

"Do? why meet me by moonlight alone—that is to say, on the Walnut-Street wharf, at four o'clock, in a burning hot sun, with a regular jam of a crowd jostling you. People start off that way every day, and call it travelling for pleasure. Couldn't undergo it myself again for all the country between this and Oregon, with choice of location and no chills. James will hunt me up for you—oh, and Mrs. Clark said you are to bring a sun-bonnet and clothes enough to last two weeks. Do her good, won't it, mother? You ought to see how my children have improved; stout as you are now, Maggie. I say to Mrs C. every day it's worth the money to watch 'em."

"I wish I was able to afford it," sighed Mrs. Harrison, with most transparent artifice, the price of butter making it absolutely necessary that Anne should be defined as Mr. Clark's guest before she gave her consent. "Anne certainly does need some change."

"Need some change? How much? And Mr. Clark, in the act of reaching for his hat, thrust his hand into a side-pocket, and produced such a handful of quarters as set Alick's eyes dancing, and his heart to breaking the tenth commandment. This wilful

misunderstanding was to cover the explanation Mrs. Harrison seemed to expect. "Why, you see, our children don't eat as much as other people's—what are you laughing at me for, you young dog, you? There! take that to teach you better manners." And he aimed the brightest of his coveted quarters directly at Master Alick's nose—"So they only charge us half price for them, and Mrs. C. and I concluded Anne might as well come and take out the rest. Good-by! Don't get left, Anne. Time and tide, you know—also Captain Hinckley. Four o'clock precisely."

"Oh, mother," exclaimed Anne, with an enthusiasm of thankfulness that would have been sufficient for the emergency, had she just received news of a legacy that would provide for the present and future wants of the whole family, "was there ever any thing so fortunate as our doing the fine things first this week? How thankful I am that I did not leave my basque till to-morrow! It would have been impossible for me to go without that basque. What would have become of me if I had not finished my new muslin to wear to church last Sunday? You'll lend me your striped silk skirt? Ah, do, now; I'll take elegant care of it. Let Maggie help Jane with the dishes. I never shall fold that muslin without creasing it. Come, Maggie, why don't you fly?"

"La! I don't see any such great hurry," responded the aspiring Maggie, sulkily, following her mother and sister to the second story, instead of doing what she was bid, and wiping up the plates. "I'm not going to mind *her* forever."

Alick was a fellow-rebel from Anne's authority, and this was addressed to him on the stairs.

The scorching of the new quarter, shut up in Alick's hand, impelled him from the house without response. James subsided into his books, and the neglected Lucy was left to make little migratory journeys with Jane from the dining-room to the kitchen, where she established herself happily at last, armed with a spoon to scrape the pudding-dish—not that she was hungry, but there was all the zest of forbidden pastime in the employment, and the few crumbs she managed to detach.

Up-stairs Anne was too busy to notice that Maggie had deserted, and was hanging on the foot of the bed, watching her hurried preparations.

"There's my muslin will do for dinner and evenings, you see, mother, and I can make a change with my basque and your silk—it's so fortunate that your things fit me—and my best collar is clean, and the under-sleeves made out of your worked cape, you know, and my barège skirt—one, two, three, four—the same as four dresses, you see. If I only can get my basque ironed out now and then, for I can change off with my muslin skirt."

"You ain't going to put that right on, and wear it every day; there won't be much left when it comes to me.—Mother, is Anne going to wear her new muslin every day?" But here Miss Margaret's jealous comments were interrupted by a resounding slap on her arm, fortunately, for she dodged the aim.

"For mercy's sake, mother, do send Maggie down-stairs! She's crushed my under-sleeves, and is

leaning right on my mantilla. You troublesome child, you!" And the threatened garment was snatched away with a jerk.

The trip to Bordentown was no ordinary event, since it made the quiet, elder-sisterly Anne Harrison so forget herself. Indeed, she questioned her own identity, when her little journey was fairly entered upon, and she stood by Mr. Clark's side, waving her handkerchief, as is the fashion of all inexperienced travellers, to her brother James, receding among the hack-drivers, porters, and draymen on the Walnut-Street wharf. She wondered that Mr. Clark could take it so quietly, actually eating an orange (out of hand) and reading the *Evening Bulletin*, instead of alternately gazing on the picturesque coal-barges and swampy flats of Richmond, and scrutinizing with equal interest her fellow-passengers for the short voyage on which they were embarked. She had thought it proper to array herself in a very haut mousseline de laine, being unprepared with any regular travelling-dress, also to carry a blanket-shawl and a hand-basket, though there seemed very little probability that either shelter or luncheon would be needed in the hour and a half that intervened between her and her destination. She found, by observation, before they reached Tacony, that most of the ladies were in light-colored stuffs, with large capes of the same, and one or two seemed to regard her chokingly-high and unseasonably-dark dress with an impression very different from that which she had intended to give; but, to use one of Mr. Clark's favorite aphorisms, "We must go one voyage to learn," and, to Anne

Harrison's quick powers of observation, education had begun.

We are compelled to acknowledge that, in her eager anticipations of the fortnight before her, she thought less of the fresh air, shaded walks, and fluttering foliage of the Napoleonic retreat now serving as a country boarding-house, than of the new acquaintances she should meet there; and, as they drove into the wide grounds of the Bonaparte House, she looked more eagerly for new faces than for the honest, motherly countenance of Mrs. Clark, which was watching for the arrival of the train from her chamber-window. One or two other married gentlemen were bestowed in the omnibus, and their wives appeared to greet them; but, on the whole, Anne was disappointed to find no more signs of life and gay society in the great halls and long corridors through which they passed. It was, in fact, "nap-time," in a hot summer afternoon, and every one knows that only very strong inducements would bring novel-reading damsels or sleep-loving matrons out of dishabille, and, therefore, out of their rooms, before six o'clock. Mrs. Clark further explained that a great many of the regular boarders had already left, as the most of them only took rooms to the first of September, and, having met the requirements of custom by absenting themselves from town up to that date, had hastened back, leaving the weather, which still continued torrid, quite out of the consideration, and those who remained were mostly quiet, unfashionable people like themselves—disappointment number two, for Anne had, in imagina-

tion, peopled this delightful retreat with marriageable young men, and the most dashing, lovely, and, withal, friendly girls of her own age.

However, when the tea-bell rang, prospects brightened. Mr. Clark stood ready to offer her his arm, his face shining more than ever from the day's hot work in the sun and his copious ablutions in very cold water. Mrs. Clark was dressed precisely the same as if she was on her way to her own tea-table—the inevitable white-ribboned cap and a plain lawn with ample cape, which defied all fashions, and had become a fashion of its own to the wearer, who would not have considered herself dressed without it. Anne Harrison had occupied the hour in rearranging her fine hair in very elaborate braids, a style she seldom took time for in her industrious home, unless there was a party or a concert on hand. She had resisted the strong temptation she felt to put on all her splendors for her first appearance—the new blue muslin, her best worked collar, and a set of velvet rosettes for her hair, a present from Alice Brooks; but still she felt “very much dressed,” in her clean basque, with some knots of blue ribbon, and the tucked barege skirt, which was quite as good as new, although the waist and sleeves were used up. Mrs. Harrison had always maintained that the convenient fashion of basques had been invented by a person of limited income, and considered it a special blessing to those who were similarly situated. Save the little consciousness of manner inseparable to people in moderate circumstances, from their Sunday garments, and of a first introduction to general so-

ciety, our Ninth-Street heroine looked very fresh and pretty, seated at the tea-table between her kind entertainers, all the lovelier for the position, doubtless.

At first she was too conscious of the unusual attention of the waiters (to whom she said, “If you please, sir,” in the most respectful manner) to notice the stares and whispers with which it is the fashion to welcome new arrivals at a table d’hôte, where none are passing travellers. But, presently, she found the courage to reconnoitre, and, notwithstanding the long gaps made by the departures Mrs. Clark had told her of, Anne thought that there were plenty of delightful people left. A pretty girl in a low-necked and short-sleeved organdie, for instance, who wore her hair turned back from her face, with several costly bracelets on her bare arms, fixed her attention immediately by the novel way in which her hair was dressed, and the cool, at-home manner in which she ate a hearty supper, ordered the waiters herself, talking and laughing all the time at everybody within talking distance. A young man at her elbow was quite Anne's *beau idéal*—tall, black-haired, with a fine beard and mustache, beautifully-even teeth, and a very white hand. Two sisters, as she learned from their affectionate address to each other, seemed to wish to monopolize him. They were also tall, but of different styles, one being very fair, and the other dark; both were dressed as if for an evening party, and talked incessantly.

Anne was very desirous to ask the names of these persons, but Mrs. Clark was slightly deaf, as became a lady of nearly sixty, and her husband's replies

would have been quite too loud for any confidential communication, owing to the habit of elevating his voice in conversation with her. How she envied them all the freedom with which they spoke and moved, especially after they had gone to the drawing-room, where she was deposited on a sofa that forced her to sit upright between Mrs. Clark, who brought out her knitting, and a friend of hers of the same mature age, who prided herself on her eyesight and her fine sewing!

If deference to age and experience were natural to the young, it would not be so strongly insisted on as a duty. Anne had all outward and inward respect for the two estimable ladies, who instantly began a house-keeping conversation across her; but it was very stupid nevertheless, to be thus prisoned between them, with her hands folded before her, and forced to keep her attention on the pickling and preserving receipts, so as to repeat some of Mrs. Talbot's remarks which failed to reach Mrs. Clark, while at the piano the pretty, dark-haired Miss Revere played a redowa, and the various young people swam and jerked round the room in an animated practice. Miss Fisher, one of the tall sisters, absorbed Anne's Adonis in an intense conversation at one of the casement windows; scraps floating to Anne with the proportions of "sweet plums" and cucumber sauce. Two or three games of chess were in progress in the little withdrawing-room shaded by lace curtains, and Mr. Clark made one of a whist-party composed of elderly people like himself, who could sit from seven till eleven watching trumps and calling tricks with a patient resignation

wonderful to restless young people like Anne Harrison. Watching all these proceedings from a distance was "dull music," as Mr. Clark would have said.

Still, when she found herself in her own room, and opened her portfolio to write the letter she had been meditating since her good fortune had been fully realized—a letter that was to astonish Alice Brooks at Cape May, and pique Elliot, who had sent her no message since leaving town—she gave a most glowing description of the place and the company, not forgetting a series of raptures bestowed upon Coleman Butler—for this she had discovered to be the name of the white-handed fascinator—who had bestowed more than one glance in her direction that evening, and in whom the romantic Anne already saw her fate. The letter concluded with one of those outpourings of affection which young girls lavish on each other before they have learned the legitimate destination of "thoughts that breathe, and words that burn."

"I am sure," wrote our gentle Anne, and she was really sincere when she did so, "that nothing can ever make me love my darling Alice less; my truest, noblest friend." Here she thought of the timely present of those velvet rosettes. "I can see that I shall love her—Laura Revere; isn't it a lovely name?—and we shall doubtless be much together. I felt drawn irresistibly toward her the moment I saw her; but your faithful Anne is not one to forget the nearest and dearest, and, if *you* were only here to wander with me through these beautiful walks, my happiness would be complete!"

## CHAPTER II.

MISS HARRISON had made one discovery in the course of the evening that placed her on very good terms with herself. She found that she could play more brilliantly than any one who had touched the piano. Miss Revere sang with a rich, pure soprano, with trills and cadenzas marvellous to Anne, who had never heard such execution out of a concert-room; but she had a careless way of slurring over her accompaniments, which proved that her industry was not equal to her natural gifts, clearness, and flexibility of voice.

Everybody that is at all musical knows that industry does more than talent in instrumental proficiency, when but one of these aids is to be had. Both were united in Anne Harrison's rapid execution; for she had of late the most helpful of motives, the desire and hope of relieving her mother entirely from her support, and doing something for the younger children. Elliot Brooks looked upon this as a very excellent thing in Anne; he not only praised her thoughtful heart, but her independence; it was the first thing that had led him to regard his sister's friend as any thing but a pretty girl, that it was polite to talk to and escort home when she came to the house. He disliked equally the feminine extremes of "strong" and "weak-minded" women, and frequently described, as young bachelors will do, the manifold virtues of the wife of his imagination. The catechism had embodied them all, but he did not

go back so far, or he might have discovered that he was not the first person, by any means, who considered it the thing to "do our duty in that state of life" in which they found themselves placed. In other words, he especially disliked people who were always aiming at some other "state," which fault of character, he said, made bankrupts of good merchants, flirts of married women, and had created that pushing, toadying class of society of late so prominent a class in our great cities. It is by no means confined to them, though Elliot Brooks's experience was. The smallest village possesses the same social element in just as great a degree.

"I do not want to be dependent on my mother, and I think it but right to help myself and the boys too, if I can," added the fair applicant for his counsel, as they walked home together one soft summer evening, that made it quite a pleasant thing to lounge along with that pretty figure leaning on his arm, and those blue eyes turned to his in the earnestness of conversation.

"I think you are very right, Anne," returned this sage adviser of twenty-seven. "Every woman ought to make the most of the talents she has; and besides, it is a debt you owe your father, and the children too. Of course, he spent more on your education than can be afforded for theirs. Do you see?"

It was at that time a new idea to Anne, but she had heart and sense enough to see and act upon it; so that, thoroughly grounded in music as she already was, she set to work to add a fine touch and brilliant

execution by patient industry. It was a proud day when Harriet Brooks came with a new yellow "Hunten's Method" under her arm to take her first lesson, and Mrs. Brooks was looking out for more pupils among her acquaintances.

Hearing herself praised for this endeavor by her friends, and for almost every thing she did or said by her mother, who looked up to Anne since her father's death from the long habit and necessity of looking somewhere, the young girl had come to consider herself a very excellent sort of person, with great decision, independence, and unselfishness of disposition. If she had been told that she was this only because circumstances had developed but one side of her character, and not from any settled principle of doing the right, she would have considered the person speaking very cruel and unjust. Miss Anne had taken more lessons in music than self-knowledge—a study that, like music, is never particularly agreeable at the outset, though often ending in the power to create both harmony and melody from discordant combinations.

Nor had she the least idea that the Bonaparte House was to be the school of such instructions when she opened her eyes on the first bright day of her vacation. A dreamy semi-consciousness of relief from all care and occupation, the freshness of the country, the full-throated matins of the birds, who always seem to consider that they have done vocal duty for the day when this chorus is ended, and so retire to the silence of domestic life, was all that stirred her heart and mind at first; but gradually

the animated face of Laura Revere, and the dark eyes of Coleman Butler, displaced the purer influences, and she sat up in bed, her eyes brightening with day-dreams.

It was owing to her mother's good sense that Anne had brought her one new morning-dress. Such were the economical habits of the family that "a breadth out of the skirt" of some frock that had seen previous duty was usually called into service to piece out the wrappers of Mrs. Harrison and her daughters. But the fashion of basques had broken in upon this arrangement, and, for the first time in her life, Anne found herself the possessor of a new gingham, made up with "the elegance of simplicity" by her own hands, and quite as becoming as any thing in her wardrobe. Fortunate seventeen, that finds every thing becoming!

Mr. Clark was always useless to community until he had swallowed and digested the morning papers—three of them—that arrived at Bordentown by the early train. His wife had made an engagement several days before to go to Trenton, with Mrs. Talbot, to call on a mutual friend they had discovered to live there.

She was really quite concerned at leaving Anne alone so long, and apologized in all the kindness of her heart for so doing. "If I had only thought about your being here, my dear; but you know it did not occur to Mr. Clark and myself to bring you out until yesterday; though I'm sure I don't see why it did not. Mrs. Talbot and I have been talking about it ever since we happened to discover that

both knew Martha Lord; but it takes some time for elderly people to get started. Mr. Clark will be very glad to take you out to walk as soon as he gets through with the *Ledger* and the *North American*, and looks over the *Bulletin* once more, for he says he never half gets the sense of things in the cars. I don't suppose you would get lost if you ventured out by yourself; the walks are all very pretty, though I don't see that they lead anywhere in particular, a great waste of ground, as Mr. Clark says. Now, do try and not get lonesome."

It looked rather lonely in the great drawing-room when Anne returned there after seeing Mrs. Clark start on her day's excursion. The gentlemen had gone to town; the married ladies were mostly occupied with their children in their own rooms, and the young people had congregated in the bowling-alley, from whence came the cheerful click of balls, and peals of laughter that were very tantalizing to the young girl, who had not even the courage to stroll that way uninvited. The piano was her only resource, for she felt too restless to read even the second volume of the "Wide, Wide World," which she had brought down with her; so she made another journey to her room for some music, and began to practise, listlessly enough at first. However, the old spirit came back to her as she turned leaf after leaf of a brilliant variation of Von Weber, and, when she finished the last grand crescendo, she was so absorbed as to be quite unconscious of an audience.

It was Laura Revere, the person of all others that she wished to know, who came closer to the

piano as she rose in a little confusion, and said, with frank good-nature, "How well you play!"

They might have met face to face in a parlor, or sat on the same bench at the Philharmonic, in Philadelphia, and never have exchanged a word without a regular introduction; but, in the country, things are different, and the two young girls were soon in a familiar chat, starting with the eminent Von Weber, and ending with themselves.

"You play better than any one we have had here this season. Do you sing?"

"Oh, no; I wish I could sing like you," Anne added, with spontaneous flattery, which confirmed her in Miss Revere's good graces. She was not a rival, and she *was* an admirer.

Miss Revere was tired of the Bonaparte House, and of all it contained, including the Miss Fishers, "who were regular flirts," she informed Anne, confidentially, "and both making a dead set at Coleman Butler. But la! he sees through them. He's my cousin, you know, and he thinks you have beautiful eyes. He said so last night, and it made Georgy Fisher raving. She said all manner of spiteful things, of course; but la! you needn't mind her."

"I don't see what she could say." And Anne's face flushed at once with pleasure at the favorable notice from her hero, and sudden dislike of Miss Fisher. The commencement of heart-burnings, poor child, but she could not see into the future, or she *might* have turned away from them all on the spot, and contented herself with the orphan "Ellen" and the honest "Van Brunt" for companions.

"Oh, she don't *know* any thing about you, of course; but she said she was certain you could not belong to the Chestnut-Street Harrisons, for she had never seen you before, and you would not have been with *that* Mr. and Mrs. Clark. Is Mr. Clark your uncle?"

"No, no relation."

The emphasis on "that" had anointed Anne's eyes with a glimpse of the social estimate even the friendly Miss Revere put upon this excellent couple, and a quick negative was ready.

"There! I said I knew he wasn't! You don't look at all as if you belonged to them; I could tell in a minute by your style. I said right away he was your guardian—isn't he?"

He had been to all intents the honorable guardian of the little property his friend had made him the executor of, and of the children to whom it came, free from any tithe or tax for his willing services; so Anne sheltered herself behind this happy suggestion, and said, "Yes."

"There! I knew he was!" And Miss Revere looked quite triumphant. "Guardians always *are* queer people—red-faced and vulgar, you know, in novels." Anne winced and flushed again, but kept unworthy silence. "One can't help their guardians. There's Julia Riggs always hated hers, a stuffy old lawyer, interfering and saying people wanted to marry her for her money every time she had an offer. I suppose I should have had one, too, if grandpapa had not been living."

"Is he here with you?"

"Yes; that is, he's up in his own room these two days with a sprained foot. It's almost time I went to him, by the way."

Miss Revere drew out a delicate jewelled and enamelled watch, not larger than a child's locket. Anne had never seen a watch set with diamonds before, but she had read of them, and this great possession and the careless way in which it was worn, increased her admiration of her new friend and her previous opinion that "she must be very wealthy." How clumsy by comparison seemed the watch and chain given by Mr. Brooks to Alice the year before! though it had been the special object of Anne's admiration and ambition ever since.

"Grandpapa is worth sixteen guardians, and if it wasn't for Miss Middleton, I should have my own way in every thing, and be at Newport now, instead of this out-of-the way, stupid old Bonaparte House."

Anne's part in the conversation seemed to be catechism. It was decidedly more to her taste to enter into the affairs of her new acquaintance than to be circumstantial with regard to her own.

"Is Miss Middleton your aunt?"

"Oh, dear, no, I'm thankful to say. She's the daughter of an old friend of grandpapa's, and he died leaving very little property; so, when I left Madame Gardell's this spring, she was invited to live with us, and chaperon me. The worst of Miss Middleton is, she's so *catty*!"

"Catty?"

"Yes, that's what Coleman calls it, and it's just the word. You think you are having your own way

all the time, and by and by find out you are walking straight after hers. I was determined to go to Long Branch or Newport this summer, and just because she wanted to get off for two months with some friends of her own from the South—of course she would have had to stay with us if we had gone to a gay place, since she had agreed to look after me—didn't she go and persuade grandpapa that sea air was too strong for him, and I was not old enough to come out really before next winter; so she packed us up here, and walked herself off to Canada and the White Mountains as independent as possible."

Anne was rather puzzled, even with this ample explanation, to define the position of Miss Middleton with relation to her friend. She knew too little of the usages of the world to understand that a lady of Miss Middleton's birth and connections would never stoop to be called housekeeper or companion, while she was reduced to perform both duties, and readily accepted such a return as enabled her still to appear in society, so long as it was not called "salary."

"As for grandpapa, it's ridiculous to see how she gets her own way with him. Now, she doesn't like our house in Twelfth Street, and wants him to move into Walnut, and she'll get him to do it yet. To be sure, I prefer Walnut, but as for the house itself, it's ten times more elegant than any thing she has ever been accustomed to, and of course we sha'n't get a garden and a green-house anywhere else."

"Do you live in that elegant house on the corner of Twelfth and Ramsey Streets?" queried Anne, in genuine astonishment, Miss Revere's attractions in-

creasing with the very recollection of the broad, substantial mansion, suggestive of ample comfort, the drawing-room windows draped by exquisitely-wrought lace curtains, the gates of the carriage-house so handsomely carved, and the glimpses of freshness, and verdure, and bloom she had often caught through the lattice-work of the garden doors.

So they lived there! Anne had never dreamed of aspiring to acquaintance with any such grandeur. And they kept a carriage! How wealthy! How fashionable they must be! She had always supposed such people were haughty and unapproachable. What would Miss Revere think if she knew just where they lived, and how they lived, and that she taught music! What a relief it was when the uninquisitive Laura was satisfied to know that her father was dead, that she lived with her mother in Ninth Street, and never so much as asked "Ninth near what?" which would have ended their friendship at once no doubt, with the humiliating acknowledgment, "above Vine!"

As it was, they got on famously, and talked so busily that Coleman Butler came to look after his cousin, who had left the bowling-party to go after a wrought handkerchief she remembered to have left on the piano the night before. He was introduced to Miss Harrison, and said some very pretty things about her appearance among them being hailed as a relief from the dulness of his attendance upon his respected governor, Mr. Revere, senior, and his tease of a cousin, Miss Laura. Then he proposed that she should join them in the bowling-alley—for he must

fly back and finish his game—which she was very glad to do. The Miss Fishers, in lawn peignoirs, and *very* worked petticoats, received her with a stare and distant bow in acknowledgment of Laura's introduction; but the other young people were pleasant enough, as young people will be before they are entirely crystallized in the mould of "society," and she soon felt comparatively at home among them. Perhaps she was inspired with more than ease at Laura's marked liking for her, and the attentions of Mr. Butler, paid partly to pique Miss Georgy Fisher, who presently declined playing and walked off, and partly to please himself. Anne began to wonder if there really was such a thing as love at first sight, when he managed to keep close beside her, stealing glances now and then into her eyes, such as she had never met before; or to touch her hand—just the slightest touch in the world! and mere accident, of course—in showing her how to grasp and poise the ball she was to send crashing down the alley, and among the men, on his side of the game. It was a very exciting and satisfactory day, passed entirely in the society of Miss Revere and her cousin. When Mrs. Clark inquired, in all the goodness of her heart, if she had managed not to feel homesick, Anne could answer in the affirmative most conscientiously.

## CHAPTER III.

"WELL, Anne, I saw your mother to-day!" And Mr. Clark helped himself right and left at the bountifully-spread supper-table. It was a peculiarity of this good man's table etiquette not to commence eating until he was all ready to go through; thus he dispatched John for tea before he was fairly seated, beckoned to Thomas for the cold ham, while he took the butter from James, detained the passing sugar and cream, while he erected a fortification of sliced peaches, cheese, biscuit, pound-cake, cucumbers, and radishes around his plate before he proceeded to attack any of them.

Mr. Clark had been obliged to go to town again, to look after his children, he told Anne; but, in fact, he had remembered that the interest in a mortgage belonging to Mrs. Harrison's little property was due, and had taken the disagreeable trip solely to see that it was promptly paid, lest she should suffer a week's inconvenience for the want of it.

"Why don't you ask how they all were?" proceeded Anne's "guardian," reaching over to Coleman Butler for smoked salmon. Anne glanced that way, but found to her relief that the cousins were busy about affairs of their own, and felt at liberty to be interested in her relatives.

"Because I thought you would tell me without asking," she said, with gay dissimulation; "and if there was any thing the matter, I should have heard of it before now."

"I'm not so sure of that. Your mother was in a terrible way at not getting any news of you. She's afraid you had forgotten the number of the house, and had misdirected her letters. I told her not a bit of it; you could no more forget 295 North Ninth than your own name; both taught to you at the same time to keep you from being strayed away, I dare say."

"Oh, if Mr. Clark only *would* speak a little lower! He might as well tell the whole house of their unfashionable neighborhood as to shout out the number after that fashion!" But it had not compromised her yet. Neither Laura nor Mr. Butler was listening. Conscience and consciousness together made her mental emotions any thing but agreeable. She had promised to write home every day; she had written just once, and the affectionate reply, that had cost her mother so much time and pains, was still unanswered.

There was a kind letter from Alice Brooks, too, lying beside her mother's in the unopened portfolio, asking her a question that required immediate answer, congratulating her on the expected vacation, and saying such things of a long talk she had had with Elliot about her, as would have made her heart flutter at any other time. Was it possible she could have been so forgetful?

"Is there any prospect of James getting a situation this fall?" inquired Mrs. Clark, with kindly interest in the family fortunes. Anne wished it had been evinced less publicly, and replied more briefly than was consistent with her age, and her position toward the questioner. "What will come next?"

she thought; "his going to the public school, or our keeping but one girl. Just like Mrs. Clark to speak of it, if it came into her head. She hasn't the slightest particle of tact!"

If tact was put for dissimulation, as it very often is in these days of polite falsehoods and charitable synonyms, Mrs. Clark had none whatever. Her nearest approach to deception was in averting her husband's notice from the neglects she could not but feel from Anne, which grew daily more glaring and inexcusable. To be sure, it was natural that she should prefer the society of young people, but it was not necessary to add a marked avoidance of her own; and she could not but think it would have been respectful at least in Anne, considering her present relation to them, to have looked in upon her once or twice that day, knowing that Mr. Clark was absent, and that her eyes did not allow her to read or sew long at a time. Mrs. Clark had passed a very dull morning, and it tasked her magnanimity not to allude to it by word or manner. There was that beautiful story, which Anne had herself proposed to read aloud, left for the past three days in the most interesting chapter; there lay the two collars and the shirt Anne had offered to supply with missing buttons and strings. She was to copy some of Mrs. Talbot's receipts, too, but the borrowed manuscript volume remained unopened, and its owner was to leave the next morning.

Anne thought of the last as she passed Mrs. Talbot's door on her way to tea, and resolved to go and attend to it in the hour of daylight remaining. She felt that a peace-offering might be expedient, but Mrs.

Clark's unvaried kindness of manner reassured her; perhaps she was not conscious of any neglect. The sunset promised to be very fine, so unusually attractive that Coleman Butler presently proposed that they should hurry from the tea-table to the observatory, that they might have a better view.

It had become a matter of course for him to follow or lead Anne wherever she went, and Laura played propriety after the most amiable manner, following her own whim and fancy, talking to them or not as she liked, and oftentimes walking off with another party by the time they were out of sight. But so she went out and came back with them, Mrs. Clark did not feel at liberty to forbid the association, though it troubled her, and once she had consulted Mr. Clark about it.

"Did you ever hear of the hen with one chicken, Mrs. C.?" Mr. Clark's perceptive faculties had not been developed in any line outside of business and marketing. "If you had six girls now instead of one, you'd let 'em all have their own way—not the least doubt of it. The poor child's head's a little turned with that jack-snipe and his mustache, very likely, but she isn't such a fool as to think one of that set wanted to marry her. Besides, she's going home again in a week, and that's the end of it. 'Tain't at all likely they'll ever see each other again till both of them's settled down with a family around them—maybe never. I guess she's about half engaged to young Brooks, anyhow. Let her go; she won't get another run in a hurry."

Mrs. Clark thought of this—how monotonous

Anne's home-life was—the little probability there was that she would ever meet any of the present party again—and left her more and more at liberty.

Coleman Butler hung over the piano when the young girls practised, Anne playing Laura's accompaniments, and dangerously teaching Mr. Butler his part of their favorite duet, "Dearest idol of my heart," which he could learn only by ear, though his voice was very passable; he helped them to balls in the bowling-alley, and to cold chicken at lunch; he drove them out to ride in the afternoon; he strolled out in the moonlight, or taught Anne the redowa, in return for her music-lesson, in the evening.

Several of the married ladies, noticing her intimacy with the party, and not caring to know whether it was an ancient league or recent friendship, made much of Anne in various little ways. Such of the young girls as did not aspire to Mr. Butler's attentions, lauded her music and crocheting, and her amiability. Even Mr. Revere, who now came down sometimes in the evening, always asked her to play for him, and praised her pretty face and respectful manner, not even knowing or noticing her connection with Mr. Clark, whom he would have met with the same lofty bow bestowed upon a porter who might chance to stand in his way, had they been presented. Mr. Revere's weakness was social distinctions; but he took it for granted that Miss Harrison was in some way connected with that branch of the family so well known in his own circle, and had even questioned her about some members of it, as referring to her relatives. Anne had an instinctive feeling of this, dating

from the evening he had complimented her on her family resemblance to Mrs. Wharton Strong, "who was a Harrison, you know," he added, leaving Anne with the uncomfortable feeling that she was unintentionally an impostor, to take the honey from the gallant notice of her hair and her complexion which the courteous old gentleman had made. But she took advantage of it, for she had learned to follow up a good beginning, and was far more ready to wheel his chair around, or find his paper for him, when carried to their little parlor by Laura, than either of his own young people, while Mrs. Clark was left to hunt for her spectacles and strain her poor eyes through them as best she might.

Not that the verdict of the Bonaparte House was unanimous in Anne's favor. Those of the young ladies who were surpassed by her in music, or who desired to attract some crumbs of Mr. Butler's attentions, made spiteful remarks on her one morning-dress, her Scotch embroideries, "her everlasting white basque," and her shameless flirting! They had their friends of course among the matrons, especially such as were no longer attractive themselves, and therefore censoriously inclined, who helped them to disagreeable little innuendoes that they took no pains to keep to themselves. So it happened that when the supper-room was thrown into disorder by a rush from the long table of sunset-seers on the evening in question, Anne could not fail to notice the tossing and bridling of the opposite party, and overheard more than one allusion to "bold pieces," and "forward nobodies," as she hurried after the cousins, without

so much as asking Mr. Clark to excuse her absence, letting all thoughts of the uncopied receipts and unanswered letters go for the present.

"Never mind about your bonnet; tie your handkerchief over your head, and I'll lend Laura my straw hat," called out Coleman Butler in the hall. "We shall get ahead of them all. Joe Lewis is waiting for his sisters, and it always takes Lizzie an hour to hunt up her things."

So off they started, distancing their comrades, and finally leaving Laura to wait for them, fairly out of breath with their wild chase.

Now it was that Anne discovered they were not in the usual path to the Tower, a high wooden structure, reared by the princely owner of the grounds for the benefit of the landscape, or to gain an elevation for his unsubdued aspirations, and now decayed like the fortunes of the family, fallen into disrepair, and only attractive to the younger portion of the present community, who were fond of adventure, and had not yet learned to shun staircases.

Mr. Butler protested he was right, or that they would come out all right, which they did in process of time, but not until the shadows had visibly lengthened, and the old Tower stood up in the gathering twilight stark and silent.

"They are only hiding. There! give me your hand. Look out! they'll try to frighten us." But no unearthly moans or groans—though they were prepared for it—startled them on the landings, and when they reached the observatory itself, they were still alone.

The sunset had left a bright glow, which just glanced on the little river and lighted Anne's eyes, as her admirer, convinced that their party had really left them, turned toward her. She was conscious of looking very picturesque in the soft light, her hair disarranged by their race through the woods, and the light cambric handkerchief with its lace border—one of Laura's—tied lightly over her head. What Coleman Butler thought may be inferred from his sudden fear lest she should grow giddy, and insisting that she should lean upon him, which she did, taking his arm, which he drew very close to himself, and then it was the most natural thing in the world that he should take her hand as well, and forget to let it go.

"How I shall miss you!" And then a pause, which was extremely eloquent, and filled up with a look that drew Anne's eyes up to his and kept them there.

"Miss me?"

"Yes; Laura told you we were going to-morrow. No?" And the tone expressed a surprise that could not be genuine, since he knew very well Laura had not yet heard it herself.

"So soon?" And Anne Harrison was giddy in reality for a moment; she had supposed all this was to last as long as her stay—five whole days yet; and how wretchedly slow they would creep by if the Reveres really were going! And Mr. Butler!

"It does seem very soon; but we are going to see each other in town. You are going to let me come and see you; will you not, *Anne?*"

No quaver of our pen under that last word could,

by any possibility, convey the lingering emphasis with which it fell on the young maiden's ears.

"Oh, if you will! But I know you will never come, never think of me again."

"And why—why not? Do you intend to keep me at a distance?" And he made a show of drawing away from her, as a discarded suitor might do.

"Oh, no!"—and she unconsciously clung closer, returning the pressure of his hand; and then, with sudden tremor, she said, "We must go; they will be looking for us," with the instinct of maiden reserve which she felt she had transgressed.

It suited Mr. Butler to take her at her word. Perhaps she had not wished him to, but he turned and led her down the staircase, and so through the darkly-shadowed paths toward the house. Only when they neared it, and saw the lights shining through the windows, and faces watching for them, Anne suddenly realized that they really were to separate, and spoke quickly:

"I shall be very glad if you will come, Mr. Butler; but we are very plain people, I must tell you beforehand, and you will not care about us."

"Do you think I care for position?"—and the lofty scorn which curled Coleman Butler's black mustache would have done credit to an income of ten thousand a year, whereas he had just twelve hundred of his own, and was supposed to be studying law with a view to make up the balance.

What further explanations and protestations might have transpired were put an end to by the shout of Miss Revere, and the Lewises, "Here they

come!" And Anne was dragged through the drawing-room window, which opened to the floor, with suspiciously-burning cheeks and moist eyes, to find Mrs. Clark really uneasy, and her husband preparing to have the lake dragged in search of her "one chicken."

#### CHAPTER IV.

"I don't think you seem very glad to get home, Anne, I must say." Mrs. Harrison's face had a "hurt" expression, and her voice betrayed a little pique. She had consented to spare her daughter, without a selfish thought of her own inconvenience; she had been obliged of course to do more about the house in her absence; and had felt "lost" without her in making such domestic plans and arrangements as came up during the time; she had done her very best to give the house a festal air in honor of the return, and passed the morning in attending to the dinner herself, because Jane objected to have any thing but a cold one on washing-day. Roast lamb and boiled custards on Monday were without precedent; but into this extravagance Mrs. Harrison had determined to go, that Anne might see she had been thought of, and her tastes consulted. It was rather hard, then, that these preparations, and the enthusiastic welcome Lucy and the boys had met their sister with, should be repaid by irritable fault-finding

on Anne's part. "Of course you can't expect a hotel-table, my dear, but we do our best, and I *did* think you would be glad to see us again, when you had never been away so long before."

"Oh, you might have known she would have come back 'stuck up,'" chimed in the forward Maggie.

"It's none of your business if I have, miss, and I'll let you know it," was the unamiable retort.—"Alick, for goodness' sake do keep your own fork out of the potatoes; and there's Lucy poking her food into her spoon with her fingers, instead of using her bread!"

"Don't you think you'd better go back until you feel easier?" suggested Alick. "We got along first-rate without you, didn't we, Mag?"—all of which did not help to improve his sister's "frame of mind."

"She was tired, and had a headache, and wanted to be let alone;" but neither the sun nor the cars were properly accountable for this irritation. The neighborhood looked so mean, as she drove past the stables, and the two-story houses, and the little stores between Vine and Elm Streets, their own house so plain, the hall so narrow and dark; for all these things she saw with the eyes of her new friends coming for the first time to visit her. Then to descend to a basement dining-room, not altogether free from the heat and the odor of the adjoining kitchen, after the large, airy hall of the Bonaparte House, with the beautifully-laid table and array of serving-men! The table-cloth looked so coarse, though still in the creases of Sunday freshness, the children's dinner-aprons were in such wide contrast to the pretty toilets she had of

late seen at this meal; steel forks, too, and an antiquated square easter with four bottles only! She had never realized before how very plainly they did live, not to speak of being obliged to wait on herself, for on Monday such slight services in this respect as Jane usually condescended to render were dispensed with. All these things, combined with the feeling that she must really go to work again, and the uncertainty attending a further recognition from Miss Revere and her cousin, when they came to see for themselves what her home was, made Anne's return to it any thing but a gladness. There was, besides this, a restlessness that she did not undertake to account to herself for, the natural cheerfulness of her disposition was gone, and in its place a fitful gayety or brooding depression reigned by turns. She felt ill at ease with herself, and therefore with all around. Mrs. Clark had never reproved her conduct even by a look, yet she felt there was a lack of the old warmth and friendliness at their parting, though Anne's thanks and protestations had been all the more profuse for her lack of genuine gratitude—for the kindness she knew she had abused. Mrs. Clark's silence made her more uncomfortable than any open disapprobation could have done, and her mother's injured tone was far from soothing her wounded self-love.

"I was very glad to have you go, I am sure, my dear, and said nothing about the fall sewing at the time for fear it might make you enjoy yourself the less; though we always begin to have cool days the last of this month, and neither James nor Alick have any thick trousers except their very best, and I am

afraid they have outgrown those. They do seem to shoot up so fast; and if James is going into a store, he must have his things right away, though I don't know how to afford an entire new suit. I wanted you to look over the woollen-chest with me, Anne, you see, and there's Lucy's bird's-eye aprons all going at once. We shall have to be very busy to make up for it." Poor Mrs. Harrison had unconsciously passed from her momentary pique with detailing some of the plans that she had been obliged to consider in Anne's absence, and expending some of her worries on the helpful adviser her daughter had hitherto been. Now that she looked at Anne, she saw that the child could not be feeling quite well. She had not improved as her mother had expected to see her; on the contrary, there was a sharpening of the lines of her face, and a contraction of the brow that swept away the remainder of her annoyance in a rush of maternal solicitude. "Your poor head must be aching badly, Anne; I can see in your face. Hadn't you better go up and lie down right away?—There, Alick! hush, Maggie! your sister isn't well.—I'll save a custard for your tea; you may feel better then."

So Anne, glad to be excused, took a tumbler of ice-water with her, thinking all the while of the cut-glass goblets and carafes she had used yesterday, and of the chambermaid she had called to bring her fresh towels, and close her blinds.

To come back to work—to Alick's thick trousers, and her mother's never-ceasing nursery cares, to Harriet Brooks and her tiresome scales, to Jane's impertinence, and, in fact, to her own sphere in life, was un-

speakably distasteful. But there was one thought still more absorbing. She was in the same place with Coleman Butler once more; only a few streets and squares separated them, and since that memorable walk to see the sunset, which they did not see, Anne could not think of him and the possibility of meeting him without a fluttering heart. But how was he to know that she had returned? It would never do to write to him. Laura would tell him; she must see Laura. And, while her mother stitched away on some heavy garment, regardless of the old pain that made her stop now and then to press her hand to her side, Anne was preparing to go out, arrayed in her best, in the hope of a glimpse, if only momentary, of the friends of a day. She had a feeling that this eagerness was unsuitable, and unshared by Laura at least; but she thought it would do no harm to pass the house, and there was the bare possibility of meeting one of its inmates. She remembered, as she turned into Twelfth Street, that she had not even asked whether the Brookses had returned to town, and that Alice's letter was still unanswered; however, she would see to-morrow; and in the mean time here was the goal of her present journey.

The house looked more imposing than ever. The large and handsome silver plate, with the one word "Revere," as if its owner were too well known to need any introductory initials, the broad sweep of the marble steps, the height, and breadth, and depth of the mansion altogether, told its own story of the wealth and position of the family; but it told nothing more. Anne almost paused before it, and looked

up eagerly, but the lace curtains were drawn, the door inhospitably closed. The oracle was dumb as to what she most desired to know; and, moved to a sudden boldness, she hurried up the steps and rang the bell. When its far-off echoes died away, her courage went with them. If she had not expected the waiter every instant, she would have turned and hurried off; or, perhaps, some one might be looking from an upper window, and it would seem so odd in her—a man-waiter, when he did answer her summons, middle-aged, dignified, scrupulously attired. Anne felt abashed by the depth of his salutation, and stumbled over the simple inquiry, "Miss Revere—was she in?"

She had scarcely expected the good fortune of an affirmative. "Yes, but the family were at dinner."

It was equivalent to a polite negative on the part of Josephus, for Mr. Revere's serving-man bore a title as dignified as his own appearance. Accordingly, he did not move aside to invite the visitor to enter. Of course, no one ever intrudes upon the sacred rite of dinner without invitation "in society;" and Josephus was evidently a member of society, and its laws Medean and Persian to him. Imagine the consternation of this functionary, then, at the reply, "Oh, very well, I will wait in the parlor then." It was so great that he lost his self-possession, and not only bowed the audacious stranger in, but opened the drawing-room door for her, though she was marked in his mind from that moment to be regarded with distrust and suspicion. Anne's rashness had

made her a foe in the household—and one by no means to be disregarded—on her first entrance.

It seemed hours to the intruder before any one came to her. The dining-room door opened now and then, so that she could hear the hum of voices and the faint clash of the removes; then all would be silence for another weary time. She had ample leisure, meanwhile, to survey her surroundings, though she did not venture to move from the first seat she had slid into, or rather mounted, for it was a very uncomfortable chair, after the antique, the antique of straight backs and solid upholstery, the reverse of the luxurious ease of the present day. The Brookses' parlor was perhaps the finest one Anne had ever been familiar with. It was a long, narrow, and rather low apartment, which would have made two cosy rooms, but one was quite out of proportion, and its whole arrangement stiff and cabinet-wareish. There was a panel-paper on the walls, a dozen heavy mahogany chairs, without the dusky richness of age to recommend their staring frames, set about the gaudy carpet, a large stuffed rocker to correspond in each room, a card-table between the windows, which were darkened by very handsomely-made Venetian blinds, the essence of stiffness in outline and movement, the orthodox candelabras and showy vases on the mantels, the stereotyped card-basket on the sofa-table, by way of ornaments. There was a large, cheerful family-room above, which had a style of its own, modified by the feminine taste of Alice; but the parlor was the glory of Mrs. Brooks's prosperous day, and the ideal of her imagination when she

sighed in vain for tapestry carpets and hair-cloth furniture. There had been a good piano and rosewood tables at the Bonaparte House, but the chairs and sofas were in brown-linen pinafores; and now, for the first time, Anne beheld the *coup-d'œil* of a lofty suite of rooms, furnished by a combination of taste and expenditure. Soft and quietly-toned medallion carpets, artistically-carved furniture, disposed as if by accident, but falling naturally into the very best position, mirrors that reproduced dusky pictures and gleaming statues, rich cornices, supporting clouds of light or gorgeous drapery, as the room seemed to demand, archways dividing one from the other, and, looking far through them, the eye rested upon the coolness of blossoms and foliage in the conservatory, where the soft splash of a fountain could be distinctly heard in the stillness.

Anne drew in her breath with an unconscious sigh as she began to gather all the details of her friend's home, and doubts of her reception in it became more and more vivid, as the time went by; but it was too late to retreat. A faint, subtle aroma stole through the opening and closing doors; coffee was going up; Laura would be at liberty very soon; and so another quarter of an hour passed, and then the sound of approaching footsteps made the suspense almost stifling. They paused in the hall. There was a playful banter, a familiar voice that thrilled the young girl's heart, and made it beat faster than ever with expectation and with disappointment, for the gentleman—it was Coleman Butler—went out, and Laura opened the drawing-room door alone.

"Oh, you dear creature, is it you? Joe only said 'A young lady.' Did you give him a card?" Alas for Anne's forgetful etiquette! "Coleman will be so vexed at not seeing you! When did you come back? Whom did you leave at that stupid old place? Have you been waiting long?"

Only three-quarters of an hour! Anne did not say so, though she had watched the bronze clock on the mantel, and saw the hands point to five just as they rose from the table.

Mr. Butler was gone, all for that stupid man; but Laura appeared delighted to see her—that was some comfort. All her fears vanished, and her doubts seemed so treacherous, for Miss Revere was precisely the same as when they had parted, as demonstrative and familiar. The next hour flew on wings. But there was the necessity of some explanation when they came to the lingering farewell—the "must you go?" and "do come very, very soon again," in which all young lady-friends indulge.

Anne's best course seemed frankness—outward frankness at least.

"Wait till you come to see me, and find out how far up Ninth we live," she said, with a playfulness no deeper than voice and smile.

"You silly child, you!" Laura was six months the younger. "What possible difference can that make? It's you I'm coming to see, not your home. Here's grandpapa. Grandpapa, here's Anne. It was very good in her to come and see us so soon, wasn't it?"

Mr. Revere in his plain sitting-room at a country

boarding-house, an invalid to be amused, was a very different person from the master of this elegant mansion and the dictator of their future intimacy. Anne shrank back, and wished in her heart that Laura had allowed her to escape; but the meeting was not so formidable after all. He received his grand-daughter's young friend very graciously. He was indulgent naturally enough to all pertaining to her; besides, he was not insensible to the pretty face and graceful figure, or the marked deference she had always shown to him. "Going, ha?" And his quick, black eyes glanced from one to the other, as they stood before him. "Can't Laura persuade you to stay to tea, and give us some of your music this evening? I have quite missed it."

"Oh, do! I never thought of it! Won't you?"

It was a sore temptation; for, if she stayed to tea, she should see Coleman Butler, and perhaps have a *tête-à-tête* walk home with him. The very possibility saved her, however, from the unfilial absence without leave, which she had so far never been guilty of in an evening. She preferred to have Mr. Butler make his own way to Elm Street, and overcome his distaste to the neighborhood as he advanced, or have an opportunity to retreat altogether, as she half-believed he would do. Anne felt that her faith in him was not grounded as firmly as the Eddystone light-house.

"Well, then, come very soon again." And Miss Revere, looking very bright and lovely in her dinner-dress, came out on the steps with Anne, and smiled

and bowed, kissed her hand, and fluttered her handkerchief in the most affectionate manner possible.

Anne walked on with a quick step, elated by her reception, and inclined to laugh at her previous fears and the doubts she could not altogether banish. It was not very palatable when she met her mother's generous question as to what had taken her out the very day of her return, and whether she had seen Alice. "She has been here twice to see when you would get back, and says she wrote to you from Cape May about two little girls—some people they met there, I think—but she thought you must have missed the letter. The post-office at Bordentown must be very badly managed, I am sure," added Mrs. Harrison. "I could not have got half your letters."

## CHAPTER V.

WHEN Laura Revere heard her friend's repeated allusions to living in an obscure neighborhood, it never occurred to her that Anne's home was really so humble as she wished to make it appear. A favorite of fortune herself, and never having strayed out of her own circle, she had not come in contact with anything so plain. Besides, Anne's appearance and manner, save a little embarrassment at times, was quite as good as that of the young ladies she had been associated with at school.

"She means that they are not fashionable, I sup-

pose," thought the unfledged worldling, "as if I cared for that."

They lived on their income, as did the most of their acquaintances—those who did not live beyond it, that is—they had property, and a guardian; there were no vulgar business associations, such as her grandpapa always shrunk from. If they were not wealthy, she was, and could afford to choose her own friends. And so, in her youthful enthusiasm, and the absence of the diplomatic Miss Middleton, she resolved to show Anne, by the speedy repayment of her visit, that she might lay aside all such uncomfortable feeling.

"We might as well get at the woollen-chest first as last," said Mrs. Harrison, as she stepped into Anne's room on her return from market. "I sha'n't feel easy till I get my list made out, so you had better come right up."

Some portion of Anne's old good feeling had returned with a night's rest from fatigue and excitement; but this business of the woollen-chest was by no means her favorite employment. Her mother's way was to take every thing out of this family receptacle, hold each piece carefully to the light in quest of moth-holes, examine into its usefulness, and, laying the garments into little piles all over the floor, make out her list of what was necessary to complete the winter-wardrobe of the family.

Apart from the close air of the trunk-room, with the peculiarly stifling smell of woollen, camphor, and tobacco, which disturbing this summer deposit always produced, it was very depressing to see every

thing have such a wrinkled, faded, old-fashioned look, as winter clothes will ever present after the lapse of a six-months' seclusion, and to hear her mother's comments and lamentations over necessary changes, repairs, and additions; very confusing to avoid mixing the separate parcels, which were classed after an arbitrary arrangement of Mrs. Harrison's, who dictated the list, backward and forward, with innumerable counter-plans.

"Your green mousseline de laine; I don't see that, Anne. Oh, here it is! No, it's Maggie's coat. I wonder how it came to be put away with two hooks off the front. It's too short altogether; so put it in Lucy's pile; I see the sleeves of Lucy's old one are gone, and it will make her a good quilted petticoat. Put down a new coat for Maggie, Anne; it will have to come out of your gray merino; we can have it dyed a good dark blue; it is faded in streaks, I find. No; I remember now, the skirt is set up under the belt, and it can be let down; and I guess I can match Lucy's and make new sleeves, so put it here, Anne; no, that is my pile, here on Maggie's. You'll have to do with the merino, I guess, and as skirts are plaited now, the light spots will go under the plaits."

"It isn't fit to be seen. Why, mother," said Anne, surveying the dress, disdainfully, "I could hardly get through last spring with it." And she thought how forlorn that old gray merino would look under the new cloak she was determined to get.

"It will *have* to do at all events." Mrs. Harrison

always felt as poor as possible when making out her spring and fall list, and no wonder, "with so many to twist and turn for," as she so often said. "Where was I? Oh, James, two new pair of trousers; there, that's his pile, and these three to go down to Alick, one of them must have knees in though; put it here. But I don't see your green mousseline yet, Anne." And Mrs. Harrison dived down into the chest again. "It can't be stolen, can it? If any other girl than Jane slept here, I should begin to think it was."

Anne came back from a long arrangement of Miss Revere's first visit—how she would alter the parlor furniture when she swept and dusted it next day, and manœuvre so that her mother should not come into the parlor. Mrs. Harrison had Mrs. Clark's peculiar indiscreetness in the matter of stating the direct truth, at all times and places, however inconvenient; and besides, as Anne looked at the calico morning-dress and home-made cap, she thought it would be just as well to keep the wearer in the background, until her relations with Miss Laura were more assured.

"My green mousseline? Why, I took it out to wear to Bordentown, you know, and Maggie might as well have that, for the sleeves are so narrow, and they are going to be worn very wide this fall, as wide as that."

"Really, Anne, you talk as if we were made of money! One of your very best dresses! New last year, and all wool too! Why can't you alter the

sleeves? There's my striped cashmere I've worn three winters, ever since I took off black."

Momentary compunction did visit Anne's heart as she looked at the very few things her mother claimed in their assembled store. Then she put down "two under-shirts, one vest, for James," at her mother's direction, and thought of the poor fellow's disappointment in not being able to enter the high-school, now that he had passed such an excellent examination for it. Mr. Clark had suggested that he should go into a store, by way of helping relieve his mother, when he was last in town. Mr. Clark never had felt any aspirations above invoices and price-currents, and consequently could not understand what a death-blow he was dealing in the proposition. Anne loved James better than either of the children; he was nearer her own age, and more like her in many ways, more like their father, while Alick and Maggie were matter-of-fact, resembling excellent Mrs. Harrison.

"I wish James could stay at school, mother," Anne said, with earnestness, as she registered the needed articles.

"I'm sure I wish he could, my dear; but I don't see how it's to be done, and, if he goes in a store, he will help earn his clothes, at least. He is almost as expensive as a man; if his father had lived, there would have been more or less to make over; but now every thing must be new. Your father always intended James to go to college, I know, though I never could see any use in Greek, and Latin, and geometry; but I suppose there is, since so many

people waste time and money upon them. Wasn't that the door-bell, Anne?"

"We don't look much like visitors, either of us," said Anne, who had pushed her hair behind her ears, and exchanged her morning-dress for a sacque and skirt, before ascending to the store-closet. Her face was flushed with that unbecoming, heated color that extends to forehead as well as cheek, from stooping, and shaking and turning heavy garments. "But, I don't think it was the bell. Yes, it must be; there's Jane calling me. I wish she would ever learn to come up-stairs when I am wanted, and not stand in the hall and scream."

"If you were on your feet from morning till night, as she is, I think you would try to save yourself as many steps as possible.—Oh, it's Alice Brooks, I dare say. I told Alick to stop on his way to school, and let her know that you were home. She is so anxious to see you, and then about those scholars; I do hope she has got them for you."

The very possibility of two new pupils would have made Anne happy for the day a month before; but now the prospect of additional labor seemed very disheartening, as she stood up brushing off the threads and lint that clung to her, and surveyed the garments to be remodelled and repaired around her feet. And, besides, there would be two more chances that Laura and her cousin would discover that she taught music.

"Just wait one moment, Anne; if it was any one in the world but Alice, I should send word that you were engaged; it is so extremely inconvenient to

stop in such work as this; I am afraid I shall get every thing mixed and upset again. Did you put down two flannel petticoats for Maggie? Not new ones, understand, but to have the tucks let down, and new waists on."

To tell the truth, Anne was not anxious for the meeting, except that she wished it was over with. She should be obliged to acknowledge that she had received her friend's letter, and devise some other reason than sheer neglect, for not replying to it; then there was a disagreeable consciousness that she did not care as much for Alice as before she had met Laura, that she was in some sort untrue to her, and it would require an effort to be as fond and demonstrative outwardly as when they parted, and this kept her from calling out to her friend to come right up to her room.

So a full quarter of an hour elapsed after Jane had announced on the stairs that some one wanted her, before Anne reached the parlor-door. She took the trouble to change her dress, for she might be surprised in the parlor by "other visitors;" she did not define to herself who was likely to call, but though she put on her gingham and a clean collar, and brushed her hair out in puffs again, there was a work-a-day look about her heated face, which her visitor noticed the instant she made her appearance.

For, to Anne's confusion, it was Miss Revere, and not Alice, that came forward to meet her. The poor girl's mind took a sudden retrospective view of Jane's usual morning-toilet—the rolled-up sleeves, and gown

pinned back out of the way of slops; and then, too, the familiar way in which the visitor had been announced. Not only that, but she had planned to manage so that Miss Revere should not have a second to wait when she did come, and no opportunity for "spying out the nakedness of the land;" and here she had been kept waiting long enough to count every thin place in the carpet, and discover the weak points of the window-curtains, usually concealed by Anne's adjusting fingers, but now drawn into full view by Jane's careless hand. The rooms had acquired an unusually shabby air in her absence, from various trifling neglects, and Anne's wandering eyes and confused manner were visibly conscious of them; though she talked all the faster to cover her embarrassment.

Miss Revere had looked to the right and the left for No. 295 from the moment of leaving Arch Street—Anne had not brought her mind to any more definite direction the evening before—and, straying on and on, she felt confident she had made some mistake when she discovered it over the door of such a dull, narrow house, in such "a peculiar neighborhood."

"Peculiar" was Miss Revere's adjective of avoidance. She did not like to acknowledge, even to herself, exactly what she thought of the surroundings, and, while she stood waiting for the door to be opened, she could not help hoping to hear that no such family as Harrison resided there. She had noticed the disarray of Jane's drapery, having been always accustomed to the tidiness of a regular waiter, and thought it odd that Anne should allow herself to

be summoned after that fashion; however, the plain house and narrow parlors helped her to understand that the antecedents of the family were very different from what she had expected, and, when she saw her friend's visible embarrassment, her natural good-nature, and the ease of "society"—

"Where, in order that things may be *toujours tranquille*,  
They seldom express themselves quite as they feel"—

came to her assistance, and she was, if possible, more friendly for the moment than ever.

"I told you that we were very plain people," said poor Anne, with a deprecating glance toward the one-side hearth-rug, and an almost irresistible desire to get up and twitch it straight. "You did not expect to find the house quite so far up Ninth or so small, did you, though?"

"Oh, la, yes, my dear, of course I did!"—Miss Revere's virtue in the matter of truthfulness was as easy as her manners. "I told you it was you and not your house I was coming to see. What a lovely picture!"—and she turned toward a sixteenth-rate landscape hanging over the mantel-piece, wondering how people could possibly exist so far from Chestnut Street, and in such little rooms.

"And such a beautiful bookcase!" she broke forth again, endeavoring to cover and disperse Anne's sensitiveness, chiefly because it made her—Laura Revere—uncomfortable.

Anne had grown up to regard it with profound admiration, the handsomest piece of furniture in the house before her piano was purchased. But the

glimpse at the carving and panelling of Mr. Revere's library had shaken this traditional reverence, and she had a dim, uncomfortable perception of Laura's purpose, that made her wish she would keep quiet, and talk about any thing else. She hoped that she would not stay long, for it was getting near twelve o'clock, and the children in their school-clothes would come flying in, and James in his shabby suit, and dinner on the table at the half-hour—dinner at Miss Revere's lunch-time! Worse and worse! But Laura sat still, chatting away, telling her all sorts of things about people she had never heard of, and never so much as mentioning her cousin for the first half-hour, though Anne was dying to ask if he knew of the call the night before, and that she was in town again.

"Dear me, I came very near forgetting Coleman's message!" she broke out with, presently. "He was so provoked when he found you were there last night, and he did not know it. I declare I was afraid he would fly out at Josephus every moment, and you might as well fly out at grandpapa, in our house. He was horribly vexed, though, and declared he would come with me this morning, but I wouldn't hear to it. I did not half see you last night, and I was determined to have you all to myself this morning. Oh, did I tell you that Miss Middleton would be home to-night?"

"No." And Anne's momentary flutter of elation at the description of Mr. Butler's ardor died down at the mere mention of a person she had come to regard as an ambushed enemy, even though the

lady was innocently unconscious of her existence at that moment.

"Dear me, yes! there was a telegraph from her this morning to have the carriage sent to meet the New-York train this afternoon. It spoiled my plans entirely. She's stayed away so long for her own convenience, that I wish she would stay a little longer for mine. I never get the carriage when she's home, yet there's no use in complaining to grandpapa. She makes all her arrangements before him. She says, at breakfast, in the blandest manner, 'Laura, my dear, I think you said you wished to go to Levy's this morning. That will suit me. Josephus, order the carriage at eleven.' And so we do go to Levy's for half an hour, and, if there's nobody there she wants to meet, and nothing new to look at, I'm hurried off with the first thing that comes. 'Young people shouldn't be too fastidious, Laura, my dear, and I've waited three-quarters of an hour for you to select.' So away we post to her dressmaker's, somewhere up an alley very likely, if they work at half-price, except her show-dresses, that have to be done at Miss Wharton's, of course; and then I sit, broiling in the sun, the rest of the morning, watching John's back or the tips of the horses' ears while she is being tried on. My, how you will hate her!"

Anne thought it was very probable, but her attention was drawn off by a glimpse of Alice Brooks's well-known bonnet passing the window at that moment, and in another the door-bell announced her. The fates had combined against her. There was Alice, with her second-best bonnet and mantilla, very

likely, never a stylish person at best, and expecting to be met in the warmest manner, after their long separation. And her business, too; it was just like Alice to come out with it the first thing. Ought she to introduce them? Alice would expect it, but would Miss Revere like it? She would not offend Laura for the world; and the end of this mental discussion was that she met Alice in a cold, hesitating manner, when she meant to have made amends by the reverse for all past delinquencies, and the three sat for a moment in uncomfortable silence, Laura rather rudely studying the unfashionable new-comer, and Alice expecting an introduction every moment.

"Some dressmaker," thought Miss Revere, looking at the parcel Alice carried, and then, to Anne's extreme relief, she rose to go, saying, "Well, we shall have our ride in spite of Miss Middleton, and you must come very, very soon, or you will be out of grandpapa's good graces. Shall I tell Coleman that you send your love?" And so she passed out with a great rustle and flourish of flounces, and a juvenile idea of making an impression on Anne's dressmaker, but taking no notice of her in any other respect.

It did not add to the already disturbed feelings of Alice Brooks that she was left alone, without an apology, for full five minutes, while the two devoted friends laughed, and kissed, and chattered away on the doorstep.

Anne came back very much flushed and excited. "That is Miss Revere, Alice—the rich Reveres that live at the corner of Twelfth and Ramsey Streets. Isn't she lovely? and so lady-like!"

"Not particularly so," Alice thought to herself, from this specimen of her good manners, but she was not jealous or ill-natured, and her fondness for Anne made her check the unpleasant feeling for the time. "So, that is the new friend you wrote about? She is very pretty."

And with this opening Anne commenced enlarging on the wealth and position of the Reveres, their style of living, and the extreme fondness of the whole family for herself, thinking that she was making a great impression on her patient listener, and so she was, but not such a one as she supposed.

"Elliot is coming around to see you this evening," Alice said, presently, rather wearied by the display, and knowing what subject would most quickly direct Anne's thoughts of old.

"Ah?" in such an indifferent tone, and then a disquisition upon Coleman Butler and his perfect gloves, which lasted until the dinner-bell rang.

"I hope you will go and see Mrs. Reed at once," said Alice, as she rose to go. "I am afraid she will find some one else, as it is now two weeks since she came back to town. She will pay twelve dollars a quarter." And as she walked homeward in the hot sun, she felt that Anne had not seemed as grateful as she should have done for all the trouble her mother and herself had taken about these new pupils.

## CHAPTER VI.

"Don't you think you'd better go and see about those scholars the first thing this morning?" said Mrs. Harrison, anxiously.

Anne was dusting the parlors. She had been up by daylight to sweep them, so as to get all through by the earliest possible calling hour. If Coleman Butler was so anxious to come the day before, he would certainly be here that day, and as early as etiquette would allow. It was the 25th of September, and by the original arrangement Harriet Brooks was to recommence her music-lessons on that day; but, with this visit in prospect, Anne felt that she could never fix her attention on "Home, Sweet Home," with variations, though disguised under the name of "Aria from Anne Boleyn," by the celebrated Hunten. On achieving this Miss Harriet's soul was bent, and her hour was eleven, the most probable time for Mr. Butler to call. Harriet's lessons must be put off until the next week, Anne decided in her own mind; and she coaxed Alick to stop there, and tell her it would not be convenient for her to begin before the next Wednesday, though she lost just that much by the delay.

"Don't you agree with me, Anne?" her mother said again.

"Agree? Oh, what were you talking about, mother? I was thinking of something else." And Anne stopped before the mirror, and tried the effect of pushing her hair back from her face, as Laura did.

"It seems to me that you are thinking of some-

thing else ever since you came home. I never saw you so absent-minded before, Anne, never in all my life. See there! You have put that card-basket on the piano, and it belongs on the table, you know. I'm sure, if I'd had the least idea it was going to alter you so, I never would have consented to that trip."

"I don't see what you mean," retorted Anne, with rising vexation. "I think it was the least thing you could do, when Mr. Clark paid all my expenses. I never did go anywhere like other girls, or have any thing like other people; but it's high time I did, and I mean to," she added, sinking her voice to an undutiful undertone.

Mrs. Harrison was too much disconcerted to remonstrate, and too anxious about the new pupils, to wish to increase her daughter's vexation before that matter was settled. "Mrs. Reed lives in Spring-Garden Street, doesn't she?" she recommenced, dropping discussion for the present. "You could go very well, and get back before Harriet comes at eleven. It is very great good fortune to find two scholars in one family, I think; and I asked Mrs. Brooks whether they were sure to pay. She says they are, and very prompt people. Mr. Reed is in the wholesale shoe business, just the same as Mr. Brooks, so he knows all about him. I'll finish, if you want to go before the sun gets hot." And she essayed to take the duster.

"I can finish it myself, thank you." Anne had no idea of having all her morning's labor lost by her mother's stiff, old-fashioned arrangement of the curtains and books. "Harriet isn't coming to-day, and

I'm too busy to go out. I've got all my things to put away; I just unpacked anyhow day before yesterday."

"I don't see what you were doing all yesterday afternoon, then, I'm sure. I didn't call on you for a thing after Alice went, and finished the woollen-chest myself. You were in your own room all the time."

Anne did not choose to confess that she had felt unfit for any thing after the embarrassment of her morning calls, but lying on the bed and reading "Jane Eyre" over again, until it was time to brush her hair for tea. As for Mrs. Reed, the idea of pupils was more irksome every hour, though she had longed all summer to be earning more money, and the twenty-four dollars a quarter would clothe James so that he could stay at the high-school. She meant to go and see about them in the afternoon, after Mr. Butler had been there, but she was determined not to run the risk of losing his visit, or stir out of the door before he did come. It made her a prisoner rather longer than she anticipated. She had measured his impatience by her own; so Anne shut herself up in her own room, and dreamed over the sunset walk, and lived in such grand possible futures, that she had no sympathy whatever with the bald, uninteresting present. If she could have had the magic mirror for which she longed, to reflect a glimpse of the absent one, she would have seen Mr. Butler lounging down Walnut Street to the office in which he proposed reading law at some future day, but in the mean time only got through with his cigars and the morning papers; lounging out again into Chestnut Street, as soon as it

began to be thronged with carriages and shoppers, twirling on a stool at Levy's counter, while Georgy Fisher selected half a dozen pairs of gloves, or at Bailey's, where he had espied the dashing Mrs. George Mutter waiting to have a favorite bracelet-clasp repaired, and meantime holding a reception quite as much at her ease as in her own drawing-room; escorting Miss Dallas up Chestnut Street to Broad, and the pretty Miss Paul down Chestnut Street to Levy's again; while Anne transformed her once cheerful home into "a moated grange," and did the part of "Marianna" in a rather more animated manner than Tennyson's heroine, starting to the head of the stairs every time the bell rang, straying into her mother's chamber absently, and looking up and down the street, watching every tall, shapely noun masculine from afar, until their total disappearance, and "sighing like a furnace" at repeated self-deceptions and disappointments. Something must have called him out of town—some business of his grandfather's, very likely. This happy suggestion came to her on the fifth day. It was as soon as ever her restlessness would allow her to think of calling on Laura again. She determined to go that very afternoon; something told her that she was going to see him that day. How often had "something" said the same that week? She did not stop to ask; but, first of all, there was Mrs. Reed. It would not do to put off attending to her over another Sunday; and so Anne set her face toward Spring-Garden Street one bright morning, very tired of her voluntary imprisonment, and very thankful to be out again. She looked about her from time to

time as she went along, thinking that the long-desired encounter might be near at hand, though she knew very well that Spring-Garden Street was an unknown region to Mr. Butler, and had heard him say he "made it a point never to attend a party beyond Spruce on the one side of the town, and Arch on the other." Anne began to realize, when she rang the door-bell at Mr. Reed's, how very important it was that she should have the scholars—not for James just now, but her own wants were daily increasing. She needed so many things all at once that she had never felt the absolute need of before; and, dream as she might, there was "just so much coming in," as her mother had said, and every thing to come out of it.

Mrs. Reed was at home, and came down to meet her rather stiffly. She was sorry, very sorry, as she should like to oblige Mrs. Brooks, and Miss Alice had recommended Miss Harrison so highly. She had waited a week for Miss Harrison to call, before sending her daughters to Miss Schmit, who had been recommended to her by their former teacher; but they were losing time every day, and Miss Harrison knew how important every hour was when young people were pursuing their education!

Miss Harrison was in a fair way to learn, for she left the house with her veil drawn down, and an uncomfortable choking in the throat; so brought to herself for the moment by the disappointment, that she went to Alice for sympathy. Alice, good friend that she was, checked the very natural "I told you so," and forbore to bring up the time and trouble she had taken to gain the advantage Anne had thrown away;

though Mrs. Brooks, far less delicate, would not have spared her. Alice was very sisterly and kind, ready to overlook the annoyance of her visit, and the length of time that had elapsed before it was returned.

There was a new photograph of Elliot hanging up in his sister's room, and Alice called her attention to it. The picture had caught his very best expression; and as Anne looked into the honest, thoughtful eyes, and remembered all his considerate kindness for so long a time, the face seemed handsomer for the moment than that which had haunted her sleeping and waking for the past month. She left her love for the original, and walked home, rather penitent than otherwise, to find the front hall stifling with the smell of the turnips that had just been served with roast mutton in the dining-room, and Jane disputing the stairway with some one who had taken possession of the lower steps, in default of a hall-chair.

"Miss Anne is out, I told you!" said Jane, grasping the dinner-plate she was on the point of passing when the door-bell rang, like a weapon of defence. "It ain't no use of waitin', for she'll want her dinner the minute she gets in."

"My good woman, return to your cabbage." (Anne recognized the cool, impertinent tone instantly.) "I have no burglarious designs. Pray, allow me the privilege!"—and the pale-yellow gloves waved off the threatened attack.

Anne felt disposed to retreat, but it was too late.

"Here's a man a-fightin' to wait till you come!" called out the domestic, as the opening door arrested her hostile demonstrations.

"Jane, Jane, why don't you bring back my plate?" shouted Alick, on the basement stairs. "Hurry up! I've got to go to the grocery before school."

"Ah, Miss Anne, your most obedient! thanks for the rescue. This indignant female was on the point of making away with me." And Coleman Butler came forward with a slight shrug and shake of the shoulders, as if to right his fastidious toilet after the encounter. "Sorry to keep you from your *lunch*"—Anne understood the ironical emphasis perfectly—"but bound to execute my commission."

"I am very glad to see you." And Anne threw open the parlor-door. If it was true, her face belied her sentiments for the first few moments. Could any thing be more annoying? and her cheeks grew hot with vexation. But he held the hand she extended in welcome, and pressed it slightly, but so that she could not misunderstand it—and seated himself very near her on the sofa. He could afford to wait for his enjoyment of the late "rich adventure" until some future time. His object now was to reëstablish the footing on which they had parted. It was not difficult to accomplish. Anne found herself forgetting the long, unexplained delay of the visit, the misadventure of its commencement—all but the dread of interruption, in sitting there, alone with him again, so near him, and with those dangerous eyes looking so nearly into her own.

He almost forgot his commission until he rose to go, just in fortunate time, for Anne knew that the children might come trooping in any moment. It was a message from Laura. She would call for her

friend the next afternoon, at four o'clock, to take a drive.

"Coming in the carriage," said Anne, as she began her preparations immediately after dinner.

"Won't she get out? I should like to see her." Mrs. Harrison herself was rather flattered at this marked attention from the Reveres. "They are a very excellent family, my dear.—Don't hang round your sister so, Lucy; there, run away to Jane, and tell her she may give you the dust-pan, and let you brush up the crumbs in the dining-room; run away, my dear.—Maggie, it's high time you were off to school. Don't let me have to speak to you again.—None better in Philadelphia. Mr. Revere's mother was a Shippen, and this Mr. Butler's father married a Southerner—a great beauty. They used to go to Christ Church; I've seen the whole family come in many a time. They were always late, I recollect. It's very kind in Miss Revere, as you never do get a ride; I shall tell her so."

"Not to-day, mother; please don't; she won't come in either, I don't believe. That isn't she now, is it? Oh, dear, where are my open-worked stockings? No, it's a hack; just look out of your window, won't you, mother?"

It was almost too good news to be true! How the neighbors would be astonished to see such an elegant carriage at their door! The Truemans—though to be sure they did not visit them—and Miss Martin, at the trimming-store opposite. Perhaps she might meet some of her acquaintances. The Perrys had got back from Germantown, talking a great deal

about a new friend, Mrs. Johnson, who lived on Franklin Square, and kept a one-horse vehicle, which she always spoke of as "my carriage." Julia Barry had been round the evening before to introduce a gentleman she had met on her journey, who, by a singular chance, had come to Philadelphia to "buy goods." If she could only see her handed into the Reveres' landau by Coleman Butler, Anne felt that Julia would be instantly cut down.

She did not question Mr. Butler's attendance for a moment. Laura, her cousin, and herself; it would be just as it had been at the dear old Bonaparte House; but, alas, for the disappointment!

The carriage came, it is true, after Anne had waited at the parlor-window, with her bonnet on, for a full hour. It was quite as stylish as she had expected, even more so. A black coachman, in livery, who held his whip with the peculiar stateliness with which King Ahasuerus is represented holding out his sceptre to Queen Esther in the children's picture-primers; the harness glittered with silver plating; the fine horses pawed and stamped on the paving-stones, impatient of the slight delay. Miss Martin came and stood in the door of her little shop, the Truemans gathered around at their chamber-windows, the stable-men gathered together and made critical remarks upon the "points" of the whole turn-out, and the green-grocer's clerk on the corner planted himself on the curb-stone, with mouth and eyes agape, in undisguised admiration.

Anne made unfashionable haste in her instant appearance. Jane folded her arms in the open door to

"see her off," and Mrs. Harrison watched the effect on the neighborhood, peeping cautiously from behind the parlor-window.

From the first stumble on the step in entering the carriage—for Anne was unpractised in the art of lifting her skirt, bending her head, and stepping lightly forward at the same moment; in other words, of entering a carriage, which must be practised, like a French accent, early in life, to insure perfect ease—from the first trip that sent her forward almost into the lap of the dignified stranger, who shared the back-seat with Laura, till her awkward jump to the pavement at the end of the drive, it was one of the most uncomfortable experiences she had ever passed through.

Laura introduced the stranger as Miss Middleton, and made a slight feint of resigning the back-seat; but Anne, unaware of the impoliteness her friend was guilty of in allowing a guest to sit with her back to the horses, insisted on the unoccupied and sunny part of the carriage, by which she was brought directly in front of the dreaded duenna, quite as formidable as she had been pictured. Not that Miss Middleton was rude or neglectful—on the contrary, she absorbed the conversation, and addressed most of it to Anne, using "my dear" quite freely in so doing—but, unpractised as she was in the ways of the world, instinct taught Anne that Miss Middleton was "drawing her out" on every subject they touched, and, guarded as she unconsciously tried to be, the elder lady succeeded. Anne had never before been made so conscious of the deficiencies of her

toilet, as when it was contrasted with the quiet richness before her, even the careless Laura being unexceptionable as to gloves, boots, bonnet, and mantilla. Anne felt the black mits that she wore, the old-fashioned shape of her mantle, the soiled white ribbon on her bonnet—Laura bloomed in a fresh cerise trimming, with corn-poppies inside the brim—noticed the accustomed air with which both ladies leaned back on the rich upholstery, with hands nonchalantly crossed and a careless ease, while she knew she sat as though braced for a daguerreotype, and holding her parasol as if she were taking aim at surrounding objects. Miss Middleton knew it, too; and if Laura, less observant, did not notice it, Anne felt that her eyes would be opened by the skilful social oculist into whose hands she had fallen. So, instead of the lively ride with Mr. Butler and Laura, there was a dull, formal drive out to the picturesque little parish-church near Laurel Hill, dusty, sunny, disheartening; and only Laura's covert information that her cousin would be at home, led her to accept the invitation to take tea with the family. So far from discountenancing Laura's entreaties, Miss Middleton seconded them in the blandest manner; but Anne could not recover from her petrification until Mr. Revere came in and paid her those courtly compliments so natural to him toward his favorites, handing her up to the dining-room himself, telling Coleman that young men must give place to their elders, and seating her beside himself. Anne glanced up with involuntary triumph to see if Miss Middleton observed this marked deference; but the petrification went on

all the same when she encountered the still, imperturbable face and coldly-smiling eyes behind the handsome tea-equipage.

Anne played in the evening, and Miss Middleton insisted on turning over the music, and made several flattering remarks on her execution. "A little more brilliancy, my dear, a rather more decided style. Wollenhauser would improve you." And she subsided into an elaborate piece of tapestry for the evening, apparently fully occupied with counting stitches and arranging shades of worsted. The velvety part of her commendation had not quieted Anne's undefined apprehensions, however; and, notwithstanding Laura's endearments and Mr. Revere's kind attentions, she felt relieved when the visit was ended, as if she had heard the photographer say, "One, two, three, four, five—that will do, miss; you can take your head from the brace."

Not that Anne thought about Miss Middleton all the way home. Coleman Butler was her escort, and managed to make her forget every thing but that she was leaning on his arm and looking up into his eyes. She almost felt that he would tell her he loved her at once—he did, by every thing but words—and, when she reached her own room, it was to brush out the heavy waves of her hair before her little toilet-glass, thinking what a lovely color she had, how bright her eyes were, how well she would look in a tableau, with her hair flowing over her white neck thus, what she should answer Mr. Butler when he asked her to marry him, and where they would go for the wedding-tour. So much for Jane Eyre, with Coleman Butler as Rochester.

## CHAPTER VII.

"I DON'T think Anne Harrison is half as amiable as she used to be," said Elliot Brooks, as he walked home with his sister after an evening spent in Ninth Street. "She doesn't play as well either; she seems out of practice. I wonder what the matter is?"

"I don't know; perhaps she is not well. She has been disappointed about scholars, too; Harriet is the only one she has yet."

"I thought the little Reeds were to go to her. I concluded she was doing nicely by this time; she dresses more this winter than she ever did before. She's a very pretty girl, certainly, and I used to think—"

Alice knew very well what her brother used to think—that Anne would make an excellent wife some day; so she did not trouble him by a reminder that he had forgotten to finish his sentence. She had wished it herself very much at one time, but the last few months she had begun to doubt whether Anne would make her brother happy. She aspired to a circle in which they had never thought of moving, for Elliot Brooks and his sister would have scorned admittance to any society except on terms of absolute equality. She seemed to think only of her dress and personal appearance, and, to Alice, who understood the circumstances of the family, she appeared to be dressing quite beyond their means. A vain, extravagant, ambitious wife would never do for her brother, though, as he was aware of the change, she

did not think it necessary to point it out to him, or enlarge upon it.

"Is Anne as fond of you as she used to be?" asked Elliot, presently. "I don't think she comes to the house as much as she did."

"She's too much taken up with those Reveres; she hasn't time for her old friends," rose to Alice's lips; but she never allowed herself to make "a railing accusation." "Oh, not so much as she once did," she answered, quietly.

"You have not quarrelled?"

"Oh, no; never."

It was the kind forbearance of Alice that had prevented it, however. Many a one would have broken friendship long before, at the petty slights she had received, and the neglects that she could not help feeling. "It cannot last long," she said to herself, when Anne set aside all topics of mutual interest, to discourse upon the style and position of the Reveres and the accidental acquaintances she had made through them. "It is too unequal; and Anne loves me at heart quite as well as ever, I am sure." So, when Elliot proposed to pass an evening in Ninth Street, Alice was ready to accompany him, and forbore to call his attention to Anne's altered tone; and, when the lecture season came around, she did not oppose the customary disposition of the second lady's ticket.

We are sorry to show so unpleasant a phase of a person whom we "love with all her faults," as much as we do our little heroine, but truth compels us to acknowledge that, when the very kind note of invi-

tation arrived, Anne hesitated all one evening about accepting it. She did not care about being seen in public with such plain people, unknown entirely to "society," and, though Elliot was always the gentleman, Alice, with all her excellence, never could be made to look "stylish" in any thing. Her quiet simplicity never offended against good taste, and, in fact, was far more elegant than the "loud," dashing manner Anne had of late affected toward her own circle of acquaintances. But then, again, Laura called lectures a bore, and Miss Middleton had said "they were all very well in their way for the people;" so there would be no danger of an encounter, and she had little enough variety in her life after all. She could not help remarking that the Reveres never asked her to go with them to the opera, or the concerts they so frequently attended, though knowing very well how much she loved music, and could not go without an escort. She *had* expected the attention from Coleman Butler, to whom she considered herself almost engaged; but he excused himself for some apparent neglect by saying that it would not do to act himself before Miss Middleton *just at present*—it would spoil all; and no doubt that was why he did not invite her on his own account. There was no harm, certainly, in the dearth of public amusements and better company, to accept the card for the Mercantile Society's lectures; and, though Elliot Brooks might not have been flattered by this mental discussion, he had not looked for any other result.

The Harrisons were by no means so happy as

when we first made their acquaintance. Anne's life, made up of false excitements, fretting misadventures, and petty mortifications, with stale intervals of useless aspirations, unfitted her to bear her mother's burdens, and Mrs. Harrison grew older and grayer every day—more fretful, too; and this reacted on the younger children, so that there was a perpetual domestic war, while James, out of his element as the errand-boy of a counting-house, and still brooding over the promised profession he could now never hope to attain, grew reserved and gloomy.

There was more than the lack of Anne's sympathy to line Mrs. Harrison's face with wrinkles. The undutiful girl had carried out her intention of "having things like other people," though, according to her constant fault-finding, it was not yet accomplished. The interest of a little bank-stock was usually put aside to meet the few Christmas bills, that it was more convenient to have outstanding; but, with Anne's importunities, based on the expectation of securing more scholars, now that she knew more people, and so making the deficiency good, Mrs. Harrison had suffered her better judgment to be overruled. Anne wore a blue velvet hat and a handsomely-flounced silk; but Mrs. Harrison never saw them without groaning inwardly over the dentist, the doctor, and the shoemaker, who should have been paid with the money that bought them.

"You are not going to wear that dress out to-night, surely," said Mrs. Harrison, as she came into her daughter's room to assist her in dressing for the second lecture of the season. It would probably

draw a crowded audience, for the speaker was well known and brilliant. Anne was preparing to look her best. "Nobody will see what you have on under your cloak, I am sure. Your cashmere would do just as well, and you will only get it stepped on and soiled."

"But I'm not going to wear my cloak. I want your white crape shawl, and then I can wear my blanket, and take it off in the lobby." Anne had helped herself to this precious relic of her mother's prosperous married life, without so much as saying "by your leave." "There, so"—and she draped it over her shoulders. "I want my best collar and sleeves; I must have a new set, too; I've worn these so much this winter that all Philadelphia knows them."

"I don't see where you are going to get them. You talk as if I were made of money. I've hardly enough to go to market with the rest of the month. You must begin to be more economical, Anne. I was ashamed to send for the doctor this morning, when Lucy was so feverish, knowing that I had not the money to pay his bill when it was sent in. I don't see that the Reveres get you any scholars." Mrs. Harrison little dreamed that they did not know Anne had ever made a pretence of teaching, and how much skilful manœuvring it had cost to keep the knowledge from them, or that it was one principal reason that her mother had never been suffered to exchange a word with Laura in her rare flying visits. "I don't think they show themselves half as friendly as the Brookses, after all," pursued Mrs. Harrison. "They have never asked you to go anywhere, or even

ride with them, since that first day, and you appear to do most of the visiting."

Anne did not suppose that her mother had noticed these neglects, which she was forced to acknowledge to herself. It vexed her, and the dressing-comb pulled her hair into "snarls," by way of accompaniment. "The less Laura comes here the better I like it, the way we live," she said, snappishly.

"I don't know where you expect to live any better; and what was good enough for your father ought to be good enough for you. I don't see why that young Butler comes in the morning either, taking up your time. Why doesn't he come in the evening, like other people? You never find Elliot Brooks idling around that way. Your father used to say that no honest man had time for visiting by daylight. It is daylight, it is true, or I should feel it my duty just to leave every thing and be in the parlor. I don't approve, I must say, of young people being left to themselves so much. If you are going to marry him, it's all well and good; I should think it was high time he had made up his mind, though; and, if I was going to have my choice, I should much prefer Elliot Brooks; I feel more at home with him."

So her mother took it for granted that she was to marry Coleman Butler. Anne's eyes flashed at the thought. How she would rise over some people who tried to put her down now! Miss Middleton, for instance, with all her pretended amiability, never losing an opportunity to make her feel ill at ease, and covering up a great many pills of mortification in the honey of her flatteries; the Fishers, who made it a

point to say some unpleasant thing whenever they met; even Laura would be obliged to treat her rather differently, when Mr. Revere, always so kind, was made doubly so by relationship. Anne really prized his good-will, and, apart from the dazzling intoxication of being Mrs. Butler, there was a longing after parental care, which Mr. Revere, she felt, would certainly give her.

"You do not have quite as much color as you used to," said Mrs. Harrison, after so long a reverie upon altering her striped cashmere into a morning-dress, that she had forgotten her late irritation. "But I think you look better than you ever did at times—to-night, for instance."

Anne was conscious of it herself, and of the improvement which her mother noticed, but could not define. "A little more brilliancy, my dear," as Miss Middleton had said; "a rather more decided style." She came down-stairs with this consciousness, and, when her wrappings were thrown off in the well-lighted hall, she met Elliot's undisguised look of admiration by a smile and glance that were not intended to discourage it. She was in wonderfully good spirits; they were early, and had secured good seats; very early, and, as the room began to fill, she recognized more than one of the Revere set among the arrivals, and, being honored by a stare and a bow from some of them, she laughed and chatted, quite enchanting her escort, and being more friendly with Alice than she had shown herself for a long time.

"Isn't that your friend, Miss Revere, in the middle seats?" said Alice, looking about her as people do in a lecture-room.

"Where?"—and the lively sally died on Anne's lips into sudden stillness. Her start was genuine; the Reveres there, and Laura had said nothing about it only that morning, and she publicly committed to the escort of Elliot Brooks and his sister.

Laura was turning round, scanning the audience with her opera-glass; it was in vain to shrink back close to the wall. Coleman Butler looked around too, and Miss Middleton followed the direction of Laura's hand. All the party bowed, and Laura beckoned her friend to an unoccupied seat near them.

"How long before the lecture begins? I want to speak to her just one minute," said Anne, hastily.

"It is a quarter of an hour yet." But Elliot Brooks did not appear very well pleased with the loan of his pretty companion.

They were a very little way off, not far enough to make Anne's movement marked in the constantly-changing crowd."

"I'll be back in one second," and she slipped into the vacant seat. But the wonderful news Laura had to tell her—that an uncle of the Fishers, in Cuba, was dead, and had left a fortune to each of the girls—required a little discussion, and Anne felt so elated by this public recognition of her intimacy with the family, and Coleman Butler's whisper, "How *lovely* you are to-night! I am jealous of that fellow," when he made way for her, that she quite forgot how the time flew by, until the first murmur of applause which greeted the entrance of the lecturer startled her.

"Oh, I must go back!"

"To those people? don't, stay with us," said

Laura, who did not happen to see any one else near her that she could talk to.

"Stay!" and Coleman Butler's hand adroitly sought her own beneath the accidental drapery of the crape shawl, while his eyes were fixed on the stage with an unconsciousness beautiful to behold, and which might have deceived any one—but Miss Middleton.

Anne glanced uneasily toward her party. Elliot Brooks stood up to cover her return. The momentary hesitation made it impossible, without a marked stir and interruption, for the speaker had commenced. Mr. Brooks sat down again, with a look of annoyance. Alice even turned her head away when Anne sought to telegraph an apology. Both of them were evidently hurt, and with good reason.

Not even the attainment of a long-nursed ambition—a public appearance with Mr. Butler as her attendant—could quite stifle Anne's misgivings. As for the lecture, she did not hear five sentences of it, and for once hurried away from Mr. Butler and Laura when it was over. Her friends did not attempt to conceal their vexation, for Alice, who could pass by personal affront, resented her brother's desertion warmly. When they left her at her own door, Anne could not help seeing that she had committed a very great and in all probability irreparable error.

## CHAPTER VIII.

THE utter silence of the Brooks family, though daily felt, was somewhat lessened by the grand fact of Miss Revere's party or ball. Her "coming-out party"—for, though she had been seen in public everywhere for two months past, the orthodox *fête* had been deferred till the height of the season should give it more brilliancy. Laura, of course, could think and talk of nothing else—how many were to be invited—her own dress—the superb arrangement of the rooms, and the supper—it was enough to turn a head that had so little in it.

Anne must hear every thing, and appeared to be more intimate there than ever before; wasting time in the most frightful way, considering how valuable time was to her, and neglecting household affairs more and more. Yet, up to the very latest moment, Laura did not tell her that she was to be invited, and the possibility that it might prove to be a Barmecide feast after all, was any thing but soothing to her vanity and ambition. With this uncomfortable uncertainty, the arrival of the thick satin paper envelope, with the Revere crest, and its huge card of invitation, was a matter of no little rejoicing.

"Oh, mother, it's come! it's come!"—and Anne, who had met the messenger upon the door-step and took the card herself, flew into the parlor, entirely forgetting that the Clarks were invited to take tea with her mother that afternoon, and, being early people, had probably arrived.

"Thought it was Valentine's day, instead of Christmas, did he?" laughed Mr. Clark. "What does he say? We're old folks, mother and I, so you need not mind us."

Mrs. Clark drew up the skirt of her dress, by a little short jerk, a way she had when not quite pleased, and knit faster than ever on the shawl that Anne knew very well she had commenced at Bordentown.

"It's none of her affairs, at all events," thought Anne; for we are much more inclined to be resentful toward those we have injured than to notice the trespasses of others in the same spirit.

"It's better than ten valentines—an invitation to the great ball the Reveres are going to give on the 22d. See!" and she read the invitation aloud. "It's the very handsomest party of the season; is to be, I mean, and everybody is going to be there!" Anne's elation at being able to show that she was still intimate with the Reveres cured the natural misgivings she might have felt on meeting Mrs. Clark under other circumstances.

"What are you going to wear?" asked that lady, rather shortly.

Anne came out of her seventh heaven. Sure enough! She had not a regular evening-dress in the world. Her white bishop's lawn was too short and old-fashioned, any way; and her mother's wedding-dress, a rich pearl-colored brocade, carefully hoarded as it had been, had but four breadths, while fashion now demanded seven, and of course at this late day it could not be matched.

"Let's see; what did our girls wear at their first

party, Mrs. C.?" and the good-natured Mr. Clark laid his forefinger against his nose as if in meditation. "White frocks of some kind, seems to me, and pink ribbons 'round their waists. How sweet they did look, though! I can see 'em now"—and Mr. Clark glanced into invisible space. "Both had an offer on the spot."

"Don't be foolish, father." And yet Mrs. Clark turned more kindly toward Anne, as she said it, with something of the forbearance she could have wished used toward the youthful follies of her own daughters, if she had been so blest as to have seen those dream-children.

"I'm sorry to have Anne disappointed," Mrs. Harrison said, a little nervously; "but I'm afraid she'll have to send an excuse. I've had to spend so much, one way and another, this fall"—(dear soul, it was chiefly *one way*, as Anne knew!)"—"that I cannot afford her a new dress."

She said this with a little hesitation. And Anne's face flushed up as she listened—not with disappointment, for she knew she should get the dress somehow, but she understood this statement of the difficulty before Mr. Clark, though slow to feel that her own extravagance had led her mother to set a snare for the liberality of her listener.

"How much would it cost now?" How naturally that large hand began to fumble with the big pocket-book, over the larger heart! "How much did those dresses cost, Mrs. C.—for our girls you know; about ten dollars, wasn't it? Just about what your Christmas presents would have come to, I guess. So,

suppose I hunt up some little things for the young people, and give it to you out and out? Hey, mother?"

Mrs. Clark had dropped a stitch in her knitting. She did not feel as if Anne had deserved it; for, besides the visit at Bordentown, she had been very rude one day, avoiding her in Chestnut Street, when with some gayer-friends, and had not been at her house but once since their return.

"There—here's a gold-piece; when I'm going to give money, I like to have it in gold; it looks better. Think that will do?"

"Oh, yes, indeed!" And, relieved of her embarrassment in this unlooked-for manner, Anne's thanks were profuse enough. Mr. Clark felt well pleased with himself; Mrs. Harrison breathed more freely, and congratulated herself with the success of her little stratagem. She had never done such a thing before; but, since Mr. Clark was going to spend that much, Anne might as well have what she wanted, and the other children were too young to mind. Anne said the same to herself; but she had heard Alick speculating on what he should get; and James hoping for his customary bright half-dollars to purchase a set of French instruction-books with. She knew they "*would* mind" being put off with some trifle, and that she was selfishly going to spend on herself what they would otherwise have had.

"Mind, it's white muslin now with pink ribbons," said Mr. Clark, when she thanked him again at parting. The shepherdess style was in favor for young ladies when Mr. Clark attended his last party.

Mrs. Harrison had ceased to go out at about the same era, and seconded the advice, when they came to talk the matter over the next morning. "White is the most suitable thing a young girl can possibly wear," urged Mrs. Harrison, "and it will be the most economical thing for you; it will last till you buy your wedding-dress."

And, as Laura had said she was going to wear white, the muslin was purchased, and made up with a skirt elaborately tucked, a round, full waist—"à la vierge," we call it, now that it has once more come in fashion—and short sleeves. Mrs. Harrison admired it greatly, so did Miss Polk, the dressmaker; and as for Maggie, it was a wonder that it was not spoiled before it was put together; "the child was forever under foot." Anne was obliged to lock the door of her room every time she left it, for fear of accidents from Miss Margaret's too pressing attentions.

She had very little time even for Laura that week, as the tucks—there were ten, and no sewing-machines, except at agricultural fairs, in those days—had to be done by herself. The preparations helped her to bear the marked neglect of the Brooks family, who did not call for her when the next lecture-evening came; though she watched for the day, and it hurt her more than she was willing to confess when she found they did not make their appearance. Coleman Butler did not come either with an offer to be her escort at the party, which was the least he could do, considering that it was to be at their own house, and he knew Anne had no one to bring her. He had kissed her more than once in saying good-by, and called her

"my little Anne," and wished he was independent of his grandfather, and able to marry to-morrow; he had said every thing in fact but "Will you marry me, Anne?" in so many words; so no wonder that she was in a hurry for the explanation that was to place her on an assured footing with the family and their friends, and felt a personal interest whenever she heard their affairs discussed.

At the last moment, leaving at least three yards of the tenth tuck for her mother to finish, Anne went to Twelfth Street to propose to Laura that she should go early, and enter the room with her; but there were other people present—the Lewises, who had been at the Bonaparte House, and were always very amiable, and Mrs. Commodore Ingersol, who gave musical parties, and had noticed Anne's playing one evening, when they had met there before.

"I wish you would come and see me, my dear, with your friend, Miss Revere," she said to Anne, through her eyeglass, on taking leave; "I should be delighted to see you on one of my Thursday evenings."

It was the first invitation she had ever received in "our set," and Anne went home delighted, though she failed to come to any arrangement with Laura, and Mr. Butler was invisible.

"People don't go before nine o'clock; I know that much," said Anne, talking it over with her mother. "I've often seen Laura begin to dress long after eight, when I've been spending the evening there." And she resolved not to be unfashionable in that respect, at least. She could not afford to have a carriage both

ways; James could take her there, and Job—that was the man at the stable, who drove them the few times in the year when they indulged in horses—could come for her.

“He’ll charge by the hour, I suppose,” suggested the prudent Mrs. Harrison, “so he’d better not go till the last minute, say one o’clock. Dear me, how late it will be! I hate to have you driving all alone after midnight; but if James comes he might ask just twice as much.”

“I’m sure you need not mind when it’s Job,” said Anne, who had her own views on the subject of a *tête-à-tête* return, and James would spoil all. “I heard Laura say that supper was ordered at twelve; so say half-past one.”

Anne’s toilet had commenced before this final arrangement was made. It was a serious affair; all those fine Grecian braids for the back of her hair, and then of course the curls for the Jenny Lind bandeaux at the sides, were twice as troublesome as ever. What with her hair, and the uncomfortable uncertainty attending her *entrée*, which Anne did not wholly confide to her mother, Mrs. Harrison’s situation as dressing-maid was not to be envied.

“I do wish Alice was here,” said Mrs. Harrison, contriving as well as she could to hold a light up each side of the mirror, so that Anne could examine the braids in the hand-glass. “I wonder you did not think to ask her to come and help you dress. Won’t that do, Anne? My arm aches as if it would break off.”

“She’s the last person, with her old-maidish ways,”

said Anne, crossly. “Do hold that light a little higher; can’t you, please? One minute more.” And, remembering who had praised her hair, and that he was to see her for the first time to-night in evening-dress, Anne’s color grew brilliant.

“Don’t you think you have almost too many petticoats on?” was the next suggestion her mother ventured to make. “They are all so stiff, too; you rattle like a sheet of pasteboard when you walk.”

“A person can’t have too many skirts, or too stiff, nowadays. How can you tell? You never go anywhere.”

It was true, in more senses than one, Mrs. Harrison never had a moment of leisure; yet, toil as she would, the sewing-basket seemed to increase rather than diminish. Here was a whole week gone on the white muslin, for she could only afford Miss Polk for half a day to cut and baste it.

The great work was accomplished at last, just as the half hour—half-past eight—struck. Anne had the large glass in the parlor taken down and placed upon the floor, so that she could admire herself at full length; and this she did, walking backward and forward, even admitting the troublesome Maggie as a spectator, and drinking in Jane’s unstinted compliments greedily. What with the braids and bandeaux, the short sleeves, broad pink satin sash, tied at one side, the best open-work stockings, new black kid slippers, and white kid gloves, Anne considered herself unexceptionable. To be sure, the stiff petticoats did rattle as she moved to and fro, and the skirt was taken up by the unusual quantity so as to

appear rather short, but that would not be noticed in the crowd, and they "stood out" beautifully. It was too bad to pin them up in every conceivable way for fear of soiling them, and to have to put her mother's old-fashioned carpet moccasins on over her slippers. It was a bitter cold night, but her cloak would ruin the freshness of the muslin, and she insisted on throwing only a stella shawl over her shoulders, and a veil over her head. Mrs. Harrison had sad misgivings, but she had almost ceased to suggest, and quite given up commanding Anne in any thing.

"Pride 'ill keep her warm, ma'am," said Jane, with a sagacious nod of her head as she returned to her own domain, and left her mistress to put the disordered room to rights.

It was quarter-past nine when they reached Ramsey Street, and already several carriages were drawn up before the open door. The house fairly streamed and gushed with light from every window, and every crevice. The open hall-door illuminated the whole square; and ladies in showy opera-cloaks, and graceful rigolettes, their wraps a costly toilet of themselves, brushed past Anne and James, pausing in momentary confusion, and tripped up the carpeted steps, to be received with low bows by the army of strange white-gloved serving-men.

Foolish Anne, her heart beating faster and faster at the idea of facing those stylish functionaries, waited until the several carriages had driven off, instead of mingling with the strangers, and so escaping their acute observation. No wonder they stared at the young girl, who had forgotten to release her drapery,

and arrived on foot and alone, except the lad, who did not even go up the steps with her in his boyish bashfulness. They made way for her to pass through rudely enough, smoothing on their white gloves instead of bowing obsequiously. A printed shawl and a satin-lined *sortie de bal* were two different things, to say nothing of her lack of retinue. Anne hurried past them, remembering to take out some of the pins as she did so, and hearing the first grand crash of the musicians in the little withdrawing-room. As children say, "the party had begun." She could see elegantly-dressed people moving about the drawing-room, for there are some conservatives in every circle, who pride themselves on keeping good hours still, but not a glimpse of Laura, or Mr. Butler, or any one of the family, for they were all stationed at the end of the suite of rooms, receiving their guests.

Narrowly escaping an unceremonious *entrée* into the gentlemen's dressing-room, where young Philadelphia was busied in getting up their gloves, and their conversation over the punch-bowl, Anne found her way to the state apartment of the house, where a strange waiting-maid was busied about the last arrivals, very voluble and very officious, taking no notice, after the first glance, of the shy young lady in white muslin.

She was only too ready to lace Miss Cadwalader Hamilton's satin boots, and to arrange the flowers in Mrs. Romulus Remus's hair, fluttered in ecstasies of admiration around the three Misses Remus, who, like their mamma, were tall, showy, and dressed in gorgeous brocade. Miss Remus in corn-color, with a

wreath of marigolds in yellow velvet; Miss Lily, who was a blonde, in pale blue, with clematis drooping and dangling over her very bare shoulders; Miss Antoinette, a brunette, in deep currant-color, with a remarkable construction of velvet and gold perched on the back of her head, from whence the hair had all been drawn to give an idea of abundance to the jetty tresses falling low upon her face. How they shook and twirled their drapery before the Psyche-glass, and the pier! how they held up their little silk-stockinged, satin-slippered feet, toyed with their fans, while they complimented each other after the most extravagant fashion, and deprecated such small change as they naturally received in return! All were satin-shod, Anne noticed, to her dismay; all wore ornaments in their hair, and twists and bands instead of braids; every neck was uncovered, every glove trimmed with lace, or ribbon, every arm shining with bracelets, and also every dress trailed to the floor!

How stout and broad she looked by comparison when she did get a glimpse at the mirror! Her stiff skirts seemed all at the top, and to fall in at the hem. How conspicuous her black-kid feet! How bare her unbraceleted arms! How chokingly high her dress, for all the lining had been cut away, and trimmed with lace, which made no show at all. Anne took off the pink satin sash, notwithstanding its elaborate bow; but there was the round short waist, when all the rest had pointed bodices, so she tied it on again, drawing it down pointedly in front. How forlorn she felt already, sitting there unnoticed, while greet-

ings, and compliments, and chattering, went on all around her! It was intolerable to sit and be stared at, for not one familiar face had made its appearance yet, and she walked out into the hall and leaned over the banister, in hopes of seeing one of the Reveres, or, at least, Josephus, whom she would have avoided at any other time. One kind young gentleman—he was very young to be out so late at night, probably not more than seventeen—came, and politely inquired if he should call her brother for her. Anne almost wished that he could; she would have been willing to make good her retreat, without so much as an entrance on the gayety she had made so many sacrifices to behold.

“My brother? Thank you, sir. If I could see one of the waiters—”

“With pleasure.” And away flew the kind young person, returning with the attendant of the punch-bowl.

“Would you be so very good as to tell Miss Revere that I am here?”

“Certainly, miss.” And Anne, quite forgetful that she had forgotten to give her name, walked back into the dressing-room greatly relieved. Of course, if Laura could not come herself, she would send Coleman at once; it was very thoughtless in him not to inquire after her, and with the intention of telling him so, she made herself as comfortable as she could under the eyes of the polished ladies’-maid.

But though she rose again and hovered around the door uneasily, no one came for her. It was not strange. Alonzo of the punch-bowl had at once re-

turned to it, knowing, if the lady did not, that she had asked something quite out of his sphere, even if the request had been reasonable in itself. So another miserable half hour passed until she recognized Emily Lewis, in a pink silk, with tulle over-dress, her face as plain and good-natured as ever. It was such a relief to have some one to speak to, even if Mrs. Lewis, whom she had never seen before, and who was very superb in her dowager velvet, did look at her rather curiously.

"Who is here? Have you been here long? Are you ready to go down? Shall Joe call anybody for you?" asked Miss Emily, turning her head from side to side, and running her fingers through her puffs. "Why didn't you go to a hairdresser, Anne? and your dress is six inches too short! Too bad, isn't it? But never mind, there'll be such a crowd. Come down with us; I wouldn't wait up here any longer for them. She has her hands full, of course, to-night," for Anne had said something in a very low voice, about Laura sending up for her.

"Mamma, this is Miss Harrison. We were all at the Bonaparte House together, when Lizzie and I were with Aunt Sue. Where's Joe?—Keep close behind us, Anne. It's a pity Joe hasn't got but two arms, but I can't lend you mine; I always feel so dreadfully awkward without a gentleman's arm."

And so did Anne, but she was thankful for even this shadow of an escort, and entered the Reveres' drawing-room as she had the family—a hanger-on!

It was difficult to keep close to the party, for the rooms were by this time thronged; but Anne man-

aged to reach Mr. Revere and Laura, both of whom bowed and smiled, and turned to the next comer to bow and smile again in precisely the same manner. Miss Middleton stood a little way off, and every one turned to her as they left the Reveres. She saw Anne quite distinctly, and Anne felt that she did; but there was no help to be expected from her, and not a glimpse of Mr. Butler.

Anne niched herself against the mantel, for her friends had drifted away from her in the crowd, and tried to keep near Laura until she should be less engaged. How very lovely the young heiress looked, a cloud of white silk and lace, her fair arms and neck marked by circlets of pearls, and delicate hot-house flowers in her hair! Standing as she did, Anne saw herself reflected beside her friend in the opposite mirror, and turned away vexed and humbled. The dress that had seemed so becoming in her own home was only mean and old-fashioned amid these elegant surroundings; she felt as if she were looking at one of those broad, dwarfed, ancient-looking figures, that stare at us from the tarnished frame of some old family portrait. Neither face, nor figure, nor air, was congenial with the scene, and Anne began to wish that the floor would be so accommodating as to let her through, and save her from crossing the room again in a retreat. Nobody spoke to her, or noticed her save by a stare; everybody had their own party, and were constantly meeting their acquaintances. Laura still bowed and smiled, and said a word or two, and the crowd rolled up and rolled away again without any apparent diminution in the arrivals.

Mr. Revere appeared to have forgotten her existence in the excitement of his favorite grandchild's *début*; and though Miss Middleton turned and glanced toward her occasionally, it was done stealthily, without one sign of encouragement, and only deepened the dumb, miserable apathy to all but discomfort that was creeping over her.

The dancing had commenced, and after a while she could make out Coleman Butler in the saloon with the eldest Miss Fisher as his partner in the redowa. Both of them saw her standing there in complete isolation, as they ceased the giddy whirl, and stood for a moment almost facing her. Miss Fisher drew herself up scornfully, and said some wittily severe thing about her dress—Anne was sure it was of her appearance in some way; and Coleman Butler, instead of resenting it, joined in the laugh, as he bowed ceremoniously, and offered Georgy Fisher his arm, and moved farther away.

The young hostess joined the dances just then, and a knot of gentlemen closed around Mr. Revere, so that that hope was cut off, and another half hour passed. Anne had not moved a yard from her first position. There were lovely flowers scattered everywhere in profusion; how much she would have given for one spray to hide those antiquated braids! There was bewitching music; but of what avail to one who had not even made the tour of the room? Was it not to be a Barmecide feast after all? It was some comfort when Joe Lewis, sent by his sister, came and asked her to dance. Anne felt grateful, but she had not the spirit to stand up before all those people, and

she could hear her skirts crack and rustle with every movement. Clearly there must be something besides starch to expand the voluminous drapery everywhere around her. Crinoline was still a fashionable mystery, and Anne, not being fashionable, had not penetrated it. There was another reason why she did not care to go into the saloon just then. She clung to the expectation that Coleman Butler would come for her as soon as he could do so without attracting observation. She had more than once been made to bear this outward indifference, and even negligence, in the presence of others; and, humiliating as it was, she endured it, because her lover was always ready with some excellent reason, and insinuated that it should not be long before there would be an end to any such necessity. Perhaps he had seen Miss Middleton looking that way; so Anne thanked Mr. Lewis, who felt relieved, since he had accomplished all that was expected of him, and continued to "do" Ariadne after the most disconsolate manner, with almost as dreary an expression as the marble caryatides which supported the mantel.

But Theseus did not make his appearance. Georgy Fisher seemed quite the belle of the evening, next to Laura, and he hovered around her in a manner that Anne could not at all understand, since he had professed to dislike her, particularly from the first moment of their acquaintance. It was getting insupportable, and, seeing Emily Lewis beckoning to her, she ventured to cross the room, and thankfully sank into the corner of a sofa.

"Just wait here a moment while I do this schot-

tish with Clarence Fisher; I've got something to tell you." And Miss Emily disappeared, not only for one, but two, three dances. Some one took the opposite seat, and Anne's face lighted up as she recognized Mrs. Commodore Ingersol, who had been so kind to her the day before.

"Mrs. Ingersol!" she said, in a little flutter of expectancy, and held out her hand to attract the lady's notice, sure of its being friendly.

"Ah!"—and she turned for a moment in Anne's direction, looking at her through the inevitable eyeglass. "Oh, good-evening, my dear;" and then—"As I was remarking, Mrs. Stockton, Madame Riviere is such a delightful person. We saw a great deal of her last winter in Paris." The broad back was turned completely around, leaving Anne to study the lappets of lace and velvet composing her head-dress at her leisure.

"Anne!"—and Laura Revere sailed by at a little distance, bowing and smiling to her as she hung on the arm of Commodore Ingersol himself, who, despite his sixty years, was ever in the train of the last *débutante*.

Anne felt resentfully bitter. Surely it would not have taxed Laura's friendship overmuch to have provided one solitary partner, even if it was her coming-out party! and as for her cousin, she would not be trifled with and mortified any longer, and she would tell him so that very night. He should see it would not be such easy work to make peace after such marked neglect!

"I was afraid you would be gone," said Emily

Lewis, coming back flushed and breathless, "and I've heard some news. What do you think? Georgy Fisher and Coleman Butler are engaged!—It's just out to-night, though perhaps you knew it before, you are so intimate here. There she goes with Mr. Revere now; he is introducing her to Senator Broadhead; they are being congratulated all around!"

"Are you sure?" The burly form of the senator and Mr. Revere's aristocratic, though slightly stooping figure, danced together with the light and the crowd for a moment.

"Oh, positive! Clarence told me so, and Miss Middleton told mamma."

"But he could not abide her!" And poor Anne made an effort to recover herself, and smiled; such a mirthless, painful smile as it was, even the dull Emily Lewis noticed it.

"Oh, of course; but you know that Cuban fortune, and Coleman Butler always was called a fortune-hunter; it makes all the difference in the world! But I was going to tell you something, because I think it's too bad you don't know it. I told mamma it was a real shame, and it shows just how worldly the Reveres are. Mamma always must know about everybody, so she went straight to Miss Middleton and asked if you belonged to the Chestnut-Street Harrisons; and Miss Middleton said, 'Oh, dear, no!' and told her a lot of stuff about your living way out of the world, and teaching music, and how she found out about it; and that Laura would have given you up long ago only she didn't know how to get out of it; she never would have kept it up at first only to

spite Miss Middleton. Laura didn't want to ask you to-night, it appears, but Mr. Revere—they told him a quantity of stuff about you and Coleman Butler, it seems—insisted upon it, and said, 'it would be a good lesson to the young person to find herself so entirely out of her sphere.' He was quite put out when he found you were not of a good family. There, we never were very intimate, you know, but I told mamma it was very mean in Laura, and I vowed you should know it."

"Josephus! oh, Josephus, won't you see if there is a carriage come for me—for Miss Harrison? It was to be here at half-past one!" And Josephus obeyed with more alacrity than he had ever shown in her cause before! for the voice that accosted him trembled as if the sobs were not far off, and Anne looked up to him in such a pitiful way that he almost relented toward her.

The shabby, clattering vehicle, driven by Job, drew up in the full glare of the aristocratic mansion. Utterly wretched as she was, Anne felt that the rusty harness, and miserable beasts, did not escape the practised eye of the ancient servitor of the Reveres. But he overlooked it, and handed her in, in his best manner, standing a moment with folded arms as he looked after the carriage. The "Thank you, Josephus," had touched him, when he reflected how perseveringly he had aided Miss Middleton in the inquisitorial process which she had instituted on her return.

"She never would do for society, though; wasn't born in her; either natural, or plated as some of us are." And he shook his head solemnly, as he reas-

cended the steps, kicking the dust from his pumps, and reflecting that he had seen the first and last of her at that house.

## CHAPTER IX.

MR. CLARK'S parlor was a picture of cheerful contentment, all the more striking from the blustering winter storm that writhed the spare branches of the leafless trees in front of the house, and sent a sharp shower of sleet at intervals against the windows. The shades were drawn up to allow as much light as possible, the day being so dark, so that the gilt picture-frames stood out boldly from the walls, and the carpet, which was of a particularly lively pattern, looked quite as well as if the sun had shone in upon it. There was a round centre-table in the middle of the room, with a tall astral lamp, very useful before the introduction of gas, and now retained for ornament. There were books of all shapes and sizes, piled up on the round table, for Mrs. Clark had always been "a great reader." The newspapers, neatly laid on the end of the wide sofa, with its hair-cloth cushions, belonged to her husband; so did the ample leathern arm-chair on one side of the fire, while Mrs. Clark herself sat in a corresponding one on the other side, though rockers marked the feminine ownership, and there was a neat little footstool of gay worsted-work in front of it. The Lehigh coal fire burned steadily,

the well-filled grate looking as if it had been arranged for the whole day, and intended to do its own part in keeping the shining hearth clear of dust and ashes. The pendulum of the marble mantel-clock ticked lazily, communicating a slow, regular motion to the drops of the candelabras on either side; the musical murmur of the glass was far from unpleasant, and had put the cat quietly to sleep—the large Maltese cat which occupied the soft hearth-rug. Even Mrs. Clark felt inclined to be drowsy, in the gray atmosphere, with such lulling sounds without and within. Her knitting-pins had dropped upon her lap, and the neat morning-cap had just given an unmistakable nod, when the sound of quick footsteps on the stairs, and the door hurriedly opened, aroused her.

"Anne Harrison! Why, child, how you startled me! Why, what is the matter? Is any one sick? Come right to the fire; you must be wet through."

"I left my overshoes and cloak in the hall; I met Margery, and she took them off—I shouldn't have thought of it. I don't mind the wet, and nobody's sick but me. I have a terrible headache; but it's not so much that; I want you to tell me what to do."

"Your mother is the proper person to go to, my dear," said Mrs. Clark, arresting the rocker, and sitting up a little stiffly.

"But she can't understand; she wasn't there—at the Bonaparte House, you know. She can't see how it all came about; that's why I came here, and to say I wanted to tell you that I knew I was very foolish, and wicked, and ungrateful there."

"It's very easy to call one's self hard names, Anne; it's harder work to act up to it."

"But I mean to now, I really do; but I don't know where to begin. Won't you let me tell you all about it? You see things so differently from mother; she only takes one side, and she would say all the time, 'Why did you do so, then?' I don't believe people ever know 'why,' when they begin to do wrong."

"When did you begin?" That's the best way to look at it, Anne. Put your feet up to the fire, though, my dear; your dress is quite wet."

Mrs. Clark began to be mollified, partly by Anne's genuine misery, and partly because she had come to her in her trouble.

"That's it; that's why I came. I thought it over and over—I did not close my eyes last night—and every time I began again I could see that, if I had kept by you, and taken your advice, I never should have got so intimate with them, and allowed him to see that I cared so much for him, when he was just leading me on all the while. I can see it now. Oh, Mrs. Clark, Mr. Butler is engaged to that hateful Miss Fisher, just because she has had some money left her. If you could have seen how spitefully she looked at me last night! I understand it all now, and why Laura has been so indifferent lately; I wouldn't let myself see it, I was so determined to be intimate there."

"I saw just how it was all going to end from the first." And Mrs. Clark felt inclined to deliver a lecture on the various points of Anne's original misbe-

havior; but she waited patiently for a full confession, beginning with the bowling-alley, and ending with her distress and mortification the evening before.

"It was very kind in Emily Lewis, when Laura and myself laughed at her so much, and she went up with me to the dressing-room when she saw how ill I was, or, I don't know how I should have got there. She helped me on with my things; but it wasn't time for the carriage yet, and there I sat and sat, and heard the music, and heard them go to supper, and the buzz and confusion all over the house, until I thought I should go crazy."

"And what did your mother say to you last night?" said Mrs. Clark, very indignant at such selfishness and neglect on the part of the Reveres, and feeling all her ancient kindness to Anne return at the recital of her wrongs.

"I had the key—Job had; mother sent it by him, and I went straight to my room. Mother had cleared it all up; I left it looking dreadfully, and it went right through me to think how good she always was, and how I'd treated her in every way this winter. Oh, Mrs. Clark, you don't know half how bad I have been!"

"There! there! don't sob so, Anne; she will be ready enough to forgive you, I dare say."

"Oh, she always is; that's the worst of it; she is so, so good! she'd been reading in my Bible before she went to bed, and it was open just where she laid it down; I should have thought it was on purpose, only I knew she had read the chapter before it Mon-

day night. For all I was so miserable, I took up the Bible and held it; it seemed as if it would do me good. I didn't dare to say my prayers; I haven't—oh, for a great while. The chapter was about people that are 'lovers of themselves, boasters, proud, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy.' It kept going through and through my head all night; it was all me. Mother knows I came here. And there's Alice and her brother won't speak to me, and she's worth fifty Lauras. Laura always was selfish."

"That was very plain to be seen," remarked Mrs. Clark; "and as long as you were useful to her in any way, even to flatter her vanity, she liked you well enough. As for the young man"—and here Mrs. Clark's voice grew more decided—"he ought to be called to an account. He knew very well that you had no father or brother. It's a good lesson to you, Anne, an excellent lesson, for you are inclined to be vain. *Never listen to any man who tells you he loves you without asking you to marry him in so many words.* There's always mischief at the bottom of it."

Mrs. Clark thought of her lifelong yearning for children, more resigned than she had ever been before to its denial. They might have been taught by harsh lessons like poor Anne's, or, worse still, lived to be scoundrels, like "that young man."

"I think you have begun just as you ought to, at the very beginning," said Mrs. Clark again, after a little interval of such thought, while Anne wept on in silence, "and I am pleased to see that you do not spare yourself. You know where to go for forgiveness as well as I can tell you, and for help to keep

your good resolutions; you can't keep them without, though you think you can. We are all short-sighted and self-deceived, my dear"—Mrs. Clark sighed, as if she knew it only too well—"and the sooner we find it out, and look away from ourselves for assistance, the straighter we shall walk."

And when Anne found how heartily she had her mother's sympathy, how readily she was pardoned, it made her understand as she never had before how free and entire is the forgiveness of our heavenly Parent.

Mr. Clark was greatly astonished at his wife's revelations that evening, and greatly inclined to settle Mr. Butler's affairs himself; but his wife reminded him that there was no actual promise, and it would only hurt Anne still more by making the matter public.

"I'll tell you what I can do, mother, at all events, since I was the unfortunate means of getting the poor child into such a scrape. I'll give Mrs. Harrison the money to square up her Christmas bills, and Alick a new suit of clothes."

"Give the clothes certainly; it would be quite a help, and we all know that Alick is your favorite; but *lend* the money, and I'll see that Anne has scholars enough to pay it off after a while. She'll feel as if she was working her way out of it herself, and it will help her to be steady and economical, for we don't lose bad habits in a day. I sent for Alice Brooks this afternoon, and she has promised to forgive and forget, though she thought it was Anne's place to go to her. I made her understand just how cut down Anne was."

So the loan was made, though Mr. Clark grumbled a little at not being allowed to give the sum out and out, and sunshine and content once more shone in on the home of the Harrisons. Anne toiled thankfully at sewing and teaching, never allowing herself to dwell upon the past, for the pain and shame that rose up with it. The reconciliation with Alice was a great comfort and help. As for the Reveres, she walked more than one square to avoid the house, and it so happened that they never met in public; her dignified note to Laura ended the acquaintance. After a time, the announcement of the marriage between "Coleman Butler and Miss Fisher, the beauty and heiress," was commented on under the head of "Personal," in the public prints, and Anne read it quite calmly to her mother.

Two years glided quietly along, with very little outward change to the family in Ninth Street; and when the second Christmas came, Anne went with much satisfaction to repay the loan which had smoothed at least half the wrinkles from her mother's face.

"All my own earnings, Mr. Clark," she said, handing him the pretty new purse she had crocheted expressly for the occasion; and her face was so radiant, that it did her old friends good to see it.

Mr. Clark counted it deliberately into little piles on the stuffed arm of the chair. It was in gold, and he had a woman's liking for bright coin.

"Yes, here it is, sure enough; you have not tried to cheat me, Miss Anne. A hundred and forty dollars, and the purse for interest. I'll keep that, and

you will be so good as to take this back again for those new clothes people always want on certain occasions."

"But, Mr. Clark"—and Anne blushed hotly as the golden shower flew into her lap.

"It's just exactly what I gave each of my girls for a wedding outfit; no, not quite; there's another eagle to help out. Mrs. C. knows what such things cost. It won't buy much finery, but substantials are the thing—hey, Mrs. C.?"

"Is the day fixed yet, Anne?" asked Mrs. Clark, with feminine interest. If her daughters had lived to marry such men as Elliot Brooks, she would not have minded the hard lessons so much, after all.

"Oh, no, not yet; it's only a week since we were really engaged, you know," and Anne played absently with her wedding-gift, forgetting for the moment to say "Thank you," though Mr. Clark knew all the time that it was felt. "Only think how kind Elliot is; he is going to allow me to go on just the same, giving lessons. Some men wouldn't like it, you know, to have their—their—"

"Out with it, Anne—their wives."

"Yes, teach, because, you know, people make such remarks; but Elliot is above that, and though he would be perfectly willing to send James to college himself, he sees that it would be best to have me do it."

"So James is really going through, after all? Well, it won't do him any harm the knowledge of the world he's picked up in a store. He's just that kind of a fellow; it must be driven into him, any thing but books. There's Alick, now—"

"Oh, Elliot says he thinks he's quite old enough to go into a store, and he'll look out for a situation."

"I'll 'tend to Alick, tell Mr. Brooks; I've got my own plans for him, and intend to settle him just as I did my own boys, don't we, Mrs. C.?"

And Anne hurried home with all the good news, and to display her own generous dower; moreover, to welcome the one she had learned to love best on earth to their first family dinner, and to be thankful, every time she found his pleasant eyes watching her, that she had found the courage to confess all, hard as it was, when he had asked her to be his wife.

*MISS BREMER'S VISIT TO  
COOPER'S LANDING.*

## MISS BREMER'S VISIT TO COOPER'S LANDING.

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### CHAPTER I.

THERE was an unusual excitement in the streets of Cooper's Landing, a little town on the Hudson River, not many miles from Newburg. It is not down in any map or panorama, it is true; but for all that it has its sloops, its tow-boat, its groceries, and its hotels. It was at one of the last-mentioned places of resort that the stir we speak of commenced. It was a very nice resting-place for travellers, this same white, wooden edifice, with its green blinds and shady piazzas. Moreover, it rejoiced in "double parlors," in one of which stood a mahogany piano of doubtful tone, which, by-the-way, was kept locked when children were staying there, by the careful landlord. This he explained to a lady-visitor, who had inquired for the key, adding that "it was a *valuable* instrument, and he didn't like to have it ruined;" after which he complimented his visitor on her songs, gallantly saying "she had exactly the right *heft* of voice."

But that has little to do with our tale, except that

these elegant apartments of the "Cooper House" were thronged with visitors one fine October morning in the last year. However, they were doomed to disappointment; at least, all but Mrs. Bench, the wife of Judge Bench, and the mistress of the finest house in town. *She* had been beforehand with the whole party, and she now appeared from one of the three private parlors on the second floor, and announced to the anxious and expectant group that "Miss Bremer was too much fatigued with the ride to see any one this morning, but had promised, with the greatest condescension, to meet a select circle at her house that evening, who were to be assembled in honor of the distinguished lady's appearance at Cooper's Landing."

Here, then, is the key to the intense excitement that caused the ladies of the place to assemble in the parlor, the men in the bar-room, and the boys on the front piazza of the Cooper House.

Early that morning, a light "covered buggy," driven by a boy some sixteen years of age, had arrived at the hotel. Mine host, with his usual politeness, assisted a middle-aged lady to alight from it, and ushered her in with one of his most profound bows. But his civility was exchanged to an overpowering demonstration of regard when a young law-student, who was hanging about the bar, read the names soon recorded in the register in an awkward, schoolboy hand—

"Hiram Powell, Jr.,

Mrs. Fredericka Bremer,"

and informed his fellow-loungers that the distin-

guished Swedish authoress was actually in their midst.

What made the conclusion more certain was, that the *Newburg Republican* had announced editorially the past week that Miss Bremer was paying a visit to a gentleman of that place, well known for his taste and liberality. The editor, with that peculiar *freedom* which distinguishes the "American press," gave a description of her personal appearance; and this was now hunted up, and mine host made an express trip to the parlor to compare notes, after the passport or thief-taking fashion.

"*She suttin'ly ain't tall,*" was his report; "and she's got on a cap. I couldn't get a good look at her eyes; and I reckon she's about the desired age."

This was regarded conclusive. All regretted they had not cross-questioned the charioteer, who had driven on immediately, saying he would be back at nightfall for the lady, who had concluded to stop, as she was not very well, until his return from the next landing. There was no help for it now, however, and Judge Bench tilted his chair down to the floor, took his feet from the front window-sill, and his thumbs from the arm-holes of his vest, and walked up at a brisk trot—for him—to inform his lady-wife. The Columbus of this discovery, Byron Olmstead, Esq., as he wrote his name (who, though he did not expect to be "admitted" for a year yet, practised at the hotel *bar* meantime, as most law-students commence life), hurried off to some young ladies of his acquaintance. Others caught the story; and, by ten o'clock, all Cooper's Landing was aware that a *live* authoress was among them.

Mrs. Bench was what is commonly called "a quick woman." She put aside the letter she was writing for the *Home Journal*, to which she contributed under the signature of Lillias Griene," and the personification of a young and extremely interesting girl, who recorded her impressions of natural scenery, the fine arts, Cole's pictures, and forest walks, in the most arch and naïve style imaginable. Indeed, it is said several sophomores fell desperately in love with the fair unknown, and proposed for her under cover to Mr. Willis. Her admirers were destined to wait another week, however, on this important occasion, for, quick as thought, she had resolved to secure Miss Bremer for a *soirée*, to be held at her house in humble imitation of the literary reunions which her favorite journal described so glowingly.

She had thought of half the company by the time her hair was disengaged of curl-papers; the rest were decided on while her bonnet and mantilla were arranged; and, before she reached the Cooper House, she already had shadowy views of future celebrity based upon this entertainment. She would write a description of it for the *Home Journal*: half-formed paragraphs floated through her brain, as—

"Can I describe to you—*you*, who have known so many of the bright stars in the literary galaxy—half the rapture, the transport I felt on standing, for the first time, in the presence of this illustrious woman? All my childhood's dreams," etc., etc.

And, better still, might not Miss Bremer allude to her hospitality in her next novel, or in the volume of travels she was of course intending to write? It was

so like a great authoress to travel in this plain way; she had heard Miss Bremer came to see the *people* of America—to mingle with them; but how came she to select Cooper's Landing? Could it be possible? It must be!—She had heard of "Lillias Griene," and had come to welcome her to author-land!

Such was the busy soliloquy that quickened Mrs. Bench's steps, lest any one should be before her.

What a triumph over the Woods, who had taken such airs in the summer, because Mrs. Osgood passed a day with them! How the Bells, whose cousin knew Fanny Forrester, would hide their diminished heads! How fortunate that Mr. Gibson was still at his sister's, Mrs. Morrison's, for he had often met Mr. Griswold, and once dined with "Boz" (at a *table d'hôte*, though this was not generally mentioned)! Yes, fortune favored her, and the happy little woman was in a perfect fever of delight and excitement as she entered the parlors before alluded to.

But Miss Bremer had meantime been accommodated with a private parlor by the obliging landlord, and thither was Mrs. Bench ushered by two waiters and a chambermaid, all of whom were anxious to catch a glimpse of the authoress; for they too had read "Harper's Popular Library"—that valuable collection in brown-paper covers.

We will not enter into details of that interview, interesting as it would doubtless prove, but return with Mrs. Bench to the assembly of ladies, who, by this time, had hastened to pay their respects to the stranger.

With what triumphant satisfaction she announced

the acceptance of her invitation to the Bells, two maiden sisters who had never married—Byron Olmstead declared—because no man ever knew them apart long enough to be sure which one he was proposing to! They were always in half-mourning for the death of some distant relative. Mrs. Wood and her three daughters were as crestfallen as could have been desired, for they had come with similar designs upon Miss Bremer; although, not being of so daring a temperament as Mrs. Bench, they had only planned a tea-party. Mrs. Morrison, on the strength of her brother's intimacy with so many lions of the day, had thought of asking her to drive out with that gentleman and herself, in one of the three carriages owned in Cooper's Landing. Mr. Olmstead's friends—the Lords—were satisfied with an invitation to the *soirée*, and delightedly undertook to circulate the hasty notes which Mrs. Bench was to dispatch to those of the "first families" not present. They were amiable girls, not long from Miss Willard's boarding-school at Troy, where they had studied Bulwer, Dickens, and Miss Bremer, more deeply than the classics. At present, they "doated" over "Jane Eyre," and were in love with that divine Rochester.

"Now, I must tell you about this, girls," said Mrs. Bench, as she hurried home between them. "She isn't handsome."

"Who? Miss Bremer?" said Anne Lord.

"There, that's another thing. I had them bring me the register while I waited in the parlor, and I see she has had her name put down as *Mrs.* Bremer.

Now, you know, it's a European fashion that ladies of a certain age are called *Mrs.*"

"Oh, yes; *Mrs.* Hannah More," suggested Ellen.

"Precisely. Now put everybody in mind of this. And for yourselves, my loves, let her see that there are some people, even in this remote part of the country, who are accustomed to European styles, talented as you are, Anna."

"Oh, Mrs. Bench!" exclaimed the blushing girl.

"Yes, my dear, I repeat it; for your 'Lines to a Dying Snowdrop' are worthy of Miss Landon herself. *You* should try to make a favorable impression."

Mrs. Bench, being so sure of her own literary reputation, could afford to be generous to so humble a rival.

"Indeed, Anna, I have serious thoughts of enclosing that poem to Mr. Willis, with a note of admiration—of introduction, I mean, from myself;" and here she entered the garden-gate, leaving the young girl overwhelmed with grateful emotion.

Mrs. Bench was a busy woman that day. Fortunately, as she often heard no refreshments were offered at literary reunions—the company being expected to satisfy their hunger "with the feast of reason," and quench their thirst in "the flow of soul"—there was not much to be looked after in the kitchen department. Mrs. Bench, being hospitably inclined, and, moreover, having the prettiest cake-baskets in town, and a new set of lemonade-glasses, could not bring her mind to dispense with all refreshments; but it was easy to buy up all the stock on hand at

Newton's, the baker's, and to get a dozen bottles of lemon syrup at the apothecary's.

The arrangement of her rooms, however, cost her more thought and anxiety. Her own apartment was given up as a ladies' dressing-room, much to the discomfiture of the judge, who had to take his afternoon nap in the "spare chamber," one story higher, and who had an aversion to sleeping in strange beds. The toilet-cushion her sisters had made at her marriage (it bore an unaltered inscription in pins, "To Angeline. May you be happy!"), was paraded conspicuously on the dressing-table, which had a fresh dimity cover, and a vase of chrysanthemums and life-everlastings. The best Marseilles counterpane was brought out, and ruffled pillow-cases completed the decorations of the apartment.

And now for the parlors. Mrs. Bench was determined they should be relieved of all stiffness, and evince, by their *tout ensemble*, the graceful and tasteful hand of their mistress. The sofas were wheeled into angles with the wall; the chairs grouped with artistic skill in the most unlikely positions for well-bred mahogany chairs to assume; the curtains were looped back with studied carelessness; and the piano opened and strewed with sheets of music. To crown all, the centre-table was loaded with engravings, the journals and magazines of the day; while Miss Bremer's works, in one volume, bound in muslin, with a portrait, occupied a conspicuous place. All this she surveyed with an air of satisfaction, the good judge looking on and congratulating himself on his wonderful good fortune in having secured such a miracle of

refinement and taste in a wife; and then, as the shadows lengthened, Mrs. Bench "rested" herself with tea and toast in the kitchen, before she commenced her elaborate toilet.

Nor was the mansion of Judge Bench the only one that exhibited marks of hurry and excitement. Young ladies were making impromptu head-dresses, and cleaning soiled white-kid gloves with bread crumbs or India-rubber; matrons selected their most imposing caps and collars; and every one, from the invited guests to the young ladies of the various mantua-making establishments, and the clerks at the grocery-store, were talking of Miss Bremer's arrival. Half the population of the town had occasion to pass the Cooper House just at the dinner-hour, and many were the curious glances directed toward the dining-room windows, which opened on the street. But all in vain, the lady was invisible, having her roast beef and custard-pie in her own room, at the polite suggestion of the landlord.

Of course Miss Bremer, being accustomed to European hours, could not be expected to arrive at the *soirée* before eight in the evening; but many of the towns-people were already there when the judge, armed by a note of introduction from his wife, was dispatched to escort her from the hotel.

"Does she speak German?" inquired Mr. Gibson, who had a commercial knowledge of that language.

"Oh, of course; but her English is excellent; a little accent, perhaps, but no more than a Connecticut woman has to us New-Yorkers. I was surprised to

find it so. I suppose her French is equally good. I have been told by travellers"—(a German music-teacher, dear reader)—"that, on the Continent, both languages are considered indispensable to a genteel education."

"Now you have the advantage of us, Anna," she continued to Miss Lord. "Your accent is purely Parisian. I shall expect you to entertain Miss Bremer in French; and if Mr. Gibson speaks German, she will have an exalted idea of the general diffusion of education among all classes in America, which is only proper."

"How fortunate Byron Olmstead noticed her name; she might have been at the hotel a week, and not have seen a soul," said Ellen Lord. "If she had only written it herself, I should have begged that leaf of the register for my collection of autographs."

"Don't you dread to meet her, Mrs. Wood?" asked a very young lady. "I fairly tremble to think of being in the presence of one I have heard so much of."

"Oh no," said Mrs. Wood, with an air of studied indifference. "This feeling soon wears off when you come to know authoresses and authors, intimately, as I have done. One finds they are only men and women at the best. We are quite a literary family. My great-uncle, Thomas, wrote his voyages to Botany Bay, or some of those places; and my husband has a cousin who published a volume of poems year before last—'Lays of Wounded Affections'—have you ever seen it?"

But, just at this moment, the company were *en*

*muse*; for Judge Bench walked into the room with an air of sublime gravity on his round, good-natured face, and on his arm leaned the lady of whom they spoke.

Many hearts beat quickly, and some few, who truly appreciated the natural and touching tales of Swedish life by which Miss Bremer has endeared herself to many a stranger-heart, could have grasped her hand with true Swedish cordiality, and called her "thou." But for a time she was engrossed by her hostess, and the guests had leisure to "look their fill." She seemed a plain, unassuming, middle-aged lady, dressed in a black silk, with a cap trimmed with white satin ribbon. She wore no gloves, and seemed a little ill at ease as she glanced around upon the crowd of strange faces; every eye turned upon her with anxious scrutiny.

Ellen Lord heard her say to Mrs. Bench, "I thought you expected a few friends sociably. I did not know it was a party."

"Oh, it is a mere family gathering, I assure you, Miss—*Mrs.* Bremer. We Americans are the most social people in the world. Make yourself quite at home, I beg. I am sorry Mr. Powell did not return in time for us to have the pleasure of his company."

"Yes, he ought to have come back an hour ago. But boys are boys; and he's a careful driver, so I'm easy about him."

"What a benignant countenance!" murmured Anna Lord to Byron Olmstead's fellow-student, Mr. Riggs. "Her very air breathes the benevolence of her nature."

"Oh, Anna," returned the youth, "be always thus confiding. I love to look thus into your inner life, though the crowd do not comprehend the depths and richness of your nature."

"No one but you has ever understood me," murmured the pensive girl, still lower than before.

"I am dying to hear her speak," said Ellen to Miss Martha Bell. "See, Mrs. Bench is introducing Sister Anna and Mrs. Wood. What an air Mrs. Wood puts on!—I detest her. She buys all her dresses in New York; *our* stores are not good enough for her."

"And now," said Mrs. Bench, "I must tear myself away, dear lady, for a little while, having introduced my most particular friends to you. Miss Ellen Lord, Mrs. Bremer; Mr. Olmstead, Mr. Gibson. I shall try to persuade Miss Agnes Bell to give us a little music, and then I shall call upon you, my dear, for that charming duet—'Take them, I beseech thee.'"

"*I implore thee,* Mrs. Bench; it's from Norma," said Ellen Lord, blushing at the sound of her own voice in such an august presence.

"It's of no consequence as to terms, my dear; half the world are quarrelling about words nowadays. But," and here Mrs. Bench stooped down and whispered, as if concluding the sentence, "I forgot to tell you that Miss Bremer does not like to talk about her own works; at least she affects not to understand any allusion I make to them. Besides, she's a little deaf, I discover; so when you see a kind of surprised look, speak a little louder."

As Miss Bremer had turned away to answer a question asked by the judge, this information was speedily circulated through the little group around her. By this time Miss Bell had been persuaded to "favor the company," and, being of the rather antiquated school of music, the 'Storm Rondo' soon drowned all attempts at conversation. Variations on the 'Swiss Boy,' by her sister, followed, and, both being eight pages long, by the time they had finished refreshments were announced.

Miss Bremer declined the lemonade, but seemed to enjoy the very nice cake. The conversation progressed in monosyllables. Lemonade is not usually very inspiring; but it seemed to rouse the suspended animation of Byron Olmstead, who observed to the authoress, with a most insinuating look—

"I cannot tell you how much your 'Neighbors' charmed me."

"Yes," was the reply; "I must say our neighborhood is excellent."

"How well she turns it off!" whispered Ellen. "But I must tell her, for all that, how 'Nina' won my heart."

"That dear *Bear*," continued Mrs. Wells, a young married lady; "I have called my husband 'Bear' ever since. He has just the doctor's expression."

"A very strange taste," said Miss Bremer, as if determined not to understand. But Anna, who thought she saw a secret satisfaction concealed in this, responded—

"*My* passion was that charming 'H. Family;' the judge's wife is perfect."

"She seems to be a most excellent woman," returned Miss Bremer, kindly.

"The modesty of true genius," whispered Ellen again; and here, as the servant returned with the cake-basket, her sister saw an excellent opportunity for her French.

"*Voulez-vous avoir un gâteau?*" she inquired, fresh from "Ollendorf's Method."

Ellen noticed the puzzled look Mrs. Bench had spoken of, and motioned to her sister to speak louder.

"*Wollen Sie etwas Kuchen nehmen?*" vociferated Mr. Gibson.

By means of sundry gestures toward the cake-basket, Miss Bremer at last understood that she was expected to help herself again, and did so accordingly, while Anna sunk into mortified silence at her bad pronunciation, to which she attributed the slowness of comprehension.

After having collected the lemonade-glasses from the ladies, and deposited them on the piano (where every one made a ring on the mahogany, which kept Mrs. Bench rubbing an hour the next day), Mr. Riggs ventured his first remark, in a confidential undertone—

"We are literary ourselves, in a small way, Miss Bremer. My friend, Mr. Olmstead, writes charming poetry. You should see his 'Leaves from Lillian's Album.' Number twenty-eight was published in the *Herald of Freedom* last week. Miss Anna is our poetess, and will write for the best magazines next year. Oh, as Dickens so aptly says of the amiable Miss Pecksniff, 'she is indeed a gushing thing. To

know her as I know her!'" and he clasped his hands in an ecstasy of admiration, and looked up to the ceiling with an earnest gaze.

"Oh, Mr. Riggs!" was all that the delighted Anna could articulate at this compliment from her lover, for such he was.

While Byron Olmstead declared, in a manner which he meant should be particularly disembarassed, "His poetry!—oh, it was mere nonsense; trifles which amused his leisure hours in the midst of intense application to graver pursuits."

Mr. Riggs returned to the charge.

"You must give me permission—painful as I know it is to a sensitive nature to listen to its own praises—to thank you, profoundly, in behalf of my many thousand countrymen and countrywomen, who have read Harper's Select Library, for the exquisite gratification which, as my friend Byron has often remarked, your 'Brothers and Sisters' afforded us."

"Indeed," returned the lady, apparently overcome by this unexpected tribute; "I did not know that you were acquainted with our family. I said to Mrs. Bench, this morning, 'Mrs. Bench, your warm hospitality to a stranger I shall never forget.'"

"*You* a stranger?" ejaculated Miss Martha Bell.

"America opens her arms to you," responded Mr. Riggs, metaphorically.

Mrs. Bench came at this moment to claim the duet, and, as the young ladies were considered wonderful vocalists, and could rarely be persuaded to give this celebrated duet, the beaux followed them

to the piano, leaving the circle about the lioness comparatively thin.

Miss Martha Bell remained seated on the sofa by her. She had burned for this opportunity of expressing *her* admiration, and lost no time in doing so.

"Every one has their favorite, you know," said she, "and I confess the 'President's Daughter' is mine."

"How many daughters has General Taylor?" returned her listener, innocently.

"I suppose, if you go to Washington this winter (as of course you will, when Congress meets), you will have the pleasure of an introduction to them. But *your* 'President's Daughter—'"

Miss Martha Bell never spoke very distinctly. Miss Bremer had not comprehended. Miss Martha tried another tack.

"I suppose you enjoy writing very much?"

"I can't say I do. I always make Jane write my letters."

"And yet you have given the world so much pleasure by your books."

"I'm always willing to lend what books we have, it's true; but none of my people ever care much about reading."

"They do not deserve you, Miss Bremer. But I have often heard that 'a prophet is not without honor, save in his own country and among his own kindred.'"

"So have I," returned the lady, as if a little puzzled to see how the quotation could be applicable to her. And then, suddenly assuming a confidential

look and tone, which delighted Miss Martha beyond measure, she added—"Miss, you look like a very nice, sensible girl, who could not take my questions amiss. Will you tell me, then, if all strangers are so warmly received in your town?—for, if so, I must say Cooper's Landing is a pattern to the whole country."

"I cannot say they are," answered Miss Martha; "but surely it is no more than *you* might have looked for. Are you not the genius which half a world admires? the pride of your own country? *the* Miss Bremer whose charming works have endeared you to us all?"

"Indeed, my dear, I am neither the one nor the other," answered the good lady, plainly. "I have thought there was some mistake all along."

"But are you not Miss Bremer, the celebrated Swedish authoress?"

"I never wrote a line in my life, except letters, when there was no one else to do it. And now you speak of it, I do believe I heard sister Ella say something about such a lady being in Newburg last week."

Miss Martha was at the point of suffocation with eagerness. Oh, if it *was* true—if Mrs. Bench had been mistaken! But the name on the register!

"May I ask your real name, then?" she ejaculated.

"Certainly, for it's one I'm not ashamed of. My husband is Captain Beamer, Captain Frederick Beamer, of Nantucket; and I'm staying in Newburg on a visit to my sister, Mrs. John Ellis, whose

husband keeps a grocery there. I started this morning to go up with Hiram, their store-boy, to the next landing—I forget the name—where some goods of theirs have been left by mistake. Sister thought it would be a nice little jaunt for me; but I felt a sick-headache coming on—I'm subject to them—so I concluded to stop at the tavern and wait till Hiram came back. That's the long and short of it. And, I must say, that I thought the people of this town was the most obliging and attentive people I ever came across—from the landlord down. But, dear knows, I didn't mean to impose upon them in borrowed feathers."

Now, it is not to be supposed that this confidential chit-chat was without listeners; for everybody was, of course, expecting "pearls and diamonds" of conversation to fall from the mouth of the last speaker, after the fashion of the good princess in the fairy tale. By the time it was concluded, two or three of the group—Mrs. Wood being the first—comprehended the whole affair. What was the surprise of Mrs. Bench, on turning from the piano, to find her guest talking eagerly, in a loud and excited tone, as she stood in the midst of them! What was her consternation when a dozen voices explained the mistake she had fallen into! her rage and mortification when she at last was made to comprehend that all her care, her pride, and her hospitality, had been lavished on the wife of a Nantucket sea-captain, whose brother-in-law kept a retail grocery in the next town! She, the aristocratic, the literary, the sharp-sighted Mrs. Bench!

It was too much for woman to endure.

Good Mrs. Beamer was suffered to depart almost without a farewell from her late hospitable entertainer. The guests, as a general thing, stood as far aloof. The judge proved himself the best-bred person of the party; for he had a most interesting conversation, going to the hotel, upon the subject of whaling-voyages generally, and ever afterward declared that, if the lady wasn't Miss Bremer, she was a first-rate, sensible woman. But, alas for the busy schemes which his wife had planned! Never will she be allowed forgetfulness of this unfortunate *contretemps*. Mrs. Wood made a party last week, to which Mrs. Bench sent regrets, and where the matter was talked over at length, and Byron Olmstead had to take his share of popular opprobrium for being such a bad manuscript reader.

"But it was an awful hand, I've no doubt," said Miss Ellen Lord, who took the part of her absent friend. "I saw Hiram when they drove off the next morning, and he doesn't look as if he could spell his own name."

"So she wasn't deaf after all. No wonder she didn't understand French," said Miss Anna.

"Or German," added Mr. Gibson.

"Did you see Mrs. Bench's poem in the *Home Journal*, Saturday?" asked Miss Wood. "It was called 'Blighted Hopes.' There's one thing—she'll never get over the airs she took that night. It was a good lesson for her."

And so it was, dear reader; and a lesson for all who rush with impertinent curiosity to look upon a dis-

tinguished man or woman, as if they were wild beasts caged for the occasion; for all who "patronize" genius, or wit, or beauty, only because it is the fashion, and that they may thereby share in the notoriety. And though America does, indeed, welcome Frederika Bremer with warm hearts and earnest sympathy, we should remember that, as a woman, she must shrink from coarse flattery or attentions devoid of feeling.

*"ONLY A FAMILY PARTY."*

## "ONLY A FAMILY PARTY."

A STORY FOR THE NEW YEAR.

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### CHAPTER I.

"It is so delightful to have an eccentric old uncle, immensely wealthy! Isn't it, Mr. Cooper?"

"Aw!" returned that individual, languidly, but with a grimace of the most profound admiration at the young creature hanging on his arm.

"To make you elegant birthday presents," continued the sylph in white tarlatan tunics. "I've just been looking at Madeline's superb diamond cross. And then he is sure to die one day, and leave you—every thing."

"With a naturally bad constitution, and a taste for—awa—quack medicines and water-cures," suggested Mr. Cooper, forming a given angle with his extremely thin arm as he adjusted his eye-glass.

"Shocking!" Miss Belmont's simper and toss of her sandal-wood fan, on the opposite wing of her partner, proved how deeply her sense of propriety was offended.

"It's such a trifling obligation—the debt of nature," pursued Mr. Cooper, "and my uncle is such a strict man of business, that really it's a wonder he has declined payment so long ah." And, not condescending to laugh at his own sally, the young gentleman's manner showed very plainly that he expected his companion to be extremely amused.

"*Méchant!*" murmured the sylph, holding up a most delicately-gloved hand in playful menace.

"Particularly when he has such a respectable nephew and namesake quite ready to take charge of his money-bags."

"And empty them," suggested Miss Belmont.

"With the aid of some fair hand," returned her suitor, with weak gallantry, "which is already pledged for the present redowa."

In a minute more the two stood in that close embrace most reprehensible in private, even proffered by an intimate friend, but entirely sanctioned in public opinion on the floor of a saloon from the stranger of a five minutes' introduction.

The *tête-à-tête* was all very well, the remarks being quite as respectful as young America usually indulges in toward its elders and betters; all very well in its way, but that it had unfortunately been overheard by the individual in question, the wealthy and eccentric uncle himself.

Imagine the tranquil state of mind with which a precise, kind-hearted, but somewhat choleric gentleman of sixty listened to this delectable dialogue. Mortimer Cooper, Jr., as he had named his card and office-plate to be engraved, would not have "wrig-

gled" with such wonderful *abandon* through his favorite dance had he been aware of the turn Mortimer Cooper, Sen.'s meditations were taking.

"The young dog! the young rascal! and there's Miss Madeline and her diamond cross; wonder how *she* speculates on post-obits? Bless my soul, how fast her tongue goes!"

Mortimer Cooper, better known on 'Change than in the precincts of a ball-room, was for the first time in his life guilty of becoming an intentional eaves-dropper. A sudden dive into the reception-room, a cross tack through the conservatory, and he stood behind the fragrant screen of lemon-trees, in front of which Miss Madeline and her escort criticised the dancers.

"A good thing Mort's going to make of it," remarked the scion of the house of Livingston, as the frantic couple dashed for a moment into full view. "Old Belmont's sure to cut up handsomely."

"Not that Mortimer need care for money with *his* expectations," returned the fair Madeline, thereby insinuating her own.

"Queer old chap, that uncle of yours." Mr. Livingston evidently understood the delicate allusion. "Quite extraordinary, 'pon my honor." Not being troubled with an excess of the last-mentioned article, Mr. Livingston, like many another threatened insolvent, drew largely upon a fabulous capital. "Not likely to marry, eh?"

"Oh, no!" Miss Cooper indignantly repulsed the unthought-of calamity. "Some fortunate disappointment in early life—fortunate for us, you know—

I've heard mamma say. — a *mésalliance*, or something of that sort, broken off by the family, and a romantic Abelard constancy."

It could not be possible that the aristocratic mouth was curled by a sneer! The shrug of the fair *uncovered* shoulders was undeniable. The pendant boughs of shrubbery rustled with the slight contact, and the lemon-blossoms gave out an unnatural, oppressive odor, it seemed to the listener ensconced behind them.

And she, his cherished niece, the constant recipient of boundless favors, the embodiment of sensibility, and with his diamond cross sparkling in her bosom, could speak so lightly of what had seared his youth and darkened his manhood! Perhaps he had been mistaken in the manner; and then, he had been so seldom in society of late years, he must make allowance for the flippancy which seemed the order of the day.

"Oh, ho!" resumed the sapient Charles Augustus Livingston; "sentimental and all that; quite antediluvian—quite as much so as his tailor."

This, tingling in the ears of a gentleman of the old *régime*, in neckerchief of the finest lawn, and a frill of unimpeachable delicacy!

"Quite a Noah, isn't he?" How they both simpered at their mutual excessive brilliancy! "But then, you know, one must put up with eccentricities, though one blushes behind one's fan, where so much is to be looked for. Poor Uncle Mortimer, his health is really wretched!"

And this was the niece who nursed him so affectionately, listened with such sweetness and patience

to the catalogue of his numerous infirmities, prepared such soothing confections, and embroidered such comfortable slippers! It was a wonder the colloquists were not startled by his involuntary groan at these mortifying reflections, knowing, as he did, that this fashionable niece and nephew, with their aristocratic mamma, owed literally every thing to him—their very income, as well as the success they met with in society, from the report of his will made in their favor.

"Dear uncle, do wrap yourself up well, it's shocking cold," exclaimed Miss Cooper, encountering her respected relative in the dressing-room.

"Ugh!" groaned the old gentleman from behind the turned-up fur collar of his travelling-cloak. His niece and the sylph had thrown over their gossamer draperies opera-cloaks, in the latest style, scarcely coming to the waist. Their elaborate *coiffures* were shaded by tasselled rigolettes, with about as much warmth as a flounce of lace. The open-work silk stockings and satin slippers were shielded by ornamental Polish carriage-boots. A good lamb's-wool stocking drawn over them would have been much more to the purpose.

"Ugh!" ejaculated Uncle Mortimer again, as his affectionate nephew volunteered his Highland shawl. "Keep it yourself, my boy; you'll need all you have."

Whether he referred to wraps, brains, or pocket-money was questionable, from the grimace which followed the remark. Mortimer, Jr., thought only of the first, and considered it a new proof of his uncle's attachment to his future heir.

"Do have the window up, Mortimer; think of

uncle's poor chest!" almost shrieked the niece, as they entered the carriage.

"And do, uncle, take the carriage," screamed both, as the unusually taciturn old gentleman discharged it, on arriving at their maternal residence, and strode away on foot to his own lodgings in cold and darkness.

The brother and sister surveyed each other anxiously by the light of the turned-down gas-burner in the hall.

"Some whim," nodded the rigolette, till the little crowd of tassels danced again. "What a supper-table, Mort! not a decent thing—not even a *mille fruits*!"

"And that champagne! Bah! Livingston and I emptied our glasses into the spittoon."

Meantime Uncle Mortimer ploughed along through the deserted streets, making a vehement gesticulation now and then, which would have arrested the attention of the watchman, had there been any abroad such an unpleasant night. But, as there was none, he proceeded in unmolested reverie. The old gentleman was apparently "making up his mind to something," making it up "good and strong" while he was about it. Perhaps it was to marry, after all, and so cut off the succession. Who could tell?

But all this fierce ebullition ended, apparently, in invitations to a New-Year's dinner-party, the cards, for they were quite formal, dating from a certain number in Fifth Avenue. "What could it mean?" said Mrs. Cooper, the mamma, in her French morning-gown and cap. Time had touched her so gently

and the milliner retouched so skilfully, that she seemed scarcely older than her daughter. Quite attractive enough to give some currency to the report that the widow had laid siege, at no very late period, to the hand of her wealthy and eccentric brother-in-law.

"It can't be possible he is at last going to give up those remote lodgings and take a house.—197! My dear, it must be that new stone front next to the "Belmonts."

"Oh, mamma! And he *can't* be going to live there all alone; it's a perfect hotel."

"Palace," corrected Mrs. Cooper. "Do walk by there to-day, and see if there are any signs of its having been taken.—But here comes Adele now; she will be sure to know."

"The *strangest* thing!" exclaimed Miss Belmont, throwing a card of invitation on the table beside their own. "From your uncle! And he's taken that house next to ours. Why, it's magnificent! far the handsomest one in the block. Why didn't you tell me, you mean creature, that you were coming to live there?"

A significant look passed between mother and daughter.

"Uncle is so very peculiar, you know, and wished it kept so quiet." Of course he must have wished it, since he had not told even them; but *that* they did not mention.

"And Gus Livingston has one too," said Miss Belmont. "He was at our house last evening."

"Quite a family party," said Mrs. Cooper, significantly. Both the young ladies felt themselves called

upon to look conscious. If there had been any doubt of Mr. Livingston's intentions, this public instalment in the Fifth-Avenue palace would certainly bring matters to a crisis. As for Miss Belmont, she surely would not say nay to the probable future possessor of its glories.

"I am so impatient to have you there, I declare!" said Miss Belmont. "How are the drawing-rooms to be furnished?"

Here was a poser. But Mrs. Cooper, quicker than her daughter in those little deceits which are called "tact" in society, affected the mysterious.

"It would not do to spoil uncle's surprise. We shall have to wait and see."

"Nine days!" sighed Miss Belmont. "To-morrow is only the 24th. What are you going to do at Christmas? We have only a stupid family party. I wish, Addy, that you and Mortimer would come around in the evening and help get up a little dance."

"Madeline would be delighted," said Mrs. Cooper, quickly; "and she could answer for Mortimer." A family party at the Belmonts! What a step gained for her ingenuous son! And how thoughtful in Uncle Mortimer to ask Mr. Livingston for New Year's!

Miss Cooper volunteered to escort her friend home, that she might have the pleasure of passing by 197, and inspecting the outer glories at least. It never had seemed so imposing before; and, true enough, the workmen were busy fastening a silver door-plate, engraved with "Cooper," to one of the richly-carved panels.

"So odd in uncle! I long to see him and find out

all about it," said the young lady, as she carried her report home to her expectant mamma.

"I should have thought he might have consulted us—at least our taste." And Mrs. Cooper looked around her small but elegant apartments, where every inch of room, and every article of furniture, were made the most of.

"But uncle has excellent taste," said the younger lady, thinking of her diamond cross. "We must certainly give a ball, mamma, as soon as we get fairly settled. I long for evening to come!"

But evening did not bring Mr. Cooper, nor even Christmas-day, though he sent a pretty gift to each of the family, as he always had done, excusing himself on the plea of unusual haste in business; the whole week, in fact, the first since the death of Madeline's father, passed without so much as a call from him.

"He doesn't want to be teased about the home," said Mrs. Cooper, as Madeline commented on this unusual absence. "You know how odd he always was, and he chooses to make the surprise as complete as possible." But, for all that, she had an undefined uneasiness she could not account for to herself, and did not even mention to her children.

Mortimer Cooper, Jr., purported to be a lawyer by profession; but, save the legal business of his relative, a very small share of "practice" fell to his lot. The office was a comfortable smoking-room. It had been handsomely fitted up by the ever-kind uncle, when he was first admitted to the bar, and was a capital lounging-place for all the "fellows" of his

particular set. They talked over this singular "palatial" freak of the senior, with their feet on the grate, helping themselves from the graceful bronze cigar-stand on the mantel.

"I say, old boy, takes you right home, there by old Belmont's," one of the party suggested.

"I wonder whose hat'll hang up in your place?" said another, leaning toward the honorable Charles Augustus.

"Gus is a clever fellow!" remarked his expectant brother-in-law, patronizingly.

"With a good lookout for the dimes," said No. 1.

"All right now, though! 197 is a blessed reality. Gus don't like *châteaux en Espagne*."

"I say, Martin, will you hold your tongue?" growled Charles Augustus from the gothic bookcase, where he was consulting, not "Purdon's Digest," but a bound volume of the *Spirit*. "What kind of feed does the governor give, Mort?"

"Can't say; this is his first spread. Silver all comes from Ball's—Addy saw it there." And so she had, by the merest accident in the world, and came with the wonderful news that it was the most superb set that she had ever laid eyes on.

Mrs. Cooper, with a true housekeeper's appreciation, looked contemptuously on the Sheffield coffee-urn, which already began to show marks of service. How she panted for the day to come that should place her at the head of this magnificent establishment! Miss Madeline had already commenced amusing her leisure moments in making out a party list,

from which many of their present visitors were excluded. "What would do for Ninth Street, never would answer for Fifth Avenue."

But this was a daily and hourly remark with Mrs. Cooper; so much so that the servants began to boast of it to neighboring chambermaids and waiters as a settled thing, until the removal of the Mark Coopers became an *on dit* with their respective masters and mistresses.

As "birds of the air" are never wanting to "tell the matter," it was not long in coming to Mr. Mortimer Cooper's ears; but that worthy gentleman apparently saw no harm in popular preoccupation of his establishment, for he only shrugged his shoulders in silence, and worked the faster to get it thoroughly complete in every detail.

Very complete it was! Mrs. Mark Cooper exclaimed at every step, as she was conducted through it on the eventful New-Year's-day, far exceeding her most boundless imaginings. They were invited at five, but took the liberty of coming an hour earlier, to inspect the house by daylight, as Uncle Mortimer evidently expected they would. He received them in the marble-paved hall in a most elaborate costume, in honor of the occasion, his shirt-frill half an inch wider than usual, Addy declared to her brother; but then its old-fashioned diamond brooch was of almost priceless value.

Mr. Cooper had exercised a fine taste, cramped by no narrow expenditure. They confessed to themselves, as they passed from room to room of the magnificent suite, they could not have improved any

thing if they had been consulted. The second floor was also fitted up in suites, one so plainly intended for Addy that she could hardly help thanking their generous relative on the spot—this time seriously—for his attention to her tastes and pursuits. There was the morning-room, a perfect gem of a boudoir, hung with ruby damask, bordered by blue and gold; pictures, cabinets, a pianoforte, though there was a magnificent instrument that she longed to run her hands over in the drawing-room; the dressing-room, opening from it, with wardrobes that looked like one massive mirror, set in a delicately-carved rosewood frame; the bedchamber, separated only by a curtain of lace and rose-colored silk. The very best drawing-room in Ninth Street, even in its best days, would not compare with that chamber.

"And how is this for a gay young bachelor?" said Mr. Cooper, opening the door of the adjoining suite.

Mortimer, Jr., was in ecstasies; nothing but a warning look from his mother prevented a volley of thanks; but he pulled up his collar, and examined his hair from right to left, before the superb dressing-glass, with visible satisfaction.

"We old people must be content to take a higher flight," Mr. Cooper remarked, as they reached the second staircase.

It was now Mrs. Mark's turn to bridle and look conscious. Wasn't it as good as saying, "All this belongs to you and your children?" and she felt a strong curiosity to inspect her own apartments. But, just as they set foot on the stairs, a loud peal an-

nounced other guests, and they hastened to the drawing-room to receive them.

Mrs. Mark did the honors quite naturally, and Addy found time to whisper to Miss Belmont, "You should see my rooms; they are superb!" before they were summoned to the dining-room.

Here also was a blaze of light and splendor. Mr. Cooper had attested his title as millionaire in the rich appointments. Mrs. Mark was unconsciously tending toward her seat as mistress of the mansion, when she noticed plates were laid for eight, yet only six were present.

"Ah," said Mr. Cooper, as if understanding the involuntary pause, "one moment;" and the "family party" had scarcely time to look at each other before he returned with a young lady, in deep mourning, upon his arm, and followed by a gentleman, whose calm self-possession was in strong contrast to the panic of the rest.

"Allow me to introduce my daughter, Miss Emily Cooper—my son, Mortimer Cooper, Jr.—just returned from their travels. My dear Mrs. Mark, your niece; she will take her place at the head of my table, if you will permit her. Mortimer, shake hands; your cousin, my namesake. Only a family party, my dears. Miss Belmont and Mr. Livingston will provide so well for your cousins, that they will not miss any little diversion your appearance may make from their share of Uncle *Noah's* property."

It was quite a long speech for Mr. Cooper, who rubbed his hands at the conclusion after the true stage-papa fashion, and the tableaux would have

done no discredit to the footlights of the Broadway or Wallack's. Though it certainly was not acting; for, however artificial most of the party might be in ordinary, their surprise and consternation on this occasion were genuine.

"Perhaps you don't exactly understand it, Mrs. Mark. These are poor Emily's children; a better wife man never had, or better children than she's made these. Family interference isn't much use after all, is it?"

It was well that the soup made its appearance at this critical period, for all the party were too well-bred to continue a scene before servants. The young gentlemen bowed to each other with the most studied politeness, and Madeline could not help acknowledging to herself that her new cousin was remarkably pretty, in spite of her close mourning, and perfectly lady-like. The ordeal of doing the honors at such a table sufficiently proved the last, however low her birth might be. Mrs. Mark found no refuge from her chagrin there, or in watching her nephew in contrast to her own son, who certainly lost by the comparison.

As for Miss Belmont and Mr. Livingston, their sole refuge from the *contretemps* of such a family dinner was in exchanging meaning glances by stealth at the utter confusion of the Mark Coopers, and took leave as soon as possible after they rose from the table.

"A charming little explanation going on there," said Charles Augustus, pointing over his shoulder to

the drawing-room. "Sly old chap that! Quite romantic, 'pon my honor."

"I never was so thunderstruck," returned Miss Belmont, passing one slippered foot on the lower step of her father's house. "Do come in and talk it over."

Mr. Livingston was not slow in responding to such a cordial invitation. Whether it occurred to him on the spot to profit by his friend's mishap, we cannot well say; but by the end of the season, Charles Augustus visited the Belmonts without invitation, and was made perfectly at home by his *fiancée*.

Mrs. Mark Cooper understood the facts of the case much better than her children, when the explanation was made; though how her brother-in-law had managed to conceal his marriage with the pretty dress-maker, Emily Talbot, from any member of the family, was an ingenuity beyond her conception. The outwardly odd and crusty bachelor, Mortimer Cooper, was in reality the most exemplary of husbands in his modest home, and his children, though highly educated, never knew that they had claims to any other.

He loved them; but he had a share of the family pride of birth, which had made him look upon his brother's children as his ostensible heirs. He knew there would be quite enough to provide handsomely for his own family into the bargain. But their mother's death had made him, for the first time, feel what had been due to her, and what were her children's rightful claims; and while he hesitated between this and custom and the world's opinion, the memorable evening of the ball decided him.

Mr. Mortimer Cooper was very slow in believing

the reality of his niece's repentance, and the warm attachment she manifested for her cousin Emily; but he forgave her after a time, so much so as to consent to receive her as a daughter-in-law. The family party was once more reunited, and, though her son was never entirely reconciled at losing the second-story apartments, Mrs. Mark had the satisfaction in time of issuing her "At Homes" from 197 Fifth Avenue.

*THE FURNISHED HOUSE.*

## THE FURNISHED HOUSE.

### CHAPTER I.

Then, breaking into tears, "Dear God!" she cried, "and must we see  
All blissful things depart from us, or ere we go to *Thee*?  
We cannot guess Thee in the wood, or feel Thee in the wind!  
Our cedars must fall round us ere we see the light behind!  
Ay, sooth, we feel too strong in weal to need Thee on that road!  
But, woe being come, the soul is dumb that crieth not on 'God.'"

MRS. BROWNING.

I do not remember my mother; I was so young when she died that I cannot be said to have "lost" that which I was never conscious of possessing. As far as care and tender thoughtfulness can go, her place was fully supplied in my eldest sister, Rachel; my only sister—my only relative, indeed—for I should have told you that it was my father's death, when I was but a fortnight old, which gave my mother the shock from which she never recovered. So you see that I lay in my cradle with the shadow of grief and loneliness above me.

But there was the presence of an angel to brighten all things, though the shadow never quite passed away, only grew transparent and mist-like as I came

to recognize the goodness and purity of my sister in every act and word of her life; she was never merry, but always cheerful and contented. She never laughed aloud, and I can remember far back in her girlhood; but I never sought her eyes without finding that calm, bright smile that I did not see elsewhere. I have come to know its meaning now. It was the token of a spirit at peace with itself, and trustful as a child toward our Father in heaven.

He cared for us as He has promised to care for the fatherless. We never had abundance; but we never knew absolute want. All came to me through my ministering angel. There was a time when she stood to me in His place, when I looked no further for happiness—for example, for light, knowledge, daily bread—so it came; that which I would not see in wilful blindness He taught me.

Others could see Rachel's goodness, and purity, and tender loving-kindness, as well as her child—that was what she always called me, and I knew myself as such always in thought. She was sought in marriage, and she became a wife; that was my first real trouble. I believe now it was jealousy, that bitter, and at times fierce feeling, with which I at first looked upon this change. She had belonged to me—to me only, so many years, and I had no one else to love. I had never made friends and companions of my own age, as other children do; she was enough to fill my heart.

Many would have thought it a fortunate change for me; every one who troubled himself about me at all probably did. Our single room, which had been "home" so many years, was exchanged for a

neat and tastefully-furnished house in a new, bright quarter of the city, where there were squares and shade-trees, and a glimpse of the river from an upper room. We were no longer obliged to steal our moments for recreation from the endless toil of the needle, and I can yet recollect the thrill of satisfaction with which I shut myself in that upper room (it was but partly furnished and unwashed then) with a book, and the recollection that I might stay there until it was finished, if I chose, or, when hurrying through the square, with its bits of velvet lawn, and cool, fragrant paths, I remembered that no taskwork awaited me, and I was free to loiter in the shadow or in the sun.

My new brother was very kind and indulgent to us both; but I did not think he loved Rachel as he should have done. It was such a quiet, undemonstrative affection; at least it seemed so to me when I knew that there was no one like her in the whole wide world! He was kind to me, as belonging to her, not for myself; that I always felt. I did not care for that though. I knew as well as he did, or the new friends that now claimed a share in my treasure, that I was unlovely, that all the beauty with which she might invest me was in her loving eyes. I knew I was dark, and plain, and shy—though that is scarcely the word. I felt indifferent, as I here told you, even to this kind brother, to all save Rachel.

So we lived three, four years; and I was a woman, retaining all the peculiarities of the child. I had read, read incessantly; but of the *forms* of education I knew nothing. I had not a single accomplishment, except that I could barely accompany myself in a few

simple ballads. I understood Rachel better now; the interest and love which she withheld from casual acquaintances, and those who sought to come nearer, for her husband and myself, and the humble watchfulness which had ever kept her "unspotted from the world."

Then came a second blow; still I had not learned the lesson. A new love rose up between us, stronger, if possible, than the first, and far more absorbing. There had been but one thing wanting to make that tranquil home-life perfect to them; I wanted nothing, nothing—oh, my Father, not even Thee!

I had learned in time to accustom myself to share my sister's love; to see her eyes brighten when evening came, and the book or work was laid away to watch for him; to see her sit beside him, her hand laid in his; to go quietly away, and leave them alone together, knowing that when the morning came, and the business of the day called him away, *my* claim was the same as in those dear old times; but now, when I stood in the darkened room, pale and silent, with the anxiety and the cruel fear I had endured alone, and saw her lying there, so fair, so helpless, looking up to him with a new tenderness for the sake of the feeble, wailing infant he held so unskilfully, yet so proudly, I felt the old fierceness rise up again, ten times stronger, until it became almost a death-hatred of the two—father and child. I was forgotten, *forgotten* when I had suffered so much! He had been calm through all; and now that frail, puny creature was to absorb all that he had graciously left me heretofore!

I have always been called gentle. I believe I am

so naturally; but then I set my teeth (I confess it in helpless humility now), and prayed for that child to die! Yes, I was a murderess at heart! I, who had never known any thing but love and kindness from either of them, prayed that the full cup held to their lips might be dashed away before they had tasted it.

Perhaps I was *mad* at the moment; it may be that the torture of agonizing anxiety, the sudden revulsion when they told me Rachel would live, had turned my brain. I have hoped so since, that it might not be imputed to me as sin; yet sin it was, even though not of that dye. I had sinned all my life long in my idolatry!

After a while, she saw me. Perhaps she read some suffering in my face; but she signed me to come near, and stoop down, that she might kiss my lips. She did not think of herself even then, for I caught the words "poor sister!" in the parting whisper of exhaustion.

She took one of those little, wandering hands (the child was lying beside her then), and feebly guided it to my cheek as I knelt down by the bed; I shrank one instant from the touch, and then I accepted all her meaning, and all—all that I could then foresee of my future life. I put away the taunting, treacherous temptation; and the second prayer of my life was for forgiveness of the first.

Yet for months the fear that the first, not the last, was heard, clouded all the joy I came to feel in my boy's babyhood. Rachel always spoke of him as our child, and consulted me in every thing pertaining to him. Perhaps she guessed a part of the truth, and

wished to make me feel that I had no diminution of her love to fear; that was not a part of my punishment.

The upper room was furnished now, and she made it her nursery; here we passed the morning always, her work-table drawn to the window, for that one glimpse of the river, seen over the sea of roofs, and the waving of the trees in the green park beyond. I can see her, as plainly as if I had just left her there, sitting in the shadow of the muslin curtain, paler, though scarcely older, than when she was *my sister Rachel*, pausing from the tiny ruffle, or the long, flowing robe, to look with such unutterable mother-love into the large, grave eyes of the child lying on my knee, or rising to temper the sunshine or the fresh air to the little sleeper in his cradle.

It is not true that love is blinded to the slow approach of disease: I saw it first; I saw it before the husband, secure in his longed-for happiness, before the physician, who came often to see the child; before the friends, who agreed that "Mrs. Morton looked delicate, really very delicate, since the birth of her infant." I knew it; but I would not confess to myself what I knew, and what she herself began to feel rather than understand.

It was a gradual, silent fading; Death could have no harsher message to one whose life had been so pure and lovely. She lived to teach her child his earliest prayers, to hear from her sick-room the patter of little feet going about the house, the musical murmured call with which he sought her vainly in accustomed places. I never left her; even the child, who

had come to be a part of her, could not entice me away. She did not exact a promise in his behalf; she never seemed to doubt the future, or my own, placed in her husband's hands.

It was all over at last; the shutters were closed, the rooms made very straight and formal; strangers went about with a mockery of stillness that was harder for me to bear than mirth would have been, as I sat with my boy in the upper room, pierced to the heart by his unconscious prattle of "mamma." Poor, poor child! When that mother, who would have been so much to his childhood, and who knew better than I, my Rachel—my all—was lying, with softly-closed eyes and folded hands, dumb to his sweet pleading, dumb to my passionate lamentation, and to the silent kisses that her husband pressed, with quivering lips, upon her white, gleaming forehead, set forever with the signet of peace.

I saw then, even in the selfishness of my own sorrow, how I had avenged him, how much he must have loved her always, how the struggle to resign what was so dear to him had worn upon him. There were lines of suffering about his mouth, veining his hollow temples. He stooped as if he had suddenly grown old as he went about the house, and his hand trembled as he caressed her child, lying on his breast.

My grief, like my love, though selfish, was calculating. I did not once think of my future, except of the void that her absence would ever make. It came like a flash upon me that this could no longer be my home, and that I had no other dependence.

There are different ways of cherishing the dead.

I would have tokens of them always in my sight, their memory be familiar as a household word. There was not a chair in which she was accustomed to sit, not a book that she had delighted in, but had a double dearness to me now. It was different with my sister's husband; he would bury his dead out of his sight. He could not lie where every thing reminded him continually of his loss; besides that, his health, never strong, was unsettled by his sorrow, and he had accepted the advice of his physician—"a sea-voyage"—the forlorn hope of the consumptive, before he spoke to me.

"We could not go on living here together in any case," he said. (I knew so little of the world that I wondered why.) "And if I return this would not be the place for me, this home that she arranged, these rooms, furnished with reference only to her choice!"

And yet he was willing to give them up to the desecration of strangers. If I had been their possessor, and unable to bear the sight of them, I would have bolted the doors, and let them crumble to dust before such unhallowed touch and tread should have profaned them; but then

"Such things be, and will again;  
Women cannot judge for men!"

I had no right even to speak against his decision. I submitted because I was helpless; he arranged it all. I was to go to his brother's in his absence, who was made the guardian of his child; and when he returned—"ah," he said, "it would be time enough to decide then!"

I was to be with her child, to have him all as my own; and I acquiesced in this double dependence—Mrs. John Morton and her daughters were the least of my likings. Our previous homeliness of living, our "poverty," they choose to call it, had barbed many a shaft, which Rachel's gentle nature had made powerless, but, passing her, rankled in my recollection. Mr. John Morton was an older and richer man than his brother. He was cold and self-absorbed, his wife worldly and ambitious, his daughters—well, I had always avoided them; but there was no help for it now. I could not leave my darling, Rachel's child, alone among them.

The house was "for sale, furnished;" so said numberless advertisements, which I hunted out of the morning papers to try and force myself into familiarity with the fact. I hate this modern fashion of a transfer of penates, this selling of associations and remembrances beyond all price! this taking up the thread of another destiny to weave with one's inner life, unconscious griefs and longings, pains and pleasures. I wonder that phantoms do not dispute the possession, and ghosts of loves and hatreds, that have been born and died there, surrounded by their silent witnesses, do not haunt and vex the rash intruder!

No one can dream what I suffered. Those rooms still shadowed by her presence, the cradle in which she had rocked her child, the very drawers that held her wardrobe, the very bed on which she died, all so sacred to me that I passed the doors with a suffocating gasp, all thrown open to the mocking sunshine, the careless eyes, the criticism, the depreciation of idle,

vulgar curiosity! It was cruel to leave the task to me!

I learned my lesson by rote, and repeated it mechanically: "This is the parlor, ladies; you will see that the carpets are almost new. The pictures do not go with the house (her portrait had hung among them). The dining-room is on the same floor; Mr. Morton keeps his silver. Would you like to go upstairs?" Oh, how I hated those curious, cautious eyes that peered everywhere, searching for defects, and spying out deficiencies, we had never dreamed of! But then it was our home; to them only a "furnished house for sale!"

One day, when I had been goaded beyond endurance by this depreciation, which was *their* part, I turned suddenly, like a stag at bay, and raised my eyes, full and flashing, into the speaker's face. She was a young, thoughtless, fashionably-dressed woman, and she had expected and desired a more elegant establishment. Generally, I went my round, and scarcely knew, when I had closed the door upon them, whether they were young or old, gentle or simple; but I saw this party distinctly. And when I said, in answer to some careless slur upon the room and its appointments, "Hush! this was my sister's nursery!" I could have stamped my foot at them, and closed the door upon them all if I dared. The gentleman said, "For shame, Florence!" at the same moment.

Perhaps he saw the blood mounting to my forehead, that they were stirring the depths beneath. I saw him glance at my deep mourning-dress, and then at his sister; and I thanked him with a look, as if I

had always known him, for the first thoughtful deference that any one of them had ever extended to me.

They took the home after all; I heard it more calmly than I once could have thought. I was thankful that my task was over, that the bitter parting, this second parting with my sister, was at hand; they were to come in three days' time. Mr. Morton had sailed; and I was to have all things in readiness for them.

Imagine those three days of gloomy preparation—laying her books, her work, her wardrobe, carefully aside, the dressing-gown, the embroidered slippers, shaped to her delicate feet, the handkerchiefs she had pressed to her lips so often to still the secret pain, the lawn caps, whose lace borders had pressed her wasted cheeks through restless days and nights! I had all my agony, all my loss, over again and again.

Mrs. John Morton particularly requested that I would not leave the house to the woman in attendance. Something might be forgotten or omitted that had been promised to the new-comers; and Mr. Morton, who had closed the sale, was particular even to a fraction where his word was passed.

"The gentleman particularly requested that he might find the house in perfect order, Miss Lawrence; and you will oblige me by seeing that it is so. I will send a carriage for you and the trunks in the afternoon; there is no necessity for the boy to come before then."

I understood her perfectly well, as she stood in the hall, saying this slowly. She meant, "You are to be under my orders, and you might as well under-

stand it first as last. As for the boy, he will be in my way, at any rate. I will not be plagued with him before it is necessary."

She was a fair, fine-looking person, dressed in the deepest and most expensive mourning, for the wife of her brother-in-law. Mourning was fashionable and becoming; her daughters, who were blondes, wore it also, but *lightened* by costly lace and flowers, as if Nature ever needed or brought forth the dreariness of black foliage and blossoms! and an endless, irritating profusion of bugles and pendants that glistened as they went out upon the pavement. I hated them more than ever for the mockery, and felt for an instant that I could throw off my own close, sombre garments, and choose the brightest, gayest colors, to shame them for assuming the livery of a grief they could not feel. I did more than was expected of me. I took the fragrant linen from the drawers—I had helped my sister set every stitch in the broad hems and smooth, delicate seams—oh! how could he part with them?—and made the bed, smooth and fair, for those that were to enter into her labors. Even my boy's cradle—he had outgrown it now—was prepared for other dimpled limbs to rest upon. Her husband, wrapped in his own sorrow, and naturally unobservant of the "trifles that make the sum of human things," had not thought to offer me even my sister's work-table, and I could not ask for what I felt to be my right. I left it standing open beside the window; I took a piece of unfinished work, and laid down upon it, torturing myself with the home-look that the whole room presented when I turned to leave

it for the last time. I saw that the fires were replenished; that the hearths were swept clean. I laid the cheerful round table with my own hands, with bright china and clear, sparkling glass; that table alone was a welcome to the new household.

It pleased me to do all this, but I did not do it to give them pleasure; it was the refinement of all I was suffering. I crowned my own loneliness in imagining their cheerful ingathering that night; the laughter and the jests of their first essay at "being a family," that gay child-wife in my Rachel's seat, her merry, romping child cradled on my boy's pillow!

When all was done, I shut myself up with him in my sister's room to await Mrs. Morton's summons. I was worn with unusual bodily exertion, and my mind had been overstrained for months; this waiting chafed me. I did not wish to talk with myself yet, not till I had time to realize the change in its full extent. What I had done all day had been partly in this spirit. I laid my close bonnet, with its long black veil, upon the bed, and drew the heavy folds of my shawl closer around me, as I shivered in the gloom and stillness that had settled down upon the house. Why did not Mrs. Morton send for me? Surely it was time, and Lawrence, weary of the delay and the restraint, begged to go down-stairs again, but I shrank from the faintest possibility of encountering any one.

Though that was mere foolishness—of course Mrs. Morton could send—she would not expose me to such a cruel alternative.

If I had known they were coming, I would not

have hesitated; though it was already dark out of doors, I would have taken Lawrence by the hand, and gone out alone into the night and the storm, for a dreary autumn rain was beating against the windows. I heard the carriage stop, but I thought it had come for me; in another moment I heard steps, and the laughter and welcomes I had imagined echoing from below. I might have spared myself picturing these things; I was to see and hear them; hear the exclamations of those to whom every thing was new, the opening and shutting of doors, in their explorations of this unknown land, the children bounding up the stairs, a heavier tread coming nearer and nearer, a hand on the very lock of the door, which was alone between me and them; while Lawrence listened, and wondered and questioned, until I was too frantic to trust myself to reply, and no way of escape was left for us.

I threw myself on the floor, and drew him down with me; I buried my head in my hands, on the pillow where her dear head had lain.

They did not see, or distinguish me, in the mass of black shadows, at first; but my uncontrollable sobs, and the child's restless movements, betrayed us. There was a sudden pause in the laughter and exclamations, which told me this; then a voice said, almost sternly, "Come away! all of you," and I knew it was the grave husband of the gay young wife who had withdrawn them.

## CHAPTER II.

"Until, in grieving for the worst,  
We learn what is the best."

THE sounds stole up more faintly from below, while the child and I sobbed on in wretched contrast; then there came a low knock at the door, and I hurried on my bonnet that the veil might conceal my face before I opened it.

"There is a carriage waiting for you," the same deep, quiet voice said, and an arm was offered to lead me to it.

I felt the proffered kindness, and it was so grateful to me that I longed for words to thank this stranger aright. I laid my hand, trembling with excited feeling, upon it, and we slowly passed down those stairs. Funeral chords to the festal song of their welcome home were Lawrence and I, going forth forever.

I knew I was indebted to the same thoughtfulness that all the doors were closed, and that we encountered no one in the passages.

No one had come from Mrs. Morton's to take charge of her expected guests, though, as I have said, the night was dark, and the rain pitiless. He shielded me as well as he could, this kind man, on whom I had no claim, while the rain beat down upon his uncovered head as he placed me in the carriage, and, hurrying up the steps again, brought Lawrence in his arms, and seated him beside me. I blessed him una-

wares as he went back to the warmth and brightness of his own fireside, while the carriage rolled slowly on, and carried me away from my old life and my former self to the hard, reluctant charities of my new abode. "Home" it never could be in any sense; I felt it as the driver rang the bell, and only he helped me and my charge up the high stone steps, where I stood until it pleased the servant, whose office it was, to admit me into the warmly-lighted vestibule. Mrs. Morton was surprised into something like interest in our arrival. She was standing in the hall, evidently vexed at some omission.

"Not gone yet?" I heard her say. "I told John this morning he was to send."

"But John is forgetful, you know as well as I do," said the slow, pompous voice of Mr. John Morton, in answer. "I am surprised that you should have been so neglectful."

"Here she is now!" said his wife, with a tone of relief, as, turning sharply to see who had entered, she encountered me. "How did you get here, Miss Lawrence?"

"The carriage was late," I could not help saying; "but it came at last."

"How is this?" asked Mrs. Morton of the retreating servant. "I thought you said John had not gone."

"He has not. I left him at his dinner just now."

"Are you sure it was *my* carriage, Miss Lawrence?"

I had not thought about it at all; I had taken it for granted, and not even offered to pay the coach-

man. He was gone; so some one must have made the arrangements with him.

"This is all very strange!" said Mr. Morton, turning to his wife again. "I give orders that are neglected; my ward and his—his *companion*," said Mr. Morton, stumbling upon the word, "arrive here in an unknown vehicle, evidently ordered by some other person; I don't understand it!" And, feeling himself personally aggrieved by the delinquency—I was left out of sight altogether—the master of the house rustled the evening paper indignantly, and walked back into the parlor again.

In the mean time, I stood, without a word of welcome, in my dripping clothing, eyed curiously by the servant, who still waited for further commands. Lawrence clung to my dress; and, recovering from her annoyance a little, his aunt essayed to take his hand. I felt a grim satisfaction when he turned from her—for she was almost a stranger to him—and clung to me closer than ever.

"He is tired and hungry," I said, instead of exerting my influence and authority to make him meet her advances.

"I suppose so," she answered, quite as coldly as I had spoken.

"Edward, call Bridget to show Miss Lawrence to her room, and put dinner on table again."

She, too, turned as she spoke, and followed her husband, leaving me still standing, directly under the glare of the chandelier in the wide hall, alone with the servant. He understood at once "the poor relation" footing on which I was placed in the house-

hold. He did not offer to take the basket which I held, though it was large and heavy, and gave me another impertinent, scrutinizing stare before he went to summon the chambermaid. She had the kindest face of all when she came; and Lawrence, with that intuitive perception of character which so astonishes one in children, suffered her to take him and carry him up the long flight of stairs to the room allotted to us. It was on the same floor with her own; I knew it must be, and she pointed her door out to the child as she passed it.

"It's Bridget's room, bless his darlin' little heart; and its Bridget that'll come till him if he cries for her in the long evenings."

It was a front room, though, looking out on the very park seen so distantly from our own home; large and low, but well furnished. It would have been cheerful if there had been a fire in the grate; but perhaps that was more of John's forgetfulness. I did not lay it much to heart.

No one came to us in the dining-room. The table was handsomely laid, and the dishes were as numerous and elegantly served as if we had been invited guests; but it was by no special courtesy. There could be no shabbiness in Mr. John Morton's household.

Edward, the waiter, began with condescending familiarity; but my manner and tone soon changed it into neglectful carelessness, the only weapon of resentment at his command. I helped Lawrence plentifully; it was his right. For myself, bread and water made my first meal of dependence; even that choked me.

Bridget was coaxing a flame to steal through the pile of wood and coal that encumbered the grate when we went back to our room. If the fire had been burning brightly, it would have been welcome; but these fruitless attempts annoyed me, and Lawrence was asleep upon my shoulder already. Bridget helped me to undress him; and, folding back the nicely-made bed, he was laid upon the pillow in an unconscious sleep, which I envied. As for me, I sent the girl away, and, wrapping a shawl around me, sat down by the window to *think*. It is the way with us too often in "this fair world of God's." We refuse proffered assistance and alleviations that are offered, and sit down in wilful darkness to gloom over the future, choosing its dreariest aspect to dwell upon; so I that night sat without light or fire, when both were at my command; turned away from the sweet picture of Rachel's child in his innocent sleep to strain my eyes into the darkness without, and listen to the dreary beating of the storm, and liken these things to my own destiny. I recall that evening now to acknowledge that I did not deserve even the comforts I then cast behind me.

I might have been left to gain my daily bread for myself and the child by the labor which would now be almost impossible to me, I had lived so long at ease. I might have been forced to see him want for the very crumbs that fell from Mrs. Morton's table, wasting and pining from cold, hunger, and nakedness. He, and the treasure of consolation that was bound up in his life, I did not then recognize—he might have been taken from me altogether, and with him the

shadow of the claim I had upon human relationship and sympathies. I acknowledge this, moreover, that, if the punishment of my wilful rebellion had been this, it would have been just; but, "knowing my frailty, He remembered mercy." If Rachel had been placed thus instead of me, her life would have been one of cheerful endurance, if not positive happiness; but, as I said before, shafts that would have glanced harmlessly past her, entered and rankled in my heart.

My life at Mrs. Morton's gradually settled down into a dreary monotony, though their *mourning* did not prevent more gayety than I had ever seen before. Morning-calls, shopping, and visiting-expeditions, dinner company, concert and opera going in abundance, filled up their week's round of amusement. Sundays were scarcely distinguished, except that breakfast was later, and their showy toilets were made for church instead of Broadway. Dinner was, if possible, a more abundant meal; and there were generally invited guests.

I lived apart from all this, though nothing of their frivolity escaped me; they knew this, and it angered them that the plainly-dressed, silent girl, who avoided even a chance meeting in the hall, or drew back with a mocking humility upon the stairs, had sounded the shallow depths of their hearts and lives, and inwardly despised what she saw and heard of their friends and their pursuits; so, though I did not interfere with them in the least, and never willingly crossed their path or allowed Lawrence to do so, the passive dislike grew daily into more open and active enmity between

us, and deeper, deeper still, I felt the thrall of an unwilling bondage.

My routine was, as nearly as possible, this: I was the nurse and teacher of Lawrence in the morning; I met the family at meal-times with my charge; if there was company, my mourning was a sufficient excuse for seclusion. Mrs. Morton saved me the trouble of a decision on this score; she often kindly provided for me in the same way.

It was the occasion of the first dinner-party after I had come to them. Mrs. Morton was in the store-room, giving out the dessert, as I passed by.

"Miss Lawrence, one minute, if you please."

And Miss Lawrence stood still as a statue, with neither interest nor curiosity on her features, to listen.

She might have spared herself the hesitating manner.

"We are to have rather a large company to-day; and it occurred to me that you would not care to meet so many strangers just now, especially as Lawrence will always dine up-stairs on these occasions."

I only bowed—for it was a *dumb*, evil spirit that possessed me—and turned away.

"Miss Lawrence, one moment more. I should like to have *my nephew* properly dressed, and sent down to dessert, if you have no objections."

These instructions sufficed to govern me forever after, not that I cared to join them, or would have done so had the choice been given me; but see for yourself how the *order*, though ever so cautiously worded, must have chafed me. I took Lawrence on my knee as I went up-stairs again, and, brushing

back his golden hair from his face, made him look straight into mine with his large, serious eyes.

"Lawrence," I said, "they do not want us here, my boy, but never mind; we have a right, and we will stay. Your father's relations have discovered that you are a pretty enough little puppet for them to display in their drawing-room; but you belong to your dead mother and to *me*. Do you hear, Lawrence?"

"Ay, mamma," he said, catching at the almost forgotten utterance.

I pressed his face in my two hands so closely that it must have hurt him; but he did not cry out, and still looked up wonderingly.

"They shall not take *you* away from me," I said, speaking again; "no one else in this wide world has *the least* claim upon you."

Alas, I did not know in my vehemence how nearly I had spoken the truth!

So it was that many a day I sat at my window to listen to the roll of carriages, to hear the bustle of arrivals, and of entertainment from below, light laughter, the hum of conversation, and bursts of music by snatches, and had sent my boy, looking—oh, so beautiful in his black-velvet suit, and the flush and sparkle of expectation in his face!—down to them to be admired and petted, and enticed away from me. I do not wonder that he loved me less; for I know my welcome and my kisses were cold to theirs when he ran up so eagerly, with hands full of bonbons, and eyes sparkling with excitement and the flatteries they had so lavishly showered upon him. I might have

listened at least; but I always checked these recitals, half-pantomime, as the broken sentences failed him in his eagerness. This was the most intolerable drop of bitterness; but even that I could have counteracted in a degree if I had so chosen.

I had been under Mr. John Morton's roof five months, the dreariest part of my life, before I had ever entered the drawing-room. I remember the time so distinctly because a letter—the second—had been received from my brother-in-law, and discussed at the dinner-table.

He did not gain in health as he had hoped, and had gone farther than he had at first intended—to Madeira from Cuba. There were messages to his boy, and kind remembrances to me, read out in the slow, distinct utterance of Mr. John Morton, who laid the letter down, and his double eye-glass upon it, though I longed to see the sentence of a longer captivity for myself as I noticed the looks of annoyance exchanged between Mrs. Morton and her daughters when they, too, heard of my protracted residence there.

"We have some very good views of Madeira, I think," said Mr. Morton, carving his venison, carefully; "in the large portfolio, I believe, my dear. Miss Lawrence, have you ever noticed those views of Madeira in the large portfolio on the stand in the back drawing-room?" Mr. Morton never forgot to be polite to his unwelcome guest; ever so often, at our meals, the only time I ever saw him, a sentence complimentary, descriptive, or of inquiry, was deliberately prepared, aimed, and discharged at me. It was usually with regard to Lawrence, our one sub-

ject in common; but to-day the letter had enlarged his scope. Perhaps if I had remembered the presence of the servants, I should have been more guarded in my reply.

"I have never entered your parlors, sir."

"Never entered my parlors!" ejaculated my worthy host. "*Is it possible!* How does that happen?"

"Because I never was asked to, sir," I said, with malice aforethought; not that I cared to go, but I knew the storm such a breach of civility would call down on Mrs. Morton and her daughters.

"*Is it possible!*" said Mr. Morton again, in the same injured tone I so well remembered in the affair of the carriage; here, again, it was a personal consideration. "I could not have *believed* that in *my house* any one would have reason to complain of such a breach of etiquette!"

"I do not *complain*," I said, catching a half sneer on Miss Morton's face, intimating that I had at last accomplished a settled object; "I beg you distinctly to understand that, nor do I care ever to enter it."

"But I *insist*; really, you will *oblige* me, Miss Lawrence, by making one of my family circle every evening."

He looked around at his wife and daughters as he said this. I knew he had been piqued into saying more than he would have done under any other circumstances; and they knew that he always insisted on any arrangement once made. Hereafter, if Miss Lawrence absented herself at any time, the matter would be especially inquired into, and her presence

desired. Hints and innuendoes of expected retirement would not avail them now; if they had been more skilful generals, the day would not have been lost at a single stroke. The rest of the dinner was eaten in silence; when it was over, Miss Morton gathered her ample flounces in her hand, and swept past me out of the dining-room. Mrs. Morton detained me as I rose to follow.

"Miss Lawrence, could you not have explained to Mr. Morton that it was your own wish to live so retired?"

"I should have been obliged to add, and 'by your orders' if I had," I said, coldly, resting my hand upon the richly-carved back of an oaken chair.

She bit her lip, and said no more; it was not the policy or the taste of either to indulge in lowbred recriminations.

By these unguarded words I lost the luxury of my solitary evenings by my boy's bedside. At first, it was intolerably irksome, not to say humiliating, to join the family party, though that is scarcely the word; for I always sat aloof, by common consent, and was scarcely ever addressed, or replied in more than monosyllables when this courtesy was extended to me. Mr. Morton always looked up from his paper and bowed. Mrs. Morton made a show of widening the circle for me if company was present, safe in her knowledge of my invariable custom, which was to take my book or work to the drop-light, which they seldom used, and busy myself with it exclusively through the evening.

It was nothing to me that my introductions were

casual and to bores. I set most of their gentlemen visitors down upon that interesting list; they would have been to me at least, with their stereotyped conversation and vapid compliments. I had never seen fashionable young men before; there was something at once pitiful and ludicrous in their whole deportment, dress, carriage, voices, ideas, and the pursuits I heard them discuss. The young lady-visitors were not one whit in advance of them; certainly, they never had the faintest intention of bidding these weak-hearted and simple-minded youths "come up higher." It is doubtful whether they were themselves aware that life had any other aim; I think they had not. But this bitter mirth of the evening could by no means fill my empty heart, my unsatisfied, longing life, when the morning sun rose still upon an unchanged, repellent routine, the end of which no hope or passionate desire could foresee.

In looking back upon that period, I see, with the clearness of an humble and repentant spirit, how the blank could have been filled up in gathering treasures of patience, and forbearance, and self-knowledge, for that future, whatever it might bring; and how much purer the pleasure of administering to Rachel's child might have been made! Still, I would not accept the teaching. I began to look forward with feverish impatience to my brother-in-law's return; it must bring some change, I scarcely cared what, so my emancipation came with it.

After what I have told you of the general style of Miss Morton's visitors, you will see it was not strange that my attention should be immediately ar-

rested by the introduction of a gentleman bearing quite another stamp, and to whom they paid the unconscious deference of a weak mind to superior will and knowledge. Mr. Morton laid down his paper to welcome the new-comer, who did not seem altogether a stranger, though I was positive that I had never seen him there before. Miss Morton's flutter of satisfaction she did not attempt to disguise; consequently, knowing the besetting sin of parent and child, I set it down in my own mind that he was a person of probable wealth and consequence; still, I greatly wondered how he should be attracted by Miss Morton's shallow graces.

I had an excellent opportunity for observing him, for, of course, *not being* a bore, I was, as usual, left by the side-light to my own reflections. Seen seated in an easy, almost lounging attitude, in the crimson-velvet *fauteuil*, his head thrown back to the full blaze of the chandelier, the massive head, bold and rather prominent features, quick, changeful expression, made him an entire contrast to the weak-minded young gentlemen I have before spoken of. He introduced subjects entirely foreign to the usual course of conversation, and to Miss Morton's comprehension, I am sure, though she listened with a well-counterfeited interest. I could not help glancing up now and then when some quick suggestion, or clever illustration, was given out with the prodigality of one to whom thought is familiar; and twice I met his eyes. My glance spoke interest and approval; his second look betrayed curiosity, I thought. This recalled me to myself; and, until his departure, I gave neither sign nor token of consciousness.

He came a second time, a third, and it began to be whispered about in the household that he was addressing Miss Morton. I did not believe it; but unconsciously I set myself to watch them. It was becoming a great pleasure to me to see him enter the parlor in the evening. I found myself looking up with interest when a visitor was shown in, and acknowledged a feeling of disappointment to myself if the evening passed without his appearance. One night I was certain that I heard him ask an introduction to me. Miss Morton's manner immediately assumed that contemptuous carelessness with which one sets to rights a mistake with regard to the identity of an inferior. I distinctly heard the words, "My cousin's nursery governess," and felt the hot blood rush like a flame to my forehead as I bent still more closely to my work. Evidently he was satisfied, for the request was not renewed. I should not have cared if it had been one of the moths who were always singeing their wings about the flames of Miss Morton and her sister; but I had been persuaded better things of him, and with the mortification of having been placed in the false position of a menial came the disappointment of knowing that what I had looked upon as a superior mind could be influenced by such considerations.

"They are all alike," I said, bitterly, to myself; "he is no better than the rest, with all I have fancied of his mind and heart. Oh, Rachel!" I groaned. "Oh, my dead sister! why were you snatched from me, my only earthly good, all that made life, in its hollow heartlessness, endurable?"

Tears, forcing themselves to my eyes, made a mist of all around me for a moment. I heard some one from the circle, for there were many visitors there that evening, come and take the vacant seat opposite to me at the small work-table; when I looked up he sat there waiting to speak to me.

"Miss Lawrence," he said, as if we were acquaintances of long standing, "what a store of thoughts and wishes you must be gathering here so silently, night after night!"

As he spoke, I had said to myself, "If I were a lady in society, his equal, he would not presume to address me so familiarly. This, then, is to be set to the account of the nursery governess!"

Had he been Le Roy just then, claiming Miss Morton's attention with his insipidities, I would scarcely have cared a rush, and could have rebuked the impertinence by a single word; but somehow from *him* it grieved more than it angered me.

"I wish I were *dead*!" I said, as I held back my breath, and clasped my hands impotently.

"Miss Lawrence"—he spoke in a tone so deeply respectful and sincere that I could but listen—"you are passing a harsh and a wrong judgment on me, on the world, and yourself. God never gives life without its appointed work and trials; when we wish to escape it, we are not doing the one, or bearing the other, as we should."

There was a buzz of conversation all around us; and he spoke in a low, but earnest tone. I did not answer.

"I know the feeling well—better than you im-

agine; but I have never experienced it without finding, when I came to probe the matter, that I, and not others, was chiefly in fault."

That was all. He had moved away, and was replying to Miss Morton's badinage a moment after; and I went to my room, stricken with a sudden conviction of unthankful murmuring I could neither meet nor silence. I was not suffered to forget it. The next day a telegraph from New Orleans announced that my brother-in-law had arrived there a dying man. Mr. John Morton hurried away to meet him; a dull quiet settled upon the home. Lawrence, alone unconscious of this second loss, was unaffected by the change, and grew rapidly into intelligent and winning boyhood.

I seldom went to the parlor now. There was no one to notice my absence; and I had not the heart to amuse myself with their frivolities as I once had done.

Taking Lawrence with me, I passed hours together in the park, wandering up and down the formal gravel-path, while he played with other children, absorbed in the new speculations that gradually took the place of my aimless rebellion against my heavenly Father's choice for me—loneliness and dependence. Gradually I ceased to struggle; I acquiesced, if I did not patiently accept them. Twice I met my outward monitor. The first time he bowed; but I do not think he would have spoken but for Lawrence, with whom he had always been a favorite.

"Are you going to walk with us?" my boy asked, detaining him with the wilful frankness of childhood.

"Not to-day," he said, pleasantly.

Mr. Chalmor could be polite, *kind* to the nursery governess; but it was not *selon de règle* to walk with her under such open observation. The second time his hand was extended with a cordial grasp of interest; I thanked him for the kindly pressure in my heart. I was indulging one of my old bitter moods, and it restored me to human fellowship.

Mr. John Morton returned alone; my brother-in-law was dead before he reached New Orleans, dependent upon the kindness of strangers in his last hours, if those excellent women who leave all, that they may serve their Master in tendance of the sick and the needy, can be called "strangers" to those they minister to for His sake in the name of a common friend."

He had died without a will; I did not think, when Mr. John Morton first told me this, of the significance it would have to my future life.

I do not believe—I never have thought—that Rachel's husband wilfully neglected to provide for one who had been so long a part of his household, her only relative. I do not think he ever realized his immediate danger; as it was, my boy inherited a well-invested fortune, and I suddenly found myself penniless. Here was an answer to my prayers different from any I had ever looked for. I was independent, it is true, but the independence of absolute poverty, without home or friends.

It was not likely that they would care to retain me in the humblest capacity toward their nephew, one whom they had never liked, and who had never been at any pains to conciliate them. Mr. Morton

said as much in our first interview after his return; not that he allowed himself to hint even that my presence was unwelcome, but he took a matter-of-fact, business view of what I was sure were Mrs. Morton's suggestions. Finally, as if to cut off any lingering expectations, he said, "that, as his brother's health was no longer a detaining consideration, he should probably put into execution a long-talked-of plan, taking his family abroad, business making it advisable that he himself should go."

"And Lawrence?"

"My nephew"—they all avoided my family name as much as possible when speaking of the child—"my nephew is, of course, too young to be benefited by travel. I shall find some safe, quiet country boarding-place for him. He needs physical stamina; it will be decidedly the best thing for him."

I went back to my room, no longer mine now that the sentence had gone forth. I had cast God's remaining blessings, shelter, the supply of outward needs, leisure, my boy's dear presence, unthankfully behind me when my sister was taken; now he claimed these gifts, so despised and slighted. I could but acknowledge it was just. Now, indeed, I did not murmur; but my punishment seemed greater than I could bear!

I had been sitting many hours with my face bent down into my hands, my mind a chaos of impossible plans, useless regrets, forebodings of the black future, on which a faint glimmering of the good and wise intent of these many strokes was the only light. Lawrence had gone out with the family early in the

day, their errand new and more expensive mournings; so, when this solitude was intruded on by a summons to the parlor, I thought at first the servant could but be mistaken.

"Miss Lawrence the gentleman asked for; I am certain," the girl, acting in Edward's stead, repeated, so I followed her down-stairs, wondering, but not guessing, who my visitor might be.

I should have known. Who but Mr. Chalmor, of all who had met me there, would care to offer condolence at my new loss? Still, even when he came forward, I thought the girl had been mistaken, and said—

"I am sorry; the ladies are out."

"I am not," he answered, with a smile; and then the grave, sweet expression, that perhaps I liked better still, came to his eyes, and trembled most like a smile around his mouth. "But, lest they should be in, and so break in upon us, pardon my abruptness. I have come to offer you what they never have supplied, a home."

Up to the last second, I thought friendly condolence, made customary by this world of forms, was his object. Even when he paused, I did not comprehend his meaning, though it flashed across my mind that, being the future husband of Miss Morton, they had told him of my forlorn position, and he had come to offer the nursery governess another *situation*.

"I know I am abrupt," said Mr. Chalmor, in the pause which followed; "but the peculiarity of your unprotected position must be my excuse. You may say that you do not know your own heart. I do not

think you do; yet I can but hope that, when you come to 'try and examine it,' you will find there sufficient trust—may I say love?—to make you give yourself to me as *my wife*."

There was no mistaking him now; still, my lips were sealed. I could not even look up. You can understand it—how, lifted suddenly from this region of cold and darkness into a full flood of light and sunshine, my heart and life stood still in swoon.

"You will understand my rashness better when I tell you that Mr. Morton has informed me of the real circumstances of your present position. *I do not presume* upon them, believe me"—and the deep voice trembled a little; "but you cannot blame me that the wish I have long indulged of one day placing you in a more congenial atmosphere suddenly became a resolve."

"If," he said again, more passionately—for my silence might have seemed a rebuke—"if you will *only* love me and trust me! I need your love, Esther; I have waited patiently for it."

\* \* \* \* \*

"I have taken passage in the steamer of the 18th," said Mr. John Morton to his wife, two weeks after his return from New Orleans.

I started, for the 18th was to be my wedding-day. "It was very soon—too soon," said the old pride of heart. "It is the best—best for both," said love, in a true humility.

"All my arrangements are made except for Lawrence.—Ah, good-evening, Mr. Chalnor! I was just speaking of our contemplated residence abroad, and

of providing a suitable home for my nephew in the mean time."

"Perhaps I can assist you," said Mr. Chalnor, seating himself near me, though Miss Morton made room for him on the sofa.

"Oh, it is too much to ask of a person so occupied with business," said Mrs. Morton, blandly, pleased nevertheless by this evident interest in family affairs.

"Mr. Chalnor was always so obliging," murmured Miss Louisa Morton.

As for me, my heart beat so fast that I wondered every one did not hear it as distinctly as I did.

"We should be greatly obliged to you," said Mr. Morton, rubbing his double eye-glass benevolently, with the finest of cambric handkerchiefs. "Anything that you might propose would be certain to meet my views."

"Well, then, suppose you make me his guardian in your absence? Here is my future wife to answer for herself;" and he laid his dear hand on mine with a pressure of encouragement.

I went to his sister's the next day. I had seen her several times before; and she came for me, armed with such earnest persuasions that I suffered myself to act passively in her hands. I found even *dependence* could be sweetened.

It was the evening of our wedding-day. My husband, Lawrence, and I, were going to our new home.

"You will not find the luxuries you have lately been accustomed to," said my husband, as the carriage rolled easily onward, "and you know I had lit-

tle time for preparation; but I shall love you so very much that I shall persuade you to forget the discomforts of sharing a poor lawyer's life, whose connections run far before his income; and for the rest, the modern fashion of furnished houses helped me out of that trouble."

The words grated upon my ear. Hitherto I had looked forward with intense longing to "our home;" but the greatest sorrow of my life was recalled by them. I sat still, in the shelter of his encircling arm; but I felt I was not as grateful as I should have been.

With eyes thus averted, I looked out of the carriage window. The streets, the houses, grew strangely familiar, though I had carefully shunned them in my daily walks. I shut my eyes, so that I should not see my old home as we passed; even then and thus, the pain would have been too great.

But the carriage stopped. I looked up to see an open door, to find *my home* unchanged, every remembered object, trifling keepsakes, books, pictures, in the very same position as of old. I looked up into my husband's eyes as his arm again encircled me.

"This is the 18th, our wedding-day, Esther. One year ago, this very day, I led you across the threshold, my poor girl. How my heart ached for you! I vowed to myself that, if you could love me as you had loved your sister—do you remember checking Florence, my brother's wife, in the room above your sister's room?—I would not rest until I had restored to you all that I saw was so dear."

"It was you," I said, thrilled by a remembered cadence I had *felt*, but never recognized before. "It

was your *brother's* wife—I thought it was her husband. It was me, then, at the beginning that you came to seek?"

Rachel, my own true sister, thou knowest that I am not less a mother to thy child because my baby is lying in this cradle; and happiness has come into my heart as the sunshine streams into this upper room where I write! Oh, my ministering angel! unseen, yet ever present, thou knowest that I have set up no idols, dear as they are to me—my husband and child—in the home restored to me by my heavenly Father!

*THE ORDEAL.*

## THE ORDEAL ;

OR,

*THE SPRING AND MIDSUMMER OF A LIFE.*

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### CHAPTER I.

"THIS young Austin is a very clever fellow, I understand."

The "clever fellow" blushed up to his forehead with surprise and delight. He could not help overhearing the remark, but it was not his fault. The rich merchant, Anthony Bradstreet, might have seen, if he had been so inclined, who his next neighbors were, and politeness would not allow the subject of his conversation to let down the heavy book of engravings he was balancing for the pretty but silly Miss Perkins, and walk out of earshot.

"Oh, remarkably clever; not only that, but solid and very high-toned."

Now, when you consider that the last speaker was the president of the college in which Carrol Austin was to graduate the next commencement, and the querist the father of the young lady that he considered the most lovely, the most faultless, the dearest

girl in the world, you can understand how near the huge *Vue de Paris* came to crushing Miss Perkins's daintily-slippered foot.

"Dear me, it's too heavy, isn't it? Your hands quite tremble," said Miss Perkins, good-naturedly. "I think I've seen it long enough. I hope to go to Paris some day—don't you, Mr. Austin?—and see the *Madelaine*, the *Palais Royal*, and the *Boulevards*, for myself. Emily went last year, and brought back the most delightful quantity of gloves and pocket-handkerchiefs. This is a pair of the gloves I have on." And she held up a hand she was very fond of displaying. "She saw that dreadful Louis Napoleon, too. People were actually saying that he intends to make himself emperor. Preposterous, isn't it? Papa says so."

How she did run on! And there was Mr. Bradstreet talking to Dr. Cogswell yet, more about him, perhaps—who knew? They looked around the room two or three times, but they did not discover him, for he was sheltered behind the broad backs of the twain.

"Of the very highest order," were the last words that came to his ear. "Correct, methodical, prompt."

Now, whether this was said of him or his classmate, Henry Bradstreet, there was a painful uncertainty, as young Austin offered his arm to conduct Miss Perkins to the library on her expressed wish to go there. It was not very like Hal, it is true, who was good-hearted, generous, ready for any kind of a lark, but not above using a "pony" for airing his Greek and Latin, dear reader, not himself—and had

never been publicly commended for promptitude; "on the contrary, quite the reverse."

"Do you like lemon or vanilla the best?" inquired Miss Perkins, as the tall man-servant, with his tray of ices, appeared in the distance. "I think we might as well sit on this lounge; it seems crowded in the library, and I never can enjoy an ice-cream if I'm standing. The minute I get into a supper-room, I always look around for a sofa, or a chair at all events; I enjoy every thing as much again. It makes a great deal of difference whom you get to wait on you at a supper-table. Some people just stand, and stare, and say, 'Shall I get this?' or, 'Would you like that!' till there's not a slice of boned turkey or a fried oyster left; and others go straight through and give you every thing, from chicken-salad to grapes. Some are so careless, too. There's Hal Bradstreet. When Julia Lawrence had her party, he upset a whole plate of stewed oysters on my new tarlatan dress. There he is now, talking to his father. I should think he was getting lectured, should not you? Perhaps Dr. Cogswell's been complaining of him; they've been talking together some time."

There was some appearance of a lecture, or, at least, of a distasteful remark. Hal Bradstreet's open face was very expressive of interior disquiet, and shadowed by a slight obstinacy at the same time.

"Don't you think he's rather fond of Ella Beckford?" pursued Miss Perkins, mincing her cream to make it melt faster. "I do. Ella and I used to be very intimate. There he comes now."

"Confound it all, the governor thinks fellows

haven't any preferences," burst forth Bradstreet, Junior, as he reached his friend, regarding Miss Perkins no more than a fly. "He's got some committee or board meeting to attend, and calls me up to say I could see Lucy home, as if I had nothing else to see after!" How people will cast behind them opportunities that others regard as priceless! Carrol Austin would have given his eyes—that is, if he could have piloted her without them—for that half-hour alone with Lucy, and as her protector, too! "Do help a fellow out of it, for I've gone and asked Ella Beckford to be her escort already! I told the old gentleman that you would answer every purpose."

"But your father is so particular, Henry," chimed in little Miss Perkins. "I've heard Lucy say a great many times that he never allowed any of the students to walk with her—anybody but her cousins or you. Isn't the carriage coming?"

"That's the thing of it. John's got a bad cut, and can't drive. We all walked. But he don't mind you."

"Did he say so?"

How far beyond the outward import of the question was the eagerness that spoke in every line of that fine young face!

"He said 'Very well,' and that's enough. I know it's a bore, but come—that's a good fellow!"

Not that he needed any urging! far from it! Brothers and friends are so blind, when we think, in our self-convicted cowardice, they have a hundred eyes, and all devoted to spying out our especial preferences. It required all the self-control Carrol Aus-

tin was master of to remain quietly by Miss Perkins for the purpose of depositing her empty saucer on the tray, he felt so like darting away to Lucy, and seeing the effect the news of the transfer would have on her. Somebody had asked her to sing in the mean time, and he could not get within a yard of the piano, for the little crowd that hung around her. Miss Perkins thought Lucy's singing a very trifling matter, compared with her sister Emily's grand arias, and beckoned some friends near, and, after a little time, walked away with them. Carrol Austin was very well in his way, ranking first in his class, and, therefore, not to be despised at a college party, especially when he was withal gentlemanly and tall. Miss Perkins delighted in tall men; but then he was poor, so her brother said, and therefore not to be dreamed of as a lover.

"It's a great pity," thought Miss Perkins, revolving the matter in her mind, as they first drew near the piano, "for he talks beautifully, and looks as good as any of us. He doesn't dress 'poor,' like Wiley, of last year's class, that always looked so seedy, and he was very foolish to tell it, I think. He might have managed somehow, as Joe Dalton did, and gone away in debt to everybody. I was very near falling in love with Joe, for the Daltons lived in such style, and he spent money right and left. I thought they must be immensely rich."

So Miss Perkins gave a little, half-fledged sigh, and took the arm of young Trotter, whose father owned no end of cotton-mills, and who parted his hair in the middle, and wore an eye-glass, and car-

ried his head on one side, leaving Mr. Austin absorbed in Lucy Bradstreet's foolish little ballads. She sang them very sweetly, though they were only English, and not remarkably new, in a low, sympathetic voice, that thrilled the young, listening heart with a wilder pulse than it had ever risen to before; for the theme was love, as it ever is with the young, and he fancied—could it be all fancy?—that her soft eyes rested on him with a peculiar meaning, as she sang—

"I do not love thee, yet, I know not why,  
Whate'er thou dost still seems well done to me;  
And often in my solitude, I sigh  
That those I *do* love, are not more like thee."

Perhaps you cannot understand how he felt not long afterward, when he had shaken hands with kind Lizzie Cogswell, the president's daughter, and made some polite and deferential remarks to the doctor, and had put on his overcoat in the gentlemen's dressing-room, and was waiting on the flat landing at the head of the stairs for Lucy Bradstreet, taking the jokes of "the fellows" in a good-natured, but rather absent way. The door into the enchanted apartment was ajar, and there was a fluttering of graceful robes, now and then peals of musical laughter, and a general buzz and hum of comment, and of appointment for future engagements.

It took a tremendous length of time for Lucy to draw on those crimson Polish boots, and the soft blue-flannel sacque that shielded her lace-covered arms beneath the heavier cloak, and then she seemed

to wait at least two minutes, hood in hand, to settle when and how she was to meet Jane Perkins for some shopping they had agreed to do together. But she came out at last, looking, oh, so bewitchingly in the blue "kiss-me-quick," with its nodding tassels and careless knot under her little dimpled chin. Then she tripped on the stairs—Polish boots were so awkward!—and he put out his hand to steady her—he had forgotten to draw on his gloves—and held hers until they were off the dark stone steps, and she was fairly under his guidance.

"Shall I carry your bouquet for you? Your hand will get cold out of your muff."

"Thank you, but it's no consequence at all; we have plenty of flowers at home, and they are faded."

He took the flowers for all that, and held them so lightly that they would have drooped before that long walk was ended if they had not already commenced to do so.

He did not have much to say, after all, or Lucy either, but the time was wonderfully short. The pavement was slippery, and that made it necessary that he should hold the arm that rested in his own for the first time in his life very closely, and now and then, when they came to a dull, blinking street lamp, it was "food for the mind," if not for conversation, to look down into the dear, happy face, and draw up, by some strange magnetism, the eyes he sought to glance one moment into his own, and then fall as quickly—the very look he fancied he had met when she sang those words that "still made melody in his heart!" It was no time to think about where this still, rippling

current was drifting them, whether upon wrecking rocks and shifting sands, or to the happy islands it seemed to lave in the distance. Young love's dream has seldom any cold calculations of "position," and "income," and "establishment," unless, indeed, the dreamers have the maturely selfish nature of Miss Jane Perkins.

As for Carrol Austin, he could scarcely believe he had not been dreaming, as he trod the worn, echoing staircase of the hall in which he lodged. The moonlight flooded the bare passages, and guided him to his own lonely room, where he longed to be, to sit down and think it all over. As unlike the fairy chamber in which Lucy Bradstreet "lay down in her loneliness," as were the fortunes of the two who were interchanging thought and half-shaped, misty dreams of the future, was that low, meagrely-furnished apartment. The almost threadbare-carpet, in which the original colors were blended into one hue of dinginess, the well-worn, ill-used furniture, the walls scrawled with rough drawings, and odd mottoes and designs, the table strewn with books and newspapers, small articles of wearing apparel, and remnants of a mid-day lunch, the bed serving the purpose of a sofa to all visitors, and therefore any thing but regular in its outlines, and a drapery of necessary but unpicturesque garments in the background—such was the picture lighted by the single lamp and the paler moonbeams that came in through the curtainless window. There was nothing attractive in the outer landscape, though in summer the smoothly-shorn turf of the Campus, its noble, graceful elms, the gleam of white-

walled mansions from sheltering masses of foliage, and the distant glimpse of molten silver made by a broad curve in the quiet river, might have sustained the enchantment of the past few hours. Yet he came and sat down in the low, broad window-seat, still holding the drooping flowers, and inhaling unceasingly the intoxicating perfumes of heliotrope, and daphne, and sweet-scented violets. Something was wrapped around the stems—a little glove, soiled, and therefore discarded by its wearer, who had left its fellow on the dressing-table with her forgotten fan. How like her actual presence it seemed, for all the ugly rent in the wrist, and the marks of its grateful servitude! He smoothed out the tiny fingers one by one, and drew the glove into something of its old shapeliness. It was like the cast of the hand he had held that night—and the bare recollection of the touch sent that same delicious thrill through every vein—moulded to its form. It had held it, and he pressed it to his lips, as he would have clung to the hand if he had dared, and then thrust it into his bosom.

He turned with a start; but there was no witness of this daring, only the old shadows stretching in uncouth, gigantic shapes over the wall, and moving slowly, as the room vibrated to the tread and shout of later classmates, who had been less innocently engaged perhaps, and were even later than himself; so he came back to the window, and out to the still silence of the night. The chill dreariness made him shiver. There lay the unbroken snow, crossed by solitary footpaths, glowing desolately in the cold,

hard moonlight, and there rose those naked, ice-clad trees, dark, and grim, and immovable as destiny.

He put the flowers away from him involuntarily. Softness, and beauty, and perfume, were not for his life. A few months ago it had risen up before him grand and solemn, as those trees had then appeared, for all their leaflessness, now as hard and wintry as their aspect to-night. His young, earnest soul had laid upon itself the vow of patient industry, to return the unwearied labors of a widowed mother, who gave of her very living to fit him for his post in life, and to rear those younger than himself, who had an equal claim to all that had been lavished upon him. And beyond, there was a higher self-devotion, which had as yet just whispered its solemn utterances through his soul, of a nobler return, of strength and intellect, and life itself, for a costlier love that had been poured out for him.

But the tempter had taken so fair a guise, so pure a seeming, to lure that heart from its purpose!

## CHAPTER II.

"I'm not going to the concert to-morrow night, mother."

"Why, Ellen, what has happened?"

"Nothing new," said the girl, poutingly. "I've made up my mind; that's all."

"But Mr. Benedict was so good as to give you

the tickets, and promise to call for you with Rose. Have you and Rose quarrelled?"

"No, mother. I like her better than any of the girls, but I'm not going with them any more; I never mean to stir out of the house except to church, and I wish I didn't have to go there!" Great hot tears, partly of anger, and partly of mortified pride, plashed down upon the work the child held in her hand. "I never do have any thing like anybody else; and I am ashamed to go to the girls' parties when I cannot have one too; and even if I could, there's no place, except the forlorn old school-room, or right here in this one room. It's too bad, and I might just as well give up trying to be like the rest."

"All because I could not get you a new spring bonnet! Why, Ellen, I am ashamed of you."

"Well, I can't help it."

"And Clara has worn hers two years, with only a new ribbon on it."

"But Clara don't care about such things. She's just wrapped up in books, as Carrol used to be; and Ben has Carrol's old clothes made over, and they do very well, but I'm too old now to be treated like a baby, and I don't see why I can't have things as well as Carrol."

"But you are here at home, with no call to go out except where you are well known, where every one knew your father, and loved him, and are kind and thoughtful for his children. They all know that I teach school, and just how we are situated. It is not expected of us that we should dress and entertain as if we were wealthy."

"Carrol must have every thing!" said the girl, still stormily.

"Every thing to fit him to appear among strangers, where he is obliged to go out more or less, and where he must be judged more by externals. But I have always tried to dress you, Ellen, so that you might not feel shabby, or old-fashioned, though it is suitable to our position that we should be plain. If my life is spared, and Carrol is the son and brother I think he is, you shall have every advantage in your turn to finish your education usefully. An education is all I can give my children."

Still the unthankful heart rose and swelled with bitter and selfish longing. So it is that every mother's soul must, sooner or later, be pierced by the ingratitude and folly of those she is ready to sacrifice every thing for.

Mrs. Austin went on with her needle-work more sorrowfully for this outbreak. Her life had ever been shaded by many cares, and chastened by heavy trials. Born to wealth, and reared in the midst of indulgences, she had seen "riches take wings," and the loving home-circle scattered; even her marriage, which promised to restore her so much of vanished happiness, was ever *shaded* by the ill health of her husband, who was taken away before little Ben, the baby, could speak his name; and she was left alone once more, with four children to rear and educate, and only the little remnant of her father's property to depend upon.

Sorrow had not left her unthankful or rebellious; it had given her a true estimate of life—only the

threshold of existence; beyond its change was the better, heavenly country, where she was to dwell forever. Here she had her task set by the Master of the household, and, so far from bending under it, she accepted it joyfully, with new energy, new aims, new hopes of hearing the sentence of reward.

From the first moment of her widowhood, the desire rightly to train her children had conquered the lonely yearning of bereavement; to be to them father and mother both, to gain the firmness and worldly wisdom that their father would have supplied, and to lose none of the watchful tenderness of a mother's love, was her steady aim. Many weak and selfish women would have considered themselves unable to do more than feed and clothe these helpless children, grieving under that necessity; but Mrs. Austin knew that this was a small part of a parent's duty, and, as soon as her strength allowed, opened a day-school of such pupils as could be gathered, and set herself steadily to the task of providing the means for a complete and necessarily expensive education.

Eight years of patient routine had passed, sometimes wearisome, sometimes beyond her strength, but ever borne with steady cheerfulness, outwardly at least. If she had her hours of despondency, and days when the accomplishment of her hopes seemed far off and doubtful, they were known only to the Friend whose strength upheld her, and the Father who, in caring for the "lilies of the field and the fowls of the air," gave her a pledge that she should not be forgotten in such things as she had need of.

From Carrol, the eldest of her children, she had

never had a disappointment. In intellect and heart he was all that she could desire; even when a child at her knee, he seemed to enter into her thoughts with a strange, unchildlike sympathy, and learn, as by intuition, the beautiful faith in God's fatherly providence, and the wondrous debt of love and gratitude he owed to the "dear Jesus," who had come from heaven to be laid in a manger, and die in manhood a sorrowful death for our sakes, and, listening to his simple pictures of the beautiful heaven the angels would take him to when he died, if he tried to please God, or the earnest and solemn asking that he might be made good and holy, a new hope sprang up and glowed in his mother's heart, and, like Hannah of old, she "lent him to the Lord as long as he lived."

When Anne went about the house in her dreary, abstracted way, or Ellen's strong will rose up against her mother's authority, or Ben, with the boisterous naughtiness of a strong, healthy boy, made her tremble for the time when he should follow Ellen's example and set her rules at defiance, it was to the thought of Carrol and his future that she turned to brighten the hope for the rest; but Ellen's wilful words made her despond even here, the night of the rejected invitation; perhaps she had been self-deceived, and only indulging a blind partiality in giving Carrol the advantages he had received. Had she been unconsciously wronging her other children for his sake? She felt all that had influenced her—the hope that he would one day stand up in his father's place, and the desire that mind and heart should be fully fur-

nished for the Master's service—but her disappointment with Carrol might be at hand; he might not feel the claims the younger children would have upon him; he might not wish to devote himself to a life of self-sacrifice, such as any laborer in the harvest must needs live if they would impress others with the reality of their creed, and bring their needs to the scanty wages doled out grudgingly oftentimes by the congregations. Her own health might fail before the rest had been provided for; it was not as strong now as it had once been, with all her care, and then she had wronged her younger children for a need that existed only in her own imagination perhaps. It was the hardest form in which doubt could come to her, she was so watchful and jealous always of her own motives; but it made her resolve to do what she had shrunk from again and again—set before Carrol her highest hopes and aims for him, and, if the answer was a disappointment, she could only pray for strength to bear it.

The day had been warm, almost oppressive, but the evening grew cold and chilly. The very atmosphere added to her depression, as she unlocked her writing-desk, and then rose, as she heard a stir in the adjoining chamber, to see if the children were all asleep. Never, since the night that she had first gathered them around her, fatherless, had she felt such a sinking apprehension of their future. But they were in her care still, sheltered by a home, sleeping softly and deeply, as only the young, or those to whom "He giveth sleep," can rest, and she went back to her letter again.

"I have never told you, my son, of the highest aims I have had for you. Whenever you have talked of your future course, you know I have always put you off with 'time enough by-and-by.' I had two reasons. One—cowardly, perhaps—I have not been ready for a disappointment; and the other, I had hoped you would make an unbiassed choice, such as I desired, for I have sometimes seen your thoughts go out that way, and it has made me happier than you could believe. I have your last letter by me. Frank, affectionate, open as you ever were, you tell me of all you are doing and of your friends. I am glad Mr. Bradstreet is so kind to you, and that you try to have a good influence over his son. You know that I have always told you our influence is one of our chief talents. How much less dread fathers and mothers would have of college-life were it not for the *evil* influences that meet their children there!

"I wish I could see the pretty Lucy you have written me so often about this winter; but, Carrol, I need not warn you that she can never be any thing more to you than the sister of your friend. Men of wealth ever seek wealth for their children; and, besides, years must pass before you can afford to make any one your wife. Even were she willing to marry a poor man, and her father willing to have her, you could not selfishly bind her to such weary waiting, a vigil that wears out a woman's health and spirits, in looking toward an unfulfilled destiny.

"It is time now that you should seriously set yourself to consider what you will be. You have no connections to help you on in mercantile life; there

is the law, with its slow results; teaching—you have seen something of that; and *the ministry*. My hand trembles as I write it, my dear son, for the wish of my life is enclosed in it. The first-born of old were ever consecrated to God, and when you were a baby in my arms, and I read of this, it impressed me with a strange, haunting force. God had been very good to me, and I desired greatly to make Him some worthy offering, and, so far as it lay in my power to train you up for Him, I resolved to do it. What had at first the vagueness of a fancy strengthened into a vehement desire, into the great purpose and hope of my life, to send out one torch-bearer to the multitudes that sit in darkness; to kindle one faint beacon-light that should warn some misguided soul from hopeless loss; to see my child entering on the noblest pursuit this side the grave. Not that I would have you biassed to this by my feeling, or the wish on your part to save me from disappointment. Far from it. The offering would be worthless in God's sight, unless it is of your own free will—unless you have yourself felt moved to lay aside all worldly projects and ambitions, or, rather, to merge all ambition into the noblest aim a human heart can have, to be 'a fellow-laborer with Him!' I should only defeat my own purpose, and kindle a strange fire upon His altar!

"Do not write me at once. It requires thought, and *more than thought*. I feel very near you to-night, and as if you needed me—as though some solemn crisis in your life had come, and you were turning to me for help. You know where to look for the help and the counsel that your mother could not give,

even if she were with you. If you were here, I should only smooth the hair from your forehead, and kiss it softly, and say, 'God bless and keep you, my son!' as I do now."

### CHAPTER III.

"COMING round to tea, Austin?"

"Does any one expect me?"

"I don't know who 'any one' is. Lucy told me to be sure to ask you, and father seconded the motion."

So the two young men walked off arm-in-arm, talking of the chances for valedictorian, soon to be decided, the prospects of "the United Brothers," their favorite society, and the boating-club some of the fellows wished to establish.

Mr. Bradstreet welcomed them to the tea-table, and sat there listening to all their boyish jokes and opinions, saying kind things to Carrol of his good prospect for the first honor, and finally telling him that, when he was tired of Lucy's piano and the chess-board, he should be glad to see him in his library. He was a generous, kind-hearted man, who had not forgotten his own youth, and he lived it over again in the freshness of these young lives—in the bright blush that kindled upon Lucy's face when Carrol was commended; in the Jonathan-and-David devotion of the two students, and all their little piques and ambitions, looking upon the honors of

Commencement Day as if the interests of a nation were at stake, and the applause of the whole community awaiting the fortunate men, or the execrations of posterity reserved for the idler of his class.

Out of his counting-house, Mr. Bradstreet's chief pleasure was the happiness of his children. The stately home had lost its greatest charm when their mother, with whom and for whom it was planned, had been carried forth to her burial from it. Lucy was very like her in face, in voice, in all her gentle, yet decided ways, in her quiet good sense, as well as her feminine grace. Lucy must never be crossed in any thing. It cost the father much less to check and restrain Henry's quick, headstrong impulses, than to deny Lucy a flower she had set her heart on. The beautiful grounds were kept up to their original elegance to gratify her taste rather than his pride; the greenhouse, with its wealth of tropical flowers, was at her command, and yet Lucy Bradstreet was unselfish and unspoiled. There are some flowers that open more perfectly in the broad sunshine than with the succeeding light and shade that belong to others.

Had Mr. Bradstreet forgotten his usual wisdom when he brought these two young lives in such close companionship? The dearest thing on earth—Lucy's happiness—had a weak indulgence brought it in jeopardy? It would seem so, that evening above all others, when he had shut himself up in his library, not to walk with the wisdom of the past, or take the bright, hopeful voice of the present for companionship, but to go over, with pen and pencil, the day's operations, count up the thousands he would gain by

the morning's fortunate investment, and recongratulate himself on the cautious financiering that had evaded a threatened loss.

Hal Bradstreet had his own engagements, too—a pending rehearsal of the serenade his lady-love was to receive, in connection with the lady-loves of five other amateurs, whose ardor had undertaken to conquer the difficulties of an adagio in E minor, no trifling obstacle to these unscientific musicians.

The soft May evening, the first true spring day of the season, had allowed open windows, and unfurled the great buds of the horse-chestnut trees of the avenue, the month going out in a flush of loveliness and the calm of early summer. There were no lamps called for; it was moonlight again, and the opal rays of the sunset had mingled so softly with its silver that the white keys of the piano at which Lucy sat had not grown dusky, though dim shadows slept on the velvet carpet. There was a soft rustle of muslin drapery at the tall windows opening on the lawn in its first vernal freshness, a glimmer of carved gilding from cornice and ceiling, a gleam of the white-limbed statue in the opposite niche, and again the subtle breath of rare flowers scattered profusely in every vase and goblet of delicate Sèvres or curious Bohemian workmanship throughout the room; above all, that low, delicious melody of voice and instrument, snatches of half-remembered songs, and murmuring preludes, and wandering chords, as memory or fancy guided the slender hands. No wonder that the brave purpose of the young man's heart melted under these enchantments, and he forgot the repeated vows of

self-restraint and self-denial he had imposed upon will and emotion. He was leaning near the instrument, and presently bent down his head upon his clasped hands, and gave himself up to dreams of delicious possibilities.

How many veritable lives had gained as lofty prizes, as far beyond their reach! What was the use of talent, and resolve, and energy, if it could not carve out fortune? And Lucy loved him; yes, he could not doubt that, and she would be true and wait for him, as many another true heart had done, and when he could make for her a home like this, she would come to him and be his own, and life should flow on all brightness. But even in the midst of heated vision, the slow and solemn chords into which Lucy had glided seemed to bear the burden of an anthem he had heard when they buried poor Richmond, their classmate: "For man walketh in a vain shadow, and disquieteth himself in vain; he heapeth up riches, and cannot tell who shall gather them. *This is not your rest.*" But he drove the echo down, and went on with his dream again. How the opening door jarred upon his feverish pulses! The dream was over; it was late, much later than he supposed, and Mr. Bradstreet had sent for him.

"Shall I say good-night, Lucy, or will you be here when I come out again?"

"I will wait."

The simple words seemed like a prophecy to his excited mood; but then a chill suddenly broke the charm. Mr. Bradstreet must have a special reason for wishing this interview. He had made such a

point of it, perhaps he had seen all that was passing, and was displeased. But he was unchanged in manner toward him! Still, that would be Mr. Bradstreet's way; he would not give unnecessary pain or be rudely uncourteous, however he was offended. So, with the fear of sudden banishment, or reproof at least, darkening down upon the bright visions of the last hour, he followed the measured footsteps of the old servant.

Coming from the dusky light of the drawing-room, the glare of the library lamps almost blinded him. He did not know it, but his eyes shone feverishly, and there was a bright spot upon either cheek that would have gone like an arrow to his mother's heart, if she could have seen him at this moment, it was so like the hectic she had watched in his father's face for years.

Mr. Bradstreet, composed and self-complacent, filled up the compass of his great library-chair, and motioned him to another on the opposite side of the oblong table. Carelessly twirling a carved paper-folder, the souvenir of foreign travel, he did not look like the stern or offended father Carrol had prepared himself to meet. Perhaps he thought it best to hold up the whole affair in a trifling, playful light, and not dignify it with a grave seriousness; but it was no child's play, no fancy of the moment, to be cast aside at the bidding of any one, and Carrol's spirit rose with the thought, and the remembrance that Mr. Bradstreet had ever tacitly sanctioned their friendship.

"Your father has been dead some years, I be-

lieve." This was the merchant's cautious opening; for business, like chess, teaches a preliminary lightness to a grave combination.

"Nearly nine years, sir," said Carrol, greatly wondering, while indignant pride went down, down with the kindness of the words and manner.

"Have you any near relations that you look to, to give you a start in life?"

"No, sir, not one. My mother is all in all to me; I owe her my education—but you know that, sir."

"I think I have heard Henry speak of it; but she cannot do any more for you. A woman knows nothing of the business world; her influence is confined to the fireside." And Mr. Bradstreet looked toward the illustrated copy of Longfellow, with a vague remembrance of something the poet had said of

"Sitting by the fireside of the heart,  
Feeding its flames;"

only, of course, he thought he had said it better, for what does a poet know of terseness and brevity, which is the soul of business?"

"Yes, sir."

"So you have no plans for the future?"

He could not give assent, though it was evidently expected. The glow of passion had dimmed the outlines of his purpose, obliterated them for the moment, but the question brought them forth again with a startling boldness, as some faded inscriptions start to life suddenly, with their ancient clearness, when brought in contact with a chemical test. He had gone through a strong conflict since that winter's

night; *conflicts*, repeated daily, of soul and spirit, with earthly cravings and natural human weakness. Sometimes this battle with self had shaken him so that he could scarcely fix his mind on the duties of the hour, and had left its traces in his face, dark shadows and a sharpened outline, that were accounted for to others by the knowledge of his incessant studiousness. But the voice of conscience and of God had called him out of the stillness of his own soul, and from the words of Holy Writ, to leave all and follow the footsteps of Christ in ministering to the souls of fellow-mortals who were crowding out of life into eternity, with no great sense of its awful meaning, such as had been laid on him. He could not say his future was all undefined.

"No definite plans, I mean?" said Mr. Bradstreet, waiting politely for the response.

"No, sir." He could at least say nothing definite.

"I am glad to hear it, my boy; for I think I can make a proposition which will suit us both. I have watched you for some time, Austin." (He knew that very well.) "And I have seen nothing to shake my original opinion that you have great business capabilities. A little late to begin with the routine of a counting-house; your real merchant should begin at the lowest round of the ladder, and then he always knows where to plant his foot, so to speak. But you have industry and good sense to bring you up; and method, which is almost every thing; and energy, which will become enterprisé in the proper field. I wish Hal had half the groundwork."

"No better heart, sir. He will grow out of his

boyishness. He only needs a good influence. He's easily led just now."

"That's the worst of it—the worst of it. It doesn't help a man, when he's gone to the devil, to say he was easily led there, though it answers for an excuse while he's going. But you kept him straight the last two years, and that, and some other things, have put it into my head to offer to take you into my counting-house, and some day, perhaps, into the business."

The light, and the drab and gilt volumes behind Mr. Bradstreet; the square, resolute-looking head of the merchant, and his kindly face, now beaming with interior and exterior satisfaction, grew confused and misty for a moment. Here was his dream almost realized, an opening that many a rich man would have coveted for his son, such as is offered but once in a lifetime. Was not his mother's favorite scheme, of a watchful Providence, over the fatherless realized? How she would rejoice at the unlooked-for prosperity!

Would she? There rose up the questioning voice of inward monition. Had she not other hopes for him, unspoken but recognized unconsciously? Mr. Bradstreet had done a noble and generous deed; he had a right to expect thanks and happiness as its result. He only saw the young man's face bent down, hidden from him, and heard a low groan, as if of bodily anguish. "Austin, am I mistaken in you? Is there any reason for this hesitancy?" And the tone had a shade of coldness, though he did not mean it should have.

"You are very good, sir; so good, that I do not know how to answer you."

"Oh, is that all? Well, thanks are the last thing I want. Only keep Hal straight, and one of these days"—for why should he stint his good intentions? the boy's family was excellent, for all its poverty—"make my little Lucy happy." The kind man's voice was almost tremulous as he said this. The face of Lucy's mother, with its sweet, approving smile, seemed to look out from her own shadowy nook close beside him.

"Lucy!" And the bowed face was lifted with a sudden, eager, almost incredulous look.

"You love her, don't you? And I dare say she's told you she loves you before this."

"No, sir, never! How could she, when my lips were sealed?"

"I believed in your honor; but there are other tell-tales than words. If I had not nursed up this plan, I should have sent you out of the house long ago. But I can't bear to deny Lucy any thing. It cuts me even to see a downcast look on her face. Bless her heart!"

If he had been untrue at that moment, the future would never have atoned for it. Little we know, when the hour of temptation comes upon us, who is feeling our peril, and praying that our faith fail not. The vibrating tenderness of a mother's love had caught the first thrill of dissonance, a hidden, nameless warning moved her that night.

"I must not deceive you, sir, even for Lucy." Oh, must he give her up! Position, wealth, love!

turn away from all! But he went on quickly, lest his courage should fail him. "It has seemed right to me that I should choose my father's profession."

"He was a clergyman, I think. Very honorable, very excellent men among the clergy; but hunted to death by poverty, half of them, and their wives, too. People are beginning to open their eyes, it's true, but that won't do for you—for Lucy, at all events, brought up as she's been. She'll tell you so. Go ask her about it." For Mr. Bradstreet thought it was a boyish fancy, very natural, and very proper when nothing else offered; and the best way to put it out of his mind was to send him to Lucy.

"But, Mr. Bradstreet—"

"There, there, we won't talk any more at present. I don't ask you for yes or no to-night; it's a poor bargain that hasn't been slept upon. Go see what Lucy says to it." And he waved the young man out of the room.

Very slowly—though he needed no guide to Lucy's presence—Carrol came back to the quiet room where she was waiting with an impatient eagerness. She, too, had her own doubts and fears as to this interview. But it had made her look into her own heart, and the dread of separation had but shown her how entirely it was given up to what had once been a girlish fancy. He did not see her, for a moment, but stood still, as the door closed behind him, shading his eyes with his hand. If she was gone, would it not be ominous? How childish! But she was there still, and came quickly toward him, laying

her hand upon his arm. "What is it, Carrol? Is there any trouble?"

"Lucy, your father says I may tell you that I love you." And he drew her close, close to him, the upturned face looking still into his. "Oh, can I give you up? Does God require it? Do I not mistake duty? Tell me that I do!"

It was not strange that, with his father's example, and his mother's influence; with a life-training in the school of self-denial, Carrol Austin should decide against his own happiness for the bare command of conscience; but it was a marvel that brought the indulged and petted girl to say, when he had told her all, "I should be miserable if I thought I had made you false to yourself, to what you think is right. We should never be happy, but it is so hard! You know I love you, Carrol, you know I do, but I cannot help you decide. I do not want to influence you by a feather's weight."

They parted, sadly enough for young lovers, in the first hour of mutual confidence, and whose future lay with themselves! Who could decide for them?

#### CHAPTER IV.

"HAVE you been to the post-office, Ben?"

It was a quarter to nine. Already little feet were beginning to patter upon the doorstep, and in a few moments more Mrs. Austin must take her post in the

school-room. She had been looking for Ben's curly head the last ten minutes, with that eagerness with which we watch for the messenger of good or evil tidings, when the balance is still undecided. It was two days since Carrol's weekly letter had been due, the letter in answer to the one it had cost her so much to write; and he might be ill, he was so anxious not to disappoint her in his scholarship. He might be overworked, and unable to write.

"There! I forgot! But here's the things—my new shoes, and the rice and the fresh eggs. I'll be off again like a lamplighter."

"My dear child"—and an unwonted feeling of impatience stirred Mrs. Austin's tone—"I *wish* you were not so heedless! Do keep your thoughts about you!"

But Ben was off, and his mother, with a parting household charge to Ellen, who came into the school-room an hour later, turned to her daily task. It was more wearisome than usual, partly because of a hard lesson in syntax, that her older girls would not try to comprehend, and then her eyes would wander toward the window, looking down the street in the direction of the post-office. Ben was so long! But he came just as the composition class presented their ambitious essays on "Time," and "History," "The Elements," and "Why do we Study?" She could only glance at the envelopes of her letters, and assure herself that one was addressed in the finished, careful hand of her son, and see that the other was from a stranger by its unknown post-mark and the business-like flourishes that followed her name. It was very hard to

control her thought, and enter into the construction of sentences that announced, with a great degree of circumlocution, the important facts that "we study to improve ourselves," and that "history is the record of past events," or to clip the redundant drapery in which the young lady who expatiated on "Sunset" had clothed the "gorgeous clouds of crimson and gold that cradle the declining luminary." Thence to the infant class, with their demurely-folded hands, but wandering eyes and absent thoughts, who could distinguish no difference between A and O, with their pertinacious, irritating mistakes and blundering guesses. Even when school was dismissed, there were two girls to be detained for misconduct and expostulated with, and the copy-books of a class to be prepared for the afternoon. With Ben clamorous for dinner, and Clara exhibiting a great, gaping tear in her second-best dress, that no one but her mother could darn, so as to preserve its respectability, school-time and sun-bonnets arrived again, with even the seals unbroken!

So it happened that she was quite alone, with the last footfall of the last scholar sounding under her window, before she opened the letter; and then she laid her head down upon the desk a moment, with an inward cry for strength, before she trusted herself to read it.

There were two dates, the first several days old.

"Mother, I have a long story to tell you; I scarcely know where to commence. I have had a long talk with Mr. Bradstreet more than once. But at first I was at his house, at tea, and he sent for me to come

into his library. I thought of a hundred things as I went along—that he was going to forbid me the house, and tell me that I must not think of Lucy. My mind was all in a whirl, for I had been thinking of her more than ever lately, thinking that she might be my wife some day—yes, mother, I did—and how you would love her—and she would love you, for she has no mother, you know, and she likes nothing so well as to have me talk about you and my sisters; she never had a sister. Mr. Bradstreet sent for me into the library, but it was not for any unkind or harsh purpose. I have always told you that he was not proud or overbearing, and he proved it by making me an offer to take me into his counting-house. It seemed providential, mother."

"Oh, Carrol!" And the dream of years seemed swept away as Mrs. Austin turned the leaf. It is so hard to find that our best desires and purposes, seemingly in accordance to God's will, have been set aside by Him for plans of His own ordaining.

"It seemed providential, mother." She glanced back at the words again. If it was His providence, though it broke her last idol to her face, she would not reject it. "I thought perhaps the blessing upon the fatherless, that you have always said so much of to me, had moved Mr. Bradstreet's heart to place me in a way to help my brothers and sisters, and, first of all, to relieve you for your hard and busy life. And then Lucy! I have not told you all. He said he knew I loved Lucy and would make her happy, and some day he would give her to me, too. I don't know why, but *that* made me feel it was a tempta-

tion. It came into my mind like a flash, how Satan carried the Saviour to a high mountain, and showed Him 'all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them,' and promised to give Him every thing, if He would worship him. Every thing seemed placed within my grasp. It was too much of a temptation; it betrayed itself; I could not fight away the feeling.

"I had been thinking all winter, ever since Christmas, that I ought to devote my life entirely to God's service. It was no sudden fancy. I have often thought of it before, even when I was no older than Ben; but this year, knowing that it was the last one here, the thought came back and back to me so often, that I wonder I have not written to you about it before. The only thing was, I could not bring my mind to decide, and I did not want to trouble you with my doubts. I had almost made up my mind to write to you after my birthday, for I did vow, in the stillness of my heart, that day, if God would make me His servant, I would 'fight manfully under His banner,' but something held me back for sealing it, even by telling you; yet I know now that it was no less binding. Do you not see how the temptation put on the face of duty, as well as inclination? I thought of you first, of the toiling hands and head that had never rested for my sake, of the home you were born to and I could make for you again, of Ben's education, and all I could do for my sisters, and Lucy at last, when I had earned the right to make her happy. Oh, mother, you do not know, even you, with all your love for me, cannot tell what a struggle it was, knowing Lucy

loved me, too; and, though she would not say a word, I know that she *hoped* I would choose.

"I did not go near the house again. I have only seen her once since. I shut myself up in my room, I did as people used to do in old times, when they tried to discern God's will and empty themselves of selfish hinderances to it. I fasted, and prayed, and thought, and read my Bible, and, mother, I am not ashamed to tell you I wept; sometimes I walked the room pressing my hands against my head, for it seemed as though my brain would burst. The sacrifice seemed too great! I could not give up Lucy. Then your letter came. Oh, what a comfort! 'At evening time, there was light!' It came like a message of peace, like the leaves of healing to Christian after he fought with Apollyon in the Valley of Humility! I cannot tell you what it was to me, or what it was not. It seemed easy then, no, not easy, but less impossible, to give up the thought of Lucy's love, and the worldly part of the temptation all vanished.

"I went to Mr. Bradstreet, and told him that I could not accept his kindness. I knew he would not understand it, and he did not. He felt hurt, more about Lucy than because I was ungrateful; he seemed to think I could not love her as much as I said I did, or I would not throw her away for a 'fanatical idea.' He was right about my not coming there any more, though it has been just like home this winter. He said, and I know it is so, that even if he should give his consent for Lucy to marry a poor minister, he could not afford to take enough out of his business and settle on her to make her as comfortable as she

ought to be, and I should be only selfish in asking her to wait. But he let me see her again, and that was a great comfort; for, though I told her I hoped she would be very happy, and marry, and forget me, it will be something to think of as long as I live, that she did love me and understand why I gave her up, and did not try to change me. Only once she laid her head on my shoulder and sobbed as if her heart was breaking, and said, 'Oh, Carrol, is death any harder than giving you up!' It did not seem to me that it could be harder to either of us than to say good-by forever. But the struggle is all over now, and, in a little while, I shall not be here to keep it in remembrance, and the pain will die away. I can do all the more good if I never marry, perhaps, and I can make *you* happy. My choice will make you happy, I know.

"I almost forgot to tell you that I have the Valedictory! Only think of it!—when, six months ago, I should have telegraphed it to you, I believe. If you could *only* be here on Commencement Day. I cannot give it up yet. It will be nothing to me; I have no one here to care—that I ought to feel would care, I mean."

Long, long after she had finished this letter, Mrs. Austin remembered the other which had come that morning. She had her wish, but what an ordeal her child had passed to reach the goal she had pointed out to him! It passed through her mind again and again, and his noble self-conquest, before she came back to what he had said of Commencement Day. She had always secretly hoped to be there and share

in his triumph. The wish had been the one darling self-indulgence of her life for the past two years; but she had failed to lay aside the means to accomplish it. Her habit of prudent foresight had, by God's blessing, helped her to meet every want for herself and her children. There was even a little sum accumulating in the hands of a kind friend, against unforeseen need, but she did not dare to draw upon it, any more than if it had belonged to a stranger. Yet it seemed hard to give up the journey, especially hard when her boy appeared so to need her comfort and sympathy. She said to herself, with an almost rebellious sigh, it was only one with her life, always to be chastened and restrained, even in what seemed most lawful.

But the other letter! Now that Carrol's was at last refolded, she touched it as she looked for the envelope. It was short, and the signature unknown to her. There was an enclosure, which she did not unfold:—

"DEAR MADAM: The year before your husband's death, he lent me twenty dollars to come to the place where I am now residing. He looked upon it as a gift, I know, for there was then little hope that I should ever repay it. I have always intended to, and do so now, enclosing you a check for twenty-five dollars, the original sum, with interest."

So it is in life, that our hopes are never so near fulfilment as when we think them quite lost.

## CHAPTER V.

"I do hope we shall have good places. It's so nice having reserved seats; I don't believe I should have come at all to-day, if we had not had tickets for them." It was little Miss Perkins, who hurried along Benefit Street at a far more rapid pace than was usual with her. "Dear me, Lucy, how fast you do walk! Do you think there is any need of quite so much hurry?"

"You know how early people go just as well as I do, Jane; and Henry charged me not to get crowded by the door of a pew, or I should not be able to see at all. Just look at all those ladies! We are not the only ones that have reserved seats." And so they hurried on until they came to the old church which had been the scene of Commencement-Day triumphs from time immemorial.

Already a rainbow-hued crowd fluttered up the aisles, and stretched around the front seats of the broad galleries, like a row of tulips bordering a grass-plot, heralds of the mass of humanity, masculine, feminine, and juvenile, that would pack the whole house to suffocation two hours later. The young girls paused in the broad aisle, and nodded to Ella Beckford, stationed in the choir, close to the grand organ that had pealed out Old Hundred at midnight at the close of the Commencement sermon. Miss Perkins, quick to discern acquaintances, for all the eye-glass that proclaimed near-sightedness, waved her fan here and there, and shook her parasol in recognition, while

Lucy Bradstreet, her companion, satisfied the guardian of the reserved seats that they had claims to be admitted to them. Already, nearly every pew in the enclosed space had one or two occupants, and it was some little time before the fastidious Miss Perkins could decide where to bestow herself and her flounces. To be seen was quite as much her object as to see, even though the front pews were sure to be filled with grave old doctors of divinity and unattractive trustees. There were distinguished strangers always scattered here and there among them, and that delightful George Cushing, who wrote those clever stories for *Harper*, was expected, and the poet of yesterday was young and handsome. Besides, the aisles were always filled, and there was an opportunity for some of the gentlemen to slip along and chat while the band was playing. So, in spite of Henry Bradstreet's admonition, Jane Perkins was determined to sit as far forward as possible, and next to the door of the pew. The one in which she finally consented to settle her redundant array, after trying several that proved unsatisfactory, had a single occupant. "Quite as good as nobody," remarked Miss Perkins, in a tone that was far from being a whisper. Miss Perkins had reference to any oversight that might be exercised upon her little schemes for the enjoyment of passing flirtations. The lady did not look like a person who would interfere with or remark upon her young neighbors. She had a calm, grave face, so familiar that Lucy bowed as she came into the pew, and then checked herself in the fear that she had made a mistake. But it drew her to look at her

neighbor again and again. The thin, oval outline, the firm lips, the pale-brown hair parted away under the plain bonnet-cap, were strangely familiar. She was evidently a lady, though her dress—all of stone-color and black, though it was not mourning—was not in the prevailing style, and her bonnet was unfashionably large. She looked at the long, slender hands quietly crossed, noted the absence of all ornament, and then turned away, lest her stealthy glances should be noticed and counted rudeness.

Faster and faster came the throng; fans fluttered in the galleries—a tulip-bed now—and the spaces around them grew less and less. Jane Perkins stood sentry for their pew, politely unconscious of the faint efforts of several individuals to occupy the two seats remaining, and the warning injunctions of the usher, "Five ladies in each pew, if you please." Airy French bonnets and Chantilly scarfs marked the fashionable city ladies who had come to witness the *début* of some son or brother; and toilets quite as elegant, though not so novel, and a certain broad, slightly *blasé* look, those residents of the elegant mansions near the college, who had seen the rush and parade of many commencements, and wished the programme well over. There were the college people, the wives of professors and trustees, who were personally interested in many of the actors in the brief drama about to be performed, and chance pleasure-seekers, who had no feeling save in the amusement of the passing hour.

Lucy Bradstreet looked around upon them, and remembered how often and how eagerly she had an-

ticipated this day; and, now it had come, was there a heavier heart than her own in all that great multitude! Her brother had done well, much better than they had hoped—thanks to the generous emulation with which his friend had inspired him—and his friend had won the valedictory; but it was indeed a valedictory parting words to her, as well as to his classmates. She knew he would leave next day, and that their lives were henceforth apart; it was an ever-present thought.

"How tiresome!" Miss Perkins had been a faithful sentry, but even her calm obliviousness of the numerous modest attempts to pass her could not prevail against the sister and cousin of young Martin, one of the graduates, who considered their right to the pew quite as good as Jane Perkins's, who had not a relative in college, as they knew perfectly well; and their parasols were quite as pointed as the one that kept guard at the desired threshold. They did not mind the cool stare of amazement at their temerity one iota. Miss Martin's father was a member of Congress, even though Miss Perkins did not choose her acquaintance, and two winters at Washington had not increased her maiden bashfulness; she was much the taller and more sweeping of the two, so Miss Perkins had rather the worst of the encounter as Belle Martin and her cousin pushed past, regardless of fringe and lace, and nearly twitched the sentry's mantle from her shoulders. Nor did the look of ineffable scorn and writhing contempt darted after them ruffle Miss Belle's serenity in the least. She had reserved tickets; she had fought for a good

place and won it; she was very much obliged to Miss Perkins for keeping it; and she made herself very comfortable.

Very different was the movement at the opposite end of the pew, where the lady made room for Lucy Bradstreet, and the young girl quietly and pleasantly acknowledged it. The stranger thought she had not seen so homelike a smile among all the unknown sea of faces that oppressed her, and made her realize her isolation. She had a quick eye for elegance and taste for all the plainness of her own attire; and the snowy chip hat, with its blue crape and white moss roses, made its wearer like a lily of the valley—to pursue the flowers—in the neighborhood of the full-blown Miss Martin, and even Jane Perkins's overloaded dress bonnet.

"They are coming!" telegraphed the quick-sighted little lady, drawing herself as far as possible from her unfashionable neighbors, while she availed herself of the elevation of a footstool to see the procession pass in. The tall, gentlemanly usher, with his blue-ribboned baton of office; the dignified and undignified dignitaries that followed; the short men and the spare men; the shining red faces, bathed in perspiration, and the pale countenances, indicative of much sermon-writing and dyspepsia; the young men, who had suddenly found themselves made doctors of law and divinity, to their own astonishment and disgust of their rivals, and the old men, who had worked for fifty years for the church and the world, with no public recognition of their merits, not so much as the moderatorship of an association; smiling,

well-to-do business men, arm-in-arm with the minister of a country church, who had sent three boys to college on five hundred a year; the nervous senior, whose heart beat fast as he recognized dear familiar faces, and resolved to "do or die," and the callow freshman, in his first tailor's suit, who imagined himself a conspicuous feature in the pageant; the noisy, brassy, unheeded band, who puffed away for the edification of small boys and young ladies from the country. Every member of the long, slow procession, that made Commencement Day, had filed in and bestowed themselves, before Miss Perkins removed her eyeglass and subsided into her seat.

It was so provoking to be separated from Lucy, and to find the aisle blocked up with a number of women, after all; not a man among them, or even an acquaintance, to whom she could say, "How ridiculous!" when Archie Cushing tripped on his gown, and almost deposited himself on the floor of the stage; or, "What a pity!" when Ellis blushed and stammered, and lost the prompting that would have saved him from that awkward pause, fairly stage-blind at finding all that sea of faces turned up to his. And after a while, the band played again, and some gentlemen friends of the Martins pushed along and talked over her in such a loud, vulgar way. Altogether Miss Jane did not find herself as pleasantly situated as her caste-loving, admiration-seeking nature could have desired.

And Lucy, who had aimed less selfishly, would have desired nothing better than she had found; she could see perfectly from her more remote corner of

the pew; she had discovered her father next to Governor Green, his great friend and ally, in the fifth pew from the platform, as became so generous a patron of the college. She could see Henry, every now and then moving about a little restlessly, for, after all the trouble he had taken to point out the most eligible seat to Miss Beckford, he was sure she would never be able to hear a word of his oration, with all those boys stamping about the gallery. What in the world did they allow such shavers to crowd up the church, any way? Henry had forgotten how he walked after the fascinating trombone and cornet players in the days of his own youth, and had eaten nuts and apples in the midst of an equally interested audience.

But, above all, there was a face in full relief against the dark pillar by which it leaned, a pale face, with large, luminous eyes, that sought the nook which sheltered her with a constancy and boldness unlike their late chance intercourse. Turn when she would, Carrol Austin was looking toward her, and now and then his face seemed to light with intelligence and an earnest warmth that startled her, he had seemed of late so reserved and unconscious of her presence. What would the stranger near her think? for she had evidently noticed those glances, as how could she help it? But it was his last day, poor fellow, and her heart sank down like lead with the thought, and she clasped her hands with a wringing, nervous gesture, and tried to forget it again. Only once could she banish the thought—when her brother came forward, with his firm, manly tread,

such a contrast to the hesitancy of some, and automaton stiffness of others, tossed his clustering hair from his forehead with his own careless grace, and, in clear, ringing tones, drew back the wandering attention, and moved the listless faces before him into interest in him and his theme. It was a real triumph, and Lucy felt her cheeks glow with pleasure, and smiled back to her father's energetic and delighted nod. Mr. Bradstreet would not have changed places with Governor Green himself at that moment.

"It was my brother," said Lucy, simply, to the lady in the corner, for there was an answering sympathy in her quiet face, as the young girl turned, still flushed and excited.

A strange glow, a sudden trembling of the mouth made Lucy wonder, as she looked into the lady's eyes. The slender, ungloved hand was put out toward her own and then withdrawn. How the strange likeness to some familiar face puzzled Lucy again! But it was only a fancy. The lady seemed very, very kind, as if she knew just how that little sister felt, when she whispered, "I congratulate you, my dear; I do not wonder that you are proud of him."

"Have you any relative in the class?" Lucy ventured to ask, for she wanted to see that smile again; it drew her toward the stranger irresistibly.

"My son—" but another speaker had appeared, and there was no time for explanation.

One more, and the Valedictory. A strange faintness came over Lucy, as she saw it was so near; she turned toward the fresh air from the window. The lady was very pale, too, and her eyes were fastened

upon the stage, and her mouth had almost a painful compression.

How nobly dignified the tall figure of the valedictorian seemed, in the sweeping folds of the silken robe that fell to his feet, as he stood for a moment without speaking! He did not trust himself with even a glance toward the dear face that was so near him now, but Lucy's eyes never left him until she felt a hand laid heavily upon her arm. The face beside her was bent down, and the frail figure was trembling with excitement. Lucy understood it all then; the revelation swept over her in a moment. She laid her hand in the long, slender fingers so unconsciously put forth, drew closer, closer to the bowed form, and whispered—"Mother!"

The craving yearning for sympathy in that day's trials and triumphs seemed suddenly filled, and the two women, so lately strangers, clung to each other until the last word of farewell died sorrowfully away.

Even strangers were moved by the earnestness of tone, the high self-devotion of the aims they listened to; they felt that a noble purpose and an unlooked-for maturity of experience had found voice, and good men blessed him in their hearts, when they heard he was to enter their ranks, and prophesied great usefulness in the field their strength had been spent upon.

"Throwing himself away; fine fellow as ever was," said Mr. Bradstreet to Governor Green, while the hum of compliment and favorable criticism sounded around him; and, in spite of the soreness he at times felt when Carrol's name was spoken, he scarcely

knew which boy he was most proud of as he folded up his programme to hear the president's "few remarks."

Yes, commencement was over to all but the hungry men anticipating the bountiful public dinner they were now at liberty to turn to, and the young girls who were prepared to look their loveliest at the evening's levee. Jane Perkins beckoned to her friend, and to a passing escort at the same moment; Lucy and Mrs. Austin stood up together.

"I am so glad I have seen you," said Lucy, shyly, her face covered with a quick blush as she remembered her exclamation. But the kind eyes looked so lovingly down upon her—Carrol's eyes! and it seemed like Carrol's voice, too, as the lady said:

"I shall not forget you, my dear child."

Poor, sad-hearted, lonely Lucy! lonely for all her father's kindness, and her brother's pride; and for all the wealth that was her portion, and the envy that pointed her out as she moved among the gay throng at the evening's brilliant reception. It was here she first knew that Carrol loved her, here in this very room, as she sang, "I do not love thee." How happy she was that night, leaning on his arm, as they passed out of the door together; and now she could not even speak to him; only a bow, and such a lingering look as they passed! But her father was very kind. "It could not do any harm," he reasoned, as he thought that the boy was going to-morrow, and they could both be trusted.

"Good-evening, Carrol; you did well to-day"—and he shook hands warmly. "I was proud of you."

Can you take Lucy off my hands for a while? I must speak to my old friend, Senator Story."

So they were together once more, and alone, for no one remarked them in that busy crowd; and when they separated, with aching hearts, poor children—Lucy said, "Remember, Carrol, I will wait."

## CHAPTER VI.

"I WILL wait."

It was a promise given unsolicited, one that he was too generous to trust, for he knew all that she would meet with when once society had claimed the rich man's lovely daughter as its own. The homage, real and insincere, the love that she could not fail to attract, her father's solicitude for her happiness, the natural result of time and absence, in wearing away the vivid remembrance of him, and the disenchantment of a fuller appreciation, a woman's knowledge of all she must give up for his sake.

So Carrol Austin did not rest upon that parting valediction; but, in spite of reason and of will, it haunted and comforted him, not that he gave up to idle dreams—his life was too real, his work too earnest—but there were hours when the fulfilment of his noblest hopes seemed afar off, and the knowledge of all he was accomplishing for those who leaned on him, and the unswerving friendship of more than a mother's love, seemed insufficient to satisfy the crav-

ing for daily sympathy, for a nearer human companionship, and then the remembrance of these words came with a soothing like the touch of a soft hand upon his forehead. Lucy had loved him well enough to say it and believe it, however life might change her purpose, and he held her free as air to do so, only praying that she might be happy.

Hal Bradstreet and Ella Beckford were both married, but not to each other. They had children growing up around them, and laughed lightly at their childish flirtations. Jane Perkins was a fretful, faded wife, selfishly exacting, as such a nature could not fail to be in its full development; and her friend Lucy could but wonder, and sometimes chide the restless mourning of a life that outwardly would seem to have every desire fulfilled.

Lucy Bradstreet still, Miss Bradstreet now, living alone with her father, and entertaining his friends, and the distinguished men he liked to gather around him, with quiet dignity and composure, yet with the ease and grace of a woman of the world. No wonder that Governor Green used to say that she realized the old English epitaph—

"Polite as she in courts had ever been,  
Yet, good as she, the world had never seen;"

and it was especially kind, when it was generally supposed that she had rejected him, confirmed old bachelor as he had been considered.

Mr. Bradstreet did not advocate that marriage, flattering as the proposal was, for his friend had been groomsman at his own wedding, and, though well

preserved, could not be more than five years younger than himself; but it was rather annoying to see all suitors, however wealthy or humble, transformed into steadfast friends. It never occurred to him that the foolish affair of ten years ago was underlying the reserve that so perplexed him. Lucy was the soul of truth, and he knew perfectly well she had never heard from young Austin, or he from her, unless indirectly, and he trusted to the wise man's saying, "Where no fuel is, the fire goeth out."

"We are to dine at Henry's to-morrow, Lucy, if you have no engagement, to meet some distinguished individual, I believe."

Mr. Bradstreet gave the intelligence casually at the tea-table, and relapsed into the journal immediately.

"Did he tell you who, papa?" Lucy asked, with very little interest.

It was a soft evening in early summer, just such an evening as the one, ten years before, when, for the first and last time, an arm, that was not her father's and not her brother's, had encircled her. Something in the perfume of the flowers had recalled it vividly. A sharp pang of hope unfulfilled, a thought of a dreary, lonely future, came with it. Ten years now since even the most casual intelligence had reached her—the election of Carrol Austin to the professorship of a Western college, a newspaper mention such as had told her of his ordination. But there was "fuel" in spite of Mr. Bradstreet's comfortable conclusion—the remembrance of that happy winter, the knowledge that he was steadily and successfully pursuing his

course, and, above all, a deeper appreciation of the truthfulness and honor, and utter self-sacrifice that had resigned her.

"Oh, did you speak, Lucy? Who? I really don't know. Some literary man and his wife, I believe, quite out of Hal's usual line. He's written a moral philosophy, or something of that sort, that they are going to adopt in college. I don't see why, I'm sure, when every one knows Dr. Cogshall's is the best text-book in the English language. Like every thing else, though, can't be satisfied without this continual change."

So Miss Bradstreet made her simple toilet for her brother's dinner, without the slightest curiosity or even interest in his guests, and entered the dining-room rather late to be presented to Prof. Austin!

"I took very good care not to tell her it was you, Carrol," said Henry Bradstreet, who was highly delighted with meeting 'the friend of his youth.' She's a maiden aunt, you know, but a pretty good girl still—walks after the old gentleman, and makes his tea in the most dutiful manner possible."

So he was married; her father said his wife was to be there. Something had prevented it, for the rest were familiar faces; she would not ask what, for a dreary, benumbing feeling came over her. She had not looked for this as the end of her vigil; but it was human nature, and she had no right to expect any thing different, when his last words had been—"No, Lucy, you must not say so; you are quite free!" She did not acknowledge what had kept her love alive, and how keen the blast that had quenched

it. She thought it was faith in human nature that had suddenly been darkened; and she listened, and replied, and was courteous, even gay, in her bearing, through all that long, bountiful, wearying dinner.

She stood before the coffee-tray, in the drawing-room, at her sister-in-law's request, when the gentlemen came from the table. It was a relief to have something to do, a shelter from the few words that must pass between them. She could not help seeing that manhood had developed the once slender figure into full and noble outlines; that the fair hair was thinned about his white temples; that he spoke with a deeper thought and utterance. There was no disappointment in time's work. She wondered if he thought her changed. She had found a gray hair two weeks ago! She was conscious of the sedate and thoughtful face that looked out from her mirror to her—that youth was over, and its illusions, alas!

"You do not ask for my mother, Miss Bradstreet." She started, for Mr. Austin had come directly to her. "My mother has not forgotten you, however."

"I have been remiss. I remember her distinctly." How often had that one meeting been lived over! and how firmly was the remembrance united to his! "She is well, I hope?"

"Yes, and making my home happy, though she is a grandmother now, and my sisters steal her away sometimes."

"And Mrs. Austin—she is not with you to-day? You take no sugar, if I remember." For all her self-restraint, the delicate Sèvres cup trembled in her hand.

"Mrs. Austin?—oh, my brother Ben is much too fickle to think of marriage, even if he were old enough. He has more flames than our old friend Miss Perkins used to boast of."

"You misunderstand me. My father led me to suppose that I should meet Mrs. Carrol Austin here to-day."

"No, Lucy, forgive me; not unless he has withdrawn the old denial; not unless I am speaking to her now!" And, as in the old, old times, their eyes met for the first time that day; hers with sudden questioning, and his with a fond, though reproachful look.

But they separated again without betrothal, unless a fuller and more perfect knowledge of the hearts and lives of each other formed it. Not that Mr. Bradstreet again denied his daughter's hand; she herself pointed out to her friend how impossible it would be to leave him, now that the habit and usage of a lifetime had made him dependent upon her for comfort and happiness. But their separation was not in utter silence as heretofore, and Lucy learned, by the history of his growing honor and usefulness, that, even in this world, "he that forsaketh houses and lands, for his Master's sake, shall receive an hundred-fold."

The day came at last when she saw the Western home of which he had so often written. It was to be hers henceforth, all that she could claim, for her father's house was already occupied by strangers, and her cares for him were ended. Almost half her lifetime had passed since she gave the promise she

had so faithfully kept, and the frail figure that came forth to welcome her was already bowed with advancing age. The brown hair was changed to silver; the face full of that repose which overshadows those who dwell in the land of Beulah, awaiting the messenger of the King, and her kiss was like a benediction, when she folded the daughter she had so yearned over in her arms.

Mrs. Austin had seen her life-work well rewarded, despite many changes, many crosses, and more than one bitter disappointment; and now that her son's home was brightened, and his youth renewed with the accomplishment of all it had desired, she could fold her hands tranquilly, and say: "It is enough; now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace."

*SINGLE LESSONS, FIVE DOLLARS.*

## SINGLE LESSONS, FIVE DOLLARS.

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MRS. MARSHALL had been out all the morning on a kindly errand. There had been a sudden death in the neighborhood, under peculiarly painful circumstances. The family in which it occurred had few intimate acquaintances, and her heart yearned over the motherless children. She had done what she could, which was little; she had given ready sympathy and tears for the desolate household, and had been able to assist them in procuring mourning for the funeral. It was a burning August day, and by the time this was accomplished she was fatigued and heated, and a dull throbbing in her temples foretold a coming headache as the result of the morning's excitement.

Her home looked delightful as she came up the neatly-kept lawn, under the shadow of the old trees; the house had been made cool by closed blinds, and her own room, which had received its weekly cleaning in her absence, had a quiet, restful air, very inviting after the glare of the burning sun. The bed, particularly spread with fair white linen, and as

smooth as hands could make it, tempted her, but dinner was nearly ready, and she indulged herself only by throwing off her street dress and boots for a wrapper and slippers. It was Saturday, and the wrapper, which had been worn through the week, was by no means fresh; but it was cooler than any other, and the slippers were the easiest in her collection, although they had already been condemned for some very observable holes in each side. Mrs. Marshall was naturally tidy and orderly, and, but for the force of circumstances, would never have appeared at her dinner-table in this style; but there were only the children, and no visitor, except her husband's sister, who, though "the pink of neatness" herself, readily excused the unusual carelessness, knowing what had brought it about.

"You are not eating at all," she said, kindly, after a little while; "you should have lain down before dinner; you are over-fatigued."

"I believe I must lie down presently, though I shall not have much time; Mr. Marshall comes out in the early train on Saturday, and Horace will be with him. I must be dressed by five, and it is three now; after three—"

Yes, nearly twenty minutes past when they rose from the table; and Mrs. Marshall had just gained her room, when the waiter came to say that "a poor lady" wished to speak with her.

"A woman, or a lady? You know what I mean," said Mrs. Marshall, arresting the disrobing process she had already commenced.

"She looks like a lady, ma'am; but she's in a

great deal of trouble, and would like to see you herself, just a minute, please."

Mrs. Marshall was tempted to send down word that she was engaged, but any one in trouble always enlisted her ready sympathy; more than that, she felt that advice and kind words were as much her duty as almsgiving, so she wearily replaced her brooch, and drew the easy slippers toward her again. She did not exactly like to see any stranger in such a dress, but the least exertion was a task, and she must use expedition or she would have no rest at all.

A pleasant-looking person of thirty or thirty-five rose to meet her. She was dressed with perfect neatness and simplicity, and with that appropriateness which belongs to the Frenchwoman. A plain gray dress and cape, with collar and cuffs of snowy linen, her black hair brushed as smooth as satin over a broad forehead, and hidden away under a white straw bonnet, with purple ribbons just touched and changed by the sun. Her eyes were dark, large, and sad, and, as she began to explain why she had come, her lips quivered painfully.

"I am very sorry to trouble you, madame," she said, in a low voice, with a little foreign accent. "I am a stranger to you, but I have heard of you."

This was nothing strange; such cases were constantly occurring, where one lady in the neighborhood, taking an interest in some poorer neighbor, would do all she could in her power to relieve her, and tell her of others kindly disposed.

Mrs. Marshall was instantly interested. The lady-like appearance of the stranger, and her evident dis-

tress and diffidence, awoke every womanly feeling in her behalf.

"Sit down; pray, sit down," she said, as the lady still stood, making her explanations, and twisting her parasol in her hands nervously.

"I know I am a stranger to you, madam, but I never was in so much trouble in my life—never." And here she broke down for a moment, trying in vain to conquer the tremulousness of her voice.

That any one should be afraid of Mrs. Marshall, who always had an ear for every pitiful story that a wayside beggar might have to tell, and who looked upon any one in sorrow or trouble as a "king's messenger," not to be lightly turned away! She could not bear to see it.

"Don't distress yourself; there, I understand it all; it does not need any apology; I dare say you are in trouble. Do you live near here?" she said, looking into the unfamiliar face.

"I have been here not long. I live up on the hill—on Frenchman's Hill, they call it."

"Oh, is your husband the bird-cage maker?" Yet the bird-cage builder always seemed a thrifty, well-to-do person, and had a pretty little cottage of his own. Mrs. Marshall had often thought of the little French colony on the hill, the only spot on the outskirts of the town where her errands of good-will had never called her. They were tidy and industrious, and never seemed to need assistance. She was glad, since one of them did, that they had applied to her. We will not say that there was no feeling of internal satisfaction at having been thus selected.

She was not conscious of it at the moment, but probably the evil Presence that delights to sully even our best actions whispered: "She must have been told how charitable you are, and how ready you are to comfort or assist people."

Possibly he had gained a hearing in the morning, when she was trudging about in the sun, and so bestirred himself more readily. We say "possibly," for she did not confess to any such suggestions, but we are all very much inclined that way, and the applicant who tells Mrs. Smith that Mrs. Jones did not give her any thing, rich as she is, and that Mrs. Brown had said she was sure Mrs. Black *would* help her, for she always helped every one, is apt to get all she asks for. Mrs. Marshall did not consciously give heed to any such internal prompting.

"That is not my husband," the woman said, growing a little more composed, though her lips still quivered. "I live near there, madame; I have been here six weeks. My husband is gone to France; I never need money when he is at home. I never need money before. We had a store, madame—in St. Louis—and lose a great deal of money; twenty-one hundred dollar. It was a great deal."

"Yes, indeed," said Mrs. Marshall, encouragingly. She had just the air of one of those neat Frenchwomen in the small dry-goods shops and variety-stores. "It must have been very hard."

The stranger looked up gratefully at the kind tone, and went on more steadily:

"Then we came to New York to see what we could do, and my husband he hear that his fader and

moder was dead in France, and leave him little money. I will have plenty when he come home. But I must borrow some now."

"Oh, she only wants to borrow," thought Mrs. Marshall; "that is encouraging. I should like to help her, she seems so tidy and civil. Poor soul! and her husband is in France, and she here among strangers, out of money; how unpleasant it must be!"

"How did you happen to come to William's Bridge?" she inquired. "Did you have any relations here?"

"I will tell you; my child was sick; I have two children; the doctor say we must come in the country. It was the doctor's wife tell me to come to you."

"Oh, Mrs. Hillman?"

"Yes, madame, the doctor's wife just below. I go to her, I tell her all my trouble, and ask her to help me. She say the doctor was away, she have no money in the house. I ask her if there was no oder ladies around here I can go to; she say, 'You go to Mrs. Marshall, she will help you.'"

"Oh, that is it," and Mrs. Marshall began to understand the case. It was some patient of the doctor's, probably called in for the sick child, and having no other acquaintances in the neighborhood, she had naturally applied to his wife in her trouble. "Mrs. Hillman was right; I will certainly help you if I can," Mrs. Marshall said, kindly. "When is your husband coming back?"

"On the twenty-fifth of this month, madame, and I can pay you again. I will tell you. He leave me

money; then my broder he say he must go to California, and he will send me what money I lend him. I lend him fifty-tree dollar, madame, but he have not send it yet. So, I have to ask a woman to take my clothes—I have good clothes, madame—and lend me ten dollars. Now, she says she is going away; she is going in the six o'clock train, and she will take all my good clothes if I do not get the ten dollar."

"Oh, that would be too bad," said Mrs. Marshall; "I dare say they are worth a great deal more." And she glanced at the neat apparel of the speaker, from the trim boot, just showing under the hem of her dress, to the bright gold rings in her ears, her only ornament, save a heavy wedding-ring and guard on one ungloved hand.

"I do not like to sell my ear-ring and my brooch—my husband give them to me; but I bring them, madame; I thought you would keep them perhaps, and lend me the money. I bring my brooch in my purse." And she began to take out a brooch to match her ear-rings from an otherwise empty purse.

"What a taste the French have for trinkets!" thought Mrs. Marshall, instinctively placing her hand on the well-worn pin that fastened her wrapper at the throat. "Here is this poor soul with ornaments far handsomer than any of mine. But I can't take them; it would look like distrusting her."

The lady held out the brooch. "If you will take it, madame, and keep it to the twenty-fifth—it is only fifteen days."—"She has counted it often enough, I dare say," thought Mrs. Marshall.

"It is hard for me to ask you, madame—I never

want help before; but my husband is gone, and I am in so much trouble." Again a mistiness that might soon be tears dimmed her large, pleading eyes, and the tremulous voice faltered.

Mrs. Marshall never had a case of this sort before, among all her dealings with the poor. There was much begging, and but little borrowing at William's Bridge, although one poor neighbor, to save her pride a shock, did occasionally ask *a loan* of twenty-five cents rather than beg for it. But this was a different thing; the applicant was evidently perfectly respectable and reliable. She asked distinctly for what she wanted, and no paltry sum. She was so ready, too, to make it good. Mrs. Marshall could not bear to take what had evidently been love-tokens from her husband, and yet she did not like to refuse a pledge that it appeared a comfort to offer. Her delicacy of feeling decided.

"I do not like to take your brooch, but I suppose you will feel better if I do."

"Oh, yes, madame; I would be so glad, I beg you to take it, and my ear-rings, too." And she hurriedly began to detach them.

Mrs. Marshall held out her hands for them, feeling very much ashamed of so doing all the while; it seemed such meanness to distrust the poor soul.

"If we lived in New York, now, it would be another thing. I should have to risk hurting her feelings, and go and inquire about her," she thought, as she went up-stairs slowly, turning over the matter in her mind. "I suppose Louis would say I ought to as it is, and I would go quietly if it were any other time;

but the sun is so scorching, and I should not get back in time to dress for the train. I am too tired to dress without resting; I should not be fit for any thing this evening. It would be a shame to doubt her, too; she tells such a straightforward story."

Thinking thus, she turned over the brooch, which was large, and had evidently been carefully used, for it was scarcely tarnished, to see if there was any inscription or initials; but neither of the ornaments was marked. They were not to her taste—too large and showy, but of a new pattern, which she had seen several of her acquaintances wear; a centre of black enamel, with a wrought gold border, and a gold pendant from the centre, with two loops formed of red stones—carbuncles—though Mrs. Marshall did not suppose the stones could be real.

"See there," she said, passing through her sister's room on her way to her own. "Isn't that fine?"

"Very," said Miss Marshall, who paused combing out her long hair before the glass. "Why, where did you get them?"

"They belong to a poor neighbor of ours, who wants to borrow some money, and begs me to keep them till she returns it. I hated to do so, but I suppose she will feel happier."

"Let me see"—and Miss Marshall bent forward to examine them. "Not very good taste, has she? but then I like a little jewelry, and that good."

She turned back to her dressing-table, where a single diamond lay on the green-velvet toilet-cushion. It was plainly set with a rim of black and silver, the whole brooch scarcely larger than an ordinary stud;

it was her favorite, almost her sole ornament in use, and even as it lay quietly, proved its rare value by the soft light flashing from it.

Mrs. Marshall was quite as decided in her taste, and her husband had always held jewelry a relic of barbarism, a poor tribute to any woman of modern times, so that her experience was very small.

"I wonder if it is really good?" she thought, as she selected an empty box, and placed it safely in a drawer, a doubt for the first time crossing her mind.

"Let me look at those again, please," said Miss Marshall, coming to the door. "How much does she want you to lend her?"

"Ten dollars."

"It's not worth that much—I don't think it is, but the French are never scrupulous about real values, you know. Are you going to lend her all of it?"

"I said I would." And Mrs. Marshall hurriedly recounted the story.

"Oh, then, Mrs. Hillman knows all about it, I suppose. But I thought the jewelry looked too new, as if it had never been worn. Well, I must say you have had your share of applicants for relief since I have been here."

There was something in the last suggestion. The brooch looked *very* new, the ear-rings a little more tarnished. Mrs. Marshall took up the key of her money-drawer with a little hesitancy. She had expected to find ten dollars in a certain purse; there were but five. She remembered, too, that she had thought, when putting it up, "There is five dollars,

for a wonder, without any immediate claim on it." She opened another portmonnaie rather more plethoric; it was "house-money," and never applied to her own use; but there was a roll of ten-dollar bills, and she thought she could borrow one for the two weeks.

Still, with the doubt just infused in her mind, a wonderful prudence came over her. "I have no right to risk the house-money, but I can do what I like with my own; and I always try to be so conscientious and exact in the use of my means, I do not believe I shall be allowed to lose it"—as if she had stood on the bank of a river, and threw in a golden coin, saying, "I mean to do right; I don't believe it will sink." The dread of really hurting an innocent person's feelings came over her again, and the ill Presence, assuming the soft voice of a ministering angel, as it can at will, whispered, "Say not unto thy neighbor, go and come again, and to-morrow I will give, when thou hast it by thee." And again, as she stood irresolutely by the open desk:

"Withhold not good from them to whom it is due, when it is in the power of thine hand to do it."

"Better to give to two unworthy persons than to deny one really in need," she had often counselled herself, and this was such a peculiar case! She brought it home: how would she feel if among strangers in a strange country, with her husband absent, and a sick child to care for, if such a strait had come upon her, to have her word questioned, and her honesty suspected? She took what was for her an heroic resolution, to be prudent, and went back quickly to

the parlor. The sad eyes were raised with a hopeful look; how could she disappoint them!

"I find I have but five dollars," she said, hurrying over the unpleasant reconsideration of her first generous promise. "I will lend you that, and perhaps Mrs. Hillman will lend you the rest."

"She might as well divide the risk with me, if there is any," she reflected.

"Well, madame," and the low voice sank despondingly, "perhaps she may be so kind; but if madame will give the all, and take my wedding-rings; the woman go at six, and my good clothes go too." She drew off the heavy, shining circlets.

"Oh, no," said Mrs. Marshall, involuntarily. Her own wedding-ring had never been off her finger from the moment her husband had placed it there. She was almost superstitious about withdrawing it. "Oh, I could not take that!"

But the lady urged it; and Mrs. Marshall began to feel ashamed of her doubts. "She knows I suspect her; she wishes to convince me that it is all right; she will give up her wedding-ring, in her husband's absence, too!

"This will convince Adelaide that she is not an impostor; for these I know to be good gold," she thought, as they lay in her hand. "Well, I will take them," and she turned away a second time.

"She seems so anxious, Adelaide, and is even willing to give up her wedding-ring and guard. See, these are real, and so large; they must have been respectable people." But as she turned them over she noticed that there was no date on either!

Miss Marshall had been thinking over the matter. She resided in town, and a near relative, who was the almoner of a Dorcas society, had told her of so many ingenious devices.

"Large enough, and good gold, apparently, but hollow, perfectly hollow; only see how light they are. I don't say she means to deceive you; but I would be careful, Jenny."

Mrs. Marshall felt very uncomfortably as she went back to her desk. Undoubtedly the right way would be to go and inquire the truth of the woman's story; but it was utterly impossible in her fatigued and wearied state, and so hurried for time, and then, what she thought most of, the dread of injuring an innocent person's feelings!

"Well, I will lend her five dollars on her honor," she decided hurriedly. "If she is not honest, it may touch her, and even then it may be returned. If she doesn't, I can go without my new boots, and make my gloves do another month. Dear knows, I want to do right!"

She gathered up the shining trinkets in her hand—brooch, ear-rings, and rings—and, taking the bill, returned to the waiting applicant. She placed the jewelry and the money in her hands.

"Here, I have brought you back your ornaments; I cannot keep them," she said; "it is not my way. I always like to help a poor neighbor when I can, and I believe you to be perfectly honest."

Here she paused, and looked steadily into the listener's face. "If she is not, she must show it!" was her thought; but not a muscle changed, only that

wistful, appealing look, and the surprise of having the ornaments returned.

"I will lend you five dollars on your word; it is all I can really call my own. See, I trust you perfectly. I do not know you, but I will believe you; I will not believe you deceive me. You can take the money."

"But if madame will take the brooch perhaps."

"No," said Mrs. Marshall, steadily.

"Or the ear-rings; my brooch I have not worn much."

"I see that it is quite new," said Mrs. Marshall, thinking of her sister's warning on that score.

"My ear-rings is more soiled; my little children climb up on my knee and pull them, madame knows"—and she tendered them almost humbly.

"Yes, but I do not care to take any thing but your word. I would not lend you the money at all, if I did not think you were honest." And again Mrs. Marshall looked steadily and searchingly in the woman's face.

"Not many ladies would do so, madame; you are very, very good."

"No," thought Mrs. Marshall. "Louis says there are not many such soft-hearted 'stupids' in our vicinity."

"I will go to the doctor's lady, she will lend me the rest! You think so, madame? I tell her you have help me?"

"Yes; tell her I have loaned you half of what you need; if she can she will give you the rest, or perhaps tell you some one else to apply to." And Mrs.

Marshall received the grateful woman's thanks standing; for it was late, and she felt still more nervous and excited from the interview. The thanks were neither profuse nor stereotyped, but quiet, fervent, and respectful, a relief, after the noisy Irish benedictions she often received.

She stood for a moment watching the neat figure as it passed swiftly down the gravel walk, which the gardener was rolling for the Sunday inspection his master was sure to give. The man looked up, both bowed, and the gate closed upon her.

"Was that a Frenchwoman, ma'am?" asked the nurse, as she came in, leading her little charge by the hand.

"Yes," said Mrs. Marshall, abruptly; "have you ever seen her before?"

"Oh, no; but I thought maybe it was some lady's French nurse come of a message; she was a tidy one, any way."

It was too late for the nap, and Mrs. Marshall sat down in her easy-chair, and put her hand on her throbbing temples. She did not feel satisfied; she was half inclined to be vexed with her good sister for having such a suspicious temper, and with herself for allowing her heart to lead her head, as it had done more than once before in her history.

"It will do no harm to send down and see what Mrs. Hillman really does know about her," was a thought full of relief. "Nora!"—and she went into the hall, calling Nora, whose movements were always as quick as her wit. "Nora, you saw that person who was here just now; she says her name is Mrs.

Sauty"—unfortunate name for the reality of her story! "Hurry down to Mrs. Hillman's, ask Mrs. Hillman what she knows about her, and whether she has lent her five dollars; tell her I have done so. Possibly she may be there still; if she is, tell her the lady would like to see her another moment."

"Yes, ma'am," said the girl, and with all quickness, but greatly wondering who the mysterious stranger could be that had interested her mistress so deeply.

It was not five minutes before she returned in breathless haste; reflection had taken the place of feeling, and Mrs. Marshall was almost prepared for her message.

"Mrs. Hillman sends her compliments, and she's just been there and gone, and she never laid eyes on her before to-day, and she's sorry for you, for she's afraid you've lost your money."

"Did she tell Mrs. Hillman I had lent it?"

"No, ma'am; she said you said you *would* lend her five dollars if she would lend her five."

Hateful duplicity! "False in one thing, false in all." Mrs. Marshall's face burned with mortification, with anger, with *remorse* at her own careless wastefulness. She, who always held herself responsible for every talent's tenfold repayment, who had been so happy of late with increased means of usefulness, and gratefully hoped it was a reward of her faithfulness in small things, acknowledging it as a trust, who made a conscience of every dollar she expended for herself or family, to throw away such a sum recklessly upon a professional impostor, perhaps; for if she

was an impostor, her perfect naturalness could only have been acquired by long practice!

She knew so many ways in which it might have been expended with good results! She had longed to make a useful parting gift to a friend going over the sea, to purchase a new dress for a poor body who could not get to church for want of clothes, and there was another behindhand with her rent, and yet another whose husband had broken his leg, and she expecting additional domestic cares! Forty demands at once sprang up suddenly to her recollection for that very five dollars she had thrown away.

She covered her face with her hands. "Oh, what can I do? Why should such an experience happen to *me*, when I try so hard to do right! What can I do?" And with her face still bowed, she sought the never-failing help that had made many a "crooked path straight" for her wandering feet.

She acknowledged her fault as humbly and as openly as a child; she promised to do better for the future if she might still be trusted with means to relieve the unfortunate; and then she felt calmer, as if forgiven though erring. "Perhaps God will help me to get it back again, or put it into the woman's heart to send it to me—such things have been!" And with the thought she sprang to her feet and went out into the hall. The window toward the stable-yard was open, and she saw the man putting the horse into a rockaway. She had herself given him a message to execute before he went to the train.

"Nora would know her again," she said to her sister, who came out to sympathize with her in the

annoyance. "I think she may go with John, and he can stop her if he sees her coming out of any house; she has probably gone down the road on the same errand."

A fierce shriek from the express train tearing along the track, the white line of vapor issuing among the trees, half a mile or so away, gave a new direction to her thoughts. If she were a professional impostor, she would perhaps be satisfied with her day's work, and return to New York in the down train, nearly due; it might be gone before John reached the depot; but he could inquire, at all events, and if such a person had been a passenger, it would end any further search, and be a "melancholy satisfaction" at least.

Nora's quick mind caught at the idea. "I should know her in twenty, and John and the porter could keep her safe enough, if she's there and going," she said to her hurried instructions. John was just driving round from the stable.

"You have no time to lose, Nora. Drive fast, John. Oh, I wish I could go myself!" And Mrs. Marshall glanced down at her limp wrapper, the creased white skirt, the dilapidated slippers. But no one could see them in the carriage, and she could accomplish twice as much herself. What could John and Nora do, after all, but identify the person?

There was not a moment to lose. She snatched a broad garden hat from the stand, trimmed with bright blue ribbons, and threw a large gray travelling-cloak over her shoulder, hoping with all her heart that she should not meet any acquaintances. It seemed as if John would never get started, or get over the ground

half fast enough when they were outside the gate. Every load of hay requiring transportation for miles around appeared to be on the road expressly to delay them, so of carts for mending the road, and small children who persisted in seeing how closely they could run before the horse without being knocked down. Every nerve was on a strain, every moment she expected to see the cars rushing into sight, and John taking matters as quietly as if he were just jogging to the depot for his master.

"Keep a good lookout, Nora. You look on that side, and I will on this."

But there was not a glimpse of the stone-colored dress and the purple ribbons, though they had arrived at a hill that commanded the whole road.

"How foolish I was to expect to find her here!" she thought. "She may be partially honest, after all; she could not have known about Frenchman's Hill if she had been a stranger, and located herself so correctly." It was almost a relief not to trace the object of her search. She thought of telling John he might turn, but concluded, as she was so near, she might as well inquire of McCarty, the railroad porter, who lived near the foot of the hill, if he had such a neighbor. There were more people than usual in waiting for the down-train. She hurriedly scanned the groups scattered about the ladies' waiting-room, as they drew up to the door.

"There she is, ma'am," called out Nora, excitedly. "I see the purple ribbons!"

"No; you are mistaken." And Mrs. Marshall drew a long breath of relief, ending in a half sigh of

disappointment. She was not an open impostor, at all events, and yet to have found her would have ended the affair.

"But there she is, ma'am—sure, she is; I see the purple ribbons," persisted Nora, instinctively starting out of the carriage herself. "There, in *the gentlemen's room, Mrs. Marshall!*"

And there she was, true enough, in a far corner, evidently seeking to avoid observation, and attended by a tall, showily-dressed man, with the unmistakable profile and beard of the Hebrew race.

Mrs. Marshall almost sprang over the wheel as she leaped to the platform, in her indignation at the barefaced trickery, and coming so suddenly upon its full proof—for what could she be doing here, if her story were true? And who was this attendant? Her peculiar costume—half chamber, half garden—was entirely forgotten as she swept through the little crowd of men straight up to the stranger, her hat falling back upon her shoulders, the open skirt of her wrapper streaming backward. She felt as if she could have shaken the woman on the spot, as she advanced, unmindful of the stares she encountered. The woman did not see her till she stood directly before her.

"I have come for that money," she said, without parley. "Where is it?"

"But, madame—"

"You have deceived me; you have not told me the truth." She felt as if her face was on fire, and her voice sounded so hard that it startled her.

The start of astonishment had passed from the

woman's face, and the old beseeching look was there.

"I have tell madame the truth; I—"

"What are you doing here, then? What are you waiting for this train for?"

"I was going to see a lady I know at the next station."

The man came up quickly, with a puzzled, questioning look, evidently seeing something had gone wrong.

"Who is this man, then? He is your husband. You said he had gone to France. Give me the money," said Mrs. Marshall, impatiently.

"It is my broder, madame.—Tell her, Henri."

"I am her brother, madame. I just meet her here—"

"I did not know he was return. You see, madame, I meet him when I leave you, by accident. I have tell you the truth."

"I am on my way now to see about that"—and Mrs. Marshall pointed to the hill before her. "If you are honest, you shall have it again. Give it to me now."

The waiting groups drew nearer. Mrs. Marshall did not recognize any of them but the gardener belonging to a friend's place, on his way to town for a holiday Sunday. They were nearly all men of that class, and showed evident interest in what was going on.

The woman drew out her purse slowly. "I have change it for the tickets," she said.

"Never mind; give me the rest."

She exchanged glances with her accomplice

quickly—a flashing, half-determined look, you would never have supposed those pleading eyes capable of giving.

The man glanced at the little group of curious faces around them and nodded. Mrs. Marshall looked up at him; the full red lips, and bold black eyes, the showy necktie and guard-chain, told their own story.

"She tell you right, madame. But you shall have the money." And he drew out of his own pocket silver to complete the sum.

Mrs. Marshall grasped the whole amount eagerly, scarcely believing her own good fortune. "You are not telling the truth, she said; you know it. I ought not to let you go, even now; I ought to have both of you arrested. How dare you deceive me so!" And she turned away, for the first time conscious of her peculiar toilet, and that she was the centre of observation.

The woman started up and hurried after her through the throng. The threat which had escaped Mrs. Marshall's lips, she herself scarcely knew how, had evidently startled her.

"You will find you are mistaken, madame; but I give you the money, as you think so. I will come and show you."

"Very well." And Mrs. Marshall did not even look up, at first, as she disposed of her dress in the carriage.

"I will come, madame—on Monday, madame"—and she put out one foot on the carriage-step to detain the vehicle, glancing up the long railroad track as she did so.

"I will hear what you have to say there. Drive on, John"—and she looked up to see the dark eyes flashing, and the white teeth gnawing the thin lips nervously. "I am going now to inquire at the place you directed me to.—Come, John." She leaned back in the carriage, exhausted, but too thankful for words that she had regained the money.

"That was good for you, ma'am," said Nora, rejoicingly; "but she oughtn't to be let go, deceivin' others with her fine story."

"No one else will be such a fool," said Mrs. Marshall, almost impatiently. "And now, John, for the bird-cage man's."

"She's walking after the carriage," said Nora, twisting her head back to watch the pair left on the platform; "both of them are, and there comes the train."

"They won't miss it, never fear for them," said John, nodding his head sagaciously; "the ould beggars!"

And so it proved; for they turned as soon as it came in sight, and hurried back to the depot.

"Good riddance," said Nora, as she saw them climb in a car, and drew in her head contentedly. "It's just lucky you are, and that's a fact."

But who shall say it was luck? Not Mrs. Marshall, who looked upon the most trivial event of her life as directed by an ever-watchful Providence, and saw that this experience was fraught with its own lesson.

"Of course no such person had been heard of there," she said, recounting the adventure to her

sister-in-law. "I knew it perfectly well before I went up the hill, but I sent John to inquire, to make sure. It is a lesson I shall never forget."

"But I don't see why you should have had such an experience," said Miss Marshall.

"I do," said her sister, humbly; "to teach me to be calmer, more moderate in my judgment of people, not to let myself be imposed upon by a pitiful story, and take no pains to prove it true, and so deprive those of help who really deserve it. I see, Adelaide, that we are not only to be ready and generous, but wise and careful stewards for God."

We have given Mrs. Marshall's experience without adding one incident or word to an actual transaction, thinking that it might serve to remind others of the lesson she was so dearly taught,—"*It is required of a steward, that he be found faithful.*"

COUNSEL—THE EVIL AND  
THE GOOD.

## COUNSEL—THE EVIL AND THE GOOD.

“MEETA! Meeta!”

It was not the voice of the reeds by the margin of the pool, that sounded so clearly above the whir of her spinning-wheel—so clearly, that the maiden paused in her busy task, and looked upward and around in the glimmering twilight. But the task was long, and the day closed swiftly; there was no time to seek for the intruder.

“Meeta! *beautiful* Meeta!”

Close at her very side, as if it had crept along the greensward, trembling through the ground ivy and the blue-eyed sparrow-grass, murmuring over the light ripples as musical as they came again, that soft, clear whisper.

“Yes,” said the maiden’s heart, “*I am* beautiful. The waves tell me so as I gather cresses every morning; and the roses prove it, for their hearts are not clearer or richer in coloring than my cheek. The lily tells me so; for am I not as fair? and the floating swan, swinging silently on the margin of the lake with its gracious repose, and the shining threads of flax that I spin, are not softer or more silken than

my tresses; the violets, my eyes are the same hue as theirs. Yes, I *am* beautiful."

"And all things *beautiful* are *loved*," said the voice.

But the maiden did not heed it. The long shining threads passed more slowly through her fingers, her head drooped forward as one whose mind is filled by vexing thoughts. Nay, in her moodiness, the psalter from which she had chanted her morning hymn, with a heart full of praise and innocent adoration, slipped to the ground, and lay, with all the treasures of the life to come, unheeded at her feet.

And there slept her faithful Leon, his long curling ears o'erlapping those white and dimpled feet, half buried in the rich moss of the river bank; and the sleeves fell back from her rounded arms as she clasped her hands bitterly, and they gleamed forth like ivory to the soft light of the crescent moon just floating upward. Her heart had not deceived her—Meeta was very beautiful.

"Fie on thee for a dreamer!" said the voice again, but more gayly and still nearer; while a woman, young, and also strangely lovely, sprang from her concealment behind the brake of flowering shrubs, whose thick stems and tall uplifted spires of blossoms had hidden her.

Meeta started to her feet, and the silken tresses broke from their fastening, falling over throat and waist, and adding tenfold to her delicate beauty.

"Thou child!" said the gay intruder, clasping her waist half caressingly, half in playful anger. "So I have found thee at last, dreaming over thine

own beauty, and weary of the daily toil it cannot lighten. Pretty Meeta, no wonder that this graceful form shrinks from such coarse garments, that these delicate limbs find no rest on the straw of thine humble pallet. And these hands, so chiselled, so daintily colored, blushing to the finger-tips at their own perfection—ah, there are cruel marks of toil upon them! Look at my hair, Meeta, wreathed and flowing! What would I not give for tresses like thine! Yet never before has even the moonlight looked upon its heavy waves unfolded. Thy feet should be daintily sandalled. See!" And she trod a light and springing step, as one that bounds through an airy measure.

"Thou here!" said the young girl, slightly shuddering.

"Nay, nay, girl! is this thy greeting to an old friend, who has left soft lights, and gallant cavaliers, and the merry dance, to come in search of thee? See, there they are, the gay revellers! The prince himself does not disdain to mingle with them; these very roses in my bosom were placed there by his hand. And he has heard of thee! So, blushing! Well, mayhap it was a little bird told me the tale, how a fair maiden spun in the sunshine, and sang so merrily, that the very thrushes came to listen, and the brook danced to the music. But another than the thrushes came, and thought the singer wondrous fair, and sought her side to tell her so. And the maiden blushed, but would not smile. Her blue eyes were veiled and downcast; but a new light burned therein, kindled by those kindly glances. Ah, thou seest I know the tale; and

now he waits for thee, to make thee his own, amid all that splendor; and I come, thine old friend, a willing ambassador, to bid thee join our gallant company!"

"Hush, Norna! Why have you come to me? You know—you know what separates us. Leave me to my simple, humble life. Leave me to peace and obscurity."

"Peace! ha! ha!" laughed the stranger, gayly. "Such peace as thou hast known since then! To wake wearily with the day's dawn, every limb aching with the labor of yesterday; to go about household tasks, disdaining even the lightest, because of the servitude of which it is a badge; loathing the coarse dark bread, and the crisp water-cresses, with visions of flowing wine and dainty cheer, that come by right to others far less beautiful than thee; turning the heavy wheel without a song, while musing upon all these things, and donning this coarse robe with thoughts of the silken softness shrouding forms far more coarsely moulded!—if this be peace!"

The girl pushed back the heavy hair which seemed to stifle her. She no longer resisted; she stood passive in that soft, yet compelling clasp.

"Come with me," said Norna. "'Tis but a step. A light wind will waft us to the other shore. Come nearer, and catch the soft breath of perfume gushing from those fragrant groves. Hear that burst of festal music, ravishing the very soul as it steals over the water! See, the lights are gleaming; but not more brightly than the eyes of love that will welcome thee!—such wild, fervent devotion as thy silly heart never

dreamed of! giving up the very love of heaven for thine! living for thee—dying for thee, Meeta!"

The pure white hand trembled, the maiden's bosom heaved with a low, shuddering sigh.

"Come—come away. I cannot wait longer upon thee. Every hour shall bring some new joy from the love that has no law, but thine own sweet will. Away with toil, and care, and servitude! Away, tasks unmeet for thee! Jewels shall shine upon this fair round throat, and loop back the rich drapery that will add a thousandfold to thy charms, and flash in thy floating hair. Come away, Meeta, and be—"

"*Such a one as thou!*" said another voice, coldly and sternly, to the beautiful, guilty creature.

"Once more," cried Norna, with a wild impatience, stamping upon the flowers at her feet, while a fierce gleam shot through the pleading softness of her languid eyes—"wilt thou come, Meeta?"

A quick, gasping throb, one beseeching glance to the serene heavens, one thought of prayer, a pang, and the struggle was ended.

"Nay, leave me, for thy very touch is pollution, sending a strange fever through my brain; thine eyes thrill me with fearful thoughts! I cannot go with thee! I may not even listen to thy words! Leave me, Norna! Leave me, for the love of Christ!"

And then, with a loud, insulting laugh, the baffled temptress had departed, and Meeta stood with hands enclasped, and eyes lowered down, listening to another voice, the counsel of one who had been her guide from childhood.

"Follow me, for I have never deceived thee," she

said. "This is no place for thee, in the very sight of such mad revelry. Ah, was it wise to leave the shadow of the cottage roof, and plant thy wheel where sounds like these float past? Is it maidenly to stand there with thy girdle unbound, and the wind toying with thy hair? Bind up thy scattered locks, and let me lead thee."

The rustling foliage of the grove, the ripple of the waters, the gleaming of distant lights, the faint gushes of song, and mirth, and laughter, the perfume of flowers—all these were left far in the distance; for their path lay beneath the shadow of a huge cliff, past the chapel with its silent spire, down the rugged steps hewn in the living rock; a rough, toilsome way, and Meeta's delicate feet were torn and bleeding when they reached the smooth, hard beach. They stood there alone, with but the heavy shadow of the cliffs, the light step of the faithful Leon, and the deep, solemn roar of the waves breaking at their very feet. The cool salt breeze came freshly to the burning forehead of the maiden. It was this deep calmness, this solemn voice of the sea, this cold kiss of its waves, that her fevered heart had need of.

"Look, Meeta, far out upon the wide expanse. Wave after wave, rising, falling, stretching out to the horizon, bounded only by what we have called heaven. It is thus with our lives. Standing upon the narrow beach, we look out to an eternity, boundless as the sea would seem to thee. Ever its waves are rising, falling. Ever we hear the deep warning voice of its waters. Look, child; I do not chide thee.

"Look in thine own heart, Meeta. Thou hast

been sorely tempted. How was it that thy heart never throbbed rebelliously before? Ever since thine orphanhood thou hast eaten the bread of cheerful labor. It is no new thing to thee! Probe more deeply still. There was a day when an evil shadow fell upon thy path; then was it that thy dreams began. Sitting hour by hour beside the still waters of the lake, laving thy white feet, thridding the tresses that fell around thee, enamoured of thine own beauty; so pride came, and by pride the angels of heaven are debased—pride that would not let thee kneel to ask purely, 'this day thy daily bread;' and so the needful petition which follows it was no longer uttered. Am I not right, Meeta?"

The listener gave no response, but still stood drooping and downcast, as the fountain of penitence and contrition welled forth in her soul at these gentle words.

"These rocks are cold and bare. The sea has a hoarse murmur, the wind is shrill, but it is more like our life than the scenes thou hast left behind. Its lessons are oftentimes cold and harsh, its paths rugged, but no poisonous breath comes in such an air as this, strength only to nerve the frame, and lightness to raise the drooping spirits. I have brought thee here to show thee paths of happiness—not such as Norna wooed thee to with her wild eloquence. The world lures thee with all that can delight the eye, or charm the sense. Its flatteries are sweet, its pleasures grow in the distance. But the soft words are hidden wounds, that burn and rankle; the pleasures have a wild unrest, more fearful for their passing oblivion of care and sorrow. Then the brow is wreathed with flowers but to cool the throbbing pain, and

behind the false smiles tears are prisoned. Ask Norna if she is happy, save in forgetfulness, or mad revelry. Do I grieve thee, Meeta?"

"Oh, no! no! thou art too kind!" she murmured.

"So the heart—this wild, restless, fluttering heart hath other teachers, and our Father sends us the message. Toil is lightened when we take the task as from His hand; and affliction is but a passing cloud, whose showers bring blossoms from the earth. To some are given lowly ways to tread, though brightened by a cheerful spirit, and made rough only with thorns of our own fostering. Beauty is this gift, Meeta, and shall we make His gift a minister to unholiness, offering it upon the altar of sinful passions? Oh, Meeta, the angels are beautiful, but they are likewise pure!

"And be thou, too, pure in heart, for this is far greater loveliness than symmetry of form, or the wealth of flowing tresses. Guard it tenderly from every evil thought; let no vain imagination, no selfish longing dwell there. For none but the pure in heart are pure in word and life; and without purity there is naught of peace."

Oh, it was a gentle pressure, far more kindly than the thrilling clasp of Norna, and the voice had a touching cadence more musical than the wild melody the revellers sang. So they turned; and, with the sea before her, an emblem of the eternity in which the sands of life are merged, and the chapel-cross far onward pointing to the serene heavens, the humble, struggling prayer for penitence cast out Pride, and the maiden's heart welcomed gladly its guest of old Content.

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