

UGLY EFFIE;

OR, THE

NEGLECTED ONE AND THE PET BEAUTY;

AND OTHER TALES.

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BY MRS. CAROLINE LEE HENTZ.

AUTHOR OF "THE MOB CAP," "RENA," "MARCUS WARLAND,"
"EOLINE," "PASTOR'S WIFE," "TWO UNCLES," "NEGLECTING
A FEE," "THE TEMPTED," "AUNT MERCY," "MARY HAW-
THORNE," "DRUNKARD'S DAUGHTER," "PEDLER," ETC.

THIS VOLUME CONTAINS

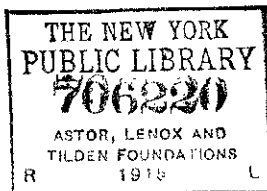
UGLY EFFIE; OR, THE NEG- LECTED ONE AND THE PET BEAUTY, NEGLECTING A FEE; OR, THE YOUNG PHYSICIAN AND HIS FORTUNES,	VILLAGE PASTOR'S WIFE, THE TEMPTED, AUNT MERCY, THE STRANGER AT THE BAN- QUET, THE TWO UNCLES.
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THE UGLY EFFIE;

OR, THE

NEGLECTED ONE AND THE PET BEAUTY.

Mr. HORTON, a rich and childless widower, made his first visit to his also widowed sister, Mrs. Dushane. A beautiful little girl of about ten, was introduced to him as the *darling Clara*, his little pet niece who was prepared to love her uncle better than any body else in the world, always excepting her mama. The child was remarkably beautiful, and all the decorations of dress were made to enhance her juvenile loveliness. The heart of the lonely man melted within him when he felt his neck wreathed by those white velvet arms, and his cheek kissed over and over by those sweet ruby lips.

"God bless her!" cried he, hugging her to his breast, again and again. "What a precious child it is!"

"I love you, dear uncle," muttered Clara, in the softest voice—"I have loved you a long time."

Mr. Horton gave the lovely child another warm embrace, then, releasing her, turned to his sister, with moistened eyes.

"If Heaven had granted me such a child as that, sister, to cheer my widowed heart, I should still be one of the happiest of men."

"You must look upon her as if indeed she were your own, my dear brother," said Mrs. Dushane, drawing Clara fondly towards her. "I am not so selfish as to wish to engross her exclusively, though I acknowledge I have a mother's pride as well as affection."

"But you have another daughter, your eldest born—where is she?"

My heart yearns to embrace them all. I came here to see if its aching void could not be filled."

"Oh! Effie?" said Mrs. Dushane, carelessly—"I do not know where she is. She is very shy and reserved—likes to be by herself—very different from Clara—remarkably ordinary in her person," continued she, in a lower voice, "and has a very singular and sullen disposition. She is a great affliction to me, but one cannot expect to be blessed in all her children."

"Still I want to see the child," said the benevolent Mr. Horton—"I loved her father like my own brother, and he used to say his little girl was the image of himself; I cannot help loving his daughter."

"I fear you will not find much to love in poor Effie," replied the mother, with a deep sigh, "but you shall see her," then ringing the bell, she ordered a servant to bring Miss Effie to her uncle.

Soon after, a dark, thin, neglected-looking child was ushered into the room, who hung back on the hand of the servant, and whose looks and gestures expressed sullenness and reluctance. Her long, thick, dark hair hung in tangled masses over her neck and forehead, and it was difficult to distinguish her features, for she endeavored to cover them with her hair, as with a veil. With slow steps and averted face, she approached the centre of the room, when her mother called to her in a tone of authority—

"Put down your hand from your face, Effie, and come and speak to your uncle—come—quicker."

Effie looked at her uncle through her long tresses, then, letting her hand fall, she drew nearer, with a more willing step.

"Ah! that was her father's glance," exclaimed Mr. Horton, opening his arms as he spoke.

Effie hesitated a moment, then darted like lightning to his bosom, and clung round his neck with both her arms, as if she would never let him go.

"Effie," said her mother, reproachingly, "you are too rude—I did not tell you to tear your uncle to pieces."

"Let her be—let her be," said Mr. Horton, pushing back her

hair, and looking earnestly in her face. "Why her eyes are full of tears, and her heart beats as if she had been running a race. Don't be afraid of me—I'm your own uncle, who has no little girl of his own to love; I want you to look upon me as a father."

"That will do, Effie," said Mrs. Dushane; "you make your uncle too warm—come and take a seat by me."

Effie withdrew her arms from her uncle's neck, and, sliding from his knee, took the seat indicated by her mother's glance. Mr. Horton's eyes were still riveted upon her face.

"Is that child sick?" he asked, abruptly.

"No," replied Mrs. Dushane—"she always has that meagre, half-famished look. She is a great deal stronger than Clara."

Mr. Horton did not reply, but looked earnestly at both children, while his sister watched his countenance with silent interest. Mrs. Dushane had anticipated the arrival of her brother with great anxiety. She knew the immense wealth he had acquired—that he had no children of his own to inherit it—that she was his only surviving sister, and she was sure that the moment he beheld her darling Clara, he would adopt her as the heiress of his fortune.

"My dear," said she to her, the morning of her brother's arrival, "you remember how much I have told you of your uncle Horton—your rich uncle. Now, though we have a very decent living, that is all;—I shall be able to leave you nothing, but your uncle is said to be worth a million—and, I have no doubt, will make you heiress to the whole, if you only try to please him, and be a dear, sweet, beautiful child, the whole time he is here."

"Oh! I will be sure to please him," cried Clara, dancing before the looking-glass. "I'll please him without trying."

"How are you sure of that, darling?" asked the mother.

"Oh, because I am so pretty," replied the spoiled child, shaking back the ringlets from her bright blue eyes, and looking archly in her mother's face. "You know every body says I am pretty, mama, and that sister is ugly."

"Yes—but you must not repeat what every body says before your uncle, for he would not be pleased if he thought you vain—and you

must be very polite and affectionate to him—get in his lap, put your arms around his neck, and caress him a great deal. You must never get in a passion before him, for it spoils your looks; you know, my dear, you are too apt to do it. You must be very attentive to him when he is speaking, and be sure never to contradict him. I recollect it always displeased him to be interrupted in conversation."

"I hope he will not stay long, if I've got to listen to him all the time," said Clara, "for I know he must be a dry old thing."

"You will not think a million of dollars dry, one of these days," said Mrs. Dushane—"but never mind, perhaps he will leave it to Effie."

"To Effie!" exclaimed Clara, with a laugh of derision. "To Effie! the ugly thing?—Oh, no! I'm not afraid of her. You see if I don't please uncle, without trying very hard either."

A servant, whose chief employment was to wait upon Clara, was full two hours curling her hair and arranging her dress, before the arrival of Mr. Horton, and when the business of the toilette was over, she led her in triumph to her mother, asking her "if Miss Clara did not look like a perfect angel?"

A rapturous kiss on her roseate cheek was an expressive answer in the affirmative.

"Oh! mama, you tumble my frock," cried the little belle in a pettish tone. "I don't love to be squeezed."

"Shall I change Miss Effie's dress?" asked the servant as she was leaving the room.

"It's of no consequence," said Mrs. Dushane, coldly: "she needn't come into the room to-night—I'm ashamed my brother should see her," continued she in a kind of soliloquy; "she is so ugly, and awkward, and wayward, I want to keep her out of his sight as long as possible."

Mr. Horton had not been more than a week with his sister before he discovered that though she was the nominal head of the establishment, Miss Clara was the real one, and that her varying whims and caprices were the laws that governed the whole household. Effie

seldom made her appearance, and then she seemed more like an automaton than any thing else; never displaying any trait of that sensibility which had so touched her uncle's heart the first night of his arrival. When company was present Clara was summoned to the piano to entertain the guests with music, which she had been taught her almost from her cradle, or she was called upon to display her graceful little figure in the mazes of the hornpipe, or the undulations of the shawl dance, which her master said she executed to perfection.

One evening Mr. Horton sat reading in an upper piazza which fronted the chamber he occupied. It was shaded by luxurious vines, which trailed their flowery tendrils through the diamond trellis-work, and excluded the rays of the setting sun. Embowered in the rich shades, he sat unseen, enjoying the sweetness and freshness of declining day. He heard the voices of the children in the adjoining room, and he could not but notice that Clara's tones wanted something of the dulcet softness of her parlor accents. He had scarcely ever heard the full sound of Effie's voice, and he now listened unconsciously to a conversation which promised to develop her character to a most interested auditor.

"Don't, Clara, press so hard against this geranium," said Effie, in an expostulating tone, "you know mother will be very angry if it is broken."

"I don't care," replied Clara, evidently persisting in her conduct, "she will not be angry with me."

"But she will with me," said Effie, "for I have the care of this flower, and if any harm happens to it, she will blame me. You've broken off several leaves already."

There was a moment's silence, and then a sudden and vehement exclamation from Effie again roused the attention of Mr. Horton.

"Oh, Clara, see what you've done! The most beautiful branch is broken—and you did it on purpose too!"

Clara laughed mockingly, and at the same moment Mrs. Dushane was heard to enter the apartment.

"Effie! Effie!" exclaimed she angrily, "what have you been

doing? How dare you break that geranium, when I've forbidden you to touch a single leaf of it?"

"I didn't break it, mother!" answered Effie, "I wouldn't have broken it for any thing in the world."

"How dare you deny it, when you are holding it in your own hand, you good-for-nothing little thing!" cried the mother, with increasing anger—"I suppose you want to make me think that Clara broke it—don't you?"

"Clara did break it!" sobbed Effie, "she knows she did, and I tried to keep her from it."

"Oh! mama, I didn't do any such thing!" cried Clara, with the boldness of innocence itself—"you know I wouldn't."

"I could forgive you for breaking the flower," exclaimed Mrs. Dushane, in the husky voice of suppressed passion, "but tell such another lie on Clara, and you had better never have been born."

Mr. Horton started from his seat in uncontrollable agitation, dropped his book, and rushed to the open door of the apartment just as Effie, smitten by a violent blow, had fallen prostrate to the floor, her hand still grasping the broken geranium, whose leaves were scattered around her.

"Clarinda!" cried Mr. Horton, sternly, "unjust, unnatural woman—what have you done?"

"She is a liar, brother, and I struck her. She deserved it," answered Mrs. Dushane, pale with anger.

"She is not a liar, and I know it," answered he, in a raised voice. "There stands the liar!" pointing to the now terrified and guilty-looking Clara. "I heard every thing that passed between them. She broke the flower wantonly, purposely, against her sister's prayers she broke it, and then basely denies it. Rise, my poor child," continued he, trying to lift Effie from the ground, "you shall have one friend to protect you, if your own mother casts you from her."

Effie was only stunned by the fall, and when she found herself in the arms of Mr. Horton, she struggled to be released.

"Oh! let me go," cried she, almost frantically—"she will hate

me worse than ever. Oh! how I wish I was dead! how I wish I was dead!"

There was something terrible in the expression of the child's large dilated black eyes, as in a wild paroxysm of passion, she repeated this fearful ejaculation. Mr. Horton shuddered, but he only held her the more closely.

"Clarinda," said he, solemnly, "you have that to answer for which will weigh like iron upon your soul at the great judgment day. What has this poor neglected child done, that you treat her worse than an hireling, and lavish all your affection on that selfish and unprincipled girl?"

"Clara," said her mother, "leave the room instantly. This is no place for you. Why do you not obey me?"

Clara began to weep bitterly, but her mother took her by the hand and leading her to the door, gave her in charge to a servant with a whispered injunction not intended for her brother's ear.

"Now let *that* child go," said she. "If I am to be arraigned for my conduct, I don't want any listeners. Effie follow your sister, and mind that there is no more quarrelling."

"She shall not go," cried Mr. Horton. "I fear that there is no safety for her out of my arms. Clarinda, I cannot believe the cruel, unjust, and unnatural mother I see before me, is the sister whom I remember in the spring-time of the heart's feeling, and in the gentleness of early womanhood."

"Brother, if you wish me to speak, let that child go. I will not be humbled before her, or any human being."

"Yes, let me go," said Effie, again struggling. "I don't want to stay here."

"One question, first," said Mr. Horton, "tell me truly, why you wished yourself dead?"

"Because every body hates me."

"And what makes you think every body hates you?"

"Because I am ugly," cried the child in a low, bitter tone, looking darkly and sullenly at her mother.

"I will love you, Effie, if you are good, as well as if you were

my own child. But you must not give way to such violent passions. Be gentle if you wish to be loved. Be gentle if you wish to be beautiful."

He put her down from his knee, where he had seated her, and motioned that she might depart. She stood for a moment as if irresolute, then threw her arms around his neck, kissed his cheeks, his hands, and even the sleeves of his garment, in a most passionate manner, and ran out of the room.

"Oh! Clarinda," cried he, greatly moved, "what a heart you are throwing away from you."

"To me she has always been sullen and cold," said Mrs. Dushane; "she has never shown me any affection, but on the contrary the greatest dislike."

"Because the fountain of her young affections has been frozen, and her young blood turned to gall," replied her brother. "She has been brought up with the withering conviction that she is an object of hatred and disgust to those around her, placed in glaring comparison with her beautiful sister, treated like a menial, her dress neglected, her manners uncultivated, and her sensibilities crushed and trodden under foot. Talk about her affections. You might as well take those very geranium leaves, and grind them with your heel, till you have bruised out all their fragrance, and then murmur that they gave you back no sweetness. But that child has affections, warm, glowing affections, though you have never elicited them—and a mind, too, though you have never cultivated it; but if God grant me the opportunity, I will take possession of the unweeded wilderness of her heart and mind, and turn it into a blooming, domestic garden, yet."

Mrs. Dushane was thunderstruck. She saw in prospective her darling Clara disinherited, and she knew not in what way to avert the impending calamity.

"Brother," cried she, putting her handkerchief to her eyes, "you are strangely altered. You used to love me once, but now the stranger within my gates would treat me with more kindness. You

don't know what provocations I have, or you would not accuse me of such cruelty and injustice."

"You forget, Clarinda, that I have been a witness myself of your injustice. I do not make accusations, but appeal to self-evident truths—and did you not suffer Clara to depart, without once rebuking her for her falsehood and guilt?"

"Brother, I believe you hate Clara."

"I have no love for her faults, and to speak the honest truth, I never liked *favorites*. From the time of ancient Joseph's coat of many colors, which excited the envy and hatred of his brethren, to our days of modern refinement, favoritism has been the fruitful source of sin and sorrow, and oftentimes of blood and death. Do not accuse me of unkindness, Clarinda, because I speak strongly of the evils you have caused. I would rouse you to a sense of your danger, and place before you, in all their length and breadth, the sacred duties you have too long neglected."

"I may have been wrong," cried Mrs. Dushane, apparently softening; "indeed, I know I have been, but I never could govern Effie in any other way than by severity. She is the most singular child you ever saw, and you are the only person who ever seemed to love her. You remember, brother, when I was a young girl, I was very much admired for my beauty, and perhaps was led to attach an undue value to it. My greatest ambition was to have a beautiful infant, and when Effie was said to be so remarkably ugly, I could not help it, but my heart seemed steeled against her, and she was a very cross infant, too, and cried day and night. I could hear the nurse calling her a cross, ugly thing, till I was ashamed to have her in my sight. Then Clara was so uncommonly beautiful, and such a sweet, smiling, bewitching little infant, I could not help idolising her. Every body called her an angel, and indeed you must acknowledge she has the beauty of one. Then she is so affectionate and loving. You don't know how she twines around one's heart. To be sure she was very wrong just now, very wrong; but pray forgive her this one fault. You saw how bitterly she wept. It was only the dread of your displeasure. You have no idea how tenderly she loves you.

Forgive Clara, for my sake, and I will be kind to Effie for yours."

"For your own sake, my beloved sister," said Mr. Horton, seating himself by her side, and taking her hand affectionately in his. "The consciousness of a fault, is one step to reformation. Only cultivate a mother's feelings for Effie, and believe me, you will be repaid for all your care."

Late that evening, as Mr. Horton was walking pensively in the garden, whose walks and arbors were partially illumined by the light of a waning moon, he was attracted by a dark object under one of the trees. Supposing it some animal, which had gained unlawful admittance, he approached to drive it from the enclosure, when he was startled by the appearance of two large black eyes turned upwards to the Heavens, flashing out from a cloud of gypsy-looking hair.

"Effie," cried he, "what are you doing here, so late, and alone?"

"Nothing," replied she, springing on her feet; "I was only looking at the moon and stars."

"You had better go and look at them through your bed-curtains," said he, passing his hand over her dew-damp hair; "it is time for little girls to be in bed and asleep."

"I cannot sleep so soon," said the child; "I think too much, and I wish too much."

"What is it you wish so much, Effie?"

"Oh! I wish to be up among the stars, out of the way of every body here; and then they look as if they love me, with their sweet, bright eyes."

Mr. Horton took her hand, and led her slowly and gently along.

"You seem to want to be loved, Effie?"

"Oh! yes," answered she, with energy, "I would die to be loved only half as well as Clara."

"Well, listen to me, Effie, and I will tell you how you may be loved even better than Clara. You must not think that it is only beautiful persons who are loved."

"But they hate me because I am ugly," interrupted Effie.

"You are not ugly, my child, and as you grow older, you will grow

handsomer. But you must forget your looks, and think of cultivating your mind and heart. You must try to be loved for something better than beauty, and beauty perhaps will come, without thinking of it."

Effie looked up to him with a smile which really had a beautifying influence on her face, seen by that soft moonlight.

"If I could only be with *you* all the time," said she, "I should be happy."

"Would you, indeed, like to leave your home, and come and live with me?"

"Would I?" cried she, suddenly stopping—"I would walk bare-foot to the end of the universe; I would feed on bread and water all my life, if I could only live near you."

"Perhaps we will live together one of these days," said he, smiling at her enthusiasm, "but I will promise you better fare than bread and water. And now, good-night—and God bless you, my own darling Effie."

Effie retired to bed, but long after she laid her head upon her pillow, she whispered to herself the endearing epithet, which had melted into her inmost heart. It was the first time she had ever been so fondly addressed, and even in her dreams she thought a gentle voice was murmuring in her ear, "my own darling Effie." Oh! how sweet to the neglected, lone-hearted child, was the language of sympathy and love! It was like the gurgling fountain in the arid desert—the nightingale in the dungeon's solitude—the gentle gale that first wakened the wild music of her soul. It seemed that till that moment there had been a chill weight of lead in her bosom, cold and deadening, but that it was now fused in the glowing warmth of love, and flowing in one stream of affection, reverence, gratitude, and almost worship, to the feet of her benefactor and friend.

When Mr. Horton proposed to his sister to take Effie home with him, she could not disguise her mortification and displeasure. Effie, the heiress of her uncle's fortune, to the exclusion of Clara, was a circumstance too intolerable to be endured. The ugly Effie chosen in preference to the beautiful Clara! She would gladly have refused the request, but she knew not what plea to urge against it. She had

herself acknowledged her unnatural dislike to the child, and her neglect of all a mother's duties towards it, was a too evident truth. In vain she sought to stifle the voice of upbraiding conscience. It would be heard, even amidst the whirlwind of passion that raged in her breast. Mr. Horton's determination was to remove Effie as far as possible from the associations of her childhood, to place her at school, where she could have every opportunity for the development of her talents, and the discipline of her character—and then, if she fulfilled his hopes, to adopt her as his own, and make her the heiress of his fortune, and the inheritor of his name.

Clara was outrageous when she learned the new destiny of her sister. She pouted, wept, and stamped, in the impotence of her wrath. Effie should not go home with her uncle, and get all his money, a whole million of dollars, away from her. She didn't want to be pretty any more. She wished she were ugly. She would be, ugly, if it were only to spite her mama, because she had not made her uncle like her better than Effie.

Her mother, instead of soothing and petting her with the halcyon strains of flattery, as she was wont to do when her favorite got up a domestic storm, now vented upon her the anger she dared not manifest before her brother.

"It was your own fault," said she, "you spoiled, ungrateful child; you broke my geranium, and then meanly lied about it. You had better not wish yourself ugly, for you will have nothing but your beauty to depend upon, when you grow up. Not a cent of money will you have for a fortune, while your sister will be an heiress and—a belle——"

"I don't care," cried Clara, scornfully pouting her rose-leaf lips, "I'll be a belle too; and I don't want a fortune. I'll marry somebody with a great big fortune, and you shan't live with me, either, Madame Mama."

Clara's appellation for her mother, in moments of passion, was "Madame Mama;" and Madame Mama began to feel a foretaste of the anguish caused by that "sharper than a serpent's tooth," the tongue of a thankless child.

Having depicted a few scenes in the childhood of the two sisters, and shown the different influences, emanating from the same source, which operated in the characters of both, the lapse of a few years may be imagined, and those who have become interested in the *Ugly Effie*, may see her once more in the period of adolescence—when released from the discipline of a school, she fills a daughter's place in her uncle's household. The mansion of Mr. Horton was such as became his princely fortune. It was on a lordly scale, and presented an elegance of architecture and refinement of taste unequalled in that part of the country where he resided. It was shaded on all sides by magnificent trees, and a smooth lawn stretched out in front, intersected by an avenue of symmetrical poplars, and surrounded by a hedge of perennial shrubs. Underneath one of the trees that shadowed the walls, and looking out on this rich, velvet lawn, sat the benevolent owner of this noble establishment, whose dignified person corresponded well with the other features of the scenery. A young girl stood near him, holding a bow in her left hand, and watching the motions of a young man, who was feathering an arrow fitted for that sylvan bow. Her figure had scarcely attained its full height, but it had all the rounded proportions and undulating outlines of early womanhood. Her head, covered with short raven curls, gave her the appearance of a young Greek, but her clear, dark complexion, of perfect softness and transparency, assimilated her more to the Creole race. Her features were not regular nor handsome in themselves, but they were lighted up with animation and intellect, and illuminated by such large, splendid black eyes, that it would have been difficult for the most fastidious connoisseur of female beauty to have judged them with any severity of criticism. From the bow, on which she partly leaned, the quiver suspended over her shoulder, the wild grace of her attitude, and the darkness of her complexion, she might have been mistaken for one of those daughters of the forest which American genius has so often glowingly described.

"That will do, Dudley," said she, playfully snatching the arrow, and fitting it to her bow; "better reserve some of your skill to

fledge your own arrows, for you know I can shoot like Robin Hood himself."

The young man laughed, and the trial of skill commenced. They shot alternately, and scarcely had the gleaming arrow darted from the string, than they each pursued its flight over the lawn, striving for the glory of first reaching the fallen missile. At last the young girl hit the target in the very centre, and Mr. Horton pronounced her the victor.

"You must surrender, Dudley," said he, "there is no disgrace in yielding to Effie—as swift a foot, as true an eye, and as steady a hand"——

"And as warm a heart," interrupted she, approaching him with a cheek to which exercise had given a color, like the coral under the wave, and seating herself on the grass at his feet. "But what shall be my reward, dear uncle? In the merry days of the 'Lion-hearted King,' the victor always received some crown, or trophy of his skill or valor."

While she was speaking, Dudley had been gathering some of the flowers and perennial leaves of the shrubbery, and had woven them into a rustic garland, which, sportively kneeling, he placed upon her brow.

"I suppose, if I were versed in the language of chivalry," said the youth, "I should address you as the queen of love and beauty."

"Beauty!" repeated Effie, with a laugh that made the green walks ring. "What would my mother and Clara say if they heard such an appellation given to their ugly Effie? You needn't look so mockingly, Dudley, for you may ask my uncle if, four years ago, I wasn't the ugliest little gypsy he ever beheld."

"You have, indeed, changed most marvellously, Effie," replied he, passing his hand carelessly over the head that rested against his knee; "and you may thank the daily exercise in the open air, which you have been compelled to take, for its invigorating and beautifying influence."

"I may thank rather, the parental tenderness, the kindness, and the care, that have been poured like balm into a bruised and wounded

heart, healing and purifying it, and changing, as it were, the very life-blood in my veins!" exclaimed Effie, in her peculiarly impassioned manner. "Do you remember the night when you found me under the sycamore tree, and called me your own darling Effie? From that moment I date a new existence—from that moment life became dear to me, and oh! how dear, how very dear it has been to me since!"

Mr. Horton looked down upon her with glistening eyes, and blessed his God that it had been his destiny to appropriate such rich treasures of intellect and sensibility, and as he looked on the fair lands stretching around him, far as the eye could reach, blessed Him again that he could now leave one behind him who was worthy to be the mistress of those beautiful possessions. There was another pair of brighter, younger eyes, looking down upon her, and wondering if it were possible that she had ever been called the "ugly Effie." Perhaps she read his thoughts, for she smilingly said—

"I wish you could see my sister Clara."

"Why?"

"Because she is so exquisitely fair—so faultlessly beautiful."

"I do not like faultless beauties," replied he; "they are always insipid. I do not like blondes—they have no expression. I like to see a face that changes with the changing feelings—now dark, now bright, like the Heavens bending above us."

"Do you think your mother and sister would know you, Effie?" asked Mr. Horton.

"I do not think they would," she replied, "for I sometimes hardly recognize myself. I should like to see them as a stranger, to see what impressions I might make. When shall I see them, dear uncle? Something whispers me I may yet be blest with a mother's and a sister's love."

"Are you not happy with me? Do you wish to leave me, Effie?"

"Never!—I want no other home than this. But, in looking back, I blame myself so much for the sullen and vindictive feelings I once dared to cherish. I tried so little to deserve the love which was not

spontaneously bestowed, I long to prove to them that I am now not utterly unworthy of their regard."

"I honor your wishes," said Mr. Horton, kindly. "And when we return from Europe, they shall be gratified. Two years will soon pass away. You will then have acquired all the advantages of travelling in classic lands. Dudley will have completed his education in the German universities, and in the freshness of transatlantic graces, can present himself to your fair sister, whose beauty you are so anxious he should admire."

Dudley began to reiterate his detestation of blondes, but Mr. Horton interrupted him to discuss more important matters.

Dudley Alston, was a ward of Mr. Horton's, the orphan son of the most intimate friend of his youth. When his father died, he left him to the guardianship of Mr. Horton, with the conditions that he should finish his education in Europe, and that he should never marry without the consent of Mr. Horton.

Mr. Alston had not been dead more than a year, so that Dudley had never seen Effie in her chrysalis state. They had passed together their last vacation, and now again met, free from all scholastic restraints, with spirits buoyant as young singing birds, converting the still home of the widower into a bright scene of youthful exercise and hilarity. Mr. Horton rejoiced in the circumstances which had thrown so closely together these two congenial beings so dear to his affections, and which promised to draw them together in closer and more endearing union. Dudley was handsome, intelligent, and high-spirited: generous almost to prodigality; unsuspicious almost to credulity; impulsive and uncalculating, and possessed of an independent fortune, free from any of those mortgages and encumbrances which so often neutralize the property of reputed heirs. Where could he find a husband for Effie, combining so many rare endowments, and where could Dudley find a being like Effie, with a soul of fire, a heart of love, and a person which he now thought singularly fascinating? He was too wise to speak his hopes, but he thought it as impossible that their hearts should not grow together, as that two young trees, placed side by

side, should not interlace their green boughs and suffer their trembling leaves to unite. He wrote occasional letters to his sister, and received from her cold and brief replies. She expatiated chiefly on Clara's extraordinary beauty, and lamented her limited means, to introduce her to the world as she would wish—hoped that Effie was improving, but declared her readiness to take her home, whenever her uncle was disgusted or weary of his charge. Mr. Horton never made known to her the astonishing improvement in Effie's appearance, for he wanted to dazzle her some day with the sudden lustre of the gem she had thrown from her heart. He always mentioned her in vague terms, expressed his general satisfaction in her good conduct, and approbation of her studious habits.—"As nature did not make her a beauty," said he, "I intend she shall be a scholar, and no fear of her being called a *bas bleu*, shall prevent me from giving her a thoroughly classical education. She is already familiar with Greek and Latin, and during our European travels, she shall become mistress of all the modern languages."

"Oh! there is nothing so disgusting as a pedantic woman!" exclaimed Clara with a shudder, as her mother finished the perusal of the letter. "I know French and Italian enough to sing all the fashionable songs and repeat all the common quotations, and that is all a young lady requires. As for Greek and Latin, I detest their very idea. But poor Effie needs something to distinguish her, even besides her uncle's fortune. I wonder if she is as ugly as ever. I should really like to see her."

"So should I," replied Mrs. Dushane, with an involuntary sigh, for there were moments when nature spoke in her heart, and she had become convinced, from her own fatal experience, that there were other qualities necessary in a daughter besides personal beauty. There were times "when the whole head was sick, and the whole heart faint," when she would have welcomed a filial hand to bathe her temples, or hold her aching brow, even though it were the hand of her neglected child.—There were times when the rebellious will, the selfish vanity, the careless disrespect, or bold defiance of the spoiled favorite, made her feel as if Heaven's retribution might be

felt in this world. At others, when she saw her caressed and admired, and heard herself envied as the mother of such a paragon, she tried to convince herself that disobedience and ill-humor were only slight flaws in this matchless diamond, which it would be invidious to dwell upon. She had had no communication with her brother during his residence in Europe, and believing that all intercourse with him would now probably cease, and that there was no hope of his substituting Clara for Effie, she became more and more anxious to secure for the former an establishment worthy of her charms. Clara was now before the world as an acknowledged belle, occupying that place in society for which she had been solely calculated, and which she had been made to believe a part of her birthright.

One evening, Mrs. Dushane accompanied her daughter to the house of a lady who, being a great amateur in music, was very fond of giving concerts. Clara, as a beauty, and a brilliant performer, was always invited. This evening, the lady told Clara to look her prettiest, and do her prettiest, as a young lady was to be present—a stranger, just arrived in town—who was said to have most remarkable and fascinating accomplishments. Clara's vain and eager eye ran over the crowd, in search of one who would have the hardihood to rival her. She had scarcely assured herself that there were none but familiar faces around her, when the lady of the house approached and begged permission to introduce her to Miss Horton, the young lady whose coming she had announced. The company fell back as the hostess led Clara and her mother through the folding doors, to the centre of another apartment, where a young lady stood beneath the full blaze of the chandeliers, leaning on the arm of a young and distinguished looking stranger. Clara gazed intently on the form of this rival beauty, and a feeling of relieved self-complacency dimpled the roses of her cheeks. Those on whom nature has lavished her living lilies and carnations, are very apt to depreciate the charms of those whose pretensions to loveliness are based on other attributes than mere beauty of complexion.—That of the young stranger was what Clara called dark, and it might

have appeared so, contrasted with the dazzling whiteness of her own, but it had that oriental delicacy and transparency so seldom found except in eastern climes. Her eyes were so dark and resplendent that their brightness would have been almost overpowering had they not been softened by long sweeping lashes, of the same jetty hue as her luxuriant and shining hair. Her figure was exquisite in repose, and from its waving outline promised that grace of motion which is more pleasing than beauty itself. There was nothing conspicuous in her dress save a small diamond star that sparkled amid the darkness of her tresses, like a lone planet on "night's ebon brow." The gentleman on whose arm she leaned, ah

"Not his the form, not his the eye,
That youthful maidens went to fly."

Clara marked him as her victim, and met his exceedingly earnest gaze with a glance of soft allurements. The young lady, whose air and appearance betrayed familiarity with the most elegant and fashionable society, nevertheless manifested no small degree of embarrassment while passing through the customary forms of introduction. She colored deeply, and her eyes were bent down with an expression of modesty and humility entirely unexpected from her previous bearing.

"Horton!" repeated Mrs. Dushane, when her name was announced, "I have a brother of that name now in Europe. It is a long time since I have seen him, however," she added, with a sigh.

"Then I hope you will have pleasing associations connected with me, madam," said Miss Horton, in a sweet, low voice.

Mrs. Dushane, who was prepared to wage warfare with one who might rival her daughter, could not help feeling the charm of such affability and sweetness. She wondered who the Mr. Alston was who accompanied her, but notwithstanding his juxtaposition with the attractive stranger, she could not but hope that he was the rich and distinguished individual Heaven had destined for her favorite child.

Music was the order of the evening, and Clara was led to the

piano, Miss Horton declining to play first. Being from early childhood accustomed to sing and play in public, she had no faltering of modesty, to mar the brilliancy of her execution. She sang and played as she did every thing else, for effect—and it was generally such as the most exacting vanity could desire. Mr. Alston and Miss Horton stood near her, and evinced, by their silent attention, the most flattering interest in the beautiful songster.

“And now, Miss Horton,” cried the impatient hostess—and “Miss Horton,” passed from mouth to mouth, as the circle pressed and narrowed around her—“Perhaps Miss Horton would prefer the harp?”

“She *was* more accustomed to the harp,” she replied, and a splendid instrument was drawn toward her.

Clara was no proficient on the harp, having, in a fit of obstinacy, given up her lessons, because the chords blistered her delicate fingers. She felt a thrill of envy, as she beheld Miss Horton seat herself gracefully before the lyre, such as the “shepherd monarch once swept,” and pass her white hands over the strings. At first her touch was soft, and her voice low, and she looked at Clara as if deprecating her criticism; but, after a while, she looked at no one—she thought of nothing but the spirit of music that filled her soul, thrilled through her nerves, flowed in her veins, and burned upon her cheek. There was no affectation in her manner—there was enthusiasm, sensibility, fire—but it was the fire from within, illuminating the temple, which its intensity sometimes threatened to destroy. It is true, she once or twice raised her glorious black eyes to Heaven, but it was because music naturally lifted her thoughts to Heaven, and her glance followed its inspiration.

“Are you not weary?” asked Clara, after she had again and again yielded to the entreaties of her auditors to give them another and yet another strain.

“No,” answered she, rising; “but I must not forget that others may be, notwithstanding their apparent sympathy with an enthusiast like myself.”

“Oh! Mr. Delamere,” cried Clara, addressing a pale, pensive,

and intellectual gentleman, who had stood, as if spell-bound, by the harp, “do not look so reproachfully at me; I did not think of putting a stop to your ecstasy.”

“You are right,” said he, drawing a deep inspiration, “I was forgetting the mortal in the immortal.”

“Oh! that we all, and always could!” exclaimed Miss Horton; “but those who speak of immortality in a scene like this, must be singularly bold.”

“Perhaps it would be more in keeping by that window, which looks out upon the magnificence of an evening sky,” answered Mr. Delamere, with a smile so winning, she could not but yield to the invitation; and seated in a curtained embrasure, which admitted the fresh night breeze, she soon found she was with a companion to whom she was not ashamed to communicate her most glowing thoughts, for she “received her own with usury.”—He had travelled over many lands—over the countries from which she had just returned—and she felt as if she heard once more the song of the Alpine peasant, the rich strains of the Italian improvisatore, or beheld again the sublime and storied scenes so vividly impressed upon her memory. But, at times, her abstracted eye told of other subjects of contemplation. She thought of the mother whose unkindness had embittered her childhood, now smiling unconsciously on her neglected offspring, and she longed to throw herself on her neck, and ask her to forget the past, and welcome back her no longer ugly Effie. She looked at her sister, on whose angelic face evil passions had left no more trace than the rough bark on the glassy wave, and forgetting the scorn and contumely she had heaped upon her in the first dark portion of her life, she yearned to embrace her, to press to her own those smiling lips, and call her by the sweet name of sister.

“Not yet,” said she to herself; “I have promised my uncle to shine before them a little while, at least till I have won their admiration as a stranger, and triumphed as another, ere I allow them to recognize in me the hated and ugly Effie.”

Surprised at her silence, Mr. Delamere watched her thoughtful

and varying countenance with an interest that surprised himself. His early history was romantic. In the very dawn of manhood he had formed an attachment for a fragile and lovely young creature, who expired suddenly on the very morning of her nuptial day, and whose white bridal wreath was placed upon the shroud that mantled her virgin bosom. Delamere, in the anguish of so awful a bereavement, secluded himself long from the world, which, to him, seemed covered with a funereal pall, and devoted himself to the memory of the dead. But, at length, the solicitations of friendship, the energies of youth, and the strong necessity of social life, drew him back to the scenes which he had once frequented, chastened by sorrow, enriched by experience, the history of the past written on his pallid cheek, and speaking from his pensive eye. No wonder that the music of Effie's voice had thrilled through a heart whose strings had once been so rudely broken. He felt for the young songstress a most painful interest, for he saw she was one born to feel and to suffer; for when were deep feeling and suffering ever disunited?

"Is not Clara beautiful, Dudley?" asked Effie, the morning after the sisters met. "Is she not beautiful as the dreams of imagination?"

"She is indeed most exquisitely fair," answered he; "she has almost conquered my prejudices against blondes. But she is no more to be compared to you, Effie, than a clear, cloudless day is to a starry, resplendent night.

*'Thou walk'st in beauty, like the night
Of cloudless climes and starry skies.'*"

"Don't flatter me, Dudley," cried she impatiently; "I know its exact value, which few girls, so young as myself, can say. Let there be nothing but truth and sincerity between us. Now is the time to prove whether the love you bear me is the result of habit and association, or that passion which would have selected me for its object, though we had been heretofore sundered as far as from pole to pole. Unfortunately, my uncle's wishes are known to both of us, revealed in an unguarded moment. To me, I acknowledge, his

slightest wish is a law, and you know my heart has not murmured at his will."

She blushed, and averted her eyes, which she was conscious expressed in still stronger language the feelings she was uttering.

"What is it you mean?" exclaimed he vehemently. "Do you doubt my truth and constancy, when, from the first moment I beheld you, I have scarcely had a thought or wish which has not been entwined with you? You were the star of my boyhood, you are the cynosure of my manhood, and age will bring no change. No, it is for me to doubt, not you, Effie."

While this conversation was passing between them, at the hotel where Mr. Horton had put up, incog., for the purpose already explained, Mrs. Dushane and Clara were expatiating on the young stranger who had flashed across their path the preceding evening.

"I do not think her really handsome, mother," said Clara; "she is not fair enough for that. She reminded me of some one whom I have seen before, but I cannot think who it is."

"It is the same case with me," said her mother; "I have been trying to think who she is like, but in vain. She certainly created a great sensation, and she was very affable and polite to me. How I wish you had not given up the harp, Clara. It's a thousand times more graceful an instrument than the piano. It was nothing but your waywardness. I told you you would repent of it some day."

"If I did play on the harp," said Clara, pettishly, "I wouldn't put myself into such ecstasies at my own music, as she did. I don't believe Mr. Alston admires her singing much, for he talked to me almost the whole time."

"Yes, because you talked to him. But, seriously, Clara, he is a fine-looking young man, and may be very rich. You had better try to captivate him, even if he is already captivated by Miss Horton. How familiar that name does sound! We must invite them to our house—make a party for them—for they evidently are persons of distinction."

"Not a musical party, mother. One good thing, however, we have no harp here."

The party was given, and Effie crossed once more with unquarable emotions, the threshold of her childhood's home. She entered the drawing-room, followed by a train of obsequious admirers, and received by the mistress of the mansion, with all the pomp and ceremony of fashionable politeness. She was magnificently dressed, for it was her uncle's pleasure that she should be so, and Clara felt, with envy and bitterness, that she was eclipsed by this splendid stranger.

"I will win Alston, if I die," ejaculated she to herself: "for I know she loves him, and it will be such a triumph."

Monopolized as Effie was, with Delamere flitting a pensive shadow at her side, it was difficult for Dudley Alston to claim any portion of her attention. It was therefore an easy task for Clara to monopolize him. She laid aside her frivolity, veiled her vanity, and taxed her mind to the fullest extent of its powers, to interest and amuse him. She had a great deal of tact, and could talk with a fluent tongue, while the loveliest smiles gave a charm to the words she uttered. Dudley could not help being pleased with this flattering attention. He knew from Mr. Horton that she was a spoiled and unamiable child, and was prepared to dislike and avoid her, but he could not believe aught but gentleness now dwelt in a breast so fair. Effie had entreated him to endeavor to think favorably of Clara, forgetting her childish foibles, and, for her sake he ought to do it. Mrs. Dushane was more and more delighted with Miss Horton, for nothing could be more deferential than her manners towards her. She sought her conversation, and turned from all her admirers whenever she had an opportunity of addressing her. Mrs. Dushane could hardly withdraw her eyes from her face. That haunting resemblance! It vexed and pained her. Once, moved by a sudden reminiscence, she whispered to Clara—

"It is the most ridiculous thing I ever knew—and yet there is something about Miss Horton that really makes me think of our Effie."

"Shocking?" exclaimed Clara, laughing outright, "what would

Miss Horton say, if she knew you compared her to such a thing as Effie?"

Alston caught the name of Effie.

"You were speaking of some one by the name of Effie," said he. "I have always admired it since I read the Heart of Midlothian. Is the Effie to whom you allude, as beautiful as the lily of St. Leonards?"

"Oh no—it is my own sister, whom my uncle adopted, and who is now in Europe with him. She is very far from being pretty."

"Indeed," said he, "is that possible, and your sister, too? Does she not resemble you in the least?"

"No," answered she, with a shiver of disgust. "She is lean, swarthy, and almost deformed. But uncle will give her a large fortune, and that will make up for her defects."

"Perhaps she has improved since you saw her last," said Dudley, and he could not help casting an admiring glance towards Effie, whose graceful head was at that moment turned towards her mother—in the act of listening. Effie had been praising the beauty of Clara, and asked if she were an only daughter.

"No—I have one beside," answered Mrs. Dushane in a confused manner, "but she lives with her uncle, who has adopted her."

"Is it long since you have seen her, Madam?"

"Oh! yes—she was a little child, when he took her, and now she is a young lady."

"If she was as beautiful as her sister, I should think you would long to see her," said Effie.

"She wasn't to be compared to Clara, indeed, she was as ugly as her sister is pretty!"

"Poor girl!" cried Effie, "I hope you did not love her less because Nature denied the gift of beauty?"

"Why, no," stammered Mrs. Dushane: "one can't help their looks. But hers were uncommon."

"Do you think you would know her now, after so long an absence?"

"Yes—I should know her any where. She looked like nobody in the world but herself."

A half-suppressed sigh, which followed these words, sounded in Effie's ear like the music of the spheres. She unconsciously echoed it, and it was echoed yet again, for the pensive Delamère was lingering by her side, and this token of sensibility interested him more than all the brilliancy of her attractions.

"Can she have known sorrow?" thought he. The next self-interrogation was—"Has she known love? And oh! how ardently, how devotedly," thus continued his meditations; "such a being must love! Would she accept the reins of a heart, once impassioned as her own? Would she mingle the unfaded blossoms of her youth with the dark cypress and melancholy yew?"

Effie, touched by the soft gloom that hung like a cloud around him, lent a more than willing ear to his conversation. But, while she listened to him, her thoughts often wandered to one whom Clara kept ever near her, and on whom her eyes turned with an expression of unequivocal admiration. A pang shot through her heart, such as but one passion can inflict. Then another succeeded that she was capable of yielding to such an emotion.

"If he be not mine, wholly mine, heart, soul and life, I will resign him, though I die in the effort," was the language of the maiden's soul. Her love had hitherto flowed on, a clear, unruffled stream, rising in the green hills of adolescence, its channels margined with flowers, and its current gilded by the sunbeams. Now the waters were becoming troubled, for they were rolling over a rocky bed. Did the rocks betoken that a whirlpool was near, and was the frail bark of her happiness to be wrecked in its vortex?

One morning, when the demon of ill-temper, roused by some petty disappointment, had full possession of Clara, and proud Mrs. Dushane, as usual, was the victim of its inflictions, a letter came from Mr. Horton, announcing his return from Europe, and his intention of visiting her immediately, with his adopted daughter. This annunciation could not have been made at a moment more propitious for Effie; for her spirit was chafed and smarting from the ungrateful conduct of Clara. She sat, however, like one in a trance, for she was ashamed and perplexed in what manner to

receive her long-estranged daughter. An acknowledged heiress, fresh from the courts of Europe, was a being of some consequence, no matter how ugly she might be.

"Poor Effie!" exclaimed she, "I did treat her shamefully, and all for the most selfish and passionate of human beings, with nothing on earth to recommend her but a little beauty, of which I am getting heartily sick."

"Oh! *Madame Mama*," cried Clara, who still retained some of the deeply respectful language of her childhood, "it is too late to sing that song; you are ten times more vain of me than I am of myself. If I am vain, you taught me to be so; if I am passionate, you set me the example. 'It won't do for folks that live in glass houses to throw stones.' But good heavens, what shall we do with Effie, at all these fine parties they are making for Miss Horton? Oh! I forget she can talk Greek and Latin, and French and Italian. She is a learned lady, and will put me quite in the shade. An heiress, too! Perhaps Dudley Alston will fall in love with her. What in the world shall I say to her? I declare I never felt so strange about any thing in my life."

"You had better treat her kindly, if it is only from policy, Miss Clara, for though you deserve it not, she may share her fortune with you—for I remember well the poor thing was generous to a fault!"

Clara, upon reflection, concluded to act upon this hint, and she began to think too that it would be a delightful thing to have Effie near, as a foil to her own beauty. She would shine still brighter in the dark beaming eyes of Dudley Alston.

Mrs. Dushane felt in a state of trepidation the remainder of the day. The sound of carriage wheels made her start and change color. The sudden opening of the door made her heart beat almost to suffocation.

"Oh! how I wish it were over," she would say. "If I only knew how she felt towards me, I should be easy. If I only knew how she looked! She can't help being ugly, though."

About the twilight hour, the carriage of Mr. Horton did indeed roll up to the door and Mrs. Dushane beheld her brother descend with

a veiled lady clinging to his arm. A large shawl wrapped her figure, though the weather did not seem to require such a protection. Even when she entered, they could see nothing of her face through the thick green veil that covered it.

"Ugly still!" thought Clara, "or she would not take such pains to hide herself."

"I have brought you back a daughter," said Mr. Horton, after embracing his sister and Clara; "but remember, my sister, if you place the least value on a brother's love, not to wound her feelings again, with regard to her personal deficiencies. She comes to you a good, affectionate and intelligent girl, who cherishes no vindictive feelings for the past, and who is anxious to show you all the tenderness of a child."

"Only promise to love me, my mother, half as well as you do Clara," said Effie, in a trembling voice, throwing her arms around her mother's neck and leaning her head on her shoulder, "and I will not ask for more."

Mrs. Dushane, completely overcome by this unexpected softness and humility, pressed the veiled figure of her child to her heart, and wept and sobbed till her brother led her to a seat, and calmed her agitation.

"And you too, my sister," cried the same sweet tremulous voice; "let us henceforth love one another."

Clara returned the embrace, with a semblance of warmth, but she was dying with curiosity to look under the green veil and the muffling shawl. She saw with surprise, however, that the hand which clasped hers, was of exquisite delicacy and symmetry, soft and jewelled as her own.

"Let me take off your bonnet and shawl," said she; "you must be very warm."

The servant at this moment entered with lights, thus dispersing the shades of twilight which lingered in the room. Effie first gave the shawl into Clara's eager hand, revealing by the act the full outlines of her splendid figure; then throwing off the bonnet and veil,

and shaking back her jetty ringlets, she turned and knelt at her mother's feet.

"Behold your Effie!" exclaimed she, "no longer sullen and unloving, and I trust no longer ugly. My dear uncle was determined you should admire me, before you knew my identity, so you must forgive me for having appeared in masquerade. Having assumed his honored name, it was an easier task. I think you liked me as a stranger;—refuse not to love me now."

Mrs. Dushane was so bewildered and astonished and delighted, she was very near falling into hysteric fits. When she was composed enough to speak, she repeated in a kind of triumph;

"I said she looked like our Effie—I said she made me think of our Effie."

Clara's blooming cheek turned to the whiteness of marble. The chill of envy penetrated to her very heart. The fascinating being, whom she dreaded as a rival, was then her own sister: so long the object of her contempt and derision. The transformation was too great. It was incredible! Effie met her cold, fixed gaze, and an involuntary shiver ran through her veins. The image of Dudley Alston passed before her, and she feared to think of the future.

Mrs. Dushane was so proud of her new daughter, so pleased and excited by the éclat and romance of the circumstances that attended her arrival, and her house was so thronged with visitors, she had hardly any time to think of Clara. But Clara was not forgetful of herself. To win Dudley Alston, whom she loved as far as her vain heart was capable of loving, was the end and aim of all her hopes and resolves. To win him from Effie was a double triumph, for which she was willing to sacrifice truth, honor, and that maiden modesty which shrinks from showing an unsolicited attachment. She believed that if she could convince Effie that she herself was beloved by Alston, she would be too proud ever to look upon him as a lover, and that if Alston supposed Delamere a successful and favored admirer of Effie's that the same pride would make him stand aloof and forbid him to seek an explanation. Effie was too ingenuous and high-souled to suspect Clara of acting this doubly treacherous

part. She felt as only a nature like her's can feel, that Dudley Alston was more and more estranged from her, but she believed Clara was supplanting her in his affections, and disdained either by look or word to draw him back to his allegiance.

"What do you think of Dudley Alston, Effie?" asked Clara, abruptly, once when they chanced to be alone.

Effie's quick blood rushed burning to her cheeks.

"As the associate of my youthful pleasures, as my fellow student and fellow traveller, he must naturally seem very near to me," she answered, with assumed composure.

"He is very handsome, very pleasing," said Clara, with affected confusion, "and I cannot help liking him better than any one I ever knew; you who have known him so long, can tell me whether I may trust him—I will say it, Effie—whether I may dare to love him!"

Effie turned deadly pale—she looked in her sister's face, and asked the simple question—

"Has he told you that he loved you, Clara?"

"Good Heavens! what a question!" exclaimed Clara, with a look of offended modesty; "do you think I would have made such a confession, had I not been in the first place aware of his love?"

"No, surely you would not," answered she, in a voice so strange and unnatural, that Clara trembled at the bold step she had taken. She began to fear the consequences.

"What's the matter, Effie?" said she, "are you faint?"

"I don't know," she replied, passing her hand hurriedly over her brow; "but the air is very close here. I will go into the balcony."

She rose as she spoke, and Clara rose simultaneously.

"I would rather be alone," said Effie; and Clara dared not follow.

"The hour of trial is come," thought Effie; "let me meet it without blenching!"

She wandered into the garden, and sat down under the shade of the sycamore, where her uncle had found her years before, longing, in the bitterness of her young heart, to die. How long she sat, she knew not—she was roused by the approach of Dudley Alston, who,

seeing her sitting like a pale statue there, forgot, for the moment, the withering doubts which Clara had been breathing into his ear.

"Effie, why are you here, sitting so pale and still?" cried he, in a tone of the deepest tenderness.

Effie rose and leaned against the tree for support.

"Lean on me, dearest Effie," continued he, passing his arm round her waist, and drawing her towards him; "you are ill—you are faint."

Indignation gave her strength, as she released herself from his clasping arms.

"I can forgive inconstancy, Dudley, but not insult," said she, and the lightning darted from her eyes;—"you remember that I told you, if the hour should come, when your heart was not wholly mine, I would not wed my fate to yours, though life should be the sacrifice. Had you nobly and ingenuously told me that you no longer loved me, that my more beautiful sister had won the affection you once thought mine, I would have forgiven, I would still have loved you as a brother. But to mock me still with looks and words of seeming love—I cannot, will not bear it."

"By the Heaven above," exclaimed the young man, vehemently, "I swear this charge is false—who dares to accuse me? If it be Delamere, his lily face shall soon wear another livery."

"No, Dudley—wrong not one who is incapable of any thing mean and calumniating. Clara herself has disclosed to me your love and hers, and I here declare you as free from all allegiance to me, as the cloud that is passing over the sun. But she may as well build her home on that thin, grey cloud, as trust for happiness to a heart as light and vain as yours."

"Effie!" cried he, forcibly seizing her hand, and holding her back as she turned to depart; "you shall not go from me thus. Come with me into your sister's presence, and let her explain this shameful mystery. I have never breathed one syllable to her but the common-place language of admiration. My heart has never wandered from you toward her, or one of woman-kind. Come with me. I demand it as an act of justice—I claim it as a sacred right!"

"Yes," exclaimed a deeper voice from behind, "he has a right, and I will sustain it."

And Mr. Horton emerged from an arbor, which the foliage of the spreading sycamore partially formed. He had been reading in the shade—one of his daily habits in summer—and had overheard a conversation, fraught with intense interest to him. Strange!—the good man despised the character of a listener, and yet it was the second time he had involuntarily acted the part of one, in the really dramatic history of his sister's family. He was indignant and excited, and drawing Effie's trembling arm through his, he led her towards the house, with no lagging footsteps. As they came through a back path, they entered the room before Clara had time to escape. When she met her uncle's stern eye and frowning brow, she knew she was to be arraigned as a criminal, in the presence of the man for whom she had bartered her integrity, and bartered it in vain.

"I have lost him forever," whispered her sinking heart, "but I will never recant what I have said—he never shall be hers!"

"Clara," said her uncle, approaching still nearer, and keeping his piercing eyes upon her, "tell me the truth, on your soul's peril—has this young man ever made professions of love to you?"

Clara bowed her head slowly, till her ringlets half veiled her beautiful face.

"I have revealed it to my sister, and I cannot deny it to you."

"This is too much!" exclaimed Dudley, his face turning hueless as ashes—"Oh, if she were but a man!"

"Peace Dudley!" cried Mr. Horton in a commanding voice. Then again turning to Clara.

"I remember, years ago, a little girl, who wantonly broke the geranium her mother prized, and to screen herself from blame, boldly accused her innocent sister of the fault she had herself committed. Have you forgotten it?—or the shame and sorrow of that hour? Clara, you are still the same—false, false to the very heart's core."

"You always hated me," cried Clara, trying to assume a bolder tone, in the desperation of her situation; "you always hated me, and took Effie's part against me. I wouldn't have told her what I

did, though I have said nothing but the truth, if I had thought she would have cared any thing about it. I'm sure she might be satisfied with her new lover, Mr. Delamere, without making such a fuss about a cast-away, to whom I condescend to show some favor."

"Clara," exclaimed Effie, raising her brow from her uncle's shoulder, where she had bent it in anguish and shame during this disgraceful scene—"Clara, you have betrayed yourself, by this double falsehood. You know that I have refused Mr. Delamere as a lover, but that I honor him as a friend. I considered such a secret sacred, but you have forced me to reveal it. Dudley, my heart acquits you fully, freely, humbly—for oh! how much have I erred in thus doubting thy honor and thy truth."

Their eyes met, as they turned towards each other. How they would have sealed their reconciliation cannot be known, for Mr. Horton threw his arms around them both so closely, in the fullness of his joy, that their hearts beat against each other, while they found a parental pillow on his own. Tears fell from the good man's eyes.

"God bless you, my children," cried he, kissing Effie's crimsoned cheek, "and make you a blessing to each other. Let not the falsehood and guile of others ever again shake your confidence and love. Let your love be founded on a rock—even the rock of ages—then the winds and waves may beat against it in vain."

During this scene, the guilty, foiled, and consequently wretched Clara, stole unnoticed from the apartment, and in the solitude of her own chamber gave vent to the violence of long-suppressed passion.

"Oh! that I had been born ugly!" she said, stamping in the impotence of her rage: then running to a mirror, and gazing on her convulsed features—"I am ugly now—good Heavens! how horrible are the effects of passion! Yes, mother," continued she—for Mrs. Dushane, who had heard the loud and angry voices below, without daring to enter, fearing in some way that Clara was involved in the difficulty, softly opened the door of the chamber and looked anxiously in—"yes, mother, come and see your *beauty* now! See your own work, and be proud! If you hadn't called me your beauty, your pet, your darling, till I sickened at your flattery, and loathed

the author of it—if you had cultivated in me one moral virtue, I should never have been the detected, hated and despised thing I am now!”

Poor Mrs. Dushane! she had sown the wind, and reaped the whirlwind.

Effie, who pitied her unhappy sister, would gladly have shared her fortune with her, but this her uncle forbade.

“If she should be in want and sorrow, you shall relieve and comfort her,” said he, in answer to her prayers. “If she marries, for your mother’s sake, you may supply her wedding paraphernalia; but I will never make her the guardian of Heaven’s bounty—never give her the means of administering to her own evil passions.”

The UGLY EFFIE, soon a happy bride, became her mother’s pet and darling. The BEAUTIFUL CLARA, still unmarried, continued to embitter her peace, and present a fatal example of the evils of maternal favoritism.

THE TWO UNCLES.



MISS PHILLIS MANNERS was the maiden sister of Mr. Manners, and the female guardian and governess of his two motherless daughters, Lelia and Elmira. One evening, Miss Manners entered the apartment of her nieces, with a decided air of vexation, and even anger.

“How provoking!” she exclaimed; “how unfortunate! The most mortifying circumstance in the world!”

“What is it, Aunt Phillis?” asked Lelia, sympathizingly.

“Aunt Phillis again!” repeated the lady. “Will you never learn to call me Cousin Phillis? I have told you a hundred times I disliked that formal, old-fashioned title.”

“Forgive me, dear aunt. Well, I cannot help addressing you so—I have always called things by their right names, and as you are my aunt, and not my cousin, I can’t see the sin of giving you the title nature designates. You know I haven’t been with you long—

I shall become accustomed by-and-by to your peculiarities, and endeavour to conform to them. Pray, tell us what is so provoking?"

"Your father has just received a letter from your Uncle Clements. He is coming here to-morrow, the very day I expect your Uncle Banks. Was ever any thing so provoking?"

"Provoking, indeed!" cried Elmira, reflecting as in a mirror, the mortified expression of her aunt's face.

"Dear Uncle Clements!" exclaimed Lelia, clasping her hands joyfully together. "I am so glad he is coming—Aunt Lydia told me so much of his goodness, piety, and talents, my heart yearns towards him. Our mother, too, loved him very dearly."

Miss Manners cast a withering look on the glowing countenance of Lelia.

"You forget his poverty and the low society he must keep, in comparison with his brother. Mr. Banks is come into possession of a splendid fortune, and will visit us in a style suited to his rank. There will be a succession of parties and entertainments while he is here. We shall all derive great consequence from his wealth—but the poverty of your Uncle Clements will weigh as much against us in the opposite scale. I never was so vexed in my life."

"I did not know that poverty, produced by misfortune, was a crime and a degradation, before," said Lelia, warmly. "For my part, I feel inclined to pay him a thousand times more respect, in his present reduced circumstances, than if he were rolling in affluence."

"Whatever your inclinations may be," said Miss Manners, with dignity, "you will be careful not to offend your Uncle Banks, by showing a preference to Mr. Clements. He is only half brother to your mother, and I don't see the necessity of calling him uncle at all."

"Must we call him cousin, too?" asked Lelia, laughing.

"I suppose you will honour his precious son Charles, who is to accompany him, with that title," replied her aunt. "But I warn you against familiarity with him. Your Uncle Banks has a son, with whom you may be proud to claim kindred, and though he is your cousin, it does not prevent the possibility of a nearer connection. It

would be well to have the property kept in the family. Young ladies, a great deal may depend upon this visit of your uncle's. The stay of the last shall be very short, if it depends on *my* influence."

"Surely, aunt—cousin—you will not treat him with incivility?" said Lelia—looking reproachfully at her silent sister."

"I shall not be dictated to in my course of conduct, Miss Lelia: but whatever it is, I shall expect you will imitate it. Your sister, I am confident, will do so, without any exercise of authority on my part. Your father leaves all household regulations to me, and I shall allow no interference in my arrangements."

She left the room, as she spoke, with a raised head, or rather a raised turban, for her head, unusually small, was enveloped in such voluminous folds of muslin and lace, it required some discrimination to notice the face, surmounted by such a tremendous turret. The sisters were left alone, and looked into each other's faces for a moment, without speaking—Lelia's cheeks burned with an unusual colour, and her eyes sparkled with excitement.

"Thank Heaven!" cried she, "that I said nothing really disrespectful to Aunt Phillis—but from you, Elmira, I cannot withhold the expression of indignant feeling. Speak to me, sister, and say you scorn such sordid views, and know how to appreciate virtue itself. Say that you will unite with me in paying both our uncles the respect and affection that is due to them—that you will make no distinction in favour of wealth or circumstances. Think if our dear mother were alive, what she would wish us to-do, and you will never wound the feelings of one who was so dear to her."

"You are the strangest girl I ever saw in my life, Lelia," said Elmira, coldly; "you make as much fuss about this old uncle as if he were made of gold; I don't know what we shall do with him—for Uncle Banks must have the handsomest chamber, and we must keep the next handsomest for company. Then there is Cousin Phillis' room and ours. The other chambers are very decent, but they have no fire-places. He will be obliged to be satisfied with one of them. Cousin Phillis never will allow a bed to be put in one of the lower apartments."

"Has our father no authority in his own household, that every thing must be referred to *Cousin Phillis*, as you are pleased to call her?" asked Lelia, trying to speak calmly. "If I find *Unce Clements'* comfort so entirely disregarded, I shall speak to *him*, and see that he is properly attended to."

"Father would as soon cut off his right hand, as contradict any of *Cousin Phillis'* orders, I assure you," answered Elmira. "You are the only person who ever dared to do it yet, and you will be very sorry for it. She said before you came home, she knew Aunt Lydia had spoiled you, and it is true enough. You are exactly like her, in thought, word, and action."

"Oh! that I were indeed like her," exclaimed Lelia, "for a gentler, purer, holier being, never lived. All my virtues are hers, all my faults my own. Let me never hear *her* reproached for follies or sins which are the legitimate offspring of my own heart."

Unable to repress the tears which this unkind allusion to a relative so tenderly beloved, and so recently lost, excited, Lelia left the room, feeling more keenly than she had ever done before, that between her sister and herself there was not one feeling or principle in common. All that is necessary to state of the previous history of these two young sisters, may be explained in a few words. Deprived in childhood of their mother, they were separated immediately after her death, and placed under influences as opposite as pole to pole. Aunt Lydia, a maiden sister of Mrs. Manners, received the orphan Lelia from her dying mother, as her own, and as such she educated and cherished her, till her death making her a second time an orphan, she returned to her father's house. Elmira remained at home, under the care of Miss Phillis Manners, who assumed the charge of her brother's household, with an authority as absolute and undisputed as the laws of the Medes and Persians.

Mr. Manners was one of those good-natured men, who always avoid trouble and contention, and who have not moral courage enough to follow up the principles they profess to admire. He believed his sister one of the best managers in the world, probably from the bustle attending all her movements, and thought himself

very fortunate in having so careful and discreet a guardian for his daughter. He regretted that Lelia did not enjoy equal advantages, for Aunt Lydia was so quiet and unassuming, and made so little parade of her own good deeds, and he was so accustomed to the egotism and display of his sister, he imagined that Aunt Lydia was one of those passive characters who exercised but little influence in her own household. Had he reflected a little on the great laws of nature, he would have remembered that the most powerful influences are silent and often unseen. The rays that illumine the immensity of the universe, as silently as brightly execute their glorious mission. The dews that refresh the sultriness of nature, steal silent and unseen from their secret dwelling-place, and "teach mankind unostentatious charity." But Mr. Manners never reasoned from analogy, indeed, he seldom reasoned at all, and it is not strange that the unobtrusive virtues of Aunt Lydia escaped his worldly observation. True, when Lelia returned, he would have thought her very graceful, lovely, and amiable, had not his acute-minded sister discovered so many blemishes in her, and such superior excellences in Elmira. He concluded, as usual, that she was a better judge than himself, and her opinion was considered infallible.

Miss Phillis Manners, alias Aunt Phillis, alias Cousin Phillis, would have been in the full sweep of her glory, on the day of Mr. Banks' arrival, had not the expectation of Mr. Clements' visit cast its dark shadow before. It is not to be supposed, that all her anxiety was disinterested, or that it was for the aggrandizement of her nieces alone, she was hoping, and toiling, and planning.

Mr. Banks was a widower, and as she had passed her vernal morn and summer noon in maiden singleness of heart, she was resolved that the quietude of her autumnal eve should be spent in the shadow of the myrtle bower. Notwithstanding her sincerity to her brother, and the truths her oft-consulted mirror breathed of her withering beauty, she fancied every one else must be labouring under an optical illusion, and imagined herself still in the spring-time of youth. It was a great source of vexation that she was compelled to own her once dark, but now bleaching locks, thus detracting from the juve-

nility of her appearance, but she consoled herself with the idea that a turban was a most becoming and oriental style of head-dress, admirably in keeping with the erectness and dignity of her figure. This day she appeared dressed with elaborate elegance—on her white turban, she wore a single artificial white rose, placed over her left ear, partly twisted in her long, flowing curls, pearl ornaments on her neck, and a robe of delicate, lilac-coloured silk, fitted closely to her really fine form. No wrinkle was ever allowed to mar the outline of her dress, and could she have exercised as arbitrary a dominion over her face, it would have been as smooth as Parian marble. She had been practising a kind of eager smile, with which to welcome the East India nabob, as she had great faith in first impressions. Elmira, who implicitly followed her aunt's directions, was also much adorned, but Lelia made no alteration in the mourning garb she wore in memory of Aunt Lydia. Miss Phillis told her that she had never looked so shocking in her life, that her eyes were as heavy as lead, and her complexion as pale as ashes. She did, indeed, look pale, for she was agitated in the prospect of meeting so many kindred she had never seen, and in the dread that their visit would be a source of domestic trial to her, determined as she was, not to yield her principles of right to the tyranny of her aunt, or the ridicule of her sister.

"He's come—Uncle Banks is come!" exclaimed Elmira, who had been watching at the window, alternately with her aunt, at least two hours. In a moment the whole household was in a bustle—a splendid carriage stopped at the door—a footman let down the steps, with as much ceremony as if a king were about to descend. Aunt Phillis stood on the threshold, smiling, and courtseying, and trying to blush, as a large, red-faced gentleman, wrapped in a blue cloak, slowly alighted, and walked up the flag-stones, breathing audibly at every step. A tall, straight, sandy-haired, young man followed him, in whom Elmira immediately discovered a striking resemblance to the picture of Prince Albert, and who was dressed in as princely a style as our republican costume will allow.

"Welcome, a thousand times welcome," exclaimed Aunt Phillis,

sinking lower and lower, while she extended both her hands to the short-breathed gentleman, who came panting towards her.

"Thank you—how d'ye do? Hope to see you very well, ma'am," said Mr. Banks, as soon as he recovered his breath sufficiently, shaking her hand up and down, something in the style of a pump-handle. "Ha—this is my niece, is it? Blooming as a peach, glad to see your uncle, hey?" catching Elmira under the chin, and giving her a salute that echoed to the farthest corner of the ante-room. "This is my son Joe—quite a man grown—just like his father—chip of the old block—ha!"

Lelia, who had shrunk back in the first rush of welcome, now tremblingly approached her uncle. He was the first of her mother's relatives she had ever seen, except Aunt Lydia, and her heart throbbed with undefinable emotion.

"What little baggage is this?" cried Mr. Banks, giving her at the same time a smothering embrace. "Just like her mother. This must be Liddy's child."

Lelia saw a tear trembling in the corner of his clear, gray eye, and she forgot for a moment the roughness of his manners, and the singularity of his dialect.

As soon as they entered the sitting-room, Mr. Banks sank down into a chair, as if quite exhausted, calling for a cushion for his feet in no very gentle tone. Miss Phillis sprang to the sofa, and catching up the cushions, placed them under his feet like a lap-wing.

"Thank you, ma'am. Excuse me—troubled with the gout—dreadful twinges—great invalid—poor appetite—be better by-and-by."

Lelia thought it strange to hear a man, with such round, ruddy cheeks and robust frame, complaining of ill-health, and she could not help smiling to hear her aunt declaring that he did indeed look like an invalid, and she feared the journey had been too much for him.

Cousin Joe seemed as bashful and reserved as his father was free and easy, and seating himself at a respectful distance, communed with his own thoughts. Placed in such a luxurious attitude, Mr.

Banks gradually recovered the composure of his muscles, which had been dreadfully distorted, nodded and smiled at his nieces, and calling Lelia to him, made her sit down on his knee, and patted her on the head like a little child.

"Good girl," said he; "Liddy told me all about you. Don't be afraid of your uncle. Rough outside—nothing but the bark—smooth kernel inside."

Lelia smiled, and began to think she should like her uncle, in spite of his rough outside, but Aunt Phillis was not at all pleased that Lelia should be placed in the fore-ground of the picture, and drawing Elmira towards him, she said, in a playful tone, "you must not slight *my* pet—you don't know how anxiously she has watched your coming. She has been almost crazy to see you."

"Fine girl, too," cried Mr. Banks, pinching her cheeks; "good healthy colour. Got any sweethearts, hey? Must look sharp—see if they've got the chink. Can't live without it—oils the springs—keeps them agoing—hey?"

Here he put both hands in his pockets, and shook with inward laughter for several moments; then opening his mouth, the sound began to roll out in echoing peals, which Aunt Phillis thought proper to echo again, more faintly, and Elmira fainter still. Lelia alone looked grave, and her gravity seemed to increase Mr. Banks' mirth, who continued to laugh till he was obliged to hold his own sides.

"Can't help it," said he; "never could stop—does one good—helps digestion—troubled with the dyspepsia—obliged to diet."

Lelia thought when she saw her uncle at the supper-table, complaining of the poorness of his appetite, yet eating heartily all the time, requiring a dozen things which were not on the table; keeping the servants running in every direction, and Aunt Phillis' eyes flying from dish to dish in ludicrous perplexity, trying to anticipate his wishes, that he was the strangest invalid she ever saw. He was very particular about eggs, an indispensable ingredient of all his meals. At first they were too hard, then too soft—again, there was a crack in the shell, through which some drops of water had penetrated. At length he had the boiling water brought to the table, and

taking out his watch, cooked them to his apparent satisfaction. Poor Aunt Phillis sat, without eating a mouthful, endeavouring to look pleased, though ready to burst with vexation, for she prided herself upon the superiority of her cookery, and on this occasion no luxury had been spared, which could tempt the most fastidious taste. She had, however, one source of consolation. The evening was already advanced, and Mr. Clements had not yet made his appearance. She could not help hoping some fortunate accident had detained him, and that he would not be present to obstruct the incense she was preparing for the golden calf she had set up as her idol. Night came on, and Mr. Banks, pleading excessive fatigue and gouty pains, was ushered up stairs into the most sumptuous apartment the house afforded, and Aunt Phillis drew a deep inspiration, as if relieved from the visitation of a nightmare.

"Very pleasant gentleman your uncle is," said she, looking at Elmira. "Rather particular in his ways—but that is owing to his ill-health. So perfectly original. How do you like your Cousin Joseph? I think him one of the most perfect gentlemen I have ever seen."

"I have no doubt we shall find him very interesting," replied Elmira; "but he does not seem inclined to talk much. He seems very distant, for a cousin."

"You cannot expect so much familiarity from one of his great expectations, as from an inferior person," said Aunt Phillis. "He cannot but feel his own consequence."

Lelia smiled, and was about to speak, when Aunt Phillis interrupted her.

"I wish you would break yourself of that saucy habit of smiling at my remarks, Miss Lelia; I assure you, I think it very impertinent."

"Dear aunt"—

"Dear aunt again—you called me dear aunt at the supper-table three times, as if in defiance of my prohibition, and on purpose to draw the attention of Mr. Banks."

The lumbering sound of wheels approaching the door, arrested the attention of all, and the clinking sound of the falling steps, convinced them that some one was descending.

"It must be Uncle Clements," exclaimed Lelia, eagerly opening the door, while Aunt Phillis and Elmira exchanged glances of undisguised chagrin.

"You need not ring the bell," said Aunt Phillis, seeing the motion of Lelia's hand; "the stage-driver will attend to him."

But the mandate came too late, for a merry peal rang through the hall, as Mr. Clements and his son entered the house. The lamps that lighted the passage most brilliantly in honour of Mr. Banks, threw their full blaze on their advancing figures, and Lelia, on whom the whole burden of welcome seemed to rest, felt a glow of delight diffused over her whole heart, in tracing, even then, in the mild lineaments of her uncle's face, a resemblance to her beloved Aunt Lydia.

"Oh, what a contrast!" thought she, as she looked at her Cousin Charles. The next moment she was in her uncle's affectionate embrace—as affectionate, but far less energetic, than Mr. Banks' *high-pressure* greeting. Miss Phillis Manners received them with stately civility, which Elmira tried to imitate, though she could not help thinking that if her Cousin Joe did resemble Prince Albert, her Cousin Charles was vastly handsomer, and more engaging in his appearance. He was dressed in a complete suit of black, which corresponded well with his dark hair and eyes, and so was the father, but the coat of the latter was rusty and threadbare, and his whole apparel that of a decayed gentleman.

"And these are my two nieces," said Mr. Clements, looking from one to the other, with moistened eyes, "my sister's children! Is it possible? How difficult it is to realize your blooming womanhood! Charles, you have often heard me speak of their mother; here," turning to Lelia, "is her living picture."

A violent ringing of the bell produced a sudden silence. Miss Phillis started up in alarm, when Mr. Banks' footman opened the door, with a half comic, half tragic countenance.

"What is the matter?" cried Miss Phillis. "Is Mr. Banks ill? Has any thing happened?"

"No, ma'am!" he replied; "but he says the sheets are damp, and

will give him the rheumatiz. He wants them changed, if you please, directly. He's walking about as fast as he can for exercise, till its done, to keep from catching cold."

"Tell him the sheets have been doubly and trebly aired," answered she, in a raised tone. "I am remarkably careful about such things. There is no possible danger of taking cold."

"It won't do any good to tell him so, ma'am," said the man, grinning. "When he once gets a notion into his head, you might as well try to move the globe, as to get it out of him. He won't sleep to-night, unless you humour him about the sheets."

Miss Phillis left the room with great alacrity; but the manner in which she closed the doors, showed she was not altogether pleased with Mr. Banks' original ways.

Lelia began to feel very uneasy about her uncle's accommodations for the night. She saw he looked pale and fatigued, and seemed oppressed with a dry cough. Charles watched his father's countenance with deep anxiety, and asked him if he would not retire, adding, that he was still too much of an invalid not to practise some self-indulgence.

Lelia had not exchanged a word with her aunt upon the subject; she had put off the evil hour as long as possible. It could not be deferred any longer, and hearing her footsteps descending the stairs, she rose with precipitation and left the room, telling her uncle that she would have a room immediately prepared for his reception. She met her aunt on the stairs, whose clouded brow would have terrified her from any purpose, in which her own gratification was concerned.

"Cousin Phillis," said she, trying to propitiate her, by giving her the name she loved, "Uncle Clements is very much fatigued, and wishes to retire. I suppose he will occupy the blue chamber."

"The blue chamber!" repeated Aunt Phillis. "And what right have you to think that *he* will occupy the blue chamber? The very best chamber in the house."

"Because," said Lelia, gathering courage as she proceeded, "because there is no other unoccupied sleeping-room, sufficiently comfortable at this season of the year. There is the one which has

been appropriated to Uncle Banks, certainly as handsome as the blue chamber. Then there is father's, and your's, and sister's, and my own—all warm and pleasant. The others have no fire-places, and you would not surely assign them to an invalid, such cold nights as these."

Aunt Phillis gave Lelia a look which had often made others quail, but she returned it with an undaunted glance.

"Silence is assent," cried she, springing down the steps. "I'll tell Peggy to kindle a fire in the blue chamber."

"If you do," said Aunt Phillis, shaking her fore-finger at her from the platform on which she stood, with the gesture of a Pythoness; "if you do, you'll repent it in dust and ashes."

Lelia paused. Her spirit was roused. She felt that she was the eldest daughter of her father's house, and had a right to command, when her father's reputation for justice and hospitality was thus endangered. She feared, however, a scene of disgraceful violence, which might reach her uncle's ears, and though almost despising herself for the act, she condescended to plead and reason. She went back to where her aunt stood.

"You do not reflect, aunt, what a strange appearance it will have—such a marked distinction between two brothers. The very servants will talk of it, and report it to our neighbours. We shall be condemned by all as mercenary and unkind."

"I don't care if we are, miss," retorted she, "it's none of their business, nor your's either. As to the chamber I've allotted to him, I've no doubt it's a palace to what he ever slept in before. What's he, I should like to know—a poor, penny-stripped fellow, a hanger-on of rich relations, a codger worth nothing but the coat on his back, and that almost out at the elbows, that he should be served so daintily? He had no business to stick his nose where he's not wanted. If he don't like his accommodations, he may go away, and the sooner the better."

Aunt Phillis paused to take breath, as a person drinking a glass of soda sometimes stops from the rapidity of the effervescence—but the angry fluid continued to flow from her eyes.

"I will appeal to my father," said Lelia, "and, thank heaven! here he comes."

Mr. Manners at this moment opened the street door, and looked, with a little trepidation, on the theatrical figure of his sister, standing erect upon the stairs, the rose over her left ear trembling and tossing as if instinct with life, a symptom with which he was very familiar; for, like certain animals, when excited by passion, she had a vibratory motion of the ears. Lelia ran to her father, and putting her arm in his, drew him towards his sister, in spite of his evident reluctance.

"Dear father," said she, "Aunt Phillis is not willing that Uncle Clements should have a comfortable room to sleep in. Uncle Banks has the green chamber, with a blazing fire, and poor Uncle Clements is to be put in the north-east corner of the house, without a particle of fire, or even curtains to his bed. Is it right, father? is it kind?"

Poor Mr. Manners was so unaccustomed to exercise any decision of his own in household affairs, and feared so much the keen edge of his sister's tongue—he found himself in a most unpleasant dilemma. He hated scenes—he wanted to get along with as little trouble as possible.

"Brother," said Miss Phillis, "we've lived very peaceably, till this girl came back to give me her impertinence from morning till night. I will not bear it—if she's to be mistress, I'll quit the house. I leave you to decide."

She uttered this in a low tone, and a kind of bitter smile, a thousand times more fearful than her frown.

"Psho! Phillis—don't talk in that way," stammered Mr. Manners, "she don't mean any disrespect to you; there's some misunderstanding, I dare say. Lelia, your aunt will see that every thing is right; I always leave such matters to her, and it is proper that you should do so—there's a plenty of room in the house—no difficulty—"

Ashamed of his want of moral resolution, he hastened into the parlour, whither his sister followed him, with a majesterial step, leaving Lelia alone on the stairs. So completely overwhelmed was she with disappointment, shame, and, it must be confessed, with

indignation too, that she sat down, and leaning against the banister, covered her face and wept like a child.

"What will they think of us?" said she to herself, "what will they think of me? It was I who told them I would order a room to be prepared. They will think it is my selection, and despise me in their hearts—and there is Uncle Banks, with his great ruddy face and vigorous frame, in his sumptuous apartment, issuing his orders with the authority of the Grand Lama. Oh! the omnipotence of gold!"

Absorbed in these bitter reflections, and hearing only the sound of her own stifled sobs, she was not aware of approaching footsteps till they were close beside her, when, looking up, she beheld her uncle ascending the stairs, leaning on the arm of his son, and preceded by Peggy, the chambermaid, who looked ashamed of the office she was performing. Her uncle paused as he passed, and laying his hand tenderly on her head, exclaimed, "God bless thee, my child."

Her Cousin Charles, too, caught her hand, and pressing it warmly, said, "Good night, my dear cousin."

The words were nothing in themselves, but there was something in the tone of his voice, and in the glance of his dark, penetrating eye, that seemed to say, "Thou hast no part or lot in this matter."

Could they have overheard the conversation respecting them? It was possible that the door might have been left ajar, and Aunt Phillis' voice was shrill in her anger. She knew not that she ought to derive comfort from this supposition, since it exposed her aunt and her father to such opprobrium, but she could not help encouraging the idea, and retired to her chamber, soothed by the remembrance of her uncle's blessing, and her cousin's affectionate "good night."

She was permitted to remain alone some time, for Elmira was closeted with her aunt, probably listening to her wrathful account of the events of the evening. Lelia rejoiced at this circumstance, as she could in stillness and solitude commune with her own excited spirit. Upon reflection, she was not pleased with her own conduct. Principle had guided her actions, but passion had mingled its base

alloy with the pure gold of her upright intentions. She trembled to think of the unchristian feelings in which she had indulged.

"God forgive me!" cried she, clasping her hands over the Bible, which she had opened and commenced to read, preparatory to her nightly rest, "for the evil thoughts of this night. I have hated my aunt, despised my father and sister, and triumphed in my own conscious superiority. Perhaps if I had displayed more meekness, her stubborn will might have yielded. Uncle Clements looks like a Christian. He has the evangelical countenance of Aunt Lydia, her mild benignant smile. No bitterness dwells in his heart. I will try to banish it from mine."

When Elmira entered the apartment, accompanied by her aunt, who always remained a while in her niece's room, before retiring to her own, Lelia's head rested placidly on the pillow, and her eyelids were gently closed. Aunt Phillis held the candle over her to see if she were really asleep. Her cheeks were flushed, and the moisture yet glittered on her eyelids; but her soft, regular breathing, indicated the peacefulness and depth of her slumbers. Young eyelids, steeped in tears, close heavily in sleep, and Lelia's self-communion and self-humiliation had diffused a quietude over her troubled soul, and hushed her passions into rest. It would seem impossible for any one to look upon her, in her innocence and purity, and cherish vindictive feelings towards her; but the very contemplation of this innocence and sweetness, only added fuel to Aunt Phillis' ire.

"Impudent little minx," muttered she, "I wonder how she dares to sleep!"

It is hardly uncharitable to suppose that she would not have been sorry if a stray spark had fallen on her muslin night-cap, and scorched the bright locks that wandered over her brow. Aunt Phillis sat down the candle, seated herself in front of the fire, and placing her feet on the fender, fell into a reverie.

"It is very cold," said she, at length, drawing a large shawl over her shoulders. "I am glad I told them to keep up a fire in Mr. Banks' room to-night. If he should get the gout in his stomach, he might die, and I wouldn't have him die for a thousand dollars, before"—

She stopped, for she found she was thinking aloud, and became conscious Elmira was listening, for she laughed aloud.

"I'm sure there does not seem much danger of his dying, with his red face and stout body," said she. "Uncle Clements looks like a shadow to him. But really, Cousin Charles is very handsome, and seems very much like a gentleman, too. He is not dressed meanly, either—and looks proud enough, though he is so poor. Don't you think he is handsome, aunt?"

"I don't think any thing about him," replied she, sharply: "I don't want to hear his name, or his father's either. I wish they were both in Nova Zembla."

"They might as well be in Nova Zembla as the place they are in now," thought Elmira, "for all the comfort they get in it."

But she was prudent enough not to express this idea. She began to take off the ornaments from her hair, and while engaged in this operation before the mirror, a sudden thought seemed to strike her.

"Was mother very handsome, Cousin Phillis?" asked she, twisting a string of pearls round her fingers, again and again.

"What a question!" repeated Aunt Phillis. "She looked well enough, I believe—nothing extraordinary. Why?"

"Because every one says Lelia is the image of her, as if it were the greatest compliment in the world. I wonder who *I* am like—for I am not in the least like Lelia."

"You are said to resemble *me*," said Aunt Phillis, drawing up her neck with a self-complacent air; "I heard Mr. Banks say there was a striking resemblance."

"Now, aunt, you know he never said any such a thing," replied Elmira, deeply mortified; "he said there was a family resemblance, and that was all. How can you say, aunt, I look like you? There isn't a feature in our faces alike—and then you look so much *older*!"

Elmira forgot her fear of her aunt, in her wounded vanity, or she would never have dared to breathe the hint that she thought her older than herself, or less handsome.

"Really, Miss," cried Aunt Phillis, giving the fender a push against the fire-place as she spoke; "it's a great insult to be said to resemble

me, is it? I am not so old or so ugly, as to be ashamed to look in the glass with any one. Really, these bread and butter Misses think any body, who has arrived at years of discretion, is as old as Methuselah, and ugly too, forsooth. Well, the world has got to a strange pass, when little girls not only think themselves wiser and better, but younger and handsomer than any body else."

She took up the candle with a jerk, gave the fender another push, and walked out of the apartment in a highly *acidified* state of feeling.

"Look like her, indeed!" said Elmira, examining herself critically in the looking-glass; "the old fright! She might have been dug out of the ruins of Herculaneum, for all the youth and beauty she possesses. Who ever heard of such ridiculous vanity?"

Elmira was not conscious that it was vanity equally ridiculous, which reigned in her own breast, and caused a dislike to her aunt, for the resemblance which she had pointed out, which all her injustice to Lelia, and coldness and incivility to her uncle, had failed to inspire. Alas! for poor human nature.

The next morning, Mr. Banks and his son breakfasted in their own apartment, and almost all the servants in the household were put in requisition, to satisfy his capricious desires.

Mr. Clements and Charles took their seats at the breakfast-table, but the pallid complexion of the former indicated that no refreshing slumbers had repaired his enfeebled frame. As Mr. Manners observed the delicacy of his appearance, his slight appetite, and that he was repeatedly obliged to put down his coffee, to suppress a rising cough, his conscience upbraided him for his pusillanimous conduct, and the image of his wife, once tenderly loved, seemed to rise before him, in the person of her neglected brother. There was a gravity, too, on the fine brow of his nephew, Charles, which he construed into a silent rebuke. Then Lelia looked sad, and he was ashamed to meet her usually loving glance. His sister appeared in one of her sour moods, and Elmira somewhat sullen. Altogether he had a very uncomfortable breakfast, and though he was glad when it was over, he did not feel better satisfied with himself when seated with the same group around the fire-side.

The entrance of Mr. Banks and his tall son created a great sensation. Aunt Phillis sprang to arrange his cushions, and made every one move from their places to give him the best seat by the fire, and the most luxurious chair. He presented a most imposing spectacle in his morning costume, wrapped in a wadded robe de chambre of silver gray, lined with scarlet, a turban of yellow silk, white fur moccasins, and gloves of similar materials. He nodded familiarly to all, as he sank down into his cushions in a true oriental style, winked at Miss Phillis, chuckled Lelia under the chin, and slapped Charles on the shoulder, whose gravity gave place to ill-suppressed mirth at his uncle's extraordinary figure.

"I hope you rested well last night," said Miss Phillis; "that you found your room comfortable."

"Rested like a king," replied he; "warm as toast; chilled at first by damp sheets; soon got over it; all right at last. How are you, brother?—look rather pale. Sleep well, hey?"

"I did not rest well," answered Mr. Clements; "I have a difficulty of breathing, which often compels me to walk during the night. I feared I should disturb the household by so doing."

"Oh, uncle!" exclaimed Lelia—"and were you obliged to do so last night?"

"I did not mean to distress you, my child," said he, taking her hand in his; "but I walked my room the greater part of the night, and as I know it must be unpleasant to those who may be contiguous to me; and as I perceive it is not convenient to remain longer, I am sorry to say I must leave you this evening."

"Oh, uncle!" again ejaculated Lelia, giving her father a look that spoke volumes.

"Must not think of such a thing," stammered Mr. Manners; "perfectly convenient—very happy to see you—fear you haven't been as comfortable as you should."

"What's that you are talking of—going away?" interrupted Mr. Banks. "Shan't do any such thing. Not convenient! Saw a room fit for a prince close to mine; not a soul in it. Sleep there to-night. Walk till morning—won't wake one. Go away!—nothing

but pride. Hate to be outshone, hey? Empty pockets ache near full ones."

Here he put his hands in his pockets, and jingling some gold and silver, began one of his interminable laughs.

Miss Phillis saw that it was necessary to redeem her reputation in the eyes of Mr. Banks, to treat his brother with more civility. She condescended to make some apology for the *mistake* of the preceding night, and promised to prepare the apartment which Mr. Banks desired for him, if he would remain.

Thus authorized, Mr. Manners became quite eloquent, and Lelia's eyes pleaded more eloquently than all their words. Mr. Clements could not resist their mute appeal, and declared his willingness to remain.

Cheerfulness was restored, and even Miss Phillis appeared amiable; for the conviction that she had acted right, though forced into the path of duty, gave a sweetened expression to her face, which elicited the evident admiration of Mr. Banks, and added, in consequence, to her own self-elation.

A week passed away, during which time the two uncles and their sons became completely domesticated in the family of Mr. Manners. Mr. Banks continued to assume the most amusing airs of superior grandeur, sported a most magnificent wardrobe, flirted with Aunt Phillis, and pinched and kissed her nieces—while Mr. Clements, mild, dignified and intellectual, wore the same thread-bare coat, and the same nap-worn hat. Aunt Phillis, before whose eyes visions of wedded pomp and splendour, bright as if called up by the wand of the genii, were constantly floating, scarcely noticed his presence, as, according to her interpretation, he seemed too conscious of his own insignificance, to force himself upon the observation of any one. Cousin Joe was still reserved, but as Elmira, according to her aunt's instructions, paid him the most marked attention, he attached himself more and more to her society, and it seemed more than probable that a double wedding might take place. Lelia, who, in her pure singleness of heart, thought not of conquests or weddings, felt a delight in the companionship of her Cousin Charles, that, succeeding the dearth

of all congenial feelings, had the power of enchantment. The books which she had read alone, and which had enthralled her with the master-spell of genius, acquired a double fascination, since they had discoursed of their excellencies. He had a finely modulated voice, and when he read-aloud, she discovered that the dullest author had charms unknown before. Lelia was very fond of drawing, and she now took unwonted pleasure in the exercise of this accomplishment, for Charles had the painter's eye, as well as the poet's tongue. And, in their hours of closer intimacy, when withdrawn from the bustling circle too much occupied with their own interests to interfere with them, they sat near Mr. Clements' side, who led them on to themes of high and holy import, and thought and feeling came up from the innermost depths of the soul, and brightened or darkened in the speaking eye—it was then that Lelia learned, that, while music, painting, and poetry gave grace and beauty to his mind, a rich vein of philosophy, and a still richer vein of religion, ran like golden ore through the whole texture of her cousin's character. She had never been so happy in her life. Though it was winter, and the trees were leafless, and the ground bleak and bare, she seemed surrounded with the verdure of the aroma of perpetual summer. All above her was sunshine, all beneath was flowers—for the affections of her ardent heart, which, since her Aunt Lydia's death, had been yearning for some legitimate object, on which to exercise their tenderness, had found one worthy of all their strength and fervour, and on which they expanded with unconscious warmth. But this is a working-day world, and life has *realities* which often force us from the lovely *idealities*, which hang their beautiful drapery over the machinery of our existence. Lelia had one serious source of anxiety in the midst of her new felicity—her uncle's coat; she could not bear to see his dignified figure clouded by such a rusty garment. She was at first troubled that Charles should be so much better dressed than his father, fearing that a tinge of selfishness tarnished the lustre of his virtues; but her uncle had removed this fear, by accidentally mentioning that the wardrobe of Charles was replenished by a friend, to whom he was willing to be under obligations, trusting that he would

be able to repay them, by the exercise of his own talents, when he was once established in the world. Her Aunt Phillis was in a high state of preparation for a large entertainment in honour of Mr. Banks and his son. Lelia was distressed at the thought of her Uncle Clements appearing at it in his shabby suit. She would have begged her father to present him a new one, but remembering the scene about the bed-chamber, she dreaded a similar refusal.

"What a shame!" thought she, "that Uncle Banks should be revelling in affluence, and suffer his brother to wear such poor apparel! I should think pride, if no better feeling, would incite him to a more just and generous conduct."

An unexpected circumstance favoured her secret wishes. Her father had promised Elmira and herself a set of jewels, when they first appeared in the raiments of womanhood. The fulfilment of this promise had been deferred from time to time, though Elmira often reminded him of it. Lelia, in the comparative seclusion of her life, sighed for no such decorations, and now her mourning dress precluded them. Mr. Manners, finding himself in a munificent vein, in consequence of the brilliant prospects opening through his rich brother-in-law, gave them each the money requisite for the purchase, and telling them to make their own selection, left them, that they might consult their aunt upon the occasion.

Lelia followed him with blushing earnestness. "Dear father," said she, "I thank you more than I can express for your kindness. Yet I dare to ask for an additional proof of your goodness. Would you be displeased if I appropriated this money to another purpose than the jewels. I am in mourning now, and would rather not wear them. Yet, if this is a gift to me, and I am permitted to use it as I would wish, you will make me very happy."

"Who ever heard of a young girl that did not want jewels before?" exclaimed Mr. Manners, half incredulous of the correctness of his hearing.

"What other purchase do you wish to make? I thought your wardrobe was well supplied."

"And so it is," replied Lelia, twisting her father's guard-chain

round her trembling fingers, for she feared he would question her too closely—"but—if you will allow me to employ the money in the way I like best, I will make no unworthy use of it. I will do nothing which your own heart will not approve. Say yes, dear father, and do not ask me to tell you any thing more."

Lelia had such a beseeching way with her, it was impossible for any one but Aunt Phillis to resist her. Mr. Manners was touched by her disinterestedness. Perhaps his mind caught a glimpse of her purpose, and being ashamed that he had not anticipated her, he forbore to ask her further questions.

"You are a strange child," said he, smiling, "but I believe I must trust you this time. Do what you like with it. It is your own."

Lelia threw her arms around his neck, and gave him at least half a dozen kisses; then running to her uncle's room, where he usually sat reading at this hour, she knocked for admittance. She did not realize the delicacy of her office till she stood before him, with a hue deep as that of convicted guilt, dyeing her cheeks.

"What petition, or confession, do those blushes herald?" said he, laying down his book, as she entered.

"It is, indeed, a petition, uncle, but I know not how to word it; I fear you will be offended, and I could not brook your displeasure."

"I do not think it possible for you to do any thing to offend me," answered he, taking her hand in both his—"nor do I think I could refuse any petition you might offer, 'even were it half of my kingdom.'"

"Then take this trifle," said she, putting the paper which contained the money in his hand, and clasping his fingers tightly around it, "and let me see my dear uncle at Aunt Phillis' grand fete, as she calls it, in a new suit, which he must wear, in honour of his, perhaps, too presumptuous niece."

She dared not look in his face, and as he did not speak immediately, she feared he was offended, and that the pride of poverty rebelled against the offering, but a tear, which fell upon the hand which clasped his, convinced her that his silence was not that of haughtiness or resentment.

"I can say, with your favourite Miranda, that 'I'm a fool to weep at what I'm glad of,'" cried he at length, "for I do prize your gift, my Lelia, beyond all words. Not that I attach much value to a new coat after all, but the feelings which prompted the act, sanctify the offering in my eyes. I know you will not love me more than you do in this old suit, which I must wrap up in lavender and sweet-smelling shrubs, as a memento of my visit here—but strangers look at the coat, and not at the man. There are a great many Aunt Phillises in the world, and very few Lelias."

Lelia felt so happy at the successful accomplishment of her wishes, that she went warbling down stairs like a bird, and actually danced into the drawing-room, to the horror of Aunt Phillis, who thought it an unpardonable sin for any one to deviate from the straight forward and perpendicular lines of utility and decorum.

In the course of the evening, Elmira asked her sister if she did not intend to go with her, in the morning, to purchase the jewels.

"Lelia don't care about jewels," said Mr. Manners, significantly, "she is a girl in ten thousand."

Lelia began to examine her work-box very industriously, and pretended not to hear what they were saying.

"I should not be surprised," said Elmira, laughingly, "if she put her money out at interest, or in the saving banks, she's such a utilitarian."

"Perhaps she is going to establish a charity school," cried Aunt Phillis, with a sneer. Mr. Banks not happening to be present, she thought she might relax a little from her amiability.

"To whatever use she has appropriated it," said Mr. Clements, "she will receive, not only thirty, but sixty, nay an hundred fold."

Charles, who sat beside his cousin, took up a spool of thread from her work-box, and appeared to be scrutinizing its quality most earnestly, but he was in reality watching her downcast face, and thinking it was scarcely a merit in Lelia to sacrifice personal ornaments, since she was in herself so lovely and so loveable. He knew the purpose to which she had devoted her father's gift, and he longed

to tell her of the gratitude and admiration she had inspired, but he would not wound her modesty by confessing a knowledge of her disinterested goodness.

"Are you going to take lessons in sewing, Charles?" asked Cousin Joe, unexpectedly breaking silence. "I should judge so, by the interest you manifest for that work-box." It was the first witticism Cousin Joe had attempted to make, and every one laughed—Aunt Phillis seemed ready to fall into convulsions, for Joe was an object of her homage, inferior only to his father.

It is not our intention to give a minute description of Aunt Phillis' splendid fete. It had the elaborate display and ceremony usual on such occasions, but seldom is a fashionable party graced by such figures as Mr. Banks and Aunt Phillis presented to the admiring eye. He wore a coat and small clothes of superb black velvet, relieved by a vest of the deepest crimson, composed of the same rich materials. White silk stockings, and golden knee-buckles; voluminous shirt-ruffles, and multitudinous rings, distinguished the man of wealth from the inferior throng. As Aunt Phillis promenaded up and down the saloon, leaning on his arm, she believed herself the envy of every female heart, as well as the admiration of every manly eye. She wore on this occasion, which she thought but the prelude of a nuptial festival, a dress of white satin, trimmed with blonde, a gossamer turban, profusely trimmed with pearls and flowers, among which the orange blossom bloomed with prophetic sweetness. Lelia could have laughed at her aunt's *vehement* affectation of juvenility, but she remembered that she was a moral and immortal being, and sighed to see her thus twining with roses and gems the sepulchre of youth. She saw her sister's neck and arms glittering with jewels, and she did not repine, for her eye rested on her Uncle Clements, and she would not have exchanged her feelings for the diamonds of Golconda. How well he looked in his new suit of deep black! How she admired the soft shadows of silver gray that stole, like a mist, over his jetty hair! How her heart throbbed as she met his affectionate smile, his grateful, approving glance!

Mr. Clements had another silent admirer. It was no other than

Mr. Manners. He had been watching his daughter's countenance, and following the direction of her eyes, he could not help sympathizing with her enthusiastic emotions. The freshness and sensibility of life's earlier days, when her mother hung upon his arm a young and confiding bride, came back upon him. He forgot the hardening lessons the world had taught him, his pusillanimous submission to his sister's arbitrary sway—he was once more a man and a father. Drawing near her, he was about to tell her that he had discovered her secret, and that she need not fear his anger, when he saw Charles anticipate him. The young man bent down and talked to her in a low voice, and she answered him in the same tone. Moreover, there was an expression in the young man's eyes very different from what cousins are wont to wear, and Lelia's colour deepened, and flitted, and resolved at last into that roseate hue, which is said to be emblematic of something more than a cousin's love.

"I must look to this," thought Mr. Manners, "he is a fine young fellow—but he is too poor to think of marrying. I wish he were Mr. Banks' son, for Lelia's sake."

The father was once more merged in the man of the world. Nature yielded to Gold.

Aunt Phillis was too much excited that night to close her eyes in sleep. Mr. Banks had done every thing but make a downright offer of himself. He had invited her and Elmira to accompany them home, telling her that he wanted her to see his house and grounds—to show her in what style he lived. She was to select a building spot for his son, who was to have an establishment equal to Aladin's palace—and over that establishment, Elmira was destined to preside. The gray, wavering light of dawn saw Aunt Phillis still absorbed in the contemplation of her future grandeur. She then sank into a kind of extatic doze, in which she beheld Mr. Banks' gold knee-buckles glittering at her feet, where he had prostrated himself, in the act of surrendering to her his heart, his hand, and his fortune.

The time drew near for the departure of the two uncles. Aunt Phillis and Elmira were so much occupied in arranging their apparel for the anticipated visit, they had no leisure to notice the evident

dejection of Lelia, or if they had, they would have attributed it to envy at their superior good fortune.

"Sorry for Lelia," said Mr. Banks, patting her on the head. "Good girl—pretty girl—wish I had room in the carriage for you—why not go with Uncle Clements?—Ashamed to ask you? Charles going away. Be so lonely—what say, brother, hey?"

"That my poor home will be transformed into an Eden bower, with such a gentle, ministering spirit there. But what says my dear niece? Would she consent to such a sacrifice? Charles has received a commission which will take him immediately to a foreign land. I shall be indeed most solitary."

"Oh! willingly, gladly will I accompany you," cried Lelia, "if my father will consent."

That consent was not easily obtained; but when he considered that Charles was to be absent, and the danger he feared would be thus averted, his greatest objection was removed. Another very strong one remained, the want of female companionship. This was obviated by Mr. Clements' description of his housekeeper—a most motherly and estimable woman; and who would prove a sufficient guardian for his young niece.

"There are very few poor men," said Mr. Clements, "in the possession of such a blessing, as this faithful and attached friend. She has remained with me during all my misfortunes, serving me from attachment, that looks for no reward beyond the exercise of its allotted duties."

Mr. Manners at length consented that Lelia should accompany him, upon condition of a speedy return. The departure of the travellers was deferred for some days, in consequence of an unexpected movement on the part of Cousin Joe. He insisted that he could not, and would not start till his union was consummated with Elmira, with whom he seemed every moment more enamoured. Elmira, notwithstanding the chilling influence of Aunt Phillis' worldly maxims and example, had some feelings true to nature lingering in the depth of her heart. She thought she would not feel so reluctant to this marriage, for reluctant she unaffectedly was, though she had used all the

arts of her sex, to allure him,—if Charles were not present. Aunt Phillis thought upon the whole that it would be the height of gentility to have the wedding take place on the morning of their journey, and then on their return, celebrate the nuptials by a large wedding party. Mr. Manners was well pleased with the match, and as all the higher powers were propitious, Elmira thought it best to smile and be propitious too.

Just before the wedding, Aunt Phillis took Elmira aside, and after a long preamble about the importance of commencing the married life with grace and propriety, said, "Remember, my dear, that there is a great deal in the name you will bear; that is, there is a fashionable and unfashionable style of addressing a married woman. You must not allow any one to call you Mrs. Elmira Banks, or young Mrs. Banks—but Mrs. Joseph Banks. That will be a sufficient distinction. When the senior Mr. Banks—when *I* am married, (there is no use in speaking in innuendoes,) I intend to be called simply Mrs. Banks.—Remember, my dear, Mrs. Joseph Banks."

Poor Aunt Phillis, she was already trembling, at the idea of being styled old Mrs. Banks, and seeking to avert the impending calamity. Lelia beheld, with unspeakable agitation, the preparations for her sister's nuptials. She knew she did not love her future bridegroom, and that the gold for which she was about to sacrifice the truthfulness of nature, and the bloom of youth—would never fill the aching void felt by the craving heart, too late made sensible of its capacities for happiness.

"God has no blessing for such unhallowed vows," said she to herself, as she stood pale and tearful by her sister's side, during the nuptial ceremony.—When the benediction was pronounced and the bride ready to receive the congratulations of her friends, Lelia could not speak—she could only lean her head on Elmira's shoulder and weep.

"Don't cry, Lelia," whispered Elmira; "when you and Charles live in your log cabin together, in the wild woods, you'll forget all, about me."

"Let me be the first to congratulate Mrs. Joseph Banks, on her

new name," said Aunt Phillis, advancing and saluting the bride, with inimitable grace.

"Mrs. Joseph Banks!" repeated Mr. Banks.—"Very good, young Mrs. Banks! Very good! By and by, there will be old Mrs. Banks—will there not, hey?" pinching Aunt Phillis' arm, who thought proper to resent the familiarity, by drawing away her arm and tossing up her head with unexpected disdain. The next moment, fearing she might offend him by her too manifest resentment of the odious cognomen, she looked back upon him, with a coquettish smile, and said something about his being a privileged wit.

The carriage rolled up to the door with a magnificent sweep. The bride and bridegroom were seated first—then Mr. Banks, who seemed to be completely cured of the gout, helped Aunt Phillis to ascend, who sprang up the steps, as light as a fawn, threw back her veil and kissed her hand to those she was leaving behind. It was a long time before Mr. Banks was arranged to his own satisfaction, and it was not till Aunt Phillis had squeezed herself into the smallest possible compass, he declared himself comfortably seated.

"Fine horses these, brother," said he, putting his head out of the window; "sweep like the wind. Ride like a king! Poor Lelia! don't cry—wish there was room. Take you next time—bye, bye."

The noble horses which had been pawing the ground, impatient of their long restraint, bounded forward, at the first touch of the whip, and the carriage was soon out of sight. But as long as it was seen, the white handkerchief of Aunt Phillis waved from the window, like an oriflamme of victory. The stage, which brought Mr. Clements and his son, was soon at the door.

"I do not think I can part with you, after all," said Mr. Manners, retaining Lelia in a parting embrace—"I shall be too lonely."

"Then come with us," said Mr. Clements, "and let me reciprocate, as far as I am able, the hospitality I have received under your roof."

"That cuts rather close," thought Mr. Manners.

Come with us," said Charles. "Then Lelia will not carry a divided heart."

Lelia echoed these invitations most earnestly, and, to his own astonishment, he found himself in a few minutes seated in the stage-coach, at his daughter's side, about to make an extempore visit to his poor relation.

As Aunt Phillis is in reality the heroine of this tale, we feel it a proper tribute of respect to follow her course, in preference to the unambitious Lelia.—It is not our intention to follow the minutiae of a journey which required many days to accomplish, for we are as anxious as she was to reach the home which had so long been looming on the restless sea of her maiden fancy. The last day, their road lay through a rough, hilly country, which gave many a jolt to her weary sides, and aching limbs. They rode through leafless forests, which seemed stretching into "a boundless contiguity of space," and through which the wintry winds whistled, making most melancholy music. Long and anxiously did the bride real, and the *bride apparent*, gaze from the carriage windows, straining their eyes to catch a glimpse of the distant spires of Banksville, where they were to enjoy the realization of their golden dreams. It was a grey, misty, dreary looking day, and towards evening the mist condensed into clouds, and the clouds descended in a drizzling rain, which completely obscured the country, and made the travellers fold their cloaks more closely round them, and draw towards each other with more affectionate familiarity.

"Oh, I am so tired!" exclaimed Aunt Phillis, leaning her head against Mr. Banks' ample shoulder; "shall we never reach home? You told me three hours ago it was only ten miles to Banksville."

"Don't be impatient," replied he, "soon be there. Charming place; get a fine supper; rest like princes."

It was a late, dark hour, when the travellers reached the termination of their journey. Aunt Phillis and Elmira had both fallen back into a deep slumber, from which they were scarcely aroused by the sudden cessation of the motion of the carriage, and the voice of Uncle Banks, bidding them wake up, and cheer up, for they had got home at last. With stiffened limbs, and bewildered capacities, the film of sleep still lingering on their eye-lids, they were assisted from

the carriage, and led stumbling along over a rough pathway towards a low dwelling intrenched in a cluster of forest trees, whose branches made coarse net-work over the roof.

"Where are we going?" cried Aunt Phillis.—"What sort of a place is this? Oh, dear!—I can scarcely see my hand before me."

"Never mind," said Uncle Banks; "see soon enough. Hallo, there"—giving a thundering rap at the door—"bring a light here. Ho—quick!—a light for the ladies!"

A heavy step was heard lingering near the door, which being swung open wide, displayed a large clumsy-formed girl, dressed in linsey-woolsey garments, with sleeves rolled up to her elbows, holding a candle in one hand, and shading her eyes with the other.

"La, Mr. Banks, if it isn't you! Bless my stars! here are ladies, sure enough!"

"Open the parlour directly. Run and make up a fire—good fire—blazing fire"—cried Mr. Banks, taking the candle and leading the way for his shivering guests.

"What are you stopping for, at this ugly old place, when we are so near home?" asked Aunt Phillis, mechanically following him, while cold, fearful drops began to gather on her darkening brow.

"Joseph, I thought you said we were to get home to-night," said Elmira, in a trembling, reproachful voice, sinking down into the first chair she saw, half dead with fatigue and indefinite apprehension.

"Home!" repeated Uncle Banks, rubbing his hands exultingly together, "and what should this be, but home? New place, to be sure—going to be a palace by and by—not quite finished yet. Welcome to Banksville, my dear—fine place, isn't it, hey?"

"Home!" screamed Aunt Phillis, lifting up both hands almost as high as the ceiling—rolling her eyes round the unpapered and unpainted walls, up on the unlathed rafters, then into the huge chimney, where the large girl was piling pine knots higher than her head, and whose broad glare soon illuminated the whole apartment—"Home!—home!—did you say?"

"Yes, home!" shouted Uncle Banks, from the very top of his lungs. "Deaf all at once, hey? Good home as ever was—plenty

of room—plenty of wood—plenty of things to eat. What more do you want? Come, take off your cloak—set down by the fire—no ceremony here."

Aunt Phillis looked steadily in his face, without winking—her eyes dilated to their utmost dimensions, for more than a minute, and he looked steadily at her, smiling and winking all the time. The girl in the chimney stopped blowing the fire, and looked from one to the other, grinning and coughing, displaying two full-length rows of unbroken ivory.

"Oh my stars," shrieked Aunt Phillis, clapping both hands tightly on her head, and throwing herself back in a chair,— "Oh! my head—It will burst—I can't breathe—I shall suffocate—I shall die. Here," to the grinning girl, "unloosen my cloak—untie my bonnet—give me a glass of water." The last words were uttered in a calmer voice. The idea, that notwithstanding the awful delusions respecting the splendour of Banksville, under which she had been laboring, she could induce him to build a house to her own taste, out of his hoarded treasures, came like a good angel and checked the outpouring of her anger. "It is very strange," said she, in a hysterical giggle, "that a gentleman of your fortune should be willing to live so—so simply."

"My fortune!" repeated Mr. Banks, "fortune enough. Own this lot and farm—plenty for me—all the rest a false report. No matter—thought I'd try my friends—make a frolic of it. No harm done—no sham here," striking his hand on his expansive chest.

"But your carriage?" gasped Aunt Phillis.

"Borrowed."

"Your fine clothes?"

"All borrowed—hey."

Aunt Phillis started up on her feet, quivering with passion. "You wretch—you monster," she exclaimed—"you deceiver—you jack-daw in peacock's plumes! I'll prosecute you for an impostor. I'll have you put in a penitentiary—set in the pillory—transported to Botany Bay. To entrap in this vile way, my unsuspecting innocence. To

lure me on to the brink of matrimony—to make me the laughing stock of the whole world.”

Uncle Banks put his hands in his pockets and began one of his silent laughs.

“To think of my waiting upon you as if you were the grand Sultan, himself,” continued she, after taking a fresh inspiration. “Of my tending your old gouty feet—yea, holding them in my very lap.”

“Hey diddle, diddle, the cat’s in the fiddle,” cried he, getting up and frisking a little to shew the soundness of his limbs. “Good feet as any body’s feet. No more gout than you have. Ready for a reel this minute.”

“Take us home directly, unfeeling wretch,” cried the unhappy spinster. “I’ll never sleep in this miserable hovel—I’ll perish in the woods first.”

Uncle Banks, who had enjoyed sufficiently the rage and mortification of Aunt Phillis, seemed to feel real compassion for the distress of the weeping Elmira. “Poor girl,” said he, kindly patting her on the shoulder, “don’t take on so—Joe loves you—he’s young and strong—be a rich man yet. Every tree of the West has a treasure of gold in its trunk. I’m getting old—tired of the seas—lost my money—wanted a home—wanted rest—folks heard I’d got a great fortune—it wasn’t my fault—didn’t mean to make you unhappy—thought you loved Joe—good boy—make you a good husband.”

Elmira, who weary and half stunned, seemed in a passive state, did not answer, but when Joe, encouraged by his father, ventured to sit down by her and take her hand in his, and she did not snatch it away, Uncle Banks thought it a propitious omen, and drawing the back of his hand across his eyes, he did not speak for a few moments.

Aunt Phillis, completely exhausted, leaned against the wall. Her bonnet partly untied, rested on the back of her head; her turban, disarranged by the jolting of the carriage and her own wrathful gestures, was poked on one side, revealing one or two stiff grey locks, while her long dark ringlets uncurled by the rain, clung to her cheeks and chin with mournful adhesiveness. The corners of her mouth were drawn down into acute angles; the corners of her eyebrows

lifted up in corresponding angles in an opposite direction; her nose looked sharpened into a severer point. Shakspeare knew nothing of melancholy madness. He had never seen Aunt Phillis Manners.

Notwithstanding the rough appearance of this lodge, in the wilderness of the boundless west, where the storm-wrecked and eccentric mariner had found a sheltered haven of rest, it was comfortable and looked even cheerful, illumined as it now was by the blazing pine knots, which crackled and corruscated in the vast chimney, and filled every nook and crevice with the brightness of noon-day. A good substantial supper was soon spread before them by the “maid of all-work,” but no one but Uncle Banks tasted a morsel. He seemed to have lost entirely the fastidiousness of his appetite, and eat of every dish with the keenest relish.

Aunt Phillis did not prowl into the woods, as she had threatened, but threw herself down on her humble bed in a state resembling despair. The cup of her wrath had foamed over, and she was now drinking in silence the bitter dregs; the veriest lees of the wine of life. She felt, as we may suppose, as the aeronaut feels, who, after rising majestically into the blue convexity of Heaven, leaving far below the grossness and opacity of earth, breathing the elasticity of a rarer, purer atmosphere, almost hearing the music of the empyrean, and catching glimpses of the palace of the Sun, when, suddenly, the gas explodes, the airy chariot falls, and he comes tumbling headlong from his glorious height, into some muddy pool, with bruised frame, broken bones and shaking brains.

For hours she lay, planning schemes of unexampled vengeance, which for variety and originality, might have shamed the torments of the fabled Tartarus, till an appalling unconsciousness of her own impotence, and the ridiculousness of her wrongs, checked the ingenuity of her revenge. She resolved at length to get home, as speedily and quietly as possible, to say nothing to her brother, or any of her friends, of her disappointment, and thus screen herself from the derision which she knew would be her portion. Elmira’s feelings were not deep, nor her passions strong. Her character had been moulded by circumstances, and it was easily remoulded. After the first ebul-

lition of sorrow and chagrin, convinced that her destiny was fixed, she submitted with a comparative good grace—determining, in her own mind, that her father should build her a fine house, and that the world should never know how deceived she had been. Besides Joe was so really affectionate and kind, she could not continue sullen and resentful—and ill-humor looked so unlovely and forbidding in her Aunt, that she struggled against its mastery.

"Carry you home again," said Mr. Banks, "in the same carriage that brought you—don't want to keep folks against their will—ought to be glad of such a fine ride. Daughter may go too, till we get her a house built. Be happy as a queen yet—mustn't be angry at Uncle—all for the best—married Joe—not his purse. Fine boy—hey?"

With what different emotions did Aunt Phillis find herself seated in the same carriage with the same party, the day but one after her arrival. She wouldn't condescend to sit on the same seat with Mr. Banks, but making Elmira occupy that post of honor, to the great displeasure of cousin Joe, placed herself opposite, and if the lighting of her eyes could have withered, Mr. Banks would have been nothing but a shrivelled scroll. He seemed in imperturbable good humor, singing and laughing so merrily, that Elmira caught the infection, and smiled and even laughed. The third day after their journey, the aspect of the country changed. It was no longer the same road they had travelled before—Aunt Phillis noticed the change, and peevishly asked to what new cities they were going.

"Going to stop to-night at a friend's," answered Uncle Banks. "Good friend—loaned me this carriage—lent me my velvet suit and jewels—capital fellow—rich as a Jew—lives like a prince—catch him perhaps—hey?"

Aunt Phillis disdained to answer, supposing he was going to take her to another log-cabin and some companion of congenial coarseness. Night came on, a clear, cold, moonlight night, when the atmosphere itself looked all white and silvery, and the pebbly ground sparkled like diamonds. The horses went faster and faster, and struck fire from their resounding hoofs. Uncle Banks' spirits rose at every turning of the wheels. He sang every verse of "Cease rude

Boreas" "Black-eyed Susan," and "The Jolly Tar," keeping time with his feet and hands, while Aunt Phillis kept dodging her head this way and that, and drawing her feet under her clothes to avoid coming in contact with him. At length the carriage rolled over a smoother road—regular rows of lofty trees, grand and lordly even in the wintry nakedness, skirted the way-side—the illuminated windows of a large white dwelling, with white columns supporting a piazza, that surrounded the whole building, over which perennial vines were clustering, became defined on the luminous back-ground of the starry heaven.

"This is a fine house, to be sure," said Aunt Phillis, in a more gracious tone as the carriage stopped at the door. "It is pleasant to see a Christian-looking habitation once more."

"No need of knocking," said Uncle Banks, leading the way up the flight of marble steps, to the entrance—"old acquaintance—no ceremony."

He entered the hall, then throwing back the folding doors, displayed to the astonished eyes of Aunt Phillis, a scene which she thought some wizard wand had conjured. Seated at a table in the centre of the apartment, beneath the soft lustre of a moonlight lamp, sat her brother, reading a newspaper, as much at ease, as if he had been domesticated there all his life, and directly opposite was Mr. Clements, so intently engaged with a book that he did not notice the opening of the door. And on a sofa, a little in the back-ground of the picture, Charles and Lelia were sitting side by side, engaged in such earnest and interesting conversation, it is doubtful whether the entrance of Xerxes and his army would have diverted their attention from each other.

"Well done, kinsfolk!" exclaimed Uncle Banks, giving his brother a rousing slap on the shoulder. "Can't you see a body, hey? Brought cousin Phillis to make you a visit. Wasn't pleased with Banksville, may be she'll like Clementsville better. Ha—little sweetheart—playing puss in the corner there. Come and kiss your Uncle."

"Welcome, cousin Phillis," said Mr. Clements, shaking her cordi-

ally by the hand, "many thanks for this unexpected honor. I shall be most happy to repay you, according to my poor ability, some of the obligations I owe you."

"So you've all been making a fool of me," cried she, unable to suppress the overflowing of her passions. "Pretending to be poor, when you're rich, and rich when you're poor, just to make a gull of me—and that little hypocrite knew it all the time." shaking her forefinger at Lelia, with a familiar gesture, "she knew it all. She acted her part as well as the rest of you. You've every one been in a conspiracy against me. Yes—every one—not excepting my own brother."

Here she threw herself back on the sofa and covering her face with her handkerchief, rocked to and fro, in hysterical agony.

"There is no use in recrimination now, sister," said Mr. Manners. "We have both been taught a good lesson, by which I hope I shall profit, as long as I live. But you must not accuse Lelia. She was the only one of us, who loved her uncle and cousin for themselves alone; and verily, she hath found her reward," added he, giving Charles a look, that might have made any young man proud.

"Come, Cousin Phillis," said Mr. Clements, "let us forget and forgive. We have all been playing a little farce, which has made us somewhat better acquainted with human nature, and with the mysteries of our own hearts. Having received a splendid accession to my fortunes, while still a resident in a foreign land, which rumor, by mistake, gave to my sailor brother here, I yielded to his whim, and allowed myself to be thought poor and himself rich, as had been previously reported to you. I had some misgivings as to the propriety of the deception; but since I have discovered such a treasury of disinterested affection, in this beloved child," drawing Lelia to his bosom as he spoke—"this child, who is as much lifted above hypocrisy as the heavens are above the earth, and since I have secured the happiness of my son, by a promised union, with so much loveliness and virtue, I cannot regret the masquerade we wore. Yes, Lelia—I would not exchange this coat, this dress given to your *poor* Uncle, for the ermine of royalty. Its history shall be recorded in

the family archive and handed down even to your children's children. Elmira, your husband is not a poor man, for he shall share of my inheritance, and yet make himself a name and a fame in the growing West."

"Come, Cousin Phillis," cried Uncle Banks. "Rub out old scores. Kiss and be friends. Don't spoil your eyes. Catch a rich sweetheart yet—maybe. Hain't got the chink—can't help it—don't want it—clear head—sound limbs, stout heart—good conscience—wealth enough for me. Isn't that enough—hey?"

NEGLECTING A FEE :

OR,

THE YOUNG PHYSICIAN AND HIS FORTUNES.

THE evening was cold and clear. The stars sparkled dazzlingly above, the frost sparkled white and chillingly below. Young Mordaunt wrapped his cloak closely around him and walked on with a rapid step. The stranger who passed him in the dim starlight might have taken him for some Haroun Al Raschid in disguise, he wore his cloak with such lordly grace, and his head sat so nobly and proudly on his shoulders. But, alas! Mordaunt was very poor. He had but one dollar in his pocket, and he knew not what the morrow would bring forth. He was a young physician, just commencing practice in a large city, with no capital except his brains, but with a stock of enthusiasm, hope, and faith (notwithstanding a dark and mysterious destiny had shadowed his youth), sufficient to endow all the Medical Institutions in the world. He was now treading the margin of his profession, watching the great rushing sea of life that roared around him, ready to seize hold of some sinking mariner, and save him from destruction. But the poor wretches were sure to stretch out their trembling arms to some older, more experienced swimmer on the human tide, and the young man was obliged to work off his superfluous energy and skill in acts of gratuitous service. This evening, he had been unusually fortunate. He had received one dollar as a fee, and having a passionate love of the drama, he was about to indulge himself in a visit to the theatre, whose doors poverty had long closed against him. A distinguished actor was *starring* on the boards, and

(266)

Mordaunt was hastening to secure a favorable seat in the parquette. At the corner of the street, he met a young man of the name of Wiley, who, turning round, walked in the same direction with him. Mordaunt always felt as if he came in contact with a counter stream of thought, when he met this young man; and now it seemed as if a dash of cold, quenching water was thrown over the glow of his anticipations. There was no sympathy, no congeniality. It was the contrast of fire and ice.

"Whither so fast, Mordaunt?"

"To the theatre. Are you disposed for the same amusement?"

"No; I cannot afford it!"

"Afford!" repeated Mordaunt, in an accent of surprise.

Wiley was reputed wealthy, and thousands taken from his pockets would scarcely leave as deep a void as Mordaunt's solitary dollar.

"I cannot afford the time," repeated Wiley. "Life is too short for the great purposes of utility, and too precious to be wasted in search of amusement. I find no leisure for such things myself; but every one has a right to put his own estimate on the gifts of God, and improve them as he thinks best."

There was something cold and cutting in the tone of his voice, something assimilated to the frosty atmosphere, that penetrated the ear of Mordaunt and chilled him.

"I know there are some," he replied, "who can keep on, day after day, and year after year, in the same tread-mill mode of existence, unconscious of weariness as of progress; but I cannot; I must have occasional excitement. I cannot sit for ever in my office, waiting for the stagnant waters of the pool to be stirred by the angel of success. The principle of vitality burns too intensely in my bosom for inaction. It must have fuel. If not of the kind I most desire, the light combustibles which a random breeze may throw in its way"——

"For God's sake," exclaimed a broken voice, so suddenly it made them both start, "for God's sake, gentlemen, show me the way to a doctor. My wife is dying. Where can I find a doctor?"

The blaze of a gas-lamp fell full upon the face of the speaker. It

was a man miserably poor, to judge by his patched and threadbare garments. He had no outer covering to protect him from the cold night air, and his old, napless hat, that beacon-sign of decaying gentility, looked as if it had been Fortune's foot-ball. In the weak, trembling under lip, the wan, bloodshot eye, the ravages of intemperance were written in defacing characters. At this moment, however, he was in the sober possession of all his faculties. Despair and remorse lent urgency and eloquence to his accents.

"For the love of Heaven," he again repeated, "direct me to a doctor. Though," he added with bitterness, "I have not a cent in the world to pay him"—

"I am a physician," cried Mordaunt, his warm, impulsive heart glowing within him at the prospect of being able to administer relief to suffering humanity. "Show me where you live. I will see what I can do for your wife."

"The Lord Almighty bless you," exclaimed the suppliant, the tears which are ever ready to flow from the eyes of the inebriate, washing his bloated cheeks.

"I wish you joy of your patient," said Wiley. "This must be the angel who is to stir the waters of the stagnant pool of life."

Just as Mordaunt was turning to follow the steps of his miserable conductor, without answering the sneering remark of Wiley, another man came rushing along the pavement as if the avenger of blood was behind him.

"What is the matter?" cried Wiley, moving instinctively from the path. "Are the blood hounds let loose to-night?"

"The horses have run away with my master," answered the man, panting for breath. "He has been thrown upon the pavement. His leg is broken—his arm is fractured. I want a doctor, a surgeon, at the quickest possible notice. For the love of mercy, direct me to the nearest."

"Well, Doctor Mordaunt," said Wiley, "your star seems to be in the ascendant to-night. I know this man's master. It is Mr. Goldman, the modern Cræsus. Your fortune is made."

"I have promised this poor creature to go with him," answered

Mordaunt, struggling with the strong temptation that beset him. The glow of compassion faded. Turning suddenly to the wretched being who had been calling down blessings on his head, he said—

"Tell me where you live, and as soon as I have attended to the gentleman who requires my assistance, I will call and see your wife."

"O, sir, she is dying—I left her in spasms. She will die if you delay. You promised me, you know you did. God gave her life as well as the rich man. If you let her perish, God will judge you for it, and man, too."

The pale eye of the drunkard kindled fiercely as he spoke. He forgot that he had been draining, drop by drop, the heart's blood of her whose life he was requiring so vehemently of another.

"He is right," said Mordaunt, heaving off the temptation with a long, deep inspiration; then directing the servant of Mr. Goldman to the office of Dr. Lewis, an eminent surgeon as well as physician, he immediately followed the rapid but unsteady steps of his guide.

"Yes," repeated he to himself, as he walked along, glad that he had girded himself for his task of mercy, "yes, he is right. Though waves of gold should roll over my path, they could not drown the faintest whisper of accusing conscience. Yet, what a glorious opportunity I have lost! Rich! Wiley says he is rich, and riches always give influence. Let me imagine the result of the incident, supposing I could have profited by this golden chance. He is rich—I am skilful—at least, *occultly* so. He is suffering—I relieve him. He is munificent—I am grateful. He becomes eloquent in praise of the young physician, recommends him to favor, and favor comes fast treading on the heels of success. Doctor Mordaunt begins to make a name and fame. The poor little bark, that has kept close to the shore, without one favoring gale to fill its sail, now spreads them gallantly to the breeze, and floats fearlessly on the foaming billows of the main. Ah! perchance the rich man has a daughter—a lovely daughter—fair as the dream of the poet—a Cordelia in filial tenderness, an Imogen in purity, and a Juliet in love. She bends in transport over her recovering father, she blesses my healing power. She raises her eyes of dewy splendor to my face. The

accents of gratitude, which she strives in vain to utter, melt on her sweet, rosy lips. I take her soft hand in mine, when"—

Mordaunt was suddenly checked in his sentimental reverie by coming in contact with a cold, damp wall, whose resistance almost threw him backward. His guide had turned into a narrow, dark alley, running back of a splendid block of buildings, and the damp, close air breathed of the mould and vapors of the tomb. But the pure stars glistened through the opening above with a concentration of brilliancy absolutely sunlike. Mordaunt realized their immense, immeasurable distance. He sighed as he looked up, thinking that even thus all that was bright and beautiful seemed to elude him, shining cold and high, alluring and baffling. One star of exceeding glory riveted his gaze. Up in the centre of the zenith it shone, a blazing diamond on the forehead of night. By a sudden transition of thought, Mordaunt recalled the scene when the Chaldean shepherds beheld the star of the East beaming above the manger which was made the cradle of the infant God. What a glory thrown around poverty! A God in a manger! Should one be ashamed of lowliness, when the Deity had wrapped himself in it, as a mantle? Mordaunt felt a sublime contempt for all the gauds of this world. And this sudden lifting of the soul was caused by that one bright, ascendant star, on which his wandering gaze had fixed. That star was his—the whole heavens, with their resplendent host, were his. A soul, capable of taking in this amplitude of glory, was his—a heart, large enough to embrace all the suffering children of humanity, was his. How could he call himself poor? All the dark past was forgotten.

He was obliged to bend his head while passing into the low dwelling occupied by the patient. The light was so dim, contrasted with the white dazzle of the stars on which his eyes had been so long fixed, he did not at once see with distinctness the interior of the apartment into which he was ushered. But gradually every object came out as through the gloom of a morning twilight. A low bed, whose snow-white covering spoke of neatness and lingering refinement in the midst of penury and domestic misery, stood opposite the

door, and above that snowy covering rose a pale and ghastly face, with closed eyelids and parted lips, through which the breath came slowly and gaspingly. By the side of the bed sat a figure wrapped in a large, gray shawl, which nearly enveloped the whole person. The face belonging to this figure turned slowly toward him, as he approached the bed, and it shone upon him in that dim apartment like one of those evening stars he had just been contemplating, beaming through a dull, gray cloud. It was a face of youth and beauty, but pale, sad, and holy as a nun's; a countenance which had been bending over the couch of the dying till the shadow of mortality had passed over its brightness. No conscious start disturbed the quietude of her attitude, no sudden blush colored the fair cheek, as she met the wondering glance of Mordaunt, who bowed his head in acknowledgement of her presence. A groan from the apparently dying woman recalled his attention to her, and taking her thin and sallow hand in his, he counted the low and flickering pulse; then lifting the candle from a little table not far from the bed, he held it so that the light might fall upon her faded and sunken features. Her eyelids moved not, as the rays flashed over them. He spoke to her in a clear, deep voice, but the sound did not penetrate her deafened ear.

"She is not dying, Doctor?" cried the man, fixing his bleared and rueful eyes on Mordaunt's serious and earnest countenance. "You don't think she is dying, Doctor?"

"She is very low, very low, indeed," replied Mordaunt. "How long has she been in this exhausted state?"

"About half an hour; ever since the spasm subsided," said the young lady with the gray shawl.

The voice was so sweet, and had such a subdued and holy tone, that Mordaunt held his breath to listen.

"O! it was terrible," she continued, "to witness that awful paroxysm."

"Surely, you were not alone with her?" exclaimed the young doctor, involuntarily.

"No," she replied, with a slight shudder; "a servant was with

me, whom a short time since I sent for wine, thinking it might possibly revive her."

"I fear it may be too late," said Mordaunt. "Her nervous system seems completely destroyed, worn out by long struggles, I should think."

Here he riveted his gaze on the drunken husband, with a look that spoke volumes.

"I haven't killed her," he cried, weeping and sobbing aloud. "I know I have not always treated her as I ought—I have sometimes been rough to her, when I didn't well know what I was doing. I never struck her but once—as I remember—never—I didn't mean to hurt her—I haven't killed her, Doctor"—

"But once!" exclaimed Mordaunt, indignantly. "It was enough! It was a deathblow!"

"Lord Almighty!" cried the man, staggering back into a chair, and turning frightfully pale, as another deep groan echoed through the room.

Mordaunt took up the vials clustered on the table, and after having examined them, poured some ether in a glass, and having diluted it with water, put it to the passive lips of the patient. The odor of the ethereal fluid seemed to revive her. She breathed more easily, and the eyeballs began to move under the closed lids.

"She needs stimulants," said Mordaunt; "wine will not be strong enough. She must have brandy. Here," added he to the husband, taking from his purse the solitary dollar—that dollar which was to have been the open-sesame to the magic caverns of fancy—and placing it in his hand, "here, go to the nearest apothecary's and get a bottle of the best French brandy, such as they keep for the sick. Make haste."

The bloodshot eyes of the drunkard flashed up with a sudden and fierce delight. The very sound of the word *brandy* tingled his blunted senses. The sight of the money was fuel to his feverish and burlat desires. Mordaunt felt a gentle touch on his arm, and looking round, he saw the gleam of a white hand on his dark coat. The folds of the gray shawl swept momentarily against him.

"He is gone," said the young lady, in a tone of disappointment; "alas! he cannot be trusted."

"Surely, at a moment like this he *must* be faithful," cried Mordaunt; yet the recollection of the insane gleam of his eye made him shudder.

"Strange that Hannah does not return," said the young lady, looking anxiously toward the door. Her countenance brightened even as she spoke, for a woman came to the threshold and beckoned her to approach. Mordaunt heard a startling exclamation from the gray-shawled damsel, in answer to something the woman said, in a quick, low voice.

"Good Heavens! My uncle! How could it happen? His arm and leg—both broken. O! what a dreadful night!"

She leaned against the frame of the door, as if overcome with the shock she had received. Mordaunt saw that she was deadly pale, and handed her a glass of water. She took it with a trembling hand, and as she raised her eyes to his face, he remembered his reverie about the rich man's daughter, and how her vision had passed before him, fixing her eyes of dewy splendor on his face. The vision seemed realized—only it was the rich man's niece, instead of his daughter, and he was in the poor man's hovel, instead of the rich man's palace.

"You will not leave this poor creature," said she, folding her shawl closely around her, and making a motion to Hannah to follow her. "My poor uncle! how much he must suffer!"

She stepped upon the threshold, unbonneted and unveiled.

"Surely you are not going abroad without a protector, at this hour?" cried Mordaunt, feeling the impossibility of leaving his poor patient alone, yet longing to offer his services as an escort.

"I have only to pass through the gate," she replied; "this cabin is back of my uncle's yard. God bless you, sir, for your kindness to this poor woman. She is worthy of it."

She was gone—the *Evening Star*, as his spirit called her—and he seemed left in darkness.

Yes! this must be the niece of Mr. Goldman, whom he might

have had for a patient, and who might have opened to him the golden portals of success. Such an opportunity scarcely occurs more than once in a lifetime. And what good had he done to this poor woman? Ether and brandy might possibly add a few hours to her miserable existence; but even if he could bring her back to life, he would be bestowing no blessing. Life to a drunkard's wife!—it was a curse—a living death—a dying life. Better, far better that she should press the clay-cold pillow of the grave, than that bed of thorns. Yet he did not relinquish his cares. He fed the waning lamp of life with the oil of kindness, and continued to watch by the bed of the sufferer, bathing her temples with water, and moistening her lips with wine. He listened for the footsteps of the drunken husband, but the wretch came not. He was doubtless steeping his soul deeper still in the burning fluid of hell. Mordaunt remembered the soft pressure of the white hand on his arm, and wished he had sooner felt its warning touch.

About midnight, the poor, weak pulse his fingers pressed suddenly stopped, and Mordaunt found himself alone with the dead. As the inexpressible calm and placidity of death stole over the features, restoring something of youthfulness and beauty, and the charm of a great and solemn mystery rested upon them, he looked upon her with a strange interest. The human frame was to him a wondrous and curious machine, a God-constructed, glorious instrument. He looked upon it with the eyes of science, and whether clothed in rags or fine linen, he recognized the hand of the Divine Architect.

But what must he do? Whom could he summon to that death-tenanted chamber? The *Evening Star* was now shedding its soft, pitying rays over another couch of suffering, that couch which his ministrations might also have soothed. Just as he was rising, resolved to rouse the inmates of the next cabin, and induce them to attend to the last duties of humanity, the door opened and Hannah quietly entered. She was a grave, respectable looking woman, and seemed to understand at one glance the office that devolved upon her. Mordaunt felt as if his mission was now ended, and he was glad that it was so.

"How is the gentleman? How is Mr. Goldman?" asked he. "Is he very badly hurt?"

"Dreadfully, sir. His leg and arm are broken, and he is shockingly bruised, besides. You can hear him groan all over the house."

"And the young lady?"

"Miss Constance? She is with her uncle. She will not leave him, though the doctors all urge her to go, and she looks ready to drop down, too."

"Has he many doctors with him?"

"There are three below—enough to kill him, I am sure," added she, in a kind of *sotto voce*.

"I might have been one of that favored trio," thought Mordaunt, "and now the weight of my last dollar is added to the millstone of sin that is dragging a wretch to the abyss of perdition. But I meant to do good. God forgive me for repining."

The history of the drunkard and his wife has nothing to do with our story, only as it serves to illustrate the character of our young physician, and to introduce him to Constance Goldman, one of those angels of mercy whom God sometimes sends into the world to drop balm into the wounds that sin has made, and to strew with roses and lilies the thorny path that leads to the grave.

Days and weeks passed away. Mordaunt continued to struggle on—to struggle on the very verge of penury, just able, with the strictest economy, to pay his daily expenses. His practice was extending, but chiefly among the poor, whose scanty purse he felt unwilling to diminish. He was gaining experience but losing hope. His youthful appearance was a bar to his success. He had a strong desire to cut off his bright, brown locks, which had a most obstinate and provoking wave, and assume a venerable-looking wig; to cover his sunny, hazel eyes with a pair of green spectacles, and wear an expression of supernatural gravity and intense wisdom. Every thing short of this, he did, to make himself older, but in vain. The fire of youth was burning in the temple of life, and it illuminated all surrounding objects.

Once, when he was walking with Wiley (for, uncongenial as they

were, they were frequent companions,) a carriage stopped at the door of a splendid mansion just before them. A lady descended, whom he immediately recognized as the *Evening Star*. The gray cloud no longer enveloped her graceful figure, which was robed in all the elegance of fashion. The face was less pale and sad than when he saw her last, but still wore that celestial fairness which is seldom warmed with the coloring of earth. Mordaunt bowed low to the recognizing glance, while Wiley stepped forward with the freedom of an old acquaintance, and offered his assistance in leading her up the flight of marble steps which led to the door.

Mordaunt felt a sudden swelling of the heart against Wiley. He could not help it, though he despised himself for it. He knew by intuition that Constance would speak to him. He felt that he was not forgotten. Though her cheek, like the pure asbestos, kindled not at his approach, her eye had beamed with a modest but joyous welcome. He knew by intuition also that Wiley's cold and biting tongue would wither like frost every kindly sentiment she might now perchance feel for him. He did not dream that she had fallen in love with him, for he was not vain or presumptuous, but, associated as they had been in the holy task of mercy and compassion, he could not help thinking there was a sympathy between them, which he could not bear to have chilled. He did not want his name to be mentioned in her presence by the lips of Wiley. But why should he suffer his equanimity to be disturbed by such illusions? She might not condescend to mention him. She was compassionate, and looked kindly on him, when she had met him in the hovel of the poor, but should he seek her in her own lordly home, the rich heiress might chill with her indifference (he could not associate with her the idea of *scorn*) the poor young physician. Mordaunt, in spite of his elasticity and hopefulness of spirit, was beginning to feel a little of the sickness of hope deferred. He had observed that morning, with rather sorrowful misgivings, that his best coat was a little more lustrous at the elbows than it was when he first wore it, and that the silken down of his hat was getting a little shorter and somewhat worn; especially on the rim in front, which he touched when making

his graceful bows. There was nothing yet to detract from the gentility of his appearance, but he knew a day would come when the coat would grow rusty and the hat napless, and unless he had more profitable patients than the drunkard's poor wife, it would be long before he could purchase others. He entered his office, took off his hat, smoothed it carefully with the sleeve of his coat before he hung it on the peg, then exchanging his coat for a student's wrapper, he threw himself into a chair, waked up the dying coals in the grate, and folding his arms, gazed steadfastly on a majestic skeleton that stood in a corner of the room, silent but awful guardian of its solitude.

"Hail, grim companion," he exclaimed; "teacher, monitor, and friend! Hail, lonely palace of a departed king. No—empty cage of a liberated captive. How often has the poor prisoner beat in agony against the marble bars of his prison-house, struggling for release! How often has the proud monarch revelled in pride behind that white, gleaming lattice work! Strange! for six thousand years the great Architect of the universe has been building domes like these, frail, wondrous, glorious, but perishable—perishable temples of the imperishable—corruptible homes of incorruption; and for six thousand years to come, perchance, the same magnificent structures will rise and continue to rise, mocking the genius and invention of man. It is a proud thought that we, masters of the divine art of healing, are able to cheat time and the grave of their inalienable right, and preserve from decay and ruin fabrics more grand than Egyptian or Grecian art ever fashioned. Yes! ours *is* a noble art, and I exult that I am one of its disciples. But, alas! I am still very poor; and O! the irremediable disgrace that still clings to my name!"

We will leave Mordaunt for a while with the grim companion whom he makes the confidant of his wild, deep thoughts, and follow Wiley into the dwelling of the modern Croesus.

PART SECOND.

MR. GOLDMAN, who was still suffering from his broken limbs, reclined upon a couch, near the fire. Wiley sat by his side; Constance, at a little distance. Wiley, when he wished to please, had the most insinuating manners, and he had a strong desire to please the uncle of Constance. He felt confident of success with him, but there was something about Constance he could not fathom. A holy serenity, a passionless calm, over which the breath of admiration flowed like a cloud over crystal, leaving no impression on its pure, smooth surface. As she now sat, looking into the fire, with a soft languor diffused over her features, he was flattering himself that he might be the subject of her waking dream, when she startled him with the question, in her peculiarly sweet, low tone of voice—

"Who is the young gentleman who was your companion this evening?"

"It was young Doctor Mordaunt," answered Wiley, vexed at finding that another than himself was the subject of her reverie. "But surely he could not have had the presumption to bow, as an entire stranger?"

"He is not an entire stranger, nor do I believe that he would be guilty of presumption, under any circumstances," replied Constance, with a slight shade of haughtiness.

"Who is that you are speaking of?" asked Mr. Goldman, whose ear caught the sound of Doctor. "Doctor Mordaunt? I never heard of him. Is he a distinguished physician?"

"He is a young tyro," answered Wiley, "a true Don Quixote in his profession. To show you what chance he has of arriving at distinction, I will mention an incident, connected with him, in which you, sir, have a personal interest. The night when you were thrown from the carriage, and your footman came rushing through the street, in frantic haste for a doctor, ready to seize the first he could grasp, I was walking with Mordaunt, and while I bewailed your mis-

fortune, I could not help rejoicing at such a magnificent opening for him, knowing your unbounded influence, and the eclat it would give him to be employed even accidentally by you. Would you believe it, sir, he refused to follow your servant, refused to administer to your relief"—

"Refused?" exclaimed Mr. Goldman, with an air of surprise and displeasure. "This is very unaccountable behavior. Did he know who I am? Or did he imagine I was some poor wretch, who could not pay him for his services?"

"I told him whom you were, sir, and that it was a life of no common value that was endangered. But because he had promised a few moments before to prescribe for the wife of a vile drunkard, who with reeling step arrested us in our path, a creature too low to be considered within the pale of humanity, he turned a deaf ear to the tale of your sufferings, and allowed *her* life to outweigh *yours*, in the scale of his judgment."

"Fool!" exclaimed Mr. Goldman.

"Perhaps he put his promise in the scale to balance the temptation," said Constance. "Of course he is wealthy, or he would not slight a golden opportunity."

"Not worth a cent in the world," answered Wiley, "and, what is more, never will be."

"Uncle," said Constance, with a sudden lighting up of her fair, calm face, a splendor, not a glow, "when I tell you what I know of this young Doctor Mordaunt, you will withdraw the opprobrious epithet you have given him. The night of your dreadful accident, I was with poor Kate O'Brien, when he visited her, and I was struck with the kindness of his manner and the heartiness of his sympathy. It seemed to me that he was skillful, and that he felt as much interest in her recovery as if a great reward were to be his. Kate O'Brien, sir," added she, looking toward Wiley, with a glance he could not understand, "was a favorite servant of my mother's. My mother had her from childhood in her household, and loved her almost as her child. She was faithful, gentle, and affectionate. Ever since her unfortunate marriage she has lived near us, an object of interest

and compassion. She was worthy of the profoundest pity, whatever may be said of her miserable husband. That Doctor Mordaunt should conscientiously adhere to his promise of visiting the poor and lowly, in the face of a strong temptation, is, I think, a noble instance of generosity and self-sacrifice. I esteemed him before—I honor him now."

"And what is this young Doctor to you, that you defend him so warmly, Constance?" cried her uncle, looking suspiciously on her shining countenance, for it literally shone with moral admiration.

"To me, nothing, uncle; but the cause is every thing."

"What cause?"

"The cause of truth, and justice, and humanity. I thought if you and Mr. Wiley understood the circumstances which I have related, they would vindicate Dr. Mordaunt from the charges of Quixotism and folly. Uncle, *you* was attached to poor Kate—I was summoned to your bed of agony—her brutal husband forsook her—this young man remained with her till she died. Even then, he watched by her lonely corse. Hannah found him guarding it, as a sacred trust"—

Constance paused. She had spoken with more energy than she was aware of, and a faint color dawned perceptibly on her alabaster cheek.

Wiley, exasperated to find that, instead of lowering Mordaunt, he had only exalted him in her estimation, rose to depart. Constance drew a sigh of relief as the door closed on his departing figure. Mr. Goldman looked anxious and irritated.

"You have displeased him, Constance."

"I care not, uncle. His displeasure or approbation are alike to me."

"He loves you. He has wealth and talents and a rising reputation. I do not like to see you blind to his merits, and infatuated by those of a poor stranger. I wish to speak to you openly, Constance. I do not think I shall ever recover from the shock my constitution has received. It is time that I should transfer my guardianship to another. Wiley is rich himself, and cannot be allured by your for-

tune. His attachment is disinterested and sincere, yet he has sufficient worldly wisdom to watch over your property, and his sobriety, prudence, and good sense will secure your domestic happiness. I like Wiley. I wish you to marry him."

"I do not like him, uncle. I do not wish to marry him, or any one else. His worldly wisdom chills the very atmosphere I breathe. If I ever do marry, it shall not be a man of dollars and cents, a man without one warm and generous affection, one noble, magnanimous feeling. Kate O'Brien, the drunkard's wife, was not more worthy of pity than I should be. Her heart was crushed—mine would be frozen."

"Constance," said her uncle, suddenly raising himself on one elbow, then falling back with a groan of pain, "if you have conceived a sudden passion for this young doctor, I will never countenance it; I warn you against this folly. It shall be blasted in the very bud."

"O! uncle, have you so poor an opinion of me as to believe me incapable of an unselfish, generous sentiment? I am not one to be governed by the impulse of passion. You know I am not. I am called the snow-maiden, because I am deemed so cold and unimpressible. I do feel interested in this young physician, for he has shown himself magnanimous and strong to resist temptation. A noble spirit struggling with destiny is worthy of admiration. I would give worlds to hold out to him a helping hand. I would give any thing that I were a man, that I could offer him a brother's aid, a friend's assistance. I feel guilty in the possession of wealth, so far beyond my want, when it might serve as a golden ladder, on which a great soul could mount to the heights of honor and distinction."

"You are a strange girl, Constance. I do not understand you," cried her uncle, feeling through the icy coldness of his nature, in spite of his own will, the penetrative sun-rays of her own philanthropy. He said he could not understand her, but he did in some measure. He understood her enough to know that she was misled by no girlish fancy, no unmaidenly passion, but actuated by a high and holy benevolence. He listened to her with more patience, on that couch

of suffering, to which she had been a waiting, ministering angel, than he would have done in his days of health and ease.

"Uncle," she added, fixing her clear, serene eyes on his face, and taking his thin hand in the soft palms of hers, "you are a man, and can do what I cannot. You are rich—one of the stewards of God's gold. You can take this young man by the hand and lift him above the influences of poverty, so chilling and depressing to the young and ambitious mind. You said this morning that you did not like Doctor Lewis, that he was careless and indifferent, that he would not listen to your complaints, and seemed to think you had no right to make them."

"Yes, I did say so," interrupted Mr. Goldman, "and I say so again. He never stays with me longer than three minutes, treats me like a common patient."

"He has too many patients, uncle. You are of no consequence to him. Your money is no more to him than any other man's. If you should employ this young doctor, he would be grateful and attentive. You would have the satisfaction of feeling that you were doing him a favor, perhaps laying the foundation of his future eminence. You would be the honored patron of youthful talent and now unknown worth. You would exult in your own works. O! uncle, it is not what we do for ourselves, but others, that is written in the Book of Life."

"You say he was very kind to poor Kate?"

"O! so kind and compassionate! No brother could have been kinder."

"What would Doctor Lewis say?"

"I think he would rejoice, for the sake of the young man. He is too eminent in his profession to indulge in the meanness of jealousy."

"What will Wiley say?"

"Wiley! Let him say what he pleases. He is envious, and I despise him. He is malicious, and I dislike him. He is cold-hearted, and I shun him. He is avaricious, and cares not for me, but my wealth. Believe me, uncle, he is unworthy of your confidence."

The lips that, cold and sarcastic, can breathe the venom of slander or an absent brother, never shall address the words of love to me."

"Brother?"

"All mankind are brothers, uncle. O! I feel the chain that binds me to my race. I cannot bear to think that mine should be made of links of gold, and others of galling iron. There will come a day of great equality, uncle. Blessed are those who labor in this world to establish the equilibrium here, which will settle at last on the meeting waves of the great human mind."

Mr. Goldman cast a look of perplexity and admiration on his niece. He could not follow the divine aspirations of her spirit. He even felt awe in her presence. She seemed scarcely of the earth, earthy. How came this young girl by these holy sentiments, surrounded by such worldly influences? Cast in the fiery furnace of temptation, with the dangerous gifts of beauty, wealth, and genius, how is it that she walked unscathed 'mid the scorching flames, serene and unmoved? Was it that one in the likeness of the Son of God walked with her, as he did with the children of Israel, and disarmed the elements of the world of their destroying power?

"How shall I send for this young doctor?" suddenly asked Mr. Goldman. "Do you know where he resides?"

"We have a *Directory*. I will get it."

Constance sought the book, and immediately ascertained the location of the young physician.

"I will try him, Constance. If I do not like him, I shall dismiss him. Remember, it is only an experiment."

"Certainly, dear uncle. I ask no more. Thank you a thousand times for this kind concession. It is good, it is noble of you. If you find him unskillful, it will be your duty to withdraw your influence, for life is too precious to be lightly dealt with, and yours most of all. Good-night."

She bent and kissed the forehead of her uncle with unusual tenderness. He drew her gently nearer and nearer, till she was rested against his heart. He folded his uninjured arm around her, and laid his hand on her smooth, soft hair.

"Constance," said he, "you are a good girl—too good for this world. I wish there were more like you. It is very strange, when talking with Wiley, I feel as hard and worldly as he seems to be. When listening to you, I seem a different being. The monitor within responds to your sweet accents. When I mingled with the world, every thing around me wore a bright, metallic glare. I found myself valued for my wealth, and I took a pride in its possession. Why should I not glory in what gave me power and influence? Since I have been confined to this couch, and when I am alone with you, my better nature rises and sometimes triumphs. Good-night. God bless you, Constance."

"And you too, dear uncle."

A tear, which glittered on the fringed curtain of her eyes, fell on the cheek of the invalid, as she turned from the couch. It was only deep emotion that could draw tears from the eyes of Constance. Her feelings were not upon the surface. They were far down in the "sunless retreats of the ocean" of thought.

The next day, when Doctor Lewis called, Constance perceived a shade of embarrassment on her uncle's countenance, and she hastened to relieve him.

"Doctor Lewis," said she, as he turned hastily to the door, "I will not detain you long. It will give you neither disappointment or displeasure if uncle should free you from your attendance on him? Thanks to your skill, he is no longer in danger. There is a promising young physician whom he wishes to patronize. His name is Mordaunt. Has he your permission to do so?"

"Certainly," he replied, with a look of mingled pleasure and surprise. "I like your frankness. I have heard of this young man. He is promising. I am glad to hear of his good fortune."

His countenance expressed more than his words; but Constance did not blush or cast down her eyes. She related in a few words all that she knew of Mordaunt, and that it was owing to her persuasions that her uncle had been induced to employ him.

The simplicity and frankness of her manner convinced the Doctor of the purity and elevation of her motives. He was not a cold,

feeling man. He had not time to express his feelings. The burden of a great responsibility rested upon him, and it made him grave and thoughtful. If he made hurried calls at the rich man's bedside, where his attentions were needed least of all, he often staid hours in the hovels of the poor. Nothing rejoiced him more than to hear of the rising fame of some young brother in the practice, but he had not time to exert himself for their interests. He had met Mordaunt, a short time before, in the suburbs of the city, at the house of a poor German, and he was much pleased with the young man. So he told Constance, and a smile of approbation illumined his countenance as he did so.

"When I was a young man," said he, laying his hand on the latch, "I had many a hard struggle with the world. I know how to sympathize with these young wrestlers. Tell Doctor Mordaunt so, and tell him to call and see me. I shall be glad to know him better."

And he did know him better, and became his firm friend and disinterested counsellor. And Mr. Goldman was charmed with the young physician, and sounded his praises in every ear.

Mordaunt had indeed cast his bread upon the waters when he visited the dying wife of the drunkard, and gave away his only dollar in the hope of stimulating her exhausted energies. He did not know, when he entered that wretched abode, that there sat the angel who was to stir the stagnant waters of his life. But it was even so.

Now, he knew that he was indebted to Constance for the sudden flow of prosperity that came rolling in the dry and sandy channel of poverty; for the dawning sunshine that shone on the night-cloud of despondency; for the glorious hope of future distinction that now animated his being. He was not vain, and never believed for a moment that personal admiration for himself had prompted the generous interposition of Constance in his behalf. Neither did he impute it to compassion—that would have humiliated him—but to a just appreciation of his character, learned by that intuition of

woman's heart which the philosopher admits, though he cannot plain.

Mordaunt had an exalted estimate of woman. He adored his mother, and dearly loved his gentle (sister, for he had a mother and sister, who dwelt far away, in a sweet country village), and in every lovely young female he recognized a sister's form. For Constance he felt an admiration so chastened by reverence, it was less like the feeling that youth and beauty inspires than what the worshiper feels for his guardian saint. It was not love, for she indeed seemed the *snow-maiden*—too pure and too cold to be warmed by the breath of human passion. He experienced in her presence a feeling of divine repose, a kind of moonlight quietude; for such was her exquisite purity, her holy spirituality, that she diffused around her a kind of silvery brightness that threw a soft, illusive charm on all within the sphere of her influence.

Mordaunt's practice was now rapidly extending among the rich and influential, among those who could appreciate his merits, as well as reward his services. He no longer looked with anxious eye on the sleeve of his coat, or the rim of his hat. He could afford to buy new ones. He was no longer poor, no longer unknown. His mind, liberated from the iron fetters of poverty, and unchilled by the vapors of obscurity, was conscious of an expansion, a warmth, an elevation unknown before. He became strongly attached to Doctor Lewis, who, in his now familiar intercourse with the young man, displayed a geniality of feeling, more winning from the contrast with the prevailing reserve and dignity of his character.

Mordaunt occasionally met Wiley, in whose breast the gall of jealousy was added to the venom of envy. Himself the now rejected lover of Constance, he hated the man who, he believed, had rivaled him in her affections. He did not discontinue his visits at Mr. Goldman's. He asked to retain the privileges of a friend, though denied far dearer rights. He wanted to watch the progress of Mordaunt, and, if possible, undermine the stately fabric of his growing fame.

"Every man," said he, "has some weak, vulnerable point, some

spot that the Styx of Stoicism has not bathed. Mordaunt is proud. Let the barbed arrow pierce him through his pride, and the wound will prey upon his life."

The soul of Mordaunt had a vulnerable spot, but it was one of which Wiley never dreamed, a spot where the arrow would indeed penetrate deep as the core of life. But time had folded its layers thickly over it, and the man at times forgot what had well nigh maddened the boy.

The age of a tree is known by the consecutive circles that are formed round the heart of the trunk, and it takes many a stroke of the sharpest axe to reach that guarded part.

Thus, year after year had wrapped round the *quick* of Mordaunt's heart a deeper coating, rendering it more inaccessible to external injury. He was far removed from the associations of the past, and on that *one subject* the lips of memory were hermetically sealed.

One evening, Doctor Lewis came into his office at a late hour. Wiley was sitting there, leaning back against the wall, on the background of a dark cloak, so that his figure was not at first distinguishable. Mordaunt was in an abstracted mood, and apparently forgetful of the presence of one whom his nature avoided with a strong, electric repulsion.

"Come to my office, Mordaunt," said Doctor Lewis, laying his hand familiarly on his shoulder; "I have a glorious subject—the criminal who was executed this morning. He is certainly one of the noblest specimens of humanity, as far as the outward man is concerned, I have ever seen."

An expression of sickening horror passed over Mordaunt's countenance. He shrunk involuntarily from the hand laid in kindness upon him. Doctor Lewis beheld him with surprise and disappointment.

"I thought you would welcome such an opportunity," said he, rather coldly. "You surely must have conquered ere this that morbid sensibility that recoils from an act which the wants of science demand, which philanthropy sanctions and religion approves. The man who has violated the laws of God makes an expiation greater

than his life, when he yields his body to the scalpel, which explores the winding mysteries of vitality. Living he may be the scourge, dead, the benefactor of mankind."

"Doctor," replied Mordaunt, and his usually sunny eye was darkened and overcast, "I would far rather disturb the awful slumbers of the grave than touch the poor victim of man's unrighteous judgment. He was condemned and executed on circumstantial evidence alone. Such a decision is not lawful. It is often murder of the most cruel, deliberate kind. I believe him innocent. I would not make a sacrifice of his body to save my own from burning flames."

Wiley leaned forward from his darkened corner and gazed with intense curiosity on the pale and excited face of Mordaunt. Why should he feel so painful an interest in the fate of a nameless malefactor? What was his guilt or innocence to him? It was not merely abstract sympathy with his race which could extinguish the color of his cheek, and quench so suddenly the light of his eye.

Wiley, the naturally cold and envious, the deliberately jealous and now malignant Wiley, watched his victim with feline subtlety and dissimulation. He had discovered a wire which communicated with the vital, *vulnerable* part he had been so long seeking. And he twisted and twisted it round the screw of memory, ready to draw it and tug at it, till the heart's blood came oozing, drop by drop, exposing the inner wound.

"I will not urge you to-night," said Doctor Lewis, taking leave of Mordaunt with a serious kindness of manner, which made the young man grasp his hand with unconscious warmth. "I see you are nervous, and I fear seriously indisposed. We cannot always command our will, and every one, I believe, has some strange, unaccountable weakness, which has its ebbs and flows like the moon-ruled tide."

"I fear you think me weak, Doctor," replied Mordaunt, "but do not judge me without a hearing. I will not detain you now. Some time, when you are entirely at leisure, I will tell you something of the history of my early life. A terrible shock received in childhood, will make the electric chord vibrate in long, after years."

When Doctor Lewis had left the office, Mordaunt resumed his seat, and leaning his elbows on the table, preseed his forehead upon his hand, bending his head so that his hair fell in thick masses over his brow. There was perfect silence in the apartment. The lamp-light fell with a strong glare on the ghastly frame-work of life gleaming cold and white in its dim recess, and threw the shadow of Mordaunt darkly on the floor.

Wiley looked at the shadow and smiled, then softly rising, he approached the young physician, and said, in his usual cool, passionless tone—

"You do not seem well to-night, Mordaunt. Can I do any thing for you?"

"No, sir," replied Mordaunt haughtily. Then, with a sudden change of voice, he added—"Pardon me, I thought you had left me."

"I am glad you refused to accompany Doctor Lewis," said Wiley. I have more sympathy with your scrupulous humanity than with his cold, abstract love of science."

"I have not been actuated by humanity," said Mordaunt hastily. "I will not accept unmerited commendation, if *you* consider it such. But *I* do not. I look upon Doctor Lewis as the high-priest of humanity. He is a votary of science only as he is a lover of mankind."

"Why did you tell him that you would not make a sacrifice of the body of that man, believing him innocent, to save your own from consuming fire?"

"Because," replied the young man with energy, "he probably has friends, who are watching with agonizing anxiety to pay to his poor remains those holy rites immemorial time has hallowed. His blackened name, his awful doom, the rope, the scaffold, and the hangman's gripe cannot divorce the victim from their affections and sympathies. The sanctity of a Christian burial heals the gaping wound caused by a violent and ignominious death. Who would rob the wretched survivors of so poor a consolation? Who would deprive them of a home for their bitter tears? A turf to make green with the dew of sorrow? Those who die in the arms of their

kindred, who are laid quietly and reverently in their six-feet bed of earth, with the balm of prayer and praise, what matters it to them if their sanctified dust be made to add to the glory of science and the good of man? What matters it to them, whether their bones moulder beneath the clods of the valley, or bleach in the sunshine of heaven? Friends never go to pierce into the mystery of the charnel-house. Affection shrinks back from its cold threshold. The wreath may hang on the marble urn—the tablet gleam with golden characters. Love, sorrow, memory ask no more.”

“Some of his kindred have died upon the scaffold,” said Wiley to himself, passing his hand over his eyes to hide the triumphant malice of their beams. “I know it as well as if I had seen their bodies swinging between heaven and earth. Constance shall know it, too.”

“For myself,” continued Mordaunt, in a still more excited tone, “I care not what becomes of this clay temple of mine when the indwelling Deity is departed. Earth, fire, flood may claim their own, for it will resolve at last into its original elements. The soul, the enfranchised angel, what cares it for the poor remnant, the broken chains, the badges of sorrow and slavery it leaves behind?”

We will leave Mordaunt to his own reflections; for when the door closed on Wiley, he suddenly extinguished his lamp and wrapped himself in darkness, as with a mantle. The memories of childhood rolled back in a black flood, lashed into billows, drowning the joys of the present, the hopes of the future, even the serene and holy light of the *Evening Star*, could not disperse the thick gloom that followed in the wake of those cold waters. It only made their shadows more appalling. The dark hour was on him, the eclipse of the soul, for the first time since the evening which introduced him to Constance Goldman.

Yes, every mortal that has a soul to feel, has their dark hours. Sometimes the night-cloud comes we know not whence, and goes we know not whither. Sometimes it is the shadow of a mighty sorrow, a sorrow rising gravely and gloomily above the landscape of life—still existing, though years may have stretched their space between.

Mordaunt's own nature was too bright and sunny for that myste-

rious, spirit-wo so many are doomed to feel; but the dark mountain, whose shade had fallen on the green fields and flowery vales of childhood, still loomed upon his sight, through the dimness of distance and the mists of time.

CONCLUSION.

NOT many days after the scene we have described in Mordaunt's office, he was met by Wiley at the house of Mr. Goldman, who was still an invalid. Wiley exerted himself more than usual to shine in the conversation that evening, and his apparent warmth of feeling nearly surprised Mordaunt into an inward acknowledgement that he had wronged this man's nature; that it might possess some of the finer traits hitherto lying beneath or beyond the observation of the world. By imperceptible degrees, and with consummate art he led the conversation through many tributary streams into the channel that suited his purpose.

Pride of birth and station had been touched upon lightly, and Wiley had maintained that the aristocracy of intellect was the only true aristocracy—the one that would, sooner or later, be universally acknowledged and respected. There was something noble, he said, in the efforts of a young man to rise above the misfortunes of his early life. But no honest man should be ashamed of his parentage.

To his propositions, deferentially stated, and skilfully reasoned, he gained the assent of even the aristocratic Mr. Goldman.

“But,” said Wiley, glancing keenly towards Mordaunt, “suppose that in addition to his poverty a dark stain rested on the family of a young man, and, concealing all knowledge of the circumstances of his early history, he should strive to ingratiate himself into the favor of his superiors, and attain their skirts with the blackness that clung to his own.”

“I know such an one,” he continued, “who even aspires to the hand of a young lady far above him. He has partially succeeded

in impressing her with the belief that he is a man of noble sentiments and qualities, that his impulses and aspirations are like her own, that his genius, talents, and acquirements are a fair offset to her possessions and proud name, and that an alliance with him would secure to her happiness and peace. He hides from her his history, which he would fain bury in the oblivion of the past; he hides from her the truth that his name would bring dishonor upon her and those connected with her by the dearest ties; he hides from her that he is seeking this marriage to gild over that name that has been stained with a dreadful crime; in short, he hides from her the fact that his own father perished ignominiously upon the scaffold! Is this honorable?"

It was not till after the words died away that the spirit felt their reptile influence.

Constance had answered—"No, it is not honorable," before this influence was perceptible on herself. She observed the eye of Wiley fixed steadily on Mordaunt, who was seated at her side, and an impulse which she could not resist urged her to turn and look upon him.

As she did so, she met his glance, and her own was riveted, as by fascination. Never had she seen the face of man of such marble pallor. Never had she witnessed such an expression of sternness and despair on any human countenance. And yet, flashing through this sternness and despair there was a suddenly kindled, burning ray, quick, bright, and fierce, as the meteor of a dark night. In that momentary communion of glances, a history was revealed which volumes might not contain.

You have seen the lightning instantaneously opening the gates of midnight, while stretching beyond seemed interminable fiery streets, glimpses of the eternal land. So oftentimes the lightning of strong emotion discloses the mysterious depths of the soul, "that city of our God," whose length and breadth no guager's wand has ever measured.

For one moment the face of Constance was bloodless as his own, then, quickly and gushingly as the blood follows the stroke

of the lancet, the warm current rushed over her cheek and brow. It was like the breaking up of an ice-bound stream, when the waves leap from their prison-bonds, or rather (with reverence we use the comparison), like the miracle of Cana, when the hueless water "owned its God and blushed."

Mr. Goldman, whose easy chair was placed a little back from the group, and who beheld not the emotions we have described, repeated with emphasis the words of Constance—

"No, it is not honorable. It is not pardonable. I could pity, nay, esteem the young man who, making no secret of his misfortune, endeavored to make himself an unblemished fame. But I never would forgive the one who deceived my confidence and tried to introduce into my family a dishonored name. Who is the young man of whom you are speaking?"

"I, sir, am that unfortunate man," exclaimed Mordaunt, to the astonishment of Wiley, rising from his seat, and turning towards Mr. Goldman; "but I have never sought to deceive the confidence of my friends. I have merely been silent on a misfortune for which sympathy has no balm, and friendship no relief. I acknowledge that in scenes far from my native home I have endeavored to forget that I bore a dishonored name, and to make for myself an irreproachable reputation. But it was for no foul, deliberate crime that my unhappy parent was doomed to a death of shame. The victim of a dark and inscrutable destiny, he left on the minds of all who knew him a conviction of his innocence as clear and ineffaceable as if the testimony were written with a diamond pen on a tablet of crystal.

"This gentleman, with a penetration which does more honor to his head than his heart, has discovered the secret, which I have guarded from no mean or unworthy motives. Why he has taken this opportunity to disclose it, in a manner the tortures of the Inquisition could not have surpassed, he alone knows."

"I mentioned no names," cried Wiley, evidently disconcerted by the undaunted frankness of Mordaunt; "if conscience has

directed the application, I neither claim the merit nor assume the blame."

"Really, gentlemen, this is a most extraordinary disclosure," said Mr. Goldman, turning pale from the excitement of his feelings; "I know not when my nerves have received so sudden and severe a shock. Doctor Mordaunt, I have never met with a young gentleman whom I have esteemed more, but these unfortunate circumstances—you should have made them known to me sooner. I am placed in a very distressing position."

Here he put his hand to his head with an air of such pain and embarrassment that Constance immediately saturated her handkerchief with cologne and bathed his forehead. She was glad of something to do in a moment of such overwhelming emotion.

"Let me relieve you of the distress which my presence occasions you, sir," cried Mordaunt. "But before I withdraw I would thank you for all past kindness and confidence. I rejoice in the conviction that I have not forfeited either by any conduct of my own. Should you consider me responsible for an event which occurred in my early childhood, and which no acts of my manhood could change, and exclude me hereafter from your friendship and esteem, I must bow to a decision whose justice nevertheless reason and religion could never admit. Farewell, sir. I wish you to reflect calmly on this question, and whatever be the result, gratitude for the past will be permanent as my life."

With a respectful bow to Mr. Goldman, who did not attempt to reply, and another still lower to Constance, Mordaunt passed from the room without directing a glance at Wiley.

With slow steps he traversed the long passage, walking over prostrate pillars of moonshine, white and gleaming as marble, thinking that of materials as ghostly and unsubstantial his life-temple must be built.

As he opened the door, a silver scaffold was plainly defined upon the floor. He shuddered to see his thoughts thus shaping themselves in the night-glory, when he was arrested by a touch so light as to be almost impalpable. At first he imagined that the moon-

beams were gleaming on his arm in the form of a fair and delicate hand, for there it was on the dark sleeve of his coat, just as he had seen it months before in Kate O'Brien's cottage. He turned and beheld the celestial countenance of Constance so near that her breath sighed upon his cheek.

"Constance!" he exclaimed.

It was the first time he had ever addressed her thus. It was strange that while the revelation just made seemed to divorce him from mankind, it drew him irresistibly closer toward her. At any other moment he would have thought it presumption to have called her by her own noble and appropriate Christian name.

"Come into the conservatory a few moments," said she, "unless you are willing to throw aside a friend as lightly as the flower your foot is now crushing."

A flower had fallen from the bosom of Constance under the feet of Mordaunt, who was unconsciously grinding it in the dust.

"I hope this is not prophetic," cried Constance in a very low voice, looking on the defaced and mangled blossom.

Mordaunt followed the steps of Constance, like a man walking in a dream, back through the passage, out into the still splendor of the night, down the granite stairs, till he found himself in a grotto, in the centre of which a beautiful fountain was throwing up its sparkling jets, which descended in the form of a weeping willow, with crystal boughs dropping pearly tears in a marble reservoir.

Imagination could not conceive a more enchanting spot than this "Fairy's Grotto," as Constance named it.

When her uncle erected the magnificent mansion which he now occupied, he allowed *her* taste to luxuriate there in all the prodigality of nature and all the refinement of art. Mordaunt had been admitted before to this lovely retreat, and he was familiar with all its beauties, but now it burst upon him with a loveliness that seemed more than earthly. The rich aroma of the flowers pressed with languishing sweetness on his senses, and the soft, monotonous murmur of the falling fountain mingled with the sad, minor tones of his own spirit, making a mournful but divine harmony.

They sat down on a circular seat which surrounded the basin, and watched in silence the diamond shower sparkling in the moonlight that turned every drop into a prism, reflecting its radiance. Some of the most beautiful nymphs of mythology stood within the shade of the grotto, and received eternal baptism from the spray. There was one of the daughters of Danaus, holding up her bottomless vase to catch the fountain's waters, hope struggling with despair on her beautiful features, the hope that her expiatory task might yet be accomplished. A lovely Bacchante lifted her ivy-crowned brow and caught a silver crown upon its leaves. A Flora, the embodiment of youthful beauty and grace, was represented as scattering flowers on the dewy grass, and all these charming classical figures were reflected in a mirror which constituted a wall on one side, and the willowy fountain with its diamond branches was reflected there also, and two other figures seated side by side cast their images on the illuminated sheet of crystal, which multiplied, as if by enchantment, the fairy scene.

Constance had thrown around her a light scarf, very airy in texture, but its color was silver gray, and Mordaunt thought once more of the *Evening Star*. But now its rays seemed setting instead of rising on the horizon of his destiny.

"I thank you for this last act of kindness and condescension," said Mordaunt, regretting the next moment that he had spoken at all, for it seemed sacrilege to break the silence, or rather the music, of the hour. "But is it not cruel to bring me here, that I may feel the more fully and deeply what I fear I have forever lost?"

"Why should any blessing, yours either by possession or in reversion, be lost to you now?" asked Constance.

"You know the curse that clings to me, and yet ask why?"

"I have learned your misfortunes, and, though nobly sustained as they have hitherto been, they will turn to blessings at last. I rejoice that you had the moral courage to avow yourself the object of Wiley's dark insinuations. He is already baffled, and his malice will recoil on himself. And do you know me so little as to believe that the revelations of this night can affect my esteem for you—that

I could be so unjust, so cowardly, and unkind—that I could visit on the innocent the crime of the guilty, even if the guilt exist? But I have faith in your father's innocence, because you are his son. I have faith that it will yet be made known to the world, dark as is the cloud which now rests upon it."

"Ten thousand blessings for this sublime faith," exclaimed Mordaunt, his countenance kindling with inspiration, "and ten thousand blessings for the confidence which has not been shaken by this sudden blow. I feel myself worthy of it, and yet I would not take advantage of it and expose you to the malicious observations of the world. Wiley will blazon abroad the stigma which brands my name. By association, your own will become contaminated. Your uncle will sacrifice me to the God of public opinion. He has not the moral strength to resist its influence. I should expose you to his displeasure, and bring dissension into a now harmonious household."

"I should be unworthy of the blessings you have just breathed upon me, if I were not willing to brave the evils you are bringing in such dread array before me. O, if you knew how little I care for the opinion of the world, when conscious of right in my own heart, you would feel how inefficient were your arguments, how sophistical your reasoning. The world, as it is called, one true friend would outweigh a hundred fold in my estimation."

"For my own safety, Constance, then be it. To wish to be more than a friend to you now would be the madness of presumption, and yet so madly presumptuous I am. Nay, so ungrateful, that the friendship which a short time ago I valued as the most precious gift of heaven, would now seem a cake of stone to the prayer of a craving, hungry heart. No," added he, with increasing excitement, "I cannot accept intercourse on such cold terms. I dare not ask it on any other. Therefore, I must leave you. I knew there was a gulf between us, but I would not see it; I made a bridge of flowers over it, and tried to forget that there was an abyss beneath. Wiley has torn away the frail arch. God forgive him—I fear I never can."

"You murmur at a cake of stone," said Constance, and again the

crimson under-current so lately liberated from restraint sent its waves to her cheek, "yet you have never asked for bread."

And the reserved, nun-like Constance uttered this to the man whose father had perished on the scaffold, and whose name was in consequence irretrievably dishonored. Yes, and far more, for they sat for hours in that fairy grotto, till

"Like holy revealings

From innermost shrines came the light of their feelings."

Mordaunt related all his past history, including the awful tragedy of his father's death. He was then a mere boy, but he remembered well his mother's agony and his sister's despair. He remembered well the last prison-scene, when his father, almost crushing him in his arms, baptized him with tears of blood, as it were, declaring his innocence in the name of that God in whose presence he was about to appear. Years of darkness followed, but light dawned at last. His mother was a brave, Christian woman, and grief did not crush her. She lived for her children. In him, the jubilant spirit of youth at last rose above the gloomy past, that past which began to appear as a frightful dream. Amid new scenes, surrounded with new associations, he ceased to dwell upon it, and if the shadow intruded, he resolutely dispelled it. There came, however, a time when it rolled down upon him with the blackness of a thunder-storm, and he bowed beneath its weight. It was the night when Doctor Lewis entered his office, and Wiley was witness of emotions his malice too well interpreted.

"I have explained every thing to Doctor Lewis," said Mordaunt, "and he is more than ever my friend. He has even offered me a partnership in his practice, and given me the most earnest advice to remain."

"Remain!" repeated Constance. "Surely, you have not thought of leaving us?"

"Since I have discovered that I have an enemy, the very air I breathe seems contaminated. But now I feel that I can triumph over his malice. With the hopes that now animate me, I could face

an opposing world. At this moment I would scarcely rend from my life's history its darkened leaf, for on its black tablet I read in golden characters your confidence and faith. No! welcome the shame, since it is the background of glory. Welcome the cross, for the love-crown that glitters in the future!"

Constance Goldman did not feel as if she had made any sacrifice in pledging her faith to Mordaunt. She believed herself the winner of a noble prize in a heart like his. Never perhaps had a young and inexperienced girl a truer estimate of life. A brotherless, sisterless orphan, nature had opened few channels in which her affections could flow. There was nothing in her uncle's character to inspire the love and reverence she longed to bestow on some legitimate object. She had met no one in the circles of wealth and fashion in whom she felt the slightest interest. Of a deeply religious temperament, her heart lifted itself toward God with a fervor and devotion unchecked by any earthly idol. In every son and daughter of sorrow she saw a brother and sister to whom God had appointed her a ministering spirit. So she went about doing good, surrounded by a halo of vestal purity, which made her inapproachable as she was lovely. From the first moment she beheld Mordaunt in the cottage of poor Kate O'Brien, she felt his superiority to his kind; on every succeeding interview she more and more esteemed and honored him; but it was not till this evening, when, with the quickness of a woman's perception, she read that he was the object of Wiley's malice, and at the same time had a vivid insight into *his* heart, that her own was awakened; and its awakening was like the sun-burst of a summer's day after a morning of clouds. What if his father's name was a heritage of ignominy? She cared not, since *he* was pure, and of spotless fame. Was he not more noble, more glorious in his own undervived excellence?

When Mordaunt left the grotto, the moon had set, and the silver had faded from the willow's watery boughs. But clear and serene and resplendent shone the *Evening Star* above his head.

On his homeward way he reflected on his destiny, and its whole aspect seemed changed. Even the scaffold had lost its ignominy,

and was exalted to the grandeur of the cross. He wondered that he had not thought of it more as the theme of an Incarnate Deity—the altar of a god-like sacrifice.

All the influence of Constance was lost upon her uncle in reference to Mordaunt. He refused to listen to her persuasions, to her earnest exhortations that he would take a noble stand above the prejudices of the vulgar and the passions of the proud. Mordaunt, the son of an executed criminal, should never more be an inmate of his house, an attendant on his person. He wished him no evil, he even forgave him the deception he had practised, but all intercourse must cease. Poverty could be forgiven, but disgrace, never!

Constance and Mordaunt both had too lofty a sense of propriety to think of clandestine meetings. She resolved to wait till the time of her majority, and then, being in possession of her fortune, and freed from the legal authority of a guardian, she could openly avow and glory in her choice.

In the meantime, the malicious tongue of Wiley was not silent. The history of Mordaunt became the topic of the day, and wherever he went the eye of curiosity followed him. Many turned away coldly who had formerly smiled, and some who had just begun to smile, frowned and withdrew their patronage. The artful misrepresentations of Wiley, uttered without any apparent venom or design, were the trail of the serpent, blighting the flowers of confidence and esteem.

The young physician had, however, one pillar to lean upon in the firm friendship of Doctor Lewis, firm as the granite, and imperishable as gold. While his proud spirit writhed in secret at the undeserved obloquy darkening his young renown, he thought of the love of Constance, the esteem of Doctor Lewis, and felt himself rich beyond the common hopes of man.

"Be strong, be patient," said this excellent friend, "be self-reliant and hopeful. It is hardly within the bounds of possibility that your father's memory will ever be cleared of the stain that rests upon it. But the cloud will in time roll away from yourself. It is only what is inherent that is permanent."

"I have always had a hope so strong as to assume the character of certainty," replied Mordaunt, "that God would bring about a revelation which would surround my father's memory with the halo of martyrdom. I tremble when I hear of the confessions of dying criminals—tremble with a vague expectation of discovering the actual murderer, in whose stead the innocent and righteous was doomed to suffer."

"It may be," said the Doctor, "but after the lapse of so many years, it would be little short of the miraculous. We must wait for the great day of revealing, when mere circumstantial evidence will be annihilated by the consuming fires of truth."

One night, as Mordaunt was returning with Doctor Lewis from a professional visit, and passing through a cross street, peopled by poverty and vice, he was arrested by a tumult on the side walk. Lights were gleaming near the door of a low building, and several figures were rushing out in different directions. One came in violent contact with Mordaunt, at the imminent risk of prostrating him on the pavement.

"What is the matter?" he exclaimed. "What is the cause of this violent tumult?"

"A man is bleeding to death!" cried several voices, clamorously. "Can any one tell us where to find a doctor, a surgeon? He can't live ten minutes, at this rate."

"Show us the way," said Doctor Lewis. "Here are two doctors at once."

The next moment, forcing the way through the crowd, they stood in the presence of the bleeding man, and, accustomed as they were to every form of suffering and death, they recoiled with involuntary horror from the spectacle before them. He lay extended on his back, on the bare floor, weltering in his blood. He lay in a crimson pool, and the dark red tide was still gushing from his right arm, like water from a fountain.

"What is the meaning of this?" said Doctor Lewis, even his iron nerves vibrating painfully as he gazed upon him.

"Nothing but a fight," answered a ruffianly-looking bystander. "The man that cut him ran off when he saw him bleed so dreadfully."

"Nothing but a fight!" repeated Doctor Lewis, sternly; "why he must have cut an artery. 'Tis a life-stroke."

A knife dabbled in blood lay dripping on the floor. Doctor Lewis threw off his coat, seized the knife, and stepping, almost wading into the bloody pool, he stooped down and gashed open the sleeve of the wounded man. To tie up a severed artery is a difficult and dangerous operation, but with a firm yet gentle touch he drew together the issues of life, till the living fibres turned, the valves of the fountain closed, and the victim was saved from immediate death.

"You are not used to such bloody work," said Doctor Lewis, looking at his own and Mordaunt's ensanguined hands, after they had laid their patient on a bed in the adjoining room, and administered the customary restoratives. "We might be taken for murderers, indeed," added he, holding out his arms, whose linen covering of dazzling white was reddened with the scarlet dye of murder.

Mordaunt turned deadly pale. He remembered his father, and the evidence that stained a spotless life.

"He cannot live," said Doctor Lewis. "Such rills of blood as have flowed from his arteries are enough to exhaust the energies of the strongest life. And why should we wish him to live, only to expend the wonderful muscular strength which God has given him in scenes of violence and strife? I can read in every line of his strongly-marked, disfigured face a history of blood and crime."

At length the man opened his eyes, and rolling them round the apartment, they rested on the figures that were seated by the bedside with wonder and terror. He looked upon their grave countenances and bloody arms, and had they been agents of vengeance instead of ministers of mercy, he could not have expressed more wildness of horror in its dim and glassy glance. Mordaunt stood nearest him, his arms folded across his breast, and a dark shade resting upon the sunlight of his eyes. The restless glance of the patient became fixed on his face, and it suddenly flashed, as if from an inward blaze. A hoarse shriek burst from his lips.

"Who are you?" he cried. "How came you here? I'm not dead yet! By the eternal God, I'll not be tormented before my time! Away, I say! How came that blood on your hands? You didn't do it! Hah!"

"Come this side, Mordaunt," said Dr. Lewis, in a low voice. "He seems delirious, and there is something about you that agitates him. I want him to be very quiet."

"Mordaunt, Mordaunt!" groaned the man, "who told you his name?"

Then pausing, he added, in a whisper—

"Fool! he died upon the scaffold!"

Mordaunt grasped the Doctor's arm with spasmodic force. The blood rushed in torrents to his brain, to make room for the wild hope that leaped into his heart.

"Be quiet," said the Doctor, laying his hand on Mordaunt's shoulder, and fixing upon him his commanding eyes. "Be quiet. *He may die without confessing.*"

The last words were audible only to the ear of Mordaunt; but, low as they were, they rung through him like a trumpet's blast. He remained silent, while every fibre of his frame quivered with suppressed emotion.

Doctor Lewis bent over the wounded man, and addressed him calmly and deliberately.

"You have but a few hours to live, at the utmost. You are going into the presence of God, a naked, guilty, trembling soul. Your only hope of mercy is in making a full confession of the crimes you have committed. You cannot conceal them. I know them. God knows them. The assembled universe will know them."

The dying man uttered the most horrible groans; while, as if under the influence of fascination, he kept his lurid, sunken eyes fixed upon the pale and agitated face of Mordaunt.

"I can't die," he murmured; "I hav'n't time to repent. *He* had. Every body that dies upon the scaffold goes to Heaven—don't they? A few hours—how many? Tell me, or, by the Almighty God, I'll curse you with my last breath!"

"You cannot live more than three—perhaps not one," replied the Doctor, with imperturbable composure. "Waste not your breath in idle curses. There was pardon for the dying thief—there may be for you. You cannot bring back the dead; you may justify their memory. For *your* crimes this young man's father perished on the scaffold. Confess it—for, as sure as you die without clearing the innocent, your departing spirit will weave itself a winding-sheet of flames."

"I will confess," he gasped, "but, God of mercy! it is too late—too late."

The Doctor moistened the parched lips of the patient; then, having forced him to swallow a reviving mixture, he drew from his pocket paper and pencil, and seated himself with the gravity of a magistrate by the side of the bed. It was not without many interruptions, incoherent ejaculations, groans of despair, and cries for mercy, that the wretched being, who called himself Leftridge, related what we will endeavor to condense in fewer words.

More than sixteen years previous, Leftridge and Mordaunt (the father of the young physician) met, as travelers, in a crowded inn. There was another stranger there, who boasted of the immense quantity of gold in his possession. He looked upon the red wine-cup, and prudence evaporated with its fumes. Leftridge and Mordaunt shared the same room, the same bed. The stranger, with his boasted gold, occupied the next apartment.

Leftridge could not sleep—a demon was at work in his heart, hissing temptation. He stole from the side of his sleeping companion, on whose placid face the moonbeams were shining, (strange that man can meditate deeds of guilt, in such a holy light!) Mordaunt's dagger, his traveling weapon of defence, lay gleaming on the table, conspicuous for its gilded sheath. Leftridge drew forth the blade, and touched the edge with his cold fingers. The steel seemed to burn into his flesh, chill as it was. A linen handkerchief lay by its side, bearing initials *not his own*. He seized it also, and stole with stealthy steps into the adjoining room. So sure was the blow that

but one groan broke on the silence of the night, and that groan echoed not beyond the walls of the death-chamber.

The murderer filled his pockets with gold, and fled. Mordaunt was arrested as the criminal. His own knife, found in the gaping wound, his own handkerchief, bathed in blood, some of the gold, discovered in his pocket, were circumstantial evidences which no counter testimony outweighed. The absence of Leftridge, who was supposed to have left at early dawn, as travelers often did, excited but little remark. Mordaunt was a stranger. So great was the public indignation, it came near setting at defiance the majesty of the law, and condemning him without judge or jury. The sequel of his fate is known to the reader from our previous narrative.

Leftridge wandered from place to place, far from the scene of the two-fold tragedy, spending his ill-gotten gold, and trying to drown in intemperance the unquenchable fires of remorse. Providence had brought him, at his last hour, face to face with the son of his victim, thus proving its own retributive justice.

Mordaunt listened to this vindication of his father's memory in breathless emotion, but no vindictive feelings swelled his bosom. That miserable being, stretched on the very edge of the burning crater of doom, looking into the smoking abyss below, feeling the crumbling earth sinking, giving way beneath—could he look upon him with any emotions save of the deepest compassion? His father had died, sustained by faith and animated by Christian hope. His memory, though stamped with public ignominy, was embalmed by the tears of widowed and filial love. His misfortunes had canonized him. But Leftridge—alas, for the poor wretch! What was left for him but a fearful looking forward to future judgment, and a name steeped in infamy?

Exhausted by the efforts he had made, he lay panting, gasping, a cold and clammy moisture oozing from his cadaverous skin. And so he died.

Doctor Lewis took immediate measures to publish to the world the circumstances which removed the shadow that envy and malice had rolled over Mordaunt's name. They became the topic of the day,

and the young physician was exalted into a hero, the hero-son of a martyr-sire. That very night, he wrote to his mother—the next he sought the dwelling of Constance.

"My father's memory is justified," said he, addressing Mr. Goldman; and, notwithstanding the respect he wished to manifest to the uncle of Constance, his manner was cold and haughty. "Is the social ban removed from his son?"

"I regret exceedingly, Doctor Mordaunt," answered Mr. Goldman, in much embarrassment, "that circumstances have compelled me to put an unnatural restraint upon my feelings. For myself, I could rise above the prejudices of the world; but as the guardian of a young lady of rank and fortune, I have been compelled to be circumspect. We live in a cold and censorious world."

"I am fully aware of that truth, sir," answered Mordaunt, with a slight dash of bitterness in his tone; but the entrance of Constance, now the *Morning Star* of his destiny, dispersed the lingering clouds of haughtiness from his brow, and he remembered nothing but that her faith and trust had been the same,

"Through joy and through sorrow, through glory and shame."

Wiley had the audacity to call at his office and offer his congratulations. He extended his hand with the assurance of a welcome guest. Mordaunt folded his arms and drew back with stately reserve.

"You can enter my doors and sit down in my office," said he, with a glance that brought the hot blood to Wiley's usually cold cheek, "for they are not a part of myself; but my hand is my *own*, and never shall be voluntarily given to a man whose heart I know to be destitute of every warm and generous feeling. That I bear no vindictive remembrance of the past, let this action speak."

Taking from his pocket-book a soiled and worn-looking paper, he put it in the hand of Wiley.

"This paper," he added, "relates to yourself. The Stephen Wiley there referred to as the leader of a notorious band of counterfeiters must be your own father. There are collateral proofs which

I can gather up, if you will it, and place in strong array before your eyes. This paper was found upon the person of Leftridge, the murderer, himself one of that lawless band. Doctor Lewis is the only man beside myself acquainted with this disagreeable fact. *He* will never publish it to the world, and I should look upon myself with loathing and scorn, if I could imitate the malice from whose evils I have just been liberated, and seek to cover you with a father's shame. Now your secret is safe. Tear the paper into a thousand pieces, if you will, and let the winds of Heaven disperse the relics."

Wiley crushed the paper as if with iron fingers. His lips turned of ashy paleness, while the veins in his forehead swelled and stood out like purple cords. He tried to speak and falsify the evidence of truth, but the words adhered to his palsied tongue. The astounding revelation brought about by such a strange coincidence of circumstances seemed so much like the retributive justice of Heaven, he was struck dumb with terror, and his coward eye quailed before the flashing gaze of Mordaunt.

"I again repeat," said the latter, "that your secret is safe. *You know it is.* You know me to be incapable of a mean revenge. And I will add, that if you profit by this bitter lesson, if you ever awaken to the beauty of truth and the value of friendship, if you should offer your hand with an honest heart in it, then mine shall close upon it with equal readiness and cordiality."

"You *are* generous," exclaimed Wiley, in a hoarse, unnatural voice, "but I cannot talk now. Farewell, Mordaunt. You will never see me again, unless I can accept your offered conditions. I shall leave the city immediately. My character is in your hands. Do what you will with it, I shall never complain."

They parted, and years passed before they met again. When they did meet, Wiley extended his hand, and Mordaunt did not reject it. Magnanimity had triumphed over malice. Wiley never became a warm-hearted or amiable man, for he wanted the genial elements to constitute such a character, but he did endeavor to be a just and honest one, and he had the candor to acknowledge that it was owing to the influence of Mordaunt. He had been a cold

skeptic in the belief of the existence of moral excellence; but there was a living reality, a simple majesty and truth in Mordaunts's virtues, to which his spirit bowed in late but sincere acknowledgment.

And once again Mordaunt sat with Constance in the "Fairy's Grotto." The fountain threw up its silvery spray into the moonlight, falling with the same lulling music in the marble reservoir. The beautiful daughter of Danaus still held her empty vase beneath the waters, the lovely Bacchante caught the same resplendent crown upon her leafy brow, and the graceful Flora twined her fadeless garlands in the shade.

Constance, fair and pure as these marble graces reposing in the moonlight, and ten thousand times as lovely, sat beside her husband, her eyes raised to the night-arch bending radiantly above them.

"Do you see that solitary star?" said Mordaunt, taking her hand in his, and raising it in his toward one whose rays were almost lost in the full glory of the moon. "The first night I ever met you, I fixed my gaze upon that planet, and thoughts holy and inspiring rushed into my soul. The dread of poverty, the fear of shame melted away in its divine effulgence. I saw you in the cottage. From that moment you became the *Evening Star* of my destiny, shining on with steadily increasing brightness unto the perfect day."

THE TEMPTED.

"I DON'T believe brother will be here to-night—that I don't," said little Mary Norwood, rubbing her eyes that winked and ached from gazing so long from the window. "I won't love him if he don't; such a pretty bright night too."

"You had better go to bed, my child," said Mrs. Norwood, smoothing down her wayward ringlets, "you are getting very sleepy, and Augustus will not be here a minute sooner from your watching."

"No, but I want to see my doll he's going to bring me, and besides I am not a bit sleepy, mother,"—and she opened her round blue eyes to their widest limits, to prove the truth of her assertion.

"I don't believe Augustus would know Mary if he saw her any where else," said Harriet Norwood, looking lovingly on her little sister, "she has grown so much, and altered too, within the last two years."

"He would know those big blue eyes of hers any where," answered her mother, smiling, "especially when she puts on that round look, as he used to call it. I hope *he* will not be changed, but bring back the same sunny countenance and ingenuous smile, that distinguished his face from a thousand. He *will*, if he has preserved the sunshine of his heart undimmed, and its fountains pure from corruption. There are so many temptations in a large city, I have sometimes trembled for him, considering his youth, and the proneness of the human heart to wander from the strait and narrow path into the wide road that leads to ruin."

"Oh, mother," said Harriet warmly, "I know he is the same. Such an affectionate disposition and ardent feelings as his, united

with such upright principles and such high sense of honor, could never change so soon. I would scarcely be afraid to stake my life on his uncorrupted integrity."

"Rose Somers herself could not have defended him with more warmth," replied Mrs. Norwood, smiling at Harriet's glowing cheek and earnest countenance, "but you little know a mother's heart if you think there is not as eloquent an advocate in his behalf pleading in my breast as yours."

"Hark!" exclaimed little Mary, jumping up eagerly and running again to the window, "I hear bells—how sweet they jingle—it's brother, I know."

Mrs. Norwood and Harriet followed the rapid footsteps of Mary, and gazed abroad on the pure expanse of snow, that, scarcely yet tracked by the footsteps of man, shone white and dazzling in the moonlight. A light sheet had fallen during the latter part of the day, and the sun, to Mary's bitter grief, had gone down in clouds; but after awhile the moon was seen palely struggling through them, then lining and edging them with brightening silver, till at length they melted in her deepening radiance, and she looked down, unveiled and glorious, on one of the most beautiful scenes of the universe—a wide landscape covered with smooth, undrifted snow, that reflected its white lustre back through the cold still air—and looked so sweet and pure, one might forget in gazing that sin or sorrow had ever marred so fair a world. Mary's quick ear had not deceived her—the merry jingling of bells was distinctly heard; they rung faster and faster, nearer and nearer—a sleigh covered with sweeping buffalo skins came dashing up to the door, a young man sprang out, and was welcomed at the threshold by a three-fold embrace, and smiles and tears mingling together like an April shower, and still those clasping arms were around him when he stood by the blazing hearth, whose ruddy light contrasted beautifully with the cold splendor abroad.

"How well you look, Augustus," said his mother, as soon as she could speak, for deep joy is never loquacious.

"And you too, dear mother; you never looked so young; and

what shall I say of little Mary here, whom I left no higher than my knee?"

"Aint I grown tall, brother?" cried she, standing on tip toe, and trying to stretch out her little short, fat neck.

"Yes," said he, laughing, and lifting her in his arms as he spoke, "and those round blue eyes have the same particular look of astonishment I always loved to excite."

He pressed her warm, rosy cheek against his cold one, while his mother warmed his chilled hands in hers, and Harriet took off his frosty cloak, and drew his chair close to the glowing fire.

"There is indeed no place like home," exclaimed he, looking round him with a glistening eye. "A welcome like this would repay one for a long life's exile. I feel as if I were a boy once more, I might almost say a girl, for a girl's softness is stealing over my heart."

He bent his head over Mary's flaxen ringlets, and she thought the snow flakes that powdered his hair were melting in drops on her cheeks. She took this favorable opportunity of whispering in his ear some very particular questions about the dolls of the city, which received the best practical answer in the world, in the appearance of a waxen doll half as large as herself, which could open and shut its eyes, and which put her into such an ecstasy of joy and admiration it is doubtful whether she slept during the whole night. His mother and Harriet, too, had each their respective gifts, testimonies of affection, whose value can only be known and prized by those who have felt the warmth of such a *welcome home*.

"Havn't you brought something pretty for Rose, too?" said Mary. "Don't you want to see Rose Somers?"

"And how is Rose Somers?" asked he, endeavouring to speak in a tone of unconcern. "Has she forgotten her old schoolmate and friend?"

"I am afraid she is forgetting you," answered little Mary, looking thoughtfully down, "for when I asked her the other day if she did not want to see you more than any body in the whole world, she said if she were a little girl like me perhaps she would. She did not

look glad either, for I saw the tears coming into her eyes when she said it."

Harriet smiled, but Augustus seemed infected by Mary's sadness, and remained silent for some time, gazing steadfastly on the blazing hearth. It was then his mother had leisure to observe his countenance, now in repose, and to note the changes two years had wrought. He was much thinner, and she thought paler too, though the fitful glow of the fire made it difficult to judge of the natural hue of his complexion. There was a contraction of the brow, and an indescribable expression about the mouth, caused by a slight quivering of the under lip, and the compression of the upper. This expression was the more remarkable in him, as his face had ever been distinguished by its joyous frankness and vivacity. He looked up, and meeting his mother's mild and earnest gaze, seemed conscious that she was reading a tablet of unutterable thoughts, for he roused himself from the abstraction in which he had fallen, and talked and smiled as he was wont to do in his more boyish days. Before the hour for retiring came, Mrs. Norwood drew a small table near the fire, on which the family Bible was laid. Harriet placed a lamp at its side, and little Mary slid down from her brother's knees, and took a low chair, as if accustomed to a more reverential attitude when listening to the word of God.

"My dear Augustus," said Mrs. Norwood in a tremulous voice, "this is the hour when we have always most tenderly and feelingly remembered you. We have never surrounded the family altar without invoking blessings on your head, and praying that you might be shielded from temptation and sorrow. If you still retain your love for this precious Book, and this hallowed hour, I shall feel that my prayers have been answered."

Augustus did not answer, but he opened the book, slowly turned over the leaves, pausing and then going on as if irresolute where to select a portion of its contents. The colour on his face heightened, till his very brow became crimson.

"Excuse me to-night, dear mother," said he hastily. "I am hoarse

and weary from riding so long in the cold. Besides I am occupying a place that yourself or Harriet can far better fill."

He rose as he spoke and took the seat farthest from the light, avoiding the anxious glances that followed his footsteps, while Harriet, occupying the one he had vacated, began to read. At first her voice faltered, but gathering firmness as she proceeded, settled into a sweet solemnity of tone, appropriate to the holy truths she uttered. But when the book was closed and they knelt down in prayer, it was the mother's low accents that met the ear. When death had entered that domestic circle and smitten the master of the household, who like the patriarchs of ancient days had offered up the morning and evening sacrifice, Mrs. Norwood had gathered her orphan children around her, and in the deep humility of a stricken and wounded spirit, laid her lonely offerings on the shrine consecrated by the manly devotions of years. She was not ashamed to lift up her voice, as well as her heart, to Him who is the widow's God and the Father of the fatherless—and her children thus educated in the hallowed atmosphere of prayer and of praise, learnt to realize the omnipresence of their Creator, and to feel that there was an eye that never slumbered or slept, constantly looking at their naked hearts. Several of her younger children had died, and their mother yielding them up in faith to their Redeemer, still bowed her head in prayer, and said, "Father, not my will but thine be done." Little Mary, who was born since her father's death, was the darling of the household. Like a flower blooming in the church yard, she shed brightness and fragrance over the home then made desolate by grief. And now when happiness and cheerfulness once more gladdened the domestic scene, she, in her sweet and joyous childhood, was the nucleus round which the tenderest cares and fondest affections gathered. Young as she was, her heart even whispered its response to her mother's aspirations and petitions, and she was as much afraid to think an evil thought as to do an evil action. But let us leave Mary to develop her guiltless character, as she is called into action, and follow Augustus to his chamber, where he is left alone with his own soul. He looked round on the well remembered walls—the pure

white curtains, the neat, simple furniture,—the shelves filled with well selected books, till every object seemed to turn into an accusing spirit, and upbraid him for his moral dereliction. And there was the hallowed spot, where he had been accustomed to kneel in prayer, and his guardian angel was wont to descend to bear up the soul's incense to heaven, after having shed from his wings the blessings with which they were laden. As he pressed his cheek on that spotless pillow, he thought of the visions of his boyhood and early youth, and the sweet image of Rose Somers glided before him so distinctly, she seemed to move between him and the pale moonlight, like a soft and rosy cloud. Affections that had faded away in the polluted atmosphere to which he had been exposed, now rose fresh and redolent as in life's younger spring. And hand in hand with them came virtuous resolutions to aid and sustain them. The past seemed a dream, a dark and troubled one, but its very darkness served to exalt by the strength of contrast the brightness of the future. He had been a slave, the more dishonored because a willing one, but now he was determined to burst his bonds, and rejoice in the liberty he had so shamefully surrendered. He rose in the morning, in the full vigor of these upright resolutions, but they were made in the confidence of his own strength, and he was yet to prove the instability and weakness of human will, opposed to the power of temptations and habit.

Harriet's geraniums and green house plants were placed in every window, beautifully relieving the chill white back ground on which they were displayed. He saw they were arranged with a view to his particular gratification, and he did not suffer a tint to pass unnoticed and unpraised. Mary brought him her kitten, a beautiful creature, with a body as white as the snow, and a buff and grey tail, which she run round and round after with a peculiar grace. This was duly admired and petted for Mary's sake, who looked upon it with feelings verging towards idolatry.

"Augustus is unchanged," said Harriet, when her brother had left the apartment, "he has preserved his love for nature pure and undiminished. He was weary last night, but this morning he is

himself again—only more manly—yet he has not lost his boyish simplicity."

"Gustus isn't changed, no indeed," said Mary, caressing her favorite; "he let my kitten climb his shoulder, to purr there as long as she pleased; you told me, Harriet, he wouldn't care for kittens any more, but he does, and I love him all the better for it, I know."

"Augustus is changed in looks, but not in heart," said Rose Somers to herself, as she sat at their fireside the evening after his return. "He is paler, and somewhat graver too, but he is handsome, withal—and what he has lost in gaiety, he has gained in sensibility of expression. I wonder if he thinks me changed?" continued she, lowering her eyes before his vivid glance, "he reads me very closely."

Rose, at seventeen, was not the same as Rose at fifteen, and yet the alteration was more in manner than external appearance. She was not beautiful or handsome, yet there was something about her perfectly bewitching, and this charm did not consist in any graces or smiles, or in any thing that could be defined. It was felt by all who saw her, and yet few could describe the attraction that pervaded her countenance and hung upon her movements.

"I cannot for my life take my eyes off that girl," said an honest farmer, "she makes me think of every body I ever saw before, and yet looks like nobody in the world but herself."

Before Augustus had left the village, Rose was almost a fixture in her mother's household. Of about the same age as Harriet, she was her almost inseparable companion, and the avowed champion of Augustus in all his difficulties and trials. She was the sharer, too, of his merry sports—whether coasting on the snowy hill side, or sliding over the ice in the bright moonlight, or rambling the green fields in search of summer flowers. But now this familiarity would never do—they must be polite and formal to each other, and Rose did try very hard to call him Mr. Norwood, and to put on a show of womanly reserve, but after a few days she forgot to call him Mr., and to take a seat far from his side. Familiar scenes were renewed, the dear socialities of the winter fireside, the ride in the moonlight,

to the sound of the merry going bells, even the coasting down hill, and the sliding on the ice, to the ecstasy of little Mary, who, taking hold of her brother's coat as he skated, thought herself quite an experienced traveller on ice. Mrs. Norwood, when she saw her son the enlivener of their domestic hearth, as he was wont to be, reading for their amusement some work of genius and feeling, while they were plying their busy needles, and winding up the evening with a portion of God's holy word, felt happy once more, and with the all-hoping, all-believing love of a mother, gave herself up to the conviction that all was right. True she would have felt very glad to have seen him established in business, but then it was natural after two years' confinement and hard study, that he would wish a little relaxation, and though not possessed of an ample fortune, he was assured of an independence.

Harriet and Rose sat together one night at a later hour than usual, by the fireside. Mrs. Norwood and Mary had retired to bed, and they remained to watch for the return of Augustus, who had gone out with a party of young men on a moonlight expedition on the water. The streams had broken their ice-chains, so that boats could glide on their surface, though the ground was still covered with snow. The young men for several nights had been engaged in the amusement of fishing, and Augustus was induced to join them.

"I wish Augustus had not gone," said Harriet, as hour after hour waned away and he did not return. "I do not like this going on the water at night; and there are some very wild young men of the party."

Rose looked at the clock, then at the window, then walking towards it, looked out upon the street till her eyes were blinded with the intensity of their gaze. "It is very strange," said she, "very strange, indeed. He said he would be back at nine, and now it is almost twelve. Something must have happened. He never staid-out so late before."

"There was a young man drowned last winter in the river, in just such a frolic as this," cried Harriet, her fears gathering strength

from the manifest alarm of Rose. "I wonder I could have forgotten it."

"Harriet," exclaimed Rose, taking up her cloak and gathering it around her, "I am not afraid of going out such a night as this. It is as light as day. It is not more than a quarter of a mile to the river the back way. Let us go and see if we can discover any traces of them."

Harriet had some scruples about the propriety of the step, notwithstanding her anxiety about her brother; but Rose, in her impetuosity bore them down, and in a few moments they were running along the foot-path that led through the fields, so closely muffled in their dark cloaks and hoods, that Augustus himself could not have recognized them. Every thing around them was as still as if all nature were sleeping in the cold moonlight. They heard nothing but the beating of their own hearts, as they glided swiftly on, till they reached the bank of the stream. There was a slight declivity where they stood, and the water rushed and gurgled over the pebbles, and looked so dark and fearful where the moonbeams did not fall, that their imaginations, already excited, invested the scene with something wild, gloomy, and peculiar. Unwilling to express to each other the extent of their fears, afraid of the sound of their own voices in that deep stillness, they remained silent and trembling, looking up and down the stream, and listening to the faintest sound, till a thousand echoes seemed ringing in their ears. At length they saw a light glimmering on the stream—it came nearer and nearer, growing brighter as it approached, while shouts and mingled voices were distinctly heard. Inspired with new alarm, the two girls sheltered themselves in the shade of a large rock, hoping to escape observation, till this noisy and seemingly bacchanalian crew had passed. They could see that the boat was full, and that they who rowed, plied the oars with a bold and rapid hand. It came gliding up, with a full sweep, near the very rock by whose shadow they were concealed, and several young men sprang on the bank, but the others dashed merrily on.

"Augustus cannot be among these," whispered Harriet, as a blustering oath from one met her ear.

Rose pressed closer to Harriet, without speaking. She thought she recognized his voice, altered as it was in sound, and it pierced her like a dagger.

"Ha! we have traitors in the camp!" cried one of them, catching a glimpse of the shrinking figures that leaned against the rock; and in a moment they were surrounded.

"Let me see your faces, my pretty ones," said the foremost of the three; "we did not know we were so tenderly watched."

They gathered their cloaks more closely around them, and buried their faces in the folds.

"Come!" said the young man with a bold exclamation, "I will know whether we have got fairies or furies flitting about in the moonlight!"

He caught hold of the cloak nearest to him with no very gentle grasp, when its relaxing folds suddenly filled his arms, and the slight figure of Rose Somers appeared beautifully defined on the dark rock.

"Augustus Norwood, can this be you?" exclaimed she, in a tone so sorrowful and indignant, it recalled him at once to a sense of his situation.

He endeavored to put the cloak round her, but she snatched it from his hand, and throwing it over her own shoulders walked rapidly forward, almost dragging Harriet, who, weeping and looking back, begged her brother to come home with them.

"What in the name of Heaven brought you here, at this time of night?" said he, pursuing their steps, and speaking in a loud and irritated voice. "A pretty hour for young girls to be abroad alone!"

"Better, far better to be alone," said Rose, bitterly, "than in the company of those who forget they were once gentlemen."

"Why, Rose, you wouldn't say I am not a gentleman," cried he, forcing a laugh.

Rose turned and gave him one look, but it was sufficient to confirm her worst fears. An unnatural flush burned on his cheek, his eyes

flashed with the fires of inebriation—his voice had a strained, inflated tone, his whole expression and manner were transformed.

"We were foolish enough to fear you might be drowned," said Rose; "and forgetting ourselves we came here and exposed ourselves to insult and mortification!"

"Insult!" repeated he; "you may depend upon it, none shall insult you while I am near." He attempted to take her hand and draw it through his arm, but she shrunk from him with undisguised repugnance.

Mrs. Somers and Mrs. Norwood lived side by side. They were now close to the dwelling of the former. Rose bade Harriet a hasty good-night, and springing through the gate was out of sight in a moment. The brother and sister did not exchange a syllable. They entered their own home, retired to their respective chambers—the one to sleep the leaden slumbers succeeding unnatural excitement, the other to weep over a discovery that filled her heart with bitterness and shame.

The next morning Augustus did not appear at the breakfast table, and Harriet's pale cheeks and swollen eyes attracted her mother's attention. Harriet, resolving to screen her brother, and to save her mother, if possible, the anguish of such a disclosure, declared she had caught a terrible cold, which was indeed the case, and that she had a bad head-ache, which was equally true. She was glad to submit to the usual remedies for such complaints, and to be kept a prisoner in her own room the remainder of the day, to avoid meeting with Augustus, whom she dreaded to see. He, too, kept his room, upon the plea of indisposition, and Mrs. Norwood, who feared from his heavy eyes and feverish countenance he was attacked with some sudden disease, could with difficulty be prevented from sending for a physician. Little Mary hovered around him, though he took no notice of her presence or attention. The child, unaccustomed to such neglect, stood near him, silent and sad. But children cannot long restrain the expression of their feelings, and the consciousness of being slighted infused a little bitterness into her loving nature.

"Brother," said she, "I am glad I never saw you sick before. I shouldn't love you so much as I do."

"Why?" asked he, sternly.

"Because it makes your eyes so red, and makes you look cross, too. When mother is sick I love her better than ever, she is so sweet and gentle."

"I never asked you to stay with me," said he, pushing her from him, as, leaning on his shoulder, she was looking up into his face with her earnest and reproachful gaze.

The motion was quick and Mary was thrown upon the floor. She was not much hurt, but her heart was bruised by his unkindness. She would not have told of it for the world, but she stole away into some dark corner and wept and sobbed herself to sleep. What *his* reflections were, when reason and feeling once more resumed their empire over his mind, may be gathered from his first interview with Rose Somers, after their midnight meeting by the water.

"You despise me, Rose," said he, stung by her cold, calm reception; "and I deserve your contempt."

"No," said Rose, "but I pity you, pity you from the bottom of my heart."

"And I deserve your pity too, for never was a being more wretched than I have been for the last six days. Yet, notwithstanding my present misery, I feel a relief in knowing that you know me as I am, that my fatal propensity is no longer concealed from you, that I am not obliged to act the part of a hypocrite and appear an angel of light, when I am actually in league with the powers of darkness."

"No, no, no!" interrupted Rose, turning as white as marble; "you shall not say so. You were tempted, you were overtaken; they forced you to join with them, and in a moment of convivial enjoyment you forgot yourself, Augustus. You did not know what you were doing. It was the first, and it shall be the last time. You shall not belie yourself thus to me, who have known you from childhood—I never *will*, I never *can* believe you!"

"Listen to me, Rose," said the unhappy young man, "while I lay

my heart bare before you, even as it will be at the great judgment day. As I hope for mercy then, I will not deceive you now!"

And she did listen, with her hands joined so closely together, that the blood purpled under the nails, and her eyes fixed upon his face with such an intense, imploring expression, it seemed as if her very existence hung upon the relation he was making. He went back to the days of his boyhood and adolescence, those white days as he called them, when the only passion whose ruling power he felt, was his love for *her*, tender and familiar as that of a brother, but of fourfold strength. He dwelt on the scenes, when placed a stranger in a city of strangers, unknown and undreaded, when he had looked upon the wine "when it was red, when it gave its colour to the cup," till his senses became maddened by the taste, and sought for a more inebriating draught. "I said to the tempter," continued he, each time, "it shall be the last. Still, when they held the burning bowl to my lips, I could not dash it from me, but tasted and yielded, till conscience, and reason and memory were drowned, and the image of God was defaced within my soul. Then, when I awakened from these deadly trances, and remembered how low I had plunged—when I recollected my mother's prayers and admonitions, her confiding affection—when I thought of you, Rose, and all the sweet dreams that had gilded my boyhood—it almost drove me mad. And, oh! Rose,—that night when I returned home, and my mother asked me to read from that sacred volume, whose precepts I had slighted, and told me of the prayers she had offered up for me, when I was myself surrounded by mementos of unpolluted pleasures and holy aspirations,—what I felt, and how I felt, I never can make you know. Such strong resolutions as I made—such earnest vows—and yet you see I have broken them all! In the first hour of temptation I yielded. Those young men have learned, I know not how, my fatal habit, and exerted every art to allure me to expose myself here. Perhaps they were jealous of my influence with you. Sure I am, they glory in my shame!"

He paused, and covering his face with his hands, leaned over the back of his chair, while his frame shook with an ague-like paroxysm.

It is affecting even to a hard-hearted person, to see a man weep at the common and natural vicissitudes of life. What must have been the feelings of the young and sensitive Rose, on seeing the tears of Augustus—tears, too, wrung by that most agonizing of all earthly feelings—*remorse*!

She had sat like a statue of stone, during the history of his degradation, pale and tearless, the image of despair, but now the blood rushed back in vivid warmth to her cheeks, and springing to his side she bent over him, and leaning her face on his shoulder, wept audibly. Even when she felt his arms thrown and locked around her as they had sometimes been in childhood, she did not chide him or withdraw, for she would not for the universe have added a feather's weight to the anguish she saw him suffer.

"Augustus," said she at length, "do not despair; all will yet be well, if you but *will* it. You are not lost, you cannot be, while you feel so deeply, and when there are so many hearts that will break in your undoing."

"And could you, Rose," said he, looking up—"could you forgive me for the past, and trust me for the future, if from this moment I break the iron chain of habit and live one of God's freemen, not the bond slave of Satan? Could you forget the two last years of my life, and remember me, as you knew me, before I yielded to this blasting influence?"

"Could I—would I?" exclaimed she, eagerly. "Oh! how little do you know me! There needs no oblivious wave to wash out the remembrance of what I never knew. As freely as you have acknowledged, so freely will I forgive. One known act of indiscretion can never efface the truth and affection of years. Be true to yourself, and I will think of you only as the dearest, the best——"

She stopped, blushing at the involuntary strength of her language, and the gloomy countenance of Augustus lighted up for a moment with the sunny look of his boyhood.

"Hear me then," cried he, "while I solemnly promise——"

"Oh! promise not," exclaimed Rose; "make no rash vows, but

pray to Almighty God for strength to resist temptation, and He will give it thee. I too will pray for thee even as for my own salvation."

Augustus listened to her inspiring words, and looked into her kindling eyes, and believed he never could be the monster to betray her confidence, and again prove himself unworthy of the love so triumphant in its faith, so beautiful in its innocence and trust.

The spring came on—green, bright, gladdening and rejoicing spring—with all the splendor, and freshness, and beauty peculiar to the latitude in which they dwelt. Streams of verdure seemed to gush up through the melting snows, the waters sparkled in wreaths of living silver down the hill-side and over the plain, waves of melody rolled above amid the branches of the trees, the heavens shone with a deeper blue, the stars flashed with intenser radiance. Rose, like the flower whose name she bore, gathered bloom and sweetness from the blooming season. There was spring-time in her heart and sunshine in her eyes, and smiles and music on her lips. Augustus was ever at her side, all she could wish or hope for. The dark cloud that had threatened to obscure her destiny had rolled away, and she only remembered it to rejoice still more in the brightness of the present and the hopes of the future.

Months glided on, the vivid bloom of spring melted in the glory of summer, and still Rose was the happiest of the happy. The national festival of freemen approached. The manner in which they were accustomed to celebrate it in this village was peculiarly delightful, for female patriotism and taste were allowed to blend with manly enthusiasm, and gild it with many a decorating tint. After the usual outpourings of eloquence, and the bustle of a public dinner, the gentlemen and ladies met together, towards the sunset hour, on some green plot, selected for the occasion, where a bower was erected and a table spread, covered with every variety of cake and fruit, adorned with the flowers of the season, and wreathed with wild-wood garlands. A band of music was stationed in the shade of the trees, that made the grove ring with melody, and blithe hearts respond to the inspiring strains. Augustus had been the orator of the day, and with that graceful, florid eloquence which is so captivating to the

eye and to the ear, had elicited universal applause. Rose exulted in the admiration he excited, but when she saw him led away in triumphant procession, she knew that the hour of temptation was come, and she began to tremble. He turned as he passed and met her anxious glance with one so full of love and confidence, that she felt ashamed of her momentary fear. She had not time to indulge in any misgivings, for she was chosen the presiding queen of the bower, and in honor of Augustus she wanted it to be decorated with regal beauty. The bower was erected on the banks of the stream already described, and a boat with awnings waited the motion of those who felt disposed to glide on its bosom.

Rose and Harriet, assisted by the other young maidens of the village, had rifled the woods of their sweets, and little Mary, who had followed them with a hop, skip and jump, every step they took, gathered the buds and blossoms that nestled low in their mossy beds. Her unwearied fingers helped to twine the festoons that swept from tree to tree, linking bough with bough in flowery sisterhood. When the fairy arch was completed, and declared to be perfect in beauty, she filled her apron with some hidden treasure, and seating herself in a remote corner, appeared to be engaged in a mysterious operation. Then springing on her feet, she waved a lovely garland in the air, and running towards Rose, "See," said she, "you are queen to-day, and here is your crown—is it not sweet? and don't she look sweet in it?" continued she, appealing to all around her, as Rose bent her head, and Mary bound the dewy coronet on her brows. All united in paying testimony to the sweetness of Rose, for she was the darling of the village, and sweet was the very epithet to be applied to her.

Every body said Rose Somers was a sweet looking girl, yet no one had ever called her beautiful. She certainly never had looked so pretty as at this moment, in her simple white dress and crown of wild flowers, the color in her cheeks coming and going, her eyes darkening and sparkling as the martial music swelled on the ear, and her heart told her it was the herald of Augustus. But little Mary herself was an object that attracted every eye. They had twisted

rose-buds and myrtle in her flaxen ringlets, encircled her white neck and girdled her waist with wreaths, which she in her innocent childhood delighted to wear. Rose said she looked almost too much like a lamb, decorated for sacrifice, but Mary would not part with any of her ornaments, and wore them with a sportive grace that might have excited the envy of a city belle.

"There he is, there is brother," exclaimed she, clapping her hands, as the music sounded loud and near, the thick boughs swung back, the military band parted to the right and left, and Augustus was ushered in between, directly in front of the bower, where Rose stood, attended by the fairest maidens of the village.

"What is the matter, Rose?" said a young girl by her side, whose arm she had caught with an unconscious grasp.

"Nothing," answered Rose, but her face turned as white as her dress, and her eyes had a sudden look of anguish and dread. One glance told her that Augustus had forgotten his vow of self-denial, and yielded to the tempter's snare. He had the same high flush on his cheek and unnatural brightness of the eye, she too well remembered having once before seen. His hair was disordered, his steps irregular,—in short, he had that indescribable air of abandonment, that mingled expression of self-satisfaction and folly, that plainly mark the incipient stages of inebriation.

"Why, Rose, my bonny Rose," exclaimed he, in an exalted tone, "you do act the queen most rarely. Let the most humble and obedient of your subjects thus pay homage to your majesty." Then dropping on his knees, he burst forth in a flowery and theatrical strain of compliment, she in vain endeavored to check. Mary laughed at this mock-heroic strain, and thought it very graceful and admirably in keeping with the joyous occasion; but Rose, who knew too well the cause of his unwonted freedom of speech and manner, felt her heart ache within her. She tried to smile, but in the very effort the tears gushed from her eyes. His sorrow and wonder and sympathy was now as extravagant and high flown as his admiration, and Rose, finding her situation intolerable, drew back behind the boughs of the arbour, where she for awhile eluded his observation.

Thither Harriet followed her, and had they been at home and alone, the two unhappy girls would have thrown themselves into each other's arms, and wept unrestrainedly.

There was a young man who had persecuted Rose, with very unwelcome attentions during the absence of Augustus, attributing the slight he had received to preference for him, felt for him the bitterest hatred. He it was who had discovered "the burning plague-spot in his heart," and exerted every art to spread it into a consuming flame. At the convivial board, which they had just left, he had seated himself at his side, even as Satan sat at the ear of Eve, and whispered evil words of temptation. It was his hand that filled each brimming glass, and mingled with the portion a hotter, more intoxicating beverage. If they who lead many to righteousness shall shine as the stars for ever and ever, what shall be the destiny of those who, like the Dragon in the apocalyptic vision, are not satisfied with going down into the gulf of perdition themselves, but endeavor to drag the sons of light in their train?

Several of the party were now in the boat, and called upon Augustus to join them. He looked round for Rose and Harriet, and not perceiving them, his eye rested on little Mary, who had been impatiently waiting his notice.

"Bless your sweet face," cried he, catching the lovely little creature in his arms; "who made such a cherub of you? Come, don't you want to go with me in the boat, and sail like another Robinson Crusoe?"

Mary threw her arms around his neck in ecstasy at the thought, and Augustus springing into the boat, it pushed from the shore, the oars keeping time to the music as they dipped, and the rays of the setting sun gilded the white foam they left behind.

Harriet caught a glimpse of Mary, elevated as she was in her brother's arms, as the boat glided on, and, rushing to the bank, she entreated him to return, as she had promised her mother not to suffer Mary to go near the boat or the water.

"Is she not safe with me?" cried he, laughing; "who will take care of her if I do not?"

Mary, at the sound of her sister's imploring accents, remembered the parting injunction of her mother, and her heart smote her for her disobedience.

"Oh, Augustus!" said she, "please let me go back. I forgot that mother forbid me—indeed I did. Let me go to Harriet—she's calling me yet."

The child bent forward with an earnest emotion towards her sister, to show her willingness to obey her summons. Augustus was standing near the edge of the boat, with one arm thrown around her, while he kept time with the other to the regular rocking of the slight bark. He was entirely unprepared for her sudden, springing motion, and before he was fully aware of losing his unguarded hold, she was seen fluttering through the air, like a wounded bird, and then the waters parted and gushed over her sinking form, the golden hair gleaming for a moment on the surface, then lost in the dark ripples of the stream. Shrieks of agony now mingled with the gay notes that still swelled on the ear; all was confusion and dismay. Augustus plunged into the water after his drowning sister. Harriet and Rose were seen struggling on the bank with those who held them back from the mad attempt of saving her with whom they must have perished.

At length Augustus appeared with Mary in his arms, but she was cold and insensible. Her lips and cheeks were blue, and her little hands clenched and rigid. She was borne to the nearest house, and the usual means of resuscitation employed; still when her mother came, in answer to the sad summons that had just reached her, she remained as cold as the wave from which she had been drawn.

After unavailing efforts to restore her, she was pronounced dead, and was borne in grief that mocks description to the home she had left a few hours before, the most joyous of human beings. They laid her on a sofa, and sympathizing friends crowded round to catch one more look of the sweet child consigned so early to such an awful doom. Mrs. Norwood knelt down by her side, and clasping her hands together pressed them on her heart, as if to hold down its murmurings. She lifted her eyes to heaven in wordless prayer for

resignation, when a wild scream from Harriet sent the blood rushing through her veins with startling rapidity.

"She breathes, mother, she breathes!" exclaimed Harriet, throwing herself into her mother's arms with an hysterical cry.

And truly she did breathe,—faint and uncertain at first the pale tints of life began to steal over the wan hue of death, the rigid hands unclenched, the heavy lids slowly uplifted, an indistinct murmur escaped her lips. It was then the widowed mother wept aloud. The grief was silent, but her joy and gratitude burst forth. She received her living child to her bosom once more, even as Jairus received his daughter from the dead, and she knew that the Son of God was present, though invisible to mortal eye, with heart as tenderly alive to human misery, with arm as omnipotent to save, as when He stood by the grave of Lazarus, and wept over him he was about to wake from the slumbers of death. The first words little Mary distinctly uttered were, "Where is brother?"

And "Where indeed is Augustus?" was repeated by the anxious mother. It was recollected then that Augustus had not been since they left the river's side; that when it was declared that Mary was dead, he had exclaimed again and again, "*What dead! Is she dead?*" Then rushed by those who were around her, like a madman, and disappeared.

A new and agonizing cause of alarm now existed. The fears of Rose and Harriet were too appalling to be expressed. Mrs. Norwood knew not yet the cause of their worst apprehensions, though she was told that it was from his arms that Mary fell.

All night she sat by the couch of Mary, cherishing warmth in her still shivering frame, praying for her son, fearing she knew not what, and listening to the echo of his name, as she sometimes heard it borne on the night wind. Harriet could not remain within; she followed Rose to the scene of their past festivity, where the people were confusedly mingled, looking up and down the stream, and shouting till the sound rolled back again on their ears, the name of Augustus. As the torches and lanterns gleamed fitfully through the shades, Rose beheld a dark object near the bank, and running

towards it, she discovered the hat of Augustus, with his gloves lying beside it. At these dumb witnesses of his mournful destiny, Rose sunk in speechless agony on the sand, where she lay unnoticed in the excitement and confusion, and when she was found, she was perfectly insensible, clasping the gloves to her bosom, her hair and garments damp and wet with the chill night dews.

"It was a pity," as a kind neighbor said, who followed her to her own home, where they bore her—"it was a pity to bring her to herself, and see her take on so bitterly."

The next day the deep, continuous roaring of cannon was heard all along the banks of the river, where the people still thronged, in the hope of discovering the body of him who they supposed had made his own grave in its channel. It was all in vain. The waters, agitated by the concussion, heaved and subsided, and heaved again—then sinking back into a sullen calm, betrayed not the secrets of its bosom.

For several days the village continued in a state of excitement: but after a while, the conviction that Augustus was drowned, being universally felt, all deplored, some pitied, some condemned him; yet all resumed their former occupations, and gradually suffered his name to die away on their lips and his memory from their hearts—all but two families, from which smiles and gladness seemed banished for ever. It was many weeks before Rose was able to leave her room, and when she did, she looked like the ghost of herself. Her long exposure to the night-air, and her exhausting paroxysms of agony, acting on a naturally delicate constitution, had brought on a lingering illness, from which many thought she never would recover; and when she was seen moving about with such a languid step and mournful countenance, and such an air of utter broken-heartedness, her friends felt as if they could scarcely congratulate her on her recovery. She went nowhere but to Mrs. Norwood's; except to visit the abodes of sickness and poverty, and when on such errands, her steps grew more light and her eyes less sad, for even disease and chill penury smiled at her approach, and she felt while she could thus impart blessings to others, she did not live in vain. It seemed

to her that if Augustus had lived, and she had seen him gradually given up to the dominion of the fatal vice that had been his destruction, she could have ceased to love him; or had he died on the bed of sickness reconciled to his God, and trusting in his Saviour, she could have learned resignation; but there was something so awful and dark and mysterious about his fate, there was so much reason to believe he had committed that deed for which there is no repentance or hopes of pardon, his memory was associated with images of shame and woe and dread. When with his mother and sister, she never breathed his name; she could not do it, but their eyes would often fill with tears when they met, and their voices falter, indicating the subject on which their thoughts were dwelling. Mary was the only one who mourned for him *aloud*. The sorrows of childhood must be expressed in words, and Mary's innocent and overflowing tongue, often gave unutterable pain. She was too young to understand their mournful silence, and fearing they were forgetting him, whom she loved so well, she tried to make up, by her own ardent expressions of love and grief, for their suspected injustice to his memory.

Two years passed away, and the third was rolling on; still Rose, faithful to her early love, refused to listen to other vows. Her former persecutor renewed his addresses, but she turned from him with loathing. She had heard the part he had acted, and looked upon him as the destroyer of Augustus. Harriet was married to a young man, whom she had long known and valued, and gone far from the home of her youth, while Rose clung to Mrs. Norwood, even as Ruth clung to Naomi, and filled a daughter's place in her bosom.

One evening, about the twilight hour, Mrs. Norwood sat in the piazza that fronted the dwelling, with Rose and Mary, shaded by the sweet brier and honey-suckle, that ran trailing round the walls. The last sunbeams were melting into shadows, and gave a rich, bronze-like hue, to the distant landscape; sprinkling the nearer objects with rays of scattering gold, and fringing the clouds with living crimson. Mary sat with her head leaning on her mother's lap, and her fair ringlets, now darkening into brown, were tossed back from her brow, with the wild grace of childhood. She was taller

than she was two years before: but her face was scarcely changed. Her eyes were as intensely blue, and they were now lifted up to her mother's face, with that peculiar expression which assimilated her to the likeness of a cherub.

"I wish I were a painter," said Rose, who sat the other side of Mrs. Norwood; "and I would sketch this beautiful sunset view, with Mary exactly in her present attitude, looking up into your eyes."

"And who would paint you, Rose?" said Mary; "for you are the prettiest of the whole."

"Oh, no," answered Rose, with a sigh and a smile; "I must not be put in at all. I should spoil the picture."

"Well, you must be sure to put that gentleman in that's coming up the street," said Mary. "I can see him through the trees."

The path which led to Mrs. Norwood's door was winding, and thickly shaded with trees: so much so, that though they were aware of the stranger's approach to their own door, they could catch but glimpses of his person, till he came to the very steps of the piazza. Before they had time to breathe or speak, he rushed towards Mary and snatching her in his arms, with a wild cry, sank down on his knees and exclaimed,

"Oh! my God—I thank thee—I bless thee—I am not then a murderer." Then falling prostrate at Mrs. Norwood's feet, again repeated the thrilling ejaculation—"My God—I bless thee!"

There is a joy that baffles description, a joy so deep, and overwhelming, it struggles in vain for words and finds utterance only in tears and sobs and sounds resembling woe. As the widow of Nain received her only son alive, from the bier, as the mourning sisters of Bethany welcomed their brother from the grave, so was the long-lost son, brother and lover greeted. And if there is joy in heaven over the repenting sinner and returning prodigal, we may believe the holy angels themselves sympathized in this affecting scene. It was long before sufficient composure was obtained for him to relate, or them to hear the mystery of his absence explained.

It was not till after the friends, who had gathered in at the tidings, were departed, (for the news of his return spread like wild-fire

through the village) and they were in the retirement of their own household, they could listen to his story. The evening lamps illumined a pale and agitated, but happy looking group, clustered closely round the speaker, while he gave, interrupted by a thousand emotions, the following narration.

The night of his disappearance, when he heard it positively declared that Mary was dead, he remembered nothing but the wild purpose of flying far as the winds of Heaven could bear him, as if he could fly from himself, or escape from the scorpions that were writhing in his breast. How far he wandered he knew not, nor when his strength and reason forsook him. He found himself, on recovering the use of his senses, in a tent, by the way-side; a most benignant looking gentleman, bending over him, and a lovely lady bathing his temples and chafing his hands, with all a woman's tenderness. They were travellers to the far west, who having provided themselves with every comfort and accommodation, had encamped during the night under the shade of the trees. He had been probably attracted by the glimmer of their light, and having approached it, fell exhausted, chilled and unconscious of the cares that were extended towards the apparently expiring stranger.

The next morning he was able to rise, but he had remained so long in his drenched clothes, with such a fiery current burning in his veins, he was seized with a slow fever, and was compelled to accept the offers of these kind Samaritans. They spread a pallet for him on the bottom of the carriage, stopped when he was too weary to go on, nor did they apply their ministrations to his body alone; for their holy conversation was a balm to his wounded spirit, and the despair that had succeeded the keen agonies of remorse, gradually softened into a more godly sorrow. He went with them to their western home and there he remained, believing his name must be accursed in his own. On the return of health, he assisted his friend in clearing the wilderness, and diffusing around the blessings of civilization and refinements of taste. He had told him his history, and the solemn determination he had made, if God gave him strength to keep it, to make himself a new name and fame, in a place where he was

unknown, and to struggle with his prevailing sin, till he conquered, even at the sacrifice of life. He did struggle and came off victorious. He could see the wine-cup and the *fire-cup* too, pass by, unttempted, for "the voice of the charmer had ceased to charm, charm he never so wisely." It was long before he dared to believe that he was indeed free, that he could walk forth without the dread of returning to the prison-house of shame; but when time had proved the reality of his reformation, he resolved to return once more to the home he had made desolate, and say to his mother, as the prodigal to his injured father:—"I have sinned against Heaven, and against thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son—but take me to your bosom again, and let me bind up the wounds I have made." He thought of her who had loved him even in his degradation. He dared not think she loved him still, but if he were doomed to see her the wife of another, he felt the punishment was just. He thought too how he would visit the grave of little Mary, and there, with a broken and contrite heart, renew his covenant vows to his Maker, and supplicate his forgiveness and grace. And now he was seated at his mother's side; the forgiven and blest, with that sweet, rosy, loving being, clinging around his neck, in all the warmth and bloom of her loveliness; whom he believed cold and mouldering beneath the clods of the valley, and Rose too, half enclosed in his arm, still faithful and confiding; her eyes beaming with modest love and holy gratitude, bending on that manly countenance, from which every darkening trace was swept away.

Let it not be said then, that the man "who deliberates is lost." He may deliberate between the choice of virtue and vice; he may even choose the path of vice, and leave the boundaries of virtue, but he may return to wisdom's ways and find them pleasantness, and her paths peace. The Ethiopian *cannot* change his skin, nor the leopard his spots, but *they who have been accustomed to do evil, may learn to do well.*

AUNT MERCY.

WE sat together in the little back parlor the evening before our father's departure. He was a sea-captain, and bound for a distant voyage. We had not been separated from him since our mother's death, and oppressed by a sense of coming loneliness, I listened to the autumnal wind that sighed against the windows, thinking it the most melancholy of earthly sounds. My father put his arm affectionately round each of us, as we sat on either side of him, and drew us closer to him. He did not speak for some time, but gazed steadily into the fire, as if he feared to look upon us, lest he should be betrayed into some unmanly weakness. "My daughters," said he at length, "my heart is relieved from great anxiety on your account. I have two letters, received almost simultaneously, both containing affectionate offers of a home to one of you, during my absence. The choice must be left to yourselves."

"Who are they from?" cried Laura, eagerly; "tell me, dear father, do?"

"One is from your Aunt Mercy," replied my father. Here Laura's countenance fell. "The other is from Mrs. Belmont, whom you once visited and admired."

"Oh! yes," exclaimed Laura, with sparkling eyes, "I remember Mrs. Belmont perfectly. She is the most charming woman I ever saw, has the most elegant house, and keeps the most delightful company. I thought when I was there I should be the happiest creature in the world if I could live as she did. Oh! father, let me go to Mrs. Belmont's, and send Fanny to Aunt Mercy's."

"And what objections have *you* to go to Aunt Mercy's?" said my

(334)

father, without addressing me, who continued to hold his hand in silence, for my heart was too full to speak.

"Oh! I never did like Aunt Mercy," said Laura, with a look of disgust. "She is so precise, and formal, and fanatical. She is an old maid, too, you know, and they say they are always peevish and ill-natured. Then she lives in a small house, almost in the wood, and sees no company but the cats. I am sure I would die with home-sickness, if I were to stay with Aunt Mercy."

"And what do you think Fanny will do?" asked my father, in a tone which I thought breathed of rebuke.

"Fanny," repeated Laura, as if she were waking to a consciousness of my existence, "why, Fanny is very different from me—and I dare say would content herself very well. Besides, I am the oldest, and have a right to the first choice, and if I choose Mrs. Belmont's, Fanny is obliged to go to Aunt Mercy's, whether she wishes it or not."

"I should like to see a little more regard for your sister's comfort, Laura," he replied, knitting his brows. "I am sorry to see you manifest so selfish a disposition, and as a just punishment, I shall insist upon the reverse, or, at least, that Fanny should exercise the privilege of selection."

Laura burst into a passionate fit of tears, declaring that she would rather stay at home alone, and would do so; for, as for going to Aunt Mercy's, it was out of the question.

"Since you give me the privilege of choosing, dear father," said I, distressed at Laura's violent emotion, and the motive which excited it, "I shall be as happy with Aunt Mercy as I could be with any one while you are absent, and I think it very kind in her to make the offer. I should feel as little at home at Mrs. Belmont's as Laura would at Aunt Mercy's."

My father laid his hand upon my head, and shading back the ringlets from my forehead, gave me a look of approbation that would have repaid me for the sacrifice of my life, if it were possible to enjoy the reward of such a sacrifice.

"You are a good child, Fanny," said he, "and you will be a

happy one wherever you are. How much your eyes are like your mother's now you are looking down! and you are like her in character too. She was always ready to yield her own gratification when it interfered with the happiness of others. She never thought of herself." Laura looked uneasy while my father was speaking.—The pleasure of gratified desire, and the mortification of rebuked selfishness struggled in her countenance. "If I ever return," said my father, rising, and walking to and fro with folded arms and bent brow, "we shall see who has made the wisest choice."

I shall pass over my father's departure and its sad accompaniments. Minute detail is seldom interesting, unless it leads to the development of character, and as it is Aunt Mercy's character that I wish to describe, rather than my own, I hasten to the moment when I became an inmate of her household, Laura having previously been received into the home of Mrs. Belmont. I had but a dim recollection of Aunt Mercy, never having seen her since my early childhood. She lived in the deepest seclusion, seldom visited her relatives and friends, and when her visits were made to my mother I was at school, so that it was only through the medium of others I had obtained my knowledge of her character. I knew she must be far advanced in years, being the sister of my grandmother, not of my mother, and a feeling of awe began to steal over me as I drew near her dwelling, a kind of wintry chill, indicating that the snows of life were near. It was a clear, autumnal evening; the dark, brown woods skirted the road on either side, and here and there through the rustling foliage, I could see the stars sparkling and the deep blue sky shining, and sometimes I could catch a glimpse of waters flashing through the underbrush, and sometimes I could hear the low, gurgling sound of a stream, whose murmurs alone revealed its existence. The great secret of melancholy seemed diffused over the world. I felt as if I were alone in creation. I had no companion with me in the carriage. I had left no friends behind. My father was now launched on the billows, perhaps never to return. My mother slept the last, deep sleep. I was going to one who, from age, sanctity, and personal peculiarities, seemed as far removed from

the sphere in which I had been moving, as the planets above, revolving in their lone and distant orbits. Happy they who have never felt that orphanage of the soul which came over me with such a dreary and oppressive power. As the carriage turned into the yard, the silence surrounding the low white dwelling, almost embosomed in shade—the solitary light that gleamed through one curtained window—the complaining notes of a whippoorwill perched near the wall—added to the solemnity of the hour, and imagination, delineating the form of Aunt Mercy with cold, grey eyes, and wintry countenance, and ancient costume, threw me into such a state of nervous debility, I had hardly strength to descend from the carriage and enter the door that opened as if by magic to receive me, for I had heard no sound of life. At first I thought it was a statue standing on the threshold of the inner apartment, so still, and pale, and erect, it looked, arrayed in a robe of white, whose folds fell voluminously from the neck to the feet, and remained as calm as those of a winding sheet. A cap with a close crimped border surrounded the face, whose pallid hue corresponded with the death-like impression the dress had made. I trembled as I approached, as if an inhabitant of another world were waiting to receive me, when the tall still figure, extending its hands, spoke in a sweet, tremulous voice, "Fanny, my child, is it you? welcome to the home of the aged."

At the sound of those kind, *living* accents, the spell of supernatural awe was broken, and throwing myself into the arms which involuntarily opened to enfold me, I wept myself into calmness. I was hardly conscious of what was passing around me, till I found myself seated by a cheerful fire, whose blaze revealed, while it warmed, the pure, white walls, the white curtains, that dropped to the floor without a single festoon, the white, ungirdled dress of Aunt Mercy: and by its bright reflection, I could see too, her gray parted hair, divided with the precision of a geometrical line, and her dark, deep-set eyes, that beamed like lamps through the mists of age. There was a fascination in the glance of those eyes, as they were steadfastly fixed on me. They did not seem looking at my face, but my soul. The memory, not the fire of human passion slumbered in

their solemn depths. But, when withdrawing their fixed gaze from me, and lifting them upwards, she remained for a few moments in the same attitude, with her hands folded, there was a holy and sublime abstraction, that showed her thoughts were withdrawn from all external objects, and were holding communion with the Great Invisible. Then again turning to me, she said, as if thinking aloud, rather than addressing me—"When I last saw her, she was little more than a smiling infant; and now she is what her mother was full twenty years ago. Time! time! what a solemn thing is time. It carries us on, day and night, without slumbering or pausing, and we heed it not, till borne like me, almost to the shores of eternity, we listen with wonder to the dashing of the billows we have passed over, and look back upon the dark and troubled waters that heave themselves into rest on the borders of the promised land."

I gazed with reverence on this hoary mariner of time, thus surveying with a backward glance the untravelled wilderness before me; but I sighed to think she must have survived the affections and yearning sympathies of her kind, and that I must learn to repress in her presence the ebullitions of youthful emotion. Her next words convinced me how erroneous was this conclusion.

"I pity you, my child. You have a gloomy prospect before you, as the companion of age and loneliness. But the fountain of love is not dried up in my veins. The current flows warm and deep beneath the ice. If you seek wisdom, rather than pleasure, you may not in after years reflect with sorrow that you lingered a little by the wayside, communing with an aged pilgrim, who could tell you something of the mysteries of the journeys of life. And something too, I trust," added she, placing her hand reverently on the Bible, which lay on the table by her side, "of that eternal country whither the young, as well as the old, are rapidly travelling."

Though I had been but a half hour in Aunt Mercy's presence, I had already gathered some precious lessons, and I looked forward to the hoard of wisdom I might acquire during my daily communion with her. Tenderness began to mingle with the awe she inspired, and when I retired to my own room, which was an apartment adjoin-

ing hers, I thought though the hours passed with my venerable relative might be very serious ones, they need not consequently be unhappy. When I first entered the chamber, however, I could not repress a nervous shudder. The same cold uniformity of white was visible that distinguished the room below. White walls, white curtains to bed and windows, and an old-fashioned toilet table, with a long, flowing, white muslin petticoat, all presented a most wintry aspect. "Surely," said I, "Aunt Mercy has selected white, because it is the livery of angels. I shall not dare to think an unpolluted thought, surrounded by such emblematic purity. I shall be reminded of Him in whose sight 'the heavens are not clean,' and 'who sitteth on a white throne in the midst of his glory.'"

The powerful influence of Aunt Mercy's solemn character, was already visible in my reflections. That influence pursued me even in my dreams; for I dreamed that I was sailing alone in a little bark over an ocean, that seemed illimitable in extent, and unfathomable in depth, and that a tall, white figure, defined on the dark and distant horizon, beckoned me onward, and ever and anon lifted a lamp that blazed in her right hand, and sent a long stream of brightness over the abyss of waters. As I came nearer and nearer, and the boat glided with inconceivable swiftness, the lamp flashed with such intolerable splendour, that it awoke me, and opened my eyes, the sunbeams darted through the opening of the curtains directly in my face, and explained the vision of the lamp. My first thought was a dread of Aunt Mercy's displeasure for slumbering so late, for I had heard that she breakfasted at sunrise, but the kind manner in which she greeted me when I descended dispelled my fears.

"I knew you must be fatigued from your journey," said she, "and would not suffer you to be wakened; but to-morrow we will rise together, for your youthful frame can hardly require more hours for repose than mine. I always think when the Lord of day is on his way rejoicing and scattering blessings in his path, it is a shame for us to be laggards behind."

I blushed when I recollected what a laggard I had been, and that I, the young and buoyant, had even this duty to learn from the aged

and infirm. Yet I could hardly call Aunt Mercy infirm. Her figure was still erect and dignified, her step unfaltering; and though time's engraving hand had left its tracery on her cheek and brow, her eyes, at times, not only flashed with the brilliancy, but expressed the energy of earlier years. She seldom smiled, but when she did, her countenance exhibited an appearance of indescribable serenity, reminding me of a lake by moonlight, when the wind just curls its surface, and the rays gently quiver in the motion. The first day I was excited by the charm of novelty. The perfect quiet and neatness that reigned in the household; the clock-work regularity with which every thing was performed; the industry that harmonized so beautifully with this order and tranquillity, astonished while it delighted me. It seemed impossible to me that human beings could live, and move, and work with so little bustle. Yet there was constant activity. Aunt Mercy herself was never idle a moment; she was either knitting, sewing or reading; indeed, her knitting needles seemed a part of her fingers, and the stocking to grow under her touch, from a natural, not an artificial process. I wondered why she manufactured so many articles, for which she could have no possible use; but I soon learned that many were the feet she covered by her industry, as well as the mouths she fed with her bounty. Never was name more appropriately given, for far as her liberal hand could reach, her benefactions and her care extended. She never encouraged idleness or vice, but wherever there was infancy, orphanage, infirmity, and age, united with poverty, her charities descended gentle and unostentatious as the dews of heaven.

"You make me ashamed of the indolence of my past life," said I, as I watched her unwearied fingers; "I feel as if I had lived in vain; I have been praised because I was willing to do something for myself, and now I feel that it is only what we do for others deserves commendation."

"Praise is sweet," replied Aunt Mercy, "from the lips of those we love, but if we do good to others for the *sake* of this reward, we sacrifice the blessing of Him, who has presented to us higher and holier motives for action. Do not praise me, my Fanny, because I

endeavour to 'do diligently what my hands find to do,' for the shadows of twilight are falling round me, and that dark night will soon come, wherein 'no man can work.'"

It may be believed by some, that the solemnity of Aunt Mercy's language, her constant allusions to death and eternity, and the inspired quotations with which her conversation abounded, would fill my young and ardent imagination with gloom and terror. But it was not so; they exalted, instead of depressing me; they created in me a thirst for sacred knowledge, a spirituality of feeling as sublime as it was novel—I could exclaim with a more heavenly ambition, than that which animated the Egyptian enchantress, "I feel immortal longings in me."

It was a somewhat novel sight, to see such close companionship and increasing congeniality of feeling, between two beings, so far removed by age from each other—the snows of winter only drew us closer together, and I almost dreaded to witness the spring-time of the year, lest in the midst of its opening splendors, I should lose something of her divine instructions. An occasional letter from Laura, varied the pleasing monotony of my existence; she always addressed me as "poor Fanny"—then as if that expression of condolence satisfied her sisterly affection, she expatiated on her gay and happy life, and the pleasures that courted her enjoyment; her volatile mind flew from one subject to another, from the theatre to the ball-room, from the ball-room to the concert, &c., with bewildering speed; and with all these dazzling scenes she mingled descriptions of attending gentlemen: some had "eyes of fire," others "tongues of eloquence," and "lips of music," and all were included in the compendious epithet, "divine." I should have profited little by the example and precepts of the evangelical Aunt Mercy, if I had not revolted at the application of this term; I grieved at the levity of her sentiments; I did not envy her the pleasures that had such an intoxicating influence on her heart; I did not sigh for the admiration of that sex from whose society I was so entirely excluded; I had never been accustomed to it, and the rapturous expressions of Laura astonished my young simplicity. One evening, after the perusal of one of

these letters, as I sat at Aunt Mercy's side, I ventured to address her in a more familiar manner than I had ever done before. I longed to hear her explain the mystery of her lonely life. "Dear Aunt Mercy," said I, taking her hand in mine, and looking earnestly in her face, "do you think it a sin to love?" She actually started at the question, and I felt her hand tremble in my clasp.

"Do you ask idly?" said she, fixing her deep eyes with a melancholy gaze on my face, "or do you, child as you are, speak from the heart's dictates?"

"No," answered I, blushing at the suggestion. "I know nothing yet of love, and judging from Laura's allusions, I think I never shall. But I have often wondered why you, who must have been very beautiful indeed, when young"—here a faint smile glimmered over Aunt Mercy's features, a lingering spark of vanity, flashing through the shades of threescore years and ten—"why you should have been"—I began to hesitate, for I could not allow myself to use Laura's expression, and say "an old maid"—then after a moment's reflection, I added, "why you should have been single, when almost every one marries; I thought, perhaps, you believed it sinful to love any one else but God." I would have given any thing to have recalled the expression of my childish curiosity; I was terrified at the emotion exhibited in her usual placid countenance; her eyes assumed a look of wild anguish, contrasting fearfully with their wonted calm, religious glance; then slowly lifting them to Heaven, and clasping her withered hands together, she exclaimed, "Sinful! oh! my Father!—sinful indeed must be the passion, whose memory even now can raise such a tumult in these wintry veins; I thought all was peace here," continued she, unclasping her hands, and pressing them tightly on her breast, "the peace of God that passeth all understanding; but no, no, the troubled waters are heaving, heaving still." As she reiterated the last words, her head bowed lower and lower, her whole frame shook, and tears gathering in large drops, glided down her cheeks, through channels, which had long been dry. I felt as if I had committed sacrilege in thus disturbing the holy calm of her soul; a burst of flame, rising from the still waters that cover

the buried cities of the plain, could not be more awful or surprising than this storm of human passion, thus convulsing the bosom of age. I knew not in what manner to express my penitence and sorrow. I wept; I threw my arms around her; I actually knelt at her feet and implored her to forgive me. The attitude roused her from her trance-like state; she held out her right hand, and commanded me to rise. I rose and stood before her pale and trembling, like a culprit uncertain of her doom.

"Leave me, child, leave me," she cried, "till I gain composure, from the only source from which the weary and heavy laden can find rest—long, long years have rolled away since any human being has struck the chord your hand has pressed. I thought it had ceased to quiver—I have deceived myself; I feel humbled in the dust; I would humble myself still more before the mighty hand of God. Leave me alone, my child, and when I am calm once more, you shall learn the history of my youth, and may you profit by its mournful lesson."

I withdrew to my chamber, grieved and agitated, yet awaiting with impatience the expected summons. But I heard Aunt Mercy enter her own room and close her door, without recalling me to her presence. She always kept a light burning during the night, that she might not disturb her servants, if one were required, but this night it was extinguished, and accustomed as I had been to see its rays streaming beneath the door, I shuddered at the darkness, of which my rashness had been the cause. I trembled when I reflected on the might of human passion—"Terrible, terrible," thought I, "must it be in its strength, if even in decay it can triumph over the coldness of age, and roll its wild waves over the traces the Spirit of God has written on the soul. Let me be spared its desolating power; let me live on as I now do, calm and passionless, striving to walk in the path of duty, with an eye directed to Heaven, and a heart devoted to God. Here, in this solitude, I am secure from temptation, and can know nothing of the struggles, of which to-night I have been a fearful witness."

The next morning I almost feared to look at Aunt Mercy, expecting to see the same wild and agitated countenance, but the placidity

of Heaven was on her brow. There might be an air of deeper humility; of more saintly meekness, if that were possible, but there was no other change. I felt a tenderness for her I had never experienced before. Aunt Mercy, the anchorite, the saint, was a being I revered; but Aunt Mercy, loving and suffering, was a being I loved. The day passed away, as usual, in industry and quiet, but when the evening came on, and we were seated again, side by side, at the lonely hearth, my heart began to palpitate with expectation, for Aunt Mercy suffered her knitting to remain untouched in her basket, and her book lay unopened on the table.

"My dear Fanny," said she, "your asking eyes shall not seek mine in vain; I have been steadily looking at the past, and am astonished at the calmness with which I can now review events, from which last night I recoiled with such dread; I have not slept, but prayed, and towards the dawn of morning, it seemed as if an angel came and ministered unto me. Like Jacob, I had wrestled for the blessing and prevailed. It is humbling to me to know that the reverence with which you have regarded me will be diminished, and that you will look upon me henceforth as a sinful and sorrowing woman; and I should rejoice that you will no longer ascribe to an erring creature, perfections which belong to God alone.

"When I was young—can you roll back the winters that have frosted my head, and restore me to the spring-time of life? If you can you must think of me, at this moment, not as I am, but as I was, with the bloom of youth on my cheek, and its hopes warm in my heart. Let this thought, my child, check the high throbings of youthful vanity; as sure as you live to reach the confines of age, you will, like me, present but a faded image of what you once have been; the eyes, those windows from which the soul looks forth, will be *darkened* and the grasshopper prove a burthen to those elastic limbs! But the soul itself, my child, is undecaying and immortal; and can smile calmly over the ruins of the body, in the grandeur of its own imperishability."

She paused, and as I gazed wistfully in her face, I thought that Ossian could never have seen such a countenance as Aunt Mercy's,

when he said that age was "dark and unlovely," for to me she was still beautiful, in her piety and meekness, with the chastened memories of other years blending, as they now were, with the holiest hopes of Heaven.

"When I was young," continued she, "I was, like you, the companion of an aged relative, though my mother was living; but having the charge of a large family, she was willing to yield to my grandmother's wishes, that I might be taken into her household, even as her own child. I was the youngest of the family, and had never been out, as it is called, into the world, so I was contented in my new home, where I had leisure to indulge in my favorite amusement—reading. My grandmother, unfortunately, had a large library of ill-assorted works, a great portion of which were romances and plays. She never restrained me in my choice, saying, she had always read every thing she liked, and had never been injured by this indiscriminate reading, and she saw no reason why children should be wiser than their grandmothers. She was fond of hearing me read aloud to her, and all the long winter evenings, while she plied her knitting needles, I amused her and delighted myself with the wildest and most extravagant productions. But there were some volumes, containing scenes so highly wrought, which excited such a thrilling interest in my bosom, I could not read them to another. These I reserved for my secret perusal; and, when summer built its green bowers, I used to conceal myself in their shades, and perusing alone these impassioned pages, forgetting every thing but the visions they inspired, I became a vain and idle dreamer. The realities of life were insipid to me; and I was happy only when breathing the atmosphere of the ideal world. My grandmother never reproved me for my wanderings. She did not seem to miss my companionship, for, in the genial season, she loved to sit in the open door and windows, and look at the flowers as they opened to the sunbeams, and listen to the songs of the birds as they made their nests in the trees that shaded the walls. I had one brother, two or three years older than myself, who always visited me during his college vacations, and transformed our quiet dwelling to a scene of gaiety and amuse-

ment. Arthur was a light-headed, frolicsome youth, with a temperament very different from mine. *He* loved to sport with the foam of the ocean; *I* to fathom the depths of its waves. And now, Fanny, look on me no longer. I would not waver in my purpose, and I cannot bear that wistful gaze; it melts me, and I would have my eyes dry, and my heart firm.

"Poor Arthur came to us, the last year of his collegiate term, accompanied by a classmate, of whom he had often talked, Frederick Cleveland. I said he had often spoken of him; and to my romantic ear his name implied all those graces and accomplishments I had never yet seen embodied. Grave even to pensiveness; pale almost to feminine delicacy; yet with a deep-toned voice, and manly figure, he formed a striking contrast to my merry, blooming, and boyish brother. Arthur pursued his accustomed sports, fishing and hunting; Cleveland soon learned to linger behind, finding more congeniality in my enthusiasm and poetry of feeling. He was a poet himself; and he loved to read his own strains to one who listened with an ear so rapt as mine. He was a naturalist; and as we walked together, he explained to me the wondrous laws of nature, and gave me enlarged and elevated views of the creating power. He was an astronomer; and as we stood beneath the starry heavens, he directed my gaze to the planets, walking in their brightness, and endeavored to carry my soul into the depths of infinity, and teach it to take in some faint glimpses of God's unimaginable glory. Fanny, I thought not of my God, but of him. I forgot the Creator in adoration of the creature he had made. He departed, and existence was a blank to me; or rather, it was filled with one image, one ever multiplying, yet never changing image. My first thought at morning was not an aspiration of gratitude to the Divine Being, whose wings of love had overshadowed and sheltered me during the darkness of night, but a remembrance of Cleveland. My last thought, when I closed my eyes in sleep, did not ascend to Him, in whose awful presence I might be ere the midnight hour, but lingered round one, a frail creature of the dust like myself. You asked me, Fanny, if love was sinful. Not that love which, emanating from a heart which,

conscious of its weakness and its dependence on God, sees in the object of its affections, a being of clay, yet an heir of immortality; a traveller of time, whose goal is eternity; not that love which, purified from earthly fires, glows with a divine ardor and mingles with the celestial flame that rises from the soul to the source of everlasting love and light. But the pagan maiden, who pours out her life-blood at the feet of her idol god, is not more of an idolator than I was, the baptized daughter of a Christian mother.

"Winter glided slowly away. My grandmother's sight entirely failed, and I was compelled to become eyes to the blind, and also feet to the weary, for her increasing infirmities confined her to her arm-chair. I performed these duties, but with a listless spirit; and, could she have looked upon me, she must have known that my thoughts were wandering. At length spring returned, and she had her arm-chair moved into the open air, and as the fragrance of the season floated round her, and its melodies breathed into her ear, she revived into child-like cheerfulness. The time for my brother's annual visit returned, and Cleveland once more accompanied him. Even now, when years gliding over years have dimmed the memories of the past, and religion, I trust, has sanctified them, I cannot recall those hours without a glow like that of sunshine, pervading my wasting being. But the gloom, the horror of thick darkness that followed! One day, as Cleveland and myself were sitting at the foot of an elm tree, reading from the same book, Arthur passed us with his gun in his hand, his green hunting pouch swung over his shoulder, and his dog bounding before him. He laughed, looked back, called Cleveland a *drone*, then went gaily on. How long he was gone I know not, for the happy take no note of hours; but the sun was nearly setting, when he returned by the same path. I felt a sensation of embarrassment that I had lingered so long, and, looking at Cleveland, I saw the color on his cheek was deepened. The sky was reddening with the clouds that generally gather around the setting sun, and their reflection gave a beauty and brightness to his face that I had never seen before. Arthur seemed animated with more than his usual vivacity. 'Cleveland,' said he, with mock

gravity, 'that blush bespeaks the consciousness of guilt. I have long thought you a criminal, and you must now suffer the penalty due to your crimes. Die, then, base robber, without judge or jury.' Then, aiming his gun like an experienced marksman, his eye sparkling with mirth, he shot—and Cleveland fell."

Here Aunt Mercy paused, and a long silence ensued. I dared not look at her, as she thus bared the fountain of her grief. I felt as if the death-shot had penetrated my own heart. I started at the sound of her voice when she again resumed her narrative, it was so hollow and broken.

"Yes! he fell by a brother's hand. I saw him extended at my feet, and the grass crimsoned with the blood that gushed from the wound. I saw Arthur dash down his gun, rush forward, and throwing himself on the bleeding body, exclaim, "Gracious Father! what have I done?" "Done!" cried I, pushing him away with frantic violence, and clasping the murdered Frederic in my arms, "Done! you have killed him—you have killed him;" and I reiterated the words till they became a piercing shriek, and the air was rent with my cries of agony. I remember how he looked—with what bloodless cheeks and lips he bent over him—what indescribable anguish and horror spoke from his eyes! I remember, too, how my blind old grandmother, roused by my shrieks,—came groping to the spot, and dabbled her hands unconsciously in the blood of the victim. It was she who cried, "he may yet be saved;" and Arthur flew for a physician, and dragged him to the very tree, and looked him in the face, while he sought the symptoms of that life which was gone for ever. My Fanny, I dare not describe the madness of despair that took possession of my soul. I rejected all human consolation; I sought no divine comforter; I knew not that there was a balm in Gilead, or a heavenly Physician near. My poor grandmother tried to soothe my grief, but I turned away from her in bitterness. My brother attempted to approach me, but I fled from him as from a monster, and hid myself from his sight. He wrote to me, entreating me to forgive him. He painted the misery he endured, the remorse that was consuming him; and yet he was innocent, innocent of every

thing but levity, whose excess is criminal. He knew not that the gun was loaded; for a boy, who was hunting like himself, had taken his rifle, which he had left for a few moments leaning against a tree, and substituted his own in its stead. It was an instrument of inferior value, though of similar appearance, and contained a heavy load. These circumstances were afterwards made known to him, and explained the mystery of Cleveland's death. Poor, unhappy Arthur! he was innocent, and yet I loathed him. I made a vow that I would never see him more. "Tell him," said I, "that I forgive him, but I can never live in his sight; I can never look upon him, but as the destroyer of all I held dear." Finding me inexorable, he left me to my sullen and resentful sorrow to seek friends more kind and pitying. My sole occupation, now, was to wander abroad and seat myself under the elm tree which had witnessed the awful tragedy, and brood over its remembrance. Oh! how hard and selfish must have been my heart, that could have resisted the prayers and tears of my only brother; that could have turned from a doting grandmother, whose sightless eyes pleaded so painfully in his behalf; that could have left her to the care of menials, instead of ministering to her declining age and smoothing her passage to the grave! But that hard heart was yet to be broken. The prophet's wand was near. I received a summons to come to my brother who was dying. He raved for his sister; he could not die without seeing her once again. I felt like one waking from a terrible dream, in which the incubus had been brooding like a demon on the soul! A voice cried in my ear, "Thou too wilt be a murderer, less innocent than he, for thou knewest what thou wast doing." I obeyed the summons, but it was too late—he was dead! I saw him in his winding-sheet—the brother whom my unrelenting lips had vowed never to behold again; with his last breath he had called on my name, and prayed me to forgive him! I stood and gazed upon him with dry and burning eyes. The merry glance was dim and fixed; the glowing cheeks sunken and white; and the smiling lips closed for ever. I had hung over the corpse of my lover, my bosom had been moistened by the life drops that oozed from his own, and I thought I had drunk the

cup of sorrow to its bitterest dregs. But I now learned that there were dregs more bitter still. Oh! the anguish of remorse; surely it is a foretaste of the undying worm, of the fire that never can be quenched; I could not bear its gnawings—its smothered, consuming flames; I was laid for months on a bed of sickness, in the same chamber where my poor Arthur breathed his last. I thought I was dying. I did not wish to live, but I recoiled from the dark futurity which stretched illimitably before me; I shrunk from the idea of a holy and avenging God; I, the unforgiving, could I hope for forgiveness? I heard, as it were, the voice of the Lord saying, 'The voice of thy brother's blood cries to me from the ground;' and I looked in vain for a city of shelter, where my soul could fly and live. I revealed to no one what was passing within. In the sullen secrecy of despair, I resolved to meet the doom which I believed to be irrevocable. Like the Spartan boy, who sat unmoved while the hidden animal was preying on his vitals, glorying in the pangs he had the fortitude to endure, I lay on my bed of torture silent and unmurmuring: feeling that the agonies I suffered, and which I expected to suffer, as long as Almighty vengeance could inflict them, or the immortal spirit bear, were a sufficient expiation for my cruelty and guilt. I shudder, as I recall the workings of my soul; I looked upon myself as the victim of an uncontrollable destiny, of an omnipotent vindictive Being, who, secure in his own impassibility, beheld with unpitying eye the anguish he caused. Had I created myself? Had I asked for the gift of existence? Was mine the breath which had warmed the senseless dust of the valley with passions so fiery and untameable; or mine the power to restrain their devastating course? As well might I be responsible for the ruin caused by elemental wrath. Oh! Fanny, had I died in this awful frame! Had my rebellious spirit then been ushered into the presence chamber of the King of kings, thus blasphemous and defying! But he who remembers we are dust, who, tempted once himself, has pity on human weakness, gently withdrew his chastening hand. He raised me from my sick bed, and bid me live. I returned to my grandmother, who was now helpless as a child, and who wept like an infant when she

heard my voice once more. The Bible, the only book in her library which I formerly passed over as too uninteresting to read, was now taken from the shelf and laid on the table by her bed-side; on my knees I read its sacred pages. With no teacher but the Holy Spirit, I prosecuted the sublimest study in the universe, and as I studied, I felt a holy illumination pervading the darkened recesses of my soul. I saw myself in the mirror of eternal truth, in all my pride, rebellion, ingratitude, and heaven-daring hardness—and I loathed the picture. The more I abhorred myself, the more I adored the transcendent mercy of God, in prolonging my life for repentance and reformation. Like Mary, I arose and prostrated myself at the feet of the Saviour, bathed them with such tears of sorrow and love, it seemed as if my heart were melting in the fountain. I loved much; I felt as if I were forgiven; and ten thousand times ten thousand worlds would not purchase the hope even of that blessed forgiveness. My aged grandmother, too, placed as she was on the confines of two worlds, acknowledged that it had been reserved for that moment, for the power and glory of religion to be manifested in her soul. She had hitherto rested in quietude in the consciousness of a blameless life; but about to appear in the presence of infinite purity as well as justice, the life which had seemed so spotless, assumed a dark and polluted aspect, and she felt that if she ever joined the white-robed throng which surround the throne of the Everlasting, with branching palms in their hands, and hymns of glory on their lips, her raiments like theirs must be washed white in the blood of the Lamb. She died in peace, in hope, in faith, bequeathing me her little fortune, and what was more precious still, her blessing. Blessed, for ever blessed, be the God of Israel, that I have been so gently led down the declivity of life, and that I can hear without dismay the rolling of the waves of Jordan, over which my aged feet must shortly pass; and, blessed too be his holy name, that he has brought you hither to minister to my infirmities, listen to my feeble counsels, and close my dying eyes."

Aunt Mercy rose, laid her hand for a moment solemnly on my head, and retired. I had wept without ceasing, during the latter

part of her narrative, and, long after I had laid my head on my pillow, I continued to weep. I wept for the ill-fated Cleveland; the unhappy Arthur; for Aunt Mercy unrelenting and despairing, then, sorrowing and repenting; I wept to think what a world of tribulation I had entered, and prayed that I might never know the strength and tyranny of human passion. I had always thought it a fearful thing to die; but now it seemed more fearful still to *live* in a world so full of temptation, with hearts so prone to yield, surrounded by the shadows of time, which seem to us *realities*, and travelling on to an invisible world, which seems so shadowy and remote. The mystery of my being oppressed me, and I sought to fathom what is unfathomable, till I remembered the sublime interrogation of Scripture, "Who can find out the Almighty unto perfection? He is higher than heaven—what canst thou do? Deeper than hell—what canst thou know?" I acknowledged my presumption, and, humbled and submissive, felt willing to wait the great and final day of God's revealing.

The next morning, Aunt Mercy requested me to accompany her in a walk. It was a mild, sunny morning, and the breath of spring, floating over the hills, was beginning to melt the frosts of winter. I thought she was going on an errand of charity, till she turned into a path, to which the leafless shrubbery on either side now gave a dreary appearance, and led me to a tree, whose bare spreading branches bent over a rustic bench, that was seen at its roots. I trembled, as I approached the spot, for I knew it was there the blood of Cleveland had been spilled. "This, then," thought I, "is the very tree, that witnessed, almost simultaneously, the vows of love and the tears of agony."

"Yes," said Aunt Mercy, as if I had spoken aloud, "this is the spot, where, more than fifty years ago, in the flower of youth, he fell! His body sleeps in the cemetery of his fathers, but this is his monument. Long as this aged tree remains, it will be sacred to the memory of Cleveland. Like that tree, now withered and shorn of its summer glories, I too stand a memento of his fate; but the spring will come to reclothe those naked branches, and pour the stream of

vegetable life in their veins; and I too await the coming of that spring-time, whose flowers and verdure no after winter can blight." As I looked around me, the conviction that all that I saw was associated with Aunt Mercy's youth; that here her aged grandmother had lived, and she herself grown old; that here too I might grow old and die, was very solemn. Aunt Mercy, who always seemed to read my thoughts, explained to me all the changes which had gradually taken place. The inroads of time had been constantly repaired, so that it was the same cottage in appearance that had sheltered her in childhood. She had respected her grandmother's peculiar habits, and continued them, perhaps, in many respects unconsciously. The white livery which at first startled me from its singularity, but to which my eye had become accustomed, had been adopted by her predecessor; when her failing sight found it difficult to distinguish objects, and every thing darkened round her. "And I love to look upon white," continued Aunt Mercy; "I love the winter's snow for its whiteness. It reminds me of the blood-washed robes of the saints."

I would have lingered near the spot hallowed by such deathless memories, but Aunt Mercy drew me away. I trembled for the effect of such excitement on one so aged. I thought her face looked paler than usual, and her step seemed less firm. I placed the easy chair for her on our return, and stood by her with an anxious countenance. "Fanny, my love," said she, pressing my hand in both hers, "I have laid bare my heart before you, but the curtain must now fall over it—never again to be lifted. I have done with the past—God and eternity must now claim all my thoughts!"

Perhaps at some future hour, I may continue my own history, as it is connected with my sister Laura's and the close of Aunt Mercy's life, a life continued beyond the allotted period of existence.

THE VILLAGE PASTOR'S WIFE.

WHAT impels me to take up my pen, compose myself to the act of writing, and begin the record of feelings and events which will inevitably throw a shadow over the character which too partial and misjudging affection once beheld shining with reflected lustre? I know not—but it seems to me, as if a divine voice whispered from the boughs that wave by my window, occasionally intercepting the sun's rays that now fall obliquely on my paper, saying that if I live for memory, I must not live in vain—and that, perchance, when I, too, lie beneath the willow that hangs over *his* grave, unconscious of its melancholy waving, a deep moral may be found in these pages, short and simple as they may be. Then be it so. It is humiliating to dwell on past errors—but I should rather welcome the humiliation, if it can be any expiation for my blindness, my folly—no! such expressions are too weak—I should say, my madness, my sin, my hard hearted guilt.

It is unnecessary to dwell on my juvenile years. Though dependent on the bounty of an uncle, who had a large family of his own to support, every wish which vanity could suggest, was indulged as soon as expressed. I never knew a kinder, more hospitable, uncalculating being than my uncle. If his unsparing generosity had not experienced a counteracting influence in the vigilant economy of my aunt, he would long since have been a bankrupt. She was never unkind to me; for I believe she was conscientious, and she had loved my mother tenderly. I was the orphan legacy of that mother, and consequently a sacred trust. I was fed and clothed like my wealthier cousins; educated at the same schools; ushered into the same fashionable society, where I learned that

(354)

awkwardness was considered the only unpardonable offence, and that almost any thing might be said and done, provided it was said and done gracefully. From the time of our first introduction into what is called the world, I gradually lost ground in the affections of my aunt, for I unfortunately eclipsed my elder cousins in those outer gifts of nature and those acquired graces of manner, which, however valueless when unaccompanied by inward worth, have always exercised a prevailing, an irresistible influence in society. I never exactly knew why, but I was the favorite of my uncle, who seemed to love me better than even his own daughters, and he rejoiced at the admiration I excited, though often purchased at their expense. Perhaps the secret was this. They were of a cold temperament; mine was ardent, and whatever I loved, I loved without reserve, and expressed my affection with characteristic warmth and enthusiasm. I loved my indulgent uncle with all the fervor of which such a nature, made vain and selfish by education, is capable. Often, after returning from an evening party, my heart throbbing high with the delight of gratified vanity, when he would draw me towards him and tell me—with a most injudicious fondness, it is true—that I was a thousand times prettier than the flowers I wore, more sparkling than the jewels, and that I ought to marry a prince or a nabob, I exulted more in his praise, than in the flatteries that were still tingling in my ears. Even my aunt's coolness was a grateful tribute to my self-love—for was it not occasioned by my transcendancy over her less gifted daughters?

But why do I linger on the threshold of events, which simple in themselves stamped my destiny—for time, yea, and for eternity.

It was during a homeward journey, with my uncle, I first met him, who afterwards became my husband. My whole head becomes sick and my whole heart faint, as I think what I might have been, and what I am. But I must forbear. If I am compelled at times to lay aside my pen, overcome with agony and remorse, let me pause till I can go on, with a steady hand, and a calmer brain.

Our carriage broke down—it was a common accident—a young gentleman on horseback, who seemed like ourselves, a traveler,

came up to our assistance. He dismounted, proffered every assistance in his power, and accompanied us to the inn, which fortunately was not far distant, for my uncle was severely injured, and walked with difficulty, though supported by the stranger's arm and my own. I cannot define the feeling, but from the moment I beheld him, my spirit was troubled within me. I saw, at once, that he was of a different order of beings from those I had been accustomed to associate with; and there was something in the heavenly composure of his countenance and gentle dignity of manner, that rebuked my restless desire for admiration and love of display. I never heard any earthly sound so sweet as his voice. Invisible communion with angels could alone give such tones to the human voice. At first, I felt a strange awe in his presence, and forgot those artificial graces, for which I had been too much admired. Without meaning to play the part of a hypocrite, my real disposition was completely concealed. During the three days we were detained, he remained with us; and aloof from all temptation to folly, the best traits of my character were called into exercise. On the morning of our departure, as my uncle was expressing his gratitude for his kindness, and his hope of meeting him in town, he answered—and it was not without emotion—"I fear our paths diverge too much, to allow that hope. Mine is a lowly one, but I trust I shall find it blest." I then for the first time, learned that he was a minister—the humble pastor of a country village. My heart died within me. That this graceful and uncommonly interesting young man should be nothing more than an obscure village preacher—it was too mortifying. All my bright visions of conquest faded away. "We can never be any thing to each other," thought I. Yet as I again turned towards him, and saw his usually calm eye fixed on me with an expression of deep anxiety, I felt the conviction that I might be all the world to him. He was watching the effect of his communication, and the glow of excited vanity that suffused my cheek was supposed to have its origin from a purer source. I was determined to enjoy the full glory of my conquest. When my uncle warmly urged him to accompany us home, and sojourn with us a few days, I backed the invitation, with all the elo-

quence my countenance was capable of expressing. Vain and selfish being that I was—I might have known that we differed from each other as much as the rays of the morning star from the artificial glare of the sky rocket. *He* drew his light from the fountain of living glory, *I* from the decaying fires of earth.

The invitation was accepted—and before that short visit was concluded, so great was the influence he acquired over me, while *I* was only seeking to gain the ascendancy over *his* affections, that I felt willing to give up the luxury and fashion that surrounded me, for the sweet and quiet hermitage he described, provided the sacrifice were required. I never once thought of the duties that would devolve upon me, the solemn responsibilities of my new situation. It is one of the mysteries of Providence, how such a being as myself could ever have won a heart like his. He saw the sunbeam playing on the surface, and thought that all was fair beneath. I did love him; but my love was a passion, not a principle. I was captivated by the heavenly graces of his manner, but was incapable of comprehending the source whence those graces were derived.

My uncle would gladly have seen me established in a style more congenial to my prevailing tastes, but gave his consent, as he said, on the score of his surpassing merit. My aunt was evidently more than willing to have me married, while my cousins rallied me, for falling in love with a country parson.

We were married. I accompanied him to the beautiful village of ——. I became mistress of the parsonage. Never shall I forget the moment when I first entered this avenue, shaded by majestic elms; beheld these low, white walls, festooned with redolent vines; and heard the voice, which was then the music of my life, welcome me here, as Heaven's best and loveliest gift. How happy—how blest I might have been! and *I was* happy for awhile. His benign glance and approving smile were, for a short time, an equivalent for the gaze of admiration and strains of flattery to which I had been accustomed. I even tried, in some measure, to conform to his habits and tastes, and to cultivate the goodwill of the plebeians and rustics who constituted a great portion of his parish. But the mind,

unsupported by principle, is incapable of any steady exertion. Mine gradually wearied of the effort of assuming virtues, to which it had no legitimate claim. The fervor of feeling which had given a bluer tint to the sky, and a fairer hue to the flower, insensibly faded. I began to perceive defects in every object, and to wonder at the blindness which formerly overlooked them. I still loved my husband; but the longer I lived with him, the more his character soared above the reach of mine. I could not comprehend, how one could be endowed with such brilliant talents and winning graces, and not wish for the admiration of the world. I was vexed with him for his meekness and humility, and would gladly have mingled, if I could, the base alloy of earthly ambition with his holy aspirations after heaven. I was even jealous—I almost tremble while I write it—of the God he worshipped. I could not bear the thought, that I held a second place in his affections—though second only to the great and glorious Creator. Continually called from my side to the chamber of the sick, the couch of the dying, the dwelling of the poor and ignorant, I in vain sought to fill up the widening vacuum left, by becoming interested in the duties of my station. I could not do it. They became every day more irksome to me. The discontent I was cherishing, became more and more visible, till the mild and anxious eye of my husband vainly looked for the joyous smile that used to welcome his return.

It is true, there were many things I was obliged to tolerate, which must inevitably be distasteful to one, educated with such false refinement as I have been. But I never reflected they must be as opposed to my husband's tastes as my own, and that Christian principle alone led him to the endurance of them. Instead of appreciating his angelic patience and forbearance, I blamed him for not lavishing more sympathy on me for trials which, though sometimes ludicrous in themselves, are painful from the strength of association.

The former minister of the village left a maiden sister as a kind of legacy to his congregation. My husband had been a protegee and pupil of the good man, who, on his death-bed, bequeathed his

people to the charge of this son of his adoption, and *him*, with equal tenderness and solemnity, to the care of his venerable sister. She became a fixture in the parsonage, and to me a perpetual and increasing torment. The first month of our marriage, she was absent, visiting some of her seventh cousins in a neighboring town. I do not wish to exculpate myself from blame; but, if ever there was a thorn in human flesh, I believe I had found it in this inquisitive, gratuitously advising woman. I, who had always lived among roses, without thinking of briars, was doomed to feel this thorn, daily, hourly, goading me; and was constrained to conceal as much as possible, the irritation she caused, because my husband treated her with as much respect as if she were an empress. I thought Mr. L—— was wrong in this. Owing to the deep placidity of his own disposition, he could not realize what a trial such a companion was to a mercurial, indulged, self-willed being as myself. Nature has gifted me with an exquisite ear for music, and a discord always “wakes the nerve where agony is born.” Poor aunt Debby had a perfect mania for singing, and she would sit and sing for hours together, old-fashioned ballads and hymns of surprising length—scarcely pausing to take breath. I have heard aged people sing the songs of Zion, when there was most touching melody in their tones; and some of the warmest feelings of devotion I ever experienced, were awakened by these solemn, trembling notes. But aunt Debby's voice was full of indescribable ramifications, each a separate discord—a sharp, sour voice, indicative of the natural temper of the owner. One Sunday morning, after she had been screeching one of Dr. Watts' hymns, of about a hundred verses, she left me to prepare for church. When we met, after finishing our separate toilettes, she began her animadversions on my dress, as being too gay for a minister's wife. I denied the charge; for though made in the redundancy of fashion, it was of unadorned white.

“But what,” said she, disfiguring the muslin folds with her awkward fingers, “what is the use of all these fandangles of lace? They are nothing but Satan's devices to lead astray silly women, whose minds are running after finery.” All this I might have borne

with silent contempt, for it came from aunt Debby; but when she brought the authority of a Mrs. Deacon and a Mrs. Doelan of the parish to prove that she was not the only one who found fault with the fashion of my attire, the indignant spirit broke its bounds; deference for age was forgotten in the excitement of the moment, and the concentrated irritation of weeks burst forth. I called her an impertinent, morose old maid, and declared that one or the other of us should leave the parsonage. In the midst of the paroxysm my husband entered—the calm of heaven on his brow. He had just left his closet, where he had been to seek the divine manna for the pilgrims it was his task to guide through the wilderness of life. He looked from one to the other, in grief and amazement. Aunt Debby had seated herself on his entrance, and began to rock herself backward and forward, and to sigh and groan—saying it was a hard thing to be called such hard names at her time of life, &c. I stood, my cheeks glowing with anger, and my heart violently palpitating with the sudden effort at self-control. He approached me, took my hand, and said, "My dear Mary!" There was affection in his tone, but there was upbraiding, also; and drawing away my hand, I wept in bitterness of spirit. As soon as I could summon sufficient steadiness of voice, I told him the cause of my resentment, and declared, that I would never again enter a place, where I was exposed to ridicule and censure, and from those, too, so immeasurably my inferiors in birth and education. "Dearest Mary!" exclaimed he, turning pale from agitation, "you cannot mean what you say. Let not such trifles as these, mar the peace of this holy day. I grieve that your feelings should have been wounded; but what matters it what the world says of our outward apparel, if our souls are clothed with those robes of holiness, which make us lovely in our Maker's eyes? Let us go together to the temple of Ilm, whose last legacy to man was *peace*."

Though the bell was ringing its last notes, and though I saw him so painfully disturbed, I still resisted the appeal, and repeated my rash asseveration. The bell had pealed its latest summons, and was no longer heard. "Mary, must I go alone?" His hand was on

the latch—there was a burning flush on his cheek, such as I had never seen before. My pride would have yielded—my conscience convicted me of wrong—I would have acknowledged my rashness, had not aunt Debby, whom I thought born to be my evil spirit, risen with a long-drawn sigh, and taken his arm preparatory to accompanying him. "No," said I, "you will not be alone. You need not wait for me. In aunt Debby's company, you cannot regret mine."

Surely my heart must have been steeled, like Pharaoh's, for some divine purpose, or I never could have resisted the mute anguish of his glance, as he closed the door on this cold and unmerited taunt. What hours of wretchedness I passed in the solitude of my chamber. I magnified my sufferings into those of martyrdom, and accused Mr. L—— of not preparing me for the trials of my new situation. Yet, even while I reproached him in my heart, I was conscious of my injustice, and felt that I did not suffer alone. It was the first time any other than words of love and kindness had passed between us, and it seemed to me, that a barrier was beginning to rise, that would separate us forever. When we again met, I tried to retain the same cold manner and averted countenance, but he came unaccompanied by my tormentor, and looked so dejected and pale, my petulance and pride yielded to the reign of better feelings. I had even the grace to make concessions, which were received with such gratitude and feeling, I was melted into goodness, transient but sincere. Had aunt Debby remained from us, all might yet have been well; but after having visited awhile among the parish, she returned; and her presence choked the blossoms of my good resolutions. I thought she never forgave the offending epithet I had given her in the moment of passion. It is far from my intention, in delineating peculiarities like hers, to throw any opprobrium on that class of females, who from their isolated and often unprotected situation, are peculiarly susceptible to the shafts of unkindness or ridicule. I have known those, whose influence seemed as diffusive as the sunshine and gentle as the dew; at whose approach the ringlets of childhood would be tossed gaily back, and the wan cheek of the aged lighted

up with joy; who had devoted the glow of their youth, and the strength of their prime, to acts of filial piety and love, watching the waning fires of life, as the vestal virgins the flame of the altar. Round such beings as these, the beatitudes cluster; and yet, the ban of unfeeling levity is passed upon the maiden sisterhood. But I wander from my path. It is not *her* history I am writing, so much as my own; which, however deficient in incident, is not without its moral power.

I experienced one source of mortification, which I have not yet mentioned; it may even seem too insignificant to be noticed, and yet it was terribly grating to my aristocratic feelings. Some of our good parishioners were in the habit of lavishing attentions, so repugnant to me, that I did not hesitate to refuse them; which I afterwards learned, gave great mortification and displeasure. I would willingly accept a basket of fragrant strawberries, or any of the elegant bounties of nature; but when they offered such plebeian gifts as a shoulder of pork or mutton, a sack of grain or potatoes, I invariably returned my cold thanks and declined the honor. Is it strange that I should become to them an object of aversion, and that they should draw comparisons, humbling to me, between their idolized minister and his haughty bride?

My uncle and cousins made me a visit, not long after my rupture with aunt Debby, which only served to render me more unhappy. My uncle complained so much of my altered appearance, my faded bloom and languid spirits, I saw that it gave exquisite pain to Mr. L——, while my cousins, now in their day of power, amused themselves continually with the oldfashioned walls of the house, the obsolescent style of the furniture, and my humdrum mode of existence. Had I possessed one spark of heavenly fire, I should have resented all this as an insult to him whom I had solemnly vowed to love and honor. These oldfashioned walls should have been sacred in my eyes. They were twice hallowed—hallowed by the recollections of departed excellence and the presence of living holiness. Every leaf of the magnificent elms that overshadowed them, should have been

held sacred, for the breath of morning and evening prayer had been daily wafted over them, up to the mercy-seat of heaven.

I returned with my uncle to the metropolis. It is true, he protested that he would not, could not leave me behind—and that change of scene was absolutely necessary to the restoration of my bloom, and Mr. L—— gave his assent with apparent cheerfulness and composure. But I knew—I felt, that his heart bled at my willingness, my wish to be absent from him, so soon after our marriage. He told me to consult my own happiness, in the length of my visit, and that he would endeavor to find a joy in solitude, in thinking of mine. “Oh!” said one of my cousins, with a loud laugh, “you can never feel solitary, when aunt Debby is”——

Behold me once more 'mid the scenes congenial to my soul—a gay flower, sporting over the waves of fashion, thoughtless of the caverns of death beneath. Again the voice of flattery fell meltingly on my ear; and while listening to the siren, I forgot those mild, admonishing accents, which were always breathing of heaven—or if I remembered them at all, they came to my memory like the grave rebuke of Milton's cherub—severe in their beauty. Yes, I did remember them when I was alone; and there are hours when the gayest will feel desolately alone. I thought of him in his neglected home; him, from whom I was gradually alienating myself for his very perfections, and accusing conscience avenged his rights. Oh! how miserable, how poor we are, when unsupported by our own esteem! when we fear to commune with our own hearts, and doubly tremble to bare them to the allseeing eye of our Maker! My husband often wrote me most affectionately. He did not urge my return, but said, whenever I felt willing to exchange the pleasures of the metropolis for the seclusion of the hermitage, his arms and his heart were open to receive me. At length I received a letter, which touched those chords, that yet vibrated to the tones of nature and feeling. He seldom spoke of himself—but in this, he mentioned having been very ill, though then convalescent. “Your presence, my Mary,” said he, “would bring healing on its wings. I fear, greatly fear, I have doomed you to unhappiness, by rashly yielding to the influence

of your beauty and winning manners, taking advantage of your simplicity and inexperience, without reflecting how unfitted you were, from natural disposition and early habits, to be a fellow-laborer in so humble a portion of our Master's vineyard. Think not, my beloved wife, I say this in reproach. No! 'tis in sorrow, in repentance, in humiliation of spirit. I have been too selfish. I have not shown sufficient sympathy for the trials and vexations to which, for me, you have been exposed. I have asked to receive too much. I have given back too little. Return then, my Mary; you were created for nobler purposes than the beings who surround you. Let us begin life anew. Let us take each other by the hand as companions for time—but pilgrims for eternity. Be it mine to guard, guide and sustain—yours, to console, to gild and comfort.” In a postscript, he added:

“I am better now—a journey will restore me. I will soon be with you, when I trust we will not again be parted.”

My heart was not of rock. It was moved—melted. I should have been less than human, to have been untouched by a letter like this. All my romantic love, but so recently chilled, returned; and I thought of his image as that of an angel's. Ever impulsive, ever actuated by the passion of the moment, I made the most fervent resolutions of amendment, and panted for the hour when we should start for, together, this immortal goal! Alas! how wavering were my purposes—how ineffective my holy resolutions.

There was a numerous congregation gathered on the Sabbath morn, not in the simple village church, but the vaulted walls of a city dome. A stranger ascended the pulpit. Every eye was turned on him and none wandered. He was pallid, as from recent indisposition; but there was a flitting glow on his cheek, the herald of coming inspiration. There was a divine simplicity, a sublime fervor, an abandonment of self, a lifting up of the soul to heaven, an indescribable and spiritual charm, pervading his manner, that was acknowledged by the breathless attention of a crowded audience, composed of the wealth and fashion of the metropolis. And I was there, the proudest, the happiest of the throng. That gifted being

was my husband. I was indemnified for all past mortifications, and looked forward to bright years of felicity, not in the narrow path we had heretofore traveled, but a wider, more brilliant sphere. My imagination placed him at the head of that admiring congregation; and I saw the lowly flock he had been lately feeding, weeping, unpitied, between the porch and the altar.

Before we bade farewell to my uncle, I had abundant reason to believe my vision would soon be realized. The church was then without a pastor. No candidate had as yet appeared in whom their opinions or affections were united. They were enthusiastic in their admiration of Mr. L——, and protested against the obscurity of his location. With such hopes gilding the future, I left the metropolis with a cheerfulness and elasticity of spirits, which my husband hailed as a surety for long years of domestic felicity. I would gladly linger here awhile. I fear to go on. You have followed me so far with a kind of complaisant interest, as a poor, vain, weak young creature, whose native defects have been enhanced by education, and who has unfortunately been placed in a sphere she is incapable of adorning. The atmosphere is too pure, too rarified. Removed at once from the valley of sin to the mount of holiness, I breathe with difficulty the celestial air, and pant for more congenial regions. Must I proceed? Your compassion will turn to detestation: yet I cannot withdraw from the task I have imposed on myself. It is an expiatory one; and oh, may it be received as such!

It was scarcely more than a week after our return. All had been peace and sunshine: so resolved was I to be all that was lovely and amiable. I even listened with apparent patience to aunt Debby's interminable hymns, and heard some of her long stories, the seventy-seventh time, without any manifest symptom of vexation. It was about sunset. We sat together in the study, my husband and myself, watching the clouds as they softly rolled towards the sinking sun, to dip their edges in his golden beams. The boughs of the elms waved across the window, giving us glimpses of the beautiful vale beyond, bounded by the blue outline of the distant hills. Whether it was the warm light reflected on his face, or the glow of the heart

suffusing it, I know not, but I never saw his usually pale features more radiantly lighted up than at that moment. A letter was brought to him. I leaned over his shoulder while he opened it. From the first line I understood its import: it was the realization of my hopes. The offer was there made—more splendid, more liberal than I had dared to anticipate. I did not speak: but with cheeks burning and hands trembling with eagerness and joy, I waited till he had perused it. He still continued silent. Almost indignant at his calmness, I ejaculated his name in an impatient tone; when he raised his eyes from the paper and fixed them on me. I read there the deathblow of my hopes. They emitted no glance of triumph: there was sorrow, regret, humility, and love—but I looked in vain for more. “I am sorry for this,” said he, “for your sake, my dear Mary. It may excite wishes which can never be realized. No! let us be happy in the lowlier sphere, in which an allwise Being has marked my course. I cannot deviate from it.” “Cannot!” repeated I: “say, rather, you will not.” I could not articulate more. The possibility of a refusal on his part had never occurred to me. I was thunderstruck. He saw my emotion—and, losing all his composure, rose and crushed the letter in his hand. “I could not if I would, accept this,” he cried; “and, were my own wishes to be alone consulted, I would not, were I free to act. But it is not so. I am bound to this place, by a solemn promise, which cannot be broken. Here, in this very house it was made, by the dying bed of the righteous, who bequeathed the people he loved to *my* charge—*me*, the orphan he had protected and reared. “Never leave them, my son,” said the expiring saint—“never leave the lambs of my flock to be scattered on the mountains.” I pledged my word, surrounded by the solemnities of death: yea, even while his soul was taking its upward flight. It is recorded, and cannot be recalled.”

Did I feel the sacredness of the obligation he revealed? Did I venerate the sanctity of his motives, and admit their authority? No! Totally unprepared for such a bitter disappointment, when I seemed touching the summit of all my wishes, I was maddened—reckless. I upbraided him for having more regard to a dead guardian,

who could no longer be affected by his decision, than for a living wife. I threatened to leave him to the obscurity in which he was born, and return to the friends who loved me so much better than himself. Seeing him turn deadly pale at this, and suddenly put his hand on his heart, I thought I had discovered the spring to move his resolution, and determined that I would not let it go. I moved towards the door, thinking it best to leave him a short time to his own reflections, assured that love must be victorious over conscience. He made a motion as if to detain me, as I passed—then again pressed his hand on his heart. That silent motion—never, never, can I forget it!

“Are you resolved on this?” asked he, in a low, very hoarse tone of voice. “Yes, if you persist in your refusal. I leave you to decide.” I went into the next room. I heard him walk a few moments, as if agitated and irresolute—then suddenly stop. I then heard a low, suppressed cough, but to this he was always subject, when excited, and it caused no emotion. Yet, after remaining alone for some time, I began to be alarmed at the perfect stillness. A strange feeling of horror came over me. I remembered the deadly paleness of his countenance, and the cold dew gathered fast and thick on my brow. I recollected, too, that he had told me of once having bled at the lungs, and of being admonished to shun every predisposing cause to such a malady. Strange, that after such an entire oblivion of every thing but self, these reflections should have pressed upon me, with such power, at that moment. I seemed suddenly gifted with second sight, and feared to move, lest I should see the vision of my conscience embodied. At length, aunt Debby opened the door, and for the first time, rejoicing in her sight, I entreated her to go into the library, with an earnestness that appalled her. She did go—and her first sharp scream drew me to her side. There, reclined upon the sofa, motionless, lifeless—his face, white as a snow-drift, lay my husband; his neckcloth and vest, saturated with the blood that still flowed from his lips. Yes, he lay there—lifeless, dead, dead! The wild shriek of agony and remorse pierced not his unconscious ear. He was dead, and *I* was his murderer. The

physician who was summoned, pronounced my doom. From violent agitation of mind, a blood vessel had been broken, and instant death had ensued. Weeks of frenzy, months of despair, succeeded—of black despair. Nothing but an almighty arm thrown around my naked soul, held me back from the brink of suicide. Could I have believed in annihilation—and I wrestled with the powers of reason to convince myself that in the grave, at least, I should find rest. I prayed but for rest—I prayed for oblivion. Night and day the image of that bleeding corse was before me. Night and day a voice was ringing in my ears, "*Thou hast murdered him!*" My sufferings were so fearful to witness, the at first compassionate neighbors deserted my pillow, justifying themselves by the conviction that I merited all that I endured.

My uncle and aunt came when they first heard the awful tidings, but unable to support my raving distress, left me—after providing every thing for my comfort—with the injunction that as soon as I should be able to be removed, to be carried to their household. And whose kind, unwearied hand smoothed my lonely pillow, and held my aching brow? Who, when wounded reason resumed her empire, applied the balm of Gilead and the oil of tenderness; led me to the feet of the divine Physician, prayed with me and for me, wept with me and over me, nor rested till she saw me clinging to the cross, in lowliness of spirit, with the seal of the children of God in my forehead, and the joy of salvation in my soul? It was aunt Debby. The harsh condemner of the fashions of this world, the stern reprover of vanity and pride, the uncompromising defender of godliness and truth; she who in my day of prosperity was the cloud, in the night of sorrow was my light and consolation. The rough bark was penetrated and the finer wood beneath gave forth its fragrance. Oh! how often, as I have heard her, seated by my bedside, explaining in a voice softened by kindness, the mysteries of holiness, and repeating the promises of mercy, have I wondered, that I, who had turned a deaf ear to the same truths, when urged upon me with all an angel's eloquence, should listen with reverence to accents from which I had heretofore turned in disgust. Yet at times, there seemed a

dignity in her tones; her harsh features would light up with an expression of devout ecstasy, and I marvelled at the transforming power of Christianity. Well may I marvel! I would not now, for the diadem of the east, exchange this sequestered hermitage for the halls of fashion—these hallowed shades for the canopies of wealth—or the society of the once despised and hated aunt Debby, for the companionship of flatterers. I see nothing but thorns where once roses blushed. The voice of the charmer has lost its power, though "it charm never so wisely." My heart lies buried in the tomb on which the sunlight now solemnly glimmers—my hopes are fixed on those regions from whence those rays depart. Had he only lived to forgive me—to know my penitence and agony—but the last words that ever fell on his ear from my lips, were those of passion and rebellion—the last glance I ever cast on him, was proud and upbraiding.

The sketch is finished—memory overpowers me.

C. L. H.

THE STRANGER AT THE BANQUET.

'Twas a festal eve. The lamps sent down their trembling rays, reflected by shining crystal and wreathing silver, on myriad forms of beauty and grace. The music sent forth the most gladdening strains, and bounding feet kept time to the joyous melody. Evening shades deepened into midnight gloom without, yet still the gay notes were heard, and the unwearied revellers continued their graceful evolutions.

Just as the clock struck twelve, a stranger entered the banqueting room, and as she passed slowly on unannounced, and unaccompanied by any guide or protector, every eye was turned towards her. "Who can she be?" whispered a young girl to her partner, drawing close to his side.

He answered not, so intently was he gazing on the figure, which now stood in the centre of the hall, looking calmly and immoveably on those around. Her white robes fell in long, slumberous folds to her feet; her fair shining hair floated back from her face, like fleecy clouds, tinged by the moonbeam's radiance, and the still depths of her azure eyes shone with a mysterious, unfathomable lustre.

"Why are ye gathered here?" asked she of the young maiden, who shrunk back, as she glided near her, with noiseless step, "What mean these glad strains, and the flowers that decorate your brows?"

The low, thrilling melody of the stranger's voice echoed to the remotest corners of that spacious hall and the minstrels paused to listen.

(370)

"'Tis a festal eve," answered the trembling maiden, "and we have met in joy and mirth, to commemorate the era."

"Why is this night chosen as a scene of festivity?" asked the sweet voiced stranger.

"It is Christmas eve," replied the maiden, "the birth-night of our Saviour, and it is our custom to celebrate it with music and dancing."

"It was once celebrated in ancient days," said the stranger, "with a splendor and beauty that would shame the decorations of these walls. While the shepherds of Chaldea were watching their flocks beneath the starry glories of midnight, they heard strains of more than mortal melody gushing around them—rolling above them—the thrilling of invisible harps, accompanied by celestial voices, all breathing one sweet, triumphant anthem—'Glory to God in the Highest; on Earth peace, and good will to men.' While they listened in adoring wonder, one of the stars of Heaven glided from its throne, and travelling slowly over the depths of ether, held its silver lamps over the manger, where slept the babe of Bethlehem. Then the wise men of the East came with their costly offerings, and laid them down at the feet of the infant Redeemer. And where are your gifts?" continued she, turning her still, shining eyes, from one to the other of the listening throng, "what have ye brought this night to lay at your Saviour's feet in commemoration of your gratitude and love? Where is your gold, your frankincense, your myrrh? Where are the gems from the heart's treasury, that ye are ready to sacrifice on the altar of your Lord?"

The young maiden whom she had first addressed, cast one tearful, earnest glance, on her gay companions; then unbinding the roses from her brow, the jewels from her neck, and drawing from her fingers each golden ring, "Where is the altar," she cried, "that I may place my offerings there?"

"Come with me," said the stranger, "and I will lead you where you can find more precious gifts than these. Gifts that will retain their beauty, when these garlands shall wither, and the diamond and fine gold become dim."

The maiden took hold of the stranger's hand, and passed through the hall, which she had so lately entered in thoughtless vanity and mirth. Her companions pressed round her and impeded her way. "Oh, stay with us!" they exclaimed, "and follow not the steps of the stranger: your eyes are dim, your cheek is pale, shadows are gathering over your face. She may lead you to the chambers of death."

"Hinder me not," cried the fair maiden, "I may not slight the voice that summons me. 'Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil.'"

A celestial smile beamed on the face of the stranger as the young girl uttered these words, and they disappeared from the festive hall. Through the long sweeping shadows of midnight they glided on, till they came to a wretched hovel, through whose shattered casements, the night gust was moaning, making most melancholy music. By the dim light of a taper, they beheld a pale mother, cradling her wasted infant in her arms, striving to hush its feeble wailings, looking down with hollow eyes on the fearful ravages of famine and disease, then raising them in agony to Heaven, imploring the widow's and the orphan's God to have mercy on her.

"Lay down your golden offerings here," said the stranger, "and your Saviour will accept the gift. Have ye not read that whosoever presenteth a cup of cold water to one of the least of his disciples, in his name, giveth it unto him?"

The maiden wept, as she laid her offering in the widow's emaciated hand. Again the beauteous stranger smiled. "The tear of pity," said she, "is the brightest gem thou hast brought."

She led her forth into the darkness once more, and held such sweet and heavenly discourse that the heart of the maiden melted within her bosom. They came to a dwelling whence strains of solemn music issued, and as the light streamed from the arching windows, it was reflected with ghostly lustre on marble tomb-stones gleaming without.

"They breathe forth a requiem for the dead," said the stranger, and she entered the gate through willows that wept over the path.

The music ceased, and the low, deep voice of prayer ascended through the silence of the night. The maiden knelt on the threshold, for she felt that she was not worthy to enter into the temple. She hardly dared to lift her trembling eyes to Heaven; but bending her forehead to the dust and clasping her hands on her breast, she exclaimed, "God be merciful to me a sinner!"

"Thy Saviour will accept the offering, uttered the stranger in her ear, "the prayer of a broken and contrite spirit, is an incense more precious to Him, than all the odors of the East."

"You shall see me again," said the stranger, when she led the young maiden to her own home, by the light of the dawning day; "you shall see me again, and we will walk together once more, but not among scenes of sorrow and death, for they shall all have fled away. Neither will we walk through the shades of midnight, for 'there will be no night there.' There will be no moon, nor stars to illumine the place, 'for the glory of God shall lighten it, and the Lamb be the light thereof.' Farewell—I may not dwell with you, but ye shall come and abide with me, if ye continue to walk in the path, where I have guided your steps."

Never more were the steps of that young maiden seen in the halls of mirth, or the paths of sin. She went about among the children of sorrow and want, binding up the wounds of sorrow, and relieving the pangs of want. She hung over the death-bed of the penitent, and breathed words of hope into the dull ear of despair. Men looked upon her as she passed along, in her youthful beauty, as an angel visitant, and they blessed her in her wanderings. Her once companions turned aside, shrinking from communion with one, whose eyes now spoke a holier language than that of earth. They felt that she was no longer one of them, and after wondering and speaking of her a little while, she was forgotten by them in the revelries of pleasure.

At length she was no longer seen by those who watched for her daily ministrations. Her place was vacant in the temple of God. The music of her voice was no more heard in prayer and praise. On a lowly couch in her own darkened room, that young maiden was

reclining. Her face was pallid, and her eyes dim, and her mother was weeping over her. Flowers were strewed upon her pillow, whose sweet breath stole lovingly over her faded cheek; and as the curtains of the windows waved softly in the night breeze, the moonbeams glided in and kissed her wan brow. The mother heard no step, but she felt the air part near the couch, and looking up she saw a figure standing in white flowing robes by her daughter's side, with a face of such unearthly sweetness, she trembled as she gazed upon her.

"Maiden," said she, "I have come once more. I told thee we should meet again, and this is the appointed hour. Does thy spirit welcome my coming?"

"My soul has thirsted for thee," answered the faint voice of the maiden, "even as the blossom thirsts for the dew of the morning; but I may not follow thee now, for my feeble feet bear me no longer over the threshold of home."

"Thy feet shall be as the young roe on the mountain," answered the white robed stranger, "thou shalt mount on wings as the eagle." Then bending over the couch and breathing on the cheek of the maiden, its pale hue changed to the whiteness of marble, and the hand which her mother held, turned cold as an icicle. At the same moment the folds of the stranger's robe floated from her shoulders, and wings of resplendent azure softening into gold, fluttered on the gaze. Divine perfumes filled the atmosphere, and a low, sweet melody, like the silvery murmuring of distant waters echoed through the chamber. Awe-struck and bewildered, the mother turned from the breathless form of her child, to the celestial figure of the stranger, when she saw it gradually fading from her sight, and encircled in its arms there seemed another being of shadowy brightness, with outspread wings and fleecy robes and soft, glorious eyes fixed steadfastly on her, till they melted away and were seen no more. Then the mother bowed herself in adoration, as well as submission; for she knew she had looked on one of those angel messengers who are "sent to minister to those who shall be heirs of salvation." She had seen, too, a vision of her daughter's ascending spirit, and she mourned not over the dust she had left behind.