

ADF
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THE MOB CAP;

AND OTHER TALES.

BY MRS. CAROLINE LEE HENTZ.

AUTHOR OF "LINDA," "RENA," "MARCUS WARLAND," "AUNT
PATTY'S SCRAP BAG," "THE TWO UNCLES,"
"EOLINE," ETC., ETC.

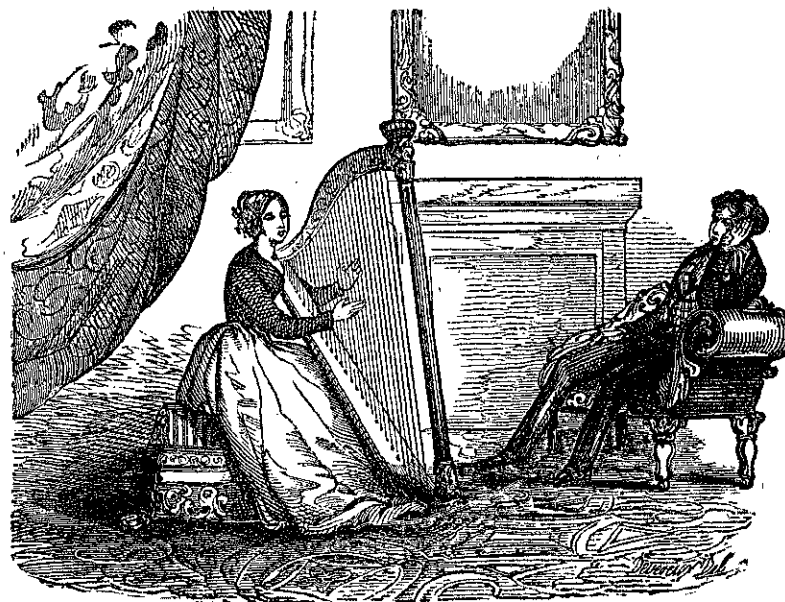
THIS VOLUME CONTAINS

THE MOB CAP,
THE PEDLER,
MARY HAWTHORNE,
THANKSGIVING DAY,
DRUNKARD'S DAUGHTER.

THE CATHOLIC,
LEGENDS OF SILVER WAVE,
THE PREMATURE DECLARA-
TION,
THE PHANTOM.

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THE
MOB CAP;

OR,

MY GRANDMOTHER'S TRUNK.



T was past midnight, and the moon had gone down when the stage stopped at Edward Stanley's lodgings, who was about to visit his village home. The lamps threw a strong glare on the pavements, but the interior of the vehicle was in such deep shade, he could but imperfectly distinguish his fellow travellers.

He observed, however, that several young gentlemen occupied the front and middle seats, while an old woman, muffled in a cloak, sat alone on the back one. She turned her head sharply round as he entered, and the light glimmering under her large hood was brightly

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reflected from a pair of spectacles of such spacious dimensions, they seemed to cover her whole face, or at least all the face that was visible through the wide-plaited border of a mob cap. Edward took the only vacant seat in the stage, at her side, with a very respectful bow, which was received with something between a hem and a cough, a sound diverting in itself, and rendered still more so, by its echo from the opposite seat; for the young gentlemen seemed determined to derive all the amusement possible from their antiquated companion. Edward had a convivial spirit, but he had too deep a reverence for age ever to make it a subject for mirth. It was in itself a sufficient guarantee for veneration, even when unaccompanied by those traits which impart a beauty to the faded brow, and to the hoary head a crown of glory. The recollection of his own grandmother, too, who had died since his absence from home—one of those fine, dignified relics of the majestic simplicity of olden time, which reminds one so forcibly of the degeneracy of modern days—gave a tenderness to his manners, in addressing an aged person, which was peculiarly engaging in the present instance, from the effect of contrast.

"Take care, grandmother," said the young men opposite, as the stage jolted over a huge stone, "take care your spectacles. We shall upset, now, depend upon it."

"No thanks to you if we don't," cried she, muttering, in the indistinct accents of age. Then turning towards Edward, she continued, "It is really refreshing to see a well-behaved, decent young gentleman, after enduring the impertinence of the dandies and jackanapes. Never mind, you may laugh now as loud as you please; but if you live, you will be old yourself one of these days."

She put her hand into her pocket, which seemed unfathomable in depth, and drawing out a snuff-box, after rapping it several times, she presented it to Edward, who was obliged from politeness to take a pinch, and all the passengers petitioning for a similar favour, a sneezing concert commenced, in which the old lady herself acted the most sonorous part. After the mirth occasioned by this chorus had subsided, she dropped her box into her pocket, and it sunk like a pebble descending into a vault. Edward began to enjoy his jour-

ney exceedingly; he never felt disposed to sleep in a stage-coach, and the old lady declared herself of the same temperament, though he gallantly offered his shoulder as a pillow, to the great amusement of the others, who were, ere long, nodding their heads to and fro, occasionally knocking their heads against each other, or reclining backwards in more unsocial attitudes. Edward and his muffled companion fell into the most familiar and agreeable conversation. She seemed very shrewd and original in her remarks, and exercised the privilege of age in inquiring his name, the place of his residence, &c.

"Ah," said she, "I knew you had a mother and sisters—or a sister whom you loved, from your kindness to me, an old woman, a stranger. Heaven be blessed for the influence of gentle ones on the heart of man. And you are going to the village of ——. Do you know any thing of the Widow Clifton, daughter of Squire Lee, who lives somewhere in those parts?"

"Not personally—but report says she is such a gay dashing character. I suppose she will find herself very much out of place in a country town. I hear, through my sister, that she is to take possession of her late father's dwelling, which has been fitted up for her accommodation in quite a princely style. You speak as if you knew her, madam."

"Yes, for I was a great friend to her grandmother; a fine old lady as ever lived, a thousand times handsomer than Gertrude—but very likely you may not agree with me. Young eyes see differently from old ones."

"Is she young?" asked Edward.

"Yes, she is scarcely twenty, for she married, poor thing, at a very early age, and was left a widow soon after. She has need of more discretion than she has now, or ever will have."

"I should like to see this gay young widow," said Edward, musingly, the vision of a pair of heavenly blue eyes that he had seen stealing softly before him, "but it is not likely that we shall become acquainted, for my mother and sister live very retired, and when I am at home I devote myself to them."

It was surprising in what confidential terms he was addressing his new acquaintance, and how entirely he forgot to ask her name and residence, though he had so freely imparted his own.

As the morning air came chill and dewy over the hill, she drew her cloak more closely around her, pulled down her hood, and seemed drowsy and silent. Edward was not sorry to be left a while to his own reflection. He thought of the mild eyes of his mother at that very moment, perhaps, turned towards the window anxiously watching his coming, of the more eager anticipations of his only sister, and more than all, he thought upon "the witching smile that caught his youthful fancy."

He was roused from his reveries by the sudden stopping of the stage, and he found he was to be separated from his ancient friend. Jumping out with as much alacrity as if he were in attendance on youth and beauty, he assisted her as she descended with slow and difficult steps; and opening the gate for her to pass, gave her a cordial and respectful farewell.

"I shall not soon forget you, young gentleman," said she, holding out her tremulous hand, "and if the time ever comes when I can serve you, you will find the aged can remember the kindness of youth."

Resuming his seat, his thoughts winged their way towards the home he was now rapidly approaching. In two or three hours, he began to distinguish the trees familiar to his boyhood. A little farther, a majestic elm stretched its lordly branches over the street, they passed it on either side, the landmark of his school-day pastimes. Then a white house glimmered through the green foliage that overshadowed it, and a moment more, Edward was in the arms of his mother, with his sister clinging round his neck. An only son and brother, returned after twelve months' absence, to beings whose best affections were garnered in him, might reasonably call forth very warm and joyous emotions. A shade, however, passed over their brows, as the saddened glance of Edward rested on the easy chair, where he had last beheld that venerable form with placid brows, crowned with living silver, now laid low in the dust—and they all remembered the death.

A year's residence in the heart of a city, would naturally produce some change in a young man, as yet only in the morning of manhood, and as Clara's admiring eyes ran over the face and figure of her brother, she blushed at her own rusticity. There was an indescribable something in his air and manner, that told he had been in a region different from her own, and a shadow of awe began to steal over the deep love she felt for him. Mrs. Stanley, whose chastened and pious thoughts were dwelling on the inner man, rejoiced that his heart remained unchilled during his intercourse with the world, for the fountain of filial tenderness was still full and gushing over.

Edward Stanley was poor—that is, he had only his own unborn energies to carry him through the world. He had just completed his studies as a lawyer, having finished his last year with one of the most distinguished members of the bar, a friend of his late father, who, though he died poor in one sense of the word, was rich in the good opinions of his fellow men. Edward was resolved it should prove a year of probation, and adhered to his determination not to suffer even the holiest interest of nature to turn him aside from his steadfast course. The trial was past—he was admitted to the bar—and now felt privileged to rest and refresh himself for a while at the well-springs of the heart.

That evening, as he looked abroad and saw the moon sending down such rills of light through the deep shades of the landscape, he thought how beautiful Fanny Morton had looked, when she stood, a year ago, in the midst of such silver waves, and he longed to know how she would look then, standing in the selfsame moonbeams. The wish was easily accomplished, for her father's house was but a short distance from his own, and he soon found himself near the threshold. The house was situated a little retreating from the street, and the path which led to it was soft and grassy, lying too in a thick shadow, so his approach was not perceived. There she stood, almost in the same attitude, leaning against the door, looking upwards with eyes so deeply, beautifully blue, they seemed to have borrowed the colour from the night heaven to which their gaze was directed. Her fair, flaxen hair glittered in the moonlight with a

golden lustre, brightly contrasting with the pure whiteness of a brow, where the serenity of youth and innocence was now softly reposing.

"Fanny!" said Edward, emerging from the shadow; and she sprang forward at the well-known voice, with a bounding step, and a joyous smile.

"Edward, I am so glad you are come."

Her manner was so frank and affectionate, it relieved him from the agitation he felt in addressing her. Perhaps he felt a disappointment in meeting her childish expression of pleasure, instead of the deep silence of joy, for it is certain the romance of his feelings considerably subsided, and he uttered some commonplace sayings, instead of the high-wrought sentiments in which he had been indulging. He had never told Fanny in so many words that he loved her, but they had lived in almost daily interchange of offices prompted by affection. In absence he had blended her image with every memory of the past and every hope of the future, and now in her presence, he acknowledged that she was fairer and lovelier than even the visions his fancy had drawn. The people of the village seeing Fanny again the constant companion of Edward and Clara Stanley, as in former times, prophesied a speedy union, though they dwelt on the excessive imprudence of the match, as they were both too poor to think of marrying, and many declared Fanny to be nothing better than a piece of painted waxwork, fit only to be looked at and admired.

They were returning one evening, about sunset, from a walk in the woodland. Fanny was literally covered with garlands, which Edward and Clara had woven, and with her hat swinging in her hand, and her fair locks unbound, she formed the most picturesque feature of a landscape, then rich in all the glories of summer. They turned aside from the path, for the trampling of horses' feet were behind them.

"Look, brother, look!" exclaimed Clara, as a lady, in company with two gentlemen, rode gaily by. She was dressed in green. Her long riding-dress swept far below her feet, and waving feathers of the same colour mingled with the folds of a veil which floated lightly

on the breeze. She turned and looked earnestly at Fanny, who, blushing at her fantastical appearance, drew behind Clara, when the veil of the stranger suddenly loosened, and, fluttering, fell at Edward's feet. Never was a fairer opening for gallantry. The lady checked her spirited horse, and, bending gracefully forward, received the veil from the hands of Edward, with a smile and a bow that would have repaid any man for a greater exertion. Her complexion was dark, but richly coloured with the warm hues of exercise and health; and when she smiled, her eyes were so brilliantly black, and her teeth so glitteringly white, that Clara could talk of nothing else for an hour after she reached home—and Edward caught himself wondering several times, who the lady of the green plumes could be.

"Yes," said he, suddenly, when he saw, at night, lights gleaming from the windows of the great white house on the hill—"It must be Mrs. Clifton, the dashing widow."

And Mrs. Clifton it proved to be, whose arrival caused no slight sensation in this quiet village—Edward and Fanny were quite forgotten in the superior claims of one, who, though among them, was not of them. One represented her as proud as Lucifer, sweeping through the streets, with her officer-like cap and feathers,—another, as a lioness, leaping her horse over hedges and walls. Some represented her as dark as an Ethiopian, terrible and grand—and others, as beautiful as an angel, and blithe as a wood-nymph. Meanwhile the unconscious object of these contradictory and most invidious remarks, continued her rides over hill and dale with unwearied activity, and sometimes she appeared in a splendid carriage, with a footman, who was said to be dressed in livery, though he wore a suit of sober gray.

What was the astonishment of Clara Stanley, when she saw one morning this splendid carriage stop at her own door, and Mrs. Clifton herself descend from it! Clara's next feeling was deep mortification; for both her mother and herself were dressed in plain calico mourning frocks, and the room was in a state of particular disorder, for she was occupied in cutting and arranging work, and her brother had covered the table with papers he was about to examine.

"Oh, Edward," cried Clara, "if there's not Mrs. Clifton! what shall we do?"

"Do?" said he, laughing and starting up eagerly—"Why ask her to come in;" and with an ease and self-possession that almost provoked the mortified Clara, he met this startling visitor at the threshold.

She introduced herself with so much grace and politeness, and fell into conversation so rapidly and simply, apologizing for what she feared might be deemed an intrusion, but expressing an earnest wish to become acquainted with neighbours in whose society she anticipated so much pleasure, so naturally and sincerely, that Clara's burning cheeks began to cool, and her confused senses to be sufficiently collected to appreciate so signal an honour. Mrs. Stanley was too truly refined and well bred to share in her daughter's embarrassment. She was not ashamed of the simplicity of their dress, and she did not look upon the proofs of Clara's industry and Edward's literature, scattered about the room, as at all disgraceful. Moreover, she was very proud of her son, and though she had never seen him appear to such an advantage as at this moment, when engaged in animated conversation with this graceful and charming lady. Mrs. Clifton admired the garden, the vines that made such fairy lattice-work around the windows, the pictures that hung upon the walls, till every thing around her became exalted in Clara's eyes, with charms unknown before. When she arose to depart, she urged Mrs. Stanley so warmly to visit her, and to suffer her to see much of Clara, it was impossible not to believe she was soliciting a favour. She was so lonely, she said—the friends who had accompanied her were returned, and she had nothing but her books and harp for companions. Her harp! Clara was crazy to hear a harp. The very idea carried her at once into the fairy land of romance, of Ossian's heroines and Milton's angels.

"Is she not the most charming woman you ever saw in your life?" exclaimed Clara, the moment she had left them. "I quite forgot my calico frock and these linen shreds, long before she was gone. Did you ever see any one so polite and condescending? I wonder

how she came to select us from all the village, to call upon," and she smiled at the importance it would give them in the eyes of their neighbours.

"I am not much surprised," said Mrs. Stanley, "as her father and yours were on intimate terms, and it is probable she has taken pains to ascertain his friends. She had just married when Mr. Lee came into the country, and as she went immediately abroad, she never visited the place during her father's life. She married very young, and I think I have heard she was not happy in her union. She certainly does not seem inconsolable at her husband's death."

"Is she not delightful, Edward?" continued Clara, in a perfect fever of admiration. "Did you ever see such eyes and teeth? and though she is dark, her complexion is so glowing and clear, I don't think she would look as handsome if she were fairer. I wonder if she will marry again?"

"You wonder at so many things," replied Edward, laughing, "you must live in a perpetual state of astonishment. But I do think, Clara, that Mrs. Clifton is very delightful, and very charming, and graceful, and I hope my dear little rustic sister will try to imitate her graces."

Edward would never have breathed this unfortunate wish had he anticipated how faithfully poor Clara would have obeyed his injunction.

The visit was soon returned, and if Clara admired her new friend before, she was now completely fascinated. She "saw the white rising of her hands upon the harp," and heard the mellow tones of a voice tuned to the sweetest modulation of art. The rich furniture, the superb curtains, the paintings in massy gilt frames, seemed to her unaccustomed eye equal to oriental splendour, and Mrs. Clifton some eastern enchantress, presiding over the scene, with more than magic power. Edward Stanley was passionately fond of music. He had never heard it in such perfection. But there was a charm in Mrs. Clifton's conversation even superior to her music. It was full of spirit, sensibility, enthusiasm, and refinement. Then its perfect adaptness to all around her! Every one talked better with her than with any one else, and felt, when they quitted her society, that

they had never been so agreeable before; confessing, at the same time, that they had never met with any one half so pleasing as herself. She certainly did flatter a little; that is, she told very pleasant truths, with a most bewitching smile, and another thing, which, perhaps, was the great secret of her attraction, she seemed completely to forget herself, in her interest for those around her.

It is very certain Mrs. Stanley's family thought more of their new neighbour that night, than their old ones. Even Edward forgot to dream of the blue eyes of Fanny Morton. His conscience reproached him for the oblivion; and when he saw the unenvying interest with which she listened to Clara's praises of the dashing widow, as she was called by the villagers, he admired the sweetness and simplicity of a character, pure as the untracked snow. He admired, but, for the first time, he felt a want in this sweet character. He had never discovered before, that Fanny was deficient in sensibility, that the shadows of feeling seldom passed over her celestial countenance. He found, too, a dearth of thought and variety in her conversation, of which he had never been sensible before. A pang of self-accusation shot through his heart, as he made these discoveries, and feeling as if he were guilty of injustice, his attentions became still less frequent, and he tried to restrain his restless and wandering thoughts.

Clara sat one morning in a deep reverie. "Mother," said she, at length, "do you remember that full crimson damask petticoat, grandmother left me as a memento of old times?"

"Yes," answered Mrs. Stanley, surprised at the suddenness of the question, "why do you ask?"

"I was thinking it would make some beautiful window curtains for our parlour. The sun shines in so warm it is really uncomfortable to sit there, and the reflection of red curtains is very beautifying to the complexion."

"Ah! Clara," cried her brother, "you never discovered how uncomfortable it was, till you saw Mrs. Clifton's fine curtains. You forget the blinds, and the vines, and the rose-bushes. Pray have more reverence for dear grandmother's ancient relics."

Clara blushed, and was considerably disconcerted, but nevertheless continued her dreams of improvement. Her latent love for show and splendour began to glimmer forth and illuminate many an airy castle she amused herself in building. To imitate Mrs. Clifton was now the end and aim of her existence. She practised her step, her air, her smile, before the looking-glass, in her own chamber, till from a very simple and unaffected girl, she became conspicuously the reverse. She strung every window with *Æolian* harps, and tried to sing in unison when the wild winds swept the chords—but they disdained the harmony of the human voice, and mocked at her efforts. Edward felt quite distressed at an effect so contrary to his wishes, but he concealed his chagrin under a good-humoured ridicule, which somewhat checked her progress in the graces. Once, when they were to accompany Mrs. Clifton in an excursion on horseback, and the lady, arrayed in her suit of forest green, was already waiting their motion, he knew not whether he was most amused or grieved, to see Clara descend in a dress of the same colour, in which the imitation was too obvious and too defective not to border on the ridiculous, with a green veil wreathed around the crown of her bonnet, and suffered to stream back behind, in the form of a feather or plume. Though the affection of her brother would not allow him to wound her feelings, by making her fully aware of her folly, and he chose rather gently to lead her back to true simplicity and good sense, she did not escape a severer lash from those who envied her the distinction of Mrs. Clifton's acquaintance, and who revenged themselves on her damask curtains, *Æolian* harps, and new-born airs. Her present ambition was to possess a gold chain, an ornament she deemed indispensable to the perfection of a lady's dress. She did not aspire to so magnificent a one as wreathed the graceful neck of Mrs. Clifton, but she thought she would be perfectly happy with one of far inferior value surrounding her own. She had a long string of large gold beads, a parting gift from her sainted grandmother, an ornament too obsolete for wear, and which she had often sighed to convert into modern jewelry. An opportunity occurred, at the very moment, of all others, she most desired it. Mrs. Clifton

was to give a party. The day before the event, Clara was examining her simple wardrobe, trying to decide on the important articles of dress, and mourning over her slender stock of finery, when a pedler stopped at the door, with a trunk filled with jewelry and trinkets. He spread them before her admiring eyes, and when she hesitated and regretted—he offered to take any old ornaments in exchange, holding up, at the same time, a glittering chain, the very article for which her vitiated fancy was yearning. The temptation was irresistible, and, unfortunately, she was alone. She flew to her little trunk of treasures, drew out her grandmother's beads, and the pedler's eyes brightened as he saw the pure rich old fashioned gold, knowing their superior value to his own gilded trifles.

"Will you exchange that chain for these?" said she, in a faltering voice; for in spite of her vain desire, the very act seemed a sacrilege to her conscience.

"That would not be an even bargain," he replied; and it was true, for the chain was nothing but brass, thinly washed with gold. Clara hung down her head. In proportion to the difficulty of obtaining the bauble, her longing increased.

"That is a very pretty little trunk," cried the pedler, "it would be very convenient to hold my jewels. If you will throw that in, we will strike a bargain."

Now the trunk was not Clara's. It belonged to her brother. It was the last keepsake bequeathed to him by this same grandmother, whose legacies of love Clara was converting to purposes of vanity and pride. There was a letter in it, directed to him, with a clause on the envelope, that he was not to open it till he was of age, *unless* he should find himself in some emergency, and especially in need of counsel. The old lady was supposed to possess considerable property, and it was also believed that Edward would be her heir.—On her death, however, these expectations proved vain, and her grandson did not honour her memory the less because he was not enriched by her loss.—He took the letter as a sacred bequest, wondering much at the singular injunction, and told Clara to keep the trunk for him, as it was of no use to him, and she would preserve it

with more care. Clara knew it was only intrusted to her keeping; and she turned pale at the thought of betraying a brother's trust; but she repeated to herself it was of no possible use to him, that he would probably never inquire for it, and it could not hurt her dear grandmother's feelings, who was sleeping beneath the clods of the valley. It was a thing, too, of so little consequence—and the chain was so beautiful. She emptied the trunk of its contents, gave it hastily into the pedler's hands, with the beads which had remained on her grandmother's neck till she died, and gathering up the chain, felt,—instead of the joy of triumph—self-upbraiding and shame. She would have recalled the act; but it was too late—the pedler was gone.—So poor was the gratification of vanity—but the bitter consequence of a deviation from rectitude she was yet to experience.

When arrayed for the party, she put a shawl carefully around her neck before she made her appearance, to conceal her ill-gotten splendour—but the consciousness of having something to conceal from the affectionate eyes that were bent upon her, gave a disturbed and anxious expression to her countenance that did not escape the observation of her brother; and when she saw Fanny in the unadorned simplicity of her own loveliness, she secretly loathed the acquisition for which she had sacrificed her principles of right.

"Let me see you, Clara, before you start," said Mrs. Stanley—and she added, smiling, "I hope you have not tried to look too well."

"Oh, pray, mother take care," cried Clara, shrinking from the dreaded hand that touched her shawl; "it will tumble my dress to take it off now. It is only my plain muslin frock," and hurrying away, with blushes and trepidation, she felt that her punishment was begun.

Arrived at Mrs. Clifton's—she became still more dissatisfied, when she saw their elegant hostess, dressed in the simplest attire, consistent with fashion and taste, with no ornament but a cluster of roses, wreathed amidst locks of gypsy blackness and oriental abundance. Her piercing eye rested a moment on the beautiful Fanny, then flashed towards Edward, with a very peculiar expression. He

understood their meaning, and an undefinable sensation of pain and displeasure oppressed him. Mrs. Clifton was too polite to confine her attentions to those she most wished to distinguish, but moved amongst her guests, endeavouring, as far as possible, to adapt herself to their different capacities and tastes. She had invited her father's friends, wishing extremely to make them her own, and to convince them that she valued their sympathy and good will.

"You seem dispirited this evening, Mr. Stanley," said she, as Edward, unusually silent, stood leaning against the harp, from which he had more than once heard thrilling music; "perhaps I ought to say, preoccupied. It may be wise to abstract the mind in the midst of a throng, but I am afraid it is rather selfish."

"I should think the wisdom consisted in the subject of the abstraction," replied Edward, "and I believe I am as unwise as I am selfish."

"I do not think so," said Mrs. Clifton, and she looked at Fanny, whose serene countenance was beaming from the opposite side of the room. "Beauty, whether the subject of abstraction or contemplation, fills the mind with the most delightful ideas, and elevates it by the conviction that the hand that *made it is divine*. I do not agree with the moralist who would degrade it as a vain and valueless possession. The woman who possesses it, may exercise a boundless influence over the heart of man, and if exerted aright how glorious may be the result!—Often and often have I sighed for the celestial gift—yet, perhaps, I should be neither better nor happier."

"You!" exclaimed Edward.

It is but a monosyllable, but the most laboured panegyric could not have been half so expressive. The clear olive of Mrs. Clifton's cheek was coloured with a brighter hue as she laughingly resumed—"I did not solicit a compliment, but its brevity recommends yours. I know I am not handsome. I cannot be if beauty depends upon lilies and roses. In the gay and heartless world I have learned to shine as others do, and have tried the rules of art. My life has been passed much with strangers. You, Mr. Stanley, surrounded as you are, by all the sweet charities of a home, living in its warm and

sunny atmosphere, you do not know the coldness and the loneliness of the brotherless and sisterless heart."

She spoke in a tone of deep feeling, and cast down her eyes with a deep expression of profound melancholy. Edward did not attempt to reply—he could not embody the new and overpowering emotions that were filling his soul, and he would not utter the commonplace language of admiration. He felt like a man who had all his life been walking in darkness, and a dream had all at once awakened him in a blaze of light. Several now gathered around Mrs. Clifton, entreating her to play; and Edward availed himself of the opportunity of drawing back, where he could listen, unseen by her, to the melodious songstress of the hour. He looked at Fanny, who was now near the instrument, and compared the calm feeling of happiness he had enjoyed in her society to the tumultuous tide that was now rushing through his heart.

"I have loved Fanny like a brother," thought he, ignorant of a deeper passion. "And now I am a man and a fool——."

A hand was laid upon his arm. "Brother, are you not well? You look pale to-night." Clara was looking anxiously in his face, and he saw that her own was flushed with excitement.

"Yes, Clara, I am well—but what has disturbed you? Indeed I noticed before we left home that something seemed to weigh upon your spirits. Tell me the cause."

He drew her hand affectionately through his arm, and for the first time noticed her new ornament.

"It is not the weight of this new chain that oppresses you," said he, lifting it from her neck—"though it does feel rather magnificent. You have never showed me this new gift of yours. Who could have been the donor?"—and he thought of Mrs. Clifton.

"Do not speak of it here," whispered Clara, with so much embarrassment, it confirmed Edward's suspicions with regard to the donor, and though he regretted the nature of the obligation, he could not think it was prompted by kindness to an observation of Clara's imitative decorations. The truth was, Clara had been so exceedingly annoyed by the questions, she could not, or rather would not answer.

Some one had suggested that it was a present from Mrs. Clifton, and though she did not affirm it, actually, she was glad to admit the idea, as an escape from further persecution on the subject. Still her conscience writhed under the implied falsehood, and she dreaded its detection. To add to her mortification, she overheard some one remark "that Clara Stanley need not put on so many airs about her new chain, for it was nothing but pinchbeck, and had a strong smell of brass."

She rejoiced when the hour of retiring arrived; and when she reached home, she ran up stairs, went to bed, and cried herself to sleep. Poor Clara! she awakened that night from a terrible fit of the nightmare, for she dreamed that her grandmother's icy hands were groping about her neck for the beads she had bartered, that the cold grasp grew tighter and tighter, her breath shorter and shorter, till she screamed and awoke. She dreaded the next day her brother's questioning about the mysterious chain; but, absorbed in his own deep, overmastering emotions, he forgot the subject when the glittering bauble was removed from before his eyes. From this time a change was observable in his character. He became as silent and abstracted as he had before been gay and communicative. He no longer talked of Mrs. Clifton, and even to Fanny he was cold and constrained. Fanny preserved the same equanimity of feeling, though she missed Edward's vivacity and smiles, and openly lamented the transformation. She looked rather more serious than usual, but the azure of her eye was undimmed, and the soft rose of her cheek remained undiminished in bloom. Edward turned from the sameness and lustre of her countenance, to gaze upon the changing face that "pale passion loved"—and while he acknowledged the hopelessness of his infatuation, he brooded over it, till it enervated all the energies of his soul. It was fortunate for his mind, that domestic circumstances of a perplexing nature roused it into exercise. Some very unexpected claims were made against the estate. Mr. Stanley had died suddenly, and left his affairs considerably involved, but his family now believed every thing was settled, and that the small property which remained was all their own. With

the strictest economy it was just sufficient for a genteel support, and that was all. They had no means of meeting this unexpected exigency, but by the sale of the house—a sorrowful expedient, for it was endeared by every association connected with a husband's and a father's love—besides it was their home, and where should they look for another? Edward remembered the letter of his grandmother. He wanted but a few months of being of age, and the hour of trouble had arrived. He opened and read it, then gave it into his mother's hands with a countenance illuminated with joy.

"It is all well, dear mother—more than well—though dead she yet continues her guardianship of love. Clara, where is the trunk whose value I have just learned? It will save us from ruin."

Clara looked aghast.

"The trunk!" stammered she—"what good can it do us?"

"Read that letter—it will explain it."

The explanation may be given to the reader in fewer words. The trunk contained a false bottom, in which the good lady had placed deeds and papers, containing an amount of property which made a rich legacy to her grandson. Knowing the temptations to which youth is exposed, and knowing too that necessity calls forth the noblest powers of mankind; she did not wish him to know of the existence of this property till he became of age; and being somewhat eccentric in her character, and fond of surprises, she had adopted this singular method of bequeathing to him her fortune. Clara read the letter, and sat like a statue of stone. She wished the earth to open and swallow her, the mountains to fall and crush her to atoms, to save her from the remorse and shame that had overtaken her.

"Clara, what is the matter?" said Edward, sitting down by her side; "can you not go for the trunk, Clara?"

The unhappy girl tried to speak, but only uttered a piercing shriek, and fell prostrate on the floor.—Excessively alarmed, they raised and endeavoured to bring her to composure, but she continued to wring her hands and exclaimed—

"Oh, what have I done! what have I done!"

They gathered at length from her broken sentences, the extent of

their misfortune. The treasure was lost, irredeemably lost, for it would be impossible to trace the course of one who led an itinerant life, and was probably now in some remote part of the country. If it ever were discovered, it would probably be at some distant day, and the demand was immediate and pressing. Neither Mrs. Stanley nor Edward could add to the agonies of Clara's remorse, by unavailing reproaches, but they both keenly felt how much it added to their calamity, to think the means their guardian angel held out for their relief, was wrested from them by the hands of a daughter and a sister.

"We must submit," said Mrs. Stanley, with a heavy sigh, "to the will of God."

"We must *act*," said Edward, "and be not cast down, my mother. If Heaven spares my life and health, we shall never know one real want. In this country there is no such thing as *poverty*, and as to vanity and show, let Clara's bitter lesson prove the emptiness of their claims."

When it was known that Mrs. Stanley's dwelling-house was advertised for sale, to satisfy the demands of impatient creditors, there was much astonishment and sorrow, for she was a woman universally beloved for her meekness, loving kindness, and tender charities. The neighbours gathered in to question and condole, and great was the sympathy expressed for Clara's inconsolable grief. They did not know the secret burden that weighed her to the dust, and wondered much to see the young bowed down so heavily, while Mrs. Stanley seemed so calm and resigned. Fanny Morton was very sorry, and expressed herself on the occasion with all the depth of feeling of which her tranquil nature was capable, but Edward more than ever felt the immeasurable distance of their souls. Hers could not comprehend the depth and sensibility of his. The lightning of heaven, and the cold phosphorescent light of earth are not more different in their properties. Mrs. Clifton came, but not with the crowd. She waited till others accused her of standing aloof from her favourites in the day of adversity. She came alone, leaving her carriage, her servants, and all the paraphernalia of her wealth behind

her. Mrs. Stanley knew how to appreciate this delicacy, as well as the added deference and respect of her manners. She asked no questions—she added no condolence—she came, she said, to solicit a favour, not to confer one. She wished to become purchaser of their beautiful cottage, whose situation she had so much admired. She had learned that her father had desired to become the owner of the lot, if Mr. Stanley ever disposed of it. She was anxious herself that it should not pass into other hands, and to secure their continuance in the neighbourhood.

"If by gratifying my father's known wish," continued Mrs. Clifton, her brilliant eyes softened by visible emotion, "I can relieve you, Mrs. Stanley, from, I trust, a transient embarrassment, I shall not consider myself less your debtor—when the time comes that you desire to reclaim it, I will not withhold its restoration."

The tears, which sorrow had not wrung from Mrs. Stanley's eyes, now fell fast from gratitude. She pressed Mrs. Clifton's hand in hers, and said, in a low voice, "You have caused the widow's heart to sing for joy—may heaven reward you for your kindness."

Clara, incapable of restraining herself longer, threw her arms around her neck, and sobbed out, "Oh madam, you have saved me from despair."

Mrs. Clifton, who attributed her words to the natural regret of a young and ardent heart, on the prospect of quitting the home of childhood, warmly returned the involuntary embrace, and bid her call back her smiles; and be ready to accompany her on the morrow in a botanical excursion. When she rose to depart, Edward rose also to accompany her home. He was no longer gloomy and reserved. He no longer looked upon her as an enchantress, moving high above him, in a region of inaccessible light and splendour, but as a woman, endowed with all the warm and lovely sensibilities of her sex—a being whom he might dare to love, though he could never hope to obtain—who might forgive the homage, even though she rejected the worshipper. Had not humanity, always the accompaniment of deep and fervent passion, ruled his perceptions, he might have derived an inspiration for his hopes, from the softened

language of her eyes—a language which others had not been slow in translating. They entered the magnificent saloon. The contrast its gilded walls presented to the agitating scene they had left, was felt by both.

“Desolate is the dwelling of Morris,” said she, in an accent half sad and half sportive,—“silence is in the house of her fathers.”

“Dwells there no joy in song, white hand of the harp of Lutha?” continued Edward, in the same poetic language, and drawing the harp towards her. It is always delightful to find the train of our own thoughts pursued by a friend—proving that we think in unison. Mrs. Clifton felt this as she swept her hands over the chords, and called forth that sweet and impassioned melody peculiar to the daughters of Italy. She paused, and her dark eye rested a moment on the face of her auditor. It was partly shaded by his hand, and she saw that he was overcome by some powerful emotion. Again she sang, but her voice was low, and she ceased at length as if weary of the effort.

“You seem spell-bound by the genius of silence,” said she, “I should be wrong to break the charms.”

“I know I must appear more than stupid,” replied he, “when there is every thing around to inspire me. But my feelings have been deeply oppressed by anxiety, and the weight of anxiety has been removed by a debt of gratitude, which, however pleasing and gracefully imposed, is only too deeply felt.”

“Oh! let not your pride be jealous of the happiness I have dared this day to purchase. What have I done for you and yours, half—half so precious to your remembrance, as to *mine*? Your sister’s tearful blessing, your mother’s hallowed prayer.”

She spoke with fervor and sensibility, and her countenance was lighted up with such an exalted expression, Edward was scarcely able to restrain the impetuous impulses of passion that urged him on. The confession trembled on his lips, but pride and poverty, two stern monitors, stood by his side, and forbade the avowal of his madness and presumption.

“No!” said he to himself, “let me live on in the silence and

secrecy of hopeless devotion, rather than by unguarded rashness risk the loss of that confidence so dangerous, yet so delightful. She allows me to be her friend. Let me never dare to aspire to more.”

Thus reasoned Edward Stanley, and thus he schooled the language of his lips—but the passion denied utterance in words, flashed from his eyes, and modulated every accent of his voice. He looked back upon this evening, passed alone with Mrs. Clifton, amidst the breathings of poetry and music, and exulted in the reflection that he had not committed himself by any act of imprudence he might hereafter vainly rue. Sometimes his feelings rose up against Clara, for the selfish vanity that had led her to sacrifice the fortune that might have placed him above the suspicion of mercenary motives, but her unappeasable sorrow for her transgression, would not allow him to cherish any resentment towards her. Sometimes, too his conscience reproached him for the part he was acting towards Fanny, the idol of his boyish fancy—but every hour passed in her presence, convinced him that she looked upon him more as a brother than a lover, and wrapped in a mantle of constitutional indifference, she seemed scarcely aware of the wandering of his heart.

“Oh! I am so glad you are not going to leave us! I do not know how I should live without you and Clara.”

Fanny’s most ardent impression in joy and sorrow, was, “I am so glad—I am so sorry.” It was a great deal for her to say—but she looked at Clara exactly as she did at him, and Edward, whose heart was now enlightened, felt that she did not love him, and he rejoiced in the conviction.

“One evening, just between twilight and darker hour, he was returning from a long walk, when, a little before he left the woodland path that led into the public road, he met an old woman muffled in a cloak and hood—he bowed, and was passing on, when she accosted him in a voice that was not known, and approaching nearer to her, he knew by the spectacles gleaming through the shades, under the deeper shade of a mob-cap, his ancient friend of the stage-coach, and he greeted her with great cordiality. She told him she was travelling about as usual, and had stopped in the vil-

lage to make a visit to Mrs. Clifton, the granddaughter of her old friend.

"It is growing dark and late," said he, "let me see you safe to her house, for you have mistaken the path that leads to it."

"Stop a moment," cried she, "if you are not in too much haste, and let me rest on this log by the wayside. I am old, and it wearies me to walk fast. Sit down, young man, and let me ask after your welfare. I have not forgotten your kindness to the aged, nor never shall I."

Edward brushed the dust from the log with his handkerchief, and preparing a seat for her, with great reverence placed himself at her side.

"Come," said she, "I must soon be gone, but I want to know if I can serve you. I am an eccentric old creature, but I am well off in the world, and when I die, I cannot carry my money into the grave. I am told there is a pretty young girl in the neighbourhood, whom you love, and would marry, were you not poor. Do not blush to own it, for if it is so, and I can make you happy by my means, I shall bless the hour that brought us together, even near the end of my pilgrimage."

Her tremulous voice faltered, and she raised her handkerchief under her spectacles.

"Thank you, a thousand times, for your generous offer," replied Edward, much moved; "but indeed, madam, you are misinformed. I would not marry, if I could."

"Young man," cried she, "you are not sincere. The heart craves for a kindred heart. You would not live alone. Confide in me, and I will not betray you. Trifle with me, and you may lose a friend, whose professions are not lightly made. Tell me, do you not love the fair girl, whom they call the beauty of the village, or is it but a passing rumour that has reached my ears?"

Edward wondered at the interest this singular old woman expressed in his destiny, but he did not doubt its sincerity, and he would not repay it with dissimulation.

"No, madam, I do not love her, otherwise than with brotherly

kindness. Where I *do* love, I cannot hope, and all your generosity cannot avail me there."

"Where?" said she. "I want no half confidences. The imagination of age is dull to that of youth. Tell me all, or nothing."

"There is one, then, with whom, were she poor, beggary would be a paradise, but whom fortune has placed so far beyond my reach, it would be madness to name, and presumption to aspire to. Sometimes, emboldened by her condescension, I have dared to think, had my lot been different—but no—it can never be—I need not say more—you know where your steps are bound."

A silence followed this avowal, and Edward was as much absorbed by his own feelings, as almost to forget the presence of his companion. At length she spoke.

"I do not see the great presumption of your hopes if you mean the widow Clifton. I see nothing to make her beyond your reach, unless you choose yourself to be put up in the clouds. She is rich, it is true, but what does she want in another? She has found no joy in wealth. I know the history of her marriage; it was involuntary on her part, and brought no happiness—a state of splendid bondage. Why do you not at least learn from her, whether your love is hopeless? If I, an old woman—if my heart warmed towards you, the first moment I saw you,—is her young bosom made of stone, that it cannot be melted, or impressed?"

"She has often spoken," said Edward, finding an increasing fascination in the subject, and drawing still nearer his aged friend, "of the loneliness of her destiny, and of the insufficiency of wealth to satisfy the cravings of the heart. These wild dreams dazzled my imagination, and gilt the future with the hues of heaven. But the dread of being banished from her presence, of incurring the displeasure of one who had been the benefactress of our family—you, who are now in the winter of your days, can have no conception of the strength of these mental conflicts—this warring of fire and ice."

"I have not forgotten the memories of youth," she answered; "and impassive as you believe me, there is an image cherished in my breast, whose traits the waves of oblivion can never efface, nor

the snow of age ever chill. Few can love as I have loved; and love with me, is immortal as the divine spark that lights up this perishing frame."

She leaned tremblingly against the shoulder of Edward, who reproached himself for calling up emotions so sublime in their strength, thus glowing and triumphant, amidst the ruins of beauty and youth. He drew her cloak more closely around her, and warned her that the night dew was falling.

"You are right," said she, rising; "I was forgetting I am not young like you."

They walked slowly on, in the direction of Mrs. Clifton's house.

"May I not ask the name of the friend, to whose kindness I am so much indebted?" cried he.

"Oh," replied she, laughing, "I thought every body knew Aunt Bridget; for I am one of those universal aunts, whom every body knows, and nobody cares for. My property is my own, and have a right to bequeath it to whomsoever I please. I have chosen you as my heir, and you may consider yourself equal in fortune to Widow Clifton, or any other widow in the land. Not a word of thanks—no gratitude—at least till legal measures are taken to secure it to your possession."

"Singular and generous being!" said Edward; beginning to believe her brain was somewhat unsound, "what have I done to excite so romantic an interest, what can I do to prove myself worthy of it?"

"Be sincere—truth is the only bond of love, and concealment with friends is falsehood."

They had now reached the gate of the avenue.

"You will go in?"

"No," said he, "I cannot see her to-night; to-morrow, perhaps—shall I see you then?"

"I cannot tell what the morrow will bring forth. But one thing let me say, young man, ere we part. You must plead your own cause, and not expect it will be done by me. If you have not moral courage and manly spirit sufficient to meet the consequences, what-

ever they may be, you merit the downfall of your hope, and the humiliation of your pride."

She closed the gate, and Edward watched her dark shrouded figure slowly treading the winding path, and almost imagined he had been with one of those sibylline priestesses, who opened their lips in prophecy, and shadowed the mystic outlines of intuition. "Whatever she may be," thought he, "I will be guided by her counsel, and abide by the result."

As he drew near his own home, and saw the light shining so quietly and brightly through the trees that quivered gently as in a golden shower, and thought how tranquilly the hearts of the inmates now beat, secure from the fear of being driven from that love-hallowed home—when he reflected that for this peace, so beautifully imagined in the scene before him, they were indebted to the very being whose recollection excited the throbbing of a thousand pulses in his heart and in his brain,—gratitude so mingled with and chastened his love, that every breathing became a prayer for her happiness, even if it were to be purchased at the sacrifice of his own.

He saw Clara through the window, seated at a table, with some object before her, which was shaded by the branches, but her attitude was so expressive that he stood a moment to contemplate her figure. Her hands were clasped in a kind of ecstasy, and her cheeks were coloured with a bright crimson, strikingly contrasting with their pallid hue. Something hung glittering from her fingers, upon which she gazed rapturously one moment,—then, bending forward the next, she seemed intent upon what was before her. He opened the door softly; she sprang up, and, throwing her arms around him, cried in an accent of hysterical joy—

"Dear brother—the trunk is found—there it is, oh! I am so happy!" And she wept and laughed alternately.

There indeed it was—the identical trunk—whose loss had occasioned so much sorrow,—with its red morocco covering and bright nails untarnished. Edward rejoiced more for Clara's sake than his own—for her remorse, though salutary to herself, was harrowing to him.

"Explain this mystery, dear Clara, and moderate these transports. How have you recovered the lost treasure?"

"Oh! it was the strangest circumstance! Who do you think had it, but Mrs. Clifton, that angel sent down from heaven, for our especial blessing."

"You know I went there to-day, about the time you took the walk in the woods. My heart was so full of grief for my folly, and gratitude for her kindness, I thought it would have burst, and I told her all; no, not quite all—for I could not bring myself to tell her that it contained your property; her eye seemed to upbraid me so for betraying the trust; but again it beamed with joy because she could restore to me both sacred relics."

Here she held up the beads, now a thousand times more precious to her than all the chains in the world.

"The pedler called there, after he left me. She recognized the trunk, as it bore the name of a friend."

Edward's cheek burned with emotion—for his own name, Edward Stanley, was wrought upon the velvet lining, but Clara went breathlessly on.

"She gathered from the pedler the history of the beads, and purchased them both, that she might, on some future day, have the pleasure of restoring them. She understood the sacrifice my foolish vanity had made, and anticipated the repentance that would follow. Is she not a friend, the best and kindest, and ought we not to love her as our own souls? And can you forgive me, Edward—will you forgive me, though I fear I never shall be able to pardon myself?"

"Forgive you, my sister? Let me only see once more the sweet, unaffected girl, who was the object of my approbation, as well as my love, and I ask no more."

He now examined the secret recess of the trunk, and found the papers safe and untouched. Their value transcended his most sanguine expectations. He could redeem the paternal dwelling, meet the demands which had involved them in distress, and still find himself a comparatively rich man.

Clara ran out of the room, and, bringing back the chain—the

"cause of all her wo,"—she put it in a conspicuous corner of her work-box.

"I will never wear this paltry bauble again," cried she; "but I will keep it as a memento of my vanity, and a pledge of my reformation. I will look at it a few moments every day, as the lady did upon the skeleton of her lover, to remind me of the sins of mortality."

When Clara had left them with a joyous "good night," Mrs. Stanley drew her chair next to her son, and looked earnestly in his face.

"There is something I ought to mention," said she, "and yet I cannot, to damp your present satisfaction. I have been told of an intended marriage, which I fear will disappoint your fondest hopes. I trust, however, you have too much honest pride to suffer your feelings to prey upon your happiness."

Edward started up, and pushed his chair against the wall with a violent rebound.

"I cannot bear it, mother—I believe it would drive me mad after all I have dared to dream to-night. I might, perhaps, live without her, but I could not live to see her married to another. Fool, credulous fool that I was, to believe that dotard's prophecy!"

He sat down again in the chair which Clara had left, and, throwing his arms across the table, bent his face over them, and remained silent.

"Alas! my son," cried Mrs. Stanley, "I feared it would be so. Mr. Morton feels for you the tenderness of a father, but"——

"Mr. Morton, did you say?" cried Edward, starting up again, at the risk of upsetting chairs, tables, and lamps,—“I believe I am out of my senses; and is it Fanny Morton who is going to be married?"

The sudden change in his countenance, from despair to composure, quite electrified Mrs. Stanley. She could not comprehend such great and sudden self-control.

"Mr Morton tells me," she continued, "that Fanny is addressed by a gentleman of wealth and respectability, and one who is every way a desirable connexion. He has learned from Fanny that no engagement subsisted between you; but he seemed apprehensive that

your affections were deeply interested, and wished me to soften the intelligence as much as possible."

Edward smiled. "Tell Mr. Morton I thank him for his kind consideration, for no one can rejoice in Fanny's prospects more than I do."

Mrs. Stanley was bewildered, for she had not dreamed of his present infatuation.

"I cannot understand how resignation can be acquired so soon, especially after such a burst of frenzy. I fear it is merely assumed to spare my feelings."

"I cannot feign, dear mother, though I may conceal. Dismiss all fears upon this subject, for were Fanny to live a thousand years in all her virgin loveliness—if nature permitted such a reign to youth and beauty—she would never be sought after as the bride of your son."

He kissed his mother, and bade her a hasty "good night," anxious to avoid explanation on a subject which had already agitated him so much.

The next day, when he reflected on his extraordinary interview with the old lady of the stage-coach, and her incredible promise in his behalf, he became more than ever convinced of her mental hallucination. Yet there was too much method in her madness, if madness indeed existed, to allow him to slight the impressions of her words.—He was now independent, and hopes that before seemed presumptuous, now warmed every pulsation of his being.

"Shall I even now follow the sibyl's counsel?" said he to himself, as he bent his steps at evening towards Mrs. Clifton's door; but the moment he entered her presence, Aunt Bridget, her promises, and the world itself were forgotten. She met him with a smile, but there was a burning glow on her cheek, and a hurried glance of her eye, that indicated internal agitation. She attempted to converse on indifferent topics, but her thoughts seemed to wander, and she at length became silent.

"I saw a friend of yours last night," said he with much embarrassment, for he knew not whether his confessions were unrevealed. "She is very singular, but extremely interesting in her eccentricities. Is she with you yet?"

"She is, and will be with us whenever you desire. Yet I would first speak with you, Mr. Stanley, and communicate an intelligence which I trust will not cost me the withdrawal of your friendship. You have known me rich, surrounded with all the appliance of wealth and fashion, and, as such, envied and admired. My fortune has been transferred into the hands of another, and you see me now destitute of that tinsel glare, which threw a radiance around me, which was not my own. Flatterers may desert me, but friends—I trust I may retain."

She extended her hand with an involuntary motion, and the glow forsook her cheek.

"Your fortune gone," exclaimed Edward; "and mine restored!" The next moment he was kneeling at her feet. In no other attitude could he have expressed the depth of passion he now dared to utter. What he said he knew not; he only felt that he was breathing forth the hoarded and late hopeless love, of whose extent he had never before been fully conscious.

"Am I then loved for myself alone?" cried Mrs. Clifton; by one, too, from whom I have vainly waited this avowal, to justify my preference?"

She bowed her head upon the hands that Edward was clasping in his own, as if her soul shared the humility of his devotion. Who would have recognized the gay and brilliant heiress, who once reveled in the cold halls of fashion, in this tender and passionate woman?

"Oh!" exclaimed she, when the feelings of both became sufficiently calm for explanation, "were I still the child of affluence, I might have vainly looked for the testimony of that love which the vessel of love was so long a rebel to, to truth, and to nature. And now," added she, rising, "let me not, in the fulness of my heart's content, forget your old friend, who is waiting no doubt, with impatience, to greet you. You will probably be surprised to learn that she is the lawful inheritor of my fortune, and that all I have been so profusely lavishing was her just due."

She smiled at Edward's unutterable look of astonishment, and

closed the door. He was left but a few moments to his own bewildered thoughts, when the door again opened, and Aunt Bridget entered, in the same ancient cloak and hood, which seemed to be a part of herself.

"Wisest and best of counsellors," said he, advancing to meet her, and leading her to a seat on the sofa—"to you I owe the blessings of this hour. It was surely a propitious star that shone upon me when I first seated myself beside you that memorable night. Had you not come to prove your claim to her wealth, the spell that bound me would not yet have been broken, and a wall of separation might still have arisen between hearts that have been met and blended, and will continue to mingle through eternity."

Aunt Bridget turned away her head, and seemed suddenly to have lost the gift of speech.

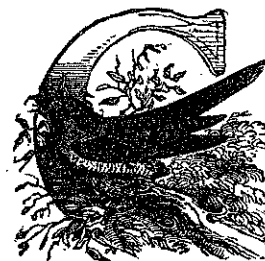
Somewhat alarmed at her unusual silence, especially as he felt her shaking and trembling under the folds of her cloak, he leaned over, and tried to untie her hood, so as to give her air. Fearing she would fall into a fit, as she continued to tremble still more violently, he burst the ribbons asunder, for the knots seemed to tighten under his fingers, and the cloak, hood, and mob cap fell off simultaneously; the large green spectacles, too, dropped from the eyes, which, laughing and brilliant, now flashed upon his own—and the arms which had been extended to support a far different personage, were folded in transport around the graceful form of Mrs. Clifton.

"Will you forgive me?" cried she, when she raised those beaming eyes from his shoulder, "the wily deception I have practised? Will you forgive me for continuing a disguise through love which commenced from eccentric motives? Young and unprotected, I have sometimes found safety in this disfiguring garb. Like the Arabian monarch, I like, occasionally, the covering of a mask, that I may be able to read the deep mysteries of human nature. But my masquerade is over.—I have now read all I ever wished to learn. Promise not to love me less because the doom of riches still clings to me, and I will pledge life and fame, that you shall find in Aunt Bridget a faithful, true, and loving wife."



THE PEDLER.

THE SEQUEL TO THE MOB CAP.



LARA STANLEY, at the time of her brother's marriage with Mrs. Clifton, believed herself the happiest of human beings. The first wish of her heart was gratified, and she did not think it possible that a more ardent one could quicken its pulsations. She loved Edward as a most affectionate and tender brother; she admired him, too, as the most handsome and graceful of men, and her pride as well as her affection exulted in his union with the admired and fascinating widow. But after the excitement attending the event had subsided, she wondered at the dejection that weighed down her spirits. She felt that there was a love dearer

than that of a sister's now gladdening his life, and that she must henceforth be satisfied with a secondary place in his affections. She had no other brother, no sister to supply his place as a companion, and poor Clara was often left to feel a dearth of which she had never dreamed before. There was something, too, in the impassioned character of Gertrude (for thus by her Christian name we will hereafter designate our former friend of the Mob Cap) that threw a kind of romance over every scene in which she moved, and Clara, communing with her own heart, would sometimes ask herself if she had the same deep capabilities of loving, or if the being existed, though yet unseen, who could call them into existence.

An event soon occurred, that gave a new colour to her dreams. She was sitting at an open window, intently reading, when the unfolding of the gate attracted her attention. She started as if she had seen a monster, for she knew at the first glance that it was a pedler who was coming in, and the sight of one filled her with horror. To make the sudden appearance more terrific, he carried in his hand a red morocco trunk, almost exactly like the one she had so shamefully bartered and unexpectedly recovered.

"Oh, mother, dear mother!" exclaimed she, starting up in dismay, "do not let him come in; I cannot bear the sight of him. Tell him we do not want any jewels. I hate—I detest the whole tribe of pedlers. I wish——."

A look from her mother checked her rash speech.

"Rather blame yourself, Clara," said Mrs. Stanley, "for a folly, for which I never would again upbraid you, if the remembrance of it did not make you unreasonable and unjust to others. I do not wish you to purchase jewels, but you must not be harsh in your refusal."

"I know I am wrong," answered Clara, ingenuously; but you know not the agonies of remorse the sight of that man calls to my recollection."

In the mean while the pedler knocked, and was admitted by Mrs. Stanley, with her usual gentle courtesy. He was a young man of quite a genteel appearance, and his long dark hair shading his fore-

head with its shining masses, his exceedingly dark complexion, and dark piercing eyes, reminded Clara, whose imagination was ever on the wing in search of romantic resemblances of the Gypsy race. He placed his trunk on the floor, and kneeling on one knee, opened it without speaking.

"Do not trouble yourself," said Clara, with a nervous shudder, as the opening lid displayed the glitter of the jewels; we do not wish to purchase any thing."

"Allow me to show them to you," said he, with that officious politeness peculiar to his profession, "you may be tempted to change your resolution."

"No, no," answered Clara, "I have made a vow never to wear another jewel."

"Not even a ring?" said he, with a smile, which she thought very bold and sarcastic; and determined to repel his assurance, she took up the book which she was reading, appeared to be absorbed by its contents. But the persevering pedler was not so easily repulsed.

"Will you not look at this beautiful chain?" said he, holding one up so near her eyes that she could not but perceive the dazzle of the links.

"Surely," thought Clara, "he must be my evil genius, sent to torment me before my time, for my past offence."

She put the chain back with an impatient gesture, and an appealing look to her mother to rid her of his importunity.

"My daughter has not the wish, nor I the means, to purchase your ornaments," said Mrs. Stanley mildly, but gravely; "you will probably find others in the neighbourhood, who have both."

The young pedler reluctantly closed his trunk and took up his hat, which he had thrown at Clara's feet as he knelt, and thus given the opportunity of seeing the name of Rover written on the lining. He observed the direction of her eyes, and said, as he swung the hat carelessly in his hand,

"A very appropriate name, Miss, for one of my profession. I believe it was what made me first think of becoming a pedler; and,

as I am naturally indolent and fond of variety, I find my roving life vastly agreeable at times."

"You are certainly vastly impertinent," thought Clara, as he retreated with a really graceful bow and a bold gaze of admiration, which displeased Mrs. Stanley very much, and made her close the door quickly after him, though it was a warm summer day.

"I do not like that man at all, Clara," said she, after he was gone; "he is very assuming, and though I reproved you for your vehemence, when he first made his appearance, I cannot but agree with you in thinking that pedlers are anything but a respectable class of people. A young, handsome, and apparently intelligent man, like him, to be wasting his time in such an idle, inglorious profession. You were right in checking his presumption as you did."

The next day Clara was searching her work-basket for some stray articles of sewing, when her eyes fell on a small packet, folded up in muslin paper.

"I do not remember what I have folded so carefully in this envelope," said she, as she loosened the covering, and a beautiful diamond ring, set in pearl, dropped into her lap. Clara was lost in astonishment, and examined it again and again, almost believing it an optical illusion. "How could it get here?" asked she aloud; but she was alone, and all the answer she could obtain was from her own thoughts. "The pedler? yes, it must have been the pedler!" She remembered that he had taken out some of his jewels, and placed them on the table, and that when he put them back, she had heard some paper rustling in his hands. This could not have been the result of accident,—it must have been a bold design,—and Clara blushed as if she had been detected in the act of stealing; recalling his long, lingering gaze of admiration, and the bright, dark eyes which, in spite of herself, had riveted that gaze on her memory.

She could not return the ring—she could not keep it; what should she do? She put it on her finger, turned it in the sunbeams, and admired its shifting lustre, and delicate setting. That it was intended as a token of the admiration his looks so evidently expressed, she

could not doubt; and, though she knew she ought to be indignant at the presumption of the act, a throb of gratified vanity fluttered in her heart.

The sound of approaching footsteps induced her to restore the ring to the envelope, and when her mother entered, she was busily searching her work-box for her thimble and scissors, and looking in every direction to avoid the glance that might notice the confusion of her own. Shame prevented her from mentioning the circumstance to her mother,—besides, she did not wish to expose the young pedler to her resentment for his secret homage.

"I wonder what I have done with my ring!" said she, stooping down that her heightened colour might seem the result of the attitude.

"Your ring!" repeated Mrs. Stanley—"what ring?"

"Oh! I did not mean ring," cried Clara, hastily, "I meant my thimble. But it is too warm to be confined to the needle within doors. I scarcely ever think of walking now,—Edward is not with me."

"It is true, dear Clara," answered Mrs. Stanley, "you must feel the want of exercise. But you should not linger at home, for want of your brother; for you must learn to be more independent of him now. The paths are all familiar to you, and in our quiet village you can never be in danger."

Clara felt as if she could bless her mother, for thus giving her a *carte-blanche* to ramble about by herself, and just now she wanted to think her own thoughts, and her own thoughts were never half so delightful as when she could look up to the blue sky, stretching far around her, and the green earth beneath her, the lulling sound of waters in her ear, and the fragrant breathings of the zephyrs on her brow.

"I will first go to Gertrude," said she to herself, "and, if I find her alone, I will tell her about the ring, and ask her what I must do."

Gertrude met her at the entrance of the avenue, with one of her most brilliant smiles.

"You are the very person I most wished to see," said she. "I have just received a letter from that chivalric cousin of mine, Washington Graham, of whom you have more than once heard me speak. He is actually wending his way hither, so much charmed is he by the description I have given him of a certain rural maiden, whom perchance, you know. Hear what he says himself, Clara."

Clara blushed, while Gertrude opened the letter, and read here and there a paragraph:—

"A cheek to blush, an eye to weep, a heart to feel, and a mind to kindle—these are charms that exercise an almost omnipotent sway over my wayward spirit. * * Simplicity and sensibility constitute what is most lovely in woman. When these are combined, as they seem to be in this charming new sister of yours, I feel as if I could make a pilgrimage to her shrine, and glory in surrendering a liberty of which so many have vainly attempted to deprive me."

"Oh, how could you be so unjust to yourself and me?" exclaimed Clara, ready to cry with unaffected vexation. "You know I am the veriest rustic in the world. Even in Edward's company I fear to disgrace him, and how must I appear in a stranger's eyes? I would not meet him for the universe after such a——"

Clara hesitated. She did not like to accuse Gertrude of falsehood, especially when too partial kindness had dictated the act. Gertrude passed her hand over Clara's throbbing neck, and looked smilingly into her downcast eyes.

"The sister of Edward Stanley need not blush in the presence of any gentleman of the land,—never at least for her own sake—and do not destroy the fair web of romance I am weaving for you, by false pride or false shame. This cousin of mine is doomed to be the hero of your destiny, graced as he is with every quality to win and wear a maiden's heart. Since I have robbed you of a brother, dear Clara, it is no more than fair that I should give you a lover in return."

In vain Clara protested and declared she never thought of a lover, never wished for one, and entreated her never to mention the subject; she could never more hear the name of Washington Graham, without feeling her cheeks dyed with conscious blushes.

"I dare not speak of the ring," thought she, "to Gertrude now. If she has such magnificent views for me, she will be doubtless displeased at the presumption of the gift."

With her thoughts strangely confused between the blending images of Washington Graham and the pedler, she turned towards the woodland, and continued her walk alone. There was one favourite spot where the turf seemed greener, the sky bluer, and the trees bent their branches more lovingly towards those who sought the shadow of their leaves than any other, and thither Clara directed her steps. She had concealed the ring in her bosom, resolving to inquire at the earliest opportunity, the route the pedler had taken; but the opportunity was much nearer than she imagined, for when she reached her favourite resting-place, there the identical young gentleman was reclining, leaning on his red morocco trunk, his hat lying on the grass, and a poetical looking book in his hand.

Clara started back in alarm and shame, at thus suddenly finding herself alone with one, whose presumption the restraining presence of her mother had failed to check. The young man sprang upon his feet, but his manner, instead of being bold and careless, was modest and respectful.

"Pardon me," said he, "if I have intruded upon a spot, which, perhaps, is by right appropriated to yourself. If so, forgive the sympathy which drew me hither."

Clara's alarm subsided at the deference of his address, but her embarrassment remained.

"I have no right here, sir," replied she, "beyond your own. But since I meet you so unexpectedly, I would wish"—Here Clara stammered; for in restoring the ring, she knew not how to avoid wounding his feelings, without compromising her own dignity. She drew forth the paper, which she had concealed in the foldings of her dress, and handing it toward him, with a look which she intended to be cold and severe, added, "this ring which I found on my table, I believe must be your property. I was wishing for an opportunity to return it, as it appears to be of value."

"Do you then scorn my offering?" said he, drawing back with

an air of deep mortification; "was I too presumptuous, in daring to leave this little token of the admiration with which you had inspired me? I know my situation is lowly, and those who look upon wealth and station as what constitute the man, may regard me with contempt; but there is something in your countenance that encouraged me to think you were above the false prejudices of the world. No! madam, I cannot take back the gift, worthless henceforth, if refused by you. It shall never encircle another's finger; but lie in the grass beneath our feet, to mingle its pearls with the dews of night."

Poor Clara! assailed by flattery, breathed in practical high-flown language such as she had read in books, but never expected to hear addressed to herself—delighted, in the midst of her confusion, at meeting with so romantic an incident in her hitherto uneventful life—she could not repulse with harshness her humble admirer.

"It is not from scorn that I refused your gift," answered she; "but you must be conscious of the extreme impropriety of my permitting such freedom in a stranger. Your conduct is very strange, sir—very unauthorized."

"Is it strange," said Rover, without seeming disconcerted by her rebuke, "to admire what is beautiful, or unauthorized to wish it our own?—In my somewhat idle and wandering life, I have had leisure to cultivate the taste and imagination nature has given me, and I think I can say, mine is no vulgar stamp. Books are my constant companions, poetry my passion, and nature my study and delight. I am sure I speak what is true, and your own heart can bear witness to it—there is something congenial to your own character in mine. Two kindred souls can read each other at a glance, while discordant spirits may remain strangers for years."

He accompanied these words by a glance such as Clara never met before, and it made her heart throb, and her cheek kindle. There was a glow, too, mantling his own dark cheek, an eloquent commentary on the warmth of his language. She cast down her eyes, and they rested on the hateful trunk—the badge of the pedler—and her mind all at once took in the ridiculous position in which she was placed. A pedler for her lover! A stranger whom she had never seen but

once before; and then her mother, gentle as she was, had shut the door in his face, incensed at his familiarity. Then the vision of the proud Washington Graham, such as Gertrude had depicted, came in dazzling contrast, to increase her mortification. These thoughts so chilling to romance, gave her sufficient composure to speak, and resolution enough to speak as she ought.

"I cannot forgive myself for continuing this conversation so long. I feel more and more sensible of its impropriety. Since you leave me no other alternative, you force me to lay your treasure where the dews of night will indeed deface its lustre."

She said this in answer to a deprecating motion of his hand, as she again extended the ring, and dropping it on the grass, she turned to depart, glorying in the conquest she had made over the weakness and vanity which tempted her to linger and accept an incense as novel as it was pleasing. Rover crushed the ring under his feet, and his eye flashed scornfully.

"I see I am mistaken. Every woman is a slave to opinion, and fears to follow the dictates of her own heart. A fine coat and a fine equipage are the only passports to her favour, and provided the world approve her choice, it matters not whether she is tortured by unkindness, or frozen by indifference."

Clara stopped, for her spirits were roused, and she forgot her timidity, that she might vindicate herself from such an assertion.

"Whatever claims you may offer as an individual," said she, "to confidence and respect, you must be conscious you have chosen a profession that precludes you, by its itinerant habits, from the society in which we mingle. I am indeed astonished that you are willing to pursue it, ignoble as it is deemed."

"If I should tell you the history of my life," he answered, more calmly, "you would find, perhaps, that I had been a rebellious youth, too proud to labour, too independent to solicit favour, who wanted to see a little of the world, and thought it just as honest and respectable to walk through it with a pedler's trunk and a clear conscience as to wear a lawyer's gown or carry a doctor's lance. But," added he, dismissing his sarcastic tone for one of deep feeling, "if

you dislike me because the world dubs me *pedler*, I will be any thing and every thing you please, if I may be animated with the hope of one day winning your affections. Yet the love that is capable of defying any reproach, and encountering any obstacle that can trample pride and vanity, and the world itself, under its feet, is the only love that can satisfy the boundless wishes of my heart. If I cannot meet with this, I will continue a wanderer through life, dealing in tinsel and gewgaws, rejoicing the while in my own independence."

It was impossible for the imaginative and inexperienced Clara, to listen to these high-wrought sentiments, so exactly corresponding to her own, without being moved. She could not disdain one who laughed to scorn the distinctions of society, and who, proud of his inborn wealth, asserted his claims to regard as one of nature's aristocrats. In vain she sought to leave him, till she had admitted the possibility that he might see her again, and had promised that the dread of meeting him should not banish her entirely from her wonted walks.

When alone once more, she wept at her imprudence, and would have given worlds to live over again the last hour, that she might recall the faint encouragement she had given. She knew she was wrong in concealing the circumstance from her mother and brother; but she tried to persuade herself that he would soon leave the neighbourhood, and forget his foolish admiration of herself, so there could be no necessity of revealing what would only expose him to their resentment. She avoided, after this, the place where she had met him; but there were other shaded walks, and her mother told her that her health would suffer for want of exercise. It would be impossible to live within doors all the time in warm summer weather, and it is not strange that she again encountered the persevering pedler, or that the dread and the shame that at first oppressed her, gradually melted away in the fascination of their romantic and untold meetings. Each time she said to herself—"It shall be the last;" but faint and wavering are the resolutions of youth, opposed to the growing influence of the strongest passion of the heart. He no longer carried the odious

red trunk, and she tried to forget that she had ever seen it. When with him, it was an easy task, listening to such language, and looked upon by such eyes, soft, yet bright, so luminously dark! Even the gypsy hue of his complexion, gave him a wild charm in her eyes, harmonizing, as it did, with his wandering habits and eccentric character.

As Clara was walking, lost in these dangerous reveries, hesitating whether she should proceed where she was almost sure of meeting one who seemed like an invisible being to watch her footsteps, and know whither they were bound, or to remain nearer the guardian boundary of home, she was startled by the sound of horses' feet behind her, and it forcibly reminded her of her brother's first meeting with Mrs. Clifton, for it was precisely the same path, and likewise near the sunset hour of day. She turned her head involuntarily, as the sound came near, and drew back as far as the width of the path would allow, to permit the stranger and his attendant to pass by. She did this with a quickened pulse, for something told her it must be Washington Graham. At any rate, he was no vulgar rider—for he was mounted on a coal-black horse, splendidly caparisoned, and attended by a negro, who rode one of the same raven colour, whose blackness was contrasted by a scarlet saddle-cloth, that almost swept the ground. Clara was so dazzled by the magnificence of their appearance, and so confused by the thought, that it was the hero appropriated to herself, by the splendid imagination of Gertrude, she could not clearly discern the gentleman's features; though he raised his hat as he passed, with a graceful bow, and slackened his pace, till he disappeared in the direction of the white house on the hill.

"What a singular coincidence!" said Clara to herself. "Just on this spot did Edward first behold Mrs. Clifton, on horseback, too, and that glance decided his destiny!" The ardent glance of Rover flashed through her memory, and, conscious of the struggle of vanity and feeling in the heart, she believed herself unworthy of the homage it expressed.

"What can he ever be to me, this proud, southern stranger," she added, "who comes among us like an eastern nabob?—and yet I

shall be to him an object of ridicule and disgust, after Gertrude's glowing description. Had he never heard my name, I might escape his notice, but now it is impossible."

While her mind was wrought up to a state of feverish excitement by the anticipated meeting with the dreaded stranger, her eyes were fixed on the windows of her brother's dwelling, illuminated as they now were, by the setting sunbeams, and she could see the dark outlines of the two riders defined upon them; then she knew that her conjecture was right. Most willingly would she have sought some covert in the woods, and fed on berries and herbs for weeks to come, to avoid the mortification she believed was in store for her;—but she fortunately remembered she had a mother, who was probably even now waiting her return with anxiety, for the soft gray of twilight was beginning to steal over sunset's golden tints.

The next day she received a summons from Gertrude, telling her there was to be a general gathering of friends to welcome the arrival of her cousin, who was all impatience to behold the fair rustic whose image was already drawn on his fancy in such attractive colours. This message renewed the trepidation of Clara to such a degree, that she was tempted to plead a nervous headache, as an excuse from attendance. One moment she was ready to sink at the thought of her being contemned and despised—the next the *possibility* that Washington Graham, lordly as he seemed, might cast a favourite glance upon her, unpretending as she was, filled her with dread. If so, what would become of poor Rover? And what would Gertrude think if she turned coldly away from the attentions of her gifted cousin? When arraying herself for the occasion, she tried to school herself into perfect indifference with regard to her appearance; but in vain. She repeated to herself a hundred times, it was no matter how she looked. She could not obtain the stranger's admiration, if she would—she would not, if she could—still she lingered before her mirror, thinking it had never reflected a less pleasing image.—She was entirely divested of ornaments, for she had not forgotten the bitter lesson taught by the tinsel chain; but the "ornament of a meek and quiet spirit," which seeks no praise or favour, for any out-

ward gifts, Clara had not yet gained. The same vanity that led her to barter her self-approbation for a paltry bauble, now caused her to tremble, in anticipation of a stranger's scrutiny.—She thought it humility, and would have wept at the suggestion, that one trace of the foible that had lately cost her so dear was still lingering in her heart. The green branches were lopped off, but the roots still clung to the parent, and when circumstances favoured their growth, were ready to shoot forth with new luxuriance.

When Clara found herself in the illuminated drawing-room, she saw nothing, for a few moments, but bright spectres floating before her eyes, and heard nothing but a ringing sound in her ears—loud as the echoes of a tolling bell. She had a kind of consciousness that she was going through the ceremony of introduction to a gentleman; but how he looked and what he said, she knew not.—He might have been the veiled prophet Mohanna, for ought she knew of his face, for she never lifted her eyes from the carpet, but stood clinging to her brother's arm: her cheeks burning with blushes, indeed her whole face, and even her neck was covered with the same crimson hue. Clara knew that the deep suffusion she was undergoing was any thing but becoming, and this conviction only added to the intensity of the glow. The idea that she was actually in the presence of the formidable Washington Graham, the prophesied hero of her destiny, was too overwhelming. He addressed her in the common language of courtesy, but she could only answer in monosyllables, and whispering to her brother to lead her to a window, he drew her away, pitying her confusion, yet vexed at her unwonted awkwardness and taciturnity.

"Leave me here," said she to Gertrude, who followed her to her retreat, "there are so many people in the centre of the room, that I cannot breathe. I will not disgrace you here."

"I *will* leave you, dear Clara, since you desire it," answered she, with a calm sweetness of manner that operated like a charm in soothing Clara's preposterous agitation, "and only remember that while you are just to yourself, you can never disgrace us. But for my sake, for Edward's sake, try to recover your self-possession, and

give my kinsman the welcome I have dared to promise him from the sister of my husband."

Clara felt the gentle rebuke conveyed in these words, as she followed with her eyes Gertrude's retreating figure, admiring that surpassing gracefulness which distinguished her above all other women, she could not but admire still more the kindness and forbearance she manifested towards one so untutored and wayward as herself. The soft evening air that flowed in through the open window, cooled her fevered cheeks, while the circumstance of her being permitted to remain quiet much longer than she anticipated, composed, while it mortified her. She dreaded observation—she equally dreaded neglect; and when she saw Washington Graham conversing with some ladies on the opposite side of the room, without making any effort to disturb her solitude, and by their pleased and attentive countenances knew that he was saying what seemed very agreeable and entertaining, she felt

"It were better to stand the lightning's shock,
Than moulder piecemeal on the rock."

She had but a partial view of his face, as it was somewhat turned from her, but his figure struck her as being remarkably graceful and gentleman-like. In a little while he changed his position, and her heart palpitated anew, for she thought he was approaching her; but no! he was drawing near his cousin, who, having been compelled to take her seat at the harp, (an instrument which still possessed all the charm of novelty with her guests,) was beckoning him to her side. Clara, like her brother, was passionately fond of music, and Gertrude's always thrilled to her very soul. But now a manly voice of exquisite melody mingled its deep notes with hers, and both blending with the full, breeze-like strains of the harp, "rose like a stream of rich distilled perfume." Edward was leaning over the instrument in the same attitude she remembered to have seen him at Mrs. Clifton's never-to-be-forgotten party, but then his face was pale and his countenance dark; now it was lighted up with an expression of fervour and happiness as intense as the human features are capable of wearing, and Gertrude's eyes, floating in liquid radiance, were occasion-

ally lifted to his, beaming with the love she no longer sought to bury in the foldings of her own heart.

"Surely," thought Clara, "I have never loved Edward, or my nature is too cold to love as she does, and yet my very existence seemed bound up in his. Can there be a love stronger than that which binds together an only brother and sister, when that brother, too, exercises a father's tender guardianship, in place of him who is laid low with the dead?"

As she asked herself this question, the image of Rover seemed to glide before her, and memory whispered, "The glance of Rover, when it bends on me, expresses the same depth and fire, and can it be that he loves me more than Edward? And will he ever fill, and more than fill a brother's place within my heart? Dare I ever avow the interest he has inspired, to those who have woven my destiny with that of this dazzling stranger?"

At this moment the face of Washington was turned towards her, and though her vision was somewhat obscured by the tears that involuntarily suffused her eyes, she could observe its lineaments, and she thought she could trace in every feature the pride of wealth and conscious superiority. His fine figure was set off by a dress of aristocratic elegance; his hair was arranged in careless but graceful waves around his temples, revealing a forehead, whose unsunned whiteness plainly indicated that he at least was exempt from the primeval curse of earning his bread by the sweat of his brow. The southern sun had given to his cheeks a manlier glow, so that the idea of effeminacy could never be associated with Washington Graham, who look exactly what he was, a gentleman by nature, by birth, by wealth, and by education. The music had so far subdued Clara, and carried her out of herself, that when Gertrude again approached her, accompanied by her cousin, she received them with less trepidation, and she ventured to listen and speak, though still with her eyes bowed down in "penetrative shame." Had Clara been conscious of her own attractions, she would not have suffered so much from self-distrust. She could not know them, for when she saw herself reflected in the looking-glass, in the act of dressing, her features

were at rest, and there was nothing sufficiently striking, in their outline, or dazzling in their hue, to give her an exalted image of her own loveliness. She never saw the roses flitting over her cheeks, coming and going, and coming again, heralds of the heart's spring-time, or the warm and shifting lustre of her eye, when enthusiasm or sensibility stirred its peaceful depths. What if she had made a conquest of a poor wandering pedler, this magnificent Washington Graham was a very different kind of person, and the idea that he would look upon her with admiration or love, was too absurd to be admitted, and it would certainly expose her to the ridicule of all her acquaintances, if it were but known that it had ever entered into her mind. But when she was once more alone in her room, and reflected on the events of the evening, though filled with mortification at her own want of self-control, she rejoiced she had stood the ordeal without any open violation of decorum, and without incurring any visible marks of contempt. The thought that she had been seen, and that the illusion created by Gertrude was consequently dispelled, was very comforting to her. Another thought gave her a feeling of delight and self-approbation, why she could not define—Rover lost nothing in her estimation in comparison with the elegant southerner. She would rather live over again the moments passed with him in the midst of nature's loveliness, stolen and hurried as they were, and always accompanied with the dread of detection and the consciousness of acting a clandestine part, than spend a thousand such evenings as this—so cold, constrained and formal. Clara was a mystery to herself—foolish girl that she was, to find a happiness in contemplations which should fill her with sorrow and self-reproach! The next day, Gertrude came to her with a congratulating smile.

"I feared last night, dear Clara," said she, "when you acted the part of the blushing automaton, that my character as prophetess was more than endangered, that it was lost. But cousin Washington declares himself enchanted with that very bashfulness and simplicity that deprived you of your native grace. He is so sick of the artificial glare of fashionable society, so weary of glitter and display, his eye

reposes with delight, as he expresses it, on the soft green of your character."

"Stop," cried Clara, "you do but mock me. His practised tongue may well utter the language of flattery, but do not, dearest Gertrude, solicit his admiration for me. To gratify your affection he may profess an interest I know he can never feel. You know not how wounded is the thought that I should be forced, as it were, upon the particular notice of a gentleman like him!"

"Believe me, Clara," answered Gertrude, earnestly, "I will do nothing to wound your delicacy or pride. I will say nothing more at present, leaving it for time to unfold events, which I trust will justify all I have ventured to express; one thing only let me ask, what think you of my vaunted cousin?"

"I have no distinct impression left on my mind," answered Clara, "so deep was the embarrassment that oppressed her. He appeared to me like something bright, lofty, and cold."

"Oh," said Gertrude, "you do not know him yet. Beneath that somewhat cold exterior, the result of a premature experience of the world's heartlessness, there is a depth of feeling known only to those who see him free from the restraints of society. Handsome, intellectual and rich—romantic, too, in the best sense in which that oft perverted word is used. I should not think it possible that Washington Graham could fail to win a young and disengaged heart like yours."

The soft blush that had hitherto coloured the cheek of Clara, was pale to the crimson that now dyed its surface.

"He leaves us to-morrow for a few days," continued Gertrude, "and when he returns, I hope to see all my fondest wishes realized."

Clara breathed as if recovering from a fit of the nightmare. She pleaded every excuse to be permitted to remain at home that evening. She had a nervous headache, she was unfit to appear in company, she did not like to leave her mother alone; in short, she gave twenty reasons, any one of which was sufficient in itself to answer her purpose.

"My head really does ache," said Clara, after Gertrude's depar-

ture, "and I think a walk in the fresh air will revive me; though unfit for company, I am not ashamed of being seen by the cattle and the birds." How she disposed of her objections to leave her mother alone; remained a mystery even to herself. She had never met Rover in the path in which she now walked, and he could not know the direction she had taken; yet she started when the wind moved the branches or the birds flew rustling through the leaves, as if these accustomed sounds were the harbingers of coming footsteps. She was unwilling to acknowledge to herself the disappointment that weighed upon her spirits; but not finding in her walk the exhilarating influence she anticipated, she turned her face homeward.

"He has probably heard of the arrival of Washington Graham," thought Clara, "and believes me paying homage to his wealth and pretensions. He does me injustice, but it is no matter. Better, far better that we should never meet again—for he can never be any thing to me. Edward would not disdain his poverty, for he was himself once poor. But a pedler! Mrs. Clifton would not have married Edward if he had been an itinerant pedler."

Just as Clara had finished these reflections, which breathed more of pique than she was aware of, she heard a sudden crashing among the boughs, and the pedler himself bounced into the path, his dark complexion glowing from the rapidity of his motions, and his eye sparkling with more than its wonted fire.

"I feared that I might be forgotten," said he; "but I see that I have wronged you—yet if village rumour has been true, it is a hopeless devotion, an act of still greater presumption. It says that a stranger of wealth and distinction, conspicuous for the display and pride of his appearance, is come hither for the sole purpose of addressing and wedding Clara Stanley. It says, too, that he will not address her in vain."

The characteristic openness and boldness of this address, left Clara no room for evasion. She did wish to acknowledge its truth—she would not give utterance to a falsehood. Unpractised in the arts which could teach her the way of extrication, she stood silent and embarrassed, wishing the good people of the village would find some-

thing else to talk about besides the Stanleys, whose concerns seemed to interest them so much.

"You are silent, Clara," cried he, in an altered tone; "you do not deny it, and Heaven forbid you should, if for once village gossip has spoken the truth. I have no right to reproach you—you have professed nothing—promised nothing—and yet I feel as if I were waking from the sweetest and brightest dream that ever gladdened the heart of man—the dream of imagined perfection."

Clara's heart swelled under the consciousness of injustice, and she would have made an indignant reply, but the deep dejection of his countenance and air inspired her with pity.

"If I deserved upbraiding from you," said she, "I should not at this moment be dreading the reproaches of all whom I love. Whatever may be said of this stranger's visit, his coming can never influence my feelings towards you."

The last words were uttered in a tremulous voice. She began to feel as if she had forsaken the "guide of her youth," and rashly given her happiness into a stranger's keeping. In the true spirit of a heroine, though true only to the impulse of nature, she covered her face with her hands, and, sitting down at the foot of the tree beneath which they were standing, tried to think herself miserable; but strange as it may seem, a thrill of delight still penetrated her heart, from the conviction that she was beloved. Nothing was more natural, from the lowly position she had assumed, for Rover to kneel at her side; and he did kneel in exactly the same graceful attitude in which she first beheld him, when he bent to display his jewels to her admiring gaze; but Clara had forgotten all that, and she soon forgot every thing else but the words he breathed into her ear, and the looks that bore witness to their sincerity.

The next morning, as she was tying up some wandering vines, that answered all the purposes of *jalousies*, to the window, she heard the tramping of horses' feet, and Washington Graham, on his raven black horse, accompanied by his black attendant, with the red saddle cloth sweeping so magnificently on either side, was seen passing by. He lifted his hat, and bowed till his hair almost touched his horse's

flowing mane, then rode rapidly by. Clara thought of the Black Knight in *Ivanhoe*; of *Ivanhoe* himself, and almost expected to see the days of tournaments and queens of love and beauty revived.

"He is certainly very, very graceful," said she, shading her eyes to catch the last glimpse of his knight-like figure, yet vexed at being forced to bring in lordly contrast to the condemned Rover, assured that in every thing but outward show, Rover transcended the southern nabob. "But I dare say he is very proud, and the maiden that he will wed must also be proud and rich, as she will be beautiful and accomplished." And with a half suppressed sigh at the inequalities of fortune's gifts, she resumed her occupation, which naturally led her thoughts back to rural life and cottage scenes, and it was not long before she was indulging most heroic scorn for every joy dependent on wealth or fortune.

Clara sat one evening alone with her mother, her head bent over her work. Whenever she was thus situated, her secret weighed heavily on her heart, and the dread of detection was never absent from her mind. If Mrs. Stanley addressed her suddenly, she would start and turn pale—if she looked upon her instantly, she would tremble and blush, and sometimes she would talk at random, and commit a thousand inconsistencies. She rejoiced at the entrance of a neighbour, for it saved her the trouble of talking, and left her to the indulgence of her own thoughts. Mrs. Morton, the lady who now made her appearance, was only desirous of listeners, for she came laden with news she was eager to impart before she could be forestalled in the office.

"This is a very unpleasant affair about that young pedler," said Mrs. Morton; have you heard of it?"

Clara's ears tingled at these words, and she held her breath to listen. Mrs. Stanley expressed her ignorance, and Mrs. Morton proceeded.

"You recollect that a shocking murder and robbery were perpetrated not very long since in an adjoining town, and that great rewards were offered for the apprehension of the murderer. It seems they have discovered a gang of pedlers, who are going about murdering and plundering in every direction. Some one who knew the

gentleman who has been lately murdered, says he can swear to one of the watches among the jewels of the young pedler who has been sauntering about here. He says he has seen it in the gentleman's possession, and has no doubt he is both a robber and a murderer. They have taken up the young man upon suspicion, and he is now confined in jail. The probability is he will be hung."

"It is indeed shocking to hear of such crimes," replied Mrs. Stanley, "when the actors, too, are brought so near our own homes. I thought there was something very suspicious about that young man, and I feared he might be troublesome to us."

She looked at Clara as she spoke, but she seemed to take no interest in the conversation, remaining perfectly still, with her head bowed, so that the lamp shone brightly on the ringlets that shaded her face, leaving her features in a still deeper shade.

While Mrs. Morton went on with earnestness and volubility, describing all she knew of the event in exaggerated colours, Clara rose softly and left the room. She stepped cautiously through the passage, and down the steps, opened the gate with a noiseless touch, and then ran like lightning through the street. It was a moonlight night, and she could see her own shadow flitting on every wall, lengthening into spectral dimensions, as she flew on, as if the avenger of blood was behind. She slackened not her pace, even while ascending the hill on which her brother's house was situated, nor paused till she reached the avenue of trees that stood in long stately lines in front of the mansion. For a moment she stopped, and looked back at the light that glimmered from her mother's window, like a solitary star, luring the wanderer home—then renewing her flight, she found herself all at once in the presence of Gertrude, who was sitting alone in her chamber, little dreaming of so strange an interruption. She rose in unspeakable alarm at Clara's entrance, whose appearance fully justified the feeling. Her face was of ashy paleness, her lips parted and quivering, and her long hair hung unbound over her shoulders in damp clinging masses.

"Clara, dear Clara," exclaimed Gertrude, "tell me what has happened! You know nothing of Edward? Speak!"

"Is Edward gone! Thank heaven!" uttered Clara, and sinking into a chair she burst into tears. Gertrude threw her arms around her, and held her sobbing head around her bosom, till, like a wearied child, she gradually ceased her tears. The hot pressure on her brain seemed loosened, but there was anguish in her heart. There was but one sound in her ears—"He will in all probability be hung!" There was but one image before her eyes—Rover, a dying victim to a false accusation. She believed him as guiltless of crime as her own brother was, and the one strong purpose of her soul was to liberate him, at the hazard of her own liberty, and life itself, if it were necessary. She had read of Helen Mar, who followed into captivity the Scottish chieftain; of the devoted Lavalette, who effected the escape of her husband from the walls of a prison, by clothing him in her own garments, and assuming his bondage instead. Impulse and action were almost simultaneous with Clara. She stopped not to think of the censure of the world, the reproaches of her friends. Rover in prison—exposed to an ignominious death, alone filled her mind. The circumstances of Edward's absence, who had been called away upon some unexpected business, was favourable to her design, for she was sure of the co-operation of Gertrude.

"Dear Gertrude," said she, "I cannot tell you the cause of my grief, but if you love me, do not refuse what I am going to ask of you."

"I do love you, Clara, for more than your own sake, and mysterious as you are to-night, I am ready to promise that whatever you ask shall be granted, assured that it will be nothing but what justice may require and affection bestow."

"Thanks, a thousand thanks," cried Clara. "Then, quick, dear Gertrude, lend me the cloak, hood, and Mob Cap, which you wore when Edward first met you, and say not a word of what you have done to a human being. Oh! Gertrude, you look as if you were going to deny me!" and Clara clasped her hands supplicatingly together, as if her life depended on the boon.

"I would do any thing but suffer you to expose yourself to danger," said Gertrude, a bright ray flitting over her face at meet-

ing a spirit so congenial to her own. "Any thing that will not serve as a barrier to separate you hereafter from Washington Graham."

"Talk not of Washington Graham," cried Clara, impatiently, "I think not of him, I care not for him—nor is there danger to me. Hasten, I will do nothing but what your own generous, uncalculating heart would prompt me to do."

Gertrude withdrew a moment, and returned with her masquerade dress, which she kept as a precious memento of her life's most romantic scenes. "My Clara," said she as she entered, "the sight of these makes me almost wish I had again the task of winning the heart which I first learned to prize beneath their muffled shades. Never, never shall I forget the hour when Edward breathed into Aunt Bridget's ear the story of his love for the high and lofty Widow Clifton."

"Tell me," cried Clara, as she hastily wrapped her youthful person in the ancient cloak, "if Edward had been in danger before you married him, what would you have done to save him?"

"What would I have done!" repeated Gertrude, passionately, "I would have died to save him. Had I ten thousand lives, I would peril them all for him at this moment, so entirely, so devotedly do I love him."

Clara could have worshipped her for this burst of enthusiasm, sanctioning as it did her own purposed devotion, and with firmer hand she tied the mob cap under her chin, put on the green spectacles, and drew the hood over her head. Notwithstanding Clara's distress, Gertrude could not forbear smiling at her antiquated little figure, wondering whether she had ever looked as obsolete herself. "Now speed thee, dear Clara, and heaven bless thy purpose, whatever it may be," cried she, leading her down the steps of the piazza.

Clara was obliged to gather her cloak round her, as it trailed on the ground, and impeded her walking. Then she recollected, that if so aged a person as she appeared to be, were seen running, it would excite suspicion, and she tried to fashion her movements to the character she had assumed. She met several boys, who terrified her by hallowing in her ear, "Good-night, grandmother—what will

you take for your spectacles?" Without turning her head, she walked on with quicker steps till she arrived at the prison. She had been there before to visit a poor black woman, who was very sick, and who had been accused of an attempt to poison a white family. She died in prison, and her innocence was proved too late. She knew the jailer, too, a simple, kind-hearted man; and when in faltering accents, which might well pass for the trembling utterance of age, she requested admittance to the pedler, (that hateful name almost choked Clara, for she had never breathed it aloud since she had first known Rover,) the good jailer immediately granted her admission. Rover was seated in a remote corner of the gloomy apartment, his head resting on his hand, the dim light scarcely defining the dark outlines of his figure. He raised his dark eyes upon her entrance, and they flashed with lamp-like brilliancy through the shades that surrounded him. He was in danger and disgrace, and Clara felt that if she had resolved to act a heroic part, she would do it in the true spirit of a heroine. She drew near him without speaking, while he, with the courtesy which adorns a prison as much as a drawing-room, rose and offered her his seat, wondering what good old lady was so kind as to visit him in this extremity. Clara sunk into the chair, and gathering courage now the critical moment had arrived, untied the strings of her cloak and cap, and emerged from the disguise like the evening star from behind a gray cloud.

"Clara Stanley, by all that is lovely!" exclaimed he; and the graceful pedler knelt at her feet. A bright triumphant smile played about his lips. "Welcome imprisonment, danger, and death itself, if they bring with them consolations like this. You believe me innocent, then," added he, "or deem me guilty, have come to pity and"—

"To save!" interrupted Clara, "to save, believing you innocent. In this apparel you can pass out undiscovered, and fly the wretches who seek your life. As for me, there is no danger. They will release me as soon as they learn that I am here."

"What! leave you here alone in this dismal place, the long dark

night, exposed to present suffering and future calumny, that I may elude dangers, which after all, are imaginary, for my life is in no peril! I can produce such proofs of my innocence as will cover my accusers with shame. No! no! I cannot leave this cell. It is transformed into the garden of Eden—since I have here learned what I have hitherto dared to doubt, the truth, the tenderness, the heroism of woman's love."

"And shall I have braved every thing in vain?" cried Clara, imploringly. "Your innocence will serve you nothing when law in its strength is once aimed against you. Even in this very cell, I saw a poor creature breathe her last, accused, though guiltless, condemned and broken hearted. And I shall be as safe here as in my own chamber. The jailer knows me—my mother has been kind to his children, and he will be kind to me; I shall immediately be released. What! still unyielding? Have you upbraided *me* for coldness and pride, and fear of the world's censure?—but who now is cold and proud, and unwilling to incur a debt of gratitude?"

Rover fixed his steadfast gaze on Clara's now glowing countenance. She seemed transformed. Her eyes, that had always bowed abashed beneath the beams of his, were riveted intently on his face—and the hand which had never willingly been abandoned to his hold, now clasped his, in the energy of her address.

"Clara," said he, and his voice trembled with deep emotion, "this is no time for deception—on one condition only will I fly. Should my fame be cleared, and my character proved upright and pure, will you allow me to declare my love before the world, and consent to unite your fate to mine, however poor and lowly I may be?"

"I will consent to any thing that obtains a mother's sanction," replied Clara, in low but firm accents; then snatching up the cloak, and throwing it over his shoulders, she entreated him to hasten, as footsteps were heard echoing through the passage. There was no time to be lost, and he hastily gathered the folds of his cloak around him; but when he bent his head for the mob cap and spectacles, unconquerable mirth struggled with the tumultuous feeling excited

in his bosom. Even Clara, though wrought upon by a thousand fears, could not forbear laughing at the ludicrous effect of the headdress; then she wept to think she could have laughed at such a moment. She was sure that Madame Lavallette did not laugh when she liberated her husband from the gloomy Concierge, and he must have looked equally grotesque in her French mantle and veil. The cold sound of the turning key banished every thought but her separation from Rover. "And now," whispered she, "Rover, farewell—take the wings of the morning, that all pursuit may be vain."

The gray folds of the cloak were for one moment wrapped closely around her, and a soft deep voice murmured in her ear,—“farewell, generous, noble, and devoted Clara. Your holy confidence shall never be betrayed. You shall yet find me all your trusting heart believed.”

The door slowly creaked open. Clara sprang into the darkest corner of the cell, while the prisoner passed out to the jailer, who remained on the outer side. She trembled, for she distinctly heard the latter mutter, as he fumbled about the keyhole, “the old woman might have had the manners to speak to a body. She strided by me as fierce as a dragoon. I wonder what she wanted of the pedler. I’ll go in and see if all is safe.”

He reopened the door, looked round the cell, and was about to close it, when returning and shading his eyes with his hand, “I thought I saw something white in this corner. As sure as I am alive it is a woman! Bless my stars, if it is not Miss Clara Stanley!”

Clara’s first impulse was to rush by him and escape though the open door; her next was to remain and prevent him from pursuing Rover.

“Why, where is the pedler?” cried he, looking from side to side in amazement and dismay. Ah, ha! I know what made the old woman walk so fast. But I’ll catch him yet.”

“No, no!” exclaimed Clara, springing forward, and holding him by the arm. “You cannot be so cruel. He is innocent, and you might have his life to answer for.”

“But it is as much as my place is worth to let him go,” said the

jailer, struggling to free himself from Clara’s hold, whose slender fingers seemed gifted with wondrous strength.

“It is a cruel office,” cried Clara, “and I would not wish to keep it; and if you do lose it you shall have a better one instead. My brother shall exert his influence, and you shall not be blamed. Dear, good jailer! do not be angry, but remain quiet here. I never asked a favour of you before, and you have said my mother has been kind to you.”

“So she has, and a blessed woman she is,” replied he; “and so have you, too, as to that matter; but what makes you take on so about it? Is that young pedler any kin of yours?”

“No,” answered Clara, blushing; “but I knew he was innocent, and I pitied him—sorry, indeed, should I be, if I could not be kind to any but my own kindred.”

Clara continued her pleadings, and in short, as the jailer said, had “such a taking, coaxing way, there was no getting away from her,” so that she at last persuaded him to let the matter rest, and suffer it to be supposed that the prisoner had broke loose from confinement. He promised, too, to say nothing about her agency, and to permit her to depart unmolested.

“But you must not go bare headed and bare necked through the damp air,” said he, “the folks will think you crazy. Stop till I get you a bonnet and shawl of my wife’s. I can get them without disturbing her, and you can send them back in the morning.”

Clara thanked him for his consideration, and the fear of being taken up for a crazy woman, induced her to accept the offer. But when he brought her a wonderful looking shawl, flowered all over with beasts and birds, and a straw bonnet which looked as if it had survived a hundred fashions, she feared the danger still existed, and that she would lose her own identity in the various transformations of the evening. The good natured jailer laughed heartily, and said “there was a good deal in things belonging to a person, and fitting them, after all, for they became his wife mightily.”

Clara showered down her blessings upon him, and returned home, while, like Collins’ Passions

"By turns she felt her glowing mind
Disturb'd delighted, raised, refined."

"How shall I meet my mother?" thought she, when she reached her own door, and she stood on the threshold pale and trembling. The exultation of having performed a generous action no longer buoyed up her spirits with unnatural excitement. She felt that she was a daughter, acting independently of a mother's sanction, and she shrunk from the terrors of her penetrating gaze. A glance through the window, from which the light streamed in glimmering rays, relieved her worst fears. She saw her mother quietly seated at a little work-table, her Bible opened before her, entirely absorbed by its sacred pages. Clara was too much accustomed to pass her evening in her chamber, for her absence to excite observation, and Mrs. Stanley usually sat up till a late hour, the tranquillity of the night harmonizing with her chastened and religious tone of character. Clara stole softly up stairs, hastily divested herself of her strange attire, and, smoothing down her disordered locks, endeavoured to compose herself to rest. But no slumber that night visited the couch of Clara. Her nerves were unstrung. The singing of the wind against the window made her start from her pillow. The clouds drifting over the moon seemed the shadows of horsemen in the fleetness of pursuit.

The flight of the pedler became a matter of three days' wonder in town, during which time active measures were taken to discover the place of his retreat, but in vain. Intelligence was received, just as they had given up the pursuit as hopeless, that the real murderer was apprehended, who, by a voluntary confession of his crime, had exonerated the young pedler from the slightest imputation of guilt, who again made his appearance in the village, the hero and lion of the day. But what was the astonishment of the good people when it was reported that Clara Stanley was actually going to be married at her brother's, where a splendid wedding was to be given, and then they were to start off to some distant place, where the pedler was to give up his profession, and try to pass off for a gentleman. There was more reality and truth in these reports than is generally the case in village gossip. The nuptials of Clara and young Rover were in

full preparation, through the influence of the all-conquering Gertrude. Edward and Mrs. Stanley were induced to yield their consent. Rover declared his resolution of relinquishing his present course of life, and embracing some honourable profession, in which the energies of his mind could be called into exercise, and Clara, who was, perhaps, a little disappointed at things going on so smoothly, where she expected so much opposition, expressed her willingness to go with him to the world's end, if it were necessary. She shrunk from the idea of a bridal festival, but Gertrude insisted upon arranging every thing her own way.

"If," said she, "you have shown yourself superior to the prejudices of the world, in the independence of your choice, let it see that you glory in acknowledging it."

But when she would have lavished upon her those tasteful gifts affection loves to bestow on such occasions, Clara put them from her, refusing to wear any thing more adorning than a plain muslin robe.

"If I am to be the bride of a poor man," said she, "the decorations of wealth are not for me."

She thought she had subdued every trace of her once besetting sin, but when she sat in her own room, overcome by those feelings which press home on the heart of the most thoughtless on their bridal day, she saw the unexpected apparition of Washington Graham sweeping by on his raven black horse, in all the pride of conscious wealth and aristocracy, she turned away from the sight in mortification and dismay.

"Gertrude must have known of his coming," said she, brushing away the tears that trembled on her cheek, "and yet she gave me no warning. I cannot bear that he should be present, to look down in scorn on one equal, if not superior to him in every gift of nature and of God. May Rover forgive me this last lingering moment of weakness, unworthy of her who is blest with a heart like his."

The shades of evening came on, and Clara, in her robe of undorned white, with the bridal rose wreathed in her hair, was waiting, with palpitating heart, the anticipating summons. She was already

at her brother's, in an apartment adjoining the drawing-rooms, which were fast filling with guests.

"I am proud of my sister," exclaimed Gertrude, kissing her cheek, now pallid from agitation.

"Be not angry, dear Clara, though I have pleaded the cause of Rover with all the interest so romantic a love could inspire, I cannot but feel for my cousin. Washington Graham is here, returned once more to devote himself to the task which I once dared to promise him would prove successful."

"Never, never mention his name to me again," cried Clara, "nor seek to raise in me emotions, which sometimes triumph over my better nature. I have been the child of vanity, and once sacrificed even my integrity to vain display and heartless ambition. And now, when I have been struggling with my indwelling enemy, in the strength of disinterested love alone, and feel as if I had come off conquering, let not your hand, Gertrude, supply my vanquished foe with new arms to rob me of my victory."

The sudden unfolding of the doors prevented Gertrude's reply. A flame of light poured its effulgence into Clara's eyes, and every thing swam in confusion before her gaze. The room appeared to turn round with a circular motion, and every figure to blend together in strange confusion. She was only conscious of being led forward into the centre of the room by a hand that trembled as much as her own, and of hearing a buzzing sound around her like the murmur of many voices.

"Be not dismayed, dear Clara," said the bridegroom, in a low voice, in her ear, "your generous confidence shall never be betrayed."

Clara, who had been gradually raising her eyes from the floor, as they recovered the sense of vision, perceived that every face was turned towards the bridegroom, with a stare of amazement. It was more than curiosity. It was wonder mixed with incredulity. Involuntarily following the direction of their glances, she raised her eyes to the face of him on whose arm she was leaning, and a wild exclamation escaped her lips. It was Washington Graham that supported

her. Washington Graham, with all that high-bred elegance of dress and manner, which distinguished him from all others. The waiving hair carelessly shading the brow of marble whiteness, the complexion, the air, were Washington Graham's; but the dark, lustrous eyes, whose glance had so often thrilled to her very soul, and which were now bent on her pale, bewildered countenance, were the eyes of Rover.

"Clara, dear Clara," cried he, "the hue of the gypsy, the garb of the pedler, alone are wanting, but the faith of the lover, the vows of the bridegroom, remain. Forgive the deception I have practised in concert with my romantic cousin here, whose guardian genius has been constantly exerted in my behalf, to prove whether I could be loved for myself alone."

"Yes," added Gertrude, turning towards the company with inimitable grace, thus diverting their attention from Clara's unconquerable emotion, "suffer me to finish the explanation. I know all our friends are interested in hearing. My cousin came hither, disgusted with recent proofs of the treachery of those who were attracted towards him by the mere distinctions of wealth and fortune, and laying aside their gaudy trappings, he assumed the disguise of a poor and lowly man."

"But what upon earth made him think of passing off for a pedler?" exclaimed an old lady, who had been rubbing her spectacles half a dozen times, to ascertain if she could see distinctly. Every one smiled at the sudden interrogation.

"I had written to him," rejoined Gertrude, "of Clara's history, and of her invincible horror of the very name; and he, in the proud confidence of his own unborrowed excellence, resolved to encounter the most obdurate prejudices, that he might have the glory of conquering them. How he has succeeded, your own congratulating hearts can now bear witness."

"But I can't for my life think," continued the persevering old lady, "why she didn't find him out. I know nobody would have deceived me in that way."

Gertrude spoke in a low voice to Washington Graham, who, gently

withdrawing from the trembling hand that clung to his arm for support, smiled and left the apartment. Clara followed him with her eyes, as if she feared he was about to vanish like the phantasmagoria of a dream, and there was a dead pause in the whole assembly. In a few minutes the door reopened, and a young man appeared, dressed in a plain suit of the darkest green, his hair combed in shading waves over his darkened brow, his complexion tinged with the same gypsy dye—"Rover!" exclaimed Clara, and sprang forward with a bound of irrepressible delight. Every remaining doubt vanished, and she wept in the fullness of her joy.

The old lady put on her spectacles, and looking close in his face, declared she would never have known him from Adam—only there was a sort of a look out of the eyes, that was like nobody else in the world but himself.

There was now a general rush of congratulation towards Clara, and she was almost smothered with caresses from those, who, a few hours before, thought it would be a disgrace to visit her again. The bride of Washington Graham was a very different person from the bride of a pedler, but Clara's heart whispered that Rover and Washington Graham were the same.

"Well," said the lady of the spectacles, after the bridegroom had resumed his character as Washington Graham, and the wedding was concluded, "I never saw any thing like these Stanleys, for the luck that follows them; but I would not advise any of the young folks to get such romantic notions into their heads, for all that. Every old woman with a mop cap don't turn into a rich young widow, nor every pedler into a fine gentleman."

THE SNOW FLAKES.

YE'RE welcome, ye white and feathery flakes,
That fall like the blossoms the summer wind shakes
From the bending spray—Oh! say do ye come,
With tidings to me, from my far distant home?

"Our home is above in the depths of the sky—
In the hollow of God's own hand we lie—
We are fair, we are pure, *our* birth is divine—
Say, what can we know of thee, or of thine?"

I know that ye dwell in the kingdoms of air—
I know ye are heavenly, pure, and fair;
But oft have I seen ye, far travellers roam,
By the cold blast driven, round my northern home.

"We roam over mountain, and valley, and sea,
We hang our pale wreaths on the leafless tree:
The herald of wisdom and mercy we go,
And perchance the far home of thy childhood we know.

"We roam, and our fairy track we leave,
While for nature a winding sheet we weave—
A cold, white shroud that shall mantle the gloom,
Till her Maker recalls her to glory and bloom."

Oh! foam of the shoreless ocean above!
I know thou descendest in mercy and love:
All chill as thou art, yet benign is thy birth,
As the dew that impearls the green bosom of Earth.

And I've thought as I've seen thy tremulous spray,
Soft curling like mist on the branches lay,
In bright relief on the dark blue sky,
That thou meltedst in grief when the sun came nigh.

"Say, whose is the harp whose echoing song
Breathes wild on the gale that wafts us along?
The moon, the flowers, the blossoming tree,
Wake the minstrel's lyre, they are brighter than we."

The flowers shed their fragrance, the moonbeams their light,
Over scenes never veil'd by your drap'ry of white;
But the clime where I first saw your downy flakes fall,
My own native clime is far dearer than all.

Oh! fair, when ye clothed in their wintry mail,
The elms that o'ershadow my home in the vale,
Like warriors they looked, as they bowed in the storm,
With the tossing plume and the towering form.

Ye fade, ye melt—I feel the warm breath
Of the redolent South o'er the desolate heath—
But tell me, ye vanishing pearls, where ye dwell,
When the dew-drops of Summer bespangle the dell?

"We fade,—we melt into chrystalline spheres—
We weep, for we pass through a valley of tears;
But onward to glory—away to the sky—
In the hollow of God's own hand we lie."



THE CATHOLIC.



THE history of Father Hilario is not a tale of fiction, invented to excite the sympathy of the reader. It has its foundation in truth, and needs no false auxiliaries to enhance its affecting interest. Imagination may have slightly embellished some of the minor incidents of his life, but his character stands forth in the simple majesty of *reality*, and the decorations of fancy, like the light garland thrown round the marble bust, could neither change its noble lineaments nor exalt its classic beauty. The beautiful village of L——, situated in one of the loveliest regions of Spanish Flanders, was the residence of this pure and holy-minded Catholic. It was not the place of his nativity, nor has tradition told the land of his birth, or the events of his earlier years. He came to the peaceful valley, commissioned to watch over the souls of the people, and to break to them the bread of Heaven. They received with enthusiasm a pastor, who seemed anointed by the Deity itself for his divine office. There was a silent acknowledgment in every eye that beheld him, that he was a being of superior order, appa-

rently moulded of purer clay, and fitted for nobler purposes than the grosser multitude. At first there was more awe than affection in the feelings he inspired. From his habits of rigorous self-denial, his air of deep devotion, his love of hermit solitude, they regarded him rather as a saint than a man. It seemed that he held high and invisible communion with nature in her secret places, her pathless woods, her virgin bowers, and by the banks of her silent streams. So constant were his solitary excursions, he was called the wanderer of the forest, or sometimes by a holier appellation, *the angel of the grove*. Some children once, urged by the restless curiosity of childhood, traced his path and concealed themselves in a thick cluster of trees, where they could watch his movements unperceived. Scarcely able to repress their glee at the success of the juvenile scheme, their young eyes pierced through the intervening foliage, but mirth was chastened into awe, when they beheld him prostrate on his knees, his locked hands lifted towards heaven, and an expression in his upturned eyes so deep and solemn, as to strike them with superstitious dread. They imagined they saw a halo round his brow, such as encircled the heads of their tutelar saints, and ever afterwards they designated him as the *angel of the grove*. There was one of this young group, on whom the impression made by this glimpse of holiness was ineffaceable. Whenever she bent in prayer by her parent's knee, or at the altar of her God, that kneeling form and upturned brow, invested with such beatific radiance, rose between her and the heaven to which her orisons were addressed, till she associated it with her every idea of that invisible glory which no eye can see and live. Father Hilario was gradually looked upon as something more approachable and human. The children, who had been terrified by his appearance of unearthly sanctity, became accustomed to the benign expression of his countenance, as they met him in their daily walks, and, won by the omnipotent charm of goodness, would often forsake their sports, gather round him in his solitude, and listen in breathless silence, while he talked to them of the God who made, and the Saviour who redeemed them. Sometimes, with a gush of tenderness, that seemed irrepressible, he would take them in his

arms, and weep over them tears as gentle as those which the mother sheds over her new-born babe. They knew not the fountain of his tears, but they had an intuitive conviction that they were holy drops, and like the unconscious flower, which opens its chalice to the dew, each innocent heart drank in their heavenly influence. The children repeated in their homes the words of Father Hilario. They said his voice was sweet as the first notes of the birds in the spring; that his eyes were gentle, and as bright as the sun when he looks over the western hills. Parents followed the steps of their children, and sat at the feet of the man of God, listening with childlike docility, while he pointed out to them that luminous path, which shines up through the darkness of earth, to the regions of perfect day. The aged sought his instructions, and it was a touching sight to see many a head, hoary with the snows of time, bent meekly before him, who convinced them their white locks were a crown of glory—if bowed in penitence and humility—at the foot of the cross. Profaneness sealed its bold lips in the presence of a being so immaculate. Skepticism abandoned its doubts, as it looked upon one, who seemed the embodied spirit of that religion, attested by the blood of martyred saints, and Christianity itself appeared, arrayed in new and renovated charms.

Was Father Hilario *old*—and were those silver cords which bind us to earth, beginning to loosen, that he thus offered himself a living sacrifice unto God? No! he was still in the glowing prime of manhood; and, as if the Creator had willed, in this instance, to unite the perfection of the material and spiritual beauty, he had formed him in his divinest mould. Had the soul been enshrined in a meaner temple, it may be questioned if it had ever attracted so many worshippers, and it is to be feared that some, who came to offer incense to the *Creator*, paid as deep a homage to the *creature*, so nobly adorned. It has been said, by one of his cotemporaries, that there never was a more imposing or interesting figure than Father Hilario presented, when he stood before the altar in his robes of priesthood, apparently unconscious of every eye, save that which is unseen, his sable hair, shading a brow of marble purity—a brow, where devotion

sat enthroned, unmolested by the demons of earth-born passion. It was even averred by some, and the remark was uttered with reverence, that they could trace a striking resemblance between the officiating priest, and the features of the Master whom he served, whose lineaments were emblazoned by the altar's sacred lights. There was, indeed, a similitude. Like that divine Master, he was destined to bow beneath the cross of human suffering, and to drain to its dregs the cup of agony and humiliation.

Years, however, passed on in this blessed tranquillity. We spoke of *one* child, on whom the impression made by the glimpse of Father Hilario, in the fervency of prayer, was deep and enduring. That child, then older than her juvenile companions, was now in her girlhood, and was acknowledged, even by her rivals, the fairest flower in the gardens of L——. Her real name has not been preserved in the annals of this history. It matters not—we will call her Leila. The word conveys an idea of loveliness and fragility; and is appropriate to her, who, like the lily of the field, was transcendent in delicacy and sweetness. There was something about this young maiden so different from the usual characteristics of her age, that the eye of the stranger involuntarily rested on her face, and read there the indications of a higher, and, perchance, a sadder destiny, than that of her blooming fellows. She was beautiful, but pale as the wild flower to which we just resembled her, save when some sudden emotion passed into her mind—the lightning that plays on the summer's evening cloud, is not more brilliant or evanescent than the colours that then flitted over her cheek. Her eyes—she seemed born to remind one of all that is lovely and perishing—had the deep hue of the mountain violet; and, like their modest emblem, had a natural bending towards the earth; but when they were directed towards heaven, as they oftentimes were, there was a holy illumination diffused over her face, like that which is seen on the countenance of the virgin mother, when she is represented as listening to the songs of the angels. She was an only child, and her parents, as they saw her in her innocence and beauty, shrinking from the gaities and amusements of youth, and devoting herself to meditation and prayer,

felt a kind of prophetic gloom steal over their minds, and, though they never gave utterance to their forebodings, they feared that one so fair and spiritual would not long be suffered to dwell on earth. An unpolluted blossom, the heavenly instructions of Father Hilario, were the sun and dew of her existence. While her more joyous companions followed the impulses of their blithe spirits, she sat, a young disciple, at the feet of this Gamaliel; and when he talked to her of divine things, till her soul kindled into ecstasy, she was unconscious that one spark of earthly fire mingled with the flame that was glowing within. She would have shrunk with horror from the sacrilegious thought of *loving* the anointed of the Lord, the Apostle, the Saint—she believed herself superior to human passion, and when sought in wedlock, for young as she was, she had already inspired in others, what she imagined she was destined never herself to feel; she would answer that “she wished to be the bride of her Redeemer only.” Alas! she knew not that she had placed an earthly idol in the sanctuary of her heart, that temple which she had solemnly dedicated to the living God. But the veil was yet to be rent away, and the temple to become desolate and dim. Before the further development of the story, it will be necessary to introduce two characters, who were conspicuous actors in some of its darkest scenes.

When the inhabitants of L—— were first placed under the pastoral guardianship of Father Hilario, there were two youths, who had gained “bad eminence” in society, as rebels against its salutary restraints. Murillo, the eldest, had one of those subtle, designing spirits, which loved to work in ambush, to hurl the shafts of mischief from behind some sheltering cloud, and laugh at the consternation they excited. Guido was bold and lawless. He would stand forth in the broad sunshine and commit the most daring depredations, entirely reckless of their consequences. Yet there was a mixture of openness and generosity, which often exerted their redeeming influence on his character. Unfortunately, exposed to the evil example of Murillo, he suffered from that moral contagion which the purest and firmest have been unable to resist. The inventive wickedness

of the former exercised a mastery over him, which he was ashamed to acknowledge, but to which he involuntarily yielded. About the period to which we allude, they entered by stealth, into the church, and desecrated the altar, by the most unhallowed hieroglyphics; then mingling with the throng who came to worship there, watched with eager scrutiny the effect of their impious ingenuity. Father Hilario felt the insult as a Christian, rather than as a man. He saw every eye directed to the offending characters, and, wishing to give an awful lesson to the perpetrators of such a crime, he came forward, with a majesty he had never before assumed, and in the name of outraged Christianity, commanded the authors of the deed, if within reach of his voice, to cast themselves before that very altar they had profaned, and, with tears of repentance, wash out the foul stains they had made. Guido felt as if thunderstruck by the unexpected appeal. The sacrilege of the act, for the first time, glared upon his conscience, and following the impulse of his headstrong and ungovernable nature, he forced his passage through the crowd, threw himself on his knees before Father Hilario, and declared himself one of the offenders. He did not betray his comrade; but Murillo was too notorious not be known as his accomplice. Murillo, however, asserted his innocence, with a countenance so imperturbable, and a voice so firm, it was almost impossible to doubt his truth. When the boys next encountered each other on the village green, Murillo assailed the penitent with every expression of scorn and indignation.

"You have not the spirit of a man in you," he exclaimed, "pitiful coward that you are, to be frightened by the threats of a canting priest. You have wit enough in your brains for the invention of mischief, but not courage enough in your soul to carry it into execution."

"I had rather be a coward than a liar," retorted Guido, contemptuously. "I tell you to your face, Murillo, you are both; and I desire no more fellowship with one whom I despise." He turned his back as he spoke, and walked several paces from the exasperated Murillo, who pursued him with bitter imprecations.

"You are a base-born wretch, and you know it," cried Murillo, "deny it if you can—resent it if you dare."

Guido felt the taunt to his heart's core. There was a mystery attending his birth, which made his claim to legitimacy somewhat doubtful; but, as his mother had expiated her frailty with her life, the shade that darkened her fame did not long obscure the opening manhood of her son. There were few who were unfeeling enough to stigmatize, in his presence, the parent who was now beyond the reach of human obloquy and shame. With flashing eyes and boiling blood, Guido turned upon the insulter, and, seizing a stone which unfortunately lay within his reach, he dashed it into his face. Murillo fell to the ground apparently lifeless, while the blood issued in torrents from his wounded head. Guido stood over him, aghast at the consequences of his rashness. He believed himself a murderer, and gazed in agony of remorse and horror, upon the pale, bleeding form extended before him. The wound, however, did not prove mortal. After suffering excruciating tortures, and lingering long in a state of painful debility, he was at last restored to his wonted vigour. But one of his eyes—and they were singularly bright—was extinguished for ever, and a terrible scar on the temple, disfigured the beauty of a face, which, in spite of the absence of every moral charm, was once eminently handsome. It may well be believed that Murillo, with his vindictive and irascible temper, never, in his heart, forgave the one, who had thus marred his features, and cheated them "of their fair proportions." He had been particularly vain of the fiery brilliancy of his eyes, and he felt that the glory of his countenance was departed, and a blighting mark set upon him to make him an object of pity or derision to a gazing world. As the young tree, riven by the lightning's stroke, stands scathed and barren in the midst of abounding verdure; he remained gloomy and dark in the social band, the few, generous affections with which nature had gifted him, blasted by the withering consciousness of personal deformity. Guido, whose better feelings had been awakened by the solemn admonitions of Father Hilario, and whose remorse for the injury he had inflicted, was keen as the resentment that dictated the act, and lasting as its consequences, exerted every energy and every art to soften the hatred of Murillo, and indemnify him for the wrong

he had done, but in vain—years passed on, still Murillo's solitary eye scowled indignantly by the grave of its fellow, whenever it turned upon the unfortunate Guido. Another circumstance served to widen the chasm which separated them. While they were advancing deeper into manhood, the juvenile charms of Leila were assuming the more seductive graces of womanhood, and the hearts of both acknowledged her inspiration. There was nothing strange in this. It would seem as natural to love, nay, as impossible *not* to love such a being as Leila, as to look upon a rose in the dewy freshness of its bloom, without wishing to inhale its fragrance and gather it from its bower. Her perfect unconsciousness of her own loveliness, her indifference to admiration, the elevation and sanctity of her character, rendered it difficult for one to address her in the language of earthly passion. But Guido emboldened himself to declare the homage she inspired, though he anticipated the denial she gave.

"I would devote myself to God," she answered; and she looked so heavenly when she uttered the words, he almost convinced himself he had a second time been guilty of profaneness, in aspiring to one so saintlike and pure. As for Murillo, his love partook of all that was dark and fierce in a character, whose passions were strong and untameable as the elements. Once, in a moment of uncontrollable excitement, he revealed to her the strength and depth of emotions he had long smothered in his breast, where they burned with the intenseness of nature's central fires. She shrunk from him in terror she had not the power to conceal, and his proud heart chafed almost to madness in his bosom. He remembered the promise of his boyhood, before any defacing touch had swept out the lines of symmetry and beauty, and he cursed Guido in his secret soul, as the author of his misery and degradation. * * * *

It was the depth of summer. Every thing wore that aspect of almost oppressive magnificence and intensity of hue, peculiar to the season, which elicits the latent glories of nature, while it deadens the strength and energy of man. The earth began to pant for one of those liberal showers, which come down with such life-giving influence, on the dry and thirsty plain. The excessive brightness of the

foliage gradually waned, the thick leaves drooped, and hung languidly from the branches, as if fainting for the salutary moisture of the skies, while the eye, dazzled and wearied by the continuous sunshine, watched anxiously the faintest shadow that floated over the glowing horizon, till every glance beamed prayer, that the blessing of the rain and the dew might be borne within its bosom. Then welcome was the forest depth, the shadow of the rock, in the sultry land. Leila wandered through the solitudes she loved. From her childhood she had been accustomed to solitary rambles, and her parents, with indulgent tenderness, allowed no restraint to be imposed upon her inclinations, confiding in the purity of their origin. Mid the loneliness of nature, she held deep and unwitnessed intercourse with the mysteries of her own heart, but its language was inexplicable to her simplicity. She could not define the vague, restless consciousness of guilt which mingled with her secret devotions, weighed down its spirit in its upward flight, and spread a dimness over all her dreams of heaven.

She sat in the coolness of one of her favourite retreats, unconscious in the shadows that surrounded her, of the heavy cloud that was rising, darkening and rapidly diffusing itself over the sky, till a faint flash of lightning, quivering through the gloom, succeeded by a low, sullen roll of distant thunder, warned her that the prayer of the husbandman was about to be answered, and a painful feeling of her personal apprehension accompanied the conviction, when she thought of her lonely and unprotected situation. She suffered unconquerable terrors in a thunder storm. It was one of those constitutional weaknesses which no mental energy could overcome. When a child, she believed this awful herald of elemental wrath was the voice of the Ancient of days, proclaiming his omnipotent mandates to a hushed and trembling world; she associated it with the mountain that burned with unconsuming flame, with all the most terrible manifestations of Almighty power; and though, in after years, she learned the sublime mysteries of nature, she never forgot the impressions of her childhood. Almost powerless from dread, she endeavoured to find her homeward path, while the storm approached with a rapidity and violence, which might

have shaken nerves less exquisitely sensitive than hers. The lightning no longer ran in dazzling chains, on the edge of the sky, but spread in bannered pomp over the firmament, and the thunder came on, in gathering peals, louder, deeper, nearer, till the trees of the forest shook in their ancient brotherhood, and the coeval rocks reverberated fearfully with the sound.

Leila thought of the grove which was consecrated in his mind by the image of Father Hilario, which even now might be hallowed by his presence, and though bewildered by fear, she sought it as a *city of shelter*, to which she might fly and live. She saw the thick vine wreaths, which hung in unpruned luxuriance over one of the most lovely and sequestered arbours nature ever arched in the wilderness, for the repose and security of man. She reached the entrance, and glancing through the lattice-work, woven by the interlacing tendrils, was arrested there by the object which met her gaze. The same figure which, years before, had beamed on her sight, like an angel of peace, now knelt in the centre of the grotto, calm amidst the warring elements, absorbed in adoration and prayer, while the lightning as it flashed through the foliage, played around his uplifted brow, in wreaths of living glory. Leila trembled as she gazed—she dared not to disturb his sublime confidence with her wild, undisciplined terrors; but, faint with fatigue, dread, and a thousand undefined emotions, she leaned against the branches, with a sigh, heavy, as irrepressible. Father Hilario heard that low sound, though apparently insensible to the thunder's crash. No expression of human suffering ever fell unheeded on *his* ear, and, turning to the direction from whence it proceeded, he saw his beloved disciple, standing exhausted and agitated before him—the deathlike paleness of fear, triumphing on her cheeks over the lilies of nature. With an involuntary impulse of tenderness and compassion, he extended his arms towards her, and Leila sunk into their protecting fold, with a feeling like that with which we may suppose the wounded dove seeks the sheltering down of its mother's wings.

Father Hilario endeavoured, with the most persuasive gentleness, to infuse into her mind the composure and confidence, arising from

faith in that Being who makes the mightiest elements his vassals, and whose mercy is commensurate to his power. He recalled to her those many instances on holy record, where the faithful had been preserved, and innocence left unharmed, while the most terrible ministers of God's vengeance were dealing out destruction to the rebellious and polluted. While he was yet speaking, an electrifying flash illuminated the grove—the thunder burst in one magnificent pæan over the forest, and the tall tree, beneath whose boughs the grotto was woven, stood with its trunk shivered and scathed, though its green summit seemed still unconscious of the desolation that awaited it. The large rain drops now plashed on the leaves, the wind bowed and twisted the branches, as if anxious to open a passage for the shower, to the panting bosom of the earth. It came down in deluging torrents. Their canopy of leaves no longer sheltered them, the vine was rent, the frail twigs scattered on the blast, which every moment swept with increasing violence over Father Hilario and his now almost helpless charge. He vainly endeavoured to shield her from its fury, by wrapping his arms around her and pressing her closer and closer to a heart which, free from the tumults of earthly passion, might well become the resting-place of innocence and beauty. Even in that hour of grandeur and horror, when the death bolts were every where hissing through the clouds, Leila felt a glow of happiness pervading her being, which triumphed over the effects of the chilling wind and drenching rain—yet no emotion agitated her spotless breast, which an incarnate angel might not have felt, and gloried in acknowledging. It seemed to her that while Omnipotence was bowing the heavens, and coming down in all its glory and majesty, almost annihilating her very existence with awe, she beheld in the mild, religious eyes, that were looking down into her soul, a beam of heaven's own love and mercy, a blessed assurance that man is never forgotten by the Almighty, and that the low prayer of faith rises with acceptance to his ear, high above the din and wailing of the tempest.

There was one eye which witnessed this scene—it was a *solitary* one—and the worst passions of which our nature is capable, were

concentrated in its rays. Murillo had followed the steps of Leila. He marked the coming storm, and hastened to her accustomed haunts, believing that she would willingly seek a refuge from its violence, even in his sheltering arms. Not finding the object of his search, he continued his pursuit in doubt and alarm, till he discovered the place of her retreat, and saw, himself unseen, all which we have just described. He remained rooted to the spot by a kind of fascination, which he had not the power to dispel. The truth was revealed to him at once—she loved him—*she*, this vestal beauty, who seemed surrounded by an atmosphere of spherul, unapproachable light, she loved this heaven-dedicated mortal with all the ardour of woman's first, unlighted affection. He read it in every expression of her upturned eye, in the doubtful colour that momentarily dyed her cheek, then left it stainless in its native whiteness. He felt maddened by this discovery. He had always looked upon Guido, whom he had sworn to hate, as a rival, and feared his success; but Father Hilario, a man whose age so much transcended hers, whose profession excluded him from the world's sympathies—it was incredible. He could not, however, but acknowledge to himself, that if Father Hilario had passed the morning of youth, time had not cast one shade over the meridian of his manhood, and while he gazed upon him, as he knelt in the storm, thus tenderly supporting and cherishing the only being who had ever kindled a sentiment of love in his own dark bosom, he was forced to confess, that man never had a nobler representative.

It is a bootless and unprofitable task, that of attempting to describe the unfathomable hell of a human heart, delivered up to the unresisted mastery of its own evil passions. It is on the *consequences* of crime that the moralist rests his hope. These, called up by the wizard wand of conscience, glide and glide before the eyes of the pale delinquent, like the accusing phantoms, in the night vision of the guilty and aspiring Thane.

The storm subsided—the heavy clouds rolled towards the eastern horizon, and the covenant token of mercy arched its deepening radiance on the retiring vapours. Father Hilario pointed out to Leila

this glorious reflection of the Creator's smile, and dwelt upon that memorable era, when it first bent in beauty over the sinking waters of the deluge. Every object in their homeward path elicited from him a lesson of gratitude and love. Leila listened, but not to the rich melodies of nature, which were now breathing and gushing around them, in the music of waters, the symphony of birds, and the mellow intonations of the distant thunder, that rolled at intervals its organ notes on the gale. She heard but one sound in the magnificent chorus—the voice of Father Hilario.

Had Murillo never stolen, like a serpent as he was, to that bower of shelter, and witnessed emotions, whose purity, the baseness and corruption of his nature could never conceive, and which he imagined partook of the unholy ardour of his own feelings, her innocent heart would perhaps never have known the pangs of self-upbraiding, which afterwards so cruelly martyred its peace. He watched his opportunity of meeting her alone. The spell which had enthralled him in her presence was now dissolved. He loved her still, but he no longer feared; for the secret of which he was the master, placed her more upon a level with himself, and brought her down from that high mount of holiness, upon which his imagination had exalted her. He was resolved to humble her by accusing her to her face of the sacrilege of which she was guilty.

"Yes, Leila," cried he, stung by the cold, averted air with which she met his proffered civilities, "I know it all. It is not that your heart is wedded to heaven, that you turn from the gaities of youth, and scorn the vows of the young and the brave. You love Father Hilario. You cannot, you dare not deny it. All that you have inspired in me, false girl, you feel for him. I saw you, Leila, when you thought no eye but his was on you, folded to his bosom, in the solitude of the grove, the crimson of passion glowing on your cheek, and its lightnings, brilliant as those which illuminated the sky, kindling in your eyes. In vain"——

He paused, for he was terrified by the effect of his words; she stood as if smitten by some avenging angel. Every drop of blood seemed to have deserted its wonted channel, for it is scarcely exage-

rated to say, that her face and lips were white as marble, and they looked as deadly cold; while her eyes, which darkened in their intensity, were riveted on his, with a look of wild supplication, which would have melted a less indurated heart. The truth burst upon her like a thunderbolt, and it crushed her to the earth. Had it been whispered her in the dim shadows of night, by a mother's gentle voice, it would have come over her, even then, with a blasting power, but to have it break upon her thus—the unfortunate girl sank down upon the fragment of a rock, near the spot where they stood, and, covering her face with her hands, wept in agony. Murillo's terror subsided at the sight of her tears, and he went on remorselessly widening the wound he had made.

"Think not," he continued, "longer to deceive the world. It shall know the latent fire which burns beneath the ice of sanctity, with which thou hast encircled thyself. Father Hilario, too! Vile wolf, who has clothed himself in shepherd's garb!"——

"Forbear!" almost shrieked Leila, at these words; "oh! never by thought, or word, or look—" she stopped despairingly, she knew not in what language to vindicate the character of Father Hilario from the charges of his adversary. She felt that she was in his power, and casting herself on her knees before him, she supplicated for mercy. "You may destroy *me*. Murillo, *I* merit it. I have deceived myself and the world; *I* am guilty beyond forgiveness; but Father Hilario—he lives only for the God who has anointed him. Oh! if through me he should suffer"—her joined hands and beseeching eyes finished what her bloodless lips in vain endeavoured to articulate. Murillo gazed with malignant triumph upon his victim. He had wrapped his coil around her, and she might seek, with unavailing struggles, to extricate herself from the folds. But whatever was his purpose he chose to dissemble, and raising her, whom he had so deeply humiliated, from the ground, he assured her that her secret should be safe in his possession, and her feeling sacred in his eyes. He solicited her pardon for the extravagancies to which love and jealousy had urged him, in terms so mild and submissive, and begged to be admitted to her friendship and sympathy, with such

lowly deference, it is not strange that he deceived one so guileless and confiding.

He left her—left the dart to rankle where he threw it—and it *did* rankle. Never more did she meet with an untroubled eye, the calm and heavenly glance of Father Hilario. No longer did she sit at his feet with the sweet docility of childhood, the deep joy of her soul mirrored on her brow. Father Hilario was grieved at her estrangement; he feared that the flower he had been so carefully rearing for Paradise, was about to lavish its bloom and its fragrance on the perishing things of this world; but when he gently reproved her for her coolness, she would only turn from him silently and weep. Unhappy Leila! the fairest and purest of earth are oft devoted to the saddest destiny; and what doom more sad than to be condemned to the conviction that the inspirations of virtue and sensibility are sacrilege and guilt?

Father Hilario sat one evening, as he was wont to do, in a chamber which he had consecrated to devotion, surrounded by the authors he loved, and the saints whom he adored. Already the waning sun diffused that golden, religious light through the apartment, which falls with such soothing, solemnizing influence on the soul of the devotee. He sat in spiritual abstraction, an illuminated missal open before him, and the holy emblem of his faith placed so as to receive the gilding of the western rays. The sound of hasty footsteps, and the confused murmur of voices approaching this hitherto unmolested retreat, roused him from his devout meditations. The door was violently thrown open, and a party of citizens, whose looks were indicative of horror and alarm, entered the apartment.

"What means this tumult?" exclaimed Father Hilario; and he feared some calamitous event had filled the village with consternation. The man who seemed to be the leader of the group, advanced with an air of mingled authority and trepidation, and laying his hand on the shoulder of Father Hilario, addressed him in the startling words: "You are our prisoner, Father Hilario. We arrest you by order of the chief magistrate."

"Me! your minister?" exclaimed Father Hilario, in dignified yet sorrowful amazement. "Of what am I accused?"

"Of murder!" cried the officer, and the words were muttered by the rest of the party, in tones that seemed to be afraid of their own echoes. Father Hilario looked steadfastly on the faces of each to see if he were not surrounded by a band of maniacs. With added solemnity he repeated the question, and received the same awful reply. A dead silence succeeded this reiteration, when, gathering himself up with indescribable majesty, he commanded them to depart. The indignation of outraged manhood towered over the long-suffering meekness of Christianity.

"Ye know me!" he cried, and his usually mild voice was fearful in its power. "Ye know that I am not a man of blood. I have toiled, wept, and prayed for your salvation. The delegate of my divine Master, I have broken for you, with unpolluted hands, the bread of life. I have followed your paths in sickness and sorrow, binding up the wounds of human suffering, lifting the bruised reed, and holding the lamp of faith over the valley of death. I have—but oh! perverse generation, is this your return?" He stopped, overpowered by the depth of his emotion, while tears, which only agony could have drawn forth, gushed from his eyes. The men looked at each other as if in shame and fear, for the errand they had undertaken. The officer said, "it was a most painful task, which had devolved upon him, but that duty was imperative, and must be obeyed." "Who is my accuser?" demanded the victim. "I," answered a deep voice from behind, and Murillo advanced in front of the group. His face was cold and calm, and his manner firm and self-possessed. He spoke as a man conscious of the import of his words, and ready to meet their consequences. "I accuse thee of the murder of Guido. I saw the deed. I saw the dagger in his bloody breast. Cold on the earth he lies. I accuse thee, in the face of God and of man, as the perpetrator of the crime." While Murillo was speaking, Father Hilario resumed his composure, though a deeper shade of solemnity settled on his brow. "Search," cried he, "for the proofs of your accusation. Every recess is open to your scrutiny."

He unfolded the doors to their examination; but what words can

speak the consternation of Father Hilario, when, as they passed into the ante-chamber, they lifted his surplice, which he had left there as was his custom when he retired to the inner apartment, and found it all dabbled with blood; even the print of gory fingers, *damning proof* of the recent death-struggle, was visible on its ample folds. A dagger, too, clotted with fresh blood gouts, fell to the floor, as the officer of justice displayed the ensanguined raiment, and there it lay "in form and shape as palpable" as the air drawn dagger, which gleamed before the eyes of the Scottish regicide. Father Hilario staggered back against the wall, his ashy lips quivering with unutterable horror, his hair actually recoiling from his brow, as if instinct with the spirit within. It was a scene which an Angelo would have trembled with ecstasy to behold—and which he would have fixed upon his canvass in imperishable colours.—There was a look of ghastly excitement on every face, save *one*, such as is seen at the midnight conflagration, when the pallidness of terror is lighted up with an unearthly glare, by the flaming element around. That face was still and cold in its expression—if there was one feeling predominant over another, it seemed to be scorn, and a slight curl of the lip, turned towards Father Hilario, said, as plain as words could utter it, "thou hypocrite!" Father Hilario marked it not. His eyes were directed towards heaven—his hands folded on his breast, and those present never forgot the manner in which he ejaculated the most affecting appeal on holy record—"Oh! my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

I have undertaken the task, and however painful, I must not shrink from its fulfilment; then let not the moralist upbraid me, for introducing an event which the infidel might exultingly cite, as proof that no superintending Providence watched over the destinies of man. But, who are those who stand around the throne of God, clothed with robes of glory, and immortal crowns upon their brows? They who have travelled with bleeding feet through the briers and thorns of human suffering, mid darkness, and tribulation, and despair—the pilgrims of sorrow, that they may be the inheritors of immortality. Father Hilario had walked uncontaminated, through a path, where

the flowers of love and the incense of adulation were dangerously blended; he was now to pass through the refiner's fire, that the fine gold might be purified from the dross of this world's pollution. I will not linger on scenes so revolting. He surrendered himself into the hands of the magistrate, and in one of those cells vaulted for the reception of human guilt, one of the best and purest of God's creation, awaited the trial for life or death. The inhabitants of the village trembled and clustered together, as when the shock of an earthquake is felt, claiming closer brotherhood in the general calamity. They loudly proclaimed his innocence; they protested against his arrest as an act of sacrilege; they would have burst his prison doors to redeem him, but he would not permit the laws of his country to be violated. He exhorted them to forbearance, and prayed them to leave the event in the hands of the Almighty. I dare not speak of what Leila suffered. From the moment she heard the awful tidings, she sat speechless as a statue; the look of wild consternation, with which she first listened, imprinted on her face, as if it had been chiselled in the marble she resembled. Could she but have wept!—but hers was not common wo—even maternal tenderness could not fathom its depth. Tears!—horror had frozen their fountain.

The day of trial came; a day never forgotten in the annals of the village of L——. The hall of justice was filled almost to suffocation. Every countenance was flushed with that expression of high wrought excitement, which extraordinary and awful events are calculated to produce; and it is a strange, inexplicable paradox of the human heart, that, however appalling may be those events, there is something of *pleasure* in the intensity of feeling they call forth. When Father Hilario appeared, there was a murmur through the crowd, like the hushing of autumnal winds, succeeded by the stillness of awe and expectation. His cheek was wan, his eye solemn, yet serene, and his hair hung neglected on his temples, as if heavy with the dungeon's dampness. There was a heaving of the crowd, as he passed through, intimating the restless elements restrained in its bosom. Father Hilario—the revered, the beloved—the almost worshipped—stood arraigned before the bar of his country, accused of the blood

of his fellow man. Where was his accuser? There—conspicuous amidst the throng, towered the stately form of Murillo. Men looked upon him askance, unwilling to fix a steady gaze on him, who had armed the avenging laws against one whom, in spite of the blood stained robe and dagger, they *felt* must be innocent. Murillo knew the part before him, and he was eloquent. His voice, when he chose to modulate it, had something peculiarly insinuating in its tones. He began so low, that the people were obliged to bend forward earnestly to hear his articulation. These low sounds, however, were only the prelude to a burst of impassioned eloquence. He described the scene which he had witnessed—the wild shriek, which, piercing the air, startled him in his evening walk. The form of Guido sinking beneath the death steel of the anointed assassin. He painted, with graphic power, the flight of Father Hilario; the concealing of the dagger in his bosom, the gathering up of his robe to hide the bloody stains; every thing was minutely marked. The voiceless witnesses, that robe and dagger, were produced and appealed to, almost as powerfully as the dumb wounds of Cæsar, by the artful and eloquent Antony. He next enlarged upon the motives of the deed. With the subtlety of a fiend, he stole into the ears of his auditors, throwing out dark hints of the resistless influence of jealousy, sweeping down the landmarks of reason, honour, and religion. Father Hilario knew that Guido was his rival. Then, seeing his audience start, as if electrified at the disclosure, he pursued his advantage, and painted the scene in the harbour, during the awful warfare of nature. He saw a flush of indescribable emotion in Father Hilario's face, and it redoubled his energy. He even disclosed, though with apparent grief and reluctance, the despair and remorse with which the ill-fated girl had confessed her sacrilegious passion. He closed with an adjuration to religion and humanity, to vindicate their violated laws, by hurling a bolt “red with uncommon wrath,” on the vile impostor, who had clothed himself in white and fleecy robes, to despoil innocence of its bloom, and manhood of the free gift of life.

A death-like silence prevailed after the accuser had ceased to speak, first broken by a deep, convulsive sob. The mourner sat in

a remote corner of the hall, and his face was bowed on his joined hands. It was the father of Leila, who had heard all that had been uttered of his child, without the power to refute the daring charge. The painful situation to which the unhappy girl was reduced, was a dreadful commentary upon the words of Murillo. With all the anguish of a father, he felt that she was lost to him, and the cause of her fading and despair burst upon him at once, with horrible reality. The father's sobs pleaded more powerfully against Father Hilario than the laboured eloquence of Murillo.

At last Father Hilario rose, and so great was the excitement of the audience, that almost all who were present rose simultaneously. His manner had lost much of its serene composure, his countenance was agitated, and a flush of hectic brightness, burned on his pallid cheek. He had resigned himself to his own fate, but now the destiny of another was identified with his. He felt that his lonely arm might vainly endeavour to interpose a barrier between them and the gathered storm.

"I have naught," said he, "to offer against the black charges alleged against me, but the evidence of a stainless life; a life whose best and holiest energies have been exerted in your behalf. I am innocent—God knows I am innocent—but the powers of darkness are leagued for my destruction, and I am left alone to wrestle with their wrath. I will not plead for myself, but in behalf of insulted purity. I will lift up my voice, till it meet an answer in the skies. I speak of that innocent being, whom I sheltered in these paternal arms, from the fury of the desolating tempest. I knew not that any eye, save the all-seeing one, beheld the meeting, but never has one thought warmed my breast for her, that angels might not sanction, and omniscient holiness approve. I have loved her as a young disciple of our common Lord, as a most precious lamb of the flock of Israel, whom my pastoral hand has led through the green fields, and by the deep waters of eternal life. She needs no vindication, ye know that she is pure. Oh! could the unfortunate youth, whose life blood dyes yon sacerdotal robe, now rend the cerements of his voiceless grave, enter this crowded hall, and point his mouldering finger at the undetected

murderer—the bold accuser of unarmoured innocence would call upon the mountains and the rocks to cover him from the justice of man, and the vengeance of God. But, though no mortal power can bring him before this earthly bar, there is a tribunal, impartial and eternal, where he now pleads, where he will for ever plead, against the guilty wretch, who has dared to break the most awful canons of the living God. Oh! ye deluded people!" continued he, extending his apostolic hands towards them; "I weep not for myself, but for you. I yearn not for life. I had hoped to have breathed out my soul on the natural pillow of decay, soothed by the voice of tenderness, and hallowed by the tears of regret; but to go down to an ignominious grave, and leave a dark, dishonoured memory!—Yet it is meet that I suffer. The Almighty wills that I should, or he might rend the heavens for my deliverance, and send down armies of angels to shield me from your rage. I should rather glory in my martyrdom, as the disciple of Him, in whose name I have lived, in whose faith I will triumphantly die, who wore the crown of agony, and bore the cross of shame. For you, if my condemnation is sealed, the time will come when the days will roll in sorrow and gloom over your heads, the nights will come on in the *blackness of darkness*, ye will seek for comfort and ye will not find it, for the weight of innocent blood will be on your souls."

There was a sudden parting in the crowd—those who were clustered round the gate fell back, as if by some irresistible impulse, and an apparition glided through the dividing throng, which might well be taken as a messenger from another world. Pale, white as a death-shroud, her neglected locks floating around her, wild as the tendrils of the forest vine, and her eyes beaming with intense and wandering fires, she rushed forward, regardless of every object, save one, and threw her arms round Father Hilario, with a cry of such piercing anguish, as thrilled through every nerve of her auditors. Need I say, that it was the unfortunate Leila, who, roused from the lethargy of despair, and supported by the unnatural strength of madness, had thus forced her desperate way in the hope of dying with him she loved? As Father Hilario looked upon this sweet, blighted

flower of his fondest earthly affections, lying in drooping, dying loveliness on his bosom, he forgot every thing but her tenderness and devotion, and closing his arms around her, "tears such as angels shed" baptized her spotless face. In vain did her father, with a breaking heart, strive to release her from the embrace she had sought. She clung to Father Hilario with an energy that seemed supernatural, a clasp that was almost indissoluble, till, at length, exhausted and apparently expiring, she relaxed her hold, and was borne by her father to his now desolate home. Father Hilario gazed after her till the last glimpse of her figure was lost, then covering his face with his hands, his Creator only saw and knew the passing agony of that moment.

The sequel of this trial must have been anticipated, from some dark intimations of his fate, at the commencement of the narrative. The unconscious Leila had sealed, by her presence, the doom of him she would have died to save. Her desperation and love were fatal corroborations of the truth of Murillo's testimony. Father Hilario returned to his cell, a condemned man; condemned to expiate at the stake, the double crime of sacrilege and murder; but it is recorded that the judges, who were men of stern unbending character, wept as they uttered the sentence, and the people sobbed and groaned audibly as they heard it. * * * * *

At length the day dawned which was marked for the consummation of the dreadful decree. It was one of painful, sickening brightness. Nature had clothed herself in her most magnificent robes, and assumed her fairest smile, as if to mock the crimes and sufferings of man. On a gradual eminence, covered with living green, o'ercanopied with dazzling sapphire, was seen the funeral pile of the victim. A multitude was stretched widely, darkly around it, and heaving heavily, mournfully on the air, the death-bell rolled its long, deep echoing knell, saddest of all earthly sounds. There was something awful in the stillness of this vast multitude—even more than its wild rush and commotion, when Father Hilario was led forth to the fatal pile. He passed along, clad in white victim robes, the crucifix suspended on his bosom, his face, placid as the lake, on which the moon-

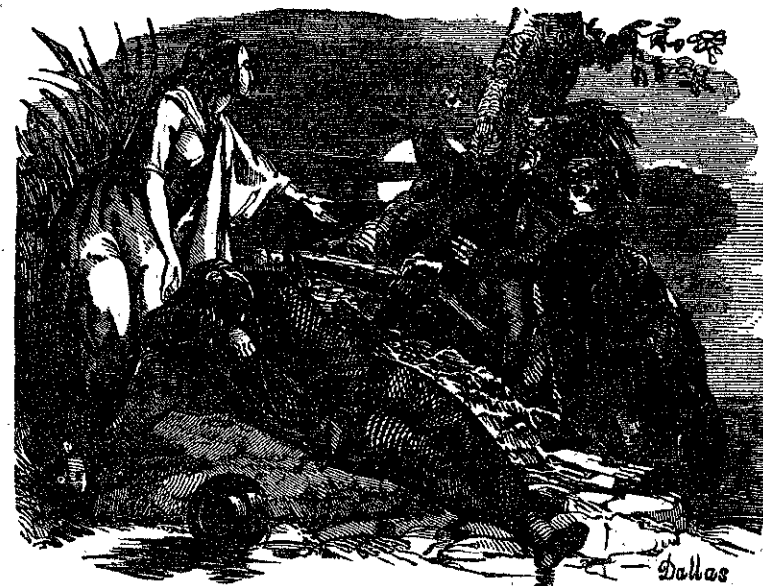
beams untrembling repose. Every trace of human emotion had vanished. He had been on the mount of prayer, and the reflection of the invisible glory, was still bright on his brow. If ever mortal, in the expression of saintlike humanity, patience, mildness and majesty, approached the similitude of the divine sufferer, it was Father Hilario. He passed along to the sound of the mournful bell, through the audible lamentations of the crowd, where man in his strength, woman in her sensibility, and childhood in its helplessness and timidity, were strangely and inexplicably blended. The victim reached the place of sacrifice. He turned around, to take in, for the last time, the glories of creation; then bending his eyes on the multitude, he extended his arms, in benediction over them. He spoke, and that voice, so sweet and solemn, rose through the deepening murmurs, like the diapason of an organ, mid the wailings of a storm.

"Ye beloved flock, farewell! To that Almighty Shepherd, who laid down his life for your salvation, with prayers and blessings, I commit you. Again I say, weep not for me. Rejoice rather, that ye see me die an innocent, a triumphant martyr. Think, when the fiery wreath encircles my brow, how soon it will be converted into a crown of glory. Even now methinks I see through the opening heavens, the wheels of the descending cherubim."—He looked up as he spoke, with a countenance of inspiration, and kneeling down, exclaimed, with the adoring prophet, "My Father, my Father! the chariot of Israel and the horsemen thereof." The awe-struck crowd gazed up into the unshadowed vault, almost believing to witness the same miracle of divine love, wrought in behalf of the sainted victim. But they beheld no burning car rolling through the arch of heaven—no wings of angels parted its resplendent blue. They looked down to earth, and saw Father Hilario embracing the fatal stake. One flash of the kindling pyre, and a wild, simultaneous shriek rent the air. Higher and higher rose the gathering blaze; still, through the winding sheet of flame, glimpses were seen of that glorious form, crowned with the awful pomp of martyrdom. Deeper and deeper closed the fiery folds, then paler waxed the wasting splendour, till at last naught but the smoke of the holocaust went up to heaven.

Twice the sun rose and set over the scene of sacrifice. The silence of death brooded over the valley. Again the bell swelled in funeral harmony on the melancholy air, while a long procession darkened the church yard and closed around a solitary grave. At the head of that grave appeared the figure of a grief-stricken man. There was such an expression of unspeakable woe and humiliation in his countenance, that even sympathy turned away, self-rebuked, for having looked at sorrow, too sacred for observation. It was the broken-hearted father of Leila. It was around *her* grave that mournful throng was gathering. But why were no white robed maidens there, to perform the customary rite, and scatter the perishing wreath, emblem of fragility and beauty, over one who was the fairest of their band? A dark spot had been discovered in the whiteness of the lily's chalice, and the flowers of its tribe were not permitted to shed their mourning sweetness over its decay. The appalling stillness which precedes the sound, most agonizing to the mourner's ear, the fall of the covering mould, pervaded the scene. The father lay prostrate on the earth, and the throes which shook his frame, were fearful to behold. Some thought as they gazed on his convulsive pangs, there could be no grief like *his*; but they remembered her, who was left in the forsaken home. The mother's sorrow was not for man to witness. When, at length, that damp, heavy, doleful sound, the last knell of mortality, fell startlingly on the ear, Murillo, who had stood in statue-like immobility, somewhat aloof from the general throng, rushed wildly forward, and stepping on the very brink of the grave, exclaimed, in a voice which might rend the marble slumbers of death:

"Away!—she shall not go down unhonoured and unavenged. She's mine—I bought her—with my soul's price I bought her—the covenant is written in blood, and sealed with the flames of martyrdom. Yes," he continued, his fiery eyes flashing with intolerable brightness; "yes! ye blind judges, tremble, for ye have need. Ye have condemned an angel of light upon the testimony of a fiend. Ye have done that, which ye would give worlds upon worlds to redeem. Behold in *me* the assassin of Guido, the murderer

of Father Hilario, the destroyer of Leila. I execrated Guido, for he made me a branded Cain among my fellow men. I hated Father Hilario, for Leila *loved* him; and *I*, an alien from mankind, lived but to worship *her*. She loved him, but with a love as pure as that which warms the burning cherubim—I stole the robes of holiness, and wrought beneath their folds the deed of hell. The Prince of darkness was with me, and promised me her, who now lies cold in the bed my gory hands have made. Here, in the presence of death, and the prospect of judgment, in the name of that dreadful Deity I have defied, I proclaim the innocence of my victims, your own guilt and mine. Live on, if ye will, weighed down with the curse of guiltless blood upon your souls; for me, I *lived* to destroy—I *die* to avenge." Before an arm could be lifted to avert the deed, he had drawn a dagger from his vest, and plunging it in his bosom, fell a bleeding, but unavailing sacrifice, to the ashes of Leila.



THE DRUNKARD'S DAUGHTER.



ATE FRANKLIN sat at the window, watching the lightning that streamed through the sky, till her eyes were almost blinded by the glare. She was naturally timid, and had an unusual dread of a thunder storm, yet though the lightning ran down in rills of fire, and the thunder rolled till the earth shook with its reverberations, she kept her post of danger, repeating, as she gazed abroad, "Oh! that I were a boy, that I might venture abroad in search of my father! It is almost midnight, yet he is not returned. He will perish in a storm like this. Oh! that I were a boy!" she again passionately exclaimed—while the rain began to drive against the casement, and the wind swept the branches of the trees roughly by the panes. She held a young baby in her arms, which she had just lulled to sleep, and her mother lay sleeping in a bed in the same apartment. All slumbered but Kate, who for hours had watched from the window for her father's return. At length her resolution was taken: she laid the babe by her mother's side, drew down the curtain to exclude the lightning's glare, and throwing a

shawl around her, softly opened the door, and soon found herself in the street, in the midst of the thunder, the lightning, and the rain. How strong must have been the impulse, how intense the anxiety, which could have induced a timid young girl to come out at that lone, silent hour, on such a night, without a protector or a guide! She flew along at first, but the rain and the wind beat in her face, and the lightning bewildered her with its lurid corruscations. Then pausing for breath, she shaded her eyes, and looking fearfully around, gazed on every object, till her imagination clothed it with its own wild imagery.

At length her eye fell on a dark body extended beneath a tree by the way side. She approached it, trampling, and kneeling down, bent over it, till she felt a hot breath pass burningly over her cheek, and just then a sheet of flame, rolling round it, she recognized but too plainly her father's features. She took his hand, but it fell impassive from her hold. She called upon his name, she put her arms round his neck and tried to raise him from the earth, but his head fell back like lead, and a hoarse breathing sound alone indicated his existence.

"Father, dear father, wake and come home!" she cried, in a louder tone; but the thunder's roar did not rouse him, how much less, her soft, though earnest voice. Again she called, but she heard only the echoes of night repeating her own mournful adjuration—"Father, dear father, come home!"

How long she thus remained, she knew not; but the wind and the rain subsided, the lightning flashed with a paler radiance, and at intervals the wan moon might be seen wading through the gray, watery clouds. She felt her strength exhausted, and clasping her hands together, lifted her eyes, streaming with tears, almost wishing a bolt would fall and strike them both simultaneously.

"My father is lost!" said she, "and why should I wish him to live? Why should I wish to survive him?"

The sound of horse's feet approaching startled her. The horseman checked his speed as he came opposite the tree, where Kate still knelt over her father, and as the lightning played over her white

garments, which, being wet by the rain, clung closely around her, she might well be mistaken for an apparition. Her shawl had fallen on the ground, her hair streamed in dripping masses over her face, and her uplifted arms were defined on the dark background of an angry sky. The horse reared and plunged, and the rider, dismounting, came as near to the spot as the impetuous animal would allow.

"Oh! Harry Blake, is it you?" exclaimed Kate. "Then my father will not be left here to die!"

"Die!" repeated Harry; "what can have happened? Why are you both abroad such a night as this?"

"Alas!" said Kate, "I could not leave my father to perish. I sought him through the storm, and I find him thus."

While she was speaking, Harry had fastened the bridle of his horse to the tree, and stooped down on the other side of Mr. Franklin. Kate's first feeling on his approach was a transport of gratitude—now she was overwhelmed with shame; for she knew as Harry inhaled the burning exhalation of his breath, his disgraceful secret would be revealed—that secret which her mother and herself had so long in anguish concealed.

"Poor Kate!" involuntarily burst from his lips, as he gazed on the prostrate and immovable form of the man he had so much loved and respected. Had he seen him blasted by the lightning's stroke, he could not have felt more shocked or grieved. He comprehended in a moment the full extent of his degradation, and it seemed as if an awful chasm, yawning beneath his feet, now separated him, and would for ever separate him from his instructor and friend.

"Kate," said he, and his voice quivered from emotion, "this is no place for you. You are chilled by the rain—you will be chilled to death, if you remain in your wet garments. Let me see you safe at home, and I will return to your father, nor leave him till he is in a place of security."

"No, no!" cried Kate, "I think not of myself, only assist me to raise him, and lead him home, and I care not what happens to me. I knew it would come to this at last. Oh! my poor father!"

Harry felt that there was no consolation for such grief, and he

attempted not to offer any. He put a strong arm round the unhappy man, and raised him from the ground, still supporting his reeling body and calling his name in a loud, commanding tone. Mr. Franklin opened his eyes with a stupid stare, and uttered some indistinct, idiotic sounds, then letting his head fall on his bosom, he suffered himself to be led homeward, reeling, tottering, and stumbling at every step. And this man, so helpless and degraded, so imbruted and disgusting, that his very daughter, who had just periled her life in the night-storm to secure him from danger, and turned away from him, even while she supported him, with unconquerable loathing, was a member of Congress, a distinguished lawyer—eloquent at the bar, and sagacious in council—a citizen respected and beloved; a friend generous and sincere—a husband once idolized—a father once adored. The young man who had walked by his side, had been for more than a year, a student in his office, and sat under his instruction, as Paul sat at the feet of Gamaliel. Now, in the expressive language of Scripture, he could have exclaimed, "Oh, Lucifer, thou son of the morning, how low art thou fallen!"—but he moved on in silence, interrupted occasionally by the ill-repressed sobs of Kate. He had been that day to an adjoining town, to transact some business for Mr. Franklin, and being detained to an unusually late hour, was overtaken by the storm, when the agonized voice of Kate met his ear.

Harry lingered a moment at Mr. Franklin's door before he departed. He wanted to say something expressive of comfort and sympathy to Kate, but he knew not what to say.

"You will never mention the circumstances of this night, Harry," said Kate, in a low, hesitating tone. "I cannot ask you to respect my father as you have done, but save him, if it may be, from the contempt of the world."

"If he were my own father, Kate," cried Harry, "I would not guard his reputation with more jealous care. Look upon me henceforth as a brother, and call upon me as such, when you want counsel, sympathy, or aid. God bless you, Kate."

"Alas! there is no blessing for a drunkard's daughter," sighed

Kate, as she turned from the door and listened to her father's deep, sonorous breathing, from the sofa on which he had staggered, and where he lay stretched at full length, till long after the dawning of morn, notwithstanding her efforts to induce him to change his drenched garments.

Mrs. Franklin was an invalid, and consequently a late riser. Kate usually presided at the breakfast-table, and attended to her father's wants. This morning he took his accustomed seat, but his coffee and toast remained untasted. He sat with his head leaning upon his hand, his eyes fixed vacantly on the wall, and his hair matted and hanging in neglected masses over his temples. Kate looked upon his face, and remembered when she thought her father one of the handsomest men she had ever seen—when dignity was enthroned upon his brow, and the purity as well as the majesty of genius beamed from his eye. He lifted his head and encountered her fixed gaze—probably followed the current of her thoughts, for his countenance darkened, and pushing his cup far from him, he asked her, in a surly tone, why she stared so rudely upon him?

Kate tried to answer, but there was suffocation in her throat, and she could not speak.

Mr. Franklin looked upon her for a moment with a stern, yet wavering glance, then rising and thrusting back his chair against the wall, he left the house, muttering as he went, "curses not loud, but deep."

Kate had become gradually accustomed to the lowering cloud of sullenness, which the lethargy of inebriation leaves behind it. She had heard, by almost imperceptible degrees, the voice of manly tenderness assume the accents of querulousness and discontent; but she had never met such a glance of defiance, or witnessed such an ebullition of passion before. Her heart rose in rebellion against him, and she trembled at the thought that she might learn to hate him, as he thus went on, plunging deeper and deeper in the gulf of sensuality.

"No, no, no!" repeated she to herself, "let me never be such a monster. Let me pity, pray for him, love him if I can—but let me never forget that he is my father still."

Young as Kate was, she had learned that endurance, not happiness, was her allotted portion. Naturally high-spirited and impetuous, with impassioned feelings and headlong impulses, in prosperity she might have become haughty and ungovernable; but, subjected in early youth to a discipline, of all others the most galling to her pride, her spirit became subdued, and her passions restrained by the same process by which her principles were strengthened, and the powers of her mind precociously developed. Her brothers and sisters had all died in infancy, except one, now an infant in the cradle, a feeble, delicate child, for whom every one prophesied an early grave, was appointed.

Mrs. Franklin herself was constitutionally feeble, and yielding to the depression of spirits caused by her domestic misfortunes, indulged in constant and ineffectual complainings, which added to the gloom of the household, without producing amendment or reformation in its degraded master. She was a very proud, and had been a very beautiful woman, who had felt for her husband an attachment romantically strong, for it was fed by the two strongest passions of her heart—pride, which exulted in the homage paid to his talents and his graces, and vanity, which delighted in the influence her beauty exercised over his commanding mind. Now, his talents and graces were obscured by the murky cloud of intemperance, and her languishing beauty no longer received its accustomed incense; the corrosions of mortification and peevish discontent became deeper and deeper, and life one scene of gloom and disquietude.

Kate grew up amidst these opposing influences like a beautiful plant in a barren, ungenial soil. To her father, she was the delicate but hardy saxifrage, blooming through the clefts of the cold, dry rock; to her mother, the sweet anemone, shedding its blossoms over the roots of the tree from which it sprung—fragrant, though unnurtured, neglected and alone.

It would be too painful to follow, step by step, Mr. Franklin's downward course. Since the night of his public exposure he had gone down, down, with a fearfully accelerated motion, like the mountain stream, when it leaps over its rocky barrier. Public con-

fidence was gradually withdrawn, clients and friends forsook him, and ruin trod rapidly on the steps of shame.

Harry Blake clung to him, till he saw his once powerful mind partaking so far of the degradation of his body, as to be incapable of imparting light to his. He now felt it due to himself to dissolve the connexion subsisting between them—and he called, though reluctantly, to bid him farewell. Mr. Franklin seemed much agitated when Harry informed him of his intended departure. He knew the cause, and it seemed as if the last link was about to be severed that bound him to the good and honourable. Harry had been to him a delightful companion; and, in the days of his unsullied reputation, it had been one of his most interesting tasks to direct a mind so buoyant and aspiring, and which owned, with so much deference, the overmastering influence of his own.

"Do not go yet, Harry," said he; "I have much, much to say to you, and I may never have another opportunity. I have anticipated this moment. It is painful, but justice to yourself demanded it."

Harry seated himself, pale from suppressed emotion, while Mr. Franklin continued speaking, walking up and down the room, every feature expressive of violent agitation.

"I have never yet to a human being introduced the subject of which I am about to speak—not even to my wife and daughter. I have never rolled back the current of time, and revealed the spot where, standing on the quicksands of youth, the first wave of temptation washed over me. I could not bear to allude to the history of my degradation. But you, Harry, are going among strangers, amid untried scenes—and I would warn you now, with the solemnity of a man who knows he has sealed his own everlasting ruin, to beware of the first downward step. You do not know me, sir—no one knows me; they know not my parentage, or the accursed stream that runs in these veins.

"My father was called the King of the Drunkards! He drank till he was transformed, breath, bones, and sinew, into flame, and then he died—the most horrible of all deaths—of spontaneous combustion. Yes, he was the King of the Drunkards! I remember when a little

boy, I saw him walking at the head of a long procession, with a banner flying, as if in triumph, and a barrel of whisky rolling before, on which the drummer made music as they walked. And shouts went up in the air, and people applauded from the windows and the doors—and I thought the drunkard's was a merry life. But when I grew older, and saw my mother's cheek grow paler and paler, and knew that my father's curses and threats, and brutal treatment were the cause—when I saw her at length die of a broken heart, and heard the neighbours say that my father had killed her, and that he would have to answer for her death at the great bar of Heaven!—I began to feel an indescribable dread and horror, and looked upon my father with loathing and abhorrence! And when he died—when his body was consumed by flames, which seemed to me emblematical of the winding-sheet in which his soul was wrapped—I fled from my native town, my native State; I begged my bread from door to door. At length, a childless stranger took me in. He pitied my forlorn condition—clothed, fed, and educated me. Nature had given me talents, and now opportunity unfolded them. I became proud and ambitious, and I wanted to convince my benefactor that I was no vulgar boy. Conscious of the dregs from which I had been extracted, I was resolved to make myself a name and fame—and I have done it. You know it, Harry—I have taken my station in the high places of the land; and the time has been, when but to announce yourself as my student, would have been your passport to distinction. Well, do you want to know what made me what I am?—what, when such a burning beacon was for ever blazing before my memory, hurried me on to throw my own blasted frame into a drunkard's dishonoured grave? I will tell you, young man—it was the *wine* cup!—the glass offered by the hand of beauty, with smiles and adulation! I had made a vow over my mother's ashes that I would never drink. I prayed God to destroy me, body and soul, if I ever became a drunkard. But *wine*, they said, was one of God's best gifts, and it gladdened without inebriating—it was ingratitude to turn from its generous influence. I believed them, for it was alcohol that consumed my father. And I drank wine at the banquet and the board—

and I drank porter and ale, and the rich-scented cordial—and I believed myself to be a temperate man. I thought I grew more intellectual; I could plead more eloquently, and my tongue made more music at the convivial feast. But when the excitement of the scene was over, I felt languid and depressed. My head ached, and my nerves seemed unsheathed. A thirst was enkindled within me, that wine could no longer quench. A hereditary fire was burning in my veins. I had lighted up the smouldering spark, and it now blazed, and blazed. I knew I was destroying myself, but the power of resistance was gone. When I first tasted, I was undone! Beware, Harry, beware! To save you from temptation, I have lifted the veil, and laid bare before you the hell of a drunkard's bosom. But no! that cannot be. The Invisible alone can witness the agonies of remorse, the corroding memories, the anticipated woes, the unutterable horrors that I endure and dread—and expect to endure as long as the Great God himself exists.”

He paused, and sunk down exhausted into a chair. Large drops of sweat rolled down his livid brow—his knees knocked together, his lips writhed convulsively, every muscle seemed twisted, and every vein swollen and blackened. Harry was terrified at this paroxysm. He sprang toward him, and untying the handkerchief from his neck, handed him a glass of water with trembling hands. Mr. Franklin looked up, and meeting Harry's glance of deep commiseration, his features relaxed, and large tears, slowly gathering, rolled down his cheeks. He bent forward, and extending his arms across the table, laid his head on them; and deep, suffocating sobs burst forth, shaking his frame, as if with strong spasms. Harry was unutterably affected. He had never seen man weep thus before. He knew they were tears wrung by agony, the agony of remorse; and while he wept in sympathy, he gathered the hope of his regeneration from the intensity of his sufferings.

“I pity you, Mr. Franklin,” said he, “from my soul I pity you—but you must not give yourself up as lost; God never yet tempted a man beyond his strength. You may, you can, you *must* resist. For your own sake, for your wife's—your daughter's sake, I conjure you.”

"My daughter's!" interrupted Mr. Franklin, lifting up his head. "Ah! that name touches the chord that still vibrates. Poor Kate! poor Kate! The hand that should have blessed has blighted her young hopes. My wife reproaches me, and gives me gall and vinegar, even when I would meet her with smiles. But Kate never gave me one reproach but her tears. I once thought you loved her, and that I should see the two objects I most loved happy in each other's affections, and scattering roses over the pillow of my declining years. But that can never be now; your proud father will never permit you to marry a drunkard's daughter." He spoke this in a bitter tone, and a smile of derision for a moment curled his lips.

"You thought right," exclaimed Harry, passionately. "I have loved her, I do love her, as the best, the loveliest, the most exalted of human beings. I would not pain you, sir, but you constrain me to speak the truth: my father has forbidden me to think of such a union, and as I am now dependent on him, I could not brave his commands without seeking to plunge your daughter into poverty and sorrow. Yet I will not deceive you. I would have braved every thing with her consent, but she refuses to listen to vows, unsanctioned by parental authority. The time, I trust, will come when, having secured an independence, by my energies, I may dare to speak and act as a man, and woo her to be my wife in the face of the world."

"Yes! yes!" repeated Mr. Franklin, "the time may come, but I shall not live to see it. There is at times such a deadly faintness, such a chilly weight here," laying his hand on his breast, "it seems as though I could feel the cold fingers of death clutching round my heart and freezing my life-blood. If I did not warm the current with fresh streams of alcohol, I should surely die. Then this aching brow, this throbbing brain, these quivering nerves, and shaking limbs, are they not all the heralds of coming dissolution?—Harry, I do not mean to distress you—I have but one thing more to say: if you resist temptation, and I pray God you may, dare not triumph over the fallen. Oh! you know not, you dream not, in the possession of unclouded reason and unblighted faculties, the proud master of your-

self, what that wretch endures, who, beset by demons on every side, feels himself dragged down lower and lower, incapable of resistance, to the very verge of the bottomless pit."

He wrung Harry's hand in his, then turned and left the office. Harry followed, oppressed and awe-struck by the revelations he had heard. Temptation, sin, sorrow, disgrace, death, judgment, and eternity, swept like dark phantoms across his mind; chasing away hope, love, joy, and heaven; even the image of Kate Franklin flitted mournfully in the back-ground, fading and indistinct as a vanishing rainbow.

Kate grieved at Harry's departure, but it was a grief which vented itself in tears. She was affected by his disinterested attachment; she esteemed his virtues and admired his character, and in sunnier hours she might have indulged in those sweet day-dreams of love, which throw over the realities of life the hues of heaven. But she felt it was hers to endure and to struggle, not to enjoy—she dared not fix her gaze on the single star that shone through the dark clouds closing around her, lest it should charm her into a forgetfulness of the perils and duties of her situation; so gathering all her energies, as the traveller folds his mantle over his breast to shield him from the tempest, the more fearful the storm, the more firm and strong became her powers of resistance. It was summer when Harry departed, and Kate, though she never mentioned his name, found his remembrance associated with the flowers, the fragrance, and the moonlight of that beautiful season; but when winter came on, with its rough gales, and sleet and snow—for she lived on the granite hills of New England, where the snow-spirit revels amid frost-work and ice—she sat by a lonely fire, watching her father's late return, or nursing the fretful and delicate babe in her mother's chamber, all the anticipated ills of poverty hanging darkly over her, Kate found her only comfort in communing with her God, to whom, in the dearth of all earthly joy, she had turned for support and consolation, and as her religious faith increased, her fortitude strengthened, and her stern duties became easier of performance. One night she sat alone by the fireside—and it was a most tempestuous night, the wind howled

and tossed the naked boughs of the trees against the windows, which rattled as if they would shiver in the blast; and the snow, drifted by its violence, blew in white wreaths on the glass and hung its chill drapery on the walls. She sat on a low seat in the corner, her Bible on her knees, a dim fire burning on the hearth, for cold as it was, she would not suffer it to be replenished with fuel which her mother might yet want for her own comfort. She was gradually accustoming herself to personal privations, voluntarily abstaining from every luxury, not knowing how soon she might need the necessities of life. She was reading the sublime book of Job, and when she came to the words, "Hast thou entered into the snow? Hast thou seen the treasures of the hail?" she repeated them aloud, struck with the force, mid the wintry scene around her. At this moment her father entered. It was an unusually early hour for his return, and as he walked forward she noticed with joy that his step was less fluctuating than usual. He bent shivering over the fire, which Kate immediately kindled afresh, and a bright blaze soon diffused warmth and cheerfulness through the apartment.

"I heard your voice as I entered, Kate," said he; "where is your companion?"

"There," answered she, lifting the Bible from her knees—"here is the companion of my solitude, and a very pleasing one I find it."

Mr. Franklin fixed his eyes steadfastly on Kate for a few moments, throwing himself back in his chair, gazed upon the ceiling, and spoke as in a soliloquy—

"I remember when I was a little boy, reading that book at my mother's knee, and when she was dying she told me never to lay my head upon the pillow without reading a chapter and praying to the Great God for pardon and protection. But that was a long time ago. I would not open it now for the universe."

"Oh! father!" exclaimed Kate, "do not say so. Young as I am, I have lived too long if the promises written here be not true. They alone have saved me from despair."

"Despair!" repeated he, in a hollow tone—"yes, that is the fitting word, but it belongs to me alone. You are innocent and virtuous,

and why should you talk of despair? You have no brand on your brow, no thunder-scar graven by the Almighty's hand, from which men turn away, and women shrink from with horror. I am an object of loathing and scorn to all. Even you, my own daughter, who once lived in my bosom, if I should open my arms to enfold you, as I was wont to do, would shrink from me, as from the leper's touch."

"Oh! no, no!" cried Kate, springing from her seat, and throwing her arms impulsively around his neck, while her tears literally rained on his shoulder.

It had been long months since she had heard such a gush of tenderness from his lips—since she had dared to proffer the caresses of affection. She thought all natural feeling was dried up in his heart—withered, scorched by the fiery breath of intemperance. She had locked her grief and humiliation in her own breast. She believed every appeal to her reason and sensibility would be as unavailing as if made to the granite of her native hills. She now reproached herself for her coldness and reserve. She accused herself of neglect and irreverence.

"Oh, my father!" she exclaimed, "if you still love me, I will not despair. There is hope, there will be joy. You have but to make one great effort, and you will be free once more. Chains, strong as adamant, cannot bind the soul to sin, unless it is a willing captive. You are wretched now; we are all wretched. No smiles gladden our household. My mother lies on a bed of languishment, where a breaking heart has laid her. My little sister pines like a flower, which sunbeams never visited; and I—oh, father! words can never tell the woe, the anguish, the agony, which I have pent up in my bosom, till it threatened to destroy me. I would not reproach you—I would not add one drop to your cup of bitterness—but I must speak now, or I die."

Excited beyond her power of self-control, Kate slid from her father's relaxing arms, and taking the Bible, which lay upon her chair, in both hands, prostrated herself at his feet.

"By this blessed book," continued she, in an exalted voice—"this book which has poured oil and balsam in my bleeding heart—

this book, so rich in promises, so fearful in threatenings—by the God who created you to glorify Him, the Saviour who died to redeem you—by your immortal and endangered soul—I pray thee to renounce the fatal habit, which has transformed our once blissful home into a prison-house of shame, sorrow, and despair.”

She paused, breathless from intense emotion, but her uplifted hands still clasped the sacred volume; her cheek, glistening with tears, was mantled with crimson; and her eyes, turned up to her father, beamed with the inspiration of the Christian's hope.

Mr. Franklin looked down upon his daughter, as she thus knelt before him, and it seemed as if a ray from the Divine intelligence darted like a glory from her eyes into the depths of his soul. Lost, ruined as he was, there was still hope of his redemption. He might be saved. She, like a guiding cherub, might still take him by the hand, and lead him back to the green paths of pellucid streams where he had once walked with undoubting footsteps. As these thoughts rolled through his mind, he bent forward, lower and lower, till his knees touched the floor. He wrapped his arms around Kate, and, leaning his head on her shoulder, sobbed aloud. The prayer of the publican trembled on his lips—“Oh! my God! have mercy upon me, a miserable sinner! Oh! Thou, who was once tempted, yet never sinned, save me from temptation!”

It was long before other sounds interrupted the hallowed silence which succeeded. Kate hardly dared to breathe, lest she should disturb the communion her father's soul was holding with the Being he invoked. Her heart ached with the fullness of hope that flowed into it, from channels long sealed. Had he made promises of amendment in his own strength, she might have feared their stability, but now, when she saw him prostrate in the dust, in tears and humiliation, crying for mercy, from the depths of a wounded and contrite spirit, she believed that He, “whose fan is in His hand,” had come to winnow the chaff from the wheat, before the whole should be consumed with unquenchable fire.

It was midnight before she rose to retire to her chamber. She felt unwilling to leave her father. It seemed to her, that this night was

the crisis of her destiny—that angels and demons were wrestling for his soul—that the angels had prevailed; but might not the demons return?—or the good angels, too sure of their victory, wing their way back to the skies? Long after she had retired to bed, she heard him walk backwards and forwards, and sometimes she heard his voice ascending as in prayer.

“Hear him, gracious Father!” cried she, from her moistened pillow, “hear him, answer and bless him!”

Then folding her arms closely round the infant, who slumbered by her side, she gradually fell asleep, and it will throw no shade over her filial piety to believe, that no one thought of Henry Blake, associated with pure images of future felicity, gilded her dreams. How long she slept, she knew not; but she awoke with a strange feeling of suffocation, and, starting up in bed, looked wildly around her. She saw nothing, but the chamber seemed filled with smoke, and a hollow, crackling sound met her ear. The dread of fire for a moment paralyzed her limbs. It was but a moment—when springing from her bed, the infant still cradled on her arm, she opened the door, and found the terrible reality of her fears. Such a rush of hot air pressed upon her, she staggered back, panting and bewildered. The flames were rolling in volumes through the next apartment, and the wind, blowing in violence through the outer door, which was open, fearfully accelerated the work of destruction.

“My father!” shrieked Kate; “my father!—where is he?”

That fearful cry awoke the child, who screamed and clung in terror closer to her bosom; but her mother, who seldom slept except under the influence of powerful opiates, lay still unmoved, unconscious of the terrific element which was raging around her.

“Mother!” cried Kate, frantically, “wake or you die! The house is in flames!—they are rolling towards us!—they are coming. Oh! my God—mother, awake!”

She shook her arm with violence, and shrieked in her ear; but, though she moved and spoke, she seemed in a lethargy so deep, that nothing could rouse her to a sense of her danger.

The flames began to curl their forked tongues around the very

door of the chamber, and the house shook and quivered as if with the throes of an earthquake. Kate knew she could make her own escape through a door, in an opposite direction; but she resolved, if she could not save her mother, to perish with her. She would have lifted her in her arms, were it not for the infant clinging to her bosom. Perchance that infant might be saved. She rushed through the door, made her way through the drifting snow to the street, laid the child down on the chill but soft bank by the wall-side, silently commending it to the protection of God—then winged her way back to the building, though the flames were now bursting from the roof, and reddening the snow with their lurid glare.

"Mother, dear mother, speak if you live," cried Kate, shuddering at the supernatural sounds of her own voice. A faint groan issued from the bed, round which the flames were rapidly gathering. It is astonishing what strength is given by desperation. Kate was a slender girl, of delicate frame, unused to physical exertion, but now she felt nerved with a giant's strength. She took up her mother in her arms, just as the fire caught the bed-curtain, and communicated even to her night-dress. Smothering the blaze with the blanket she had dragged from the bed in rescuing her mother, she flew rather than walked, burdened as she was, the flames roaring and hissing behind her, gaining upon her at every step—the hot air almost stifling her breath, even while her naked feet were plunging through the snow-drifts, and the frosts penetrating her thin night wrapper. It seemed as if ages of thought and feeling were compressed in that awful moment. Her father's dreaded fate—her little sister freezing on the snow—the servants probably perishing in the flames—her houseless mother fainting in her arms—her own desolate condition—all was as vividly impressed on her mind as the lurid blaze of the conflagration on the dark gray of the wintry night. She bent her steps to the nearest dwelling, which was the residence of Mr. Blake, the father of Harry. She reached the threshold, and fell with her now senseless burden, heavily against the door. She tried to call aloud for assistance, but no sound issued from her parched and burning lips. She endeavoured to lift her right hand to the knocker, but it was

numb and powerless, and in her left, which encircled her mother, she felt for the first time the most intense pain.

"Merciful Father!" thought she, "thou who has sustained us thus far, leave us not to perish!"

Even while this prayer burst from her soul, footsteps approached, the door opened, and Mr. Blake, accompanied by a servant, bearing a lamp, stood upon the threshold. He had been awakened a few minutes before by the reflection of the blaze in his chamber, and had just aroused his family, when the sudden jarring of the door excited his alarm. He recoiled at first with horror from the spectacle which he beheld. Mrs. Franklin, white, ghastly and still, lay to all appearance dead, in the nerveless arms of her daughter, who, pale, prostrate, and voiceless, could only lift her imploring eyes, and moan the supplication her lips vainly sought to express. Mr. Blake had forbidden his son to marry a *drunkard's daughter*, and he had looked coldly on Kate, secretly condemning her for the influence she unconsciously exercised over his destiny. But he was not a hard-hearted man, though very proud, and his wife was a repository of heaven's own influences. Under her anxious superintendence, the sufferers were soon placed in warm beds, and every means used for the resuscitation of the one, and the renovation of the other, while Mr. Blake, with the male part of the household, hastened to the scene of the conflagration. The main building was now enveloped in fire, but the kitchen was still standing, and he rejoiced to see the servants rushing to and fro, trying to save something, perhaps their own property, from the ruins. He looked around in search of the unhappy master, and trembled at the supposition that he might have found a funeral pyre. There was nothing to be done—the work of destruction was almost consummated, and he was turning away sick at heart, when he thought he saw a bundle lying near the wall where he stood. He stooped down, and beheld with astonishment a sleeping infant. At first he thought it dead, but when he raised it, and touched his cheek to its cold face, he felt its sweet breath stealing softly over his lips, and its little hand instinctively clasped his neck. He was inexpressibly affected, and gathering the folds of his cloak around it, he

pressed it to his bosom with a father's tenderness. Never had he been so struck with the special providence of God, as in the preservation of this little outcast. Angels must have brooded over it, and impressed their heavenly warmth upon its chilly bed. But who had laid it so tenderly in its snowy cradle, aloof from the smoke and the blaze? Who but she whose filial arms had borne her mother to his own door! As he answered this interrogation to himself, his heart smote him for his injustice to the heroic girl who had made such unparalleled exertions. He almost wished Harry was at home—but this was a moment of excitement; when he became calmer, he rejoiced at his absence.

Mr. Franklin had not perished in the ruins. After Kate had left him, his newly awakened feelings of remorse raged with frenzy in his bosom. No longer soothed by his daughter's caresses, and sustained by her prayers, the blackness of despair rolled over him. He could not compose himself to rest—the room seemed too small to contain the mighty conflict of his feelings. He could not bear to look upon the blazing hearth, and feel the fires raging within. He went to the door, and as the cold wind blew on his brow, he felt inexpressible relief, and leaving the door unlatched, he rushed abroad, reckless where he went, provided he could escape from himself. The farther he roamed from his own home, the more he seemed to lose the consciousness of his own identity, till exhausted in body and mind, he threw himself down on the floor of an uninhabited dwelling, which had often been the scene his drunken orgies. There he lay, while the fire which he left blazing on the hearth, fanned by the blast howling through the open door, reveled uncontrolled and unconquerable. When at morning he sought his homestead, he found it a heap of smouldering ruins—and he knew the work of destruction was his. He remembered how the door creaked in the blast, and in his madness he would not return. While he stood gazing in speechless agony on the wreck, Mr. Blake approached, and taking him by the arm, drew him to his own dwelling. Like the friends of Job, he spoke not, for "he saw his grief was very great." His wife, whom he had once tenderly loved, and who, in

his chastened mood, came back to his memory, clothed in all the sweetness of which his vices had robbed her, lay on her deathbed. Though rescued by filial devotion from a fiery grave, she had swallowed the breath of the flame, and her chafed and wounded spirit was passing into the presence of her Maker. She could not speak, but she knew him as he entered, and stretching out her feeble hand, her dying glance spoke only pity and forgiveness. The unhappy man knelt by her side, and burying his face in the bed-cover, gave way to a burst of anguish, that was like the rending asunder of body and soul. And Kate, too, lay there by the side of her dying mother, with frozen feet, blistered hands, and feverish brow—with her bright locks scorched and disheveled—her eyes bloodshot and dim. This, too, was *his* work. There are calamities which come immediately from the hand of God, and man bows in weakness before the majesty of the power that overwhelms him. The pestilence that walketh in darkness—the tempest that wasteth at noonday—the earthquake—the flood—are ministers of his vengeance, and come clothed with an authority so high and sacred, the boldest and strongest dare not rebel. But when the sufferer stands amid ruin his own hand has wrought—when conscience tells him he has arrogated to himself the fearful work of destruction, and stolen and winged the darts of death—there is an unfathomable wo, an immedicable wound, an undying remorse—an antepast on earth of the retributions of heaven. Let no one say the horrors of intemperance are exaggerated! Here fire and death had done their part, but murder had not yet reddened the black catalogue of sin. Happy, comparatively happy, the inebriate who is arrested in his headlong career, before the blood of innocence, mingling with the libations of Bacchus, brands him with the curse of Cain—the indelible stamp of infamy, which his own life, poured out on the scaffold, cannot efface, and which is handed down an inalienable heritage, to his children's children.

The day after the remains of the ill-fated Mrs. Franklin were consigned to the grave, the citizens of the place assembled in the town hall, to make arrangements for the relief of the suffering family. Their sympathies were strongly excited in behalf of the heroine, Kate—

and in the hour of his calamity they remembered Mr. Franklin as he was in his high and palmy days, when his voice had so often filled the hall where they were met, with strains of the loftiest eloquence. They had seen him prostrated on the grave of his wife, in sorrow that refused consolation, and they felt towards him something of that tenderness which we feel for the dead—when vice is recollected with compassion rather than hatred, and scorn melts in forgiveness. Warmed by a common impulse, they contributed munificently, and made immediate preparations for the erection of a new building on the site of the old. Mr. Franklin, who was aware of their movements, entered the hall before they separated. It had been long since he had met his former friends, associated in such a respectable body, and a few days before he would have shrunk from their glances, conscious of his degraded condition. Now, strengthened by a solemn resolution, he came among them, and standing in their midst, he begged permission to address them a few moments. He began with the history of his boyhood, and told them his parentage, his flight, his temptation, his perjury, and guilt. His voice was at first faltering, but as he proceeded, it recovered much of its former richness of tone, and when he painted his remorse and despair, his solemn resolutions of amendment, and his trust in Almighty God for strength to fulfil them, his eloquence rose to the most thrilling sublimity.

"For myself," said he in conclusion, "I would have asked nothing—hoped nothing. I would have buried in the deepest solitude the memory of my shame. But I have children—a daughter worthy of a better fate. For her sake I solicit the restoration of that confidence I have so justly forfeited—the birthright I have so shamefully sold. Low as I have sunk, I feel by the effort I have this moment made, that the indwelling Deity has not yet quite forsaken this polluted temple. I am still capable of being master of myself, and with God's help I will be so. I ask not for the hand of fellowship and friendship. I want it not till time shall have proved the sincerity of my reformation, and purified from defilement the drunkard's name."

Here every hand was simultaneously extended, in token of reviving confidence. Some grasped his in silence and tears—others fervently

bid him God-speed, and promised him encouragement, sympathy, and patronage.

The introduction of a household scene—more than a twelve-month after this—will close the history of *The Drunkard's Daughter*. Mr. Franklin was seated at his own fireside, reading; and when he raised his clear, dark eye from the book, and cast it on the domestic group at his side, you could read in his untroubled glance, quietude, self-respect, and confidence. The red signet of intemperance was swept from his noble brow; every look bore witness to his intellectual and moral regeneration. Kate sat near him—she, who, in the hands of God, had been made the instrument of his salvation—bearing on her youthful and lovely person a sad memento of her father's sin. Her left hand lay useless in her lap; its sinews had been contracted by the fires she smothered, when snatching her mother from the flames, and she was destined to carry through life a witness of filial heroism and devotion. But her right hand was clasped in that of Harry Blake, who, sanctioned by parental authority, had sought and received her wedded vows. Kate refused for a long time to assume the sacred duties of a wife, conscious of her impaired usefulness, but Harry pleaded most eloquently, and Harry's father declared that he considered the cause of her dependence as a mark of glory and honour. He had forbidden his son to claim alliance with a degraded name, but Kate had proved, during her sojourn in his dwelling, that a daughter's virtues could redeem a father's shame. Kate soon learned to be reconciled to a misfortune, which only endeared her the more to the hearts of her friends. She forgot to mourn over her physical dependence, in a father's and husband's devoted love. But, though dependent, she was not passive. She shared in all their intellectual pursuits, read for them, wrote for them, when weary from professional toils, and all that her right hand found to do, "she did diligently and in order." She was their inspiring companion, their modest counsellor, their spiritual friend.

There was one more figure added to this domestic scene. A fair-haired child sat on Mr. Franklin's knee, and twisted her chubby fingers in his still raven hair. It was the child once cradled on the

snowy bed, whose blooming cheeks and bright lips corresponded more with the *rose-bud*, than the *snow-drop*, the pet name she bore.

"Let no man say, when he is tempted, I am tempted of God," or having once yielded to the power of the tempter, that, like the giant slumbering in the lap of Delilah, he cannot break the green withs with which his passions have bound him, and find in after years the shorn locks of his glory clustering once more around his brow.



A LEGEND OF THE SILVER WAVE.



IT was verging towards the evening of an autumnal day, in the year 1777. The forests began to assume the varied and magnificent tints, peculiar to this season, in an American clime; those rich, brilliant dyes, which, like the hectic glow on the cheek of consumption, while it deepens the charm and the interest of beauty, is yet the herald of decay. The prevailing hue was still of a deep, unfaded green, but the woods were girdled by a band of mingled scarlet, green, and yellow, whose gorgeous, rainbow-like colours, might well be compared to the wampum belt of the Indian, tracing its bright outline on the darker groundwork of the aboriginal dress. These inimitable tints were reflected in that mirror, which the children of the forest denominated the *Silver Wave*, known to us by the more familiar, but not less euphonic name of the *Ohio*; but its bosom was not then covered with those floating palaces, which now, winged by vapour, glide in beauty and power over the conscious stream. The

bark canoe of the savage, or the ruder craft of the boatman, alone disturbed the silence of the solitary water. On the opposite bank, a rude fortification, constructed of fallen trees, rocks, and earth, over which the American flag displayed its waving stripes, denoted the existence of a military band, in a region as yet uncultivated and but partially explored. Towards this fort, a canoe was rapidly gliding, whose motions were watched by the young commander, as he traversed the summit of the parapet, with a step which had long been regulated by the measured music of the "ear-piercing life and spirit-stirring drum." The canoe approached the shore, and as Captain Stuart descended to receive his forest visiter, his eye, accustomed as it had been to the majestic lineaments of the savage chief, could not withhold its tribute of involuntary admiration, as they were now unfolded to him, invested with all the pomp which marked his warlike tribe. He was indeed a noble representative of that interesting, but now degenerate race, once the sole possessors and lordly dwellers of the wilderness, now despoiled and wandering fugitives from the land chartered to them by the direct bounty of heaven. The gallant tuft of feathers which surmounted his swarthy brow, the wampum girdle which belted his waist, his deer-skin robe, ornamented with the stained ivory of the porcupine, corresponded well with the expression of his glittering eye, and the proportions of his martial limbs. From the lofty glance of that eye, he had received the appellation of the Eagle; but the commander of the fort now hailed him by the name of Sakamaw, which simply signifies a chief.

"Brother," said Sakamaw, as he leaned with stately grace on his unquivered bow, "brother, will the pale man dwell in peace and friendship with the tribe of the Shawnees, or shall the eagle spread its wings to the shore that lies nearer the setting sun? The Mengwe have sworn to obey the white father, who lives far beyond the great Salt Lake. The wolf and the turtle have given their allegiance to him, and the serpent and the buffaloe rise up against the pale tribe that are dwelling in our wilderness. Sakamaw, the friend of the white man, comes to warn him of the snare, to know if the Eagle

shall curl his talons beneath his folded plumes, or arm them with the war-bolt that shall find the heart of his enemy."

It was not without the deepest emotion, that Captain Stuart heard this intelligence, that the British army had received such powerful and dreaded allies as these fierce and vindictive tribes. He felt that he occupied a perilous station, and notwithstanding the high trust he had always placed in Sakamaw, who was emphatically called the friend of the white man, as he looked upon the dark brow and giant frame of the Indian warrior, all that he had heard of the treachery and revenge of a sable race, flashed upon his excited imagination. Captain Stuart was brave, but he was in arms against a foreign foe, who had stooped to the baseness of strengthening its power, by an alliance with the children of the wilderness, arming in its cause their wild, undisciplined passions, and adding all the horrors of border warfare to the desolation that hangs over the embattled field. He may be forgiven by the bravest, if for one moment, his generous blood was chilled at the tidings, and suspicion darkened the glance which he turned on the imperturbable features of the Eagle chief.

"Young man," said the savage, pointing towards the river, whose current was there quickened and swollen by the tributary waters of the Kenawha, "as the *Silver Wave* rolls troubled there by the stream that murmurs in its bosom, so does my blood chafe and foam, when its course is ruffled by passion and revenge. Feel my veins—they are calm. Look on my bosom—it is bare. Count the beating of my heart, as it rises and falls, uncovered to the eye of the Master of life. Were Sakamaw about to do a treacherous deed, he would fold his blanket over his breast, that he might hide from the Great Spirit's view the dark workings of his soul."

"Forgive me, noble chief!" exclaimed Stuart, extending his hand with military frankness and warmth, "I do not distrust you; you have come to us unweaponed, and we are armed; you are alone, and we have the strength of a garrison; and more than all, you warn us of treachery and hostility on the part of other tribes, and bring us offers of continued peace from your own. I cannot, I do not, doubt *your* faith, but as the rules of war require some pledge as a safeguard

for honour, you will consent to remain awhile as hostage here, secure of all the respect which brave soldiers can tender to one, whose valour and worth has made the fame of this forest region."

Sakamaw assented to this proposal with proud, unhesitating dignity, and turned to follow the young officer, whose cheek burned through its soldiery brown as he made the proposition, which military discipline required, but which he feared might be deemed an insult by the high-minded savage. Sakamaw cast his eye for a moment on the opposite shore, where it was immediately arrested, and his foot stayed in its ascent, by the objects which there met his gaze. An Indian woman, leading by the hand a young boy of the same tawny hue, approached to the water's side, and by impressive and appealing gestures, seemed to solicit his attention and compassion.

"Why does the doe and the fawn follow the panther's path?" muttered he to himself, "why do they come where the dart of the hunter may pierce them, and leave the shelter of their own green shady bowers?"

He hesitated, as if resolving some doubts in his own mind, then springing into the canoe that lay beneath the bank on which he stood, he pushed it rapidly over the waters to the spot where they awaited him. Whether the dark shadow of future events cast its prophetic gloom before him, softening his heart for the reception of conjugal and parental love, I know not, but there was something mysteriously tender in the manner in which he departed, from the coldness and reserve peculiar to his race, and embracing his wife and son, placed them in the light bark he had just quitted, and introduced them into the presence of Stuart, who had witnessed with surprised sensibility the unwonted scene. The sensations which then moved and interested him, have been since embodied in lines, whose truth the poet most eloquently felt:

"Think not the heart in desert bred,
To passion's softer touch is dead—
Or that the shadowy skin contains
No bright or animated veins—
Where, though no blush its course betrays,
The blood in all its wildness plays."

"Sakamaw," said he, "you have decided well. Bring them to my cabin, and see how warm and true a welcome a soldier's wife can offer. The walls are rough, but they who share the warrior's and the hunter's lot, must not look for downy beds or dainty fare."

It was a novel and interesting scene, when the wife and son of the Indian chief were presented to the youthful bride of Stuart, who, with generous, uncalculating ardour, had bound herself to a soldier's destiny, and followed him to a camp, where she was exposed to all the privations and dangers of a remote and isolated station. As she proffered her frank, yet bashful welcome, she could not withdraw her pleased and wondering gaze from the dark, but beautiful features of the savage; clothed in the peculiar costume of her people, the symmetry of her figure, and the grace of her movements, gave a singular charm to the wild and gaudy attire. The refined eye of Augusta Stuart shrunk intuitively, for a moment, from the naked arms and uncovered neck of the Indian; but there was such an expression of redeeming modesty in her countenance, and her straight, glossy hair, falling in shining folds over her bosom, formed so rich a veil, the transient disgust was lost in undisguised admiration at the beauties of a form which a sculptor might have selected as a model for his art. The dark-haired daughter of the forest, to whose untutored sight the soldier's bride appeared fair and celestial as the inhabitant of a brighter sphere, returned her scrutinizing gaze with one of delighted awe. Her fair locks, which art had formed into waving curls on her brow, her snowy complexion and eyes of heavenly blue, beamed upon her with such transcendent loveliness, her feelings were constrained to utter themselves in words as she had learned from her husband the language of the whites.

"Thou art fairer than the sun, when he shines upon the *Silver Wave*," exclaimed Lehellah, such being the name of the beautiful savage, "I have seen the moon in her brightness, the flowers in their bloom, but neither the moon when she walks over the hills of night, nor the flowers when they open their leaves to the south wind, are so fair and lovely as thou, daughter of the land of snow."

The fair cheek of Augusta mantled with carnation, as the low,

sweet voice of Lehellia breathed forth this spontaneous tribute to her surpassing beauty. Accustomed to restrain the expression of her own feelings, she dared not avow the admiration which had, however, passed from her heart into her eyes, but she knew that praise to a child was most acceptable to a mother's ear, and passing her white hand over the jetty locks of the Indian boy, she directed the attention of her husband to the deep hazel of his sparkling eye, and the symmetrical outlines of a figure which bore a marked similitude to the chiseled representations of the infant Apollo. The young Adario, however, seemed not to appreciate the favours of his lovely hostess, and shrinking from her caressing hand, accompanied his father, who was conducted by Captain Stuart to the place where he was to make his temporary abode. The romance, which gave a kind of exciting charm to the character of Augusta, had now found a legitimate object for its enthusiasm and warmth. By *romance*, I do not mean that sickly, morbid sensibility, which turns from the realities of life, with indifference or disgust, yearning after strange and *hair-breadth* events—which looks on cold and unmoved, while *real* misery pines and weeps, and melts into liquid pearl at the image of *fictitious* wo—I mean that elevation of feeling, which lifts one above the weeds of the valley and the dust and soil of earth—that sunny brightness of soul, which gilds the mist and the cloud, while it deepens the glory and bloom of existence—that all-pervading, life-giving, yet self-annihilating principle, which imparts its own light and energy to every thing around and about it, and animating all nature with its warmth and vitality, receives the indiscriminate bounties of heaven, the sunbeam, the gale, the dew and the flower, as ministers of individual joy and delight. Augusta had already begun to weave a fair vision for the future, in which the gentle Lehellia was her pupil as well as her companion, learning *from* her the elegancies and refinements of civilized life, and imparting *to* her, something of her own wild and graceful originality. She witnessed with delight the artless expression of wonder the simple decorations of her rude apartment elicited from her untaught lips, for though in the bosom of the wilderness, and dwelling in a cabin constructed of the roughest

materials, the hand of feminine taste had left its embellishing traces, wherever it had touched. Wild, autumnal flowers mingled their bloom and fragrance over the rustic window-frame; sketches of forest scenery adorned the unplastered walls, and a guitar lying on the table, showed that the fair mistress of this humble mansion had been accustomed to a more luxurious home, and more polished scenes. I cannot but linger for a moment here, for to me it is enchanted ground—a beautiful and accomplished woman, isolated from all the allurements of the world, far from the incense of adulation, and the seductions of pleasure, shedding the light of her loveliness on the bosom of wedded love, and offering the fresh and stainless blossoms of her affections on that shrine, which, next to the altar of God, is holiest in her eyes. But I must turn to a darker spot, one which has left an ineffable stain in the annals of our domestic history, but which is associated with so many interesting events, I would fain rescue it from oblivion.

The next morning the garrison was a scene of confusion and horror. A party of soldiers had been absent during the evening on a hunting expedition, being a favourite recreation in the bright moonlight nights. When the morning drum rolled its warning thunder, and the hunters came not as wont to perform their military duties, a general feeling of surprise and alarm pervaded the fort. Gilmore, the next officer in rank to Stuart, had a very young brother in this expedition, and filled with fraternal anxiety, he collected another party, and endeavoured to follow the steps of the fugitives. After hours of fruitless search, they discovered a fatal signal, which guided their path, blood staining the herbage on which they trod, and plunging deeper into the forest, they found the murdered bodies of the victims, all bearing recent traces of the deadly scalping-knife. The soldiers gazed on the mangled and disfigured remains of their late gallant comrades with consternation and dismay, when Gilmore, rousing from their stunning influence, rushed forward, and raising the body of his youthful brother in his arms, defaced and bleeding as it was, he swore a terrible oath, that for every drop of blood that had been spilled, heaven should give him vengeance. The other

soldiers, who had neither brother nor kindred among the ghastly slain, shrunk with instinctive loathing from their gory clay, but breathing imprecations against the savage murderers, they followed the steps of Gilmore, who, weighed as he was by his lifeless burden, with rapid and unfaltering course approached the fort.

"Behold!" cried he to Stuart, who recoiled in sudden horror at the spectacle thus offered to his view, "behold!" and his voice was fearful in its deep and smothered tones, "had he been a man—but a boy, committed to my charge with the prayers and tears of a doating father—the Benjamin of his old age—oh! by the shed blood of innocence and youth—by the white locks of age, I swear—to avenge his death on the whole of that vindictive race, who thus dare to deface the image of their Maker—my poor, poor brother!"—and the rough soldier, overcome by the agony of his grief, deposited the mangled body in the ground, and throwing himself prostrate by its side, "lifted up his voice and wept aloud." The manly heart of Stuart was deeply affected by this awful catastrophe, and the violent emotion it had excited in one of the most intrepid of their band. That the treacherous deed had been committed by one of those tribes, of whose hostility Sakamaw had warned him, he could not doubt; and he looked forward with dark forebodings to the stormy warfare that must ensue such bold and daring outrage. He turned towards Augusta, who, pale with terror, stood with her Indian friend, somewhat aloof from the dark-browed group that surrounded the mourner and the mourned, and the thought, that even the arm of love, "stronger than death," might not be able to shield *her* from the ravages of such an enemy, froze for a moment the very life-blood in his veins. Sakamaw was no unmoved spectator of the scene we have described; but whatever were his internal emotions, his features remained cold and calm as the chiseled bronze they resembled. He saw many a fierce and lowering glance directed towards him, but like lightning on the same impassive surface, neither kindling nor impressing, they played around the stately form of the eagle chief.

"White warrior," said he, advancing nearer to Stuart, in the midst of the excited soldiers, "the Serpent has coiled himself in the brake,

to sting at the midnight hour. The Wolf has lurked in ambush, and his fangs are dripping with the blood of the young. But the Eagle soars in the noontide beam, and hurls the thunderbolt in the face of his foe. His children are guiltless of the innocent blood."

While Sakamaw was speaking, there was a sullen murmur of discontent among the soldiers—the low growl that harbingers the tempest's wrath. Gilmore too rose from his recumbent position, and stood with clenched hands, shut teeth, ashy lips, and eyes that burned red and malignant through tears that the heat of revenge were now drying ere they fell. There is nothing so exasperating to one inflamed by hot and contending passions, as the sight of stoic indifference or perfect self-control. As the waters chafe and foam against the moveless cliff, that stands in "*unblenched majesty*," in the midst of the raving element; the tide of human passion rages most violently when most calmly opposed.

"Dog of an Indian!" muttered Gilmore, "painted hypocrite! fiend of subtlety and guile! How dare you come hither with your vain-boasting words, honey on your lips, and gall and bitterness in your heart? By the all-beholding heavens! you shall answer for every drop of blood spilled last night, by your own hand, or by the hands of your hellish tribe!"

"Gilmore, Gilmore!" exclaimed Stuart, in a tone of deep command, "you are worse than mad. Respect the laws of military honour, nor dare to insult one, who has voluntarily surrendered himself as a hostage for his tribe. This chief is under my protection, under the guard and protection of every noble and honourable heart. Look upon him, he is unharmed, yet with generous trust and confidence he has entered the white man's camp, to warn him of the very outrages over which we now mourn. Gilmore, be a man, be a soldier, and command our sympathy—not our indignation."

The voice of the young commander, which had been wont to suppress every expression of mutiny or discontent, by its slightest tones, now made an appeal as vain as it was just. "Down with the red dog! down with him, Gilmore!" burst forth and echoed on every side. Again did Stuart raise his commanding voice, till it rose high

and clear as the sound of the bugle's blast. He was answered by the same rebellious and daring shouts. Lehella, who had looked on in wild, undefinable alarm, now comprehended the full extent of the danger which hung over the devoted Sakamaw, and rushing through the lawless band, she wreathed her slender arms around his majestic frame in the unavailing hope of shielding him from their rage.

"Fly, Sakamaw, fly!" she exclaimed, "the deer is not swifter than the foot of the hunter. Fly with Adario, from the home of the pale man. There is death in his gleaming eye."

"Sakamaw will never fly from the face of his foe. The Great Spirit is looking down upon my heart, and he sees that it is white of the blood of the brave." As the noble savage uttered these words, he looked up into the deep-blue heavens, and drew back the deer-skin robe from his breast, as if inviting the scrutiny of the All-seeing to the recesses of his naked heart. It would seem that,

"If Heaven had not some hand
In this dark deed,"

such magnanimous sentiments would have arrested the course of their revenge, but they were blind, and deaf, and infuriated. Gilmore felt in his bosom for the pistol which he carried for his own safe-guard. Augusta saw the motion, which was unperceived by Stuart, who was endeavouring to stem the torrent swelling around him; with an irresistible impulse she pressed forward, and seized his arm at the very moment it was extended towards his victim. The motion, and the report of the pistol were simultaneous. The angel of mercy was too late—the death-shot pierced the bosom of Sakamaw, and the faithful breast that had vainly interposed itself between him and the impending blow. They fell—the forest oak and the caressing vine—blasted by the avenging stroke, and the pause that succeeds the thunder's crash is not more awful than that which followed the deadly deed.

"Great God!" exclaimed Stuart, "what have you done? All the rivers of the west cannot wash out this foul stain." With feelings of bitter agony he knelt by the side of the dying chieftain and his martyred wife.

"Sakamaw," he cried, "friend, brother of the white man, speak, if you have breath to utter, and say you believe me guiltless of this crime—would that I had died ere I had beheld this hour."

The expiring Indian opened, for the last time, that eye which had been to his tribe a lamp in peace, and a torch in war, but the eagle glance was quenched in the mists of death. Twice he endeavoured to speak, but the word "*Adario*," was all that was articulate.

"Yes, Sakamaw," he cried, "I will be a father to thy boy, through life; in death I will cherish him."

Who can fathom the depth, the strength of a mother's love? Lehella, who had lain apparently lifeless on the bosom of Sakamaw, while Augusta, with bloodless cheeks and lips, hung weeping o'er her, seemed to arouse from the lethargy of death, at the name of her son. She raised her cold cheek from its bloody pillow, and joined together her hands, already damp with the dews of dissolution, exclaimed in a voice unutterably solemn, while she lifted her dim and wavering glance to heaven—"Oh! thou *Every Where*, protect my son."*

With this sublime adjuration to the Omnipotent Spirit of the universe, her soul made its transit, and Stuart and Augusta were left kneeling on either side of the dead bodies of the martyred Indians.

It is painful to record a deed which must for ever stain the annals of American history; but now while we glow with indignation at the tale of Indian barbarities on the frontiers of the West, let us remember the story of their past wrongs—let us think of the fate of the magnanimous Sakamaw, whose memory,

"In long after years,
Should kindle our blushes and waken our tears."

* * * * *

Years rolled on. The wilderness began to blossom "like the rose," and the *solitary places* to look joyous with life, and bright with

* This impressive prayer was in reality breathed by a dying Indian mother.

promise; while on the fair banks of the Ohio, the inhabited village, the busy town, or the prouder city, rose in beauty and imitative splendour. It was where the *father of ancient waters* flows on in all the opulence of its waves, still deep in the bosom of the wilderness, an isolated cabin reared its head through thick clusters of o'er-shadowing vines and perennial trees. The moon showered down its virgin rays on the woods, the waters, the peaceful cottage, the rustling trees—and lingered in brightness round two solitary figures reclining on the bank, watching the course of the swelling stream. Its pallid beams revealed the features of a man, who had passed life's vernal season, and was verging towards the autumnal gray; but though the lines of deep thought or sorrow were distinctly marked on his pale brow, there was an air of military dignity and command investing in his figure, which showed at once that his youth had been passed in the tented field. The other figure was that of a young man, in all the vigour of earliest manhood, in the simple dress of a forester, with the swarthy cheek, glittering eye, and jet-black locks of the Indian race. As we do not aim at mystery in the development of this simple story, we will gather up in a few words the events of years, in whose silent flight the young and gallant Stuart had become the subdued and pensive moralist, who sat gazing on the brink of the stream; and Adario, the orphan boy of the murdered Sakamaw, the manly youth, whose ardent, yet *civilized* glance, reflected the gleams that shone fitfully round them. The young, the beautiful Augusta, was now the dweller of "the dark and narrow house," and the widowed husband, disgusted with the world, retired still deeper into the shades of the West, with the child of his adoption, and one sweet inheritor of her mother's charms, who had been baptized by the soft name of Lehellah, in memory of the mother of Adario. The only daughter, accompanied by a maternal friend, had for the first time visited the scenes of her parent's nativity, and it was to watch the boat which was to bring back the rose of the wilderness to the solitary bower, that the father and Indian youth, night after night, lingered on the banks, catching the faintest sound which anticipation might convert into the ripple caused by the dipping oar.

Restless and stormy, unuttered feelings, agitated the breast of Adario. Bred under the same roof, educated by the same enlightened and gifted mind, these children of the forest grew up together entwined in heart and soul, like two plants, whose roots are wreathed, and whose leaves and tendrils interlace each other in indissoluble wedlock. The son of Sakamaw, the daughter of Augusta—the dark and the fair—the eagle and the dove; it seemed to the sad and imaginative Stuart, that the spirit of the injured Sakamaw would rejoice in the land of ghosts, at the bond that should unite these descendants of their sundered tribes. Adario, tortured by jealousy and fear, awaited the return of Lehellah, with all the fiery impatience peculiar to the dark nation from which he derived his existence, though in *her* presence he was gentle and mild as the gentlest of his sex, and all the harsher traits of the aboriginal character were softened and subdued, retaining only that dignity and elevation we can never deny is their own legitimate dower.

Though they had usually retired before the midnight hour, they remained this night longer, by a kind of mysterious sympathy and indefinable apprehension. Clouds gathered over the calm and silvered heavens, and gradually deepening in darkness, wrapt the woods and waters in their solemn shadows. A low, sullen growl, broke at intervals on the silence of the night, and they looked up anxiously for the flash which was to be the herald of another peal of the yet distant thunder. All was gloom above, and around; still the same sullen, murmuring sound, came more distinctly on the air, which was now damp with the labouring storm. At last, a light gleamed on the waters—bright, but still remote—and sent a long stream of radiance down the channel of the river, far as the spot where they were seated, gazing in a kind of fascination on the unwonted splendour. Louder and louder were those sullen murmurs, and deeper and brighter grew the ominous and lighting-like flashes that illumined the darkness of the wilderness. Onward it came, as if containing the principle of vitality in the fiery element that spread broader and fiercer around it—howling forth as it came, those unearthly sounds, which to the ear of an untutored savage,

would have seemed the angry thunders of the Manitou. Standing on the very brink of the river, with breathless suspense, they watched the approach of the blazing phantom, when the father, whose perceptions became clearer as it neared, and who had heard of those wondrous fabrics, one of those noblest inventions of human genius, that, propelled by vapour, triumph in speed over the majestic ship or the lighter barque, believed he now, for the first time, beheld one of these wonders of the waves, enveloped in a glory which was only the herald of its destruction. The thought of his daughter, that she might be exposed to the awful fate, wrapped in those volumed flames, came over him like a death-blast. At this moment wild shrieks and tumultuous cries were heard confusedly mingling with the hoarse thunders and plunging sound of the waters—figures became visible through the sheets of flame, wreathed with blackening smoke, that reflected now their lurid brightness on the whole face of the sky. Suddenly a form burst through the blazing curtain, like an angel of light mid the regions of despair—it was but a glimpse of loveliness; but that one glimpse discovered the fair, far-waving locks, the snow-white brow, and beauteous outlines of the daughter of Stuart. They saw her stretch forth her virgin arms to the pitiless heavens—then plunge through one devouring element into the cold embraces of another still as deadly. With one long, loud shriek of agony—the father and lover sprang from the shelving bank, and disappeared in the ignited waves!

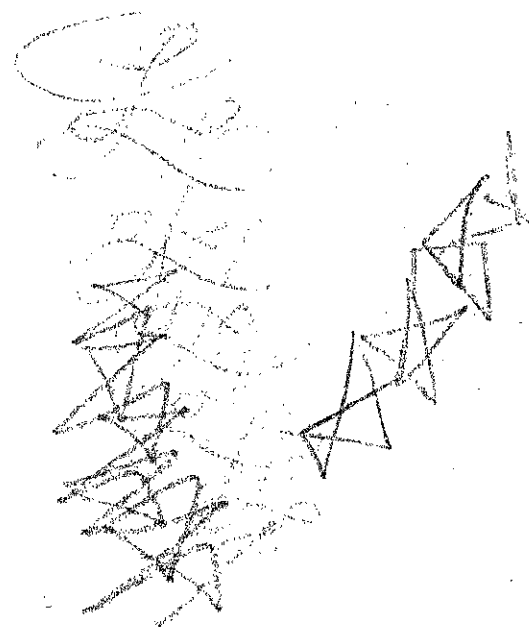
The morning sun shone bright and clear on the blackened wreck of the *Evening Star*, the name of the devoted boat, and the waters flowed on calmly and majestically, as if they never echoed to the shrieks of the dying, or closed over the relics of human tenderness and love. The solitary cottage was still the abode of life, and youth, and hope. Adario and Lehella, redeemed from a fiery or a watery grave, were once more embosomed in its peaceful shades; but they were orphans. The river of the West was now the sepulchre of the gallant soldier. Lehella wept for her father—but she wept on the bosom of her lover; and she felt she was not alone.

It was a mysterious destiny that thus united the offspring of two hostile nations in the loneliness of nature, the sacredness of love, and the holiness of religion—for Adario had learnt to worship the Christian's God. The memory of Sakamaw, the friend of the white man, is still hallowed in the traditions of the West; but many a traveller passes by the cottage of the wilderness, and gazes on its shaded image in the current that bears him along, unconscious that the son of the eagle chief, and the daughter of his brave defender, dwell within its secluded walls.

 PROLOGUE TO DE LARA.

'ERE yet the curtain lifts its veiling fold,
 Now o'er the scenes of tragic art unroll'd,
 The eye of hope this brilliant ring surveys,
 And draws prophetic radiance from the gaze,
 The third sad sister of the seraph choir,
 Who wake the music of the deep-toned lyre,
 This night, presiding genius of the stage,
 Has searched the hoarded treasures of an age.
 Rich in the dearest memories of earth—
 In chivalry, devotion, valour, worth—
 She comes, with thorns upon her pallid brow,
 Though thorns and sorrow lurk beneath their glow.
 The passions follow darkly in her train,
 Wild as the billows of the storm-swept main;
 But reason, nature vindicate their cause,
 And conscience writhes o'er its insulted laws.
 Who has not felt, when reeling o'er the verge
 Of crime to which temptation madly urge,
 An antepast of that undying sting—
 That quenchless fire, prepared for guilt's dread king;
 And shrunk, as if the Lord's avenging wrath
 Had placed upbraiding phantoms in their path?

To paint these agonies, to show the wreck
 Of Mind's proud sovereignty when on the neck
 Of unthroned reason Passion victor stands,
 While pale Remorse in stealth its victim brands!
 This is the empire of the heaven-born maid—
 May no polluting steps her realms invade.
 Never may that celestial fire, which erst
 From Pindus' mount in flames of glory burst,
 Descend to gild that scene where vice maintains
 Its sorcery o'er the slave within its chains—
 Where genius forms unholy league with fame,
 And makes itself immortal by its *shame*.
 Ye sons of Erudition! classic band!
 Rulers of taste! in this unshackled land—
 All that ye can, in candour, truth accord,
 To this new candidate of fame award.
 Man's own justice may relax its frown,
 When woman aims to win the laurel crown.
 Till now, the smiles of partial friends have warm'd
 The germs of fancy, their fond love disarm'd
 Relenting criticism—veil'd in mist
 Each venial error. In the crowded list
 Of Bards, adventurous champion now she waits,
 As stood the fabled Sylph at Eden's gates,
 Trembling to know if hers were that bright gift
 Of power the everlasting bars to lift.
 Daughters of loveliness! we turn to you—
 Stars of the arch, fair bending on the view;
 'Tis yours to kindle that propitious beam
 Whose visioned radiance gilds the poet's dream.
 To you a sister, in the bard, appeals
 For all that woman most devoutly feels,
 Most dearly prizes—pure spontaneous praise.
 Oh! when some unseen hand these folds shall raise
 May some kind genius o'er the walls preside,
 And more than welcome great *De Lara's bride*.



MARY HAWTHORNE.



MARY HAWTHORNE, why don't you come into the drawing-room? There is not a *very* large company, so you need not be frightened away to-night."

"Perhaps not; but I had rather pass the evening in your father's chamber. He will be alone, and will welcome me, I know; and in the drawing-room, I should be a mere cipher to others, while I would myself suffer the tortures which none but bashful people can know."

"Well, if you persist in your old-fashioned ways, I suppose I must let you follow them: I acknowledge there is nothing particularly attractive as yet in the assembly, so let us walk awhile on this green plat, and make our observations, through these lighted windows, on the figures so gaily dressed."

The speaker, a fashionable-looking, gaily dressed young man, led his companion along, as he spoke, to the spot indicated; and as

they slowly promenaded in the shade, he criticized with a practised eye the dress, air, and attitudes of the group within, illuminated as it was by the shower of silver light that fell from the brilliant chandeliers. There could not be a greater contrast in appearance, than between the young man and his companion. Her apparel was remarkable in such a scene, from its extreme simplicity; and there was no glow of beauty on her face, or striking graces of person, to render the absence of all adventitious ornament forgotten by the beholder. She was not beautiful; she was not handsome; not even what the world calls pretty, and yet she is the heroine of my story—and Henry Graham, the hero, was called the handsomest man in his mother's drawing-room, when the elite of the city were gathered there, as they were often wont to be.

"Had you not better go in?" said Mary, as she observed the stately figure of Mrs. Graham pass and repass the windows, pausing to say a few words to this guest, bowing graciously to that, smiling benignantly on one, offering a fan to another, the embodied spirit of politeness, ever moving, yet ever seeming exactly in the right spot.

"Not yet, stay awhile longer—there is no one there I care any thing about; and you know I never trouble myself to entertain those who are indifferent to me. It is incredible to me how my mother, (Heaven forgive her!) can condescend to put on that eternal smile, and to appear so delighted with people whom in heart she despises, laughs at, or dislikes. I must say, however, her smiles become her very much; she is a noble-looking woman, and understands the art of dressing better than any lady I know—I wish you would take lessons of her, Mary."

"When I am as handsome as your mother, I will certainly do it. Let excessive attention to dress be the peculiar privilege of beauty: I claim the less appropriated one of unadorned homeliness."

"You do injustice to yourself—you look very well, Mary, vastly better than a hundred prettier girls. If you would summon a little more confidence, and assume an air, a manner—that something, whose fascination we feel, yet cannot describe: dress with a little

more taste and fashion, you would find that nature has not been such a niggard after all. You would be astonished yourself at the metamorphosis."

"It must have been far easier to transform Daphne into a laurel-tree, and Narcissus into a flower, than an awkward girl, like me, into a modern fine lady. Oh, Henry!" she continued, in a tone of deep feeling, "if you knew what I suffer when I am in the midst of a scene like the one reflected before us, you would never ask me to enter upon it. When I see so many fair forms, and so many admiring eyes bent upon them, I cannot but make comparisons humbling to myself; and sometimes I feel as if I would barter an empire, if I had it, for *such* claims to honour: ay, 'tis true, I grow envious; and then I hate myself."

"Strange girl! With such a soul ——" he was going on, probably to exalt the perfections of the soul in comparison with those of the body, when his attention became suddenly and completely distracted; his eye rested on a lady, who, at that moment entered the drawing-room, and hastily saying, "I believe it is time I should be there," Mary found herself alone beneath the mulberry tree, under which they had just been standing. The most laboured eloquence could not have convinced her more of the justice of her own reflections with regard to personal beauty, than this simple act. The lady whom Henry so eagerly sought was beautiful—splendidly, surpassingly beautiful: not from mere regularity of feature and brilliancy of complexion, but there was an air of regality about her, a queenly grace, such as Mary's imagination had invested her lovely namesake of the house of Stuart with. She was dressed magnificently; but the jewelry of her eyes transcended the gems that glittered on her neck and arms; and even the diamond star, that shone midst the darkness of her hair, flashed not more brightly than the glances she scattered like sun-rays around her. Wherever she moved there was a buzz, a commotion, a pressing forward of the gentlemen—a subsiding motion among the ladies. But who could marvel? She moved with such grace! Mary caught herself repeating, before she was aware of the recollection,

"The cygnet nobly walks the water—
So moves on earth Circassia's daughter."

Wherever the fair stranger turned, Henry Graham followed her, with an animation of countenance and earnestness of manner, strikingly contrasted with the languor and indifference he generally manifested, when he felt no motive to call into exercise those powers of pleasing with which he was eminently endowed. Mary sighed; she was vexed with herself for sighing—she feared she was growing very envious.

"I would rather die," said she to herself, "than give myself up to the dominion of such a hateful passion. Conscious as I am of having that within which should lift me above such groveling thoughts—a heart glowing with the love of all that's excellent and fair—a soul capable of bearing me to the very gates of the empyrean——"

She remembered then her office as nurse in the chamber of the invalid master of the gay mansion, and quitting her post of observation, she passed the illuminated hall, and softly unclosed the door of an apartment, where she knew her light footstep was always welcomed with joy.

"Mary, my dear, is it you?" asked a mild voice as she entered. She answered by smoothing the pillow on which the invalid leaned in his easy chair, and placing his footstool in a more comfortable position. What a change did this silent chamber present from the hall into which she had just been gazing! The dim lamps that burned upon the table, the close-drawn curtains shutting out the soft breath of evening, the white locks and wan face that reclined upon the pillow—called up a very different train of reflections from the dazzling lights, the crimson folds drawn back by gilded shafts, the proud mein and flushed cheek of Mrs. Graham, or the gaiety and splendour of her guests. She thought of her mother's sick room and dying hour, her own deserted home, and, drawing a low chair near Mr. Graham, she sat down in silence, for her heart was too full for speech.

And who is Mary Hawthorne? what relation does she bear to the

family of the Grahams? and where did she acquire those rustic, retiring habits, so uncongenial with her present situation, may be questions naturally asked and easily answered.

Mary's mother was cousin to Mrs. Graham, and in early youth had been her play-fellow, school-mate, and most familiar friend. An imprudent marriage, whose result was a blighting of the heart, poverty, and seclusion from the world, removed her entirely from Mrs. Graham's prosperous and brilliant sphere. Left in widowhood with scarcely the means of support, yet too proud to ask assistance from the early friends, whose neglect and alienation she bitterly felt, she continued to struggle with her destiny, and to bear up herself and her young daughter above the cold waters of despair that seemed fast closing around her, till, finding herself sick and dying, she sent a messenger to the once affectionate friend of her youth, and entreated her with all the eloquence of a dying mother's prayer, to receive and cherish her desolate child.

Mrs. Graham's good feelings were not so utterly worn out in the pursuit of the world's pleasures, as to be unaffected by a petition like this. She promised all that was asked; and Mrs. Hawthorne's last sigh was mingled with a throb of deep thanksgiving. Mary, the humble, disciplined child of adversity and sorrow, became a dependent on the bounty of one, who, from her cradle, had been dandled in the lap of smiling prosperity, and knew adversity and sorrow only by name. Accustomed to the unbounded indulgence of her own passions, Mrs. Graham never reflected, that others might have passions and feelings too. Consideration made no part of her character. When she granted Mrs. Hawthorne's petition, she had flattered herself that her orphan protegee would give her additional eclat in society; she had delineated her in her own imagination, with the classic outline of her mother's beautiful face—a fair, drooping lily, gemmed with the dew of sorrow, that would contrast sweetly with the roses of beauty she gathered into her drawing-room. Her disappointment at seeing Mary was extreme, and she had not the delicacy or kindness to conceal it. The weeds of mourning and the pallor of deep grief, had a most unfavourable effect on Mary's

naturally pale complexion and downcast eyes: while awed by the unwonted splendour that surrounded her, she exhibited an embarrassment of manner, which, to the self-possessed and graceful Mrs. Graham, had the character of incurable awkwardness.

"What a pity she's not prettier," said she to a female friend, in a low voice, but which Mary, accustomed to watch for the feeble accents of her mother, distinctly heard; "I cannot conceive how it happens; her mother was one of the most beautiful women I ever saw; I am shockingly disappointed; she seems excessively awkward, too, poor thing."

Cold and heavy as lead did each unfeeling word sink in poor Mary's wo-worn heart. Convicted of the atrocious crime of not being handsome, she had an intuitive perception, that the qualities of the head and heart, which, amidst all the ills of life, her mother had constantly taught her to cultivate, would be considered as of little value in the estimation of Mrs. Graham. All the warm feelings of gratitude and love, which she was ready to pour out at the feet of her benefactress, were congealed at the fountain. She sickened in the midst of profusion, and would gladly have laid herself in her mother's grave and died, if she could have escaped the chagrin and isolation of her present lot. To have nobody to love her, nobody to love in return, it was a living death, a frozen life; she could not endure it. At last she found an object on whom she could lavish her sympathy, her affections, and her cares. She had been for some time a member of the household before she knew there was such a being in the world as Mr. Graham. There was such a constant bustle about the house, such an ebbing and flowing of the tide of fashionable life, she was perfectly bewildered, her faculties of seeing and hearing seemed to have become dim and weakened; she felt a mere speck herself, a mote in the sunbeam, whose oppressive glare withered up her young heart.

One evening, she never forgot it, when sitting sad and unnoticed in a corner of the room, Henry Graham, who, though the flattered votary of fashion, was gifted by nature with warm and generous feelings, took compassion on the forlornness of her situation, and asked

her to walk in the garden and help him to gather some flowers for his father. His father! it was the first time she had heard his name. She then learned from him, that Mr. Graham had been long confined to his room, by a chronic disease, which, though not attended with any immediate danger, was a source of frequent suffering, and excluded him from all the active pleasures of existence.

"Oh, let me go to him," exclaimed Mary, "let me stay with him and nurse him; I am too dull, too sad, to be where I am; will you not take me to him?"

Henry was moved by the earnestness of her manner; it was the first time he had heard distinctly the sound of her voice, or seen the colour of her eyes; for, dismayed by the remarks of Mrs. Graham on her personal appearance, she had remained perfectly silent from that moment in company, unless directly addressed, with drooping lids, that too often covered tears, that would but dared not fall. She now spoke with fervour, and her voice, though low, had an uncommon sweetness of tone; and her mild, sad gray eye lighted up with an expression which not only indicated exalted feeling, but intellectual power. Henry, though he had made his best endeavours to bring down his mind to the level of coxcombry, and to form himself after the most admired models of fashion, had not been quite able to do it. The celestial spark would occasionally flash out. He had looked upon Mary as a kind of automaton, a poor girl whom it was his mother's business to feed and clothe, and, as such, entitled to kindness on his part. He now saw that she was a feeling, thinking being, and Mary understood, with surprise and delight, she might look for sympathy where she had least expected it. He walked with her through the garden, pointing out to her observation what he thought most worthy of admiration, conducted her kindly to his father's chamber, was very sorry he had not time to remain himself, and left her, happier than she had been since she was an orphan.

She was surprised when she saw an aged man, with snowy hair, reclining on a couch, by the side of which Henry had seated her. Mrs. Graham, in full dress, might have passed for the elder sister of her son, and could not have numbered half the years of her husband.

"This must be Henry's grandsire," thought she, "and yet he called him father." She was mistaken—it was Mr. Graham, the neglected husband of his younger, gayer wife, breathing out his unvalued existence, uncheered by those soothing attentions, those offices of love, which can transform the couch of sickness into a bed of roses. Yet many a poor cabin dweller doubtless envied him his damask canopy, downy pillows, and numerous attendants, nor dreamed that the inmate of such an apartment could sigh from the consciousness of neglect. He must have been a very exacting man, for Mrs. Graham came into the room almost every day to inquire after his health, which was very kind, as he had been sick so long, it would have been natural not to think of him at all; and Henry, who certainly loved his father, often devoted an hour at a time to read to him or converse with him. He would gladly have done more to prove his filial devotion, but then as he himself had told Mary, he had so little time. He was obliged to attend his mother to so many parties, to see so much company at home, to go to the theatre and the ballroom so often, he was so much admired and caressed, and he was so unaffectedly and constitutionally indolent, it was surprising how he was able to accomplish so much. From the hour Mary first stood by his side, and offered, with a trembling hand, the flowers she had gathered in the evening, whose commencement we have just described, during the lapse of a year, she had been to him a ministering spirit of kindness and love. She became as light to his eyes and fragrance to his senses. The face which was disregarded or criticized by the side of the heartless belle, was welcomed by him as an angel visiter. She came to him arrayed in the beauty of gentle words and deeds, and his chilled bosom melted with tenderness, and warmed towards her with more than a father's love. Nor did she confine herself to mere physical attentions. She administered to his mind the food it loved, read to him hour after hour, till lulled by her voice, he slumbered quietly as a soothed infant. Mary grew happy in the consciousness of being loved, of being necessary to the happiness of another. She had another source of happiness in the society of Henry, who found a relief from ennui in her natural and unpretending conversation,

exalted, as it oftentimes was, by beauty of imagination and vigour of thought. When weary of playing the part of a fine gentleman, weary of shining and being shone upon, or of lounging on a sofa, or sauntering through the hall, he thought of Mary, and found himself refreshed and invigorated in her presence. The best, the kindest feelings of his nature were called into exercise by this companionship, for Mary never touched a chord of the human heart that did not answer in sweet music, provided that heart were rightly tuned. He learned to look upon her with the kindness and consideration of a brother, and sought to draw her more into society, but here his efforts were generally unavailing.

"Mary, my child, do not stay with me to night," said Mr. Graham, laying his hand on her head, as she drew a low seat close to him, and leaned on the elbow of his chair—"you make yourself too much of a nun; I am a selfish old man I know, but I cannot bear to see you deprive yourself of every gratification at your age."

"I find my chief pleasure here; I cannot even claim the merit of making a sacrifice, for if I did not remain with you, I should most probably retire to my own room."

"I have a great deal to say to you, Mary, but I cannot do it to-night; I feel too languid for the effort, another time when I can rally a little more strength remember what I have said: I must not defer it too long, for my life is gliding away, grain after grain; a few more turnings of the glass and it will all be over. Does it make you weep, child, to hear me speak thus? well, take down that book and read me to sleep, for my eyes are heavy, and it is better that I should not talk now."

Mary took the book, and began to read in those low, gentle tones, so soothing to a sick man's ear. It was not long before his deepened breathing convinced her that her voice was no longer heard. She paused awhile, and turning over the pages, tried to continue reading to herself, but though it was an author she loved, she could not fasten her attention upon a single paragraph. Her eyes ran over the lines, and mechanically took in the words, but her thoughts wandered after the dazzling stranger. Her curiosity was excited—she wondered at

its own intensity. She longed for the morning, that she might ask Henry her name and residence. She laid down her book, and sat in the window, within the curtain, where she could see and hear something of the movements in the hall; for Mr. Graham's room was in a wing of the building, extending back from the main body of the house. The sash was a little raised, and she could distinctly hear the notes of the piano, with the accompaniment of a female voice of rare and exquisite melody. "That must be the beautiful stranger," and she was right in her conclusion. It was Miss Devereux, the star of the evening, the acknowledged beauty of a sister city, a nightingale in song, a goddess in the dance, a perfect mirror of the graces. Female rivalry was put aside in her presence, for she distanced all competition. It was no disgrace to yield the palm to one so pre-eminent; it became a matter of policy to praise and admire her, and for once, the ladies vied with the other sex in their flatteries and attentions. She had the peculiar power of conversing with half a dozen gentlemen at the same time, and to make each believe that they were particularly distinguished. She would keep a dozen more employed for her at the same time, and each considered himself particularly honoured. No empress was more despotic in her sway, yet she threw her chains around her vassals so gracefully, that they gloried in their bondage. If Mary was so anxious to hear her name, she had but to listen at the door of the drawing-room, where it resounded from corner to corner the whole evening. It was "Miss Devereux's glove," "Miss Devereux's fan," "Miss Devereux's this," and "Miss Devereux's that," nothing in the world but Miss Devereux. It was strange how one woman could turn so many people's heads in one night, but she was the *veni, vidi, vici* lady. It would be difficult to count the tongues employed the next morning in discussing the merits of her person, voice, dress, and manners. It is strange indeed, if no flaw were discovered in the jewel, upon an inspection so close; perhaps the microscopic eye of envy might have done so; but Henry Graham made no such discovery. Mary found him as ready to tell her all he knew respecting her, as she was eager to ask. He described her as

not only the most beautiful being he ever beheld, but the most fascinating; he could find no language sufficiently strong to do justice to her; he was obliged to speak in ejaculatory sentences:—"How superbly she dances," "how divinely she sings," "such eyes," "such a brow," "such a glorious complexion!" It is unnecessary to repeat all the encomiums that were uttered, or all that Mrs. Graham and her son said respecting the evening's party or the morning's entertainment. The former was delighted because it had gone off so brilliantly, and the latter that he had been roused and exalted into interest, and that the demon of ennui was charmed away, for that day at least. And so it was for many days—for weeks. There was a constant succession of parties, rides, excursions of pleasure, and every fashionable pastime for the beautiful stranger. Henry became fascinated and bewitched; he could talk of nothing else, till Mary, whose curiosity was completely satiated, would gladly have changed the theme. She was unwilling to manifest her weariness, lest Henry should mistake it for envy, and she sometimes feared it was so. Gradually, however, he spoke of her less and less, but from his long fits of abstraction, it was evident he thought the more; and Mary, changing her fear, dreaded lest he should suffer himself to be lured by a siren to works that might wreck his peace. She knew but little of Miss Devereux, but she believed her heartless; she could not understand how any one could appreciate the affections of one who accepted with smiles, incense from all. Her fears were soon confirmed by one of those accidents which reveal more of the character in one moment, than is oftentimes done in years.

There was a long walk in Mrs. Graham's garden, shaded on each side by a close hedge, whither Mary was wont to retreat for solitude and exercise. One day, after enduring the martyrdom of a dinner party, which Mrs. Graham had given in honour of Miss Devereux, after feeling the presence of her beauty, till she seemed dazzled by its brilliance, and wishing most fervently that for Henry's sake, so superb a temple might have an indweller worthy of its fair proportions; she welcomed the moment which gave the ladies liberty to retire, and sought her favourite shade. She always chose the least

frequented side of the hedge, and was walking there, absorbed in thought, with her usual stilly step, when she heard voices on the other side, one of which immediately arrested her attention. It was that of Miss Devereux conversing with another young lady, probably a bosom friend.

"You are entirely mistaken," Miss Devereux was saying, "I care nothing about him, only as he administers to the gratification of the present moment; I may prefer him to any of the fools around me just now, because he is the handsomest, and reported to be the richest."

"Poor fellow," exclaimed her companion, "I always thought before you came, he was cased in a suit of mail, impenetrable to ladies' attractions; but indeed, Julia, you are wrong to encourage him so much if you really mean to discard him."

"Discard him! let him give me the opportunity; and be assured he shall—he will. I never suffer a man who has shown his devotion by exclusive attentions alone, trying to earn a right to an acceptance, and to make himself sure of it before he is committed, I never suffer such a man to escape: I lead him on till I bring him to my feet, and then suffer him to get up as he can."

"Supposing I undeceive him and tell him what a deep coquette you are."

"Do it—I defy you to do it! and I would stake my life on his incredulity. The chains are around him, the rivets are fastened, he cannot break them now: would you know one of the great secrets of my power, Maria? They call me handsome: very well—perhaps I am so—but it is this; in giving just enough encouragement to inspire hope, and too little to create confidence."

"Very well; but if you ever mean to marry I cannot conceive why you would not accept him; he is handsome, rich, and fashionable."

"It is true, if I were foolish enough to think of falling in love, it would be a very good opportunity, but I love my independence and liberty too well; a few years hence will do; I would not for the autocrat of the Russias barter the freedom I now enjoy for domestic thralldom."

Mary, compelled to be a listener from her situation, was indignant and amazed. She could not have believed there was so much hollowness and art in the world. She felt as if she had been reading a dark page of the human heart, and in her simplicity and sincerity, looked upon Miss Devereux as little better than a murderess. What! entice a person with smiles and graces, and kind glances, to lay his whole affections at her feet, and then spurn them. Mary shuddered—she was but a novice in the ways of the world—and she shuddered still more when she heard the voice of Henry Graham accosting them, and the same silver tones which had just been pronouncing his doom address him with such seductive softness.

"What, a rose! Mr. Graham, offer me a rose! I thank you; but I dislike roses exceedingly."

"Dislike roses! impossible."

"Very possible; they are so vulgar, so glaring and large; I cannot imagine how it was ever named the queen of flowers."

"Unqueen her then, and suffer me to place the diadem on the one yourself shall call the fairest."

"Excuse me, no queen of flowers for me; they deserve not such honours; they are too fading, too abundant; there is vulgarity in their very profusion; they are a plebeian race, and I must acknowledge I dislike them all."

Henry spoke of a ride proposed for the morrow, and hoped the sky would be as blue and the air as pleasant, it was such a delightful excursion, the prospect was one of the finest in the world."

"Now, Mr. Graham, I sincerely think it one of the most foolish things in nature to go so far for a little amusement. I shall go, and I thank you for starting the idea, but how preposterous to ride so many miles over a dusty road and then climb a steep rugged hill, leaving shreds of muslin and lace on every shrub, just to admire a fine prospect and to have the blessed privilege of being weary."

"If you do not wish to go, Miss Devereux," continued Henry, "the party will be broken up: we sought your pleasure particularly in the proposition, if I am not very much mistaken, yourself suggested the idea."

When the trio had again entered the house, Mary glided along her shaded path, which she could not do before without crossing theirs, and making them conscious of her previous vivacity, rejoicing for once that she was not beautiful, if beauty must be accompanied with such heartless vanity and folly. Her mind was absorbed with one thought, Miss Devereux and the painful disclosure she was compelled to make to Henry Graham, for she deemed it a religious duty to inform him of the arts of which he was destined to be the victim. She found an early opportunity of being alone with him; she knew that they were to meet on the morrow, and she wished he should arm himself in time with the panoply of moral courage, to defy the arts of this insidious beauty.

"Henry," said she, approaching the sofa on which he reclined. She felt a sudden choking in her throat, and paused with the flush of embarrassment rising on her pale cheek.

"Well, what would you, Mary?" making room for her by his side, "what petition is harbingered by that earnest look?"

"None; I have no petition to make, merely simple facts to state, which I deem it my duty however unpleasant."

"Do not hesitate, speak openly, am I not your brother? address me as such."

"I hesitate because I fear to give pain; I fear too to be associated in your mind with painful emotions."

"What is it you have to communicate? your eyes are filled with tears, you breathe with difficulty; is it any thing of Miss Devereux? good heavens! any accident? has the carriage been overturned? is she hurt? is she killed?" and Henry started upon his feet.

"Pray, compose yourself: it is of Miss Devereux I would speak, yet I am not aware of any accident. I have been an unwilling listener to-day to words you ought to hear, as they may, they must affect the happiness of your future life." Gathering courage from Henry's preposterous alarm, Mary faithfully repeated the cold, treacherous dialogue she had overheard. Henry listened without any interruption; she saw the blood mount higher and higher, till it reached his temples; he bit his nether lip most ominously; was he

angry with her or Miss Devereux? she could not tell. At last he began to walk up and down the room with long tragic steps, stopping occasionally and applying his hand to his forehead with a force that made Mary start. She had never witnessed a lover's heroics, and was seriously alarmed. Hardly knowing what she did, she ran to him, and seizing him by the arm, arrested him in his rapid movements.

"Henry, dear Henry! what is the matter? Do not suffer yourself to be moved in this manner, try to forget her, she is not worthy you should give yourself such suffering on her account."

Henry shook her from him as if a viper had clung to him. Staggered by the violence of the motion, she was obliged to lean against the wall for support, and stung to the soul, she covered her face with her hands and burst into tears. He stopped, looked steadily at her and became very pale.

"Mary, beware what you are doing; it is dangerous to trifle with a man's passions when they are roused as mine are. I cannot believe her such a hypocrite, deceit never was enshrined in such a form; were an angel to tell me that she did not love me, I would not believe it."

"You think me then capable of falsehood?"

"I think you have misunderstood and misinterpreted playful and innocent language. You know nothing of the world: what woman of spirit will acknowledge her affection for another, especially to a female friend? I would not wound your feelings, I may have been too hasty, you always act from a sense of right, but Mary, you know but little of love."

Mary's tears were checked, the sense of deep injustice and ingratitude supplied her with dignity to bear her up above her wounded sensibility. Her mild eye lit up with a burning ray, her cheek glowed with living crimson, she seemed transformed; never before had her countenance beamed with such an expression; it imparted power and beauty to her face. Henry caught it, and it had upon him the momentary effect of fascination. Though the tide of exalted feeling soon rolled back, effacing for the time every impression but

one, in after hours of darkness and despondency, the recollection of this flashing out of the heart and soul came to him as the torch, lighting up the gloom of a mine: Mary moved to the door and laid her hand upon the latch.

"My errand is done," said she, "how painful a one it has been, is useless for me to say. Had I known the manner in which it would be received, I might have lingered longer; but it is better as it is, I have done what truth and friendship required, and it is enough. Grateful friendship I ought to say, for when dejected, oppressed, and unappreciated by others, every fountain of joy sealed up, you came with sympathy and kindness on your lips and in your heart, and the living waters once more gladdened the desert of my life. From that hour gratitude to yourself and father have been a strong vital principle within me. Simple, inexperienced girl as I am, I know you better than the world does, and I have the boldness now to utter it: while the flatterers of your fortune deem you the mere indolent devotee of fashion, I have seen a depth of feeling and vigour of intellect that shamed the worldly bondage to which it submitted. That feeling and intellect will yet work out deliverance and triumph; you will hereafter do me justice."

Henry looked after her as she closed the door, as Amarath did upon the genius Syndaria when he had encircled her finger with the magic ring. He felt the power and purity of truth, and his conscience upbraided him for the ungracious manner in which he had met the admonition of his friend. Then again his imagination delineated the goddess form of Miss Devereux, the darkness of "her oriental eye" swam before his gaze: he thought of her houri smile, and convinced himself that she was all that was excellent as well as all that was fair; Mary's fastidious ideas of rectitude had been needlessly alarmed, and had converted a little badinage and evasion into moral turpitude. He attended the riding party the following day; Mrs. Graham was also there in high spirits; Mary remained, as usual, by the couch of Mr. Graham.

The house was almost deserted; the servants, as a reward for the many extra services required of them during such a succession of

parties, were enjoying a holiday. Every room in the usually gay mansion was as still as the sick chamber where Mary kept her unwearied vigils.

"Mary, my dear," said the invalid—in a moment she was bending over him, "place these pillows behind me, and draw back that curtain, so that I may feel the west wind through the slats; I feel better than I have for many days, I can breathe more freely. Do you remember a promised communication you were to hear when I could summon sufficient strength and resolution? I dare not defer it longer; something warns me to finish all I have to do on earth, for I shall soon rest on a pillow where your kind hands, my Mary, can never reach me more. Give me a glass of that cordial and draw your chair still closer, and now let me begin before this glow has left my frame."

Mary had not forgotten what he had once said to her on this subject. Her curiosity had been excited and interested, but now the moment had arrived when it was to be gratified, she shrunk with awe and misgiving from the mysterious communication. She gazed with solemn interest on the aged speaker, whose sunken eyes were turned on her with a look of intense and prophetic meaning.

"Mary, if I had strength to relate to you the history of my life, you would wonder what strong passions had warred in this now wasted frame. I cannot go back to my youth, I will not even revert to my prime of manhood; it was passed before I became a married man. When I tell you that never heart of mortal was more bound up in visions of home and domestic joy, that I centred in it all my affection, care, wealth, and happiness, when you see how my affection has been repaid, my cares returned, my wealth dissipated, my happiness disregarded—oh! my child, I am a dying old man, and ought to wrestle no longer with the dark spirits of this world, but when I think of the folly, the recklessness, the hard-heartedness of those from whom I had a right to expect pity, kindness, and love, the blood of nearly seventy years burns in my chilled veins."

"Oh! forbear sir, you are flushed, you are feverish, you cannot bear this exertion."

"Interrupt me not when I have so much to say, such uncertain breath to utter it. I said I had centred all my wealth in my home, I was wrong; when my son was about sixteen,—unfortunate boy, left exposed to such pernicious influences,—I was called to Europe upon commercial business of great importance: during my residence there, some fortunate speculation, which it is unnecessary to detail, became to me a source of immense wealth. When I returned, and learned the extravagant career of my wife had run, her boundless ambition to be first in every idle expenditure, I resolved to make a secret of my newly acquired riches, and vowed to hoard it, that my son, whom she was training as her disciple, might have an inheritance secure from her dissipation. I might have secured it to him by law, but I had another object in view: I had a lesson to teach them both, a lesson they are yet bitterly to learn. I love my son, nature has gifted him with noble qualities, and had not heaven prostrated me upon this sick bed at the time I was most anxious to direct his education, he might have been a man; but left to the uncontrolled influence of such a mother, is it strange that he has lost the nobility of nature? Interrupt me not, my own dear Mary, my story yet remains to be told. Upon my return this mansion was vacated; though only a few miles from the city, it was too retired in winter for Mrs. Graham's gay propensities. I brought with me, from Europe, a young man, in the capacity of a servant, though his object was to come over to this country and find employment as a carpenter, being a poor but very ingenious mechanic. He came with me to this place, then deserted of its inmates; I brought him into this very room, I locked him within it till he had completed the work I had appointed him to do. He finished his task; bound by an oath of secrecy, he received the stipulated sum, left me and died soon after of a sudden disease. No being but myself knows the work he wrought."

He paused from exhaustion, nor could he forbear to smile at the wild expression of Mary's countenance as she glanced round the room, almost expecting to see supernatural beings issue from the walls.

"There is nothing here to harm you, Mary," continued he, after a pause; "I employed no unholy means, my journeyman laboured after a European model. Now rise, my child, bolt both doors, that no one may enter unawares; you cannot draw the bolts with such a trembling hand; there, that is a little steadier. Now walk to the fire-place and press firmly with a downward motion against the lower pannel, the right side of the chimney; a little lower, firmer, harder; harder yet."

Mary obeyed the directions, bewildered and frightened at finding herself such a mysterious agent. The pannel suddenly slid, and a small secret closet was revealed.

"Mary, hand me the casket within that closet."

The heavy casket was placed on his bed; he drew from his bosom a small key, which was suspended from his neck by a chain, and bidding Mary unfasten the hasp, he immediately clasped it around her own. "And now, Mary," said he, with a more solemn, deeper accent, "you are in possession of the key that unlocks that foreign treasure I have so long secured from the unprincipled waste of wealth; hide it in your bosom, let not even the chain be visible, guard it as the bequest of a dying man, who is about to bequeath you a more sacred legacy still."

Mary sank on her knees by the bed-side and clasped his hands imploringly in hers. "Do not, do not, I entreat you, sir, bequeath this gold to me. It would weigh me down to the dust; this chain even now seems a string of fire around my neck. Your son, your son, the wealth is his, who is so fitting to receive it from your hands; he is worthy of your trust, he will not abuse it."

The sick man raised his feeble body with an energy that appalled her. "It is for the sake of that son, that now degenerate boy, I leave this in your immediate keeping. Within this casket is a letter to Henry, explaining to him all my wishes: put it back in the recess, replace the pannel and unbolt the doors. Approach me once more, and with your hand in mine, your eyes lifted to heaven, promise to obey me in my last directions, and my soul shall bless you in its parting hour."

Subdued and awe-stricken, Mary lifted her tearful eyes and faltered out the promise he exacted.

"It is enough; the lips of truth have vowed, and the vow will never be broken. When I am gone my estate will be involved in irremediable ruin; I have long foreseen this would be the result of such boundless extravagance. I have long since ceased to warn, for my unhappy son needs the lesson in store; adversity alone will rouse him from his mental and moral lethargy; let him but once be forced to call his powers into exercise by commanding necessity, and they will come like a legion of angels to his help in the hour of need; let him become poor, flatterers will desert him, beauty will slight him, he will turn from the hollow world and be regenerated. He must go through this stormy ordeal, and then, when all the dross is removed, when he stands unalloyed and firm on the independent basis of his own character, and not till then, may this casket, from whose contents you have in the mean time derived your own support, be committed into his keeping."

'But should the lesson fail, should he sink into despondency and inaction, once more I entreat——'"

"You have promised, entreaties are vain; if the lesson should fail, he merits it not, and I leave it in worthier hands. You have been to me like the renovated spirit of my own youth; to you I look for every thing that remains of my comfort and support. I feel a faith, strong as that inspired by prophecy, that my son will shake the dust from his spirit and put on the beautiful garments of true manhood: you will not always remain the guardian of this treasure. As for her, who has alienated herself from me from the hour she became a bride, who has neglected me for long years on my sick bed, left me to the care of hirelings till God in his mercy sent me a loving and tender daughter in you, the time is to come, and soon, when she will cling to the reeds of fortune and find them break in her grasp; when deserted by seeming friends she will feel the horrors of solitude and remember me; let repentance be her dowry."

The voice of the sick man assumed a tone alarmingly hollow as he uttered the last words. His head sank back heavily on Mary's

shoulder, who, gazing in his face, saw that his eyes were fixed with a glassy stare. Though she felt a dreadful conviction that the effort he had just made had exhausted the strength of life, and that he was sinking at once, now the moment of excitement was passed: she did not lose her presence of mind. She laid him back on the pillow, and bathed his temples and face with the restorative waters, with which the chamber was supplied; she chafed his cold hands, but the features remained rigid, the eyes moved not in answer to her fearful glance. She recollected that one waiting maid had been ordered to remain behind, and, ringing the bell till the girl ran in, she immediately despatched her for the physician. When he arrived and took the patient's hand, it fell like lead on the bed-side. His skill availed him nothing here—he was dead.

Mary now felt an awful responsibility resting upon her, rendered doubly solemn by the instantaneous death of him who had intrusted it—the delegated guardian of Henry's wealth and fame—the repository of a secret so strange as almost to baffle credulity. Mary felt all this, till she sank down in the hopelessness of despair: but even in this first hour of despair, she prayed that she might be strengthened by Him, who himself prayed, when bowed by more than mortal agonies; and the hope, the conviction that the son would be regenerated over the ashes of the father, came like the wing of an angel hovering over the gloom.

Mrs. Graham was shocked, excessively shocked, by the suddenness of the event. She shrieked, and even fainted, when, on her return from the party, she found herself standing by the shrouded body of her husband, by the side of which Mary sat in the immobility of sorrow: she was reminded of her own mortality; the chill atmosphere of death oppressed and appalled her. The conviction that the gay, glittering life she was leading was nothing but a passage to the grave, the cold, deep, lonely grave, came over her heavily and suddenly.

Henry's grief was sincere. The poignancy of self-reproach added intolerable stings to filial affliction. While he had been engaged in selfish amusement, administering to the pleasures of an adulated

beauty, given up to high and unhealthy excitement, the irreproachable Mary had clung to the anchor of duty—sustained his father's dying agonies, and received his parting breath.

It was after every thing had subsided into the stillness of gloom, which succeeds such startling events, that Mary, whose energies of mind were now called into vigorous exercise by the responsibilities which had so mysteriously devolved upon her, endeavoured to extend that influence over the mind of Henry, which true moral excellence and modest, intellectual strength always give its possessor. Conscious of the reverse of fortune that awaited him, she tried to arouse his ambition by the purest and most exalted motives. She related the conversations she had often had with his father, when left alone with him in his sickness, in which he deplored the indolence of character, which permitted the most brilliant attributes of mind to remain mouldering in inaction. She told of the dreams in which he sometimes indulged, of loving to see the son of his hopes sitting in the high places of the land, swaying the multitude by his eloquence, watching over insulted laws, and avenging outraged humanity.

With a heart softened by sorrow, a conscience enlightened by the same salutary counsel, Henry listened as to his better angel, and made the most ardent resolutions for the future.

Without entering into tedious and unprofitable details, it may be said here that Mr. Graham's executor found that he had died insolvent; that the consternation of the widow was unutterable, and the wonder and sympathy of her innumerable friends, as sincere and valuable as they usually are on such occasions. *Mulberry Grove*, the beautiful and stately mansion was to be sold. Mrs. Graham was to take private lodgings in the city; her son was going on a European tour, and Mary was to return to the obscurity of her native village. Such were the on-dits of the world of fashion.

Among those who came to pay visits of condolence, after the knowledge of their worst misfortune, were Miss Devereux and her inseparable friend. She was on the eve of her departure to her native city, and mingled her expressions of sympathy for her friends.

with the warmest words of gratitude for their attentions. She wanted to walk once more in that beautiful garden, which she should always remember as a model of the blended loveliness of nature and art. In the course of their walk, she managed so skilfully as to separate herself from her companion, and to be alone with Henry by the hedge. This accomplished coquette had no thought of departing with the glory of her conquest unacknowledged. Though his fallen fortunes rendered it of less consequence, his name was to be added to the number of her victims; for her ambition stopped not at less than a hecatomb. The opportunity was irresistible; the temptation equally so. The sympathy she had assumed diffused a captivating softness over the lustre of her beauty, and there was an abandonment, an abstraction in her manner, that might have given encouragement to a bolder lover. The declaration was made: it was a pouring out of the whole heart and soul, with all the generous fervour of a first acknowledged attachment: as Miss Devereux afterwards told her confidant, "it was the most graceful, impassioned, and heroic declaration she had ever received, and had she not been informed about his loss of wealth, she was afraid she might have been foolish enough to have consented." She heard him in silence, with down-cast eyes, from which rays of gratified vanity were brightly stealing. She then drew back with the air of a queen, who is about to reject the petition of a vassal; was greatly surprised and distressed; she had never imagined the existence of such feelings on his part; uttered some cold words about friendship and esteem, courtesied gracefully, and moved towards the house, leaving Henry to reflections we have no wish to describe. The greatest kindness we can offer to a man of real and deep sensibility, who first discovers he has been the dupe of heartless vanity, is to "leave him to himself."

It was that very night, when the family had retired to rest, and the whole household in the quiet attendant on that lonely hour, Mary left the room, bearing in her hand a feeble lamp, and directed her steps to the chamber lately occupied by Mr. Graham. She had formed the resolution of going back to the scenes of her childhood,

in the midst of her mother's friends, and supporting herself by the exercise of her talents. She could teach a school; she was confident she could gain a subsistence. Nothing would induce her to remain an incumbent on Mrs. Graham. As the estate was to be sold, Mary deemed it her first duty to take possession of the treasure, of which she was made the reluctant guardian. Notwithstanding the sacredness of the charge, and the uprightness of her own principles, she trembled and drew her breath quickly and short as she opened the door of an apartment so lately solemnized by the awful presence of death, surrounded by the dim shadow of midnight, secret and alone. Notwithstanding her cautious movements, the wind, which blew with a strong current through the long hall, pressed against the door with such force that it eluded her grasp, and closed with a noise which almost terrified her from her purpose. Sick at heart, she sat down in the easy chair, which, but a little while before, she had seen occupied by the venerable form now covered with the mould of the grave. She lived over the last, impressive scene, heard again the solemn adjurations of paternal anguish, and her resolution became strengthened for the task. She rose—put down her lamp—pressed the secret door—drew forth the casket—replaced the pannel, and lifting up the lamp, was turning towards the door, when the opposite one slowly opened, and Mrs. Graham stood before her. Mary uttered a faint shriek, the lamp dropped from her hand, and she remained gazing on the apparition without the power of speech or motion.

"What is your business here?" at length exclaimed Mrs. Graham, her eye fixed as if by fascination on the casket—rushing towards her with exasperation in every feature.

"I came on an errand of duty," faltered Mary, with bloodless lips.

"And that casket, how came it in your possession? Am I to be plundered in my own household, by one whom my bounty has fed? Give it me this instant for your life."

Mary grasped it to her bosom with convulsive agony, yet with a resolution as firm as that with which the martyr clings to the cross, for which he is yielding up his life.

"Do you dare defy me thus?" exclaimed Mrs. Graham, seizing her arm, and shaking her with delirious force, "I'll rouse every servant in the household—minion—thief!"

"By the soul of the sainted dead, I am innocent!" cried Mary, emboldened by the consciousness of her own innocence, and the sacred guardianship to which she had been elected. "Touch not this, Mrs. Graham, as you would rest in your own dying hour. It was intrusted to me by your husband, with his last breath. I vowed to guard it till the hour appointed. Let not the curse of perjury rest upon me. Incur not the wrath of Heaven by disregarding the wishes, the commands of the dead."

Mrs. Graham was not in a situation to listen to any appeal. She had been kept awake by an acute nervous affection, which she had in vain endeavoured to soothe. Her indignation was boundless, her purpose immovable. Her hands seized the casket, which Mary vainly struggled to retain. Mrs. Graham was a tall, stately, strong woman; Mary a slender girl, with feeble muscles, that relaxed at last in the powerful grasp that held her.

"Oh! Henry, Henry!" shrieked the unfortunate girl, "where art thou?"

Mrs. Graham burst into a convulsive laugh, and held the casket in her right hand, extended over the victim now prostrate at her feet.

At that moment, as if Providence had marked out that night for its own particular purpose, the door was thrown back by a sudden motion, and Henry Graham stood before them. It would be strange indeed if a rejected man thought of slumber; it is certain he had not, but racked by feelings that maddened him, he had walked his own room like a restless ghost, till Mary's shrill cry of agony, issuing from the chamber of death, pierced his ear, and brought him to the scene on which he now gazed in unutterable amazement. The majestic figure of his mother, in her white night-dress, and long black locks that, loosened in the struggle, streamed back from her brow, with uplifted arm, holding a glittering casket, standing over the pale and prostrate Mary, in that chamber where the shadows of death still lingered, suddenly confronted him

"Gracious Heavens! what does this mean?" asked Henry.

"What does it mean?" repeated Mrs. Graham, dragging Mary forward with one hand, while she shook the casket in the other; "it means that this girl is a wretch, a plunderer, who steals in the silence of midnight to rifle your father's coffers, and rob you of your inheritance."

"Impossible, impossible!" exclaimed Henry. "Rise, Mary, rise and vindicate yourself from a charge so black."

The generous and devoted girl, even in the moment of despair, thought not of herself, but him. She hailed his sudden appearance as a direct interposition of Heaven, in vindication of his rights. Freeing herself from Mrs. Graham's now relaxing grasp, she clung to Henry with frantic energy.

"Oh! Henry, think not of me, but of yourself. That casket is yours; your father gave it in my keeping in his last hour. He resisted my prayers and tears that I might be spared such a trust. He made me swear by the Heaven that now hears me, to be true to the charge, to keep it, to cherish it, till adversity, unknown before, had called out the heaven-born energies within you. It was for your sake he has secreted this wealth for years. It was for your sake he committed it first to these feeble hands. He has left with it a letter, expressing to you all his wishes and his hopes. On the eve of returning to the obscurity of my own lot, obedient to the commands of the dead, I sought this chamber and took possession of that fatal treasure. Oh! that he had left it in other hands than mine!"

Henry, at that moment, would as soon have doubted the evidence of truth itself, as the words of Mary. Free from the spell which had lately enthralled his faculties and dimmed his perception of right and wrong, he saw Mary's character in its own pure, exalted light. Throwing one arm around her, as if to shield her from the storm that had just swept her down, he turned to his mother, with the respect of a son, but the authority of a man, in his voice and manner:

"My mother, be unto those who break the commands that death has hallowed. By all that is sacred, I entreat you to restore what I must say, you have most unjustly assumed."

The conscience of Mrs. Graham had convinced her, as she listened to Mary's explanation, that she had shamefully wronged her, but her pride refused to yield to its convictions.

"No!" said Mary, "I never can resume its guardianship. Destiny has interposed to save me from this oppressive responsibility. Into your hands I now commit what Heaven has willed I should not retain. Here is the key, which your father suspended round my neck with his own hands. It was the last office they ever performed: almost the last words he ever uttered, was a prophecy of the future glory of your manhood. Oh! Henry, fulfil that dying prophecy, and it matters not who keeps the gold, which is but dust in the balance of such a reputation."

Henry took the casket from his mother's unresisting hand, knelt down and opened it in silence. He stopped not to count the gold, or to ascertain its immense value, but drawing out the paper directed to himself, closed it again, and gave it back to his mother.

"I have taken all I shall ever claim. Mother, this is yours, take it, and use it as you will. Mary is right in declining to receive it, and as for myself, I will read the stern lesson my father willed that I should learn. Nay, I will not keep it, I will earn my fortune, or be a poor man to the last day of my life."

Mrs. Graham refused and reasoned, but at last convinced herself that a mother was the most fitting person to be the guardian of her son's property. She would not consent to it but from that conviction. She condescended to ask Mary to forget the occurrence of the night, and to look upon her as she had ever done, considering her house, wherever it might be, as her home. But Mary, while she expressed gratitude for the offer and for past kindness, declared it her earnest wish to return to the village where she was born, mid scenes more congenial to her taste. Henry did not oppose this resolution. He respected the motive too highly, and her honour, her happiness would be promoted by the change.

It was a source of speculation, of surprise, when it was made known to the world, soon after this eventful night, that *Mulberry Grove* was not to pass from the possession of its owners. Mrs. Graham did not

retrench her expenses, and of course the number of her friends and flatterers remained undiminished. The removal of so humble and unpretending a being as Mary, was a matter of too little importance to excite observation, but when it was ascertained beyond a doubt, that the indolent and fashionable Henry Graham was become an indefatigable student of that profession which he had before only nominally embraced; when he was at length seen at the bar, in eloquence and power, pleading for injured innocence or violated right, then the world did indeed marvel at the transformation, and talk of it as a modern miracle.

We will pass over the events of the following year. They may be understood from one scene which took place in the little village of —— at the close of a summer day. A group of gay, neatly dressed little girls were running merrily from the door of a low isolated building that stood in the middle of a green common. The sun-bonnets thrown recklessly back, the satchels swinging from their arms, the unbounded gaiety of their motions, all spoke "the playful children just let loose from school." A gentleman, who seemed to be a traveller, from the thick riding-dress he wore, on so mild a day, accosted one of the eldest children in that tone of habitual gentleness and courtesy, that even untaught children know how to appreciate. He asked if they were returning from school. An affirmative, accompanied by a low courtesy, was the reply. "The name of the school-mistress?" "Mary Hawthorne—yonder she comes;" and the affectionate child ran to her beloved instructress, to announce the approach of the stranger. But Mary's eye needed not the annunciation. She had recognized the well-known form of Henry Graham, and the next moment her hand was in his.

"Mary Hawthorne!" For eighteen months she had not heard his voice. Past scenes rushed to her recollection, and joy and exultation swelled her heart. She knew that his father's prophecy was fulfilled. During the months of their separation, he had constantly written to her, and every letter breathed the progressive elevation of his soul. She had followed in spirit, with trembling anxiety, his onward course, till it had reached the goal of fame, and now he

stood before her, as his dying father so eloquently expressed, "in the beautiful robes of true manhood." And Mary, too, was changed. The consciousness of exciting so noble an influence as she had, over a naturally noble mind, the exertion of her own independent faculties, and the pure air she breathed in those beautiful regions, had imparted a glow to her countenance, and a vigour to her frame, they had never before possessed. Her face was now radiant with the most lovely expression the female lineaments can wear.

"You have grown handsome, Mary, as well as blooming," said Henry, as they walked together towards Mary's rural home; and Mary, who seldom blushed, coloured like a true heroine, at the unwonted compliment.

That evening, after having related all the struggles he had sustained with constitutional and habitual indolence, the counteracting influence of his mother, who considered the course he was pursuing as degrading rather than exalting; after an hour of the most unbounded confidence, Henry drew from his bosom the letter of his father, which he had taken from the memorable casket.

"Mary, the time has arrived when I may ask you to read this letter. My whole soul and heart are in my father's wishes. On your decision—" he was too much agitated to go on. He placed the letter in her hands, and gazed in silence on her downcast face while she perused its contents. He saw, through gathering tears and rushing crimson, gratitude, joy, and shame. He remembered the moment when, after having warned him of the arts of Miss Devereux, he had accused her of "knowing little of love," and her countenance had so eloquently vindicated the charge. He felt that through all his errors he had been beloved, and he wondered at himself that he could ever have been insensible to such real and exalted loveliness.

Is it needful to say what were Mr. Graham's solemn wishes, what the decision on which the happiness of Henry's existence depended? That he should take this inestimable girl as his wife, as a legacy more precious than the gold of the East; and she did become his wife, and he never regretted the hour when he was discarded by the beautiful Miss Devereux.

B

THE PREMATURE DECLARATION.



BROTHER TIM—do pray be careful, and not brush the leaves of my orange trees so briskly; you always step so quick. Take care, don't tread on the hearth. It has been painted this morning, and is not yet dry. There, you have left a track; it is too late; but old bachelors never know what to do with themselves. They are always in the way."

"Nay, sister, you know I did not mean to do it; I was only trying to get out of the way of the orange leaves. As for being an old bachelor, I may be one, to be sure; but you know it would not be prudent for me to be otherwise."

Before I go on with the conversation, it may be well to introduce the readers to the speakers, as well as to some other members of the same family, who will be hereafter mentioned. Mrs. Butler, the lady, was one of the best wives, best mothers, and best neighbours

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THE PREMATURE DECLARATION.

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in the world, according to oral fame, for which the village to which she belonged was notorious. Her house was the mirror of neatness and taste, but as her taste was kept in constant restraint by the unre-laxing parsimony of her husband, it was truly admirable to see the ingenuity with which she would make the "worse appear the better" thing. Their furniture was of the most ordinary kind, but no parlour looked more enticingly pretty than theirs; she always had so many tumblers of fresh blooming flowers on the sideboard, tables and man-tel-piece, such luxuriant branches of evergreen in the chimney, and festoons of oak-leaves and woodbine around the white-washed walls. No one could tell what kind of frame the old looking-glass had, through the neat folds of the stanced muslin that enveloped it, and no one would have imagined that the bright green baize, that almost covered the carpet, showing only a handsome border con-cealed the old, faded, worn-out relic of a prior generation. But to see Mrs. Butler in her pride, you must follow her into the garden, and a lovely garden it was. The wild-brier, the thorn, and the thistle may now choke the sweet blossoms which once bloomed pro-fusely there, and the kind, active hand that planted and reared them be cold and powerless, but at the time of which I speak it presented the fairest avenues of sweets I ever beheld. Rich exotics and tro-pical plants mingled their patrician odours and tints with the less valued but beauteous offspring of our own ruder latitudes. There were bowers within bowers; the yellow jessamine, with its bright golden blossoms and deep, shining, slender green leaves; the grace-ful clematis or virgin's bower, with its clusters of purple, melting into the softest blue; the multiflora, fairest, most modest of vines; the coral honeysuckle hanging its rich petals, as if of ocean-birth, amid the velvet verdure of the wreathing leaves; the magnificent trumpet-flower, looking like the very coronet of victory itself, and all the loving and lovely families of vines. Then there were tulips, and jonquils, and narcissuses, and hyacinths, and violets, and heart's-eases, and primroses, and snow-drops, and roses, and rosemaries, and all the sweet smelling shrubs in the universe, from the fragrant clover to the aromatic calacanthus. Then fruit-trees and bushes of

every description, even to the rare pomegranate, whose scarlet flowers glow so beautifully through the brilliant green of its foliage, giving promise of the scarlet and orange-coloured fruit that is to succeed it. But there is no end to the beauties of this little world of Flora, I believe if I should write for a week without cessation I could not enumerate half its wonders or excellencies. So great was its fame, Mrs. Butler was almost obliged to live in it, and it was a pleasant life to her; whoever wanted herbs for medicinal beverage, savory and thyme for broth, sage for sausages, or wormwood for bruises, sent to Mrs. Butler; whoever desired a bouquet for a party, or flowers to ornament a mantel-piece, or a few nice figs or apricots for a friend, sent to Mrs. Butler, and let it be recorded to her honour, she never refused, though her plants and flowers were dear to her as her heart's blood. But we have kept the good woman so long in her garden we forgot Brother Tim, whom we left in the dining-room, at a most respectful distance from the orange bush, and looking meekly and mournfully at the track his unfortunate foot had made on his sister's vermilion hearth. It must not be supposed, among Mrs. Butler's almost innumerable excellencies, she was not one of the best sister's in the world. The very perfection of her virtue in this relation rendered her constantly annoying to his peace, for she justly considered ridicule the most powerful instrument of attack, when the party in question is of a timid and self-distrustful character. If she did scold him for his *gaucheries*, it was in so good-natured a manner it passed for merely raillery with others, though he always answered her with a meekness and solemnity truly diverting. To see him married was the darling wish of her heart. She had a perfect horror of old bachelors. The comparisons she had so often heard drawn between them and a dry stalk, a blasted fig-tree, or a blossomless, fruitless shrub, were associated in her mind with such mournful images, she was determined, if possible, to avert such a misfortune as to have one of these useless cumberers of God's fair earth, entailed upon her otherwise flourishing family. What grievous mistakes good people sometimes make, out of the very abundance of activity of their benevolence. A cumberer of the earth!—use-

less! Never did there exist a more obliging, industrious, busy, (there is a great difference between industrious and busy—a person may be industrious without our being conscious of it at the moment, whereas a busy one never escapes observation.) Mrs. Butler little knew how dependent she was upon the kind offices and indefatigable attentions of this humble, lonely brother of hers. Who turned the bobbin, made her lace frames, mended her broken china, and brought her the nearest wild flowers of the forest? Who stuffed the blue-bird, and little wren, and solemn owl that adorned her mantel-piece? Who but Brother Tim? Then the children—what could they do without him? He made their whistles, kites, and bows and arrows, dragged them in a little wagon manufactured by his own hands, made images of dog's and sheep's heads on the wall, and cried ba and bow-wow, to amuse the exacting monkeys. There was nothing too much to ask of his inexhaustible good-nature, nothing too much for it to grant; yet such is the perverseness and ingratitude of our natures, his own sister, the very best woman in the village, compared him to the unprofitable weed that gives back no sweetness to the air, in return for its genial influence. I think I see him before me, with his meek, small countenance, his sleek, sparse, sandy locks, and thin, sharp, blue-tipped nose, that gave an inexpressible air of forlornness to his face. It looked as if it were ill able to bear alone the bleak winds of this adverse world, and had already miserably shrunk from the contact—a voice seemed to issue from its very tip—"Oh! who would inhabit this bleak world alone?" Kind, honest-hearted Timothy Fuller—did merit meet on earth its just reward, did the pure in heart receive in this world the exalted rank they take in the beatitudes, thou wouldst have sat in the high places of thy country's glory; the richest sheaf in the harvest of moral excellence, to which inferior ones should bow down, as in Joseph's ancient dream. Never was guile or malice found on thy unoffending lips; they dropped the honey of human kindness as naturally and freely as the Arabian tree its medicinal gum. But I grow poetical in thy praises, and am forgetting other important personages in the drama of life, in which thou actedst thy noble part. Mr. Butler could never be overlooked

by one who loves to study human nature, and to observe the various aspects the "mighty mother" assumes. Mr. Butler, the merchant, the deacon, the sheriff, the man of dollars and cents, of small gains and great savings, the cold, blue worshipper of Mammon, yet walking with such severe correctness none would dare to say he was not a sober, conscientious, upright Christian. He ground the poor for the last cent they owed him; and when, with a pale cheek and quivering lip, and long-drawn sigh, poverty put up the empty purse, and turned away from the merciless creditor, Mr. Butler would sigh too, and compress his narrow lips—fit opening for his narrow soul—and say, "It is hard, to be sure, to part with one's all; but then it is a debt, and my family must be supported; every body must take care of his own;" and the next Sunday at church he would sit in his long, sanctimonious, dark surtout, and repeat to himself, while the pious minister was breathing forth his divine aspirations, "I thank heaven I am not as other men are, extortioners," &c., and lifting up his hard stony eyes, he believed all the worldly sins of the week effaced by the exemplary devotion of the seventh day. He did not enter into his wife's views, with respect to her brother, for he deemed him too simple to support a family himself; and that he would consequently bring an additional expense upon them. Mrs. Butler was too generous and uncalculating to reflect upon the future where her own interest was concerned, but she respected, perhaps I ought to say, *feared* her husband's prejudices, and always forbore in his presence to assail poor Tim in his "vital, vulnerable part." Her good genius was, nevertheless, constantly at work, and she was determined not to slacken her exertions, till she had brought about a matrimonial engagement between her brother and Miss Submit Schoolcraft, the amiable and unimpeachable spinster of the parish.

I was going to describe Miss Submit Schoolcraft, or as her friends familiarly called her, Miss Mitty,—but as people are best known by their manners and conversation, and as I have already appropriated considerable time to the delineation of characters, when I only intended to speak of their actions, I will introduce her, and suffer her to ingratiate herself by her own undescribed attractions.

"Now this is very kind of you, Miss Mitty, to come and see me, without waiting to be sent for; take off your bonnet and sit here by the door, where it is cool, and you can see the flowers. Timothy, give my feather fan to Miss Mitty; don't you see how warm she looks? I didn't ask you to tread on my foot though, but old bachelors are always in the way."

"Sister, I am sure I didn't mean to do it," exclaimed the blushing Tim, extending the fan at arm's length to Miss Mitty, who sat with imperturbable composure, the warmth of the season glowing on a cheek which always wore the dry, unvarying bloom of the winter apple.

"Well, Miss Mitty," continued Mrs. Butler, "what scheme have you on hand for the good of others? You are always going about seeking out the sick and the afflicted; I don't know what we could do without you in the village. You must not think of getting married, unless," and she glanced her good-natured eye at her brother, "unless some smart deserving bachelor—hem—."

Miss Mitty put her smooth cambric handkerchief to her face, and said she was very glad if she were able to do any good in the world; that time was short, and life uncertain, and a great many other pious, sensible remarks, which made a great impression on the amiable mind of Mrs. Butler, and made her more than ever anxious to secure so exemplary a helpmeet, for her brother. I am doing great injustice to Miss Mitty not to describe her person. To introduce a heroine without a description is unpardonable; I acknowledge my error, and hasten to correct it. Though evidently past the sunny bloom of youth, there was an air of freshness and vigour, a kind of evergreen verdure about her exceedingly becoming. Her complexion was not remarkable for its delicacy, but at a little distance, the stanch or powder, with which she perfectly covered her face, might well pass for the lilies of nature. Her hair was of a faded flaxen, and combed back with severe precision from her brow, corresponded well with the plainness and neatness of a dress which was never known to be in disorder. Altogether, Miss Mitty was a very comely and personable young lady, and if skilful physiognomists

could detect a certain air of self-complacency or self-righteousness in her countenance, who could blame her? Was she not the patroness of Sunday Schools and Charity Schools, the disseminator of Tracts, the presenter of subscription papers, the almoner of others' bounties, the *primum mobile* of the whole neighbourhood? She had a kind of moral sagacity in finding out distressed objects, that was unequalled. She knew the history of every man, woman, and child, within a dozen miles of the church. Did she hear of an intemperate man who wasted his substance in riotous living, and impoverished the wife and children he was bound to support, she neither slumbered nor slept, till she had made a visit to his house, and exhorted and sermonized him upon his neglected duties, and inevitable ruin. Did she hear of an idle, an improvident, or a slatternly woman, she immediately selected an appropriate Tract, begged for a comb and hair-brush, and cake of Castile soap, and presented them to the delinquent sister, with fitting words of counsel and warning. In short, she was a female St. Paul—"in season and out of season"—the unslumbering guardian of the morals and religion of the village of H——. But some how or other, her unceasing exertions were not crowned with the success they merited. The drunkard resumed his burning draught, and breathed out a deeper curse against "preachers in bonnets, and idle, busybodies." The slattern cast the unappreciated gifts aside, and "wished old maids would not be so meddlesome, and keep their advice till wanted or asked." This was all very ungrateful, but human nature is made up of strange inconsistencies. Perhaps it may be that charity, like religion, must be breathed in the still, small voice, that its influence must be as soft and unostentatious as the snow that falls unheard and almost unseen, upon its flaky sisters of the clouds, and then like that gentle snow, when melted by the returning sun, it will sink, and moisten, and fertilize, till moral flowers spring forth in the spring-time of the heart. I will not now pause to penetrate into the mysteries of metaphysics, but Miss Mitty was certainly often called "*officious and troublesome*" when her back was turned, by the objects of her tender mercies, while more discerning individuals, like Mrs. Butler,

inhaled with delight the odour of her sanctity, and marvelled at her labours of love.

An hour passed away in edifying conversation between Mrs. Butler and her friend, with an occasional remark from Timothy, to which Miss Mitty listened with the most flattering attention, when supper was announced, and Mr. Butler, having transacted the business of the day, returned to take his accustomed seat at his wife's hospitable board. Yes, in spite of himself it was hospitable, and all who shared it felt the influence of her spirit. Mr. Butler's presence, however, was always a counteracter: to look upon him reminded one of a north-east storm. He never failed at table to discourse upon the virtues of temperance and the sin of gluttony and excess, particularly if he had any guests. Miss Mitty was always blest with a charming appetite, though she ate slowly and took very small pieces at a time. Mr. Butler must have groaned in spirit, at the innumerable *small pieces* that were slid in slow, regular progression on her plate. If he could have invented a method by which people could live without eating, and consequently without much expense, he would have been the happiest man in the world. It was several evenings after this Mrs. Butler told her brother, he had an opportunity offered him of showing his kindness, goodness, and zeal; that Miss Mitty, who had been an indefatigable instrument in promoting the Sunday School every Sunday afternoon, and who had already got it in a most prosperous way, was anxiously in search of a person who would open the school in a proper manner, with prayer and hymning. Mrs. Butler added—(I am afraid it was a spontaneous suggestion of her own)—that Miss Mitty knew of no one so well calculated as himself for that office, and that she would have made a personal application, had not modesty and propriety, &c., prevented her. Timothy blushed scarlet deep at the proposition, stammered out something about incapacity and prudence, got up and walked towards the door, casting a furtive glance at the looking-glass, thinking it possible Miss Mitty had taken a fancy to the cut of his face, and doing homage in his heart to her judgment and taste. Far be it from me to throw a shadow of ridicule upon these holy institutions which have been and

continue to be the blessing of the land, or to speak lightly of that spirit of active benevolence and piety which, in imitation of man's divine exemplar, goes about doing good. But in sketching from real life we must take the evil with the good, the tares with the wheat. If Miss Mitty's high sense of duty and conscientious desire to be useful, was marred in its exercise by too much ostentation, and parade, and bustle, it surely is not my fault; I would not add one shade the more or one ray the less. I would portray Miss Mitty just as she is, or was, considering her perfect in her kind; and as for Timothy Fuller, my heart warms within me at the very recollection of his simple, confiding excellence. Behold him on the following Sabbath, in obedience to his sister's admonitions, winding his quiet way through the sweet, shaded path that led to the village church. It is a fair, warm, blue-skyed, soft-aired summer day. The birds sing their melodious hallelujahs mid the cool green boughs, and all nature reflects in peaceful loveliness the glorious smile of its Creator. Timothy feels the gracious influences around him. He is grateful for his being, grateful for his capacities for gratitude, and his opportunities for serving his great Task-master. The incense that arises from his heart is unadulterated with one particle of envy or vain-glory. He is dressed with unusual care, but that is rather his sister's doing than his own, who laid his buffest vest and whitest cravat on the toilet of his chamber, and ordered the servant to polish his boots till they resembled the brightest Japan. Some one said they saw him looking at himself in one of his brass buttons, and smooth his hair over his forehead before entering the door of the church, but I do not believe a word of it; he was no coxcomb.

The children were all arranged in the nicest order, and Miss Mitty was moving from class to class, as if she had the power of ubiquity. As soon as he entered she became stationary, and he felt that his presence was acknowledged. There was a half conscious, odd kind of expression in her countenance, followed by a look of deeper gravity, upon observing a saucy smile upon the lips of some of the urchins. Timothy saw the smile, and his bosom quaked; the horror of being laughed at, which every bashful person has experienced,

came over him as a thick darkness. He had not realized before the magnitude of the office. From earliest childhood he had been accustomed to offer up his morning and evening sacrifices of prayer and praise, and to make melody with his lips unto heaven. It had seemed to him in perspective an easy task to lift up his voice before untaught and uncriticising children, and a devout and kind-judging woman. But it was in vain to think of retracting, the ordeal must be passed; so, opening his trembling lips, he began that sublime and simple petition, the first that infant innocence is taught to utter—"Our Father, who art in heaven." There seemed to be a magic in the sentence; his voice grew steady, and lifted by the real fervour of his feelings, he forgot himself and his auditors, and when he had concluded, the serious brows of the children bore witness to the hallowed influence of true and unaffected piety. Timothy rejoiced in spirit that what he had commenced so fearfully had terminated so well. Gathering courage from success, he approached within four yards of Miss Mitty, and offered, with many hems and coughs, if it would not be considered an intrusion, and if it was thought he had the proper qualification, to assist her in taking a class. Miss Mitty looked as if she would have blushed if the steady bloom of her cheek had admitted. She certainly looked pleased, said every thing that was proper on such an occasion, acknowledged that she had long wished for a fellow-labourer, and admitted it as the omen of better things. Never was Timothy better satisfied with the world in which he lived, than when the duties of the day being ended, he found himself walking side by side with Miss Mitty, through the same beautiful path, actually carrying her basket of books, though a cold sweat covered his forehead at his own presumption, when he proposed to relieve her of her burden. A rich crimson was beginning to mantle the blue of the western horizon; the air breathed softer and balmier. Timothy looked at the sky, at the trees, and the ground. His soul expanded at the magnificence of the scene. He felt called upon to express his emotions, but knew not how to embody them.

"Miss Mitty," at length said he, "hem—hem—Miss Mitty, is it not a very pretty evening?"

"Very pretty, indeed; I think it grows a little cooler."

"I don't know; I haven't observed any clouds."

Miss Mitty raised her eyes as she spoke towards the heavens, and as she brought them down to earth, she happened to rest them on Timothy, who, by a singular coincidence, happened to be looking at her. The glance was very kind and approving, and might have encouraged a more bashful man.

"What was it you said, Ma'am?"

"Sir!"

"I beg pardon; I thought you were going to say something."

"No, sir—"

A dead pause succeeded, and poor Timothy could not think of any thing else to say. They were very near home; a beautiful rose bush grew close to the path, and spread out its fair blossoms so invitingly Timothy could not help plucking one.

"Do you like roses, Miss Mitty?"

"Yes, sir; very much, indeed."

"Would you—like *this* rose—Miss Mitty?"

This was uttered with a dreadful effort, and the rose trembled in his hand, as if shaken by the evening breeze. The lady took it with a gracious smile, touched it to her nostril, then put it in her belt on the left side. What apparently trifling things change the colour of one's destiny! A solitary grain of musk will perfume a room for many years, a single flower given and taken may impart fragrance to a whole existence. This was the first offering Timothy had ever made to any woman, his sister excepted, and the recollection of his courage made him feel dizzy when he was alone.

From that memorable day the duties of the Sunday School were never neglected. Every Sunday saw them associated in the interesting task of instruction and exhortation, and so admirably did his meekness and humility temper Miss Mitty's parading virtues, the school was never known to be under such happy auspices. Every Sunday during the season of flowers was a rose timidly offered and kindly received, but matters went no farther. In vain Mrs. Butler rallied and scolded him for being an old bachelor; he always

answered, "He did not think it prudent to be otherwise." There was one auspicious omen, however; he now invariably ended the sentence with a sigh, and was often observed to lean his head on his hand and look abstractedly on the wall. To judge truly of a man's thoughts we must follow him in the solitude of his own room, and such a room as Timothy's was well worth being admitted into. It had once been an office, and was attached to Mr. Butler's store, where he sometimes officiated as merchant *pro tem*. It was a miniature gallery of the fine arts, a miniature menagerie, aviary; a little world displayed. There were pictures of his own painting, (for Timothy was an artist of the most original kind, as every one who ever saw his paintings must acknowledge,) adorning the walls—stuffed birds, and living birds in cages—the prettiest little gray and white kitten with a cork tied to its tail; a large tortoise shell cat; several snakes in green glass bottles; a tame squirrel; coral sea-fans and some pieces of a petrified wig; all the wonders of earth, air, and sea condensed and harmonized. To preserve and cherish these treasures, and add to their number, was one of the great objects of Timothy's existence, or rather had been, for his whole soul was no longer absorbed in them. There was something wanting, which he had never been conscious of before. The plumage of his birds was as soft and bright, but it no longer charmed his eye, or their warbling his ear. His little kitten frisked and frolicked as gracefully, and his squirrel held a nut in his paws as cunningly as ever—they did not divert him as they were wont to do. "What can be the matter with me?" said he one day to himself, as he sat in the midst of his curiosities and pets. There is nothing I can do to please myself, I can't paint any thing striking or natural; my snakes don't look as handsome as they used to; my cat don't purr half as pretty; I'm tired of all my pets; I must get a new one." Just at that moment a figure glided by the window, whose discreet motions and measured step were not to be mistaken. The pulsations of his heart were mysteriously quickened. He went to the window and looked wistfully after her. She was dressed in white, and looked remarkably nice and airy. "Ah!" exclaimed he, continuing his soliloquy, "I

think I know what is the matter; I believe it is Miss Mitty after all; what an imprudent man I am!" and Timothy leaned his head upon the window frame, with a penitential sigh. "It was sister that put all this into my head; I never should have thought of it myself; I wonder if *she* feels as I do!" There was a charm in this speculation which he found irresistible. He recalled her kind looks, her invitation to him to officiate in so responsible an office, her frequent visits to his sister, till he convinced himself they were both indulging in very tender sentiments, which prudence expressly forbade; he had no fortune, and how could he marry? He never thought of the possibility of making one by his own exertions. His humility would have startled at such a suggestion. He had a wealthy uncle who lived in a neighbouring state, who had no children of his own, who, he thought it not improbable would leave him a handsome legacy; but this uncle was in the prime of life, vigorous, and robust, who probably thought as little of dying as Timothy himself. The only course which he deemed it *prudent* to pursue, was to conceal his growing tenderness from the object who inspired it, and going steadily forward in the straight line of duty, reconcile himself as much as possible to his solitary existence. But for the first time in his life, he experienced a conflict between inclination and principle. It was a hard trial to his resignation. The distressed expression of his face was noticed that night at table by Mr. Butler, who seldom noticed any thing but the quantity of food devoured.

"Timothy," said he, "what are you thinking of? You have been looking into the salt-cellar for ten minutes steadily. Do you see any motes in it? I hope I have not been cheated in it: I paid a high price for it, to be sure."

"Oh! never mind the salt," interrupted his considerate wife, "he does not feel very well. Here, Tim, drink some of this cool buttermilk; it will do you good."

"Thank you, sister, I do not feel quite well to-night."

He blessed her in silence for not calling him an old bachelor, and poured the buttermilk unconsciously into his coffee.

"I wish Miss Mitty were here," exclaimed Joseph Butler, the

eldest son of Mr. Butler, a mischievous youth of sixteen, with rosy cheeks and black curling locks, the idol of his mother, the torment of the household, the dread of his uncle; "I wish Miss Mitty Schoolcraft were here; don't you, uncle?"

"Phew!" said Mr. Butler, turning up his long nose, "let Miss Mitty stay at home; she has too large an appetite to please me; her *small pieces* amount to a respectable quantity, to be sure they do."

Where is the lover who can hear a reflection upon the beloved object, without an indignant glow? Timothy's blood rose, and miraculous as it may seem, he dared to vindicate her.

"I think," he stammered forth, "I think Miss Mitty shows her discretion in eating slowly; I have heard Dr. Philler say, it was not prudent to swallow too fast."

"Miss Mitty is indeed a model of prudence," said Mrs. Butler, "in every thing; I wish all the young women of the present generation were like her; she will make an admirable wife, and he will be a happy man that gets her!"

Mrs. Butler had never ventured to say so much before her husband, but she was soon silenced.

"Mrs. Butler," cried he, in a solemn tone, laying down his knife and fork, "you had better be done with your nonsense; I really believe you have been putting some of your ridiculous conceits in Tim's head; a pretty husband he would make, to be sure—with nothing but his birds, and cats, and snakes, to support a wife and family."

"I don't think of such a thing as being married, Mr. Butler," said Timothy, with a dignity never assumed before, "I know it would be very imprudent; if I got a legacy from my uncle, it would alter the case; but that is very uncertain, indeed."

A sigh which might have softened a heart of stone, concluded this speech, but it made no visible impression on the indurated bosom of Mr. Butler. Joe Butler was observed to be unusually mischievous that evening, (after his father had left the house,) overturned every thing that came in his way, and shook his black curls as if brooding over something of vast import.

Things remained in *statu quo* for two or three months. Miss Mitty went to visit an aunt about thirty miles distant, and the operations of the Sunday School were suspended. The winter, short and mild in that genial clime, came and melted into the blossoms of an early spring. The cheek of Timothy gave evident indications of the wasting influence of hidden passion. It assumed a kind of russet hue, while his thin nose looked still thinner, and wore, if possible, a bluer tint. His kind sister made him drink copiously of rue and wormwood tea, to give him a healthy appetite, urged him to ride on horseback before breakfast, and made a pillow of hops to call back the vagrant slumbers to his restless couch. But "neither poppy nor mandragora could ever medicine him to the sweet sleep" he was wont to enjoy. Mrs. Butler was a woman of very little sentiment, and never dreamed that she had herself been the innocent cause of the malady she was taking such ineffectual means to cure. Concerned as she felt for him, she could not help telling him "it was nothing but the hypo, or the megrims, for old bachelors always were troubled with them."

It was a fine morning on the first of April, all smiles, no tears: they had all been kissed away by the sun. Mrs. Butler was in her garden, a basket of flower-seeds in her hand, giving directions to a man, who was laying out the beds in the form of hearts and diamonds, and setting box in every corner. She was obliged to stop every now and then to scold her son Joe, who was jumping into the midst of the moist beds, overturning the flower-seeds, carrying off the gardener's tools, and doing every thing in the world he ought not to do. At last seeing his uncle approaching, he climbed up a peach-tree, and sat embosomed in the leaves, as quiet as the maternal bird in its nest.

"Brother Tim, you are the very man I want. Just run over to Mrs. Tilner's, and ask her for some slips of that scarlet geranium of hers. It is such a beautiful morning for gardening—you will see Miss Mitty, too, for she came back last night."

"I should be glad to oblige you, sister," answered Timothy, with deep solemnity, while at the same time his handkerchief to his eyes,

"but I am called to attend to matters of more importance; something very unexpected indeed. I must start immediately on a long journey."

"A long journey! why, the man is crazy. You were never ten miles from home in your life."

"Read that, sister," said he, putting a letter in her hand, "you will see it is no joking matter."

Mrs. Butler opened her eyes as wide as a morning-glory, while she perused the following letter:—

—, March 3d, —.

DEAR SIR,

As the administrator of your late uncle's estate, I am authorized to address you. By his sudden and lamented death you are at once a loser and a gainer. You have lost a worthy and generous uncle, and gained a large and unencumbered fortune. Your presence here will be immediately required, and I trust you will start as soon as possible after the receipt of this.

Yours, with much respect, &c.

The tears dropped from Mrs. Butler's eyes, before she finished the epistle. She loved her uncle very much, and was grieved and shocked at his unexpected death. No feeling of regret entered her disinterested mind, that she was omitted in the will; she rejoiced at her brother's prosperity in the midst of her mourning.

"Well, Timothy, since it has pleased Heaven to take away our dear uncle, I am glad with all my heart that he has seen fit to make you his heir. I am sure you will make a good use of it."

"I will try to be a prudent steward," was the meek reply. "But please, sister, to see that my best shirts and cravats are brought in from the wash, and sew that button on my buff waistcoat."

Mrs. Butler promised to have every thing in readiness, and leaving her beloved plants, accompanied her brother to the house. By one of those singular coincidences, which destiny loves to bring about,

who should be seen walking through the gate at that moment, but Miss Submit Schoolcraft, coming to pay the morning respects to her dear friend Mrs. Butler, after an absence of many weeks.

"I declare," said Mrs. Butler, "if there isn't Miss Mitty! I am so glad she is come."

"Sister," said Timothy, "if you think it would be prudent, I should—should like to speak a few words to Miss Mitty before I start—I have something—particular, hem—perhaps—you know what I mean."

"Oh! yes indeed; that's right; speak like a man. You've a right to hold up your head now."

The lady in question was now within speaking distance, and the ceremonies of meeting passed. The beating of Timothy's heart sounded in his own ears like the trampling of horses' feet on frozen ground. The only obstacle to the union for which he had long secretly panted was now removed, and he found himself suddenly in the presence of the very and only woman who had ever awakened a sentiment of love in his unpolluted bosom. Before he had recovered from the stunning effect of such unexpected circumstances he was seated alone with Miss Mitty in the front parlour, for Mrs. Butler kindly recollected a thousand things to do, that required her presence elsewhere. She had taken her seat by an open window, in the shade of a lilac bush in full bloom; a monthly rose, with a single flower, blushing on its stalk, stood on the window-frame. Timothy, who sat at the opposite side of the room, looked sideways towards the object of his attraction, and thought he had never seen her look so comely. Her ruffles were plaited so nicely, her hair was combed so smoothly, the folds of her neck-kerchief were so exact. Timothy sat with his feet on the rounds of the chair, and his hands in his waistcoat pocket; he felt glued to the spot—his tongue felt glued to the roof of his mouth.

At last Miss Mitty spoke; a woman is always the first to break such an awkward silence.

"Have you enjoyed your health, Mr. Fuller, since I saw you last?"

"Ah! Miss Mitty, I have not been quite well, but I feel some better now."

He hitched his chair two steps nearer.

"Have you been well, Miss Mitty? you look charmingly."

"My health has been excellent, thanks to Providence."

Every word that was uttered gave Timothy confidence to hitch a little nearer, till at last he got within the shade of the lilac tree.

"Miss Mitty, I have something very particular to say—if I may be so bold—would you be kind enough to read that letter?"

It was not without a great many coughs, and hems, and stammerings, he said all this. Having got this far he wiped the perspiration from his brow with his red silk handkerchief, fanned himself with its folds, looking steadily upon the green baize, till she folded up carefully the important document. She returned it, making a sensible remark upon the vanity of life, and the duty of resignation; and Timothy, who hoped the letter would break the ice, found he must make a desperate effort and break it himself. He looked round in a sort of despair, and his eye rested on that single rose, so sweet and fair. He remembered the flowers he had formerly presented; and breaking it from the stem, with a spontaneous burst of nature and feeling, exclaimed, "Mi—Miss Mitty, do you remember the first rose I gave you?"

He would have given all the world to have read his doom in her countenance, but it was perfectly opaque in its fresh composure. He thought she smiled as she gave a monosyllable affirmative, but she held the rose to her mouth and he could not be quite certain.

"Sister thinks," continued he, emboldened by his own exertions, "I had better think of getting married: a prudent wife must be a great blessing."

"So must a good husband be;" answered she, looking modestly down, and Timothy felt his hopes elevated almost to the summit of ecstasy. He drew his chair a little nearer, and she did not retreat.

"Sister says, a good wife makes a good husband; if you will take me, Miss Mitty, I will promise to be the best husband in the world."

She did not make an immediate reply, but there was something so encouraging in her glance and deportment, something so ominous of a kind reply in the manner in which she cleared her throat of a sudden huskiness before beginning to speak, Timothy felt as if he were reaching the happiest moment of his existence. He stooped forward, and ventured to take the hand nearest him, which still held the proffered and accepted rose; a gentle pressure assured him that his presumption was pardoned and his hopes confirmed. He recollected having heard his sister tell how Mr. Butler kissed her hand when she consented to marry him, and perfect novice as he was in the art of courtship, he blessed his memory for assisting him in this most interesting moment of his life. He bent his head lower and lower, his lip was just within reach of a hand which never before had received such devoted homage, when his body being too entirely on the edge of the chair to keep the centre of gravity, and being unaccustomed to such a position, lost its equilibrium, and poor Timothy kissed the baize instead of Miss Mitty's hand, with a suddenness and fervour that completely stunned him.

At this awful moment, a loud shout was heard from behind the lilac bush, and the black curls of Joe Butler were distinctly seen through the boughs. In every disaster there is some alleviating circumstance. Miss Mitty had a pleasure never before experienced, of seeing a lover prone at her feet; and however involuntary the prostration, it was flattering to her vanity. I suppose she must have a little vanity, for she was human.

The morning waned away. The stage was to start at noon that was to bear him to the scene of his future wealth. Timothy was the happiest of human beings. The wilderness blossomed, fountains gushed forth in the desert of his life. Then his conscience reproached him for not mourning for his uncle, and being so very happy, and he tried to look sad, but failing in the effort, laughed aloud. I will not describe the leave he took of Miss Mitty, nor the congratulations of Mrs. Butler, on the consummation of her warmest wishes, but I would mention how Mr. Butler heard the tidings of Timothy's windfall, but he was unfortunately absent in that eventful

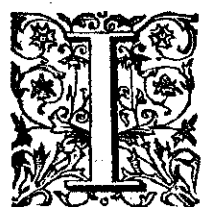
morning. The horn sounded clear and melodious, the stage rattled up to the door, the smooth black trunk was lashed on behind. Timothy took a tender leave of his sister, promised the children a thousand pretty things on his return; then stepping into the stage, was about to seat himself comfortably on the back seat, when Joe Butler, jumping on the wheel, whispered loudly in his ear, "*Oh! you April fool!*"

Then Timothy did indeed remember that it was the first of April, and his bosom died within him, to think he had been the dupe of a mischief-loving boy. All his bright reversionary prospects melted in air; his visions of love dissolved in tears. He was incapable of harbouring any bitter, or revengeful feelings towards the young villain, who had served him such a trick, but the iron of mortification entered into his soul.

He got "sister" to explain matters to Miss Mitty, who, strange and perverse as it may seem, bestowed that resentment on the unoffending and too credulous Timothy, which was due only to the saucy Joe. Mrs. Butler was so sensible of the injustice of this, that she gave up her matrimonial speculations, and even forgot herself so far as to call this pattern of propriety an "unreasonable old maid."

Good always comes out of evil: his flame expired with the oil that fed it. The last time I heard from him he was quite hale and cheerful, going on in his single and upright course, a candidate, if ever man was, for that reward contained in the beautiful promise "the pure in heart shall see God."

THANKSGIVING DAY.



I WAS travelling merrily along, in a snug, green sleigh, wrapped in buffalo skins, rejoicing in the prospect of a comfortable night's rest, in the still village which I saw peeping over the hill I was just ascending. It was a clear, cold, bracing winter's day. The ground was covered with spotless, shining snow, that made the eyes ache from its intense whiteness, and the air had those little, bright, cutting particles of frost, that glance like a razor across the nose and chin.

"How charmingly I shall sleep to-night," said I to myself, nodding in fancy at the very thought, "when I reach that hospitable looking inn, whose sign-post creaks so invitingly in the wind. How refreshing a hot cup of coffee, and light, smoking muffins will taste, after riding so far in the sharp, hungry air!" Regaling myself with this vision of anticipated comfort, I suffered the reins to hang a little too loosely: my horse, who was probably indulging in *his* reveries

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of oats, and hay, and a warm crib, made a kind of off-hand, sliding step, and with a most involuntary jump, I vaulted at once into a bed of a very different nature from the one upon which my imagination was dwelling. It was some time before I recovered from the stunning effects of my extemporaneous agility; but when I rose and shook off the snow-flakes from my great-coat, I heard the sound of my horse's bells at a respectable distance; and I had to walk speedily, and limpingly too, to the next tavern, before whose door I intended to have made such a triumphant flourish. There, I arrived at the mortifying conviction, that my sleigh was broken, that my horse had run, head first, against the shaft of another sleigh, and wounded himself in such a manner, that I should probably be detained several days on my journey. I felt quite stiff and lame the next day, but my landlady—who was a good little bustling woman, walking about so briskly that the border of her cap flew back and lay flat on her head as she moved—gave me so many warm lotions and doses, that towards evening, I felt as if I had recovered my wonted activity. She advised me not to leave the room that day, "as it would be a thousand pities, if I cotched cold, after such a marvellous deliverance." The scene from abroad was too tempting, however, for my philosophy. They may rave about the beauties of a moonlight night in summer—a night of shadows, bloom and flowers; singing birds and singing rills—but it cannot be compared to the one I then gazed upon—it was so dazzlingly bright!—the virgin snow looked so calm and holy in the clear light that mantled it! The first idea it suggested was a solemn one. It lay so cold and still, it reminded me of the winding-sheet of nature, till the almost supernatural radiance that sparkled from its surface, recalled to the imagination those spotless robes of glory, which are described as the future garments of the righteous. I stood with my arms meditatively folded, absorbed in these reflections, till the stars twinkled so kindly, with such sweet, beckoning lustre, I could not resist the temptation of going abroad. I rambled awhile down the street, when, catching the echo of a gay laugh, and an occasional jovial shout, on the cold, still air, I turned in the direction of the sound, and soon found myself near a boisterous,

busy little group, who were engaged in the delightful amusement of sliding down hill. I did not wish to disturb their gaiety, and stopping in the shade of a high stone wall, close to the spot, watched them as they stood on the brow of the slope, preparing to make the grand descent. There were girls and boys without hats, or bonnets, or cloaks—their cheeks looking so rosy, and their eyes so bright, it made your own wink to look at them. About half a dozen little girls were wedged closely together on a hand-sled, the handle of which was turned back and held by one who sat in the middle, in the capacity of charioteersman, and one who sat on the right hand, held a stick, which she occasionally stuck in the snow to pilot them on their way. There was one girl taller and larger than the rest, who seemed to take a kind of superintendence of the band. I never saw such a personification of health, bloom, and rustic beauty. Her hair, which was perfectly black, hung about her shoulders, as if she had just shaken out a confining comb; her face was lighted up with such a living glow of animation, it made one feel a sensation of warmth and comfort to gaze on her; and then her blithe voice rang so musically on the ear, it gave the heart a quicker, gladder bound to hear it. Just as they were about to start on their downward career, there came a dismal screeching from a neighbouring farmyard, that jarred most discordantly with the merriment of the scene. "Oh!" said one of the little girls, in a doleful tone, "the poor hens and chickens! What a dreadful, cruel thing it is to kill 'em so for Thanksgiving—just too, as they get nicely to roosting! I won't touch a bit of chicken-pie to-morrow—you see if I do." "Do you hear her!" started half a dozen at once; "she shan't have any Thanksgiving, shall she? And don't you pity the pumpkins, and the apples, and cranberries, Mary? And don't you think it hurts them to be cut, and pared, and stemmed!" Here the voices were drowned in peals of superior laughter. "Never mind, little Mary," interrupted the kind, glad accents of the elder girl—"I love you all the better for being pitiful, and so they all do, if they do laugh at you." I gathered from this childish, but moral discourse, that the next day was to be Thanksgiving—that good, old-fashioned New England festival, and

was exceedingly pleased at the idea of witnessing the hilarity of the village on so interesting an anniversary. I recollected that I had seen, or rather heard, most marvellous preparations going on at the inn, pounding, and stirring, and rolling, and beating, and chopping, and various other mysterious sounds.

Now, off they go—faster and faster—the little sled glides like a fairy boat over a moonlit wave: now it shoots like a falling star near the foot of the hill. A shout from above—but, alas! a cry of distress from below! The triumphal vehicle was overturned, and the compassionate little Mary taken up writhing with pain. "Poor, dear Mary!" exclaimed the pretty, black-eyed lassie, bending anxiously over her; "what is the matter?" "Oh, I don't know," answered the poor child; "but it hurts so bad!" Grieved at the accident that had checked their innocent glee, I immediately offered my services to carry the little sufferer wherever they should direct, an offer which was accepted with readiness and gratitude. Fearing she had broken a limb, I bore her with great tenderness and care to her father's house, which was indicated by her elder sister, the pretty girl I admired so much. It is unnecessary to dwell on the commotion of the family, upon the sudden entrance of a stranger under such circumstances. Every body knows what a bustle is. Let those who love such scenes, seek for a description elsewhere. I wish to say a few words of the good doctor of the village, who speedily arrived—a man, who, "take him all in all, we ne'er shall look upon his like again." He was dressed in a long, white, tight-bodied great-coat—a broad-brimmed white hat, with a pair of huge saddlebags on his left arm, and a pair of huge spectacles approaching the extremity of a long, thin, nose. He walked directly towards the table, without looking to the right or left; took off his hat, laid down his saddlebags, hemmed—then walked straight to the fire, sat down, and looked wisely into it, with his long hands resting on his knees. "Oh, doctor!" said the anxious mother, "do look at the poor child and see what is the matter." "I'll pass my judgment directly," said he, weighing his words as he uttered them. At last, after a great many preliminaries, he "passed his judgment," that the child

had dislocated her collar-bone—set it with greater expedition than I expected, resumed his saddlebags and hat, and walked directly out of the house, without looking to the right or left. Surely, if ever mortal man pursued a steady, undeviating course in the line of duty, it was Doctor M. And never was mortal man more venerated for wisdom and skill. It was almost believed he held the issues of life and death in his hands, and his “judgments” were never disputed. It is strange there are so many inveterate talkers in the world, when a few words, slowly uttered, invariably establish a reputation for superior sagacity. Let me do justice to the good doctor before I leave him. They said, when once you penetrated the hard, cocoanut shell of his manners, you met the sweet flow of the milk of *human kindness*, warm from the best of human hearts.

The family were so grateful for my attention, that they invited me to come and partake of a Thanksgiving dinner with them—an invitation I gladly accepted, especially, as Lucy, my black-eyed favourite was the elder daughter of the household, and backed the request with a glance, that flashed as brightly over me as the pine-knot blaze that was glowing in the chimney.

Thanksgiving morning dawned—clear, dazzling, and cold. The sun came forth like a bridegroom from the east, unconscious of the slaughtered victims, whose heads lay reeking in the poultry-yard, unconscious of his un pitying beams. Thanksgiving day! What “volumes of meaning” in that little phrase! A day when man makes a covenant of gratitude with his Maker for the free bounties of the year; when the fragrant incense of the heart rises up warm and fresh, above earth’s cold, wintry mantle, sweeter than the aroma of summer flowers, and mingles with the odours of Paradise! I went that morning to the village church—a plain, modest building, distinguished by a tall, white spire, that arrested the first and last glances of the magnificent eye of the universe. The village pastor—what endearing associations cluster around that name!—stood in the act of prayer, as I entered; I caught the sound of his voice, and it filled me with venerating sensations. It had that deep, full, organ sound, which breathes so eloquently of soul; and as it rose with the

fervour of his feelings, and rolled through the arch of the simple, but heaven-dedicated walls, I felt my spirit as irresistibly borne along on these waves of sound, towards the ocean of eternity, as the fallen leaf upon the billowy sea. I never heard such a voice in my life. “How,” thought I, gazing in wonder on his evangelical face, pale, but illumined with the glow of devotion,—“how came such a man here? Towards the close of the prayer, the deep, majestic tones of adoration and praise gradually lowered to the softer accents of humility and love. He sat down; there was a hush, as if the Spirit of God had descended and was brooding over the abysses of the human heart. I wish I were not limited to a sketch, that I might dwell long on this meek, richly-gifted apostle of our divine religion. Never before had Christianity seemed to me so lovely and august. His sermon was the most eloquent I ever heard—fraught with glowing images, with earnest, affecting, and energetic exhortations. I felt as if had been a monster of ingratitude, and I made a vow to myself, to live hereafter a wiser and a better man. I fear you will think I did not fulfil my vow, when I passed the succeeding scenes. Yes, I must descend from the holy mount of prayer and praise, to the simple, heartfelt socialities of a village life. Imagine me then, seated at a long table, covered with spotless linen, and groaning with unutterable comforts, and around that table three generations gathered. “First the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear.” There sat the grandfather and grandmother, their brows whitened with the harvest of life, ready to be gathered into the heavenly garner: then the respectable farmer and matron, the heads of the household, in the quietude of conscious competency and domestic happiness; then the children, from my pretty Lucy, down to a little chubby, golden-haired, blue-eyed thing that peeped from her grandfather’s knee, like a violet from a snow-bank. The old man raised his feeble hand, and every head was bowed, as with a palsied, difficult voice, he called down a blessing on the bounteous board. Even the infant on his knee, clasped its little hands, and looked reverently in its grandfather’s face, as if it were conscious it had something to do with heaven. After a decent pause, the busi-

ness of gratitude commenced. The roasted turkey—the lord of the table; the chickens, roast beef, chicken-pie, with its circumvolutions of paste, salient angles, and loop-holes, were first to be demolished, with the accompanying vegetables and relishes, the bright green pickles, garnished with the scarlet barberries. Then came the plum-puddings, and mince-pies, and apples, and custard, and cranberry-tarts; and pumpkin-pudding, and apple-custard: and it would have been considered the height of ingratitude to have refused one of these dainties. A triangular piece of each pie was put upon a plate, till they made a perfect wheel of party-coloured spokes. Lucy sat by my side and received my gallant compliments, with a mingled bashfulness and roguery of expression, which was completely bewitching to me. I was what they called a genteel, good-looking young man, and had a tolerable good opinion of my own powers of pleasing. I thought there could be no possible harm in flirting a little with the pretty rustic. I was incited to this by the evident discomposure of a youth, who sat on the opposite side of the table, whose countenance presented the oddest mixture of displeasure, fear, and shame-facedness I ever witnessed. He had really a fine face, but it was so disguised by these different expressions, it had something inexpressibly ludicrous in it. He sat at a distance from the table, with his feet on the rounds of the chair, so that he was obliged to reach forward his head and arms most lengtheningly; and he kept his eyes fixed so ruefully, yet indignantly on Lucy and myself, that he could not find the right path from his plate to his mouth. Lucy seemed saucily to enjoy his awkwardness and confusion, and true to her sex, triumphed in her power. At last, seeing that he had laid down his knife and fork, over his untouched pie, she asked with real interest and kindness of tone,

“William, why don’t you eat? I am afraid you are sick.”

“I haven’t got any appetite,” said he, huskily.

“You’ve lost it very suddenly,” said she, archly.

At this, he cast at me a glance of dim fierceness, so irresistibly comical, I had recourse to a convenient fit of coughing, to hide the rising laugh. Lucy caught the infection, and unable to resist the

impulse, laughed outright. The poor fellow started on his feet, set back his chair, with a tremendous noise, snatched up his hat, and marched directly out of the room.

“Oh, Lucy, what have you done!” said her mother reproachfully.

“Lucy, you ought to be ashamed of yourself!” uttered her rougher father.

I looked at Lucy. Her face was the colour of crimson, and an expression of alarm struggled with her scarcely conquered mirth. I began to think I had carried matters a little too far, and that Lucy was rather too much of a coquette. I was sorry for the pain I had given his honest heart, and for the confusion into which I had thrown the good people. She was evidently ashamed of having me suppose that he had any right to be displeased, and put up her pretty lip, and said she was sure she did not care: “he was nothing to her—he had no business to look so funny.” My thoughts were diverted into a new channel, by a side conversation which was going on by the couch of little Mary, (which was nicely made up in a corner of the room, within full view of the dainties of the day,) between her and a cousin of the same age, upon the comparative merits of the different pies their mothers had made, their superior quality and quantity. At last the dispute became very warm—their tones grew angry, and every little sentence began with “I say.”

What a lesson might the proud wrestlers in the great arena of life take from these Lilliputian disputants! They rested their claims to superiority upon the majority of pies made in their households, and each pie, in their eyes, was of more value and importance than the star of the legion of honour. It may seem a trifling theme; but many a time since that hour, when I have heard the high and mighty, in mind and name, contend for the poor straws of earthly distinction, I have thought of the eager, positive, triumphant assertion, “*my mother made the most pies.*”

To return to my rustic coquette. As evening approached, her vivacity was rather upon the wane: she cast restless glances towards the door: at the sound of the merry, jingling bells she ran to the

windows, and looked earnestly out, as if looking for something, whose coming she watched in vain. "He won't come, Lucy," whispered her sister to her. "I don't believe he will ever come near you again. You can't go to the ball." "I don't care," answered Lucy; but as she turned away, I saw tears gathering in her bright eyes, which belied the indifference of her words. I understood at once the state of the case. This awkward youth was probably a sweetheart of hers, who, when free from the demon spell of jealousy, was very likely a glass of fashion to the village dandies. There was to be a Thanksgiving ball, and he was to have been her partner. In a paroxysm of jealousy he had left her in the lurch; and the prettiest lassie in the country was doomed to the penalty of staying at home, because she could not get her beau!

This would never do. As I had been the bane, I resolved to act *the part* of the antidote. I managed to introduce the subject of the ball; said there was nothing in the world I should be so much pleased to witness, and if she would allow me the honour of attending her there, I should be extremely happy, &c., &c. Her countenance became radiant with animation. From what bitter mortification I had saved her! What a noble revenge would she inflict on her plebeian swain!

I have not leisure to tell the hows—the whys—the wherefores, and wherebys—we are in the ball-room, on Thanksgiving eve—a New England ball-room. If a son or daughter of the land of pilgrims should read this sketch, who has ever been so blessed as to witness such a scene, they behold it at this moment in their mind's eye. Scrape go the fiddles—pat go the feet—the girls all in pure, simple white, with here and there a gay ribbon and fluttering flower, scamper down the dance: the young men, with stiff, starched collars, and shining metal buttons, and heavy heels, foot it briskly after.

The floor has a noble spring, and those who are sitting around, spectators of the exhilarated actors, feel their feet keeping time involuntarily, and their heads nodding, before they know what they are doing. What would my patrician friends have said to see me

cutting the pigeon-wing, and taking the double shuffle with the superfluous animation that I exercised that evening! Yet I would not have been ashamed of my sweet partner, even in the heart of the metropolis. She did look lovely. To be sure, her sleeves were not twice as large as her body—her shoulders were where nature placed them—and, worse than all, she wore round-toed shoes! But her robe was as white as the snow on which the moonbeams shone, and her face as blooming as the red rose that decorated her brow. I was really half in love with her, and I rattled more nonsense in her ear than her unsophisticated imagination ever dreamed of. Her vanity was greatly excited, for I was the *gentleman* of the party, and the young girls looked upon her conquest with envy—that mildew which falls on the sweet blossom of the valley as well as the exotic of the greenhouse. At length the tide of youthful spirits began to ebb: the bounding step softened down into a kind of weary slide: the lights looked dim, and a sleepy cloud floated over the young, starry eyes shining around me. Lucy never opened her lips while I was escorting her home. She seemed to be communing with own conscience, which probably gave her some remorseless twinges and regretful pangs. For my own part, the excitement of the occasion being over, I felt a little sheepish for the part I had taken.

The next morning, every thing being ready for my departure, I called to bid farewell to Lucy, with the commendable resolution of speaking to her frankly on the subject of her jealous love, and recommending to her reconciliation and forgiveness. I found her with an open letter in her lap, the living carnations of her cheeks all withered and pale, and tears that seemed wrung by agony, streaming from her late glad eyes.

"What has happened, Lucy?" said I, trembling with indefinite apprehension. She tried to speak, but could not; and then put the letter into my hand. I read it, and wished I had been shot. I will transcribe it as faithfully as my memory allows, and I think I remember every word of it, for it seemed stamped upon my mind as with a red-hot iron.

"DEAR LUCY,—

"I'm going away—a great way off—and I don't want to go without letting you know that I forgive you the wrong you've done me. Oh, Lucy! if you only knew how it cut me to the heart, when you laughed at and made game of me, before that fine new sweetheart of yours, you never would have done it; for he never can love you as well as I have done; for he's known you but a day as 'twere, and I—we've known each other from children, and I've loved you better than any thing else in the world ever since I knew how. I'm going to sea; to sail on the great waters, and perhaps I may make my grave in them; for I don't feel as if I had any thing to live for now. I always had a kind of longing for the sea; but I hated to leave you behind. It's no matter now. If I thought you'd be sorry, I think I'd be willing to die. Good b'ye, Lucy,—I hope you'll be happy as long as you live.

"No more at present from your faithful.

"WILLIAM."

Thus ran poor William's letter. Oh, what mischief had my idle vanity wrought! What would I not have given to have blotted out the record of one thoughtless hour! The angel of consideration had whipped the offending spirit of coquetry from her bosom. The memory of his early love and devotion—his integrity and truth—came back upon her with the fragrance and freshness of the opening spring. Then the thought of the cold, dark waters to which she had driven him—of his finding there an untimely grave—and his injured ghost coming and standing beside her bed at the midnight hour, and crying—"Oh, cruel Lucy!" I read all this in her woe-begone face; and penetrated with remorse, I took her hand, and said with a manly feeling, which I think did me honour—"Lucy, I am sorry for you from the bottom of my heart. I am alone to blame. Your William will come back again—I am sure he will—and if he does not—by Heaven! I will marry you myself! Yes, I am going a long journey—perhaps I, too, must cross the ocean; but I shall return in two years, if my life is spared; and then, if you are willing, my

pretty Lucy, I'll marry you, and cherish you tenderly as long as I live."

"You are very, very kind," sobbed Lucy, "and I like you very much—but I'd rather have William, after all."

Oh, simple and unadulterated nature! how eloquent thou art! Art never taught its polished votaries a sentence more beautifully impressive, than this spontaneous expression of truth and sensibility!

Let us suppose two years and a little more are passed—that spring has covered the hill-side with green, and the valley with bloom. It was this sweet season when I again stopped at the village where I had spent the memorable Thanksgiving day. It was Sunday. Every thing was perfectly still: even my bustling little landlady had gone to meeting without asking a single question. I brushed the dust from my garment, and took the path to the white church, that now contrasted beautifully with the velvet common on which it was built. I entered: again I heard those deep, adoring accents, which had once before thrilled through my very soul: again I looked on the benign countenance of the servant of God, still bearing the sacred impress of his celestial embassy. I looked round. My eyes rested upon a pew not far from the pulpit, and they wandered no more. I felt as if a mountain were removed from my heart. Lucy was there, more beautiful than ever: her fair brow turned thoughtfully upwards, and a sweet, subdued expression diffused over her whole sunny face; and William was by her side, in the dignity of manhood, and no longer under the dominion of a withering passion, looked not unworthy of his blooming bride. As soon as the service was over, I stood in the broad aisle, waiting for them to pass out. My heart throbbed quicker as they approached with that sober, decent pace, which becomes those who are leaving the temple of the Most High. At length she raised her downcast eye, and it fell upon my face: a glow, like the morning, overspread her own.

"Oh! sir," said she, after the first heartfelt greeting was over, "I am so happy now! William has come back, you see, and"—"And

you are married," added I, taking up her hesitating speech. William blushed, and turned upon her a look of such pride and affection, I almost envied him. I have had many a joyous hour, but never have I felt so exquisitely happy as in the conviction that moment brought me, that the honest, loving hearts my folly had severed, were again united in those holy bands, which God having formed were never more to be lightly sundered

THE PHANTOM.

He could not gaze and live!
 He's fled—but thou art there—though paler still!
 Sad wanderer from thy last, unquiet home,
 Why is it that I shrink with icy fear
 From thee, thou semblance of the noblest form
 That ever clothed its warlike limbs in mail?
 Oh! if I'm doomed to see thee, *feel* thee near
 Where'er I turn, in sunshine as in gloom,
 Come not as now, a dweller of the grave!
 Leave in thy sepulchre that mournful shroud,
 And wear the glittering panoply of war—
 The ancient majesty of conquering Spain!
 Thou fadest from my gaze—I see thee not—
 But thou hast left a chillness in the air
 Scarcely less dreadful than thy shadowy presence!
 'Tis past! my struggling reason breaks once more
 The chains that supernatural horror weaves!
 I am alone! Oh! that no mortal eye
 Had e'er beheld these humbling agonies!
 Zoraya, *thou* hast heard me utter sounds
 That leave a sleepless echo, murdering peace!
 I'll tell thee all! give back thy virgin vows!
 Tear thy seducing image from my heart!
 Drown in black vengeance love's unhallowed fires,
 And let this bridal day go down in blood!
 What! shall I offer up this spotless lamb
 A living sacrifice to sooth the dead?
 Shall I resign her? tell her that the powers
 Of heaven and hell are leagued against our union,
 Though by an angel mother's blessing hallowed?
 Or shall I lift the veil, and show the gulf
 That yawns between us—the eternal gulf!

Oh! thou unsearchable, mysterious power,
Whose sway the ancient elements confess,
Why should the soul of man, thy noblest work,
Be thus defaced by warring passion's brunt?
Nature may be convulsed by thousand shocks—
By tempests rocked—by lightnings riven and scarred—
And smile again in her primeval beauty;
But there's no moral sunshine that can throw
A radiance o'er the ruins of the mind;
No smile to gild the desolating marks
That passion leaves—the tempest of the soul!—*De Lara.*

THE END.