

**THE SIEGE OF VICKSBURG.**

THE  
SIEGE OF VICKSBURG.

BY  
MARIA I. JOHNSTON.

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## PREFACE.

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This book, the first-fruits of my literary efforts, I desire to dedicate to those who shall read it. And that the compliment is not more worthy their acceptance, I plead the excuse of inexperience. The bird which practice learns to sustain itself on steady wing when it first leaves the nest, falls many times, and is bruised against the stones. So, having left the "even tenor" of my way, and entered the arena of authors, I ask in my struggles the indulgence of the public, and must draw their attention to the fact, that I have not presumed to instruct, but only endeavored to entertain. I deem myself fortunate to live in this enlightened and liberal age, when men of genius, well content to reign supreme in the higher walks of history and science, not only open the paths of romance to female writers, but lend them such kindly encouragement to walk therein. In confining themselves to the *profound*, they have, as it were, left to the other sex the *beautiful*; and by criticism and advice, teach them to admire and portray the natural charms of the landscape with enjoyment, and to study and transcribe human character and manners without affectation. Hoping, then, for the indulgence of men, and the sympathy of women, I submit my book to them, without farther preface.

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# THE SIEGE OF VICKSBURG.

## CHAPTER I.

**A**ND, are you really from the battle-field?" asked the lady, in surprise.

"Madam, from the very heat of the action," returned the soldier.

"And, is the whole army in retreat?"

"I did not say so," he answered again; "but the thing is all over with us, and the fellows are straggling, — at least, all that can get away without being seen and shot."

"And have you really left some of your comrades fighting bravely, and ran away? The cannon is still booming; and, listen! There is the sound of musketry; and you do not even look tired. Surely, my good man, but few of the Louisianians have acted in this shameful way."

The man did not even seem to hear her. He rested his gun against the brick wall of the house, and sat down beside it, as calmly as if she had complimented him as a hero, instead of expressing contempt for a shameful desertion of his comrades and colors.

Elizabeth Woodville closed the door, and retired into the house; without remembering to offer the glass of corn-beer she had carried, when she saw a soldier stop before her father's door. She quickly entered the parlor, and said, "Father, our fears are being confirmed every hour. Here is a soldier, just from the field of Champion's Hill; and he says that the Federals are driving us back, and that many of the men are straggling."

This she addressed to Judge McRea. He was seated beside a window that overlooked a small flower-garden, reading (or, rather, trying to read) his Bible. For many Sundays, year

after year, had he read the same volume in the same spot. Seventeen times had the month of May opened the roses and jasmines, and brightened the eyes of his wife and daughters with a spring-offering of their perfume. As the judge rose, and closed his book, the opening buds were the last things of which he thought. He rapidly ran his eye around the room, as if to assure himself that all the household were present. Mrs. McRea was there, — a tall matron, thin and delicate in appearance, but with an eye, black, and expressive of great energy. There were four daughters. Elizabeth Woodville, a widow of twenty-six, returned only a few months before, with her children, to ask the protection of her father's roof, which she had quitted at seventeen as a bride. Mary, Estelle, and Sue, were the others. The two former, handsome and ladylike; the latter, the beauty (already the beauty) of the family, though without the dignity and grace, so eminently hers when several years had matured her charms; for now she was only fifteen. There were boys also, for this was a large family, and rosy grandchildren. As Judge McRea looked upon so many women and children, of whom he was the only protector, his heart sank within his breast; for the information given him by his daughter confirmed his fears, that the Confederate army, which had been fighting under Pemberton since daybreak, near Big Black River, had met with reverses that could not be retrieved, and that if they retired upon Vicksburg, that place would, in a few days, be invested by the Federals under Grant, and his family subjected to all the horrors of a "siege."

The excitement and enthusiasm of Mrs. McRea prevented her sympathizing with, or realizing the fears of, her husband. Going to the door, followed by her daughters, she looked up and down the street. The soldier spoken of before sat in the same place, and had been joined by several others; some of them showing plainer marks of the battle than he had done, and more sensible of the shame of having deserted their posts. Mrs. McRea addressed herself to them, and drew from the most talkative a connected account of what he had seen of the day's fighting. "The Missourians fought well, madam," said he; "they made a successful charge, drove the enemy up a hill, and captured some guns, but were finally overpowered by numbers; for the Yankees are *like locust* — *like locust*. I have walked twenty miles in five hours. By this time, the army must be in full retreat; for they were gaining on us at twelve

o'clock, and we poor Tennesseans were sadly cut up. General Tilman is dead, — shot, while rallying his men. His body was put into an ambulance, and must be in town by this time. Looking up and down while the man spoke, groups of soldiers could be seen, hurrying here and there, apparently hot, tired, and hungry. Soon the gathering at the door increased to a crowd; and the ladies busied themselves in distributing such refreshments as their house afforded, though their father reminded them that their store-room was ill supplied, and that provisions might be sorely wanted before he could replenish.

Such considerations could not influence the sanguine temper of his wife. She insisted that all in the house should be used for the benefit of the army, but left the task of ministering to the stragglers (with whom she had little patience) to her daughters, while she herself had the rooms and beds prepared, thinking the ambulances would soon arrive from the scene of action, and that such of the wounded as could not be properly attended at the hospitals, might be brought to private houses. In this she was eagerly assisted by her negro servants, who, terrified by a danger they but half understood, obeyed with more than usual alacrity the orders of their mistress.

Among the crowd at the door, Mary McRea was attracted by the appearance of a lad who seemed ready to sink, either from illness or fatigue. Calling the attention of her sisters to this *gendarme*, she proposed that he should be immediately taken into the house, and cared for, and addressed herself to him, to inquire the name and place of his regiment. What was her surprise, to find him utterly unable to give her an intelligible answer, and that the noise of artillery had deprived him entirely of hearing and almost of speech. This condition of the poor youth produced no sympathy among his companions, who hissed and scoffed as he made his way to the door. "Let him die, and go to the devil, miss," said one. "The sooner such chicken-hearts are used up, the better," said another.

"Not so," said the kind-hearted Estelle; "see how pale and trembling he is; one night, in his present condition, in the trenches would certainly kill him."

"Estelle," said Mary, "I don't believe mamma can spare him a bed. She has but three; and we have not yet heard from our friends. Some of those we love may be wounded or

dying." She went to ask, and quickly returned. "Mamma says," she said, "these beds are reserved for those who have fought. Let this boy be taken to the hospital."

Mrs. McRea now called to her daughters, requesting that they would get their bonnets and shawls; for, in spite of the reluctance of her husband to their leaving home, she had determined to walk to the head-quarters of General S——, that she might learn the full extent of the disaster, and inquire for such of her personal friends as had been exposed in the battle. Making their way through the soldiers at the door, the ladies walked up, and turned into Cherry Street. The *aides-de-camp* of General Smith, who had been left as part of the garrison of the town, were standing on a balcony before the quarters of that general, glasses in hand; for, far up the street was heard the distant sound of music, and all were eager to catch the first glimpse of the main body of the army. The ladies passed the court-house and the high wall of the county jail. Baggage-wagons and artillery-carriages filled the streets; soldiers who had been left to garrison the town, passed, with looks of dogged carelessness; and, ever and anon, one of the few citizens who still remained, hurried along, with only a nod of recognition, anxious to gain their homes, or seek some of the public offices where information could be obtained. The music grew louder and louder, as each square was traversed; and the tune, "My Maryland," was now distinctly heard. A cloud of dust obscured the view: but, finally, through it the ladies descried the disfigured coats of part of the retreating army, and upon nearer approach, it proved to be the Forty-second Georgia, commonly known among the garrison as the "Forty-tooth." With the officers of this regiment, Mrs. McRea and her daughters were acquainted, but in the bustle of the sidewalk, scarcely thought to be recognized. The contrary, however, was the case; for several friends, among them Captain Scott and Major Hall, left the ranks, and came out to be congratulated on their safety, and to offer their sympathy for the anxiety which the citizens were suffering and had suffered during the day. They reported their regiment in tolerable order. The killed and wounded numbered only thirty-five; and they drew attention to two small pieces of cannon, the only artillery, they stated, that had been brought off the field. Learning Mrs. McRea's intention of going to the head-quarters of General S., they turned to accompany her. The

party had not, however, proceeded far ere they were again stopped. "Oh, Mrs. McRea, Mrs. Woodville, Mary! wait for me! Stop!"

The voice proceeded from the opposite side of the street, and, turning, our friends saw a fair and extremely delicate girl, accompanied by a young officer, making her way through the dust towards them.

"Caroline!" exclaimed Mrs. Woodville, "I thought you were to leave town early this morning, and go to your aunt."

"So I thought," she answered, seizing her friend's hand, and shaking it with glee; "so I thought; but uncle could not get an ambulance to send me in; and here I am with the rest of you, and here bound to remain, till our brave soldiers have swept back the Yankee hordes."

"Miss Carrie," said her escort, "is wild with excitement and joy."

"I wish I could see," said Mrs. Woodville, "some cause in all this for hilarity."

"Oh," cried Caroline, "to think of the grandeur of a siege, the pleasure of sharing the hardships of the soldiers, and finally of seeing the humiliation of the Federals! Joy! joy!"

"Not so fast, Miss Courteny," said Major Hall; "we met them face to face on the field of Champion's Hill this morning; and if there was any humiliation, it was on our side, not theirs."

"Then we will be revenged for that, too," she cried. "From behind our entrenchments, and in comparative security, our men shall take a life for every drop of blood, — every drop of precious Confederate blood."

"O Carrie!" said McRea, "how I love your courage and enthusiasm. Would you could instil some of it into my undemonstrative girls. Estelle has been crying all day at the idea of the suffering of our wounded; and Elizabeth can think of little else in her anxiety for her children. Come with us, dear girl, since there is no lady at your uncle's; make my house your home till matters quiet down a little."

"Oh, no, Mrs. McRea," was the answer; "I must hurry on as fast as possible. I am promised two wounded men to nurse; and I must go and comfort uncle, for he is perfectly miserable about auntie; and no wonder. She must have been terribly frightened this morning, in the midst of all those horrid Yankees, with so many little children. But I'm not afraid for

her, for she is so good and so pretty, nobody will hurt a hair of her head. Good-by, Mrs. Woodville. Kiss me, girls, and be as glad as I am, that we are all to be immortalized;" and with a laugh, in which nobody could refuse to join, she pursued her way rapidly down the street, followed by her escort. Reaching, soon after, the house used as quarters by General S., the ladies met a young *aide-de-camp* at the door. From him they learned the news of the death of the gallant Major Anderson. He had crossed an open field after the firing had almost ceased, to cut loose the horses which were harnessed to the guns he saw it was necessary to abandon. His humanity and pity for the poor beasts (who were pitching and rearing) had made him, in spite of the remonstrances of his fellow-officers, venture too far. A fragment of shell had pierced his heart, and he fell.

"And his body?" said Mrs. McRea.

"Is in the hands of the enemy, madam. He was too far off for us to reach him."

"Ah, his poor wife!" sobbed Estelle.

"Ah, his proud father," said Mrs. McRea; "it is better to die thus, than to live."

Unable to gather further particulars, for General S., and staff had not returned, our party left the house; but, in crossing the street, found themselves almost entirely surrounded by a gathering on the opposite corner. Negroes, children, and a few soldiers, crowded round an ambulance, with looks of eager curiosity or dismay. Approaching nearer, Mrs. McRea singled out a youth, of apparently seventeen or eighteen years of age, wearing Confederate uniform, and asked him what or who the vehicle contained. The young man made a strong effort to be calm, as he answered,—

"Madam, that is the body of General Tilman; he was my father."

Stark and stiff lay the brave officer, his clothing and gloves covered with blood, and the gory stream congealing in the dark masses of his tangled hair; yet, there was much in the attitude in which he lay expressive of dignity, and nothing in the serene composure of his countenance to indicate that one feeling of anger or revenge had followed him from the tumultuous scene where his life had just closed. His body was prepared for burial and placed in a coffin at the house of Mrs. H., and an hour later, was, with suitable services, taken to and from the Presbyterian church, and placed in the city

grave-yard. A few months afterwards, a Federal officer had asked Mrs. Woodville to point out the spot to him. "He was a distant cousin of mine," Colonel H. said; "and since his wife and children are deprived that pleasure, I wish to place a tombstone to his memory; but very plain and unostentatious it must be, for the men of my own regiment, in some moods, might go and pull it down." The simple slab was placed, bearing only the name and date of the death of the soldier; the cannon sounded round the cemetery for the forty-nine days of the siege; but now all is hushed where he sleeps. The mocking-bird sings its matins and vespers over the grave, and the fruitful soil of the "Sunny South," for which the brave man shed his blood, has poured from its breast the lily, the ivy, and the violet, which stranger hands have from time to time carried to the distant wife, who has never been allowed the privilege to water them with her tears. In her bereavement, the comforting thought must have occurred, that, sudden as was his death, all was remembered that should engage our thoughts on the brink of eternity. His voice sounded, trumpet-like, with the word of command, filling his men, as his own breast was filled, with thoughts of patriotism and duty, as the fatal shot reached its destination. As soon as his son came to his assistance, he said: "My boy, go home, and stay with your mother; she has sacrificed enough in this cause." Then repeating distinctly the Lord's Prayer, at the words "Thy will be done," he ceased to speak; and General Tilman was dead.

Shocked and trembling at the sight before them, the ladies turned to retrace their way home through the gathering twilight. Arrived there, they found that the very gentlemen of whom they had been in search, Major McCloud and Captain DeBlanc, had preceded them by another street, and were already in the house with Judge McRea. As Mrs. McRea entered the parlor, Mary and Sue looked through the window from the gallery. "I wish," said the latter, "we could get to speak to Eugene McCloud alone, for he would tell us about the battle, while Captain DeBlanc is so much more likely to talk about himself."

"Perhaps," said Mary, "papa may be some restraint on him; the young men never blow their own trumpets quite as loud when he is there to give them a look."

"But," said Sue, still peeping through a crack in the shut.

ters, "Captain DeBlanc is so glib, that nothing less than a rap over the head will silence him when he once gets to talking. I've a great mind to call Major McCloud out here on the gallery, a moment. Do you think mamma would care?"

"I know she would not," answered Mary; "but, since I have not the same desire to talk to him alone, as yourself, I'll go into the house, and tell him in so many words, that you wish to speak to him on the gallery."

This was bringing matters to a climax more rapidly than Sue had anticipated, and created an amount of embarrassment of which Mary by no means conceived; for, if there was a hope mixed with the almost childish fears with which Sue had seen the — regiment leave Vicksburg, four days before, it was, that in the fighting which might occur, Eugene McCloud would distinguish himself. Though young, he was her senior by many years; and his manner, which teased her one day as a child, and the next distinguished her with attentions due only to a woman, though it often irritated and perplexed her, did not fail to strike her fancy and occupy very often her thoughts. She had during the day thought of his returning from the battle-field in many different ways. Sometimes, her fancy painted him a stiff cold corpse, and thought of the laurel-wreath she would lay on his bier; sometimes, as being racked with painful wounds; then, again, with a broken arm, and the title of brevet-colonel. But lo! when, in accordance with Mary's request that he should step out on the gallery, he did so, and approached the young lady with extended hand, she regarded him with disappointment and contempt; for there he was, fixed up as nicely as a Broadway swell, his collar cutting him under the ears every time he turned his head, and his cravat arranged most unexceptionally, looking not one bit like Ivanhoe at the tournament, or Richard in Palestine; while she felt so like playing Queen Berengaria or the Lady Rowena. Observing that she withheld her hand, and received him in such unusually cool style, he bent down to look in her face, and in vain endeavored to repress a smile, for he saw so well what was passing in her mind. "No, *ma belle*," he said, "in spite of the battle, you can't make a hero of me this evening. I understand your reproachful look. Yes, my clothes are clean, and my skin perfectly whole. Now, had I been like my friend, Captain DeBlanc (who is, no doubt, already entertaining your ma and pa with his hair-breadth

escapes), actually in sight of *le combat*, I should not have gone to head-quarters to wash my face and don my uniform, but, covered with dust, have staggered into your presence, having the blood trickling, in the most approved manner, from a slight wound in my temple, and, in theatrical tones, begged that your fair hands might staunch the flow. But, alas! the only orders I received this morning, from General S. were:— 'Eugene, stay behind with the wagon-train, and see that it don't advance too far. Don't run any risk of capture; we're deuced hard run for something to eat. And, say, send your man Jim back to get some cold coffee, and an old umbrella (if such a thing can be had), for, from the heat of the sun, one might fancy themselves approaching the infernal regions.' Then, in the evening, just as my unacclimated ears had become accustomed to the noise of the guns, he sent an aid to say, 'Get back into town with the wagons, as fast as your legs can carry you.' I obeyed, Miss Sue, feeling less like a hero, than I expected; and since I cannot, like Othello, recount past dangers, won't you excuse me, that I did pay a little attention to my toilet? For, I assure you," he continued, drawing nearer, "though I don't feel as much like a warrior as I expected, I am no less inclined to play the lover, if I am only allowed."

Sue was in no humor to be conciliated. One moment, she thought to laugh at his foolishness; the next, to get mad at his impudence. Aspirations for him, she had certainly had, and wished to see him show signs of having been in the fight; but she was not mad with him for not being wounded, as he seemed to intimate; that would be too ridiculous. She saw, too, that he was excessively amused at her embarrassment and pique; and while she could not make an open rupture with a person who had that very day marched out in a gray coat, to fight the Yankees, she could not forgive him for laughing so quietly at her expense. All things taken into consideration, she thought best to adopt an alternative he had seen her resort to before, and immediately showed signs of a fit of the pouts, which Major McCloud had strong fears might become chronic. This somewhat disturbed him, for though, as he described, in no personal danger during the day, he had suffered anxiety and distress, and was in no light mood at heart, in spite of his jesting. Major Anderson, too, was his intimate friend; and so sudden a death of a comrade

could not but affect his spirits. What man is there, that, at such a time does not want expressions of sympathy from a female friend? This habit of irritating the temper and sporting with the feelings of a young girl, almost a child, had sometimes a fascination for him, just as one might pelt a pet squirrel with nuts; but this evening, he would willingly have exchanged it, to hear her say, in sober earnest, "I have been anxious about you, today, and have prayed for your safety."

The opportunity was lost now for securing the kind words; but he hastened, before it was too late, to put a stop to the quarrel. "Let us make friends," he said; "your mother will soon call you in, and though you are not glad of my safety, I am in great anxiety to provide for yours, and must hear what precautions your father intends to take against the shot and shell we may expect tomorrow."

She gave her hand reluctantly, and led the way into the house, where Captain DeBlanc was repeating to Judge and Mrs. McRea the details they so much wished to hear, taking good care to place himself and his exploits very prominently into the foreground of the picture.

## CHAPTER II.

MARY McREA waked early next morning. The night, within the limits of the town, had been very quiet. The soldiers had been deepening and widening the trenches that the engineers had marked out some months before, but the sound of the spades and pickaxes did not disturb the stillness that pervaded the place. Mary looked at the rising sun from the window of her bedroom, which was in the third story of the house. The sky was cloudless and gave promise of a bright day. Before her toilet was completed, the sound of the fife and drum was heard in several directions, beating the *reveille* for the neighboring camps. This, she knew, had become the signal for the house-servants to commence their morning labors of sweeping, dusting, etc., below stairs; and as she occupied the dignified position of housekeeper *pro tem.*, without waking her sisters, she descended to the first floor. The duties of her office being by no means arduous were soon dispatched; they consisted of some one or two orders to the dining-room servant and maids, and while abiding their execution, she supplied herself with a book and a seat on the front gallery. The morning air, though cool, in comparison with the noonday sun which must succeed it, failed to invigorate and refresh her, as usual. The book, though one of her favorites, did not interest her, and yielding to an inert feeling of listlessness, it fell upon her lap, and her eyes wandered from the page and looked vacantly down the street.

Since the place had been garrisoned, this street, usually so quiet, presented numerous signs of camp life. At the corner, below the house, a trench had been dug to hold sharp-shooters, in case the enemy should attempt to storm. Small pieces of cannon were arranged to command the declivity which sloped to the river-bank, and all the streets of the town being fixed in the same manner, and stronger fortifications placed on the bank and surrounding hills, very little danger was apprehended from an attack by the river.

Few persons in the South and West are unacquainted with



the situation of Vicksburg. It presents from the river an extremely picturesque appearance, for its sight is a continual slope, and every part is seen from the front. The Mississippi River forms a peninsula in sweeping past; and to the north, one of the range of Walnut Hills, commonly known as Fort Hill (from the remains of an old Spanish fort in the locality), overlooks the town and completely commands the river. It is, from its natural position, extremely well fitted for fortification. Only guns were needed to make it invulnerable; but of this scarcity, the mass of the Federal troops, and even the citizens within the town, were ignorant, for in many places, large trees had been shaped, painted, and placed in position, to represent cannon; and for several months, passes to visit or inspect the batteries, to non-combatants, had been obstinately refused, and none but soldiers allowed to approach. The rifle-pits across the streets were by no means subject to such restrictions; and even now, while Mary McRea looked about her, her little brother sat among some creole soldiers, who were cooking their breakfast upon a bank of dirt, and from the talking and laughing going on, she surmised they were carrying on their somewhat stale joke, of trying to trade with him for one of his sisters. Willie had gone through with the same thing every day for some time; and, as their broken English grew more intelligible to his ears, he began to find out, from the quantity of sugar, oranges, bananas, or sweet potatoes they promised to pay, when they got home and made crops again, exactly in what estimation the young ladies were held. Sue was in great demand; next, came Mary, and Estelle; but to Willie's surprise, Mrs. Woodville, having several children, was at a discount. Sue, to whom the traffic became known, was very indignant, and wanted her mother to prohibit any such conversation in future; but the other ladies only laughed, and as the faces of the creoles became familiar, they learned each one to know her own admirer by sight. And no small amusement was created when Willie found, after some difficulty, a youth of some sixteen summers, with carrot hair and dirty finger-nails, who consented to pay a small amount of sweet potatoes for his sister Elizabeth, provided somebody else would take care of the children. Mary was so much amused by watching Willie imitate the soldiers, by sopping with a piece of corn-bread in the skillet that smoked before them, that she did not hear the

sound of approaching steps, and started, as a hand was laid upon her shoulder, and a voice sounded a cheerful "Good-morning" in her ear.

"Cousin Tom!" she exclaimed, in surprise.

"He, and no other," was Captain Dean's response.

"The very man for my purpose."

"What purpose?" said Captain Dean, as he seated himself on the door-step beside his cousin.

"I am not particularly well," said Mary, "and feel as if I needed a long walk; so I had about made up my mind to go out to Mr. Andrews's to breakfast, but hesitated about going so far from home alone. Now that you are here, the difficulty is removed; you can accompany me."

"How could we settle it with the old folks?" said Captain Dean. "Your pa is quite right in opposing you girls in walking about the street at such a time as this. I'm come now to urge him to dig a big hole in the side of Fort Hill, near our camp, and pack in his family *en masse*; for, do you know, the Yanks are in sight of Hoadly's battery; "indeed, I'm told, can be seen almost all round our fortifications. You had better stay at home, Mary; you don't know what time a murderous fire may be poured upon the town."

"I must try," said Mary, "to see my friend Lucy, before that time; don't smile in that provoking way. I tell you, my business is of great importance, — something we wish to do for the Washington-street Hospital, which was only founded yesterday, and is provided with no comforts at all. Besides, I want some of Mrs. Andrews's coffee; she still seasons her beverage with a little of the genuine article, while ma's has degenerated into unadulterated parched corn. I shall feel stimulated between the walk and the coffee, and will get rid of my headache, I know. I don't like to wake ma up, for she was late in going to her room last night; but I can leave a message for her with Willie, and I don't think she'll feel uneasy when she knows I'm with you. At any rate, we will be back in a couple of hours; and I don't think they will have finished breakfast here before that time."

Thus urged, her cousin consented, and taking her palmetto hat of home manufacture from the rack in the hall, the young lady was soon equipped.

"I don't know why I feel so stupid, so dull, this morning,"

she said, as they pursued their way. "See how blue my fingers are at the ends; my blood scarcely seems to circulate."

"Anxiety, or fear of the Yanks," suggested her cousin.

"Oh! not at all that kind of a feeling," said Mary, a little indignant at the charge of cowardice. "My throat is dry and my eyes annoy me; but tell me, what do the Federal troops appear to be doing?"

"I was with Colonel Cassady on the highest point of the line that we could reach," said Captain Dean, "soon after daylight. Through our glasses, they seemed, directly in front of Hoadly's battery, to be throwing up earthworks; farther round, they are undermining, I'm told."

"That would be terrible," said Mary, with a look of alarm, "for their purpose is, no doubt, to blow up our fortifications if they ever get near enough."

"That we can prevent."

"How so?"

"By undermining also, and commencing the blowing up business before them."

"Do you think our officers will take such precautions?"

"Undoubtedly."

"What kind of spirits are the men in, Tom?"

"My own men were never in better," answered Captain Dean. "You know, they have had nothing to do, but to sit down on the bank of the river, and wait till the Federal gunboats attempted to pass. The troops who were at Big Black and Baker's Creek, must, after suffering defeat and being obliged to retreat in such disorder, feel somewhat depressed; but their courage is reviving, for they are laughing, chattering, and digging away this morning as if it was the pleasantest work in life. I believe a brave defence will be made; but God only knows what the end of it will be."

"Oh!" exclaimed Mary, "I'll tell you what the end of it will be. General Johnson will collect a great army, four or five hundred thousand men, more or less."

"Principally less," laughed her cousin.

"Don't interrupt me, Tom, if you please, by making silly remarks. I say, a very large army; and, marching to our relief, he will communicate with General Pemberton, and the whole garrison will make a sally, so that General Grant, finding himself attacked both front and rear, cannot but surrender at discretion."

"This is all very plausible, Mary," said Tom. "By the powers, I wish you were secretary of war, or at least lieutenant-general; but please, be so good as to tell me where General Johnson is to get his men from."

"That I don't know; but don't you think General Lee will send him some from Virginia?"

"That I don't know. I am poorly posted about military affairs, with the exception of feeding and fighting my own men, as you well know. When I hear of a great Confederate victory, I try to get papers containing the particulars, and hand them about among my men; but if discouraging rumors are floating about, I don't inquire or talk too much about them. A soldier, and subordinate officer like myself, should try and become a machine, or as near one as possible. I am often disgusted with my messmates for finding fault with General Pemberton, and talking about mismanagement generally, in the presence of the men. It is thoughtless, nay more, it is wrong; for the poor fellows are 'in for the dining,' and some of them have families almost starving at home. Who can wonder, if distrust of their superiors once enters their minds, that they lose interest in the struggle altogether?"

"Oh, Tom," said Mary, "I wish all the young officers showed the same regard for their duty that you do. So few of them can forget themselves, or their own selfish ends, for the general good. Sometimes I think, when hearing them talk, that they voted for the inauguration of the war, to get a lieutenant's or captain's commission, and wish to keep it up that they may become majors or colonels. Papa thinks the feud between the colonel and lieutenant-colonel of the Twenty-fourth will do a great deal of harm. Think of their coming to a fisticuff in presence of the men, while the regiment was drawn up for dress-parade."

"It was indeed disgraceful," said Captain Dean; "and more so, from the fact, that several privates were at the very time in the guard-house for fighting."

"I can excuse a man," said Mary, "for being ambitious on a large scale; for I know that even personal ambition is, in strong characters, sometimes productive of public good. But to see a man criminate his superiors, as did Lieutenant Herman, from morning till night, till his complaints amounted to whining, that he might get for himself such a pitiful promotion, is disgusting."



"And the worst of it is," said her cousin, "that those who so eagerly seek preferment and responsibility among us are least worthy of it. In conversing with my brother officers, I notice that those who really understand our perilous position, and the magnitude of the struggle in which we are engaged, have much fewer suggestions to make and less fault to find than those empty-headed fools who see, in a revolution of eight millions of people, only a means of getting their names put into a newspaper puff, or being appointed to command a regiment, when they don't understand a military manœuvre. But why should we be astonished? Was it not just so at the beginning of the war? As a general thing, large slaveholders and men of property were opposed to extreme measures, and counselled moderation; while little, pitiful stump-orators and pothouse politicians who did not own a slave, and never expected to, shrieked continually for Southern rights and against the abolitionist of the North. But when our first reverses occurred, after the surrender of Forts Henry and Donnelson, the croakers and those who began to whisper submission, were these very men; while the slaveholders, feeling that the issue being once made, ought, both as a matter of interest and honor, to be sustained, sent their sons, and when feasible, went themselves into the army."

"But surely, Tom," said Mary, "the larger portion of the army must be acting from good motives."

"Indeed, I agree with you," he said; "and as a proof of it, I see my men eat food every day which is nauseating, even when they are sick, with comparative cheerfulness; and the poor fellows stand separation from their families in a manner which to a bach like myself looks positively heroic. Yes, there must be some very strong motive at heart to sustain them; and I believe, in spite of their backbiting and grumbling, they feel for their uniforms as I do for mine (and he glanced at his white linsey jacket, slashed with faded blue), an attachment which is not unmingled with pride."

"But, dear Tom," said Mary, "you have a higher source of pride than most of them. Is not the old white jacket entirely obscured by the covering of glory you won for yourself at Belmont and at Island Ten? But," she continued, as the smile passed from her lips, and a shudder ran through her frame, "I begin to understand the meaning of my dull feeling of this morning; for, 'twas but the foreshadow of a chill

which has caught me tight enough in its icy clutches now. I will have to insist, that you divide either the mantle of glory or the white jacket with *me*, for, indeed, I am very cold."

"Poor child," said her cousin, "you really are sick. I see it plain enough now. Here, take the white jacket," and he laid it over her shoulders; and as to the mantle of glory, if any lady, not my cousin, ever offers to divide it with me, I'll consider it a proposition, and accept her on the spot as my sweetheart."

Mary was by this time too sick to talk more, and regretted having left home.

"I'm too near Mr. Andrews's, to turn back now," she said; "and, besides, I'm still tempted by the coffee. But you must go back home and tell mamma that you have seen me safely in the house. Say I've only a common chill, and will return as soon as it passes off. And, Tom, be sure to tell her not to be uneasy about me, for they have a cave already dug here in the bank at the back of the house; and if the firing commences, I will go into it with the family, and stay till papa comes for me. Don't look so much disturbed, because you have to take the scolding for both; but take your jacket, and good-by, for I'm going into the house as fast as possible."

At the door, Mary was met by Lucy Andrews, who was an intimate friend, and had been a schoolmate but a short time before. One glance at her pale and haggard countenance told plainly of the two sleepless nights, and the daily and hourly terrors which had haunted her since the news of distant fighting had been made a reality by the distinct sound of cannon, the sight of soldiers in rapid retreat, and the harrowing groans of the wounded, which the jostling of dilapidated vehicles over rough roads had made audible, even within her father's house. Naturally of a nervous temperament, the cruelly exciting scenes that the last few days had brought before her, joined to frightful anticipations of what was yet to come, had almost unsettled her mind. She put her arms about Mary without speaking, and so agonized was the expression of her countenance, that her friend could not smile at her exaggerated fears, since they caused her to suffer so intensely.

"I feel very badly myself, Lucy," said Mary; "not so much from actual fear, as that I'm really sick. I've done a foolish thing in coming out here this morning, for I've been taken with a severe chill."

"Oh," exclaimed Lucy, "a chill is nothing at all. I've had a chill ever since the bad news came from the battle-field; but I would not mind it at all, if I could only get a moment's peace of mind. O Mary! I wish I was dead! I'm almost frantic whenever the gunboats begin to throw shell; and father tells me that the firing from the line, to which our house is so much exposed, will soon begin. Oh, what on earth will become of us all? Do you know, we stayed in our cave all last night, and mother is dreadfully cramped from it this morning. We've only come out now to eat ~~our~~ breakfast, and are going back directly afterwards. But you must go, too. I think, if you will stay with me, I can be more composed."

Mrs. Andrews was really glad to see Mary on Lucy's account.

"I cannot induce her either to eat or sleep," she said; "and am seriously afraid of a nervous fever. Talk to her cheerfully, my dear, and try to divert her mind, if you possibly can."

Poor Mary! she was far more in need of comfort herself just at the time, than fitted to bestow it on another. She sat down, however, and made an effort to do as she had been asked. She told Lucy of the poor boy who had lost both hearing and speech from fear, the morning of the battle, intending to draw a comparison between his state of mind and that of her friend, in such a manner as to make her laugh at its absurdity; but, in spite of herself, her style became so dolorous, and was so often interrupted by the chattering of her teeth, that her friends soon discovered her condition, and hurried her upstairs and to bed.

The usual bathing and steaming, so common in the South, and so much advocated by female nurses, was resorted to, and she was then left alone, after being recommended to sleep.

Half an hour afterwards, when breakfast was ready, Lucy entered the room on tiptoe, bringing the much-coveted cup of coffee, and approached the bed.

Mary sat upright at her command, and reached out for the cup; but, overcome with the effort, she clasped her burning forehead tightly with her hands, and sank back upon the pillow.

"This is no ordinary chill," she murmured. "I am sick, very sick."

And so it proved.

About noon, Mrs. Andrews sent a servant to Judge McRea's, requesting that some member of the family would come immediately out, as Mary had high fever, and could not return home.

Mary McRea was by no means a person of weak nerves; but the state of excitement in which she had been for several days, the dread of hearing the firing commence, and the natural depression caused by her physical condition, all conspired to unnerve her now. She lay all day without speaking, or taking the least notice of the kind attentions of her friends. She was not, however, entirely unconscious of what was passing about her, although she seemed to be so; and understood perfectly the arrangements agreed upon to provide for her safety, in case the Federals should begin the attack, which were, that she should be placed upon a lounge, lifted down-stairs, and then into the cave.

Most of the caves that the frightened citizens of Vicksburg were scooping in the surrounding hills, were just large enough to admit a small mattress, on which the family, be it large or small, huddled up together, in a way that was injurious alike to comfort and health. A neighbor of Mr. Andrews's, however (an eccentric man), had taken a fancy, without any particular reason, to make for a favorite daughter one that was both tasteful and commodious. It consisted of a hall, through which ran a line of earthen columns, opening into four chambers, containing furniture for bedrooms, dining-room, and parlor. The young lady's piano, books, and hot-house flowers were transported from his residence to ornament it; lamps were hung from the ceiling, burning all hours of the day and night; and nothing was left undone to make the damp, close air seem wholesome and cheerful, or to reconcile his darling to this subterranean retreat, which he deemed necessary to the preservation of her life.

Mr. Andrews had also been anxious to provide for the comfort of his family; but he doubted the sagacity of making excavations on so large a scale. An examination of the character of the soil made him fearful that thus undermining the bottom of the hill might make the top, particularly after the constant report of cannon began to jar it, cave in. He therefore contented himself with a much more moderate apartment, but one large enough to contain a good-sized bed and several chairs.

It was nine o'clock at night before Mrs. McRea for a moment left her daughter's bedside. About that time, she was much encouraged, for the wandering eye of the invalid became more quiet in its expression, and her breathing growing less

and less labored, she finally appeared to sleep. When she had induced her excellent hostess and Lucy to retire for the night, she lowered the lamp, and leaving the door ajar, went herself into the next room to take some rest. Mary, after a short and troubled slumber, awakened to renewed pain and to a sensation of burning and unquenchable thirst. Her prostrate condition prevented her from calling for aid; and sinking again to her former state, her fevered brain and parching throat created huge phantoms with which to inflame her imagination and terrify her heart. Then suddenly would come a calmer mood, as if to collect her scattered senses, and friendly forms and familiar voices would come for a moment from the medley of horrors, but only to prepare her for a more stunning blow.

In fancy, she visited her brother, who was camped with Lee's army on the Potomac. She saw him pacing back and forth on his weary sentinel's way; she felt for him a crushing languor and unwillingness to move; and still, the impetus of an unknown power, which, like the Wandering Jew, bid him *Onward!*

Then came up before her another loved one, who was stationed by the sea-coast. He sat upon a rock, close by the shore. The hot rays of the sun fell all around him on the parching shells and sand. His throat was sore with dryness, but the canteen that hung by his side was empty. The waves of the sea came swelling almost to his feet; but when he tasted the water, his consuming thirst was only accelerated.

"Water, water, everywhere, the very waves do shrink;  
Water, water, everywhere, but not a drop to drink."

"A change came o'er the spirit of her dream." She walked with her Cousin Tom by the bank of the river. Cheerfully they talked, as they had done a few hours before. They walked rapidly, for both were thirsty and anxious to reach the brink, that they might drink their fill of the fluid that was spread out so temptingly before them; but as they advanced, the stream receded. Faster and faster they followed, till at last, overcome with fatigue and disappointment, they sank down exhausted, and the river slowly disappeared from view. Then came a vision which she afterwards remembered, for it seemed to have prophetic significance.

She heard the sound of music and of many voices, like the rushing of the waves of the sea. Through a cloud of dust that rose from earth to sky, a multitude approached — horsemen and men on foot, women and children; the fair face of the European; the swarthy countenance of the Asiatic; and the jet-black skin and shiny teeth of the African. On, on, they came, with a swiftness and steadiness that seemed likely to crush her in their path; but just before they reached the place where she crouched, half dead with fear, the crowd divided, and upon nearer view, she saw upon one side human forms innumerable, clothed in Confederate uniform; and others, more numerous far, wearing the bright blue and gilt buttons of the Federals she so much dreaded but had never seen. Suddenly they paused. One, clad in dusky hues, erect and proud in manly beauty, came forward to do battle for his country and for all that his soul held dear. His strife with the champion of the enemy grew hotter and hotter, till both were covered with human gore. Then slowly rising in a cloud of deep blue, dotted with tongues of flame, the antagonist of her countryman towered above him. The gray form sank lower and lower, till he assumed a suppliant posture, offering his sword. The countenance of the Federal was dark and lowering, and as she watched him, the blue coat was changed to a tawny skin; horns sprang out from his temples; and a caudal appendage rose from his back, and stood threateningly over his head. He lifted his sword to strike; and the blow descending, shook heaven, earth, and sea. In the agony of her terror, Mary shrieked aloud. Her cry was echoed by Lucy Andrews from her own room, and a second afterwards, the whole house resounded with the alarm, "The firing has commenced! The firing has commenced! Quick! quick! to the cave!"

## CHAPTER III.

**C**AROLINE COURTENY went also, that morning, to breakfast with a friend. Hers had been an engagement of some days' standing; and though the aspect of affairs had changed considerably since it was made, she had coaxed her uncle into compliance with her desire to fulfil it; and seven o'clock found her at the gate, her broad palmetto hat (the only head-gear which was to be had for love or money within Confederate lines) in hand, waiting for Major Hoadly, who had agreed to act as her escort on the occasion. Punctual to time, the major arrived, and the two started off in fine spirits, and in very agreeable mood for conversation. While, however, they are getting through the mutual inquiries for health, etc., the uninteresting prelude to what sometimes proves to be an interesting conversation, I must take the opportunity to introduce my heroine more minutely to the reader. I do not claim for her regularity of features; neither can I enlarge upon the soft blue or the dazzling black of her eye; then, with all an author's partiality, I must admit that her nose was slightly *retrouse*. But I do say, that as Caroline Courteny started on her morning walk, a more charming figure is seldom seen. Her cheeks were rosy and soft as the down on a fully ripe peach; her form, clad in a dark-brown dress, fastened high upon her throat and round her wrists, was graceful and light as a fawn. Then the little hand and foot, so neatly encased in glove and shoe; the white apron, pinned so coquettishly across her swelling chest; and, lastly, the broad blue ribbon that encircled the crown of her hat, — all was prim, and arranged with scrupulous care; and who could have seen her without exclaiming, "She is, indeed, a lovely girl!"

Just as I have presented her to the reader, so she impressed Major Hoadly as they pursued their way. Another thing he noticed. Somebody had said in barracks that Miss Courteny's hair was not pretty; that it was too near red; but, as his eye lighted upon a wave that encircled a tiny ear, if there *was* a tinge of red, he forgave it; for in contrast, the delicate feature

seemed a sea-shell, mingling the pink of the coral with the transparency of the pearl. Could any human being, thought he, find fault with the color of those shreds of gold that set there so caressingly?

What a blessing it is to a young female to have an agreeable appearance! How little is known of a very young woman in general society, except how she looks! Now Caroline Courteny was an exception; for, not being a beauty in the general sense of the word, *she* did not trust everything to her looks. Heaven had endowed her with a mind that was by no means ordinary. She had keen perceptions, and a sense of the ridiculous that sometimes carried her beyond the strict bounds of propriety; but to the world she had one great deficiency — one that is considered unpardonable in a young lady — that is, no romance, no love of sentiment. Whether this deficiency was seeming or real, our story will prove. Whether she possessed the attractions for which I have given her credit, let the reader judge. Certain it is, they were not freely admitted by the world, for Caroline had reached the age of nineteen, and no man, as yet, had made a formal declaration of love to her. What excuse shall I make, then, for selecting one whose eyes were no blacker, or nose more aquiline, than others; who was neither learned like Lady Montague, nor saintly, like Cecilia of old; when beauties are as plenty as blackberries, authoresses as peas in their season, and one can have a female sermon, free of charge, preached just for the asking — and holding her up to the world to be admired? The face, figure, and costume of the young girl who stands, hat in hand, to be by me daguerreotyped on paper, is about what is met with in every fifth lass that ranges from sixteen to twenty-six years of age in this, or, perhaps, in every other civilized country. Yet, I claim for the presiding genius of my first romance something more. Is there not more than usual sprightliness in the glance of her eye? Is there not firmness and dignity in the expression of the mouth? Is there not an absence of all coquetry and affectation in the tone of the voice, indeed, the whole manner? And is this not — *this being* — a little different from other girls?

Caroline Courteny never fancied, sought, or bragged of conquests. Often I've seen her astonished look, as some matron expatiated on the victims of her girls. Often I've seen her smile of contempt, as some young friend held out the tempting bait of flattery to a man she neither loved nor respected, that

he might be caught in the trap of her charms, and his heart, when fairly entangled, displayed and tortured with savage joy, as an Indian would do the scalp of a fallen foe.

"If I really loved a man," she said, "my pride would induce me to conceal it from him. How, then, could I *feign* a passion for an object my heart would deem unworthy?"

The conversation of our heroine and her companion, as they went on together, turned naturally upon what she would do after the investment of the town. Her uncle, with several other gentlemen, had commenced to prepare a cave in the nearest part of Fort Hill. They were eagerly assisted by a company of soldiers (heavy artillerists), who, being stationed on the river-bank, had nothing to do but to sit idle and wait till the gunboats attempted to pass. Caroline objected strongly to going into a cave at all. Judge McRea, she knew, was afraid, on account of the delicate lungs of his wife, to venture on such a change of life, and had determined to try the chances with his entire family above ground. But Colonel Wilkerson was of a different opinion, and Caroline had to admit somewhat reluctantly to Major Hoadly, that her uncle insisted she should go into the cave some time before dark, and remain there during the night.

"We are to have very pleasant company," she said. "Mr. Slaughter, the chaplain of the Seventeenth, is not yet recovered sufficiently to return to his regiment, and will stay with us. Mr. and Mrs. Stickney, our rector and his wife, have engaged quarters; and General Lawrence will bring his daughter Kate."

"And if some of us poor fellows with shoulder-straps steal away from camp in the evening," said Major Hoadly, "how will we be received?"

"Oh, I have specially provided for that," she answered; "the caves do not join, but are dug in a straight line along the bank. My own is with Kate Lawrence; and uncle has promised to have a tent placed before the door, and make all necessary arrangements for company. We are very near Captain Dean's battery; but then, none of his company are ladies' men, and I doubt if we shall see them at all."

"That you certainly shall not say of the artillerists farther up on the hill," said Major H. "We find it utterly impossible to work our guns without the advice of the ladies."

"Lieutenant Beck," said Caroline, "gave us a glowing account of General Lowring's masterly retreat and escape

from the fate of the rest of Pemberton's army. How I long to see him! And how I *shall* see him come in with Johnson in triumph, not many days hence."

"I cannot at all sympathize with your admiration of General Lowring's conduct," said her interlocutor.

"How," she exclaimed, with indignation, "can you refuse to render honor where it is so justly due? He occupies a position which is proudly defiant; the Federals have not kept *him* in check a single day."

"Restrain your admiration," said Major Hoadly, "and look calmly at the facts of the case. General Lowring had special orders from General Pemberton (his superior officer) to retire, after the reverses of Big Black, into Vicksburg. Now, whether such orders were *wise*, or not, I cannot pretend to say; but it is a clear principle in military matters that orders should, under all circumstances, be obeyed. Tell me; what state of things would exist, if every subordinate officer should reason with himself as to whether this or that order were for the best? General Lowring, after receiving positive orders to march back into Vicksburg, withdrew his men, made a skilful retreat, I am willing to admit, and camped snugly in the valley of the Yazoo. I beg you will reflect what will be the consequence if such conduct become a precedent. There will be no end to the mischief that may accrue."

"I cannot argue with you," said Caroline, "about the principle involved; but the fact you must let me admire. Besides, that rigid discipline usual in armies, I cannot think it so necessary in this; for you know yourself, Major Hoadly, that our ranks are occupied by men of as much education and intelligence as the officers themselves can boast of having. Why, then, cannot a subordinate sometimes exercise his own judgment?"

"For the very reason you have given," was his answer. "I think General Lowring's conduct reprehensible in the extreme. What injury it will do to the country, God only knows! That many men in the ranks are more fit to command than the officers themselves, far be it from me to deny. But this very thing makes it more important that a soldier should act under orders, though he see their fallacy, nay, more, in some cases their absurdity."

"Do not consider that I am convinced, if I argue no longer," said Caroline, "for I must detain you here a moment. It will

not, I imagine, need much persuasion to induce you to enter where dwells the pretty Mrs. Lea."

"Why do you say so? I am not one of her victims," said her companion.

"Then it must be because you have not seen her; for Fanny Lea, besides her fortune of two hundred thousand, is irresistible. General Grant himself should seek to learn her secret, for she has taken the hearts of all the garrison by storm."

"Perhaps he thinks more of taking their bodies just at present. But by all means, let us enter, since you wish it."

The servant, in answer to their enquiries, said that Mrs. Lea had been riding with General Turner since sunrise; so Caroline had to leave a message with the *femme-de-chambre*, and continue her way.

Everybody remembers Mrs. Smith's breakfasts during the siege. Now, of all those breakfasts, she never served a more comfortable one than was placed before Major Hoadly and Caroline Courteny this morning. How delicious were the muffins, in those days when muffins were so scarce! How fragrant the coffee, when the unadulterated beverage was so seldom seen! Then, how imposing was the figure, and how sweet the smile, of good Mrs. Smith, while she dispensed her dainties. Colonel Wilkerson had said, one day, "I still retain a childish idea that a good woman must be a little woman. My mother was small; so is Virginia, my wife; and you, Mrs. Woodville; and when I see Mrs. Smith handing toast about to the poor soldiers in a hospital, or pouring out tea for a thirsty visitor, in spite of her weighing a hundred and eighty pounds, she don't to me look bigger than a teapot." Colonel W., as the reader may suppose from the above remark, was fond of his joke, and furthermore, had a talent for joking. No more suitable time to introduce him than the present; for there he was, seated, as Caroline entered the room, at the side of Mrs. Smith's breakfast-table, and already provided with coffee, muffins, and ham.

Colonel W. had not been an early advocate of the war. He belonged to that school of politicians who contemplated the separation of the two sections, *North* and *South*, with the greatest reluctance. His parents were from New York, but, by an accidental residence of his mother in Maryland, he was himself a native of that state. At eighteen years of age, his health became delicate to such an extent, that his friends urged extremely a remove to Mississippi. In the belief that he

would never see them again, he set out for the South; but scarcely had he breathed the air of his adopted state a fortnight, ere a marked change for the better was visible, and health, and not only health, but happiness, crowded upon him. Happiness, bright and true; that which alone is true — domestic happiness. His wife, whose beauty, intellect, and purity of heart he regarded with a feeling little short of idolatry, was a Mississippian, and his children were nurtured in the old homestead where she was born. He came to the state poor and without influential friends; but his genius at the bar, and his cheerful temperament in society, soon gained for him all that a man could wish, and in return for so much given, — for health, happiness, and success, — he loved the section he had adopted with an intensity which is not often seen.

In the convention, he voted against secession, but when war was declared, was one of the first to volunteer. He served a laborious campaign on the Potomac, and finally came home, after the battle of "Seven Pines," mutilated by the loss of an arm. At the time of the accident, he said, while viewing his bleeding stump, "But for my wife and little ones, I would rather have died." Reaction, however, soon took place, and his cheerful temper returned. Upon his recovery to health, he was elected to the office of judge of the criminal court; and at this time, when his enthusiastic temper longed so much to take part in the fray, he had to content himself with a *bonmot*, instead of a thrust with his sword.

No sooner had Caroline seated herself beside him at table, than he whispered something in her ear which caused her to blush violently. For, as next to loving his wife, teasing his niece was what afforded him most pleasure in the world. He did not fail to interpret her having gone out of her way to call upon Mrs. Lea as a mere pretext for prolonging her walk with the handsome major, and told her so. Caroline often said she would be more at home in society, and make a better appearance altogether, if her uncle would just let her alone; yet she heartily returned his affection, and though naturally wilful to a fault, was in most things guided by his advice.

The shaking of hands, as the breakfast-party broke up, was rather more protracted than usual, for Colonel Wilkerson expressed his unwillingness that Caroline should come so far from home again till the movements of the Federals were more decidedly known.



Mrs. Smith kissed and took her in her arms.

"Don't be imprudent, child," she said, "when the firing commences, but stay closely in your cave. Good-by, and God bless you."

Major Hoadly went (after desiring permission to see Caroline again in the evening) to his quarters by another street; and Colonel Wilkerson walked home with his niece.

At the door of his residence, a private soldier (a rough fellow and badly dressed) was waiting to speak to Colonel Wilkerson.

"Be you," he said, "colonel or judge?"

"My good man," was the answer, "I have been both, but at present am more judge than colonel."

"Then won't you be after coming with me," said the man, with broad Irish brogue, "for they are wanting your honor badly down at the barracks."

"They would be more likely to want a colonel there than a judge; perhaps I'm not the person you seek."

"Faith," said he, "it's a judge they want, not a colonel, and your honor is the man."

"Who sent you for me, Pat?" said Judge Wilkerson.

"Faith, and it was Captain Alexander that sent me," said Pat; "and he says, 'Patrick,' says he to me, 'go up to the house with the gallery in front, and speak to the gentleman who has but one arm, for,' says he to me, 'he's got the sense in his head, and can see us all out of this trouble.'"

"Then I am to infer that both yourself and Captain Alexander are in trouble. But why did not the captain come to me himself?"

"And it is himself that would be here," said Pat, "except that he is under arrest."

"In that case, I follow you, my man," said the judge; and they set off together.

Pat led the way through a part of the town called Springfield, and they soon gained the valley between the city graveyard and Fort Hill. The appearance presented by this locality today is very different from what it was on this morning in May, 1863. Standing on Fort Hill now, and looking into the valley below, nothing is to be seen (but the little bayou winding its sluggish course) to interrupt the grass which covers the side of the hill, carpets the ravine, and rises with a gentle slope to the environs of the town, save, here and there,

a solitary hut, the abode of some shiftless free negro, whose half-dozen chickens and small patch of sweet potatoes prevents alike the fear of starvation and the disposition to work.

On this morning, ere Colonel Wilkerson's steps had left the town lots behind him, his way led through piles of baggage-wagons, camp-fires, tents, and all the necessary bustle and confusion attendant upon military life. Piloted by Pat, he wound through the quarters of this and that regiment and company, and finally stopped at a tent before which paced a tall sentinel, whistling the "Bonny Blue Flag." Inside of the tent, playing a sprightly game of euchre, and regaling themselves ever and anon with corn-beer, sat four young officers round a bass drum, which was answering the purpose of a table for the cards and glasses.

"Damn it, man," said a voice, which reached Judge Wilkerson's ear, "don't take the matter so much to heart; your quarters are comfortable enough, just like any other tent, save its ugly name of the guard-house."

"Now, cease your jesting, Hamilton," was answered from within. "It is not in your crazy pate to understand the circumstances that make my situation so deuced disagreeable, or the many reasons I have for wishing to get out of it."

"Devil a bit do I care," said Captain Hamilton, "to take a hand in that digging that you seem to have such a yearning for; let them have the spade and pickaxe work all to themselves say I."

"But, my good fellow, my honor! my honor! Who will excuse me, when it is known that I've forgotten every other feeling but selfish anger in this matter?"

"Honor, go to the devil!" answered his friend. "I, too, started out for honor, and haven't I found it with a vengeance? It came to me in the shape of a ball in my left shoulder; a disagreeable, dirty bed in a hospital for six weeks; and a recovery just in time to learn that my property was swept away as if by the winds, the cotton burned by the Confederates, and the negroes stolen by the Yankees. And now, though, I'm here as unjustly as yourself, and, if I live, I'll make old Clark repent his impudence and tyranny. Still, I don't mind being under arrest, and I don't care a damn if I'm kept so till after the siege; but hallo, Pat! where is the gentleman you went after?"

"And he's here," said Pat; "and a gentleman, every inch of him, for he didn't keep me waiting a moment."

Thus introduced, Judge Wilkerson entered. The person who accosted him first was named by Captain Hamilton as Captain Alexander. He stepped forward, endeavoring to place a camp-stool comfortably for the visitor, and then named respectively the other two occupants of the tent as Captain St. George and Lieutenant Seymour.

Captain Alexander was a tall, fine-looking man, with black hair and whiskers. Captain Hamilton, on the contrary, was of fair complexion, with locks of brownish tint. He was one of those men who retain, long after maturity, an extremely youthful appearance. In his eye there was a mixture of cool daring, and at the same time, boyish glee; and his snow-white throat, exposed to view by his unbuttoned shirt-collar, reminded one strongly of the pictures of Byron. Lieutenant Seymour ought to be described because he has been mentioned, but, as his only striking characteristic through life was being able to dispose of more tobacco than anybody else, it must alone serve to identify him on this occasion. Of Captain St. George's appearance, it is hardly necessary to speak, for who of all the garrison will ever forget his airs and graces, or how entirely he was entitled to his well-known appellation of Georgianna?

"I am half ashamed, Judge Wilkerson," said Captain Alexander, "to explain to you the silly business for which I am under arrest, just at a time when every good soldier should be hard at work."

"It does not occur to me that you have been *idle*," said the judge, as he glanced at the jug and the scattered pack of cards.

"For that I cry your mercy," said Captain Hamilton. "We were dying of *ennui*, and had to resort to the cards for pastime and for the beer; if sack and sugar be a fault, God help the wicked."

"Far be it from me, Captain Hamilton," said Judge Wilkerson, "to discourage a game of euchre; and as for the beer, I cannot tell whether it is a good thing or a bad, till, for want of something stronger, I've tasted it."

"Spoken like a man!" cried the captain, as he handed a glass; "but, when one thinks of the good old Cognac of

former days, this has an insipidity, which carries a fellow back to the nursery, and reminds him very strongly of pap."

"Not so bad," said the judge, as he sipped; "not so bad, to be fed on the milk of the word, when strong meat cannot be had."

"When I was in the navy," lisped Captain St. George, "I once made a deuced good bargain in champagne."

"Hold!" cried Hamilton; "St. George is about to favor us with his favorite story *again*. Now, if we were in the open air, and could run away, it might not make so much difference; but here in a close tent, with no means of escape, never! never!"

"I say, Hamilton," said St. George, "I think you are very rude. Since I never saw this gentleman before, *he* cannot possibly know what a fine bargain I made in wine."

"What the devil does he care?" was again vociferated; "we sent for him to get us out of this scrape, and not to be bored to death with your insipid yarns."

Captain St. George waxed wroth, and laid his hand upon his sword. Hamilton regarded him with a careless smile, while Captain Alexander, mortified that Judge Wilkerson should witness such a scene, whispered to his friend, "By heaven, Hamilton! it is hard to tell which of you is the biggest fool of the two; why do you irritate the ninny, when we have other matters to talk about?"

Thus rebuked, Captain Hamilton returned to a more serious mood, and said:—

"Perhaps I am wrong, St. George. Make friends, my good fellow. I only interrupted you, because I thought Judge Wilkerson's time might be valuable."

But Captain St. George was not to be conciliated. He relapsed into a fit of the sulks, and taking his hat, said, "I think I had better go elsewhere, since I can't be treated with politeness here." Rising to return his parting salutation, Judge Wilkerson demurely said that he regretted the press of business that prevented his longer enjoyment of Captain St. George's society, and hoped ere long to see him again, and to hear the end of the story.

"*That* you shall certainly do," said St. George. "Come to my quarters as soon as possible; I like you, I've taken a great fancy to you; you remind me so much of a man I once knew in the navy."



"Good heaven!" said Hamilton, as he disappeared; "what a pity you, and all the jolly fellows who kept company with you, were not sent by a Federal broadside to the bottom of the briny deep, to the relief of all landsharks."

"For shame, Hamilton; you drive the fellow to frenzy," said Captain Alexander. "I am sorry, Judge Wilkerson, that you should have met him here at all this morning."

"On the contrary," said Judge Wilkerson, no longer able to control his laughter, "I find him a delightful fellow; I'll call this evening, and hear the end of his story."

"No," said Hamilton, "you'll not hear the end of it, for though we have belonged to the same brigade for a year, and, during that time, I've heard him commence it full three hundred and sixty-five times, it never comes to an end; and never will, I dare be sworn."

"Nevertheless," said the judge, "some rainy day, I will try my luck at it, and probably he my *patience*. But, may I be informed, gentlemen, in what way I can serve you this morning?"

"It is a long story," answered Captain Alexander, "and I beg you will excuse me if I begin at the beginning. With General Lucius Clark's general character, I presume you are somewhat acquainted. He is, and justly so, most unpopular with his men; indeed, they regard him with a feeling which amounts almost to execration. From the time my company was placed in his regiment, he evinced a particular dislike for me, which I returned with interest, I can assure you; but, being a subordinate officer, and, not wishing to set a bad example to the men, I studiously avoided any open rupture with him. About two months ago, the brother of the man Pat, whom we sent in quest of you, was detailed from my company, and placed at the quarters of General Clark, ostensibly to act as orderly, but Mrs. Clark, soon after, finding herself short of servants, commenced first by asking Barny (who is a lad of very obliging, though of quick temper,) to take her little boy riding on a small Shetland pony. For several days, Barny readily consented, and taking the bridle of the pony, led it about the yard, and sometimes a short distance down the street. Finding the lad quite biddable, Mrs. Clark soon determined to have things all her own way; and from first asking as a favor, and afterwards exacting as a right, one service and another, she finally succeeded in con-

verting one of the finest soldiers in the regiment into a common household drudge. Barny was keenly alive to this injustice, and also to the ridicule of his companions, who taunted him continually with his servile occupations, and came several times to me, begging that I would speak to the general in his behalf. I was very reluctant to do so, but finally was overcome by his entreaties, and going to General Clark, and avoiding to attach any blame to Mrs. Clark, indeed, scarcely mentioning her name, I made an appeal in terms as respectful as I possibly could. General Clark answered me with threats and oaths, and I quickly left his presence, fearing to lose my self-control, and say something that might place me in his power.

"Things continued in this fix till just before we were all ordered down to the neighborhood of the Grand Gulf to oppose the landing of General Grant. Barny sent me a message one morning, to say he had unfortunately had some altercation with Mrs. Clark's child, in which that lady warmly took part, and the end of it was that the general continued to consider it a military offence, and had him snugly lodged in the guard-house. I was about setting off on the march at the time, and could not spare one moment to think of the business. Yesterday evening, however, soon after we entered the town, poor Pat met me in great distress. He said his brother had now been kept in confinement ten days, and had in the meantime been attacked, and was suffering still, with a violent camp disorder. I came to see him immediately, and I cannot better describe to you his condition than by showing you the poor boy himself." So saying, he lifted a curtain that divided the tent into two parts, and displayed to view a poor young Irishman, who lay on a cot, very pale and evidently suffering.

"After trying in vain to get some third party to go in Barny's behalf to General Clark, I determined to speak to him again myself, for, though I was told application had been made to him, either to send the prisoner to the hospital or to allow him medical attention in his tent, without avail, I still thought he must be ignorant of the *extent* of the outrage that was going on. In this determination, I left Barny's tent, and meeting Hamilton on my way, I took his arm, and we walked on together talking, not of this business of the prisoner, but of military matters in general. After some hasty expressions about Pemberton as a general, he ended by saying, that, for

his part, he thought Vicksburg had gone up the spout. Turning round at the gate, we found we had been quickly followed by General Clark, and thinking it a good time to speak to him, I did so in a strong manner, but one that I am sure was not impertinent. Clark now lost all regard for decency, and ended by swearing that the Irish dog should *rot* in the guard-house. He used expressions which no man can brook from another. I retorted angrily, the more so, as a crowd of soldiers had gathered round, and I was more irritated at being so insulted in the presence of others. To make a long story short, we swapped the lie and other courteous epithets, till, finally overcome with passion, he screamed that I should consider myself under arrest, and repair to my quarters immediately.

"Now, it so happened, judge (and I hope, fortunately for me), that I had no quarters. Before I left town to oppose the landing of the Federals, I had been for some time in a tent, but yesterday, our baggage was all captured, so that, like Noah's dove, I had not where to rest my head; and Hamilton was in the same condition. I, therefore, as soon as I was cooler, sent to acquaint General Clark with the fact. His answer was returned by a sergeant, accompanied by a squad of men. The sergeant handed me a note, containing these words, 'Get to the guard-house, and stay with the Irishman you seem to regard as a brother.' The same messenger had also orders to arrest Captain Hamilton, who was directed to keep me company till a court-martial could be arranged to try him for using the expression, 'Vicksburg has, in my opinion, gone up the spout.' We found, then, that the miserable rascal had been eavesdropping, and intended to make use of a private conversation.

"Now, sir, we can but draw our own inferences. Clark is no fool, and well knows that he has far exceeded his authority, in attempting to keep officers in close confinement, and heap such gross insults upon them in a public and unprovoked manner. If he expects such unscrupulous abuse of his petty power to be passed over, on account of the confusion that exists in the army at present, he has mistaken his men. We might have resisted the order, and very little blame could have been attached to us for doing so; a single word or look to my company, and the guns of his sergeant and squad would have been broken to pieces over their own heads. But,

since he has arranged the noose so beautifully for his own neck, we chose rather to come and go to work to visit his tyranny and oppression, as severely upon him as circumstances, time, and mature deliberation will permit. What is your advice as to the preliminaries of a legal prosecution? Let us know our most available mode of redress."

Judge Wilkerson, soon after, left the tent. He had fully sympathized with the indignation of the young officers; and was resolved to proceed to extreme measures against Clark in their behalf.

Passing through the camp, however, he met General Turner (who will again appear in our story), and explained the matter which had engaged his attention for the last hour, expecting to find a warm co-operator in his prosecution. To his surprise, General Turner advised conciliatory measures alone.

"Consider, judge," he said, "the circumstances in which we are at present placed. This is no time to expose bad conduct in high places. Let me, rather, go to General Clark, and ask as a favor what, I admit, in quieter times, might be demanded as a right. Should he refuse, I shall then threaten him with exposure;" and, scarcely waiting for permission, he hurried off, saying, that Judge Wilkerson should hear the result of his efforts immediately.

## CHAPTER IV.

THE third time Caroline Courteny was called by her uncle, she came downstairs, ready to start on her way to the cave. The judge had been to the hill during the day, and given such directions as he thought best for the convenience and safety of his niece; and her maid Lizzy had gone in advance, carrying her young mistress's *robe de chambre* and dressing-case.

Carrie had expected Major Hoadly to bear her company in her walk to the grotto (as she had named it), but the sun was setting, and her uncle insisted she should wait no longer.

The place selected by General Lawrence for the den (as he had named it) was not far from the valley in which Judge Wilkerson had visited the young officers during the morning, but they gained it by the open road, after crossing a bridge which spanned the bayou.

The evening was clear and delightful; rather cooler (as had been the whole spring) than was common in Mississippi during the month of May. It would be hard for most females to realize with how little emotion Caroline walked amid baggage-wagons and camp-fires, and even touched with her skirts, on either side, the grim form of the hoarse-sounding cannon; but for a year, Vicksburg had been garrisoned, and even before that time, the railroad depot had been the scene of companies and regiments passing to and fro: and when they were delayed a few days, and had to improvise a camp, it was a common thing for ladies and gentlemen to walk among them, and to distribute vegetables, fruit, and other delicacies to eat.

Caroline, therefore, walked with her uncle through the camp to the extremity of the valley, without feeling any particular awkwardness. She was not entirely unconscious of the admiration she attracted among the soldiers; but that admiration was expressed in a manner that was not likely to abash her or to wound her delicacy.

As she approached the line of caves, the prospect both sur-

prised and delighted her. Hurried as had been the work, the rubbish was all cleared away; and sods of grass were placed, for some distance round, with the smoothness and regularity of a permanent sward. Three circular terraces were in this way arranged, to ascend to the doors of the caves, five in number. Before the middle one was a tent, of large dimensions, furnished with tables and chairs; and at the foot of the terraces, attached to a long pole, waved a handsome Confederate flag. As Caroline approached, Kate Lawrence descended to receive her; and a band of musicians, stationed in the distance, played a cheerful air. Caroline was delighted.

"To whom," she said, "are we indebted for this charming reception?"

"I consider myself," said Miss Lawrence, "indebted to you; for Major Hoadly, they tell me, superintended the finishing touches and furnished the music. The band had orders to play, as each lady approached; but I learn, that this particular air was reserved for Miss Courteny's arrival."

Caroline blushed, for it was an air Major Hoadly knew she particularly admired.

"But come, and look into the caves," said Kate. "Mrs. Stickny is here, and is putting her baby to bed."

The girls went, one after another, into every cave. The first two were occupied by officers having sick furloughs, the centre one was appropriated to their own use, the fourth to Judge Wilkerson, and the fifth and last to Mr. and Mrs. Stickny.

Mrs. Stickny was suffering great uneasiness on account of her children. Her husband was rector of the Episcopal church, and had stayed in town longer than was prudent, because a portion of his congregation still remained. He learned, when it was too late, the danger to which his family would be exposed; and had asked of General Lawrence permission to place his wife and children somewhere in the valley, near his quarters, thinking it was as safe a place as he could find.

Caroline and Kate talked cheerfully to the young mother, and assisted her in undressing the little ones and hushing them to sleep. They then returned to their own tent, where Lizzy had lighted a lamp and put a pack of cards on the table. The scene below them pleased the young girls, and they stood at the door of the tent, with their arms around each other, watching the smoke curl up from the fires where

the soldiers cooked their evening meal; the jaded mules and horses, searching along the hill (and generally in vain) for a few blades of grass; and the officers, riding about from place to place, giving and receiving orders.

"Where is uncle, Lizzy," asked Caroline.

"Stepped down to the camp, Miss Carrie, and said he would be back in a moment."

Caroline laughed.

"I wonder," she said, "he was not afraid to leave me, even for this short time, for fear of my running home again. All day long, I've been trying to persuade him not to force me into a cave, while he has been just as persistent that I should come. If I had anticipated such quarters as this, I should have given him no trouble. It is certainly no hardship to stay here, particularly if we have pleasant company, and I'll lay a wager uncle will bring us some when he returns."

And so he did. He entered, soon after, accompanied by Captain Alexander, Captain Hamilton, Major Hoadly, and others, and in a short time, the company divided according to their several inclinations; some of them promenading back and forth upon the greensward, and others sitting down to cards.

Caroline chose to walk with Major Hoadly, that she might thank him for the trouble he had taken to give pleasure to herself and her friend, by providing them with music. Now it is likely that the reader thinks, he or she has found in these two a couple of lovers; but not so. If I have in any way intimated the thing, mine be the blame; for Caroline knew that Major Hoadly, though attentive to herself, very much preferred the charming daughter of Mr. W. Why then, you ask, should she blush because he remembered her favorite airs. In the first place, a lady may blush without giving a reason for it; but I will be liberal, and tell that it was because her uncle had a malicious way of intimating that she had quite a weakness for the gallant major herself.

As they walked back and forth before the doors of the caves, Caroline debated with herself whether or no she should mention to Major Hoadly something that was on her mind. But as she took some time to determine, we must here make a digression and account for the appearance of Captains Alexander and Hamilton, who were so lately left in "durance vile."

General Turner went, directly after his talk with Judge Wil-

kerson, to General Clark. Clark had some reputation for courage; but that he knew when and to whom to display it, General Turner had reason to believe. He therefore told him plainly, that an *expose* of his course to two subordinate officers would by no means result to his credit as a commander, and made such impression, that he was not only charged with orders to set the young men at liberty, and to send Barny to the hospital, but with a message from General Clark, expressing regret that he should have so completely given way to his anger in the morning. The news of his release was a great relief to Alexander, who started immediately *en route* for the trenches, stopping only for a moment to pay his respects to Judge Wilkerson and Miss Courteny. Hamilton, less eager to go to work, determined to spend the evening in some more agreeable way, and not to report for duty till next morning.

Now, as we have said before, Caroline had something on her mind — it was this: During the day, and the night before, and the day before that, she had asked herself continually, "Can I be of no use at such a time as this? Uncle, and indeed every one who speaks to me and of me, have only one idea, and that is, to take care of me. Why did Heaven give me a person so frail? I feel that my heart is strong within me to suffer with and for the soldiers. They won't let me go to the hospitals, because they are now so dirty, and the scenes of suffering so shocking for a young woman to behold. The linen that was sent me for making lint was finished last night before nine o'clock, and all the sewing Lizzy can do without any trouble. Am I to sit idle all this time, when I am so anxious to work? How many women have performed wonderful things without half the opportunity that is offered me now, and yet, I am so afraid of ridicule, I have not dared to mention what I feel, even to uncle."

Thus thought Caroline, but still her tongue refused to speak of one little scheme which she had thought of and longed to mature. If she could only make up her mind to mention it to somebody, no matter who, and get a little word of encouragement, how happy she would be! But no! not to Major Hoadly, because he was a young man; so it must be put off for some future time. While she reasoned with herself, she was abstracted, and seemed to listen to the music which played at intervals from the top of the hill. Captain Alexander claimed her attention to say "Good-evening," ere he took his leave

and her uncle was calling her from within to join the card-players.

"Let me see you as often as your duty will permit, Captain Alexander," she said, as she entered the house in obedience to her uncle's summons.

Alexander mounted his horse and started up the hill at a rapid pace. In order to reach the summit, he had to make a *detour* of some yards, and as his horse slackened his speed after gaining the eminence, something on the ground riveted his attention. He stopped a moment, looked intently on the grass, and finally dismounted. Standing still and keeping his eyes bent intently down, for some moments he remained, then mounting again, rode quickly away. The last words of Caroline sounded in his ears: "Let me see you as often as your duty will permit." How often had pleasure been held tempting before him on the same conditions. Should I take her at her word, and come only when duty would permit, she would see me seldom enough in good sooth, he mused.

Captain Alexander had turned into the long street that divides Springfield from the lower part of the town. He had now traversed three or four squares. Was it caprice that made him rein in his horse, turn back as quickly as he came, and stand again upon the same spot where he had before dismounted? This time, he stayed longer, and the cause of his uneasiness or curiosity could be discerned. He examined closely a small crack he had discovered in the earth. It took a zigzag course across the top of the hill, and disappeared in the grass. It was very small, hardly two inches in width, but the question that presented itself to him was, Is it old or newly made? He bent down, and by the moonlight carefully examined the earth. He hesitated what to do. Should he call Judge Wilkerson and consult as to whether there was danger for those below? He remembered the anxiety it would cause the ladies—to the clergyman and his wife. He had reason to think, from all he heard, that the firing would commence before morning; what if he should send them forth by an imaginary danger, back to their homes, where they might encounter a real one? A moment more, and his resolution was taken. He leaped upon his horse, and this time steadily pursued his way till he reached the southwest part of the line of fortifications, where his company had been stationed while he was under arrest. He found the men working with interest

and industry. They had been through the whole campaign since the landing of Grant, and had suffered in the three battles considerable loss. He had noticed in them, during the last engagement (Big Black), a languor and want of spirit, which pained him to the heart. He frequently urged them to the charge, but in vain, and at the command to retreat, none of that mortification and dissatisfaction was expressed he had so often heard from them before. Once within the rifle-pits, however, and their drooping courage began to revive.

"Hello," cried one; "there is our captain come back again."

"Three cheers," cried another, "for brave Captain Alexander!"

"And bad luck," chimed in Pat, "to the man that sent him away from us!"

"What are you after, my brave men?" said the captain, springing from his horse and throwing the bridle over his neck.

"Making graves for the Yanks!"

"Getting ready to send them to hell!"

"Making a hornet's nest!" was answered from all sides.

"If that is your work," said the captain, "just count me in;" and seizing a spade, he set to work like the rest of them.

It took pretty industrious digging that night to put the town in anything like a state of defence, for the engineers had done nothing but survey and mark out the line, and it was left to the men to widen and deepen the trenches so as to afford themselves any protection at all.

Words of encouragement the soldiers spoke to each other; officers, too, worked on with hearty good-will and talked with a cheerfulness they could scarcely feel.

The relief was to come at twelve o'clock, and Alexander debated with himself as to where he could find a quiet place to rest a few hours before daylight. The most convenient way would be to take the blanket from under his saddle, and lay upon the ground, as he had often done before; but a certain uneasiness of mind impelled him to go back to the camp at the foot of Fort Hill, and examine for the third time the place where the grass parted on the top of the caves. This, he finally determined to do; and the half-hours began to seem long that must pass ere Lieutenant Seymour would come with his detachment of men.

Meanwhile, things passed merrily at the cave. Such of the officers as were off duty, seeing bright lights burning within the tents, and the graceful forms of females, sometimes promenading and sometimes seated at cards or books, did not fail to stop in passing; and even quiet Captain Dean, who seldom spoke to any lady except his cousins, walked in front of the terraces, ostensibly to look at the Confederate flag, but having done so, thought it no crime to take a peep at the ladies. "If I did not look so confoundedly shabby," said he to himself, "I think I'd go in, not to pay a visit, for I don't like ladies' society, but to offer Judge Wilkerson some fish that my men have promised to catch for me tomorrow. It would be horrible if the women and children here should have to eat that beef that a man and a soldier like myself can hardly bring himself to swallow."

"How good in you, uncle," said Caroline, "to send here the books you know I love so well. Here is Tennyson's 'Maud,' 'Macaulay's Essays,' 'The Initials,' my bethumbed copy of 'Corinne;' and oh! the very book I feared had been forgotten, Ware's 'Zenobia.' Tell me, Mr. Stickney; I saw you looking over the book just now, what do you think of it?—for myself, I've been much interested while reading it, for its style is so unlike most romances."

"But," said Hamilton, "you don't surely think the delineation of female character good?"

"I never thought much about that," said Caroline, "till last night, when I dreamed of Grant's marching into town at the head of the Federal army; and I think now I have some conception of the feelings of Queen Zenobia while bound with heavy gold chains to the triumphal chariot of Aurelian. But, Mr. Stickney, I am anxious to hear your opinion of the book; what is it?"

Thus encouraged, the rector came forward. He had sat with his wife, during the early part of the evening, by the bedside of their children—both together they had commended them to God—but as the cheerful voice of Caroline and her companions sounded on his ear, he began to feel more light-hearted, and said, "Maggie, I think I'll go out and talk with Judge Wilkerson about our domestic arrangements; it will probably be late before we can get any breakfast tomorrow, and I should not at all like that, on account of yourself and the children."

In making this last clause to the sentence, the rector lost sight of the fact that he played himself a pretty good knife and fork, and when Caroline invited him to a literary discussion, he forgot farther that he had a definite object in coming out of his cave, but sat down and began to talk. Now the rector was an eloquent declaimer; if his poetry was *not* poetry, his sermons certainly were, and it was a treat to hear him talk, for he was well informed on almost all subjects. But the rector had his faults as a conversationist. Judge Wilkerson had said, "I don't like a monopoly; it is a bad thing in trade; and I can't say I exactly fancy it in conversation." And this remark referred very well to Mr. Stickney's colloquial powers, for when he commenced, it was difficult for anybody else to get in a single word. Now most gentlemen of his cloth would have thought it a fine opportunity (since the cards had just been distributed for four-handed euchre) to make a few remarks on the uncertainty of life and the folly of wasting the little of it that probably remained to each individual around the table, in this frivolous, if not sinful, occupation.

Not so the rector. As a theologian, he was emphatically liberal; and while he constantly invited his flock to partake of the sacraments of the church and the comforts of religion, he seldom threatened them with hell-fire; in short, to use Judge Wilkerson's expression, he burned brimstone very moderately, and was not in the habit (as so many preachers are) of using his pulpit as a means of insulting his congregation by calling them dreadful hypocrites, perjured sinners, and masses of wounds, bruises, and putrifying sores, when there was probably not a case of scrofula within the sound of his voice.

On this occasion, having been quiet most of the day, from anxiety for his wife and children, the relaxation was perfectly frightful. Caroline, who had not quite finished her book, wished to ask a question about the situation of the ancient city of Palmyra. She might as well have tried to stem the current of the Mississippi in its rolling course, as stop for a moment the flow of the rector's conversation. He talked of ancient history, not reflecting that most of his audience had not in their researches gone as far back as the Christian era; he talked of ancient geography, regardless of the fact that several of his hearers had never traced on the map anything east of the straits of the Golden Horn; he recited a Latin



poem, though the only classical scholar in the tent was deaf; and began, as the clock struck eleven, and the card-players still held before them their unplayed hands, a mathematical calculation of the chances of the game of euchre (though he had not learned it in Arkansas), when the first gun sounded, and the whole party jumped up from the table and rushed pell-mell out of the tent, to see whether it came from the mortar-boats or the line.

"Good God!" said Hamilton, in the midst of the confusion and alarm, "what a fortunate circumstance for those people not disposed to listen all night."

The prolonged sound of artillery made it now evident that the Federals had opened on the town. The faces of the young girls were pale, but more with excitement than alarm. They withstood, for some time, the entreaties of the gentlemen that they should retire into their cave; but after going again to talk to Mrs. Stickny, and finding that she too advised it, they sat within, so as to be sufficiently sheltered, but at the same time able to converse with those outside. Thus things continued till the still small hours, when the gentlemen began to disperse, and the ladies agreed to go to bed.

"This is not at all disagreeable, Carrie," said Kate, as they lowered the curtain at the door of the cave and prepared to don their dressing-gowns.

"On the contrary," said Caroline, "I like it; but, dear me! listen how the guns roar, the noise is becoming positively frightful. This point must be nearer the line than we imagined. I thought Major Hoadly said it was a good mile from his battery, and that, I understood, commanded the town on the north."

"My father fears that this valley, in spite of its being safer than other parts of the town," said Kate, "may be enfiladed from the east—the extreme back; but"—She spoke no farther. Then came another deafening report; the earth shook as with an earthquake; the lamp fell and was extinguished; and as the two girls with piercing shrieks rushed towards the opening, they sank down motionless with terror, for it had caved in, and they found themselves buried alive. Who can describe the agony that ensued; the gasping for air; the fear of the darkness; darkness so thick, that it seemed to settle, with crushing weight, on their limbs, on their breasts; to paralyze their tongues, to freeze their brains? Moments

passed; and neither spoke nor moved. Tightly they clutched each other; thought, like lightning, flew from place to place; and life, like a panorama, lay spread out before them, till every idea faded away, and every faculty was swallowed up in one wild craving for light and air. Stunned, as she was, Caroline noticed that Kate's hold upon her suddenly relaxed. She felt the form of her companion fall heavily upon her; and starting as from a frightful nightmare, she woke to the consciousness that she was the only living occupant of the gloom. Time passed; was it in moments, in hours, or in days? Caroline knew not. Every sensation was benumbed; every thought was absorbed in despair. The drops that started out upon her forehead were almost frozen, for her blood no longer circulated. How long it was before consciousness returned, she knew not; but when it did, she wished for apathy again, for frenzy next succeeded, and fear made her shriek and scream, and claw the earth around with her nails. Was she to meet, by starvation, the death which had momentarily relieved the sufferings of her friend? Was her companion a corpse, or had she only fainted? Would they make any effort to save her from without; or were all that held her dear engulfed in the earth like herself, to die of madness, or mangled corpses, to be dragged out and exposed to view?

The firing still sounded regularly, but was muffled and indistinct, yet, now that she lived and moved again, each report caused the vibration of every nerve and sinew in her frame. "O God!" she shrieked, "give me light and air, or let me die;" and throwing herself wildly forward, she beat the bank with her head, and scratched it with her hands, till the blood ran in streams from her nails, and the glass from the broken lamp penetrated her feet and gashed her knees. Panting and breathless from pain and fatigue, exhaustion again made her calm, and now it was indeed the calmness of despair. A large piece of earth, loosened from the top of the cave, fell with force near her, and it required all of the little strength that remained for her to disengage her feet from the clods that covered them, to crawl to the body of her friend, and as she murmured, "Kate, wait for me, let me not die alone," that happy unconsciousness, for which she longed, came to her at last, and she suffered no longer.

## CHAPTER V.

**T**HERE had been hot work in the trenches the last hour of Captain Alexander's guard; and hotter was in store, ere the next hour should pass, when Lieutenant Seymour would arrive with the relief. Several feet of earth had been taken from the rifle-pits, but they were not deep enough to afford any protection to the men when the Federal batteries opened on the town.

"Work on, my brave lads," said the captain; "an hour more, and we will be comparatively safe. As soon as the pit is deep enough to cover our heads, we won't care a damn for their minie-balls; and as to mortar-shells, of course, we are all bomb-proof long ago." But, by an unhappy chance, a shell burst in the trenches almost while he spoke, and three men were disabled. One of the fragments penetrated the eye of poor Pat, and gave him exquisite pain; another man had his arm broken; and the third received a painful wound in his hip.

"Be not discouraged," said the captain, "we are not likely to meet with such a mischance soon again; hurry along to the rear, you that are wounded, and tell the surgeon to set you on your feet in double-quick time." But while Alexander spoke with cheerfulness, his heart sank within him. "I am leading them like sheep to the slaughter," thought he. "Stoop down, if you can," he shouted, "at every volley from the sharpshooters."

A courier came to him with orders from General Clark to take his company across the opening, and man the redoubt that stood between the trenches. He had stopped down a moment before, to show the men the way he thought best to avoid the bullets; for the Federal sharpshooters had probably discovered the exposed position of his men while working, and volley after volley came whizzing over their heads, so that it was necessary to remain almost bent double while using their spades. The earth taken from the ditch was of course thrown towards the enemy; but it was too new and loose to afford much, if any, protection; and each shower of balls scattered

it in every direction, filling the faces and clothes of the soldiers with dust and sand. When the order came for moving, Alexander climbed to the top of the embankment, glass in hand, to look into the valley below. He saw that the enemy had formed into a regular column, three or four abreast, their line stretching about parallel with the trench occupied by Clark's regiment. Standard-bearers, at regular intervals, carried aloft the stars and stripes; the drums were beating, the bands playing, and all was ready for the charge. The moon had risen as quietly to give light for the work of death, as she had looked, night after night, upon the city burying-ground, whose white fences and marble tombstones reflected back her rays upon the left.

"Load up," shouted Alexander, "but keep your fire for awhile; they are going to attempt to storm."

A moment before, Alexander had felt depressed by the misfortunes of his men, but one glance at the enemy preparing to storm the works served to arouse within him his natural enthusiasm, and now he only thought of sending death within the ranks that bore down upon him in such threatening array.

He hesitated a moment, whether to run with his men across the open space and man the redoubt, as he had been commanded; but it hardly seemed feasible now, for the Federals were advancing steadily up the hill, and to leave the trench would be to abandon a very decided advantage. Still, the redoubt must be protected, for once in the hands of the enemy, the whole town might be at their mercy. Our first fire may check them, thought he, in which case much loss may be avoided to my men; for, in crossing the open space, they will have a clear sweep, and may almost annihilate us. Quick as thought, he came to a determination. "Harold," he said to the color-bearer, "look here; and mind what I say to you. I'll direct the men to keep their fire till the Yanks gain that little thicket just half-way up the hill; then we'll open fire, and I pray God most of them will go to the devil; but, mark me! if they rally again, the redoubt will be in danger, and we must run and climb up into it. If this becomes necessary, I'll make the first move, and do you go to the other end of the trench, and at the word of command, follow hard after me, and urge the men to rush with all speed, for not a moment must be lost."



"I'm your man," said young Harold; "but it is a pity we didn't get behind that bank of mud before, for the little brass cannon on the top of it might be doing beautiful work, if there was anybody there to manage it."

"Down with the spades and load up your muskets!" was said, and echoed from place to place.

"Now mark me, lads," said the captain, "when I give the command to fire, climb to the top of this bank, discharge your muskets, and then drop down again. I'll watch and tell you if the fire takes effect."

Thus directed, every soldier crouched down with his gun, waiting till the moment when he should receive orders to discharge it.

Alexander remained on the top of the bank, all unconscious now of any danger to himself, and longing for the moment when he could prudently order his men to fire.

The enemy advanced slowly but steadily up the hill, discharging their rifles from time to time, and as they neared the trenches, their own cannon and mortars were silenced, least they should do damage within the ranks of the attacking column.

Alexander rose on his hands and knees, and saw that the auspicious moment had arrived. In answer to his summons, his men crawled also to the top of the bank, and taking deliberate aim, poured a murderous fire into the hostile force. For a moment they wavered; another, and the column had closed up; and over the bodies of their fallen comrades, they still advanced calm and defiant.

"To the redoubt!" shouted Alexander, "or they'll gain it before us."

"To the redoubt!" echoed Harold, from the other end of the trench, "or, by God, they'll gain it before us!"

Pell-mell they rushed, their brave captain leading the way. Danger was forgotten, till, at the end of the abutment, the view unobstructed by the bank, the enemy appeared coming in majesty upon them, and outnumbering the little band by three or four to one. Simultaneously both officers and men hesitated; twenty feet must be traversed under a galling fire without the opportunity of discharging a gun. Before even Alexander had recovered himself, the lad Harold sprang forward with the flag. "I will plant it on the parapet," he cried; "follow, or leave me to my fate!"

The rifles from the Federals raked them, and left the open space thick with the dying and the dead; but those that survived gained like lightning the fortifications, turned their guns upon the enemy, and, in another moment, the column was broken, and fled in confusion down the hill.

A shout of ecstasy went up from the Confederates, which was heard again from place to place, till it spanned the town in a circle, and reached the river on the north and south.

"Now is our time to give it to them, my men," said Alexander; "show yourselves boldly, and let them have many a volley ere the bombshells begin to scatter."

Harold had, as he promised, planted the flag on the extreme height of the fortification, but a moment after, a well-directed shot cut the staff in two, and the youth had the mortification to see the colors he loved so well, and for which he had risked so much, tottering and ready to fall to the ground. Springing forward, he seized the broken staff, and with that wild enthusiasm which only a boy can feel, he raised it high in air, uttering a yell of defiance at the enemy, and anon a cry of encouragement to the Confederates, who, led by their captain, commenced the descent of the hill in pursuit of the retreating foe. The command to fire was again and again obeyed, till Alexander saw he had ventured too far, and called aloud, ordering a retreat.

The Federals, on gaining the bottom of the hill, had paused, rallied, and formed again, and suddenly turning, moved in dark masses again forward.

"Back! back!" shouted the captain, "and gain the redoubt without delay."

The bullets whizzed over the heads of the men, who rushed wildly back; and were soon enabled, from within the earthworks, to discharge their guns upon the Federal column, which a second time was turned, and retreated in great confusion down the hill.

"Harold, my boy," said Alexander, with emotion, "give me your hand, it is to you, more than any one, that I owe this successful movement."

A gleam of intelligence answered him from the lad's eye but there was no movement of the hand, and another glance showed that it hung helplessly by his side; for a minie-ball had penetrated above the elbow, and the bone of the right arm was broken.

Alexander placed his arm lovingly about the boy's neck, and thought of little else, till he was in the hands of the surgeon, that his wounds might receive attention. "Rest, boy," he said, "and take every care of yourself; for, by God, the country will need you another day."

The ladies were awakened, just before day, at Judge McRea's (for, notwithstanding the shower of shot and shell, they had gone no farther than the cellar of their own house,) by Doctor Bronson, the surgeon of the Twenty-fifth. "I have brought you, Mrs. McRea," he said, "a wounded boy, young William Harold. His arm was broken while holding aloft our flag, as the enemy approached the works, just now, to storm. We wish to procure for him the best possible attention, and for that purpose, I've brought him to you."

Had the brightest jewel in the regalia of England been placed in Mrs. McRea's keeping, she could hardly have deemed it more precious than the noble gem of inborn courage which lay in the casket committed to her now.

"Give yourself no uneasiness, Doctor Bronson," she said, "I will take every care of the boy."

Lieutenant Seymour came at two o'clock, and with the rest of the company took possession of the southwest redoubt, to enable his comrades to retire a few hours for food and rest.

So entirely was Alexander under the influence of excitement, that, as he rode along towards the camp at the foot of Fort Hill, in spite of the violent exertion of the last few hours, he was hardly conscious of fatigue. One officer after another met him on the way, going, like himself, for their breakfast and a nap; and from them he learned that the Federals had charged simultaneously all around the line, attempting to take the town by storm, and had everywhere been repulsed.

"This is admirable," said he, "as far as it goes. Do you know how we're off for ammunition?"

"Plenty of everything," said his interlocutor, "except caps; and several couriers have been sent to General Johnston, and are to return *sub rosa*, bringing a supply."

"What is the impression about provision?"

"Beef and pease enough, it is said, to last six weeks, but great scarcity of hospital supplies. However, as regards food, by killing up the mules, horses, and dogs, we can, it is thought, hold out much longer, if reasonable hopes are extended to us from the outside, of being finally relieved."

"Can anything like an estimate be made of Grant's forces?"

"Nothing reliable, that I know of. Various rumors are floating about, most of them, I suppose, very much exaggerated. For instance, Major Rooker, whose judgment in some things can be relied on, believes them to number near four hundred thousand men. This, of course, cannot be so; for, though Grant certainly has under his command an immense body of troops, he could by no means concentrate half that number at this point. He must leave a force to keep Kerby Smith in check; and probably will use another to harass Johnston, and prevent his being reinforced by Bragg or Lee."

Thus conversing, Alexander gained an elevated point, where the camps, caves, etc., of Fort-Hill valley lay spread out before him.

In a scene so extensive, the particular point selected by General Lawrence for the excavation, which had lately caused such a dreadful misfortune to his daughter and Miss Courteny, occupied naturally no very conspicuous place; but a single glance served to awaken in Alexander every fear which his manly heart was capable of feeling.

There, at the very spot which his eye sought first — which, a few short hours before, he had left smiling in symmetrical terraces through the moonlight, and echoing the light laugh of the woman that seemed fairest to him on earth — there lay the earth in huge heaps, and soldiers many in number crowded upon each other with spade, axe, and shovel, digging.

Digging for what? By many chances, Caroline might have escaped — much time might have elapsed, from the first alarm till the real danger — but, with the first glance came to him the dreadful certainty they were digging, digging, for her. How he gained the spot, he never knew. What he said to Judge Wilkerson (who sat upon the ground, the presence of mind and coolness, for which he was so eminently remarkable, all gone), he could not remember; but the answer he received time never effaced from his memory, and the strong man, who had lately rushed upon the Federal guns and faced death so boldly, shook now like an aspen leaf, and was the veriest coward of them all that stood around.

"There," he gasped, "there — your niece!" and striking his forehead with his hand, "fool — murderer — that I am — one word from me, spoken in time, might have saved her."

The horror-struck soldier moved like an automaton about. The helpless forms beneath the earth presented themselves, with frightful vividness, before his mind; and the shock and reeling of his brain made respiration almost as difficult to him, as it had lately been to Caroline for want of light and air.

"Is there no hope?" he asked of some one, mechanically, who was standing near.

"None," was the answer; "we are digging for the dead."

He took the spade that was offered him, and commenced to scrape the earth. Slowly he moved, for the weight of stunning grief had settled on his heart and paralyzed his limbs. The shells were falling thick now, but no one seemed to notice them. There was but one woman near — the rector's wife — but she had gathered her children about her, and seemed chained to the spot, with interest for those whose unhappy fate, she had so lately escaped. "Leave me," she said, when assistance was offered; "do all you can for them."

In the midst of his despair, Alexander conceived a hope. Suddenly, he threw the spade away, and, with new-born energy, gained the top of the bank. With a burning glance and palpitating heart, he scrutinized the ground beyond the place where he first had noticed it gap apart. Like a drop of cool water to a parching throat was the unbroken grass on the one side; and out of so slight a hope, momentarily, he formed a design, which all the energy of his strong nature lent itself to execute.

"This way," he cried, to the men below; "this way, with your spades and axes. Dig! dig! with all your might, on the right-hand side; but, for your lives, stir not the earth on the left."

New strength had come to his arm now; and fiercely he lifted the earth that weighed so heavily on the gentle breast of her he loved. His directions were calm enough.

"Throw the dirt to this side," he said. "or to that, but see that it falls not within."

Through the narrow opening, his eye was the first that discerned a cavity beneath; and, as the opening widened, his glance, in advance of all others, discovered two female forms.

"Stand back!" he said to the others. "There is air enough now to preserve life, if life is not extinct. Get me a rope; but one person can descend at a time."

"Young man!" said the bluff colonel of the Fourteenth, while Alexander made his preparations to go down, "you had better not be rash; those young women are past all help now. Wait, till we dig farther; and, if the earth falls upon them, they'll be no worse off, for they are dead already."

Alexander pushed him aside; nor was he the only person who was willing to venture life and limb in such a cause. Many crowded around, and peered into the opening.

"I can see a foot!" said one.

"There is a piece of Miss Courteny's dress!" said another. But none could discover a motion or sign of life.

The time seemed so long before a rope could, in the confusion, be found, that Alexander began to think of leaping into the darkness beneath; but the thought occurred, and made him tremble, — what! if the little of life that yet remained, should, in a moment, be crushed out by the heel of his boot.

"Here are plenty of ropes," cried Captain Dean, coming up out of breath, "and I, or any of my men, will undertake to go down, if it is necessary."

"I'll bring them up, if you say so," said a rude Texan, who was captivated more by the danger, than the idea, of preserving the lives of two females; and he began to pull off his clothes, and throw them in all directions.

"But Alexander was before them all. He wound the rope around him, and, calling to those about him to lower him very gradually, he was about to commence the descent, when a voice called loudly to him, —

"Pull off your spurs, man, and your boots!"

"Well thought of," said Captain Dean; and he helped him off with his spurs, boots, and coat. "Pull the rope hard," he continued, "when you want to come up, and I'll stand here at the mouth of the opening to help you."

A moment more, and Alexander had disappeared within the cave.

"Shut your eyes tightly, and keep them so a moment," shouted Captain Dean, "or you'll not be able to see at all."

But this advice was unnecessary. Not only had Alexander closed his eyes, but now, when his foot rested on something beneath, and he needed the assistance of the rope no longer, he hesitated to open them.

"I have still a hope, a slight hope, of her life," he said; "what, if one look should destroy it."

He groped about slowly in the dim twilight, and felt beneath his hand the soft flesh of a woman's arm. Alexander had met Caroline Courteny but three times, and then only in general society, but another touch satisfied him that it was her; for the third finger of her right hand was always encircled with a hair ring, and what was familiar to his sight, his touch soon recognized.

The arm of Caroline was thrown closely round the neck of her friend; and the faces of the two girls lay pressed together. Alexander disengaged them gently from each other.

"This one," he said to himself, as he raised Kate Lawrence, "I will send up first. The other, be she living or dead, shall stay with me, and, come what will, we'll take our chances together."

He tied the rope about Kate, and made signs to those above to elevate her. As soon as her body receded from his hand, he turned to Caroline, and took her in his arms.

Softly, he breathed her name; but there was no response. Anxiously, his hand sought for a sign of life in the pulsation about her heart.

"Why should I wish it otherwise?" he said. "Faint as has been the impress of my image on her fancy — dead, she is mine; but the first breath of air that penetrates her lungs and animates her being, most probably divides us forever." False logic! — and not of the heart, for the feeble sign, when it came at last, though slight as the pulse of a new-born infant, sent a throb of joy through the frame of the soldier: and anon, the hand of the young girl was bathed with the strong man's tears.

## CHAPTER VI.

FROM ELIZABETH WOODVILLE, TO MARY McREA.

**I** HOPE, my dear Mary, my not coming out to pass last night with you was the cause of no trouble or uneasiness. I had made all my preparations to do so, in spite of the severe shelling, when Judge Wilkerson came to beg I would go immediately to Caroline Courteny, and I inferred, after he had repeated the particulars of the shocking accident of the morning, that she needed my care more than you could possibly do. I was more encouraged to go, too, from the fact, that Tom Dean told me you were getting on so well, and being so carefully nursed by dear Mrs. Andrews and Lucy. You have stood the terrible experience of the last few days, from all I hear, admirably well; and, I must say of you, that you are really a brave girl. Your fever was so high when I left you, day before yesterday, I could not but feel the greatest anxiety on your account; and mamma, I think, was still more uneasy. Tom's report of your condition in the evening; of course, relieved us at once, and I have no doubt you will soon be well.

Meanwhile, if you had to be sick, it was better for you to be at Mr. Andrews's (though it at first seemed so unfortunate) than here; for we are very, very uncomfortable. Papa keeps us all constantly in the cellar; and it is so dark and damp, I am afraid we run serious risk of injury to our health. The confinement is exceedingly irksome to us all; the children, however (contrary to our expectation), stand it better than the grown people. And, while I write, the little girls are busy with their dolls — for which their nurse has just made a beautiful satin dress, out of bran-new homespun.

You may judge of our condition, when I tell you, that, in this small cellar, sixteen by eighteen, and with only one small window, thirty people (including the Rev. Mr. R. and his wife, and the adults, children, and negroes that comprise our family), are congregated. Madam Etienne, our French neighbor, asked permission to pass the night with us, but was

so much overcome with the noise and confusion, that she made a hasty retreat, declaring that she would rather stand every risk from the shells. I felt very much like making the same declaration; but, pa is so completely overcome with anxiety for us, and looks so dreadfully careworn at our discomforts and discontent, that I thought, for his sake, and the example to the others, I should nerve myself to endure. We have had some dreadful shocks, for the house and garden have already felt severely the effects of the shelling. A fragment penetrated the roof, and entered one of the rooms in the third story, yesterday morning, and broke the plastering in large quantities. Aunt Fanny was very nearly overtaken by another at the kitchen-door; and the poor old negro forgot her lameness, and set off at a brisker trot than she had indulged in for many a year. Willie declares, that when he met her afterwards, she had turned snow-white. We suppose the latter to have been a whole shell, instead of a piece, for after ricochetting in many directions, it exploded in the middle of the room, tearing up the floor, and scattering the cooking utensils. In several places, the garden is torn up, but this we don't mind, as we are spared the shock of the noise.

Ma is in much better spirits than pa, and talks continually of the time when we are to be relieved by Johnston; I wish I had her faith, in his coming soon. Pa is hardly ever willing for us to go upstairs. We venture out of our subterranean retreat about twice a day to get our meals and change our clothes; but, before we are half through with bathing, dressing, or eating, we are generally ordered downstairs again, for the mortar-boats seem to take a malicious pleasure in throwing their missiles exactly in our range during these interesting periods.

The monotony of our life was slightly varied yesterday by a visit from General Turner and Lieutenant DeBlanc. Since pa was positive in saying we could not go upstairs, ma arranged that they should come around to the cellar-window to see us. And, no sooner did General Turner get sight of us, all huddled up together and wearing such long faces, than he fell a-laughing, and I thought he would never stop. However, when he calmed down a little, I asked him about things in the trenches, and he says, that our loss in killed and wounded, from "the charge" yesterday morning,

was much less than at first reported; and that the Federal dead are laying all over the ground, in sight of our fortifications and their comrades cannot bury or remove them, because of the sharp-shooters on the Confederate side. He asked how we were off for provision, and said, that himself and his messmates would divide anything they had with us, which, of course, was kind. He told me that he thought it would have been much wiser in pa and ma to have removed us some time ago from town; that General Pemberton regretted extremely that any citizens should have remained; and said, that since they had been commanded repeatedly to leave, and would not, that they must take the consequences, and share the fate of the soldiers, whatever it might be.

In enumerating the occupants of our cellar, I forgot to mention a boy named William Harold, a second Sergeant Jasper. This young hero was brought here by Doctor Bronson, and placed under ma's care; for he received, the morning of the "charge," a very painful wound in his arm while elevating the colors of his regiment. It is not strange that I forgot to mention him, for he seldom speaks and never complains, and but for the bad state of his pulse, and an occasional groan in his sleep, we would never know how much he suffers.

Tom, of course, told you all about the dreadful accident that happened to poor Carrie. I found her, last night, as Judge Wilkerson said she had been all day, very much prostrated both in mind and body. She is dreadfully cut and bruised, but has no broken bones; and, if a nervous fever does not set in, I hope will recover rapidly. She is now at Major C.'s head-quarters, and has a comfortable room on the first floor. Her uncle says, nothing will induce him to take her a second time into a cave.

Pa tells me that Mr. Andrews's boy is waiting for my note, so I must stop, though I am not quite through. Tell Lucy to send what tomatoes she can spare to Fanny Lea, for she wants contributions for the Cherry-street Hospital. Either mamma or myself will come out, and pass the night with you tomorrow. Your affectionate sister,

ELIZABETH WOODVILLE.

FROM FANNY LEE, TO GENERAL TURNER.

I've just been the rounds of the Cherry-street Hospital, my dear general; and I have returned home, sick at heart. Such suffering among the sick and wounded, as exists, you cannot conceive of without seeing. I do not wish to be censorious, but, indeed, I think there must have been frightful mismanagement in some department; for these buildings and tents were clean and well ventilated, two weeks ago, and now they are unfit for the abode of any human being, much less for invalids. In the room lately occupied by Lieutenant Watt, and not large enough to accommodate more than two men at farthest, I found that ten had been stored away; and that some of them, wounded four days ago, had received no attention from their surgeons, and were ill supplied with food.

Captain Mockler is, I think, now past all hope of recovery; for the brandy Doctor Kerr said was necessary for him, and which I purloined from your slender store, has been appropriated by some one of his nurses, and where to get more, I am entirely at a loss. The boy with the broken arm you have felt so much interested for, told me that he had not been able to get food for twenty-four hours, and seemed nearly dead with weakness and hunger.

There are no mattresses for any of the men wounded since the landing of Grant, and no effort has been made to substitute anything in their place. I suggested, some days ago, that moss be collected, or even shavings, for the purpose, but the poor bleeding, dying creatures are still extended on bare planks and boards. I remained about two hours, and saw several of the surgeons, who seemed to be in a dreadful state of consternation, and could not suggest anything to be done.

I enclose you some gold, a small sum, but all the coin I have at present. Please buy with it some hospital supplies, if possible, and send them to me to make use of for these poor men. I could send several thousand dollars in Confederate money, if it would be of any use, but I'm told that provision can be had for nothing but silver and gold. I have had cooked up all that can be spared from my father's store-room, but my woman who went to distribute it said it failed to furnish one good meal. I do not feel it necessary to apologize for troubling you about this matter. I know you realize, as well as I do, that all delicacies, such as flour, sugar,

tea, etc., within the town, should be used for the benefit of the hospitals; and I feel certain, that, as soon as the attention of the citizens is once called to it, they will cheerfully deliver over such articles for that purpose, at least such as are in the enjoyment of good health.

The soldiers firmly believe that Doctors P. and K. have been hid in a cave for three days. Of course, I think it must be a mistake; but, since they are missing and have not been seen for that length of time, you had better (as they are both friends of yours) look them up, and advise them from me to show themselves a little, and discredit the report. The same impression exists about the Rev. Mr. L., the chaplain of the Seventeenth; but I hope it will prove untrue, for surely, if there ever was work for chaplains and surgeons in our army, it is now.

Please let me hear from you soon. I feel so badly about doing so little, that I think I'll not go to the hospitals tomorrow, without I can get some kind of food, for it seems mere mockery to go through the wards, if I've nothing to offer, but flowers. I regret not being able to see you yesterday. My father kept me skipping about all the night before, first in and then out of a cave, to avoid the shells, so that I had no opportunity to sleep, and had just gone to my room for that purpose, and directed Pauline on no account to disturb me, when you called.

In answer to your kind inquiries, I must say, that I already feel ill effects from this sedentary life, and suffer a great deal from headache. I miss, more than I can tell you, our accustomed gallop before breakfast. When do you think our rides can with prudence be resumed? Your friend,

FANNY LEE.

GENERAL TURNER, TO MRS. LEE.

DEAR MADAM, — Fortunately, I was off duty yesterday, and was able to pass the whole morning in your service. I visited every commissary or vender of provisions that I could hear of, and then called upon such private families as I thought at all likely to have a surplus of any of the articles mentioned in your note. The result of my labors you will see from the enclosed memorandum. The little flour and tea, I



procured, at enormous prices from a small shop on Jackson road, but my inquiries among citizens led me rather to offer than to ask assistance, for most families seem very poorly supplied.

I consulted with General Pemberton as to the best way of reforming some of the abuses you speak of; but, indeed, my dear madam, on this head I have nothing favorable to report, for the supply of beds, blankets, etc., is so entirely inadequate to the demand, I very much fear things will grow worse, instead of better, as the siege advances. For the soldiers on duty, there are pease and beef enough, if used with economy, to last some weeks. But woe betide the poor wretch, who, from wounds or sickness, becomes a fit subject for a hospital, for there seems no alternative for him but to die. Fortunate he who dies soon! But it is wonderful how tenacious of life is sometimes the human frame; for these men, suffering each day a thousand deaths, being consumed gradually with grief, disease, and putrefying wounds, still live on, till life becomes more dreadful to them than the prospect of the damned. I use strong language, but you know it is true.

And now, dear madam, excuse me, if I use the freedom of an intimate friend, and beg you to forbear, not only tomorrow, but for the future altogether, from visiting the hospitals at all. To tell you not to exercise in any way your benevolent spirit, I know, would be useless. Heretofore, I have, in spite of the opposition of your friends, encouraged you to go at all times, and show what kindness was in your power to these poor unfortunates, who seem forsaken of God and man. Believe me, the time is past when a woman's presence can do in our hospitals any good. Confusion and terror is doing its work. The wounded, whose fears are looking every moment to have their half-healed gashes torn asunder a second time by the cruel shells, could scarcely hear the encouraging voice of a female; and the disease-worn frame of the sick man cares little now for a woman's cheerful smile.

Let me entreat, therefore, dear Mrs. Lea, that you will hereafter confine yourself to what can be done without exposure of your person. Let your women do a little washing when they can; but for yourself—sew, hope, and pray—and if your petition is made with half the earnestness I now make mine to you, believe me, it will eventually be answered.

Ever your friend, HENRY C. TURNER.

SUE, TO MARY.

Ma says I must write you word how we all do, as she is very busy looking up books to send to the trenches for the soldiers to read, and can't attend to it herself. I don't think ma ought to make me write, for she knows I'd rather take a whipping than do it, and indeed, I think she told me to do it, because she felt like giving me a whipping. But, thank heaven, I'm too big for that now.

Sister Elizabeth has just treated me very badly. You know how saucy her black Harriet is. Well, this morning, I told the impudent thing to put on my shoes and stockings; and do you know, she tossed up her head and walked right off, muttering something about being too busy, attending to the children. Sister Elizabeth was standing by at the time, and instead of being mad with that imp of darkness, she commenced talking to me about the importance of learning to wait on myself, and doing all sorts of things that Yankee girls do, which makes me know she is no better than a Yankee herself; and I just told her so, and that is the reason that ma got in a temper with me, and sent me over into the corner to write to you.

The reason I'm so mad with that black thing is, that I gave her my pink calico, when the colors were not faded at all, and a bran-new pair of stockings, with only a little hole torn in them, the day I got into the ambulance to go and see the dress parade.

I am as miserable as I can be, way down here under ground, with everything worrying me to death; and if I thought the Yankees would let me out, and choke black Harriet to death, I wouldn't care a straw how soon they marched into town; though I expect they'll seize me and drag me all round the room by my hair, as soon as they get here.

And speaking of hair, sister Elizabeth said I was plenty old enough to comb my own hair, even when I went to a party; which comes mighty well from her, to be sure, as nobody is fonder of having her hair fixed all sorts of ways, down at the St. Charles Hotel, in New Orleans, and looking very horrid afterwards. Not but that I said her coral combs were becoming at the time, but I never did think her a pretty woman, and I never will say so, even if the Yankees were to stab me to the heart, which they will do soon enough, heaven knows. Sometimes, I think I'll die down here in this cellar.

And there is so much coal-dust in my skin, I could not get it out if I washed a year; though pa won't let us stay above stairs half an hour at a time, to wash, dress, and eat, altogether.

We've not had a bit of butter or a drop of milk for three days, and you know how I hate molasses. Mr. and Mrs. R. stay with us all the time, and they are just as blue as indigo; she has the sick headache, and he is so uneasy about her, that he don't like us to laugh or make any noise. Eugene McCloud treats me as badly as other people; for yesterday, when he came round to the cellar-window, and I wanted to come out to take a little walk in the garden, he would not ask ma to let me do it, and said pa was perfectly right to keep us all down here in this shocking way, though he saw I was nearly dead, while he was standing out in the open air, with his feet almost on the violet-bed, and they in full bloom; and I wanted some so badly, but since he did not think to pull me some, or was too lazy to take the trouble (and I do hate lazy people), I wouldn't have asked him to do so, to have saved his life.

You have heard of this boy William Harold, that ma and everybody is making such a fuss over. Well, for all their talk, I don't think a thing of him. Ma is always after me to go and talk to him, and I thought yesterday I would try, though I had nothing upon earth to say. So I went up to him and said, "Good evening, Mr. Harold; does your arm hurt you, and would you like to have this flower?" and he turned very red in the face, and said "No;" and I didn't know whether he meant the "no" about the arm or about the rose, which made me feel as foolish as possible, the more so, because I saw sister draw down the corners of her mouth to keep from laughing; though it is she who often talks to me about the impropriety of hurting people's feelings by laughing at them before their faces. I handed the foolish boy the rose anyhow, because I didn't know what else to do, and he turned still redder, and sat about an hour with the pretty flower I wanted myself, all crushed to pieces in the palm of his hand, and I believe, if it had been possible, he would have sank through the floor. I don't see anything to admire in such a spooney chap. Mr. R. shook him by the hand yesterday, and told him he ought to feel proud of thus making history; but if he is making history, I think it is a very easy job, and if he is a hero, I don't like them at all, and hope Eugene will never be one as

long as he lives, but that he will have to stay behind with the wagon train.

The only sensible thing this Harold boy has done since he has been here, was to tell Willie that he did wish people would not talk about what he did that night in the trenches, as it was none of their business; that he hated to stay down in the cellar, and if ma would not let him go back to camp soon, he would certainly run away.

I don't expect any sympathy from you, because you have been sick, all comfortably, down in Mr. Andrews's cellar, and can't know how dreadfully I feel.

The reason I'm writing so much is because I know Mr. Andrews's boy will soon be here, and I want to manage so that ma won't have time to read my letter, for I know she'll talk ever so much about the bad spelling and want of punctuation, and maybe, tell me to write it all over again.

Mrs. R.'s sister, Mrs. Middleton, will come here to stay all night tomorrow, and I'm very glad, for I hear she has a lovely photograph album, of a style we've never seen, and some beautiful new dresses, made in Louisville, on purpose to run the blockade with; and if the horrid Yankees ever stop shelling for half an hour, I'll ask her to take me across the street where her trunk is and show them to me. Besides, she has two sweet little children, and I can play with her baby, for now that sister Elizabeth has treated me so badly, I'll not have one word to say to her children, or touch them for —

#### ELIZABETH, TO MARY.

— two hours. After a slight struggle, Sue has given her note up to me, and I have completed her unfinished sentence. She is now a little recovered from her ill-humor, and laughed with the rest of us when I read her effusion aloud. I send it to you, however, as a fair sample of how we all feel. Everybody has grown cross, and we take little opportunities of venting it on each other. Mamma's spectacles are missing, and little Mary is suspected of having used them as a plaything, which makes me feel very uncomfortable. Estelle and I are in dispute about a book, and have been foolish enough to get a little warm, much to Mrs. R.'s annoyance, who is suffering,



as Sue told you, from sick headache. You know she is always more or less subject to it; but the constant concussion produced by the firing, I sometimes think will now drive her mad.

A shocking thing happened in the lot next to us yesterday. A poor negro woman, who had scooped for herself and children a den in a neighboring bank, before going into it had her foot cut in two by a fragment of a shell. Ma went over to do what she could for the relief of the wound, as no surgeon could be procured for some time, and had at first some hope that she might survive; but this morning, she has lockjaw, and will die before night.

Captain Haly and his lieutenant came to our window last night and talked a few moments. They gave me a good many letters to take charge of, written by different officers of the regiment, addressed to their friends in different parts of the Confederacy, and to be sent by us to their directions, in case of death or imprisonment. I felt very sad in undertaking the charge. How many of the brave men who penned them may be taking their last farewell of home and friends, God only knows!

Tom tells me that you sit up now nearly all day, and that the atmosphere of the cave seems to do you no harm. I very much feared the contrary, as you know did also the family of our friend Mrs. Graham; but though her infant was only a week old at the time of the investment, and had to be taken from a warm, comfortable room directly into a cave, no ill effects have as yet occurred, and both herself and child are apparently in good health. You are progressing more rapidly than poor Caroline, for she seems still in a very weak state, and scarcely ever speaks. She fainted almost immediately, it is supposed, after the front of the cave fell in, and only returned to consciousness when she was pulled up and laid on the grass, some hours afterwards. I suppose we might venture to move you within the next few days, if we had any comfortable place for you to stay, but as it is, you must not think of it.

Besides the general inconvenience, we all have our personal troubles to complain of, and are the most discontented set you ever saw. Poor Sue is the most disconsolate of all. She has managed to collect upon her skin and hair twice as much dirt and coal-dust as anybody else, and as she is not remarkably swift about making her toilet, she is called down below every

day before she fairly commences the work of fixing herself up. Her hair is now falling over her shoulders in masses of tangles that even if she were disposed to try, I know she could not straighten; but I must wait till her indignation abates a little, before I proffer the services of black Harriet to braid it, for at present, I know they would be haughtily declined.

Who is this Major Porter of whom you speak in your note? He must, indeed, be a gallant man to think of bringing such sweet bouquets in such lovely Bohemian glass vases, at such a time, and deserves the very sweetest of smiles in return. But I must not begin to collect materials for a romance, lest, as has several times happened already, they be destroyed by the appearance on the stage of the wife and children of the *cidevant* hero, and make applicable the song that Willie learned from the sergeant-major —

"Soldier, soldier, won't you marry me, with your musket, fife, and drum?  
How can I marry such a pretty girl as you, when I have another wife at home."

Good-by. Tonight, Judge Wilkerson comes for me to go to Caroline Courteny; but tomorrow night, I hope to be with you.

Your affectionate sister,

ELIZABETH WOODVILLE.

MRS. LEA, TO GENERAL TURNER.

My father and brother will bear me witness, my dear friend, that, from the morning I received your note till today, I've been a good child, and acted under orders. Doctor Camp is to blame, that I, this morning, ventured into the Cherry-street Hospital. He told me of several poor fellows, that interested me so much, that, today, I followed the leading-strings of my heart; and thinking (since nothing else remained for me to do) to divide my breakfast with them, I went. Once there, however, my old habit gained the ascendancy; and I visited each ward, hoping to find, among the hundreds of new faces, some of my old friends. Alas! but few of them remain, and most have exchanged their couches of suffering for a narrow bed beneath the sod. God grant that they at last enjoy rest!

I write to ask that you will buy, beg, or steal for me a small portion of chloroform. Soon after I entered the hos-

pital, an ambulance arrived filled with wounded men just from the trenches. While the poor bleeding creatures were being lifted out, filling the air with their groans and cries, I was attracted by the appearance of a poor boy who had been shot in the leg. He was evidently in great pain, but made every effort to bear his tortures with patience. I followed him into the house, and learned that the limb could by no means be saved. He seemed to have a great horror of amputation, and asked the surgeon repeatedly to "wait till tomorrow, only till tomorrow." Doctor Camp reasoned with him mildly, and insisted that it was better, on many accounts, to take the limb off immediately; and, in answer to the poor youth's earnest petition to take chloroform, said it was impossible, as there was none to be had. I could no longer control myself, but added my own entreaties for delay; and promised, if the chloroform was in the limits of the town, that it should be forthcoming in the morning.

My dear general, do not treat my request with a spirit of levity. I know this is one of the hundreds of cases that occur every day; and, that this poor boy can endure the danger and pain of the operation without the soporific as well as others, do not say this to me, for I know it well, but remember, that my word of honor is given, and that it is to you (though I've sent elsewhere, in all directions) more than any one else, that I look for the means to make this poor boy insensible during this dreadful period. The supply of chloroform allotted to the Cherry-street Hospital, was unfortunately put into glass bottles some time ago, and the morning the building was struck by a shell, was, with many other medicines, destroyed in the general crash. Doctor Camp thinks it will be very difficult to procure more; but try, try, for me, my good friend. Get it by fair means or foul, for I must have it tomorrow.

Don't say another word hereafter to dissuade me from going to the hospitals every day. Indeed, you are mistaken in thinking I would spare my own feelings by staying away. I am ready to admit that I was wrong at first (I mean, a year ago) in habituating myself to scenes that a woman had better avoid. I took a foolish pride at that time in testing the strength of my nerves; and I was stimulated, too, with the hope of doing a little good, for, being fortunate enough to have some ready money, I was able from time to time to pro-

cure comforts, and distribute them among the invalids. This is no longer the case. I feel that I can do nothing at all by going, and yet I cannot stay away. The groans and cries of the wounded sound in my ears with a more frightful distinctness at night, than when I stand beside them in daylight, and watch the work of the surgeon's knife; and the eye that meets mine, asking so beseechingly for food, lacerates my heart more in imagination than when I answer in reality, "I have none to give." While away, I see neither comfort nor peace; once there, something sustains me, I know not what.

Have you noticed the nun, Sister Marie, who moves about the wards so noiselessly, and shows so little excitement or sympathy, that one might think, to look at her rigid features, that they were the index of a heart as cold? Yesterday, after I saw the worst, — the wounded starving, and the dead hurried to their graves with their bloody garments unchanged, and a single blanket the only coffin to preserve their flesh and bones from the pressure of the sod, — I shrieked out in agony, and sank upon my knees. She had never spoken to me before, but then, she laid her hand upon my shoulder, and whispered in my ear, "It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth good unto him." The simple sentence, spoken in a spirit so resigned and true, gave me new strength; and, as I rose and followed her steps from ward to ward afterwards, the atmosphere of holiness that seemed to surround her must have carried "healing on its wings," for I felt within me the impetus to work and to "cast my burden on the Lord."

No more, then, my dear general, about avoiding the hospitals. From this time forth, I must go; but come to me when you have leisure, and you will see that my health is better and my temper more cheerful in consequence of the exertion. I have received from different people during the morning near a bushel of tomatoes. Pauline will cook them; and if you will bring what milk you have, and take off your uniform, so as to be *incog*, you may go with me tomorrow to distribute them, provided, of course, you bring the chloroform for my poor boy. As ever, your friend,

FANNY LEA.

## CHAPTER VII.

**M**ORE than a week had passed since Caroline Courteny had been taken from the gloomy tenement beneath the ground, and borne in a state hovering between life and death to the quarters of Colonel C., on — Street, a point supposed by Judge Wilkerson to be less exposed than his own residence, which had already been severely perforated by shot and shell.

The report of the surgeons, after an examination of Miss Courteny, had been highly satisfactory to her friends. Her uncle, who had feared to look as she lay on the grass, lest he find her a mangled corpse, felt as if treading on air, when, an hour later, Doctor Drake had said, "No harm done, judge; a little nervous, but not a bone broken. Give her a careful nurse, and my word for it, she is all right in a few days." All the nursing her uncle would cheerfully have undertaken to do himself, if he had felt confidence in his ability to do so. He was well acquainted with the peculiarities of his niece, and felt assured (though she expressed no interest or wish in the matter) that the presence of strangers would be at such a time extremely disagreeable to her. Had she been consulted, she would most probably have petitioned to have no one but her maid about her. So, without saying a word on the subject, Judge Wilkerson went immediately to Mrs. Woodville, desiring that she would stay as much as possible with the invalid, and take the general direction of all that concerned her; but avoid all conversation, and especially upon what had lately happened in the cave. The latter direction, Mrs. W. found no difficulty in carrying into effect. Caroline lay, day after day and night after night, most of the time sleeping, and apparently feeling a perfect sensation of ease; for she seldom changed her position, and when roused up to take necessary food or to have her wounds dressed, answered all inquiries after her health in monosyllables, and soon relapsed into her former state again. This Mrs. Woodville thought favorable at first, and did all she could to encourage. Mrs. Stickny, who shared her cares for the invalid as much as her duties would allow, proposed the

fourth day to lighten the room and offer to read aloud; but it was agreed afterwards to wait still longer, thinking that Nature, the wisest of all physicians, and Time, the best of medicines, would do more for the exhausted frame than any effort of friends.

Lizzy, the maid against whom Mrs. Woodville had always entertained a great prejudice on account of her airs and graces and generally saucy behavior, rose rapidly in her estimation, for now that Miss Carrie was really ill, she served her with all her heart and soul, losing sleep with cheerfulness, and answering the bell with an alacrity she had never before under any circumstances evinced. "I believe she really loves her young mistress, after all," thought Elizabeth, as she saw with what care the room was arranged to give it a home look. The writing-desk, workbox, and dressing-case of Miss Courteny stood in their accustomed places on the bureau and stand; and her dressing-gown and slippers were placed, according to usage, on a chair beside the bed.

"And please, Mrs. Woodville," said Lizzy, "don't disturb them slippers, for Miss Carrie likes them to sit just so, with the toes exactly even; and she have often telled me, when I was younger, that my eye were not straight, and that I had better make a little mark with a pencil on the matting, which are onnecessary, madam, as you sees for yourself."

"I'll be careful not to move them, Lizzy," said Mrs. Woodville; "and as you know Miss Carrie's ways better than I possibly can, I hope you'll tell me of anything you think will be likely to please her."

"Yes, ma'am," said Lizzy. "I think there is nobody as understands Miss Caroline's ways as well as me, if I do say it myself; and to be sure it's time, I should think, as we was children together, and nursed at the same breast; and my mother, I has heard, weaned me of her own free will and accord that she might get the more milk. And here are all the bouquets, twelve in number, that has been left here during the week, with the compliments of Captain This and Major Such-a-one. And here is all the cards in the card-basket, for Miss Carrie, though she is too sick now, poor thing; will ask about them and read them over, maybe a dozen times, when she gets better. For she always have said to me, 'Lizzy, take care of all the cards and notes, and be polite to the gentlemen as calls,' which last is onnecessary for Miss Carrie to say, seeing as I have got the

etiquette to do so without being told; and farthermore, she have said to me, 'take off your apron when you goes to the door to answer the bell,' which is also unnecessary in Miss Carrie to say, seeing as I generally wears a clean one. And I will not deny to you, Mrs. Woodville, as I have sometimes controverted her about this, seeing as she is altogether in the wrong. And I sees by your look, Mrs. Woodville, as you are one of those who think as a colored person should be authorized on all subjects, and not make use of her own head; but seeing as Miss Carrie comes to breakfast in her own apron, and mine is made by the same pattern, I sees no reason why it should come off before twelve o'clock."

"Very well, Lizzy," said Mrs. Woodville; "don't talk any more about it just now, for the doctor said Miss Caroline should be kept as quiet as possible, and you know we might disturb her."

"And yet," said Lizzy, lowering her voice the sixth part of a tone, "I begs to add one word, for to make known to you as I am not one of those as would throw themselves into the arms of the Yankees, seeing as I have been told they are onused to colored people, and are expecting of them to be doing two things at a time. But I thinks, Mrs. Woodville, that a colored person like myself," and this was accompanied with a half glance at a neighboring mirror, "as has something the figger of a lady, and can wear Miss Carrie's dresses with very little lettin'-out in the waist, is got a right to her opinion; though there is some people who think black flesh is fit for nothing on the earth but sausages."

"I hope you don't think I am one of those persons. Lizzy," said Mrs. Woodville. "But we'll talk of it another time."

"No, ma'am," continued Lizzy, with great pertinacity; "for I've heard your nuss Harriet say, that with the exception of being a little onreasonable Sunday evening, as you could be lived with; but I must say"—

"Say nothing more at present, Lizzy, if you please," said Mrs. Woodville, keeping her eyes firmly set upon her book. So the maid, who had never met with any encouragement from her young mistress's friends before, to talk, after making a few more efforts to improve the present opportunity, and finding that she apparently excited no interest, slowly withdrew, not particularly well pleased.

Mrs. Woodville opened her book and began to read. She

made no great progress, for the noise of the mortar-shells bursting in the air and scattering their fragments here and there, sounded with more than usual distinctness, now that profound stillness reigned within the chamber. She was thinking, too, that Caroline's state of apathy continued too long; that if her wounds were really as harmless and slight as the surgeon thought, that she would before this have evinced more life and energy, particularly as she was naturally of a very elastic temperament. It had occurred to her before, and now the thought gave her more uneasiness, that some internal injury might have escaped the doctor's scrutiny, and from her constant sleeping that it might be one of the brain. Without any reason, she approached the bed on tiptoe, to look again at the countenance of the young girl. Caroline lay as usual perfectly still; but as Elizabeth bent over her, she saw that her eyes were wide open, with a natural expression; and the next moment, in audible tones, she said, "Is that you, Mrs. Woodville, or am I still in a dream?"

"This is me, dear Carrie," was answered, "and I now see that you are entirely awake; but don't attempt to sit up. If you want anything to eat or drink, tell me, and I will give it to you with a spoon."

"I want nothing to eat or drink," she said; "but where am I, and where is my uncle?"

"You are at Colonel C.'s head-quarters; your uncle is across the hall, asleep in bed, I expect; Mr. and Mrs. Stickney are in the next room; and Lizzy can at any moment hear your bell. Judge Wilkerson will be delighted when I tell him how bright you feel; and if it were not so late, I would wake him up to come and see for himself."

Caroline answered something, a little at random, and ere the sentence was concluded closed her eyes and seemed again to sleep.

Mrs. Woodville's anxiety was much relieved, even by the short colloquy that had taken place. Miss Courteny was certainly perfectly in her right mind, and though still very weak, would no doubt eventually recover.

Several hours passed. Elizabeth nodded in her chair, rousing up occasionally to brush away the mosquitoes with her handkerchief, blow upon the stings the mischievous insects had inflicted upon her hands and arms, and then compose herself to sleep again.

Towards daylight, Caroline became the watcher, and her friend continued to sleep. She rose noiselessly and sat upright in her bed. Running her eye over the room, she recognized her workbox, writing-desk, gown, and slippers; but all else was strange; nor had she any idea that she had for a whole week been an occupant of the chamber. Putting her hand to her forehead, she made an effort to remember. Her mind had by no means been in a torpid state during the time she had appeared so inert to her friends. Mountains had, in imagination, fallen upon her; rushing waters had borne her along with the rapidity of lightning; and fire had sometimes encircled her till its heat had singed her hair and scorched her limbs; but in every case, a tall man had reached her, coming sometimes through fire, sometimes through water, and sometimes through the solid earth. He had taken her in his arms, and laid her head upon her shoulder. He had spoken low, soft words to her, such as she had dreamed of, but never in reality heard. He had placed his hand upon her heart, and the heavy, cold feeling had left it, and the throbbing pulse beat again as before. This had happened many times; but ere she was borne to a place of safety by her deliverer, and placed upon the grass where the cool air fanned her cheek, and the bright sunlight gladdened her heart, he had taken from her finger a ring. As Caroline rose up in her bed, the depression departed from her brain, the mist from her eyes, and now she lived, moved, and was herself again. From the chaos of the last eight days she was able to separate with tolerable distinctness the real from the ideal, and the handsome form of her deliverer, with his protecting arm and loving words would have been quickly dismissed among the things of imagination but for one little circumstance, — the hair ring that she always wore, that had been given her in childhood, and fitted too tightly to slip off itself, was really gone. She gazed at her hand long and earnestly. The third finger was encircled by a white mark, and was a little deformed, for the joint had grown in the last four years, but the wreath of hair and gold had not allowed a proportionate enlargement of the flesh and bone. Her uncle had taken hold of the finger several times and said, "Pull it off, child; it will ruin the shape of your hand." But she had always snatched the finger away and said, "No, uncle; I love it better than anything I have," and had refused to answer questions, and tried to make a mystery, though in reality there was no

mystery about it, for it was the gift of a classmate, given the day they both left school. She was almost certain her uncle would not have removed it while she was ill; Lizzy, though in most things a privileged character, knew how it was prized, and would never have dared.

As she sat up in bed, weighing the possibilities and probabilities, Caroline again closed her eyes, to see if she could recall the tall form that had bereft her of her ring. A smile wreathed her lips and a soft light shone in her eye, and without farther reasoning, she made a sudden resolve. It was this. That if time or circumstance ever made known to her who that person was, she would give him what his words seemed to indicate he considered of far more value — what had never been possessed by any other man — she would give him the warmest affections of her heart. Her uncle had sometimes said, in her wayward moods, that her affection so bestowed would not bring unadulterated happiness. This occurred to her now, but gave her no concern. "He said he loved me," she murmured; "and wept when he found I still lived. Life, surely, could never seem dreary or sad with that voice to cheer me or that manly breast to lean upon. When Mrs. Woodville wakes up," she said, "I'll ask her who dug me out of the cave; but," she added, as she felt the blood mount to her forehead, "I'll be careful to show no confusion, for I'll keep my secret, and keep it the more carefully, as it is also his." Mrs. Woodville stirred, and Caroline coughed as loud as her strength would permit, to deprive her, with malice prepense of that greatest of luxuries, a morning nap.

"How provoking! She is really going to sleep again, I do believe."

This time, she spoke aloud; and another moment, Elizabeth was at her bedside, much alarmed that she had so far neglected her charge, and begging that Caroline would immediately lay down again, and be quiet. "Not till you have talked to me a little, my dear madam," said Caroline, smiling, and shaking her head. "I feel almost as strong as ever, and indeed you must tell me, for I want so much to know all about the night the cave fell in; and how my poor uncle, with only one arm, ever got me out again, and laid me on the grass."

"I've particularly promised your uncle not to talk with you of that dreadful night," answered Mrs. Woodville; "it might

excite and give you fever while you are so weak. But I'm glad to find you feeling so bright, and will tell you anything else you want to know. Here are cards and notes for you to examine and beautiful bouquets to be admired, sent by your gentlemen friends, who are dying of anxiety to know when you will be visible again, whose disappearance from society is so like a total eclipse of the sun."

"Oh, give them to me!" said Caroline, eagerly. "I hope Lizzy has preserved them every one."

For some time she read and re-read the cards and notes, turning them over and over again. Then she looked eagerly towards the bouquets.

"Bring them to me," she said, "that I may examine every flower. I do wish I knew the names of all who have had kind words and wishes for me since I've been sick."

She looked again at the names on the notes and cards, but, putting them away with an unsatisfied air, began to examine and smell the bouquets. "Did nobody else call," she asked at last, "except such as whose names are written here?"

"Undoubtedly," answered Elizabeth, "many other persons called, and some have no doubt trusted to the fragrance of these blossoms to suggest to your heart their names."

Then she examined this and that bouquet over again, and made so many surmises as to what garden they came from, calling always on her friend to give her opinion, till Elizabeth laughed.

"How can I possibly tell, you foolish girl, when there is so little difference in roses!" she said.

"Well, but you can guess; please, help me to guess. Here is one with a white japonica; now, there are so few green-houses in town, and this flower never grows in the open air, that you surely can form an opinion as to what lady gave it away."

Glad that Caroline's interest was excited about so harmless a matter, and diverted from her own condition, Elizabeth suffered herself to be pulled down upon the side of the bed, and taking hold of the bouquets one after another, gave, laughingly, an opinion of each.

"This one," she said, "gives evidence of the good taste of Mrs. B. Here are japonicas, azaleas, and fern leaves, arranged with artistic taste, and since it was left without message or note, I think would criminate General Stephen D. Lee or

some of his staff, as they are guests of Mrs. B., and the most probable subjects of her liberality. This must have come from Mrs. P., for, see what a quantity of Malmaison rose is mixed with the white oleander."

"Then," said Caroline, "I must be indebted to some officer of the First Louisiana or the Forty-second Georgia, perhaps Lieutenant Bruce, or Captain Conrad, or else Major Hammon. But oh, Mrs. Woodville, see this little one; it is, although so small, the sweetest of all."

"That," said Elizabeth, "from the rareness of its floral gems, must have been taken from the somewhat limited stock of Mrs. G. This is full of Cape jasmine and gorgeous amaryllis; and was probably arranged by Mrs. L. And this, she continued, taking up one that was rather ill-shaped, and laughing as the thought occurred to her, "this is tied with a small piece of twine, and was probably culled from our own garden, and made up by Tom Dean."

"If I thought so, I'd value it ever so much, twine, string, and all," said Caroline; "for Captain Dean so seldom attempts to compliment a lady, such a distinction would indeed be flattering."

But she was not satisfied with her guessing, and soon said: "Take them away; for, after all, I cannot tell who they came from." And Caroline stretched herself on her couch again, but was evidently restless and ill at ease. But a few moments passed ere she rose, and called to Mrs. Woodville again. "Indeed, dear madam," she said, "I'm strong enough to talk now. Please tell me, for I'm so anxious to hear, how long it was after the cave fell in before they dug me out again, and what uncle said when he first saw me."

Again Elizabeth remonstrated; but finding that Caroline persisted, she thought it best to satisfy her as well as she was able, and drawing a chair to the bedside, she said:—"I'll tell you all I know, my dear;" but it is not a great deal. I've had so much to excite and distress me since the Federals invested the town, that after I found you were safe, I did not ask many questions, and I really have not heard the details. It seems to have happened very suddenly, and though Mrs. Stickney tells me the noise was less than one might suppose, the ground shook as with an earthquake, and everybody ran out into the air. Your uncle seems to have been the first person that noticed that yourself and Kate Law-



rence did not appear. He ran as fast as possible to the centre cave, calling aloud for help, and trying to force a passage through the earth that obstructed the entrance. This, of course, he found impossible, and was so convinced you had not survived, that he gave up all for lost, and sank down almost lifeless."

"Poor dear uncle!" said Caroline. "I believe he loves me as if I were his own child."

"Indeed he does, my dear," answered Elizabeth. "Had you seen his joy when the physician said you would live, you could not doubt it for a moment."

"But, dear Mrs. Woodville," said Caroline, after a pause, "I think I understand pretty well now how I got into the cave, but I should like very much to know how I got out."

"Why, child, all of Clark's regiment was camped within a hundred yards of you, and the water-batteries, too, were very near. You cannot doubt that men and soldiers were willing to do their best to rescue any human being from such a situation, much less two young girls."

"Oh, yes! I am sure they all did what they could; but I feel as if I must be indebted to some two or three, or possibly to some one more than the rest. Did you hear the name of anybody who came down into the cave before the others? I think it was uncle; but I should like very much to know certainly."

"I did not hear the name of anybody in particular; but it is now daylight, and you can soon see your uncle, and ask for yourself," said Mrs. Woodville. "Meanwhile, I'll send Lizzy in to help you to change your clothes; and I'll go and ask Colonel Smith to drive me home as soon as he gets his breakfast."

Judge Wilkerson, Mr. and Mrs. Stickny, indeed, everybody in the house (for it was full of people; and among the occupants were plenty of young men who had a due appreciation of the charms of the now interesting convalescent) were well pleased with the encouraging account that Elizabeth was able to give of Miss Courteny.

"And she is laughing and talking just like herself?" said her uncle. "Then let me know the very earliest moment I can go to her room, for my eyes are hungry for the sight of my Carrie in all her brightness again."

"Lizzy," said Caroline, while the process of dressing, and

fixing the room was going on, "were you anywhere near, the morning the soldiers were digging Kate Lawrence and me out of the cave after it fell in?"

"Of course I were, Miss Carrie," said Lizzy; "I couldn't have moved a step if I had owned a hundred pair of legs."

"Then, I suppose you saw everything that happened, and can tell me something I want of all things to know."

"I can tell you everything," said Lizzy; "for I couldn't have seed no better, if I'd had a hundred pair of eyes."

"Well, Lizzy, Mrs. Woodville tells me that a great many soldiers crowded around, and that everybody dug with all their might, till a big hole was made in the top right down into the cave."

"She couldn't have spoke no truer," said Lizzy, "if she'd had a thousand tongues in her head, all talking at once."

"Well, now listen to me, Lizzy. Of all the soldiers and officers that crowded around, of course, some must have gotten a great deal nearer the opening than the others."

"Of course, Miss Carrie," answered Lizzy; "it don't take the sense of a hundred people to see that is a fact."

"Well, Lizzy, I want you to think well, and to tell me the names of as many as stood nearest, as you can remember."

"Well, Miss Carrie," said Lizzy, "there was old Colonel Cassady, I knowed him in a minute by his long white beard; then there was General Clark, certain, cause he walks with a stick; and old Captain Washburn, as has such a pretty wife; and Major Fisher."

"Why!" said Caroline, in a voice indicative of great displeasure, "you can't make me believe that only old men came around the spot."

"Nor does I wish to do so, Miss Carrie," said Lizzy; "for there was young Lieutenant Fleming, as I heard you say yourself as his wife must be a fool to take him afore he had any beard; and Captain St. George, who has had his colored man ever since a-rubbing the dust off his breeches; and—"

"You can't make me believe," said Caroline, "that, of all the soldiers camped in Fort-Hill valley, none but old men came to my assistance, except two simpletons!"

"Nor does I wish to do so, Miss Carrie," said Lizzy; "'cause one of the first men I seed was the Rev. Mr. Colburn, as is a chaplain, and as I has heard you say yourself is as smart a man as ever you see. And I thought to myself, if poor dear

Miss Carrie is dragged up a corpse, there is the Rev. Mr. Colburn all ready for the funeral, for he had a solemn look about him, and no doubt he carries a prayer-book always in his pocket; and—

"Stop pulling my hair," said Caroline, angrily, "and hush with your nonsense. I don't believe you know anything about it, and you need not say another word."

The maid sulked, as all maids do when told to be silent, and shortly afterwards went with a message from Caroline to Judge Wilkerson, desiring that he would come to her room directly after breakfast. Even this short delay the judge could not brook; and scarce a moment elapsed from the time the message was delivered ere his knock was heard, and Caroline's audible "Come in" sounded cheerfully in his ears.

The young girl's dimity night-wrapper, with its tiny ruffle at neck and wrist, was by no means an unbecoming costume. She had undergone a wonderful change since her uncle looked upon her last, though it was not many hours before. Her cheek was then colorless, but now its pinkish tint had returned; her look of apathy was entirely gone, and the bright smile and roguish laugh banished every lingering fear her uncle cherished as regards her state, and made him, for the moment, forget every other anxiety in his happiness with her. Caroline was by no means deficient in ingenuity. Her object was to find out as soon as possible (without letting her uncle know the real cause of her curiosity) whether any one person, as far as he knew, had acted a more conspicuous part in her deliverance than others, and if so, who that person was.

To say that she entertained no suspicion or wish as to the identity of the individual would hardly be true. She had mixed in society during the last six months in Vicksburg. The male portion of that society, what is ordinarily called the *beaux*, were all soldiers, and Caroline had her favorites among them, and with a woman's acuteness, knew pretty well how they all regarded her. Among her acquaintances were several sensible, fine-looking fellows, any of them good enough for a *beau ideal*; for ladies, none of you, were very particular at nineteen, or, to express the thing poetically, we'll turn a line of Byron's hindpart before, and say, —

"In her last passion, woman loves her lover;  
But in all others, all she loves is love."

Satan never appeared more satanic than when he misquoted scripture. I am certainly anti-Byron to an almost unlimited extent, when I twist his own lines to refute his own sentiment. And yet I say, that most girls under twenty would marry plenty of men to whom a few years later they would never give a thought. Both men and women give themselves up unreservedly for three or four years (the period differs in different characters) after they leave school to the dictates of what is generally called the heart, but is in reality the fancy, and invest with ideal perfections the person most convenient to select as the rallying-point of the affections. Under this influence, men of genius often select the most ordinary women for wives, and give to their children mothers to whom, in after life, they can hardly repose the trust of learning them their A B C. That women make still worse mistakes cannot be denied. And it is conceded by most reflecting minds, that an attachment formed later in life, where the character of the individual produces the passion, and not the passion the supposed character, has better prospects for happiness.

But, what says Mrs. Thompson, who has five marriageable girls? "If the girls stay single till twenty-five, and the men till thirty, they really don't seem to care to marry at all." There, madam, arises a serious question, and I know that my theory, like everything else, is liable to abuses — abuses which fall harder upon women than men. That people grow more particular, as they grow older, I have affirmed; that they are less likely to meet with their requirements, I must admit. Whether it is better to marry badly than not to marry at all, I have not time to discuss. Should you and I, madam, select alternately all the homeless old maids of forty-five, and all the wives and widows of the same age, — surrounded by their ill-raised broods, the offspring of ill-advised and uncongenial marriages, — that we can find, and compare them, we would probably end as we began, by differing in opinion. But, to return to Caroline.

Among the young officers that composed the garrison of Vicksburg, she had many acquaintances, and among those acquaintances were several, who, had they sought her love under some circumstances, might have won it. But fate had decided otherwise. Something interfered in every case. One or two were engaged already; a third was suspected of being a fortune-hunter; and a fourth thought he had consumption,

and therefore ought not to marry. Caroline had in none of these cases been in love. She possessed that dignity and self-respect which made her withhold her love till it was sought; so, if she had thought of this or that one, that she could love him, she had blushed even to make the confession to herself, and had quickly dismissed it as unworthy of her.

Such behavior in a young lady does, in many cases, lead her straight in the road which has a spectre at the end — a spectre with straight back and hooked nose, that speaks in a squeaking tone, and is shifted about from the house of one relative to another, always abusing and always abused. The more approved way is to fawn and flatter; to do or say something that brings one conspicuously forward from the crowd of pretty girls that are candidates for matrimony; to touch in some way the fountain of self-love that lies hidden in some manly bosoms by a thin, in others by a thinner, coating of ice; and the coating once thawed, a girl even of common abilities can, in most cases, trust everything else to her youth and her natural attractions as a woman.

Had Caroline thought proper to advance one step; had she by smiles, sighs, blushes, or downcast looks, said to some of the tall, bewhiskered soldiers that she daily met, that they had made an impression on her heart, very likely the work would have been completed. The cavalier would have thought first, that the lady had excellent taste, and ought to be cultivated; the matter would have ended by a declaration; and the tact of mademoiselle would have placed herself in the position of the wooed and not the wooer. But Caroline Courteny was firm about this first step. "I'll wait," thought she, "till some man singles me out, ere I give much time or attention to the business of love and marriage."

Thus she reasoned during her seventeenth and eighteenth year, and was entering her nineteenth in the same state of quiet assurance, when the spectre with the straight back and hooked nose suddenly (and, in the dim distance, looking most hideously) burst upon her. "Good heavens!" said she, "what an odious old maid I would make — I, that fret so much already, if the toes of my slippers are not exactly on line, and my needles stuck straight in my housewife." The prospect startled Miss Courteny, so much so, that she took the flowers from her hair, and she did not go to the ball that

night; and it weighed so heavily on her spirits, that she lost rest, and was all unfit for the *dejeuner* next morning.

For two or three days, she continued to think more seriously than she had ever done before in her whole life. The result of her cogitations cannot in the present pages be transcribed. Having both sides of the argument all to herself, she naturally devoted the night to the dark and the day to the bright points in question; so that, in the morning, she thought, "I can get a husband, if I try;" and at night, she thought, "I shall never get married as long as I live." Thus our heroine fluctuated between right and wrong for some time; but she came out of the struggle as pure as gold. Her determination was this: "If heaven or good fortune," she mused, "makes me comely in the eyes of any noble-minded man, and he asks me to love him, I'll do it with all my heart; but if nobody takes a fancy to me, I'll never fish for a husband, but will go straight on my way, and take life just as it comes." And the spectre with the straight back and hooked nose grew less hideous to view, as did also the spectre beyond — the one that stands at the end of everybody's road — he with the sand-glass and the scythe. This determination was the first religious sensation Caroline had ever known. Religion, as taught her in her infancy, was odious to her; religion, as practised about her in her youth, was ridiculous; so she had, in the general acceptance of the word, little enough of religion. But in this matter, she decided conscientiously, and trusted all things mutely to a higher power.

When she returned into society again, Caroline found a new pleasure in everything about her. She had no object in view but to enjoy herself, and for some months she thought of nothing else, and gave herself up unrestrainedly to the innocent pleasures that came in her way. It was quite unexpectedly, therefore, that she met with a soldier, tall and bewhiskered like the rest, whose eye dwelt a shade longer on her face than was necessary, and saw by a certain something in his manner that she pleased him. Their intercourse was not unlike that which generally passes in a ballroom or at a dinner-party. One night only had they ever been thrown intimately together, and that was the night Major Watts's hop was interrupted by an alarm that some of the enemy's gunboats were attempting to pass the water-batteries. The dance had broken up suddenly; the ladies and gentlemen ran helter-

skelter about, not, in most cases, flying from the scene of action, but, striving to find some elevated point, that the combat might be more distinctly visible. On this night, Caroline was in such a state of excitement, that she scarcely knew what she was doing. She was borne along by the crowd, eager as the rest to gain Sky-Parlor Hill, and had reached the foot of it, when somebody had covered her thin dress with a shawl, and offered an arm to assist her in mounting. Was it vanity that made her notice something more than common in the tone of the voice? Was it imagination, that marked a pressure of the hand beneath the strong arm that supported it? Caroline had almost decided that it was, for afterwards they met, and neither were renewed. Yet she found herself constantly comparing the tone and touch on Sky-Parlor Hill with that of the person who had rescued her from the cave, and her heart and her hopes told her, sometimes, they were the same. At such times, she felt as if in a delicious dream. She would lay with her eyes closed, and try to recall every word or tone that had ever reached her ears from his lips, and make to him a thousand vows of truth and constancy. Reader, recall your own first dream of love, and spare me the failure of a description.

Then, again, would come to her a thousand doubts and little circumstances that would seem to make it improbable that the real individual and the ideal were the same, would become distorted to mountains of impossibilities, and she would strive hard to banish them from her mind ere the precious hope would vanish into air, and thus escape her forever. The conversation with her uncle was not more satisfactory than had been the one with Lizzy and Mrs. Woodville. With much ingenuity, she arrived at her point and asked to whom she was most indebted for her deliverance; but her uncle made her understand in a few words that he was not at the precise moment anywhere near. Expecting to hear that she had been dead some hours, he purposely withdrew himself from the spot, and it was only after he had been told several times that his niece was living, and not severely hurt, that he ventured to approach and look upon her.

Caroline was disappointed, but not discouraged, by the conversation. Since her uncle was not near and did not really

know, she could not learn it from him; but it made her the more anxious to recover her strength and leave her room, for she felt certain that once again in what is called the world, this or any other information might be obtained, if only sought for diligently.

## CHAPTER VIII.

ELIZABETH WOODVILLE, TO MARY McREA.

I AM so much excited by what has just taken place, my dear Mary, I fear I can hardly (as yet) give you an intelligible account of it. About two hours ago, the prolonged silence of the mortars, which had lasted full five minutes, attracted pa's attention, and he left the cellar to go upstairs and reconnoitre. He soon came back with the intelligence that one of the largest of the enemy's gunboats was coming, under full sail, round the peninsula in front of the town, and would soon be in range of the Fort-Hill batteries. As we were clamorous to go upstairs, he, upon reflection, concluded that we might, without running a great deal of risk, do so. The mortars still remained quiet, and if the gunboat fired at all, she would be much more likely to aim at the batteries than the town.

You may depend, we did not wait for a second permission, but ran precipitately, servants and children included, to say nothing of Jeff. Davis, the big yellow dog. I was somewhat delayed by helping little Mary up the last flight of stairs, and found, upon gaining the third story, that Estelle, with the aid of a spy-glass, had deciphered the name of the gunboat, which proved to be the Cincinnati. She looked formidable as she now appeared (just rounding the point), to a degree that was really majestic, and nature itself seemed to lend aid to bid us defiance, for the wind raised the flag that stood on her deck, and proudly unfurled the star-spangled banner. The windows were soon filled with our heads, and our attention was directed with almost breathless expectation, to see the effect of the first exchange of shots. Our battery, from the point called the Devil's Backbone (the most elevated on the hill), was the first that opened fire, but seemingly without effect, for the balls rebounded from the iron sides of the boat like bullets from the hide of a rhinoceros; and on she steamed, uninjured and undismayed. Another volley from the batteries, and now the iron monster made her preparations to respond. She turned her bow towards the right bank of the river, and pausing, threw

at us a broadside, which, had it been well aimed, must have carried death to many a brave gunner on shore. The contrary, however, proved to be the case; and the missiles of destruction fell short of their destination, into the river beneath, the water receiving them into its bosom and quickly obliterating the path by which they came.

Estelle now called to us to look below the town. Through her glass, she had seen three gunboats (the same, no doubt, that passed the town, in a crippled state, some two months previous, in the teeth of our batteries, and had been repaired) coming up the river, and offering battle to our heavy artillery near Reading's Foundry. In spite of our peeping and peering, not much could be learned of the proceedings in this direction, for we were too far off. Estelle continued to use the glass, and reported from time to time what she observed. The shots on both sides could be seen and heard; but of their effect, we remained in ignorance. Not so with the conflict above. The strength of the line of guns on the hill was now concentrated on the enemy. The large pieces of cannon at the foot of Jackson, Main, and First East Streets were turned on their pivots in the same direction, and vomited fire and smoke, at intervals, with a noise that made the floor tremble beneath our feet and the plastering fall in small pieces from the roof. Our attention was occasionally diverted by the appearance of excitement and enthusiasm in the streets. The citizens all (like ourselves) crowded to the windows, waving handkerchiefs, shawls, and towels to the soldiers below, who answered, sometimes by cheers and throwing up their hats, and sometimes collected in squads and presented arms. Papa was the first that perceived and made known to us that the boat showed the effects of the fray. She was turning slowly round and was about to commence a retreat.

In turning, her captain made a fatal mistake. Had he backed up stream till the point of land protected him, presenting always the iron-clad bow, no injury would have been sustained, but in turning round, a vulnerable point in the stern was exposed. Unconscious of their advantage, our line of guns continued to fire. The boat becoming suddenly still, a suspicion arose which made our hearts leap. This suspicion became a certainty, when, a moment later, the eagle eye of one of the group discerned the truth, and shouted aloud, "She is sinking, she is sinking! Look! look! she will soon go down!"

I cannot describe to you our joy: we screamed, we shrieked, we shouted, we wept, and fell into each other's arms. The children clapped their hands with glee, and Estelle and Sue danced about the floor like mad. From out of every house went up the same cry of joy, but the men at the batteries outdid us in noise. They rent the air with loud huzzas of triumph; they mounted upon the cannon, and earthen magazines, holding aloft the Confederate flag; and anon the wind, with human-like treachery, shifted sides, and gave also its strength to flaunt about in the face of the enemy the standard of rebellion, and carry to their ears our victorious shouts.

Short, far too short, was our enjoyment of the scene. The dull sound of the bursting mortar-shells again began to disturb the tranquil air. One more look we took, both above and below. There on one hand lay the disabled monster, her lower deck already disappeared in the water, and sailors and officers dropping from her sides into little boats below, to make the best of their way by rowing back to the Federal fleet. In the distance, on the other hand, we could see the retreating outlines of the three which had advanced from below, and some of us, even from this indistinct view, continued to imagine them in a crippled condition. Slowly, we prepared to obey pa's peremptory command to descend again. In doing so, we met at the entrance of the cellar, our neighbor Mr. Cells. His usual impenetrable gravity was all gone; and such was his state of excitement, he could hardly be recognized. He forcibly stopped us all, one after another; and in spite of wry faces, entreaties, and squeals, made us take from a glass and bottle he held in his hand, a sip of one of the greatest known abominations, called Louisiana rum.

I think you would have been proud to see the execution done by Tom Dean's battery during the conflict. General Turner has just peeped through our cellar-window, to tell us that it is supposed the Brook gun, in the second section of Tom's battery, and immediately under control of Lieutenant Cousins, did the finishing touch this morning. or, to use his own expression, made it a stern reality for the Cincinnati. Oh, dear! how dark and gloomy the cellar looks after two whole hours spent in the sunlight and breathing the fresh air. Sue has relapsed already into fretfulness; and Estelle calls it "the black-hole of Calcutta." I don't suppose any human beings ever

experienced the variety of sensations in months, or even years, that we now pass through within a single day.

Yesterday was prolific with horrors! You remember Lieutenant Willet, who came, the first day of the siege, to place in my keeping a letter for his *fiancée*, and a locket containing her miniature. The poor fellow received yesterday morning a wound in the leg which made amputation necessary, and the limb was taken off near the place where the accident happened. His captain put him into an ambulance, as soon as the operation was finished, and brought him here, thinking he would receive better attention than at the hospitals; but although all possible precaution was used against the jolting of the ambulance, the roads were so rough, and the going up and down hill so bad for the poor fellow, that by the time he reached our door, the bandages had slipped, and he was weltering in his blood. Of course, everything in our power was done, but in vain; and he died in six hours. The saddest part of it was, that he suffered a thousand deaths in dying one, for every report of the mortars threw him into an agony of fear, lest he should again be wounded; and at such times, he would beg to be lifted, in spite of his bleeding stump, below stairs or to some place of safety. They buried him without any services in the next lot, for I'm told that the shells are falling in and around the city burying-ground so thick, that it is almost certain death to approach the spot.

When this work of destruction will end, and how many of us will survive, God only knows! Every house in our neighborhood has been penetrated by shell; and in addition to the mortars, the enemy have sharp-shooters in the thickets across the river, who enfilade the streets with minie-balls, and sometimes make it very dangerous for the soldiers to approach the river to get water. These, of course, can be dislodged by our batteries, and have in many instances been made to change their position; but the fact that our guns fire so seldom, when they should in reality keep it up all the time, makes it evident to me (though I am careful not to talk of suspicion) that they are becoming short of ammunition. If this should become known to the garrison at large, I fear it would discourage them more than the great scarcity of food. The force with which these sharp-shooters send their minie-balls is (to us) wonderful. You know our house is three squares



from the river, and yet, in several instances, they have lodged in the trees before the front door.

General Turner tells me, it is supposed the Federal fleet were experimenting last night with hot shot, thinking to fire the town. Of this he thinks there is not much danger, as the mortars are so far off (and cannot, without danger to themselves, approach nearer), that the shells become too much cooled before they strike to do us much injury in this respect. We had hoped, being so near to the river and so far from the outer line of fortifications, that we should at least escape the danger of Parrott guns; but even this hope is now dissipated, for yesterday one crossed the street and entered Mr. Cell's house with a whizzing noise very like a windmill. Indeed, when I consider, I think it wonderful that any house, or indeed any human being, escapes instant destruction; but Judge Wilkerson tells me that a calculation has been made, which shows (when the casualties are compared with the amount of ammunition consumed in the world's annals of battles) that it requires an immense amount of powder and ball to take any one life. Another thing surprises me; it is that so little fear is evinced by those around me. We are all as much disposed to cheerful conversation as ever; and such of the officers and soldiers as visit us (or, more properly, come round to the window, and look down upon us), seem to have no fear for their limbs or their lives. I notice this in an extraordinary degree about Major Hoadly. He says he feels a perfect assurance that the bullet is not yet moulded that will enter his flesh or take his life, and, I'm told, often exposes his person very foolishly in and about the trenches.

I suppose you heard of a Mary Holly having her head blown off, day before yesterday. I thought I had never heard of her at the time, but have since remembered that she once lived as nurserymaid with Mrs. W. Was it not horrible! Not a vestige of her head could be found; and yet her fate was enviable in comparison with many, who, after receiving painful wounds, endure days and nights of agony, breathing the infected air of a crowded hospital.

Our cistern is nearly dry, which will give us additional trouble, for such other cisterns in our neighborhood as have water in them are constantly surrounded by crowds of soldiers drinking and filling their canteens, and will soon be in the same condition. The soldiers show a great deal of con-

sideration for us. They seldom come on the lot, even for a drink of water, without taking the trouble to explain, that the danger of going to the river alone makes them trespass on private property even to this trifling extent. Poor fellows! They little know what outrages they may be forced to commit by hunger ere this terrible state of things comes to an end. But I am no doubt wrong to write you in such a strain.

Ma is still confident, and is in daily expectation of relief from Johnston. General Turner brought the man Ned Haly here yesterday. He (Haly) made his way through the Federal fleet in disguise, and floated many miles down the river on a plank, bringing despatches from Johnston to Pemberton. Haly, of course, knows nothing of the contents of the despatches, but he gives very favorable accounts of the condition of Johnston's army, which is assembled at Jackson, Miss. Among other things, he told me that our friend Captain Cowan, who, you know, lost all his artillery at Baker's Creek, had been supplied with guns of a very superior quality, and had been reinforced by many recruits from this and the adjoining counties. He reports that General Loring has made a junction with Johnston, and gives it as his opinion, that the forces now assembled at Jackson amount to fifty thousand men, and are being daily reinforced from Georgia and Alabama.

Haly is a rough, uneducated man, but seems to have a great deal of natural shrewdness. Ma conversed with him a long time, and he gave her very minute particulars about his trip. He has a sore hand, caused by the bite of an alligator, while he was paddling his plank down the river. His accounts from the outside are extremely cheering, and Ma seems to credit them entirely and to enjoy them very much. I felt as she did, till I had some talk with General Turner. Of course, being on Pemberton's staff, he has to express himself guardedly, but I soon formed an opinion that the private despatches contained news rather less encouraging than it is permitted the garrison at large to know. Remember, General Turner said nothing, but he smiled when Haly expressed the opinion that fifty thousand men were assembled at Jackson, and at some of his other reports shook his head. I asked him if Haly had received instructions to talk in this sanguine way, and he answered "Not that I know of," but reminded me

how difficult it was for a man to form any idea of the number of troops at a place just from looking at them.

Ma has called several times to tell me that Jerry is impatient to be off, and that I must close my letter. I shall be out to see you either tomorrow or next day. Caroline Courteny is almost well, and does not require me any longer. I do wish you could come home to us, now that you are well enough to do so, but am certain you are more comfortable than we can possibly make you here, so cannot advise it. Good-by.

Your affectionate sister,

ELIZABETH WOODVILLE.

## CHAPTER IX.

CAPTAIN Alexander took a snug night's rest, for the first time since the beginning of the siege, and rose up this, the morning of the sixth of June, feeling much refreshed. He had alternated for two weeks between his tent and his trench in the most soldierly manner. To the outer world, there seemed to be little to interrupt the monotony of his life, for the same hour saw him daily on and off duty, on and off horse-back, etc. But there was a little circumstance that interrupted the daily routine, until it became a daily routine itself; it was this. To put on his best clothes, to ride in a stately manner to the head-quarters of Colonel C., to ring the bell, and inquire of any one who answered it after the health of Miss Caroline Courteny. This was an easy thing to do, and many other officers of the garrison performed the same duty (or, perhaps we should say, pleasure) twice in the twenty-four hours, and in a much more pointed way; for, very frequently, they carried an offering of flowers, and sometimes left a charming *billet-doux*, or a message expressive of the tenderest anxiety for Miss Courteny's speedy recovery and early appearance in society.

Captain Alexander carried with him neither flowers nor note. His inquiries were brief, and he never left for the lady any other message than his "best respects." Lizzy thought, that of all the young men who called, he showed least anxiety for Miss Courteny, and so little importance did she attach to his daily visits, that she did not think it necessary to mention them at all. Yet, the preparation Alexander made for these morning calls was worthy of more decided results. They had been for him, ever since Caroline was taken from his arms the day he lifted her, more dead than alive, from beneath the earth, the oasis in the desert of his day. When he laid down, he counted the hours that must pass before the time came for him to ride through the street and stop before the door of the house that contained her. He longed for the moment to come when he should have a pretext for uttering her name

in an audible voice, that he might inquire how she did. From the time he left his tent in the valley, till his hand was on the bell, his breathing became quicker and quicker, and his heart beat so rapidly that all his self-control had to be summoned to be able to articulate the few necessary words, without running the risk of betraying the intensity of his feelings by his voice. After pronouncing her name, then came a dreadful sensation of calmness; not that he feared to hear she was ill (for Alexander had never doubted that Caroline would do well), but he knew, that while he stood there in the doorway, receiving an answer to his inquiries, that he was nearer to her than he could again be for twenty-four hours, and he sometimes feared he was as near to her as he could ever again be, with honor, as long he lived.

It is the same old tale, reader, told so well by Shakespeare, and in so few words — “the course of true love never did run smooth;” the same old tale, told in such pusillanimous terms by female novelists, who with barbarous cruelty separate their lovers by obdurate parents, difference in politics, and oftener than all by difference in religious faith; portraying their heroines with a trait of character called by women firmness, and by men obstinacy, forgetting that God has made woman stable only in the exercise of her affections. And yet, it is very much the fashion to shed tears at the fate of some Methodist young lady who cannot conscientiously marry a Presbyterian young gentleman, and who, with a want of latitudinarianism which would be very much cried down in the Pope of Rome, sends out one bull after another of excommunication at him, till his lacerated heart prostrates itself before the anxious-bench, and receives remission in the person of a Methodist divine.

Think of the triumph with which such a wife enters the pew, to hear her husband's first sermon. Think of the complacency with which she reflects:—He would always have been in the broad path, but for me. I could not trust to the slow process of leading a holy life, like the meek and lowly Nazarene, but I tried the battle-axe of controversy. I threatened his tenderest feelings. I required him to give up the prejudices of his education and association, or else to give up me, whom I saw that he tenderly loved. Women can stand the test of such things, but we poor men generally leave our religion, and cleave to our idols in petticoats; and, like the

oath of Uncle Toby, does not the recording angel blot out the offence with a tear?

The same old tale, then, is generally told badly in novels, and yet, everybody who writes a novel will always have the same old tale to tell. The general error, we contend, is in settling the thing *a la mode* Miss Evans and Marion Harland. The beautiful creatures they so often introduce, with such unnaturally long, wavy hair, and such an astonishing amount of learning and religion, are fortunately seldom met with in real life. Far be it from me to say that girls are not just as pretty out of books as they can be made in; that they do not just as often shock our ears with the jaw-breaking sound of technical terms, or try our patience with long arguments on the philosophy of the doctrine of predestination; but I claim for the lovely creatures on *terra firma*, that, dearly as they love their pet theories and hard-sounding names, that in *affaires de cœur*, they generally let the learning and religion go, and follow mutely the dictates of their hearts. What saith the scripture? “Therefore, shall a man leave father and mother, and cleave unto his wife.” Why said it not also of a woman? Because, so completely she giveth up her all, the sentence has no meaning, for she knoweth not the sacrifice.

And now it comes my time to tell, “the same old tale.” Come to my aid, O patron saint of authors! lest I bring down upon my own head with double force the rancor of criticism, for the mantle of fame covers not my imprudence as it does the fair novelists just mentioned, who reflect a lustre upon the Southern States. And forgive me, O fair young countrywomen! if, copying from nature, I curtail the amount of your hair, your learning, and your religion; for, again, the scripture saith, “In the writing of many books, there is vexation of spirit.” And what saith the most fashionable hair-dressers? “In an abundance of natural locks, there is great disadvantage.” So, mark me, though my heroine was not like Samson in quantity of hair, she may be, if you wish it, perfectly unrivalled in the size of her waterfall.

Alexander, then (to take up the stitch, and proceed with the stocking of our narrative), rode as usual, having his uniform brushed with great care, he knew not why, to — Street, and rang the bell. The door was slightly opened, and crossing the hall, he saw Judge Wilkerson, who immediately

came forward, accosted him with great cordiality, and invited him into his room.

Now, in paying these daily visits, which resulted so unsatisfactorily, Alexander had thought more than once, that if he should happen to meet Judge Wilkerson, and be invited in, he would be almost certain to hear something more definite about Caroline's state, and probably devise some means through the uncle of improving his acquaintance with the niece. He therefore accepted the invitation with alacrity, and was soon seated *tete-a-tete* with the judge, who, all unconscious that the house contained any object of greater interest to the visitor than himself, commenced a conversation on matters and things in general, and particularly on military affairs.

The call was not exactly well timed, for the hands of the clock wanted five minutes of eleven, the hour appointed for Judge Wilkerson to renew his old habit of breakfasting with his niece, for the first time since her recovery. And the most brilliant *dejeune* could not have offered him more attractions than did the prospect of sweet-potato coffee, poured out by his niece, and enlivened during the time of drinking by her sprightly conversation. Judge Wilkerson thought, after some time had passed, that the captain was not near as agreeable in conversation as he had before supposed. What he had heretofore considered as dignified reserve seemed on this occasion little short of stupidity, and, as he talked on, eyeing his visitor, a comical idea came into his mind, which was, that Captain Alexander was intently listening for some sound that he expected from above; and, thought he to himself, he must be (in spite of his reputation for courage) a genuine case of excited nerves, for what can he possibly be listening for, but the periodical explosion of the bomb-shells. That our hero was listening for a sound from above, the reader will not be surprised to hear.

Once, while waiting at the front door, he had accidentally looked up at the windows, and hanging out of one of them, from the room immediately above, he saw a shawl. He knew well to whom that shawl belonged; it was ornamented with stripes of crimson, blue, and gold, such a fabric as might envelope an Indian princess, not easily forgotten by any one. But had it been less conspicuous, Alexander doubted not that he would have known it again; for once,

when the wind was chill, he had followed a slight form clad in a white dress, square after square, till he had remembered that her health might suffer from the exposure of her neck and arms to the night air. Then he had gone back with rapid strides, thinking to get his own cloak, but had met her maid in the doorway, eagerly inquiring which way Miss Courteny went. He had seized the wrapping, and hurried again to her side; and as he placed it upon her shoulders, had almost encircled her with his arms. Then they had climbed the hill together to look at the gunboats pass the batteries; and being somewhat separated from the crowd, had stood a little while talking apart. He had said little, and she less, but there was something in her voice that electrified him. No wonder, as Alexander sat thinking of all this, and listening with greedy ears for the noise of her footfall or the sound of her voice; no wonder the judge thought him dull.

The visit was by no means a short one, and Judge Wilkerson thought within himself, "Confound the man, I don't understand him. He does not seem to feel the slightest interest in what I'm saying, scarcely seems to listen to me, and yet he has kept me a good hour from my breakfast; and Caroline, I know, will not eat without me."

Yet though the conversation flagged to some extent after this, another half-hour passed ere Alexander rose to take his leave. Judge Wilkerson did not urge him to remain. They walked together to the door, and, fearing that the sound of the bomb-shells (which happened at that moment to be a little more lively than usual) might set him to listening, and detain him another half-hour, the judge made his adieu somewhat precipitately, and retired into the house.

As Alexander mounted his horse, he was really angry with himself. No man could have had a better opportunity of finding out what he most wanted to know; and yet he had not brought his courage up to the point of making the most commonplace inquiries, or indeed of mentioning Caroline's name at all. He had thought, while he sat talking with her uncle, of several ways that he could introduce her into the conversation, without appearing to do so by design; but, before he could mature the idea, the opportunity would pass, and when about to take leave at the door, Judge Wilkerson seemed to be so hurried, that to have broached the subject would have seemed quite *malapropos*.

So on he rode, feeling disappointed and chagrined. "I have acted foolishly," he said to himself, "in not making friendly inquiries about her, for everybody does that, and it would have excited no suspicion. But, having so studiously avoided it on this occasion, how can I hereafter go for my daily report? Then, I fear I've not made a good impression on her uncle, which I certainly wished to do — but," he paused — "but (and philosophy coming to his aid, he ended the sentence) it is no doubt for the best, this or anything else that happens to divert my heart and my mind from Caroline Courteny."

Why, reader, you will no doubt ask, should Captain Alexander thus have concluded his sentence? Why, when my brave captain felt such a yearning for a pretty girl, and had a strong persuasion that she also liked him, why did he not go like a man straight up to her, whisper just one little sentence into her ear, get a smile or a blush in return, and feel himself the happiest of men? There were no cruel political opinions to keep them asunder, for they both hated the Yankees alike; no differences of religious faith, for neither of them had any religion; no disparity of age or worldly position; yet there was an obstacle, — one that, in the eyes of the soldier, was an obstacle indeed. It was — a young girl, slight and graceful as Caroline, without her sprightliness and bloom, it is true; without her independence of mind or intensity of imagination, but with a heart as pure.

As Alexander compared the two women in his mind, the one to whom his honor bound him lost daily by the contrast. There was a time when Marion's large, dark eye looked sweet and womanly. He had never loved her, but his heart had freely acknowledged her virtues, and ardently longed for her happiness. During the last few weeks, the remembrance of those eyes had become disagreeable to him. In his dreams and meditations, the expression of gentleness was exchanged for one of reproach, and, contrasted with the flash of Caroline Courtney's glance, they now seemed dull and gloomy. Could Alexander have forgotten the past, his present love would have elevated and strengthened him. He was, in spite of his reserved manners, one of those passionate beings whose nature it is to act from impulse. Duty, honor, gratitude, and habit had all united to make him love his Cousin Marion, and all combined had not succeeded. Duty, honor, every-

thing forbade him to think of any other woman; yet while Caroline Courteny was a stranger, his heart surrendered itself her willing slave.

At a time less exciting, Alexander would have reasoned with himself more thoroughly; and if he found his weakness incurable, would no doubt have removed himself from the woman whose influence he found it impossible to resist. But the state of things existing within the invested town made such a thing almost impossible now. The danger to which she was every hour exposed, her late narrow escape from a dreadful death, hearing her name spoken often by his brother officers — all conspired to keep her constantly in his mind, till reason was darkened by love, and every other feeling gave way to the burning desire to be near her and have some claim upon her heart. He had never been in love before; not that anything was lacking in either his heart or mind which is necessary to the conception of an earnest, healthy passion. Go back with me to his boyhood and youth, and let us see why, at twenty-six years of age, when many men are becoming *blase*, Pierre Alexander was still unlettered in matters of love, and that his affectionate nature, which might have budded as early as others, had been backward and was only now beginning to bloom.

## CHAPTER X.

**E**DWARD Alexander, the father of our hero, was born in Tennessee. As he has little connection with our story, it is only necessary to say (without telling why) that he left home very early in life, and after wandering, without any definite object in view, for three years, found himself at the end of that time in Attakapas, in South Louisiana. He seems to have been one of those persons (not often met with) who are lightly bound by family ties; and when the first year had passed after he left home, he ceased to hear from, or to write to, any living relative. He came to Louisiana without any reason, finding himself there, as it were, by accident; for he had no idea of remaining more than a few weeks, much less of making it a permanent home, and leaving children and grandchildren to inherit his name.

But so it proved; and those who have any knowledge of the climate and scenery of those parishes that once formed Attakapas, will not be surprised that an aimless and homeless man was beguiled by the bright skies and balmy air of St. Mary's to tarry, he scarce knew why. Edward Alexander, however, soon found a reason for his tarrying. A fair creole, an heiress and a beauty, came in his way. It would seem that an adventurer, without name or fortune, stood little chance of forming the acquaintance, much less of winning the heart, of the rich and lovely Mademoiselle Dijon. But not so. An introduction at a neighboring ball, a few sentences in very bad French, and spoken in the presence of madame sa mere (for Felice was never alone), and monsieur from Tennessee found himself an accepted lover, and began to wonder where he could get the money to buy his wedding clothes and make a present to his bride.

He rode round the plantation of his *fiancee*, and looked with wonder at the immense fields planted in sugar-cane, and the lines of whitewashed cottages, the habitations of three hundred slaves. He was joked by his boon companions in the neighboring village with having gotten into a good scrape;

but it was several weeks before he realized what had really come to pass. Alexander was not devoid of honor, and upon reflection, he felt dissatisfied with himself. He felt he was giving Mademoiselle Dijon a poor return for her fortune and her beauty. His declaration to her had not been premeditated; and when, inspired by the childishness and loveliness of the girl of fifteen, he had asked her to be his wife, he fully expected her to answer no.

But the creole girls never flirt before marriage; and Felice, thinking he meant what he said, and knowing that her father and mother thought she ought to marry and see a little of the world, was quite delighted; and turning immediately round to Madame Dijon, who was sitting near, begged her in the most artless and unembarrassed manner to give her consent to a speedy marriage with Monsieur Alexander. The matron expressed no surprise at the suddenness of the proposal, but told monsieur to call the next morning and see Monsieur Dijon. This part of the business Alexander would gladly have escaped; but since there was no alternative, he went at the appointed hour, and learned, more by signs than words (for his father-in-law elect spoke no English and he no French), that there was to be no objection on the paternal side. A few weeks passed very pleasantly. He went daily to see Felice, who always received him in the presence of mamma, and learned from her a few more sentences of French to add to those he had already picked up, and in return gave her a lesson in English.

It was very sweet to him to repeat after her, "*Je vous aime*," and to hear her say in her turn, "I love you." She was shy at first and seemed to avoid intuitively some adjectives her teacher insisted on, but finally grew more confident and said in audible terms, "dearest." Mamma, who took little interest in the conversation, as a general thing, seemed also to wake up at this sound and requested Felice to say to M. Alexander that as they were not yet married, all expressions must be *comme il faut*. Alexander thought "dearest" sounded *tres comme il faut*, and begged Felice to say to mamma that it was all right, and that the expression was a positive necessity between engaged people in his country. At this, Madame Dijon's anxiety was entirely lulled, and she relapsed again into silence.

After the novelty and excitement of the thing was over, there



came a time, as we said before, when Alexander felt dissatisfied with himself. His little *fiancée* asked him with great simplicity one day, why, if he loved her so much, he did not hasten the day for their marriage. This made him think seriously, and he resolved to go at once to M. Dijon, to make an *expose* of his poverty, and he doubted not that he would in consequence have to give up all claim to the hand of the daughter. The interview took place. Neither party understood above three words of what the other said, and they parted; Dijon very angry, and Alexander really ashamed to think he had compromised his honor, and really sad to think he could only see Felice to say farewell. After leaving the father, who was puffing and blowing with anger, Alexander went into another part of the house, and asked as usual for Madame and Mademoiselle Dijon. He would have given worlds at that moment, to have spoken good French, just to have told Felice how sorry he was they had ever met, and how loth he felt to leave her; but in his excitement, words seemed to escape him, and it was with much difficulty, that he made her understand it was necessary to say "Good-by."

"Ou allez vous?" she cried, in grief and surprise.

"Je ne sais pas," he answered; "mais votre pere dit, qu'il faut que je m'en aille."

"Pourquoi?" she said, still wonderingly.

Oh! what would Alexander have given to have explained all, but in vain he made the attempt, and after commencing several unintelligible sentences, he could only utter, —

"Ne pas de l'argent."

"Ne pas de l'argent!" she repeated in surprise; "est ce tout?"

"C'est tout," he answered, sadly, and quickly went away, for tears were standing in the soft eyes of the girl, and Alexander felt that to linger, would be but courting misery for both.

The next morning, before breakfast was finished, M. Dijon drove to the village, and stopping before "L'Hotel de St. Jean" (which, in spite of its long name, was little better than a "Cadian hut"), asked for M. Alexander.

"Decendez, monsieur, s'il vous plait," said the waiter; "M. Alexander a la maison. Entrez ici, monsieur, est dans cette chambre."

Alexander left off packing his valise and made a step forward to receive his visitor. M. Dijon commenced like a

schoolboy who had learned his task, but learned it very badly.

"Yester," he said, "I miscomprenez you, monsieur. You say vous n'avez pas de money. Je pense you say you not take ma fille pour any de money. Je demande grace," and he offered his hand.

This harangue somewhat puzzled Alexander, but, with the help of the waiter, who fortunately spoke both French and English, he was made to understand that Dijon had the day before construed his allusions about money into expressions of disrespect for mademoiselle and her fortune, that his not having any money was no no sort of objection to the marriage, as Mademoiselle Dijon had quite "assez pour l'un et l'autre," and that if he wished it, the wedding might take place the very next week.

An hour later, Alexander, in spite of Madame Mere, was holding Felice in his arms and expressing in much better French than he could command the day before, his love for his *fiancée*, and his admiration of the generosity of monsieur son pere.

"I'll always be good to you, Felice," he said; and so he always was.

The wedding soon took place, and Alexander found himself metamorphosed from a poor devil for whom nobody cared a straw, to one of the richest sugar-planters in St. Mary's; for his wife, besides being liberally portioned by her father, had inherited a large estate from a relative on the mother's side.

Fortunate would it have been, if a few thousands or a few hundred thousands could have been invested in common sense, or procured for the young couple a little prudence, wherewith to manage their affairs. The first time in her life that Felice had ever heard of such a thing as want, was the morning Alexander had uttered to her astonished ears, "Ne pas de l'argent;" so that, to take care of, or to increase what she already had, would have been a more profound mystery to her than the doctrine of transubstantiation. To her husband, who had been born poor and always expected to live so, the fortune was always a dream to wonder at and enjoy, never a responsibility to realize and assume. Felice lost both father and mother soon after her marriage. This was the only grief she ever knew during her husband's lifetime. Business affairs were going

wrong, it was true. Crops failed year after year, and yellow fever swept away the negroes by dozens and scores. But her husband never allowed even the little of anxiety he felt to cast a shadow on the sunshine of his wife's happiness. It mattered little to her, whether the crop succeeded or failed. No change occurred in her daily life; the same bevy of nurses carried about her numerous children, and the same *femme de chambre* combed daily her long hair, put on her shoes and stockings and clasped in her diamond ear-rings. As she grew older, the symmetry of her form disappeared, and she became rather more than *embonpoint*, which increased her natural love of ease to indolence, and the greatest exertion of which she was capable was to get into her carriage, and glide over the smoothest of all roads for a morning or evening drive.

Twelve years almost to a day, from the time of his marriage, Alexander found himself on his death-bed. A vague fear which had for some time annoyed him now assumed a tangible shape, and he felt certain that the time would come sooner or later when Felice would feel a change and suffer what to her would be privations for want of money. He blamed himself now, when it was too late, that he had not taken more care of her property, or at least endeavored to prepare her in some degree for the approaching change. As she stood beside his bedside, he tried hard to say one word, just one, but the dread of giving pain made him postpone it till the last hour of the last day; and then one look at her countenance, when the idea first occurred that he was going to die, changed his determination altogether. The words of warning were changed to those of encouragement and love, and as he had lived, so he died, keeping in his own bosom what he feared might cause her to suffer; and hiding even his death-struggle, he looked his last upon her with a smile.

Madam Alexander, when she became a widow, had nine children, of whom the oldest, Pierre (our hero), was only eleven years of age. She had besides, a niece of her husband's, a girl of thirteen, who had been sent from Tennessee, some years before, because she had lost both father and mother, and the news of her uncle's sudden wealth reaching the ears of his nearest of kin, little Marion was sent to claim, as a portionless orphan, her right to his protection and a share of his abundance. She was received and treated as a daughter by Felice, and it was strange to see with what a

feeling of astonishment the little stranger was regarded, when it was found that she could actually dress herself at so early an age, and comb her own hair. Alexander and his wife petted and praised her, but the head-nurse shook her head, and looked suspicious, for she thought it was against nature for white people to wait on themselves; and, later, when Marion conciliated her with an apron of her own making and a pair of stockings knit with her own hands, she declared publicly in the quarter that the child would die, for that such a prodigy could never be raised.

It was from this remark of the nurse, as well as her delicate appearance, that the idea arose on the plantation, and frequently reached the ears of the child herself, that her life would not last many years. Probably this affected her spirits, for the little girl always looked quiet and sad; and as she grew older, the expression of her large eyes deepened from thoughtfulness to extreme melancholy. She took from the first a kind of protecting care of her aunt, whose helplessness touched her affectionate heart. She learned to perform all the little offices of the toilet, and, when the maid was sick, went with unfeigned pleasure to take her place. Madam Alexander first objected, saying, "Ne soyez pas une domestique, ma petite." But she never excited herself much about anything, and in time, allowed Marion to relieve the nurses one after another, as she had before done the *femme de chambre*.

Nothing (in the days when slavery existed in the Southern States) excited the contempt of the negroes like seeing white people work. This was more particularly the case in South Louisiana, where the creole population (who were the largest slaveholders) were indolent to excess, both by nature and habit. It was some little time before Marion's good offices about Madam Alexander's household were considered by the servants as anything but interference. But the time came, and then the little girl was a great favorite. Her Cousin Pierre, two years younger than herself, was probably as rude and unmanageable a chap as the world ever saw. From his infancy, he was spoiled and petted by father, mother, and nurse, till his temper (naturally quick) became violent and ungovernable. Toward Marion it oftenest showed itself, for tyranny in children, as in older people, generally vents itself on the gentle and defenceless.

Why did not the little girl hate her cousin as he deserved? It would be difficult to give a reason, but certainly, such was far from being the case. A ride behind Pierre on his pony, a sail on Bayou Teche in his boat, a moment of pleasant talk under one of the huge live oaks that shaded the lawn—and rudeness, injustice, hard words, and even blows, were forgotten. Crawfish time, in the spring, was the pleasantest time for Marion, for then Pierre needed nets, of which she made the best of anybody; and, almost every day, he spoke civilly, and asked her to make him a new one. How delightful to be able to do something for Pierre, something to give him pleasure! If she ever went hunting with him and got tired of carrying the gun, he drove her back and called her a spooney; for Pierre spoke English almost as well as French, and knew that was a name by which a girl hated to be called. But when the nets were needed, they sat together under the trees, and she would knit as fast as possible. Not fast enough to suit her cousin, however, for he would keep saying, "Quick, quick, Marion, or we'll have no *bisque* for dinner!"

Young Pierre inherited none of his mother's indolence. So full of energy was he, and so fond of manly sports, that his frame seemed able to endure almost any amount of exertion. And his father used to think sometimes, as he caught sight of the child, clinging to a creole pony without saddle or bridle, and flying through the prairie in pursuit of a wild bull, that the spirit of some traditionary forefather—a rude pioneer of the stately forests of Tennessee—had descended upon him, and kept at bay, alike, the inert proclivities of his maternal relatives and the enervating effects of the almost tropical sun of St. Mary's.

When Edward Alexander died, his wife mourned for him truly. She did not murmur at the decrees of fate, or give vent to her distress aloud; but a certain sadness crept slowly over and pervaded her whole being, which was never dissipated till the day of her death. Her mild helplessness was truly affecting. For months after the death of her husband, she sat still in her chair nearly all day, saying over her rosary, with her eyes full of unshed tears and never raised, except to contemplate a picture of the Crucifixion with looks of devotion. In an undertone, she repeated prayer after

prayer for the repose of the soul of him who was gone, and learned to look upon the years that must pass before her death as a painful separation from all that was dear.

The care of the house, the children, everything devolved on Marion. It was she who first found out that they had grown poor, and must move away from the beautiful white house, with its avenue of oaks leading to the front gate, and the emerald carpet of grass spread out so smoothly before it. She took Pierre away from the house to tell him what the commission-merchant had written and the lawyer had said; but the lad stamped and swore so violently, that the girl felt like a culprit who had helped to bring on the misfortune, instead of a guardian angel who was seeking to avert or soften it.

"O Pierre!" she cried, "don't talk so loud or get so mad, indeed I'm afraid it's all true; and, please, tell me what we ought to do."

"But it is not true, and it shan't be true," cried he; "and you shan't say it's true; and the first man that comes here to sell this house, I'll take my gun and shoot him right through the heart." He started to run for his gun so as to load it all ready, and poor Marion, badly frightened, clung to him weeping, and begged and prayed he would not alarm his mother by his violence.

It was in answer to a message from the young girl, that a brother of Madam Alexander, whom Marion had never seen (though he lived not fifty miles away), came to look into her business affairs, and to advise as to their future mode of life. A more unsuitable adviser than Gustave Dijon, about any practical matter, could scarcely have been found. He had taken from the paternal estate, fifteen years before, his own portion (a liberal one), and settled himself on one of the sea islands that dot the coast of South Louisiana. He had never married, and his life had been without incident, except a voyage to France, and a residence in that country of two years. He was not extravagant in his way of life; and I cannot tell (for he could not tell himself) why, at forty years of age, he was a poor instead of a rich man. There was no reason why he should consider why this had come to pass. For it seemed to be the history of every wealthy creole family in South Louisiana; they became rich without any effort of their own, simply from the increased value of their lands, gotten, in the first place, by Spanish grant. And just as regularly as the hands

of the clock point to twelve at noon and six in the evening, the generation succeeding the rich one was sure to be as poor.

To a man constituted like Gustave, this thing of money was of little consequence. He was of unambitious temper and indolent habits, and having no family of his own, and supposing the children of his sister well provided for, he saw his thousands dwindle into hundreds with little or no concern. His only feeling strong enough to be called a prejudice was distaste for American society. When, therefore, his health became delicate, and he was recommended a change of air and scene, he chose rather to go to France, than to take the tour through the northern and eastern states, which was becoming so fashionable among the new planters, who were coming into the parish from the more eastern of the gulf states, and bringing with them habits and morals extremely disagreeable to the creoles. Two years in France brushed him up a little, and gave him a habit, before unknown, of looking into the newspapers, and noticing what was going on in the world. But twelve months after his return to his native country, these slight changes had disappeared, and though *Le Moniteur* was sent him from Paris, it was soon neglected, and finally used only to light his pipe.

He had seen little of Felice since her marriage. That her husband spoke so little French was a sufficient reason to avoid him; and it was with both reluctance and embarrassment that he started, because of general rumors and a particular message from Marion, to look after his sister and her affairs.

"You are changed, Felice," he said, as he kissed her forehead and seated himself beside her.

"Yes," she answered, "I have lost my husband."

To her, this sentence contained the sum-total of her grief. She had been told that her fortune was gone, and her children were to grow up perhaps uneducated and certainly unprovided for. Pierre's violent temper and unruly behavior must long ere this have forced themselves upon her notice; but while her husband lived, she had never been unhappy, and now that anxiety crowded upon her, she thought it all originated in this — that he was not there to shield her. Gustave had little difficulty in persuading his sister to give up her home and move to a smaller one. There was but one thing he looked for her to oppose. He had concluded, when he went home, to take the boy Pierre with him; not that he had conceived any

fancy for the chap, but, seeing that he added to his mother's troubles, he thought it best to take him out of her way. Even to this, the widow made no objection.

Accustomed in all things to be guided by others, she was easily persuaded that 'twas for the best, and, commending her boy to the Blessed Virgin and St. Ignatius Loyola, with very few tears, she saw him depart. Just before setting out for the home of his uncle, Pierre became suddenly thoughtful, and seemed to realize that he had been, for some time past, a very bad boy. He said farewell, in gentle terms, to his mother and little brothers, and, last of all, to Marion; and, in addition to farewell, he said to her, "Marion, I know I've been very rude to you, and I'm sorry for it. I'll not stay long away; and while I'm gone, please, you take care of mamma, for you can do more for her than anybody else; and when I come back, I'll try and repay you."

"I'll do all I can, Pierre," she answered through her sobs, and watching, saw his pony disappear from view.

Life on the sea-island suited Pierre, if possible, better than life on the bayou. His first sight of the Gulf of Mexico was from the top of some hills that skirted the island. His eagle eye scanned the silvery waves, and longed to launch his boat, despising in recollection the quiet sail on Bayou Teche, and anticipating with delight *le petit voyage* he would make in the teeth of some rising storm. He soon learned to draw the seine, and count by dozens and scores the fish of every name and hue that he turned from the net upon the shore, to writhe and glitter in the sun. At the mouth of the bayou, there were always crabs; and there, astride the trunks of fallen trees, he drew them up, or waded barelegged through the white-shelled bottom of the limpid stream, to clutch with his hands the party-colored monsters, in spite of the sharp wounds inflicted by their vicious claws. His feet were often cut with oyster-shells, and his legs bleeding from the grasp of crabs; but the trophy, be it shell-fish or scale-fish, was held aloft with the same reckless glee.

'Twas wonderful that the occupants of the gulf and bays received him not as a brother; for, though amphibious and able to exist on land, once in the water, he moved through the waves like lightning, and might have won a wager from them all. The habitation of Gustave consisted of five huts, joined together, and daubed on the outside with mud. Let not

the reader wonder that such was the abode of one, a gentleman both by manners and birth. To a female, accustomed to live incessantly within four whitened walls, a house might have been a consideration even here. But to a man and a creole, the contemplation of the landscape beyond was more fully enjoyed beneath the dome of the ever-azure sky, for nature had lavished her beauties on the spot. She spread out the bay at the foot of the grass-covered hill. She wound the blue-tinted bayou, between its banks of snow-white shells, till its waters mingled with the brackish fluid of the little bay, and, farther on, made one with the briny waves of the giant gulf. She clothed the trees with eternal verdure, and looped their branches together with fantastic festoons of grape-vines and wild honeysuckles. Along the shore and at the mouth of the streams, she made many a lovely nook and inlet, shading the top with the white-blooming magnolia and a wild profusion of the crimson-tinted coral berry; fit rest alike for the gorgeous plumage of the parrot and to echo the gentle coo of the dove. She warmed vegetation in the morning with the splendors of a tropical sun, and cooled and refreshed it in the evening with the softest of dews and the life-giving influence of many a breeze from the sea. She threw, in the distance, the silvery waves high on the sandy beach, and when the tide was high offered an Eden of freshness for the heated body to lave in.

Was it strange that a man should despise an aspiring roof that would shut from his view such a scene, or offer a mockery of protection from the almost ever-cloudless sky? The dainties of his table might have well been the envy of kings. Hunger was appeased with the delicate flesh of the teal duck and woodcock, and the oyster and crab made many a savory *ragout* under the crafty hands of that unrivalled of culinary artists, the creole *cusinier*. The repast was finished with the golden fruit of the orange plucked from the neighboring trees, and the smoking *café noir* was handed late in the evening. The immediate surroundings of the house were such as are apt to be found in that climate about the home of a bachelor, where the foot of a white woman had seldom if ever trod. Dogs kennelled on the end of the gallery; ducks made themselves muddy pools near the front entrance of the habitation; and juvenile Africans (their clothing a single shirt) squatted about, almost as thick as the swarming mosquitoes. The

female servants were numerous; some having the shiny black skin and good-natured expression of the full-blooded negro; others, the more regular features, abundant hair, and suspicious eye of the mulatto. The miseries of freedom had at that time never been dreamed of; the form of government acknowledged on the plantation was a despotism, but its exercise a limited monarchy; for a kinder-hearted or better man could scarcely have been found than Gustave Dijon, its master.

## CHAPTER XI.

**I**N this abode, young Pierre lived till he was fifteen years old, without going even once to see his mother. He was told from time to time that she was well, and with this account was perfectly contented. It had never occurred to him that she had upon him any claim, or that he could do anything for her. Marion, he knew, was there, and his little brothers; and the negroes who passed to and fro, between the plantation and the island, sometimes entertained him with accounts of how they all had grown, and how fat his mother was getting to be. He might have passed several years more in the same way, but that at this time, it suddenly occurred to Gustave, that his nephew could scarcely write his own name. Reflecting upon the matter, it gave him some concern. He had no ambition to make his nephew a scholar, but had himself felt inconvenience from not knowing more of arithmetic; and, in revenge for certain mistakes made in debit and credit in New Orleans, he firmly resolved that, at any cost, Pierre should be taught to look over his own bills.

This amount of knowledge, as the reader may observe, might have been acquired on this side of the Atlantic; but, after revolving the matter over in his own mind for some months, Gustave saw no alternative but to send the youth to France. It was in the month of June that the resolution was taken, and, when fairly decided on, was in due course of time made known to Pierre.

Gustave was not prepared for opposition, but he met with it in this shape. Pierre had other plans for the coming fall. He had made an acquaintance on a neighboring island, when he first came to reside with his uncle. It was an old man, brown as mahogany with the effects of sixty years' exposure to suns, winds, and rains. He lived alone, having no ostensible occupation but to collect oysters and catch fish, and, but for his age, might in winter have sat for a portrait of Robinson Crusoe, since his outer garments and cap were of bear or deer skin. He was commonly called Gonsalve, and spoke both Spanish and French, but the former much better than

the latter. Pierre was in the habit of swimming or rowing to his island in search of game, and fell in accidentally with this crude specimen of humanity, his acquaintance with whom soon ripened into an intimacy.

Gonsalve was regarded with suspicion by both whites and negroes. By the negroes, he was thought to be leagued with the devil; by the whites, he was suspected of smuggling. Before a year had passed, Pierre knew more of him than any one else, and the facts which he gathered were these. The old man had belonged to the piratical gang of the famous sea-robber, LaFitte, being at the time not twenty years of age.

By an accident, he had not been included in the pardon won by the outlaw for himself and comrades, by his services to the Federal government at the battle of New Orleans. Gonsalve was absent, at the time, on secret service near the Rio Grande; and, returning some months after to the old place of rendezvous, he heard the strange tidings, that his companions had all become honest men, and he only left to dodge about the old haunts with the unquietness of a shade from purgatory. Had he been blessed with much sagacity, the easy method of giving himself up to the authorities and demanding pardon would no doubt have occurred to him. But so little did he know of mankind and their manners, that he always believed himself a criminal, and passed many years seeking to conceal his name and history, when no human being sought to bring him to justice. That leading this isolated life, afraid to look upon the face of mankind, and believing himself under the ban of the law, his heart yearned for the jolly companions of his youth and their exciting adventures upon the high seas, the reader may readily believe.

Pent up in his bosom his secret remained for two-score years, till, won by Pierre's boyish frankness and confidence, he told him the story of his life in return; and added many a legend of battles fought and won, and told of heaps of captured gold and glittering jewels. The cruelty (if cruelty there was) he carefully repressed, and, enlarging on the courage and generosity of La Fitte, he painted him in colors so bright that the boyish enthusiasm, which might, under different direction, have spent itself in devotion at the tomb of the martyr Becket, or followed with admiration the steps of the warrior Napoleon, took for its ideal the famous pirate of the gulf, and desired no better fate than to lead a career like his.



Many a day the boy spent listening to these tales of Gonsalve. All were heard with wrapt attention, but his favorite was the capture of the rich and miserly Don Manuel Gobeze, who had defrauded his fair ward Donna Inez, and was carrying her fortune of money and jewels to Cuba, when LaFitte bore down upon the ship that contained him, and seized the treasure to restore to the beautiful orphan, making her persecutor walk the plank into the sea. Pierre questioned not the legal right of his hero to dispose of the booty and legislate on the lives of his captives. His excited imagination found no fault with the deeds of daring, and could see in the pirate only a philanthropist.

"And how did he send the money back to Donna Inez, Gonsalve?" asked the youth with breathless anxiety.

"That is the worst part of the story," answered Gonsalve; "he never could get it back to her, at all. We were sent, the morning after the capture, with a box of gold and precious stones, to bury them in a convenient spot till some opportunity occurred to send one of the crew with them back to Mexico. I came in the boat, and helped to dig the hole; but, strange as it may seem to you, Pierre, we never could find the place afterwards, though I noticed, particularly, that it was at the foot of a mound, and took the precaution to notch the neighboring trees with my hatchet."

Then Pierre, wild with excitement, commenced a search for the captured treasure, that he might restore it to the owner—painting her in fancy a fair young girl, and forgetting that the half-century which had passed would have converted any marvel of beauty into a shrivelled hag.

He dug at the foot of every mound on the islands round, but in lieu of gold and jewels, found only teeth, bones, and pieces of Indian pottery, with now and then ends of arrows, or an ill-shaped tomahawk of stone.

This motive excited him to scour the coasts for many miles, and though the fair Inez and her descendants were not the better for it, many a deer, hare, and duck went in consequence to their long homes; and the cabin of Gustave was bedecked with the snow-white plumage of the crane, the brown crest of the autulon, and the carnation wing of the rare and beautiful rose-colored flamingo.

But to return to our story. Pierre was not willing to go immediately to France, and told his uncle so. He had agreed

to take a trip with Gonsalve early in November, and his heart was too firmly set to abandon it for the pitiful ambition of learning to write and cipher.

In truth, he considered this thing of learning as rather to be desired in women than men, for he remembered Marion's smooth handwriting and great partiality for books, and thought a thing so easily acquired by a girl as rather beneath the dignity of a young man, who ardently hoped at some future day to be a pirate. The trip arranged with Gonsalve was neither long nor hazardous. The old man had never ventured farther from his hermitage than the island on which was built the lighthouse, since his memorable journey to the Rio Grande; but feeling great trust in Pierre's courage and protection, he now contemplated (if the youth would bear him company) to take a small sail-boat, with a cargo of oysters, round to Berwick's Bay and up Bayou Teche, to dispose of at the little towns of Franklin, New Iberia, and St. Martinsville. This thing was done by oystermen from the neighboring coasts, and it was reported, with great profit; so that Gonsalve, from the rumor of market prices that reached his ear, calculated that the cargo might yield him near a hundred dollars, an almost fabulous sum of money in his eyes, so entirely had his ideas and fortunes changed since he scoured the gulf in search of rich marine spoils. Pierre most readily agreed to go, with his uncle's consent, if it could be had, and if not, without it. He told Gustave the exact state of the case, and added, that as regards going to Paris, he didn't much care one way or another when he came back; but, if it was a long distance, some of the negro men must go along, for he was by no means willing to do his own rowing.

With his characteristic mildness, Gustave thought it better to conciliate than to use force. So he bade the lad fulfil his engagement with Gonsalve, and then come back to prepare for his journey, adding a request that Pierre would stop and see his mother, which would only be a few miles out of his way; but about this, the nephew would make no positive promise lest it might in some way interfere with his *compagnon de voyage*."

Punctual as to time, the white sail of the little craft was unfurled; and the crew, which consisted of Gonsalve, Pierre, and a negro from Gustave's plantation, piloted and steered it through the group of little islands, and, hugging the coast for

some miles, brought her safely into Berwick's Bay. The beauty of the weather during the fall months in the southern parishes of Louisiana can neither be imagined nor described. Week after week passes with a cloudless sky and an atmosphere like the balmy air of spring. The flowers, as if conscious of the coming freeze which for a short time checks their bright hues, bloom with a profusion which seems an effort to exhaust their sweetness, ere the hand of the destroyer comes to blight them. The negroes are busy with their knives in the cane-fields, loading the groaning wagons with the juicy stalks; and the delicious odor of the boiling syrup rises with the curling smoke from the sugar-houses, and invites the passer-by to stop and be regaled with the cane, taffy, punch, and other good cheer, which, in "the good old times," were always extended politely and without charge.

It was a season of uncommon beauty when Pierre and Gonsalve made their notable journey. Arrived at Berwick's Bay, Pierre, as the boat glided along, looked at Brashear City on the one side, and the depot of the Opelousas Railroad on the other; and, as he had seen little but woods, cane-fields, and negro-quarters since he was born, thought it a considerable assemblage of houses and quite a respectable number of people. One of the line of Galveston steamers was just entering the bay, and Pierre, who had never seen so large a vessel before, was lost in amazement and delight. Fortunately, the canvas tent of an itinerant show, which was pitched in the distance, escaped his attention, or the boat would have soon found itself at anchor; as it was, he would willingly have tarried, but Gonsalve, who mistook the top of a neighboring church for a court-house, began to think of courts, jails, and gibbets, and insisted on steering straight into the bayou, without stopping to pass the night.

On they glided; and our hero, who made a distinction, with all his activity of body, between exerting himself for amusement, and doing so in the way of work, was very particular to let Gonsalve and the negro manage the boat, while he, considering himself as supercargo, sat still on a barrel at one end, watching the tall oak-trees, draped with trailing moss; the shining orange-trees, laden with golden fruit; the plantations coming into sight, and then disappearing from view; their long lines of whitewashed cabins, spreading bananas, and smoking sugar-houses, tinged with the rays of the setting sun.

It would be hardly just to the youth, not to mention that his own appearance, in spite of his careless dress, gave an interest to the scene, for Pierre at the time was a model of boyish beauty, and though of a different style from the love-sick Narcissus, had he cast a look in the waters beneath, as he stood up to blow his bugle (a well-known sign to make known to the plantations that an oyster-boat is passing), he might have suffered in consequence from the effects of his own charms.

The trip, though tedious, was full of variety and pleasure. When, in answer to the bugle-blast, a signal was made from one of the plantations for the boat to land, Pierre jumped immediately on shore, leaving his friends to conclude the oyster traffic; and, bounding up the bank, ran to seek amusement, and to exercise his limbs, stiff with want of exertion. At such a time, the sugar-house, if boiling had commenced, was sure to be his stopping-place, and, mounting up the platform to the foaming kettles, he would take from his pockets the yellow-skinned oranges, and throw them into the hot syrup to cook; or, bringing in a tin pan, the kernels of pecans, that most delicious of nuts, that grow in wild profusion along the banks of the Teche, he mixed them with the golden-grained sugar, making a delicate confiture, with which to regale himself and companions when again in the boat. Then he would go to the door of the purgery, and sometimes spying a crowd of little negroes at their never-ceasing occupation of sucking sugar-cane, he would charge upon them with a long stalk, and, leaving them uttering a simultaneous howl, would disappear down the bank, in boyish enjoyment of the fun, often to the relief of Gonsalve, who could not speak one word of English, and found himself more and more inconvenienced by it, as he proceeded up the bayou.

Naturally buoyant, the boy was extremely exhilarated by the constant change of air and scene, the glorious sunlight, and the cloudless sky; but, when the evening came, and the shadowy twilight glided into moonlit night, the effect sobered his spirits, and thoughtfulness would make him almost sad. At such times, a foresight would come over the glad heart of the youth, and a sad foreboding seemed to creep into his bosom of the trials that awaited his maturer years. In the moss-draped trees, his imagination revived the frightful phantoms of his childhood's dreams; and the infantile instinct to

hide his head and shut out the dreadful images would come back, but Pierre never yielded to it. Just as he sat upright, and gazed with clear eye upon the dark shadows and huge forms about him, so, in after-life, he bared his bosom to the storms of fate, and with manly courage bore his lot in life, albeit a sad one.

At the end of fourteen days, the lower towns of the bayou had been passed; and the church, court-house, and dwellings of St. Martinsville came in sight, which was to terminate the journey. Here the cargo was discharged, and Gonsalve, well pleased with his success, commenced the next day his preparations to descend. Hearing of a French priest in the town, he detained Pierre (for he had long wished to meet with one, that he might unburden his conscience, by going to confession), and spent an hour in consultation with the holy father; at the end of which time, he returned to the boat light of heart and bright of countenance, for he firmly believed that he had received forgiveness through the church, and that "God's benediction was upon him." The same bright days and moonlit nights attended them on their way down. Pierre passed within five miles of his mother's home, and the proximity awakened within him some recollection of his childhood, so much so, that he resolved to see her again; and, as Gonsalve could wait but a limited time for the visit now, he thought it best to attend him back to the island, and start afresh to make a visit of some duration before going away to school.

As they drew near Berwick's Bay, going down, a wonderful change occurred in the feeling of the atmosphere and the looks of the sky.

Pierre had been sleeping in the cabin of the boat, and, coming afterwards out on deck, he called out, "Hallo, Gonsalve! what's become of the sun?"

The old man shook his head, and answered, "We are going to have awful work above head, Master Pierre, before the night is over. Listen, how the water-fowls shriek! and that muttering thunder has mischief in it."

An hour afterwards, though the night was not come, it was almost dark. The leaden hue of the sky had changed to a blackish mist, and the rain-charged clouds chased each other with frightful rapidity past. The wind, coming through the south, howled through the forest, carrying with it leaves and branches, and, raising the hanging moss on high, threw it with

threatening gestures about, grimly menacing the horrors that were to come ere morning—horrors, at the recollection of which, even yet, the people of St. Mary's grow pale, for it was the night of Last Island storm.

The storm-king was drunk with fury, and breathed destruction around; but the spot marked for annihilation was the fairest in that locality—a beautiful island, which lay like a sparkling gem upon the bosom of the sea, its glittering sands spread over a twelve-miles beach, smiling a gentle return for the daily caress of the waves. It had been, for several years, a favorite summer resort for the citizens of New Orleans and the families of the sugar-planters of the parishes bordering on the gulf, many of whom had erected picturesque cottages upon its shores.

On this dreadful night, the treacherous sea-breeze, which had often brought health and healing, changed suddenly to a hurricane, and, bursting on the devoted spot, revelled in madness around, and sweeping every habitation away, hid the earth from view, tossing the human beings, during the agony of their death-struggle, on the top of the waves, and throwing the stiff corpses on the marshes, to putrefy in the sun or furnish meals for the grim alligator and the hungry sea-birds to feed on.

The howling blast and surging waves entered Berwick's Bay, and enfiladed the bayou with such force, that the little boat was driven far back, and the united strength of the crew failed to bring her to shore. With all his experience of wind and weather, Gonsalve had never seen such a storm. The darkness was thick, and the rain descended in torrents. The mast and sails of the boat were gone, and the force of the water alone threatened to beat it to pieces. Pierre, when he reflected, was at a loss how to proceed. He had little fear of the foaming waves, but the bank once gained, he conceived no prospect of security, for, by the flashes of lightning, he saw large limbs from the trees tossed about by the wind, and even the trunks of the giant oaks, in some places, torn up by the roots.

The time came later, when certain death in the boat forced them to seek the slender chance of life on shore. The negro Francois, unfortunately, could not swim, and, screaming with terror, clung to the groaning planks of the craft, till Pierre, after vainly urging him to trust himself in the water, and even

trying force, had to leave him there to perish, and set out upon the tossing waves. Manfully he battled, moving through the sea of foam, but as often as the bank was reached, the force of the water carried him back again, till one wave, stronger than the rest, raised him like a feather in the air, and, with iron strength, threw its light burden far upon the shore.

Pierre felt a heavy blow upon his head, which produced such intense pain, that he gasped for breath; and, making an effort to rise, the noise of the elements grew fainter and more distant, till a period of unconsciousness (how long, he never knew) succeeded.

What a change in the prospect, from the time he lost recollection, till it returned to him again!

His eyes opened on the unclouded noon of a day of dazzling brightness; mocking-birds were singing in the trees above his head, and squirrels frisked among the branches. The air was soft and balmy, having been doubly purified by the thunder and lightning that attended the late storm. When the boy got fairly upon his feet, he felt he must have laid in the same position for many hours; for he was bruised, sore, and stiff, and his outer garments, muddy and torn. His first thought was, what had become of Gonsalve? He had left the boat at the same time as himself, and knew how to swim as well; but, in answer to repeated calls, Pierre now received no answer.

He wandered along the bayou bank for some time, making his way through the limbs of fallen trees and thorn-bushes; and, seeing everywhere the effects of the storm, but unconscious where his steps were going, save that, by the current of the stream, he saw that it was always down.

When the forest at last ceased, and he came to an opening, a large prairie presented itself to his view, showing that the fury of the wind and rain had also spent itself here, for the smooth grass was dotted about with the dead bodies of horned cattle; though the thinned herds had recommenced grazing in happy oblivion of what had passed.

It was at a neighboring Arcadian hut, where Pierre stopped to ask for refreshment, that he learned the extent of the tempest and the hundreds of lives that had been lost, when Last Island was submerged.

Full particulars had not been received, but every heart ached for the safety of some one that was dear; and when returns came by such boats, as, in spite of the danger, ventured

into the still rolling gulf, a cry of anguish went up from every house, for the destroyer had desolated each heart with frightful impartiality.

For many days, the packets passing up Bayou Teche tolled incessantly their bells, and groups of careworn men and pale-faced women, draped in black, hurried to the bank to receive those, who left them so shortly before in health, strength, and beauty, returning under the care of the undertaker, and laid all unconscious in the narrow confines of their coffins, to be committed to the earth.

But many found not a grave. The remorseless waters retained even their bones; and once a year, the winds come from the four corners of the earth, and, to such as were denied a funeral chant, it sings a dirge so awful in its solemnness, that even the sea-birds fly the spot, for since that dreadful night, they only inhabit the stillness that pervades it, and shall pervade it till the sea gives up its dead.

## CHAPTER XII.

**I**N spite of his bruises and torn clothes, Master Pierre reached home in good time. He inquired for Gonsalve, and learned that the old man was safe, and had spent every day, since his return, in searching for the bodies of the victims of Last-Island storm, on the neighboring sea-marshes and beach, and had been able to lend to the friends of the dead very efficient aid.

Since the season of the year made a sea-voyage unsafe, Gustave readily agreed that several months should be spent by Pierre with his mother, before he set out for France; and the youth, after visiting in turn every spot that had any interest for him, said good-by to his uncle, Gonsalve, and the negroes, packed up his limited wardrobe, and left the island, which he did not see again for many years. He found some changes in his mother and brothers, but the greatest of all in Marion, whom the intervening five years had transformed from a child to a young woman of nineteen. Madam Alexander had ceased to regret her former affluence; Marion's efforts still secured her personal comfort; and farther than this, to say her rosary (as the bell sounded hourly from the adjacent convent) and to cherish the memory of her husband was all for which she cared. Pierre remembered the rich fabrics and handsome jewels which once adorned her person, and the numerous servants that assisted at her toilet. Her figure looked clumsy now in the French blouse, which was never exchanged, and her beautiful hair was cut short on her neck; but the same gentle expression remained, with a voice so sweet, that its tones alone spoke eloquently for the breast from which it emanated.

She took little interest in the management of the household, and none at all in the affairs of the plantation. Marion, who from a child had been accustomed to take responsibility upon herself, now had the direction of everything. She taught the children, looked over the cook, made garments for the little negroes; and when they were sick, nursed the grown ones. There was no want of comfort in the humble home, for though the property had dwindled down almost to nothing, in that

locality it is very easy to live; and the three families of slaves that remained to Madam Alexander, out of the three hundred that had once been hers, made the yield from a small piece of land sufficient to supply the limited wants of their mistress and her children.

Master Pierre did not consider his mother's fate particularly hard. He saw there was plenty to eat; and though the silver pitchers that once sat upon the handsome rosewood side-board were exchanged for those of common earthen-ware, the water tasted just as well, and he was satisfied. Marion was clothed in the plainest of dresses. But what signifies it what a woman wears, except, indeed, she could dress like Mademoiselle LeClerc, who lived on the next plantation, and looked so like a queen; but Marion was too small and too pale to look so, even if she had the gown. Only one thing he complained of, — there was no riding-horse, and he had to go some miles on the prairie to catch one. Among so many herd, it was difficult to find the Alexander mark; and when the horse was secured, it was difficult to break him. Yet all this was accomplished in the course of a week, and Prevost LeClerc, near the age of himself, being secured as a companion for rides, hunts, and fishing, our hero found himself comfortable, and had no thought except for present enjoyment.

The society of Marion, while in doors, he could not but find agreeable. He began to consider her a prodigy of learning; for she knew the form of government of every country in the civilized world, and it was from her lips that he heard, for the first time, what every boy and girl has learned at school, the sad story of Mary, Queen of Scots; the brutality of Louis XI., of France; and the astonishing information, that many a crowned prince has not only lost his kingdom and insignia of rank, but sometimes his head. She read him some accounts of the splendors of ancient Rome; and the same day, pictured to him the mob that passed along the streets of the city of Paris, following a cart, in which was a woman, whose countenance was like stone in its agony of despair, and hair white with terror and grief, and told him that this wretched being was a queen of France and a daughter of the Cæsars. Fortunate it was for Pierre, that his curiosity was awakened about the great world and what had happened in it, before the rudiments of Latin and the dull rules of arithmetic were presented to him as the only means of gaining knowledge. Marion was by no means a person of much re-

search. She had led a useful life, but a lonely one, and often had no amusement but such as she could glean from books. Her reading had been without direction, and her enjoyment of it without a companion. She had hopes of sympathy from some of the little ones who were growing up, but as she was their instructress, and had herself only a limited education, she felt that this hope was a slight one.

When learning first began to please her, she tried to read aloud to Felice, but her aunt would hear nothing but the Lives of the Saints; and of these Marion herself grew weary, for though a Catholic and a firm believer in the truths of Christianity, to accept such wonderful miracles, it required, not simple faith, but sometimes blind credulity.

How pleasant she found it, then, when Pierre came home, with his bright eye and quick (though entirely uncultivated) understanding, to tell him of all the wonderful and delightful things she had read; and when her memory would fail her, to get the book, that he might see for himself, and desire like her to know more. She knew well what suited his cast of mind, and, with her woman's tact, first began with romance; awakening his enthusiasm about the days of chivalry, she persuaded him to examine with her the historical facts, that they might know if such strange things really did happen. When the weather was fine, the youth found the house insupportable; but, fortunately for Marion, some days of rain set in about Christmas, which made the roads for weeks disagreeable. Upon this slight circumstance, Pierre, in after-years, when he became more thoughtful, knew that the die was cast. The thirst for knowledge (that thirst which, when once excited, is never quenched), when first the devouring *ennui* of the dark clouds drove him to Marion's side, awoke; and though slight at first, and repressed by the circumstances of his life and his habits of self-indulgence, resulted finally, when opportunity occurred, in making him take and appreciate an education.

Felice was not surprised, but pleased, at the intercourse that was growing up between her son and his cousin. She saw but one termination of it, and that was marriage. Marion was two years older than Pierre; but this, she thought, was far outbalanced by the other advantages that would accrue to him in having such a wife. She said nothing of her expectations, well contented to leave to time to develop them. Had she spoken freely, things might possibly have taken a different

turn; for, if ever Pierre could have loved Marion Ludlow, it was now. Her life had been, for her age and disposition, one of toil. Her constitution was naturally delicate; and nothing but the tenderest care and watchfulness, while it was forming, could have warded off the disease that was coming slowly, but surely, upon her. Her disposition was dependent to excess; but in her very childhood she had no one to lean upon, for, weak as was her own nature, those about her were weaker. By training, even the ivy can be made to stand alone, yet there is something unnatural in the plant so reared, and it soon succumbs to the wear and tear of time.

We have said, if ever Pierre could have loved his cousin, it was now. Youth, with its natural energy, had battled for her against the destroyer, and, for a time, was triumphant, and decked the young girl with a short-lived bloom. All that she ever knew of health and beauty, Pierre saw her enjoying now; and had his attention been directed to it, might have invested her with some of the romance of which his boyish heart was full. Marion already loved him truly, not as a cousin, but as an idol. She had lived secluded, hearing only of the great world through books; and Pierre was to her all of real brightness that there existed in life. She had an offer of marriage from a neighboring planter some time before, who was old, but might have given her a comfortable home; but her own inclination had never been in his favor, and Pierre's return decided her positively against it.

Five months passed, as if on wings, to Marion, — five months of exquisite happiness, and they constituted her sole experience of hopeful love, for she seemed the first consideration with Pierre; and, though she knew that the sea must ere long divide them, she looked forward to a happy return. She worked industriously and with a light heart. The duties of the day were made light by cheerful expectation, for when the night came, she sat sewing by the lighted lamp, and Pierre read aloud or talked. With great care, she fashioned the garments that he was to wear so far away, believing that each one would awaken some recollection of her during his absence, and feeling the heartfelt pleasure of being able to do something that would add to his comfort or give him pleasure.

The happy *tete-a-tetes* were presently interrupted, and later came entirely to an end. Pierre made the acquaintance of another woman, and, without any provocation, fell violently



in love with her. Marie LeClerc looked intently at the high forehead and black eye of her brother's companion. She smiled as she saw the blood rush to his face at the sound of her voice, and laughed quietly at the impetuosity with which he begged to retain the button that fell from her glove. It was a little surprising, considering that she was twenty-five and he only seventeen, that she took so much interest in watching the different stages of the malady that attacked the youth with such unwonted violence. Perhaps she was fascinated by observing feelings which had early been repressed and long been strangers to her own heart. Pierre plunged violently into the depths of his first love. Books, home, Marion, even horse and gun, were forgotten, in the delirium of the new-born feeling. Happiness consisted in seeing her and hearing her speak — misery, in her absence and silence.

Poor Marion! How dreary the house had suddenly become to her — how long the days — how cheerless the nights! Within her bosom gleamed the brightest of jewels — a true and earnest love; and, unmindful of its value, she threw it down recklessly to be trampled under foot. When Pierre came into the house now, he was moody and silent; and yet, if in riding with Mademoiselle LeClerc, they came within sight, his face was wreathed in smiles, and happiness made him loquacious. Marion, with an instinct of tenderness, early divined the truth. She knew that Pierre could never be blessed in such a boyish and unreasonable fancy, so jealousy formed no part of the pain she suffered. But the pain was intense, for with it came the fear — almost the certainty — that she could never be beloved by Pierre, except as an older sister, and that the devotion that was filling her bosom would meet but this lukewarm return.

One evening, Pierre came from the house of the wealthy General LeClerc, feeling injured and very angry. He threw himself into a chair beside his cousin, and poured into her patient ear the cause of his mood. "There was," he said, "an appearance of great bustle about the house; a tall stranger was walking on the long galleries restlessly;" and, though he had asked several of the servants for Marie (with whom he had an engagement to walk), he could hear nothing of her. After giving many signs of impatience, and disregarding all Marion's efforts to draw him into farther conversation, he went sullenly to bed, leaving her to sew away on the clothes,

which he had long secretly determined, since he became a swain, should never be worn, save on this side of the Atlantic. Marion went to the window, and looked towards the house of General LeClerc. From the number of lights flying about, it was evident that something unusual was going on. In answer to her inquiries, she learned something she knew would give Pierre pain, and felt glad, now that he had gone to bed, since he could sleep in peace, and she would tell him tomorrow. The next morning, she tremblingly approached his door, and asked if he was awake, then going up to his bed, she said:—"Dear Pierre, I have to tell you something disagreeable; but it had better come from me than another. Mademoiselle LeClerc was married last night, and started this morning with her husband, on their way to New Orleans."

Pierre hurled at her a look of thunder; and then succeeded expressions, so full of grief and chagrin, that the poor girl retreated rapidly downstairs, feeling such proofs of passion for another too keenly, to witness them longer. The more violent the feeling, the sooner the reaction. It was wonderful how soon Pierre got the better of his love, and began to whistle. His recovery might have been more rapid still, but for the conduct of the perfidious Marie, who left him a *billet-doux* (enclosing a rose-bud), in which she regretted not being able to take the proposed walk; and alluded to a certain engagement, the fulfilment of which she had hoped to postpone, but which unavoidable circumstances had brought to a sudden conclusion. For ten days and nights, the flower and note were the most precious to Pierre of all his worldly possessions; another ten days, they lay neglected in his bureau-drawer; and, at the end of that time, Marion noticed that the one was thrown on the floor and the other used to wrap up a small quantity of powder.

The affair was soon over with Pierre, but the sensitive heart of Marion had received a really painful wound. Her eyes looked dimmer, and her cheek grew pale — but all unnoticed by Pierre, who took to his horse, gun, and out-door amusements, with more energy than ever; and wrote to his uncle, that, on any day he should mention, he would meet him to say good-by in New Orleans, and then take ship immediately for France. Meanwhile, Marion went on with her preparations for the departure. The last day came, and though all was ready, she lingered still over the trunk, trying to think of

something more she might do, before he had gone for so long a time.

She told Pierre at dinner-time, that he must sit up with her that night, after the other members of the family had gone to bed, for she wished to talk to him; and when, in accordance with her request he stayed, and she found herself alone with him, she said, "I've been thinking, my dear Pierre, that I ought to tell you, before you leave, exactly how things are with us, for, though you have been with us almost eight months, I've not had the heart to disturb you about what I know you cannot help."

"Marion," said Pierre, made thoughtful by her serious tone, "tell me everything. I do not always treat you as well as you deserve, but, indeed, I know how good you are, and would do anything in the world to serve you."

"Pierre, if I were certain of living till you return, it would not be necessary for me to say a word; but if I should not, I want you to know that we are poorer than we seem, and that, in a few years, our dear mother may come to want."

"How can that be?" her cousin answered, quickly. "Is there not enough plain food for all?—and the children seem comfortably clad."

Then Marion told him, what he had never heard before (indeed, how should he, since Madam Alexander herself was ignorant of it?), that she had been for three years in possession of a small income, sent her by a relative of her father's in Tennessee, which she had always spent for the benefit of the family.

"Our mother," she continued, "owes a sum of money to her merchant in New Orleans, larger than she will ever be able to pay; and it is only by settling the interest yearly, that the house and land are allowed to remain in her possession. While my Uncle Ludlow sends me money (which he says he will do, as long as I live), I can meet this debt, and all will be well. But lately, I have had misgivings about my life, my cough has returned, and gives me fever; and, a month ago, I wrote to him, telling him, for the first time, how I spent the money, and begging him, in case of my death, to continue it to her who has been more to me than a mother. To my surprise, he refused, not only decidedly but angrily, saying that the widow and children of the spendthrift Edward Alexander

should never be supported by the hard-earned savings of a Ludlow. This is what I want you to know, Pierre."

"O Marion!" said Pierre, "how good you are, and how much more you have done for my mother and the little ones, than I have. I'll not go to France to be educated like a gentleman. I'll stay here and work like a negro; I'll plough, hoe, go in the cane-field, do anything, rather than leave you all in such a condition."

"No, Pierre," said Marion, "you must go. I am convinced you can best serve us by doing so, for the small sum it takes to supply our wants you can easily earn at a profession, when you have taken your degree. On the other hand, you can do nothing here, for old Jacque makes as much from the land as you can possibly do. Go, Pierre; and, if you should never see me again," and her voice faltered, "if I should die, perhaps Uncle Gustave will take care of your mother till you come back."

Pierre was much moved. He came up to Marion, and taking her in his arms, begged her to live, to live and be happy, for that there was no happiness for any of them without her. He kissed away her tears, and said again what he had said to her, when as a little boy he left her, to go with his uncle to the island. "Take care of our mother, Marion; and when I come back, I'll try and repay you."

The next morning, in saying farewell, he came to her last, and, as he pressed his parting kiss upon her lips, he repeated the same sentence; and Marion loved Felice afterwards with a love passing that of a daughter, for besides that her own heart bade her do it, she saw in her a sacred charge from Pierre.

Marion stood and watched the retreating form of her cousin, and Pierre, turning, saw her for the last time in health and youthful loveliness, for ere he returned from abroad, her cheek had faded, and the symmetry of her form was marred by its extreme frailness.

## CHAPTER XIII.

**P**IERRE stayed in France six years. His uncle provided him with means to live respectably, and wrote to a relative to arrange for him such educational advantages, as would best enable him to improve the time. We have neither inclination nor space to follow Young America in his promenade on the Boulevards de Paris; to stand gaping with him at the Tuileries; to linger on the fair bridges that span the Seine; or marvel at the fountains, that spring like magic from the grounds of the royal palaces that ornament the city of Versailles.

It was a pity that the young traveller, before going abroad, had not seen more of his native land. Having lived all his life within the circuit of a hundred miles, the advantage that might accrue from a fair comparison of Europe and America was lost to him. He had never heard the thunders of Niagara, or wandered by torchlight through the mazes of the Mammoth Cave. Had he walked in summer through Central Park — that pride of the United States, and particularly of the city of New York — he might have seen drives and rambles, that rivalled those made by royal lovers for their pampered mistresses. Had he ever seen Popocatepetl, he would no longer have wondered at Vesuvius. A fourteen days' travel on the winding waters of the Mississippi would have shown him a greater variety of climate, productions, and scenery, between New Orleans and St. Paul, than appeared in his transit of the Atlantic. For, instead of taking passage on a steamer to New York and thence to Liverpool, Gustave chose rather to send him direct to Havre, in a ship that did not even touch at Havana; and so the Moro Castle and its beautiful surroundings (that fairest feature in the West-Indian Archipelago) was also lost.

The voyage was monotonous in the extreme. The usual amount of sea-sickness kept him for the usual number of days chained to his berth; and after he was able to scramble up on deck (from which he never descended till *terra firma* was in sight), one day was like another, with its boundless sky above, its immensity of ocean beneath, and only the sun, rising with

pale splendor in the morning, and sinking with more dazzling brightness at evening, to mark the points of the compass or tell the day from the night.

It has sometimes been said by travellers, that after the glory of a sunset at sea, when, like a ball of fire, the king of day sinks down into the waves, tingeing the water with a thousand shades of red, the deep crimson, mellowing in the distance to the delicate carnation, and the soft twilight succeeds; that thought, with unwonted activity, flies swiftly to either shore, and seeks the company of loved ones left behind. Happy he, who, at such a moment, is conscious of having an anchor for his affections somewhere, and feels that loving hearts are following him with fervent prayers and fondest wishes from the sacred precincts of his home.

Pierre, at such times, thought much of Marion. Her soft dark eyes and graceful household motions stood before him as he closed his eyes; and, as a youth thinks of an absent sister, all gentleness, he blessed her, thinking of all she had done for him and his, and hoped most earnestly that they would meet again.

Arrived in Paris, he presented his credentials which were to recommend him to the protection and hospitality of his distant cousin, Monsieur Pelet. It was by the permission, or more properly the advice, of that gentleman, that he concluded to spend some little time in sight-seeing, before entering upon the course of study which had been marked out for him ere he arrived.

Pierre saw much less, in going over the city of Paris, than was really there to be seen. After all, what are works of art, except to a cultivated taste! How little there is in locality, except past events or future hopes be associated with it! How absurd it looks to the unlearned, to see people flock in crowds to look at a miserable shanty, with its aged roof and walls disfigured with pencil-marks, which stands at Stratford-on-Avon, once the habitation of William Shakespeare, who, in his time, was poor in purse and spirit, and had the same difficulty in getting food and raiment as themselves. Were you ever hurried out of the comfortable cabin of a Lake Champlain steamer by an enthusiastic friend, and made to stand on the windy deck while passing Ticonderoga and Crown Point? If so, I'll answer for it, that it took all the associations of Revolutionary history or Ethan Allen's biography, to make the

banks, grass, and trees (not at all different from other points) suggestive or interesting. At such times, one is apt to wish that the site of those ancient forts still remained in the hands of the British, and that enthusiastic tourists could keep their admiration to spend on some place more naturally interesting.

Pierre wandered through the Louvre, and looked unmoved on the gems of Guido, Murillo, and Canova, of world-wide fame, and saw in them only pictures and statues of naked men and women, who would look much better with clothes on.

So, at La Petite Trianon, the rarest porcelain, brought from distant climes to pamper the luxurious tastes of the most unprincipled of women, and buy her treacherous smiles for a king of France, were only bits of glass to him, and valueless, because so perishable.

The huge bronze column, topped with a colossal statue of the Emperor Napoleon, moved him more than all the symmetry of snow-white marble, though it perpetuated figures of female loveliness, which had been models in their time; for the inscriptions upon it told that it was moulded of cannon taken from the enemies of France, whose dead bodies strewed the battle-fields of Austedt, Jena, Echmul, and Wagram. In this, he felt that he was indebted for his enjoyment very much to Marion, for, during the stay at home, she had read to him the history of the modern Cæsar; and, while wandering through the streets of Paris, his eyes aching for a familiar face, or anything to awaken some thought or feeling he had known before, the sight of the figure (so dear to the French people)—the little man, clothed in the white overcoat and the cocked hat—was a relief amid the chaos, and awakened such associations of the glory of France (that country of his mother's forefathers), that he learned to regard the effigy, which ornaments so many parts of the city, as a friend.

Pierre learned very little the first three years. But for Marion's elevating influence, he would have learned nothing at all, for the shock of finding out his own ignorance, when he began to associate with other young men of his own age, would have discouraged him altogether. As it was, he saw that great exertions were necessary to make amends for the years he had wasted. He possessed one advantage in speaking two languages with equal fluency; and after studying and idling by turns, for three years, he, at the end of that time, felt confidence in his ability to learn; and, writing to

Gustave (who now proposed that he should return to America), he plead earnestly for three years more, that he might use them better. Life in Europe was gaining interest for him every day, for the light of history, of science, and of art, was illuminating every object; and the boy, who had groped about in the twilight of instinct, now saw clearly by the sunlight of knowledge.

The three years were granted, and they were well used. They did not convert Alexander into a pedant or a philosopher, but they made of him an accomplished gentleman. When they drew to a close, he prepared to make a tour of the most prominent countries of Europe, and then to set out for home.

He crossed the Alps, and traversing the northern Italian States, found himself at Rome. His plan was to return through Germany, cross the channel, and go on foot through Scotland; afterwards, England and Ireland were to be seen; and in going home, he was to visit New York.

The latter part was never put into execution; for, before the Coliseum and Pantheon were examined, or the Catacombs half explored, there came letters from Louisiana, which decided him to return. The first one he opened ran thus:—

NEW ORLEANS, *December 10, 1860.*

DEAR SIR,—It is my painful duty to inform you of the sudden death of M. Gustave Dijon, the news of which reached us only yesterday.

The last instalment of your yearly allowance you will find at your command at DeCard's, Rue —, Paris. Farther than this, we cannot possibly supply you, as his effects, all told (as far as we know), will not liquidate his liabilities to our firm. If, upon your return to America, you can suggest anything, in the way of an accommodation (since you are mentioned in his will as heir), you will find great willingness on our part to oblige you. We have forwarded to your address at Paris, a letter sent to our care by Miss Ludlow.

Very respectfully, T. M. PORTMAN.

The other was from Marion, and ran thus:—

I'm afraid, dear Pierre, that you will have to come home. Mr. Portman has no doubt written you of the death of Uncle

Gustave. He (Mr. Portman) wrote, some days ago, a letter about our own business affairs, that I don't exactly understand. Your brother Eugene went to the city to see him on the subject, but he is so inexperienced in such things, I fear he will accomplish nothing.

I know it must be hard for you to give up your tour, the pleasantest part of all your residence abroad. I have therefore hesitated some time, before writing you to come, but lest I blame myself, and you blame me hereafter, have concluded to do so. Our mother and the children are well.

Your affectionate cousin,

MARION.

Ten days after, a gentleman, looking quite mature for his age, took passage on a ship direct from Havre to New Orleans. He had little in common with the youth who, six years before, made the same voyage. All of the boy had disappeared from his appearance, and most of it from his heart. Alexander's life in Europe had been among things, not people; for besides his fellow-students, he had made few acquaintances, and scarcely mixed with society at all. Thus life had much in store for him, for his feelings were naturally warm, and though his manners were reserved, his nature was social. To apply what he had learned, and enjoy it in association, offered many attractions to him, as it ever does to those beginning life.

He retained, except for its natural beauties, a not very favorable recollection of his home, but he was full of hope for the future, and looked forward to devoting some years to securing comfort and independence to his mother in her old age; and then, to leading such a life himself as his fancy might dictate. For while in France, everything had contributed to fill his heart and mind with admiration for republican institutions; and hearing them daily extolled and vaunted by those who saw the disadvantages of monarchical government, he had accustomed himself to think that success in America was certain, and had only to be sought for to be found.

If there was a romantic feeling in embryo in his bosom, it was one for Marion. He remembered her charms of person and manner with admiration, and her angelic goodness with veneration; and as the coast of Louisiana came in sight, he thought of her with a quickening pulse, and, of all his boyish

recollections, she stood first to welcome him home. He had associated her in many a plan for future enjoyment. He was studying law, commenced for amusement, but now followed with hope of gain; and in the prosecution of it, he longed for her sympathy and interest, even more than the commendations of some learned advocate — so entirely do we look to women for our rewards, even in occupations which they neither understand nor like.

The evening that Alexander came in sight of his mother's house was such as displayed the landscape to best advantage, with its spreading prairies, smooth roads, and background of forest; yet, in the looks of everything, the young man experienced, he knew not why, a feeling of keen disappointment.

Did you ever, reader, return in maturer years to look upon the stream that flows past your father's door, and the hill that required such exertion of infantile strength to climb? How the proportions seem to dwindle, after a sight of the great world! The waters that impressed you with their dignity, because they swallowed up your paper boat, now only irritate you with the fear of wetting your shoes; and the eminence, that was the goal of your youthful walks, now seems but a difficulty in the way of the plough. This feeling increased with our hero as he neared the house, for the garden seemed *tres petite*, and the doorway almost too small to admit a man. The brothers that flocked out to see him were exceptions to this general rule, for they were no longer children, but overgrown boys, with the reddest of cheeks and the shortest of Attakapas trousers. Unlike the picture his imagination had painted, Marion came not first, but last, and one glance showed Alexander why she did so. Marion had not gained in the years that had passed, but lost — lost everything; and, feeling painfully the loss of what could never be regained, she feared to encounter the glance of him, that a morbid sensibility had suffered to grow dearer every year, till the simple thing of loving had destroyed her health and worn away her youth.

Marion was but twenty-six, the age at which a woman more gradually developed might have been in the noonday of her charms both of mind and person, and better able to exert an influence over a man like Alexander than at an earlier period.

Do you reflect upon the beautiful, my friend, and are you a *connoisseur* in women? I appeal to single men, for a man, to keep an

unbiased judgment upon the matter, must never particularize, and so cannot get married. Did you ever notice, that the most charming women at eighteen, are often least so at thirty-eight? What is so lovely as delicately rounded proportions, gayety of disposition, and innocence of heart? And yet these things cannot survive, for they so early succumb to the ordinary experiences of life. Poor Marion's attractions were of the softer kind, and very early were dissipated. The change was not so much of her person, though her eyes were sunken, and the lines growing deep about her mouth, but it was that her intellect had rather contracted than enlarged, and that her vivacity was gone. She was fully conscious of it all, and, though the hope of Pierre's return was like a rainbow in her sky, still she feared to see him, for she knew that the boy had become a man in character and cultivation; and that he who had thought her learned and fair at nineteen, would find her dull and faded at twenty-six.

Alexander had very little time to brood over what disappointed and annoyed him at home. Upon examination, the affairs of his mother were bad indeed. Marion had, three years before, asked from her Tennessee uncle several thousand dollars, promising to forego all claim to her annuity, and never to trouble him more. Her request was ungraciously granted, and the money so raised was placed in the hands of Eugene, who attempted a sugar-crop on a more extensive scale, which, from the fluctuations of the market-prices, not only failed to pay expenses, but plunged them more deeply into debt. Gustave's estate proving insolvent, there seemed no alternative but to sell all the slaves that remained, and seek some other way than planting or maintaining so large a family.

Alexander was full of hope, and doubted not his own abilities to retrieve all that had been lost; but, about this time, circumstances occurred which perplexed him in no ordinary degree.

The political aspect of his country was threatening in the extreme. The muttering of the thunder had reached him across the ocean; but now, before he was able to examine the issues of the day, or understand the convulsions of the body politic, the clouds burst with fury, and seemed ready to deluge the whole United States in civil war.

While he was reading the debates in Congress, and studying the constitutionality of the fugitive-slave law, Fort Sumter

was bombarded; and the laugh produced by the despatch, "Nobody hurt on our side," very ill concealed the uneasiness that pervaded the people in every locality, from sea-coast to sea-coast and from the great lakes to the gulf.

The martial spirit, natural to his age and character, was thoroughly roused in Alexander. His indignation against the entire North, which he regarded as the bitter enemy of his section or the Union, was more a matter of feeling than reason, for he saw that many subjects of dispute were idle; for instance, that southern politicians contended so hotly for the extension of slavery into the territories, where, they were obliged to admit, it could never, for reasons of climate and expediency, long exist.

He soon began, in spite of himself, to lose some of his admiration for republican institutions, for the perfect police system and neatly-executed laws of France gained ground in his estimation in proportion as the coarse style of stump oratory (so much admired among us) and the libellous attacks of the newspapers on the heads of government struck him painfully here.

The applicants for the offices of president and governor seemed to gain in the public estimation by the appellations of rascal, liar, and fool; and that which he had admired in Americans as a noble disregard of the accidents of birth and fortune, he now suspected was an unworthy unwillingness to render honor where honor is justly due. Still, he hesitated not long when the time for action came.

The young men of his state and parish flocked to the standard of revolt, which was raised simultaneously with the secession of Louisiana. Alexander burned to be among the first, but having made no provision for his mother, he restrained his impatience and suffered his three younger brothers (the youngest being scarcely seventeen) to enlist before him.

The mercantile firm, to which was due the mortgage on the estates of his mother and uncle, was a branch of a New-York house, and, alarmed at the prospect of the separation of the Union, demanded instant liquidation or required a sale of the property. Feeling that his public duty urged him to join the army, and yet his private one required him to linger at home, he reasoned within himself what to do, and in a serious mood, went one day to converse with Marion. She listened to him



while he explained the difficulties of his position, and said, when he had finished, —

"Pierre, I think you ought to go."

"That I never will do, Marion, till I am convinced that you, my mother, and the four younger children will not, in the meantime, suffer for want of a home. Can you suggest anything that can be done to provide you with one while I am away?"

Marion turned very pale as she answered, "There is something I can do, and if you think it best, it shall be done. Monsieur Touchet, who once offered to marry me, is willing to do so still."

The sentence was short, and Pierre had no idea how much of self-sacrifice it contained. He knew that Monsieur Touchet was old and infirm, but that he could give Marion a comfortable home, for his land was free of debt. She, on her part, had feared that such might become her duty before, and clung to the hope of Pierre's return to save her from the dreaded fate, for the sight of her admirer was almost loathing to her.

The glare of military life, and the fancied din of battle, must have made the young man deaf and blind, for the lips of poor Marion trembled, and her heart beat loud, because of the sudden resolution she had taken to make this last sacrifice of every feeling she held dear, and buy a home for Pierre's mother with the wrecks of her constitution and her heart. Yes, deaf and blind; for, seating himself beside her, all unconscious of the agony that was racking her delicate frame, he said, with intense satisfaction, "Now, indeed, I am relieved, and can join the army in peace as soon as I have kissed the sweet bride of Monsieur Touchet, and seen those I love so, comfortable and happy."

So Alexander thought that night that the matter was settled. He knew very little of women in general in thus supposing that a roof given by the kindness of another would be considered a home; but such was the disposition of Felice, that, could the thing have been put into execution, it would have produced from her no murmuring or discontent. The morning after this conversation, Alexander met his mother near the dining-room, looking much disturbed. She told him that Marion was sick; that after dispatching a note the night before to Monsieur Touchet, she had twice fainted, and was now confined to her bed, looking pale and weak. Then came

the fear to the young man that all was not right, and he made some inquiries of his mother which resulted in making him feel heartily uncomfortable. He was restless for two days, during which Marion did not appear, and from his mother's account, did not improve. The third day, in reading the paper, he saw (what so many less interested than himself had for weeks been expecting) that the legislature assembled had passed a law, pronouncing all debts owed to northern capitalists null and void, and thus making the mortgages with which Portman and Company were threatening both his mother's estate and his own (as his Uncle Gustave's heir) of no effect. Not knowing the exact bearing the passage of this state law would have, he hastened out to consult a lawyer at a neighboring town, and it was returning that he met a buggy at his mother's gate, in which was a form swollen with dropsy and disabled with gout, and heard him ask in a piping voice for Mademoiselle Ludlow, that he realized (when Marion's sacrifice had become unnecessary) how great that sacrifice was.

When he next conversed with his cousin, he told her that she must immediately break off an engagement, which, had he known her repugnance to, should never, with his consent, have been formed. In the excitement of his gratitude, he even went farther, and though he did not ask her to marry him, he intimated that but for the condition of the country, which rendered it improper for a man just entering the army to form such tender ties, that such an offer would be made.

This much said, Alexander considered his debt of gratitude to Marion for the present settled, and as he had himself given up something in assuming this attitude towards her (for he was not in love) farther consideration and attention she did not meet at his hands. If he had talked her into momentary cheerfulness, it soon disappeared. Since she had no hope of gaining his heart, she saw little prospect of happiness in being one day his wife, but resigned herself, as she ever did, to things as they were, and superintended the preparations for the man and the soldier to depart, with the same care she had before done when the light-hearted boy left her to cross the Atlantic. The young man left his business affairs in much better condition than he found them. Both plantations, — the one on the island, left him by Gustave and supposed to be worthless, and the one in the prairie on which his mother re-

sided, — were now free of debt. He spent but a few days in putting in crops and providing suitable overseers for the slaves, and when all was accomplished, went to take leave of Marion. He was to go first to Texas, where a lieutenancy was offered him in a company which had been raised in his own parish, and as the regiment was only on itinerant service, he comforted his mother and cousin with the hope that it would be moved, in which case they might see him soon again. In saying farewell, he used the same expression with which he had twice quitted Marion before. It was:—"Take care of our mother, and when I come back, I'll try and repay you."

When said to her by the boy of twelve, Marion thought it meant that she should have pleasant rides and sails upon his return. When leaving for Europe, he repeated the same thing, she, with the hopefulness of youth (although a subdued one), thought that it meant that he would love her when they met again. Now, the promise conveyed to her this meaning — that when the war was over, he would make her his wife, and that they would go together to the island and make them a home. But the prospect was far from being all brightness now. Marion with gentle meekness allowed her cousin to form what plans for the future he thought best, but for herself she looked forward with listlessness to everything. Her dearest hope, that of gaining Pierre's heart, was gone; and to all else, save her duties, she felt alike indifferent.

## CHAPTER XIV.

THE citizens of Vicksburg had, on the — of May, a short respite from the din and clash of arms. The stench from the Federal dead, which covered the hills after the charge, had become insufferable to the Confederate soldiers; and General Pemberton, being the infecting influence of the polluted atmosphere, sent a flag of truce to General Grant, proposing that the firing on both sides be discontinued, and the putrid corpses be committed by their comrades to the earth. The proposition was, of course, accepted, and a silence ensued which lasted from eleven o'clock in the morning till night.

Along the line of trenches, the Confederates crawled out from under the ground, where they had so long burrowed like moles, and sat in the light of day upon the top of the embankments. The privates looked bad enough, with their unwashed faces, tangled hair, and linsey jackets covered with mud. Many of them also showed plainly the marks of camp disease, which was battling for General Grant with as much prospect of success as his powerful artillery and well-appointed troops. They seemed, however, fully alive to the pleasure of being for a few hours relieved from duty; and with smiling faces and ready repartees, answered the Federals, who, approaching the trenches to take away the dead bodies, regarded them with looks of curiosity and interest, and not unfrequently with heartfelt sympathy. They often entered into conversation with each other; and at points where they could approach sufficiently near, liquor and cigars were given by the Federals to their less fortunate opponents, who had nothing to offer in return.

The bearing of the officers (particularly the younger ones) on the Confederate side was by no means conciliatory. Feeling keenly their want of resources, they endeavored to hide those feelings under a show of luxury in apparel, which did not altogether accomplish their design. Most of them donned their dress-uniforms, and appeared armed *cap-a-pie* with sword and pistol, mounted on horseback, and covered with gold lace. In the matter of dress, the staff-officers, as usual, outdid the

line, and, in riding from point to point, heard the ill-suppressed murmurs of their more laborious comrades, on the softness of their duties and the good appearance of their horses, which the hungry men suspected were fed on corn, which, in some cases, should have been their own. Altogether, the spirits of the garrison were good, and the officers rather increasing than diminishing in popularity.

It had been the policy of General Pemberton, heretofore, to keep close to his quarters; so much so, that he had never been seen at all by most of the garrison. This and other things made him very unpopular among the men. The certainty that the town was badly supplied with provisions caused violent complaint; for it was known that large quantities of corn and pork had been offered by the planters on the river above, free of charge, to be used for this purpose; but the moving of it had been so long delayed, that it had, in most instances, fallen into the hands of the Yankees. That in this General Pemberton showed sagacity rather than otherwise, is the author's opinion, for if he knew (which he certainly must have done), that Vicksburg was untenable, and must eventually fall into the hands of the enemy, he probably thought that to accumulate military stores and provisions, would, in the event of surrender, rather strengthen than weaken the foe.

That he had neglected to attach the soldiers to his person must have occurred to him now, when it was too late; for he appeared often, making the rounds of the fortifications, and encouraging the men by apparent forgetfulness of personal safety, and exciting and cheerful talk.

A very good effect was produced upon the soldiers on the left, by a feat of personal bravery, performed by General M. L. Smith. Riding, one morning, round the earthworks, his duty led him to an exposed position, where his gay uniform and large horse soon became a mark for the enemy. Several shells were thrown, which passed over his head; but one, better directed than the rest, struck the horse of a courier, who followed in his train, throwing the man to the ground with great violence, and making his death inevitable; but that General Smith leaped immediately down, rushed into the midst of the missiles of destruction, and seizing the soldier, dragged him safely away, amid the cheers of the men who were spectators from within the trenches, and saw the strange

sight of an officer, high in command, running every risk of his life to save that of one of the most obscure of the privates.

Many other officers, who had borne themselves with what was considered unnecessary haughtiness, affecting great military state and reserve, showed, in this extremity, consideration and sympathy for the privates, and would, not unfrequently, lay on the bare ground, and eat the same pea-soup like themselves.

On the day of the flag of truce, much good-natured railery passed between the soldiers of both armies. A squad of Federals approaching one of the trenches, however, threw into it some pounds of hard-tack, which was, no doubt, done with kind intent; but some over-sensitive Confederates misunderstanding them, thought it was intended as an ignoble taunt to their starving condition, and hurled it back with abusive epithets and oaths of defiance. The others answered in the same strain; and the most excitable on both sides actually prepared for a fist fight, when their officers interfered to restore the peace. A variety of answers were made to the frequent question of how the garrison liked mule and dog meat. Some would respond with execration; but others would, in jocose style, enlarge upon its merits, vow it was their favorite diet and much superior to codfish and molasses. The usual comparison of female excellence was proposed, which, in the course of argument, drew from one of the Federals an expression, approving of the course of Butler in New Orleans. This was answered with howls of rage and execration from the Confederates; for the actions of "that disgrace to humanity," which every civilized government on the globe (except his own) has pronounced infamous, will ever awaken indignation in the heart of every man born on southern soil, and meet from many coming generations their bitterest hate.

But cheerful and good-humored talk very much exceeded these disagreeable outbursts; and, though strictly against orders, many pounds of tea and coffee had, by some means, during the day, crept into the town, which were given to the women, and by them in most cases dispensed among the wounded in the hospitals. The relaxation within was no less pleasant to the citizens than the soldiers.

The ladies went above stairs to perform the details of the toilet, with more care and ease than they had been able to do

for many days; and they descended in all the glory of white dresses and blue ribbons.

It was about three o'clock, that Fanny Lea came out fresh as Hebe from the luxury of her bath, and resigned to her maid the long brown hair, which, all impatient of the restraints of a comb, broke away, and formed tiny ringlets round her forehead and on the back of her neck.

The pinkish tint of her skin and the smiling dimples that wreathed her mouth would have impressed an observer with the idea, that she loved and courted ease alone, and the rounded proportions of her figure might indicate that she had ever found it. Yet such was not the case. Nature had placed in the bosom of the little woman the courage of a soldier.

During the siege, indeed since the commencement of the war, she had spent much of her time in visiting the sick and nursing the wounded soldiers; and the drooping spirits of many a languishing sufferer had been revived by her cheerful smile and encouraging voice.

The crowds of starving wounded that now filled the hospitals within the town of Vicksburg presented so terrible a spectacle, that almost all females (except a few stout Irish nurses) avoided going into them at all; but Fanny Lea still went, in spite of the shells, to such as were nearest her father's residence, and, though she had little else than kind words to dispense, she did what she could, and received in return many a blessing from the dying.

How such firmness and strength of nerves happened to be found in a woman so delicately reared is somewhat strange; certain it is, however, that the youthful widow displayed in an extraordinary degree traits of character the very antipodes of each other, and united to love of admiration and consciousness of charms, determination that failed not at the sight of the surgeon's knife, and good sense that gave her a hearty desire to be useful. Such a course of action in a woman, young, handsome, and rich, did not fail to excite comment, and various were the opinions about the charming Mrs. Lea. The older ladies pronounced her good-natured, but highly imprudent; the younger thought her good-looking, but very affected and vain. Among the gentlemen, she met with the admiration to which she was so justly entitled; and, though only in the second year of her widowhood (and wearing still "the habiliments of woe"), she counted her admirers by dozens

and scores. By a few, who knew her best, she was properly estimated, and known to have many virtues and some faults, for though, when thoroughly roused, she displayed unusual energy and resolution in the matters of every-day life, she was yielding to excess; and the musical sound of flattery, though approaching hyperbole, was very apt to sound sweet to her ear, and gain in return a smile. For this reason, many men, her inferiors in heart, social position, and understanding, were admitted to her acquaintance; and the only thing ever said of Fanny Lea, with truth, by those who envied or did not understand her, was that she was too accessible.

Society, through the whole South, was forced into many convulsions by the war. A man's being a good soldier became a sufficient reason of itself to recommend him to the notice and acquaintance of a lady; and the gatherings that occurred about the caves and in the parlors of the well-born dames of Vicksburg presented a mixture, that, under other circumstances, would not have been allowed.

There was no female within the town that daily received the same amount of company, as did the young widow Fanny Lea. Her evenings were attended by officers of every rank and age. Taciturn General Pemberton often came hither, attended by some more jolly members of his staff. Scores of lesser lights, in the shape of generals, colonels, majors, and captains, were applicants for her favors. She was remarkable for her perfect taste in dress, and never did it show her to better advantage than now; when, after the day's exposure and anxiety, the soldiers came to admire her at their ease; to report the casualties of the day, and hear her heartfelt expressions of sympathy for their toils and triumphs, their sufferings and dangers. Many a by-play went on between these gentlemen-at-arms.

It was Mrs. Lea's desire that distinctions of rank should be forgotten in her drawing-room; but she could not entirely ignore the scornful looks of the generals, when she sometimes forgot for a moment to admire their bouquets, in her anxiety to inquire for the health of the wounded privates, or the smothered rage of those from the ranks, when they imagined themselves neglected for gentlemen of higher degree. But, to return.

Fanny's bright face, as her toilet proceeded, grew brighter; for she was meditating a scheme of pleasure for the afternoon.

In pursuance of this, she sent a note to Mrs. Woodville, requesting that she would get together some pleasant people in her part of the town, particularly Caroline Courteny (if she was well enough) and Judge Wilkerson; and be ready, about five P.M., to take a walk to Fort Hill. She concluded by saying, "I'll join you at that hour with General Turner and Major McCloud; and, if I have to bring along that greatest of bores, St. George, ask your sisters please not to complain, but bear with him for my sake; for he comes here every evening, and there may be no alternative, but to take him along, or stay at home to entertain him, which latter (seeing I've not had a stroll for more than two weeks) I certainly shall not do. After all, we may have some amusement out of him, for the poetry Estelle sent anonymously has almost turned his head, and perhaps he will give it to us in lieu of the champagne tale. Good-by. Be punctual."

Elizabeth considered the scheme of the walk worthy of the little goddess that gave it birth, and called a council of her sisters and such officers as happened to be present, to select the party, which they agreed should contain the "highth of good company" alone.

In answer to her summons came Caroline Courteny, fresh as Venus, accompanied by her uncle and Captain DeHeart. There existed one elementary principle among them, which was, that the gentlemen (the beaux) outnumbered the ladies by two or three to one, so that every Helen had more than one Paris, which, though out of fashion with married women among us, is admired by single ones, and enjoyed with an avidity equal to that displayed by their transatlantic sisters. They were delayed some twenty minutes, waiting for the Widow Lea, who was attended by a fatality which accompanied her through life — of being too late on every occasion. The moments being precious, the ladies of the McRea family were impatient to be off; and as Fanny Lea came in sight with her bevy of beaux, she saw a certain something lurking in the eyes of her female friends that kept her from feeling entirely comfortable. Things were not altogether propitious either in the division of escorts. She looked daggers as Captain St. George offered his services with officious gallantry to her; and Mrs. Woodville, who had rather set her mind on a metaphysical discussion with General Turner (which she thought might result in giving him a favorable opinion of her

understanding), saw with chagrin that he selected the youngest and giddiest girl in the company to be his companion. Caroline Courteny was at a loss — as she saw several anxious for the honor — upon whom to bestow her company, and fell back on her usual, and to the gentlemen very disagreeable, expedient of pressing closely up to her uncle's side. This was the first time she had ventured any distance from home since her recovery; and the whole burden of her hopes and thoughts was, to find out, in conversation with some one who had been on the spot, the name of her still unknown deliverer. There was, as they all set out, no one so happy as Mary McRea, who had the day before returned home, after having a spell of fever which lasted some weeks, and kept her for that space of time confined closely to a cave on the premises of Mr. Andrews, on the outskirts of the town. She felt in fine spirits, at being with her friends and sisters again, and they were in no way dampened at the prospect of a *tele-a-tete* with the handsome Captain Hamilton, who, in consideration of her having lately been ill, pressed upon her his arm as support, and walked slowly that she might not be fatigued.

Mrs. Woodville's dissatisfaction was not without good cause; for, in addition to losing the good company of the general, she got in lieu of it a sandy-headed boy, who strove hard on his part to secure somebody else, and an old Louisiana colonel, who talked about his wife, and chewed tobacco incessantly. And this, too, while she saw Captain Alexander and Major McCloud, two nice young men, who had been to college and studied the classics, when they saw all the ladies provided for, very contentedly lock arms with each other, and start off thus to make the trip, without apparently feeling any regret. Conversation was not brisk at first; it never is when people have set a particular time and place for that purpose, and no other; and Fanny Lea, who attempted several times to apologize for being late, began to feel her spirits flag, and wished that she had stayed at home.

When the bottom of the hill was gained, she began for the third time to plead her cause, and said to one of her escorts, "Captain DeHeart, I know I am to blame for keeping everybody waiting so, but—"

She could not proceed farther, for the captain, not having the tact to understand that she was but using him as a means to conciliate the ladies, particularly Mrs. Woodville, who was

near enough to hear the remark, broke in with a thousand protestations, that he was not at all inconvenienced, and thought they got off exactly at the right time. Perhaps it is right to remark, that little matter of making delay, though it had several times happened before, was not the only thing in which Fanny Lea gave Elizabeth Woodville cause to complain, for she was malicious enough to be some years younger, and much fresher and more attractive in appearance. The two women, being both widows, and neither ill-natured, had much in common; but though Elizabeth tried by an appearance of more dignity to equalize matters, she sometimes felt the advantages of her friend in no very agreeable way.

Conversation also progressed slowly between Sue and Captain St. George, the latter of whom no sooner left the house than he turned the subject on poets and poetry, making haste to tell that he had met with an adventure two days before, that surprised him not a little.

"While getting on my horse," he said, "which was restless, and hard to mount (for a man, Miss Sue, like myself, who has been in the Confederate navy, cannot be expected to be an experienced horseman all of a sudden), a boy stopped and delivered me a letter. It contained some beautiful lines—ahem—altogether suitable to myself—and if you are fond of poetry, I'll repeat them."

"But I am not fond of poetry," said Sue; "and I would not trouble you to such an extent for the world."

"Oh!" was the response, "I should consider it a pleasure, and perhaps you can assist me; for—ahem—though I have an idea, I am not certain, who is the dear authoress, for the lines are only signed 'Alice.'"

"But I'm not good at guessing," said Sue; "and," she continued, with a school brusqueness, that was more courageous than polite, "I don't care who wrote them." And here this dialogue came also to an end.

Estelle liked her *compagnon de voyage* well enough in some respects, but he had a sore foot, and she was particularly fond of fast walking. So, nobody was sorry, when, just as the ascent of the hill was commenced, Judge Wilkerson cried out that he was desperately tired of his niece, and proposed a general exchange of partners.

Most particularly Caroline thought she had made by the change, for in skipping about, without any design on his part,

she was secured by Captain Dean; and forthwith commenced a cross-examination of him, resolved to extract some information about the business of the cave. "I am glad to have the opportunity, Captain Dean," she said, "of thanking you, for helping to extricate me the night I was in such danger from the falling in of the cave."

The captain was a very modest man; he seldom conversed with ladies at all, and was invariably excited when they addressed themselves to him. He put, however, a bold face on the matter, and answered, "Nothing could give me more pleasure, Miss Courteny, than to get a rope for a lady in such a situation; indeed, I have to apologize for making you wait so long; but in the prevailing excitement, it took much time to find one."

"Oh ho!" thought Caroline; "so I'm coming fast enough to the point. If he brought the rope, he must certainly know who made use of it. I fear," she said, speaking aloud, "I gave you all a sad fright."

Tom thought somehow that he ought to controvert this, and hesitatingly answered, "Oh, not at all! Nothing gave us more pleasure than to see a lady in such a fix, at least—that is—" (and he began to fear he had expressed himself very badly) "if—that is—if one can be instrumental in getting her out of it."

"That you certainly were, Captain Dean, and I have others besides to thank; if it would not be too much trouble, I do wish you would tell me every one who was present, that, when opportunity occurs, I may tell them also how much I appreciate their kindness."

"Why, my dear Miss Courteny!" said Tom, as much aghast as a schoolboy requested to repeat the whole multiplication-table, "there could not have been less than a thousand people, who came almost at the same time to the spot."

"Yes, so I've been told," answered Caroline. "But, since many of the number were instigated by motives of curiosity alone, and did not know in coming what was taking place, I do not feel myself indebted to them, but wish very much to know who was nearest the opening, and helped to take me out; for the nature of the soil must have made it quite dangerous for any person or persons to stand near or descend into the cave."

"Why that did seem to be the impression," responded Tom;



"but I own I felt no anxiety for my friend, or I should have insisted on his taking greater precaution."

How fast Carrie's heart began to beat; one question, and she should know all. She paused to frame it in suitable words. "If I am not mistaken," she began, "your friend was—"

"O Tom! Tom!" cried Mrs. Woodville, "run quick, and tell Sue to get down from that bank, and come here; it is dangerous. Be quick!"

"Excuse me, Miss Courteny, my cousin calls;" and Captain Dean moved off—not to Caroline's disappointment, but almost to her relief, for when she found her curiosity about to be gratified, she hesitated. What if it should not be him after all, but somebody else! What if she had been dreaming idly all the time. And though Captain Dean had positively spoken of some one person, her old fears came back, that she owed her deliverance to the united efforts of those that were near, of whom some one had accidentally incurred a momentary risk. No; she was not sorry to be a little while longer in suspense. The hope that had so firmly taken hold of her mind was not yet to be dissipated, even if finally given up. She took General Turner's arm, then, when he offered it, for the road was growing very steep, and entertained him with her sprightly talk. Reaching the extreme top after fifteen minutes' toiling, the whole party stopped, and simultaneously turned round to look below.

The view from Fort Hill to the north of Vicksburg is beautiful to an extraordinary degree. In the valley below, the town lies spread out, so that almost every building can be seen at the same time, and the streets crossing each other with the regularity of squares on a chess-board. The private residences look doubly fair, contrasted with the stately evergreens, well clipped hedges, and festoons of vine-branches, which ornament their gardens, and climb, under the genial influences of a southern sun, with rapid strides from porch to roof, shading the windows, and draping the house-sides with emerald verdure. Nature was making her accustomed offering to spring; and the lines of locust and china trees, unchecked in their yearly routine, unfolded their profusion of white and purple blossoms, making the air around them heavy with perfume. Conspicuous among the buildings below were the huge white columns of the court-house, the brick wall of the

Prentiss Hotel, the lofty spire of the Roman-Catholic Church, its golden cross reflecting the rays of the setting sun; and, farther in the distance, yet distinctly seen, on account of its elevated position, the miniature castle, built by the eccentric Tom Robbins, with its turrets and terraces, giving a charming variety to the scene. The grass, which for so many years had covered the line of hills and carpeted the valley, to the suburbs of the town, had almost disappeared. Immediately beneath, the tents, wagons, and swarms of troops had converted the swards into furrowed and dusty barrenness; and the starving horses and mules wandered listlessly about the top and sides of the eminence, nipping with eagerness every spreading blade of grass, and looking with greedy eyes for more. On the other hand, the river washed the base of the hill, which, throwing out huge jets of earth here and there, offered occasional protection for a battery of guns or camp of soldiers, whose nest of white tents or unfurled flag made a pleasing prospect for the eye. The broad Mississippi from this point is visible for many miles. It appears in the dim distance, immediately in front, winding a crooked course, and forming lakes, bays, and islands, till nearing its way, is more defined; and the peninsula opposite is clearly bounded by its broad band of silvery waters, which rolls almost directly beneath the hills, and disappears in the distance, going south.

Elizabeth Woodville had from earliest childhood ardently loved and admired the spot. She had often climbed up the sides to gain it, with merry companions, when their hearts were full of glee; and, later in life, when grief and anxiety were wearing away her youth, she had sought its unbroken stillness to gaze and weep alone. It had been a sweet respite from the dusty streets and dull monotony of the little town; and now that strangers had come to enjoy it, she felt a certain pride in their admiration, as if its natural beauties were particularly her own. She looked from face to face, to see what impression was made upon every one. Some spoke in loud tones of approbation; others continued their conversation, apparently taking no notice of what lay before them; and others, again, stood silent, looking intently, but preferring not to speak. It is rather hazardous to broach sentimentality in a promiscuous crowd, and yet she said to the person nearest, "This spot is associated with all the principal events of my life. It was a favorite resort when we were all pupils of

Mr. Y.; and in gaining it, we would have been perfectly happy, but for our childish fears of the cows. When I grew older—"

Judge Wilkerson interrupted her by calling out, "Now we shall be interested indeed. When you grew older! Tell us of the sighing swains, that lent you an assisting arm, or followed your steps, or —"

"Did you trot your suitors out this far?" said General Turner, who was fat, and was fanning himself industriously with his handkerchief, for he had grown red in the face with the effort of climbing. "The Lord help them, if they were of my constitution," and he sat down, and commenced to blow.

"Which of us," said Judge Wilkerson, "shall attempt a description in verse of this extensive view or gorgeous sunset?"

"Mrs. Woodville," said Fanny Lea, "since she comes here oftenest, and loves the hill so well."

"And," chimed in the general, who was made malicious by fatigue, "since she no doubt made it the theme of many compositions, written while in her twelfth year."

"And not remarkable for good spelling, as I've heard," said Sue, who wished to be quits for some lectures she daily received on the impropriety of a multiplicity of vowels.

"It is somewhat singular," said Judge Wilkerson, "that ladies who are always mistresses of spells, should so often require a master in spelling."

"Bravo!" cried St. George. "I like those puns, even a child can understand them."

"And remember," said Fanny Lea, laughing, "that this one happens to be nearly two centuries old."

"None the worse for that," retorted the judge. "I am not stealing wit, only retailing it; though now you draw my attention to it, Mrs. Lea, it was, if not stolen, certainly Steele wit in the beginning."

"Then," said Fanny, "we will forgive you for repeating an old pun, since for our sakes you have originated a new one."

"I don't know, however," continued he (with your leave, I return to our former subject) whether one's writing or talking of scenery is proof positive that it is best enjoyed. This thing of intense admiration of the beauties of nature seems a boon granted specially by heaven to those who are not happy. When I was a poor devil, and nobody cared for me, I used to

stand in the cold, admiring the moonlight, or climb difficult places like this, to see larger quantities of water and sky than are visible on level ground; but lately, I've turned my attention more particularly to keeping Virginia in a good humor, and I find more comfort in her smile than in contemplating the setting sun or the moon's silvery ray. And as to music, I've wearied long ago of the opera, and much prefer the varied tones of our little Sammy, whether he be making merry over his ball or begging with plaintive notes for a biscuit. Away with the strains of Bellini; give me domestic music forever!"

"Out on such nonsense!" said Fanny Lea; "you commenced so seriously, I really expected something grandiloquent. But tell me, Mrs. Woodville; the little island you are pleased to call magical, in what part of the landscape is it to be found, or is it visible at all this evening?"

"I never saw it with more distinctness than now," said Elizabeth. "Come, girls, all of you who have called it a fancy of mine, look now for yourselves. Follow the direction I point in, — there, in the extreme south, just as the river disappears from view, it stands. Generally, it comes and goes, but this evening it is stationary."

"Why, it is really there," said Estelle. "I have, to please sister Elizabeth, strained my eyes after it often, but this is the first time I've ever been rewarded with a view."

"Pray heaven it may not fire a gun, and break the delusion," said Captain DeHeart.

"No danger of that, it can't be a gunboat," said Estelle. "The lower fleet is full a mile nearer to us; besides, count for yourself. But five vessels have passed the town, and there they lay huddled up together."

"It would puzzle you to count the upper fleet, ladies," said the general; "the masts, as they stand behind the point yonder, look like a forest stripped of its leaves. To make a guess, as the Yankees say, I think there must be near fifty."

"There is the monster of a mortar-boat," said Caroline, "that gets our range, and pays its respects, directly after day-break, in a manner so destructive to my morning nap."

"I think you have made a mistake," said her uncle. "I would rather suspect the one at the mouth of the canal, or rather, what was intended for a canal, but turned out a good joke on General Grant."

"And a joke we had better make the best of, since he is trying

so hard to turn the tables on us," said Fanny Lea. Then turning to Judge Wilkerson, she continued: "I came to high words with General Turner, this morning. He called me absurd, for a fancy which took possession of me, which was, to go out to the line during the cessation of hostilities today, and ask General Grant for some hospital supplies. In spite of his long argument, that such a request would never be granted, and that it was the same thing as asking for gunpowder and fresh cannon, I honestly believe I should have gotten them, by representing to General Grant, that they should be used for those only who were entirely disabled by wounds or sickness, and could never bear arms again. What think you, would there have been a chance of success?"

Judge Wilkerson laughed. "Only one chance that I can think of," he said, "that of taking General Grant so much by surprise, that he might lose his presence of mind."

"Give me a better reason," cried Fanny. "In this civilized age, from what I read and hear, it seems that men of honor only consider as foes such as are fit to meet them on equal terms upon the battle-field. Suppose this request came to General Grant from females, who pledged their word of honor, that every morsel so gotten should be appropriated to the wounded, nay more, if he required it, to such as could never, under any circumstances, bear arms again; would he, after such a representation as that, refuse?"

"I think he would," replied the judge; "for he might deem it unsafe to rely on the honor of a stranger, even if she were a female, since history does not entirely disprove that gentle woman can be treacherous. And if he felt convinced of your sincerity, what security would he have that your promise would be respected by nineteen thousand men who are on constant duty, and little better than starving. Would you in your heart blame them for laying violent hands on something to eat?"

"I've heard of no stealing as yet," said Fanny.

"Then you must be among a more honest or less hungry set than are camped around us," said Caroline, laughing; "for this morning, just as a large fish (a buffalo, it is true, but still a delicacy) was seasoned by our cook, and converted to a nice crisp brown condition, a grayback (name and regiment unknown) appeared at the kitchen-door, and disappeared a second afterwards, leaving us minus our breakfast. The fish

he might have had; but he took also my coffee-pot, that cannot be very well replaced at present."

"You have no right to complain," said Mary McRea, "for we ought to divide everything with the soldiers."

"I intended to do that," said Caroline, "indeed, had made special preparations to make merry with my friends; but, just as you would have done, Mary, I gave preference to the buttons and gold-lace; for you must think with me, that an officer's uniform looks better at the breakfast-table, and an officer's palate seems to have quite as good relish for fish."

"Another argument, Mrs. Lea, against your scheme, is," said Captain Alexander, "that General Pemberton himself would have objected; for to admit the shocking condition of our sick and wounded would be to show our weakest side to the enemy."

"That hardly holds good," retorted Fanny; "I believe they know it as well as ourselves. Do they not see their shot and shell penetrating houses every day, over which floats the hospital flag?"

"Then, if you think they designedly shoot into hospitals, I'm surprised you expect such generosity from them in this matter of supplies!"

"No," chimed in several ladies at once; "if they shoot at dying men, they certainly would not give them anything to eat."

"Hold, ladies!" cried the judge. "We hate the Yankees bad enough already; be careful not to blame them for what they really cannot help; if they only aimed where they were certain of not striking a hospital, they would certainly have to turn their guns another way. For, consider, about every tenth house is now a hospital. There is the sick flag on the Court-house, the Marine Hospital, Doctor Lane's residence, the Vicksburg Hotel, the City Infirmary, besides whole lines of tents. In good sooth, we would be safe enough, should they all be respected."

"Can you, judge, in the multiplicity of your charity," said Mary, scornfully, "defend those shots, that were thrown with such fatal effect among the crowd that was going into the Catholic Church, Sunday? Any glass that would draw attention to the gathering at all, would have shown that they were non-combatants; for many of them were women, and the men wore citizens' dress."

"I am not certain that those shots were aimed at the church-goers, Miss Mary," said the judge. "True, they continued to fall in the same locality for fifteen minutes; but you must have observed, when a mortar opens, it generally keeps the same range about that space of time, or till it becomes necessary to stop and cool off, for fear of bursting. It may possibly have been accidental, for all we know."

But the ladies were clamorous with reasons why it was not, and could not have been, accidental; and ended by declaring, that as long as Mr. Mike Donivan lived (he was one of the wounded on the occasion), his handless arm would be a monument of Yankee cruelty, and evidence that they were not willing for a poor gray-haired old man to go on Sunday and say his prayers, just because he lived upon southern soil.

"And," said Mary, "you cannot excuse General Grant for opening fire on the town, when he knows, that, besides sick and wounded, there are plenty of women and children within range of his guns, without sending the accustomed summons to surrender, and allowing the defenceless time to remove."

The judge started to say, that the town had been summoned twelve months before, and might be considered by the Federals as having been in a state of siege a whole year; that the non-combatants, having been notified by the Confederate authorities to move, and refused to do so, remained at their peril; but seeing disapprobation in the eyes of all the ladies, and not feeling willing to encounter their ire, he only said, "Well, well, have it your own way; no matter how we argue, we all come to the same conclusion, and hate the Yankees alike at last. But, though it is breaking up a very agreeable party, I am obliged to go back, and either must beg to be excused myself, or ask you all to return with me. The last is your better plan; but choose for yourselves, every one of you, for you are strong-minded women, and if you could fight as well as you can hate, no doubt you would have whipped the Yankees long ago."

"It is time to descend," said General Turner, in a very positive tone; and so echoed Colonel This and Captain That, for our party had gained recruits in coming up the hill.

General Turner defeated his own object in attempting to dictate, for Mrs. Lea was not in a particularly good humor with him, for more reasons than one; and immediately formed a strong opposition, which party she headed herself,

the declared principles of which were, to walk on as far as the Devil's Backbone, and then return to this spot to see the sun set.

The general was piqued. He was a widower of forty-two, and had a grown son and daughter; but he was fine-looking (particularly so in regimentals) and very fond of the ladies. Mrs. Woodville thought him culpably weak on one subject—that of admiring young giddy females much more than those of more dignified age and character; but since this has been a peculiarity of widowers of his age, from time immemorial, she should have been less severe on it. He was a great favorite with the fair sex, and deserved to be. He was supposed to be in search of a wife (which circumstance in no way affected his popularity), and it was said that he would take one of suitable age, if she had money enough to make it a consideration; but where there existed youth and beauty, he would be entirely disinterested.

This is about the position of every man, of similar age and condition, on the subject of matrimony, where and who ever he be; so anybody who blamed General Turner was finding fault with human nature. But Elizabeth Woodville had sometimes attempted to turn him a little into ridicule, for the assiduity of his attentions to girls, and made some innuendoes about the insipidity of sweet sixteen; to which he responded, that, for his part, he did not like his food too highly seasoned. Nevertheless, the two, in spite of an occasional thrust of words, were pretty good friends. General Turner, who, though preferring youth (as sensible men are apt to do), was not insensible to attractions at any age, thought her a fine woman, and often (with great frankness) told her so; and she, although a widow, had not been so long, and had formed no scheme as yet to entrap him into anything like actual matrimony.

General Turner's manners were really agreeable. He had considerable knowledge of character, and a happy faculty of adapting his conversation to almost any one; but, like everybody else, he sometimes made a mistake, and this was one of the times. Instead of leaving Mrs. Lea entirely alone, to decide for herself in this matter of going home; for she knew, as well as himself, that it was wisest to do so. He, feeling the effects of their misunderstanding of the morning, began to insist that they should all go immediately down, and when she refused, openly charged her with folly in thus,

for the gratification of her whims, risking her own life and that of others.

Fanny, affecting an air of great carelessness to hide her annoyance, said, "Oh, since you are really afraid for your life, I beg, sir, that you will not accompany us. Come, girls (or rather, such of you as expect to survive it), let us start for the Devil's Backbone."

Every one of the females and most of the gentlemen, at this juncture, sided with the opposition; and Judge Wilkerson, greatly amused at such a display of spirit, called out, as he retreated down the hill, "Bravo, Mrs. Lea! If you decide to go to General Grant, please, ask him for a new hat for me, for I'm strictly a non-combatant, and have not fired a gun since the town was invested."

General Turner hesitated a moment what to do. He rather disliked to give up the walk, which the young men seemed to anticipate with pleasure; but, looking at Elizabeth Woodville, he saw her smile, while she hummed audibly,

"For May and December can never agree."

This completed his chagrin, and with a stiff bow, he also disappeared, and was, when he became again visible, beyond the bank, far down the road leading to town.

"Forward! march!" called out Estelle McRea; and the party formed into line, and was again in motion.

Mrs. Woodville now walked with Captain Alexander on one side, and St. George on the other. The latter broached immediately the subject of the poetry, and requested permission to repeat it, which being granted, he began as follows:—

TO CAPTAIN ST. JOHN ST. GEORGE, FORMERLY OF CONFEDERATE NAVY.

Why left you the sea? where the light ripples part,  
Like the first sport of love, with the young maiden's heart.  
Why left you the sea? where the dark billows roll,  
Like crushing despair, o'er the depths of the soul.

Why left you the sea? Could the mermaids ne'er feel?  
Are their hearts made of rock, or their bosoms of steel?  
Could not coldness and cruelty, terrors to me,  
Cause sorrow enough in the depths of the sea?

As you played with their ringlets of emerald and gold;  
As you gazed on their features of statue-like mold;  
As you heard their low song, as it swelled o'er the wave;  
As you saw their light grace, as they carelessly lave;—

Why did they not weave a light web round your heart,  
To detain you, and save their land-sisters the smart  
Which the daughters of Neptune, they say, cannot feel,  
Or their grief-stricken murmurings ever reveal?

O stoic and false one! before I knew thee,  
I'd a bosom as light and a fancy as free,  
As those same sunny maids! Did they teach you the spell  
That rivets my soul, and my being so well?

Why staid you not? They seek not feeling, or vow;  
They ask not the love which my heart yearns for now;  
They could sport with you daily, and feel not the thrill  
Which you woke in my soul, and which lingers there still.

In mercy return! I had hope, I had fear,  
When your light laugh first sounded distinct on my ear;  
But your coldness has taken all joy from my heart,  
And bid even the brightness of girlhood depart.

Go back to those frolicsome maids of the wave!  
In the light sea of snowy surf, still with them lave;  
They ask not from you, who to them will give naught, —  
A soul for a soul, or a heart for a heart.

"Indeed, the lines are highly complimentary, Captain St. George," said Mrs. Woodville, "and should afford you no slight degree of gratification."

"But," said Captain Alexander, "perhaps, St. George, they were not intended for you; in which case, you may be appropriating a compliment that belongs to somebody else."

Captain St. George reddened. "I fancy," he said, "there can be no mistake on that head, sir—none whatever."

"Well," replied Alexander, "show us the manuscript, and tell us how you got it."

"It was handed to me by a boy, sir," said St. George, getting excited, "just as I was getting on my horse—given, sir, into my own hand."

"Pshaw! that is no evidence; perhaps he took you for another man."

"Sir, I fancy I am as well known as another," retorted St. George; "and, allow me to remark, that there is an appropriateness—a—a—fitness about them (seeing that I have been in the navy), which would strike any gentleman, sir—but one, sir, who was disposed to rob me of a compliment."

"Rob you? not for the world; but it is devilish hard, that you should get all the favors from the ladies. Tell me, Mrs. Woodville, how does it happen?"

"I cannot tell you that," answered Elizabeth; "but one

thing I feel it my duty to say, since you are disposed to throw doubt on the matter, that these lines were intended for Captain St. George; and, though I am in honor bound to preserve the secret, that I myself know the lady who wrote them."

"Ah, dear madam," said the dandy, in pathetic tones, and seizing eagerly her hand; "pray, pray, tell me the name of the dear creature."

"I've told you," said Elizabeth, "that I'm bound to secrecy; but I have reason to think that both Mary and Estelle are in possession of the same information, and probably may feel more at liberty to divulge it."

Hearing this, Captain St. George moved off; and Alexander, laughing, said, "In society, the ladies throw St. George about as boys do a trap-ball — all, however, to no purpose; for he is incarcerated in such an impenetrable shell of vanity, he can never be made to think himself a nuisance."

"Nevertheless," said Elizabeth, "I'm sometimes sorry for him; and apropos of sympathy, I'm afraid General Turner is really offended, and I'm sorry for that, too. Fanny was hasty, and I'll tell her so, by and by. She has forgotten it already, however. See how bright she looks! It is scarcely possible to ruffle her temper more than a moment at a time."

"So I should think from her countenance," answered Alexander; "and the young lady by her side, Miss Courteny, if I mistake not, is she equally amiable in disposition?"

"I must know what you consider amiability in a young lady, before I answer."

"You put me to a severe test, Mrs. Woodville," answered Captain Alexander. "I have known almost nothing of women, though I grew to man's estate some years ago; my actual association with them has been confined to my mother and a cousin two years my senior."

"In spite of that," said Elizabeth, "you must have formed some opinion on the subject, or you are no son of Adam. I have heard love spoken of by your sex as a disease, which is as inevitable as the cutting of teeth. Is it not Washington Irving who tells the tale of a Moorish prince, who was strictly guarded from infancy, to prevent his so much as seeing a woman, and yet showed unmistakable evidences of the malady at the usual age?"

"Yes; and made vows, and played plaintive airs to a tree," said Alexander. "The tale is cleverly told, and has a good

moral. I suffered (I have a very distinct recollection of it), while in my seventeenth year, from the charms of a certain Mademoiselle LeClerc, of our parish; but, I don't think I learned much of female character from her."

"Then," said Elizabeth, "I am to suppose that your cousin is your model of womanly excellence — or, perhaps, your mother."

"Well, I don't know," was the response. "Mere Felice is certainly saintly and pure, and Marion gentle and self-sacrificing. But, to be frank with you, one's idea in thinking of a young lady, is more apt to be, — is she fit to be loved, than is she fit to go to heaven?"

"I can answer without farther consideration," said Elizabeth, "that Caroline is not fit to go to heaven."

Alexander (wretch that he was) could not help thinking, that, if one of the two women, whom fate and fancy seemed to point out to him from whom to select a wife, had to start on the journey, it had best be her who was best prepared.

"Those saintly qualities, which are so rare and so lovely in women," continued Elizabeth, "are not appreciated by your sex; and it strikes me as being strange."

"Nevertheless," said Alexander, "when a man falls in love, it is natural that he should select a woman who will make his life pleasant, and leave it to a priest to shrive him at the last."

Elizabeth laughed; but after a pause, she said, "You seem to forget, or, perhaps, you have never realized, how much those who come in daily contact with us influence our actions and control our fate. Think of the consequence, when, from duty and habit, we have to pass the greater part of our lives with them. We are discussing rather a trite subject; and I have drawn your attention to it, to make the very trite reflection, that a man, in selecting a mistress, with the hope that she will one day be his wife, should not underrate moral qualities; for, after marriage, though people generally cease to love each other, they never cease, in some way or other, either for good or evil, to affect each other's fate to the end of life."

"I do not understand you," said Alexander. "My idea of marriage is, that love alone constitutes the tie. In thinking of marriage, its restraints appear perfectly insupportable to me, without a warm feeling on either side."



"Those are sentiments," said Elizabeth, "which every honorable person should hold; yet, nevertheless, I believe them dangerous and unsuited to the world at large. I have seen few marriages where I thought actual love survived intimate associations; yet I've seen many persons conduct themselves with dignity in that relation, make useful members of society, and apparently lead contented lives."

"What you speak of with so much calmness," said Alexander (showing more excitement than he was conscious of), "from my soul I abhor; and, now I think of it, we were just now speaking of Miss Courteny. Think you, that such would be her idea of a happy life?"

"Caroline is very young," was the answer. "In talking, she expresses even more than the usual amount of enthusiasm, but it is now, and will be for some time, mere theory with her; for I think she is a singular instance of a young lady who was never in love. She has strong feelings, and it is the fate of all that possess such to meet with bitter disappointment and sad experience in early life. Since she feels acutely, I predict that she will suffer much; but I have seen glimpses of firmness and dignity in her, that lead me to think, in spite of many faults, that she would not succumb to an ordinary misfortune, but rise superior to it, and, in time, regain and retain her peace of mind, which nothing but loss of conscious rectitude could utterly destroy."

"I find much amusement, captain, in conversing with my young sisters and with Caroline, whom I regard almost as one of them. Their ideas of life are so exaggerated, as sometimes to make me smile, and their standard of action and confidence in themselves so high, as often to make me sigh. They treat me with entire confidence, and there is not a day-dream or a night-dream (which though withheld for a time) is not finally submitted for my comments. They are all at the scribbling age, and every day I am presented with verses, having little enough of merit in themselves, but interesting to me, from the fact that they embody sentiments so fresh and sincere, and give me (unknown to them) much insight into character. The lines, so gratifying to St. George, were written by Estelle, and dedicated in derision to him; and but that I fear to tax your patience too far, I would read you some lines that Caroline suffered me to take from her desk yesterday, and which I have about me."

She took hold of her companion's arm, that he might look over the paper conveniently with her, and, as they walked along, read:—

Since Fate has decreed it, 'tis better to part;  
Not a tear on my cheek, or a throb of my heart,  
Shall disturb my soul's calm, or venture to tell  
Of grief or regret, as I bid thee farewell.

I could doubt if we ever loved, now that 'tis o'er,  
For your face wears the same careless smile as before;  
And your laugh rings as clear and as cheerfully yet,  
As when fondly we vowed, or when hourly we met.

And for me, now that vision of girlhood is past,  
I smile to remember I thought it could last;  
My brow is as smooth, and my heart seems to be  
Rejoicing and gay in new-found liberty.

But as memory brings back the remembrance of love,  
For a moment the curtain of Lethe's removed,  
And I look with surprise on the hopes and the fears  
That were centred in *thee* all those three weary years.

I'd a bright happy home, where the hours flew so fast,  
I dreamed not that girlhood and youth could not last;  
Kind brothers to shield me, sweet sisters to cheer;  
Loving parents still with me, to love and revere.

I had dreams of ambition, too, vivid and clear;  
As in girlhood's first dawn they invariably are, —  
Wealth, station, and grandeur, in dreams *all* were mine.  
Oh! sweet were my musings, and bright were their kind!

But changed were my dreamings, and broken the spell  
That had bound me to home and to parents so well;  
Sweet sisters! proud brothers! so tender to me,  
I'd have given them *all* for a cottage with thee.

At a touch of my hand or a glance of my eye,  
All beaming and eager, your own would reply;  
And the soft tale of love your lips now scorn to tell,  
If not true in those days, you dissembled right well.

Think not I regret thee! far better to be  
Restored to myself, and once more light and free;  
'Twas a pang to my heart, but relief to my mind,  
When I saw thy soul bound at another's false shrine.

Thou wert not what I thought thee; I cannot now tell;  
What it was that induced me to love thee so well;  
But thine image, that came to my bosom unsought,  
When I found I was loved no more, rose to depart.

I have heard and have read, that when love has once flown  
From the heart and the mind, where she sat on her throne,  
That the flame which has played upon passion refined,  
Can leave but the ashes of sorrow behind.

But with me 'tis not so; though I love thee no more,  
I will pray for thee warily and oft as before;  
And when, morning and evening, soft memories move,  
Will wish thee another and happier love.

Captain Alexander listened attentively, and for some little time was silent. He was thinking (and not agreeably) that in spite of what her friend had said (speaking of her heart, as a tablet, on which no characters were written), that Caroline might have had some fancy, and that these lines were written under the influence of real feeling. Elizabeth soon relieved him by saying, "Some time ago, the girls were seated about me, and we happened to discuss the probable feelings of persons who had once loved each other, and afterwards ceased to do so. There was a variety of opinions about the matter; and Caroline took this method of expressing hers."

Alexander made no reply. He wanted very much to ask Mrs. Woodville to give him the lines, and she would have done so without hesitation; but that "conscience, which makes cowards of us all," restrained him; and Elizabeth, imagining she had chosen a topic of conversation not interesting to him, made haste to change it.

## CHAPTER XV.

MARY McREA and Captain Hamilton were the first to reach the Devil's Backbone. There was one of Captain Dean's guns (the best of them all) placed on the extreme top of this point. It had fired the shot that proved fatal to the 'Cincinnati, and wore a wreath of roses, that had been twined about it by one of the gunners, and was ornamented besides by many bouquets. The mounting of this gun was better arranged than those of the same battery above and below. It was placed in a half-circular trench, and moved by machinery back and forth, so as to command the entire bend the river forms immediately in front of it. This was the most elevated position of the whole fortifications, and overlooked on one side a camp of one of the regiments belonging to Lee's brigade, of which St. George was an officer. Directly behind the gun was a magazine of earth, well-sodded and substantial; and as this was elevated some twenty feet higher still, Mary and Hamilton climbed up the sides, and enjoyed an even more extensive view.

When Caroline came up, she was much pleased with the holiday attire of the gun, and, taking the band from her hair, she said, —

"Blue ribbons are scarce since the war began; but, after such a gallant deed, you shall have a reward;" and she arranged the bow with care, leaving the streamers to toss about in the breeze.

"See!" cried Estelle, "how patriotic we of the 'Southern Confederacy' are, since even young ladies sacrifice their ribbons without hope of getting more."

Captain St. George stepped forward, and affected to do the honors.

"Allow me, ladies," he said, "to point out the tents of some of your friends."

"And also their caves," called out Hamilton, from the top of the magazine; "for we are all provided in that respect, and find them useful. When the shells get our range, we fellows who are put to work the heavy guns (and can only use them when gunboats attempt to pass), having nothing to do, find it advisable to cave."

"This camp ought to be very well protected," said Mrs. Woodville, "since it is inclosed on every side, except towards the river."

"You forget," said Alexander, "that mortar-shells, bursting in the air, are no respecters of side fortifications. I believe as many as six men of this company have been killed or wounded already."

"Only two actually killed," said Captain DeHeart.

"But," said Alexander, "all of them will die; for their wounds are severe. I dread mortar-shells for my men more than minie-balls. They are not as demoralizing, it is true; but a shell wound seems to give a more violent shock to the nervous system, and, generally, in the end, proves fatal."

"Is this a Brooke gun?" asked Elizabeth of Captain Dean.

"No," he answered. "I have only one Brooke gun, and that is below on Mr. Harwood's residence. I've named it Mary Elizabeth, after his wife."

"Can the accounts about the power of the Brooke gun be true," asked Mrs. Lea. "I've heard it will shoot through several feet of granite."

"To look from here," said Captain Dean, not hearing her question, "one would suppose it impossible for anything to pass round that bend with these guns playing full upon it, and yet I've had the mortification to see the enemies' boats (curse them) steam pass, almost uninjured, and we shooting with all our might."

Caroline took off her hat, and sat down upon the grass. "A little green spot looks doubly refreshing now," she said. "But for its steepness, the horses would, long ago, have robbed this hill also, and left it only barren sides."

"How delightful!" said Elizabeth, "is this little respite from the firing. Ah! how I wish it were never to begin again."

"It must, indeed, be a dreadful experience," said Captain Alexander, "for women and children. I sometimes think, even now, when matters have progressed so far, that something ought to be done to relieve them. Surely Grant would listen to any proposition from Pemberton to allow non-combatants to pass through the lines!"

"Pemberton would not allow such a proposition to be made," said Elizabeth. "Our friend, the Rev. Mr. R., sounded him upon the subject, and he said, positively, that as the citizens

had, in spite of repeated remonstrance, decided to remain, they must now take the consequences, whatever they be."

Caroline had been thoughtful for a moment, and at the end of it, she said, "I've been wondering what our sensations would be, if, in that direction," and she pointed to the west, "we should hear shouts and firing, with cries of, 'Johnston! Johnston!' What would you do, Mrs. Lea?"

"I would run to meet him," cried Fanny, starting up, "in spite of shot and shell; I would throw myself on the earth before him; I would kiss his hands, and his ——"

"His feet," interrupted Estelle.

"Yes, his feet, and call him by every name that a soldier holds dear; and in all our troubles, let us be supported by the hope of that blessed day, for it must now be near at hand."

"I have ceased to hope for it," said Elizabeth, sadly.

"You shall not say so," said Caroline, seizing her hand; "anything, anything, but that Johnston will not come to our relief! I dream of it every night, and it keeps my courage up during the day. Sometimes I want to pull the flowers in Major C.'s garden, but I forbear. We'll need them, I think to myself, to make decorations when Johnston comes in triumph. I practice on many a laurel wreath, that I may make them rapidly, to crown his victorious troops; and I fancy, almost every hour in the day, that in the distance, I hear, between the explosion of the shells, firing. I make uncle listen, but he does not hear, and calls it a fancy of mine."

"Yet it is not a fancy," said Elizabeth. "I have noticed it myself, particularly yesterday; and in spite of my settled conviction that we are not to be relieved, I felt, for the moment, a shadow of hope."

"That is a hope I must dissipate," said Captain Alexander, smiling. "The firing does actually occur, but it is skirmishing on the opposite side of the river, between the Federals and some of Kirby Smith's command."

"But," said Fanny Lea, "may it not, after all, divert the attention of the enemy, and be of some little advantage to us?"

"That must be the intention of it, but Grant's army is so immense that they can spare plenty of men to skirmish in that direction without being at all weakened."

Caroline sighed. "I supposed," she said, addressing Alexander, "it will require almost a miracle to effect our success against such unequal numbers."

"I do not know that inequality of numbers is, of itself, such a bad feature in the case. I have a little hope that the hugeness of the Federal army may prove its destruction, for a large mass of troops is more difficult to manœuvre than a smaller one, and a mistake made must produce more confusion. In recording battles, history proves that numbers alone achieve nothing; so much so, that the greatest victories have almost invariably been gained by the smaller over the great."

"But," said Elizabeth, "that was in the open field, where success depended on a pitched battle. Surrounded, as we are here, numbers can accomplish everything, and will do so against us. Like Caroline, I think nothing but a miracle can effect our success."

"But," said Caroline, "there is this difference. You despair; I look confidently for the miracle to occur."

"You want to see Johnston badly, ladies," cried Hamilton, from the top of the magazine; "but this is nothing to the anxiety you'll feel when reduced to rations of mule-meat."

"It was reported this morning," said Elizabeth, "that some mules were killed, and are about to be distributed to the garrison as food. Is it true?"

"There were a couple killed by a shell, not far from here," said Captain DeHeart, "and turned over to some Mexicans to be dried; but I think there has been no distribution of the meat yet."

Estelle's face expressed great disgust at the idea of such food, and Fanny said she would almost as soon die as eat it, but Captain Alexander said he thought it was simply a prejudice that was rather unreasonable than otherwise, whilst Caroline declared, that if there was any hope of relief, that the garrison should consider it no hardship at all.

"You are talking rather recklessly," called out Hamilton, "since you have no idea of the taste of it."

"They jest at scars who never felt a wound."

"Caroline would feel like the rest of us," said Mary, "when brought to the test."

Upon which, Caroline replied, "Listen, all of you present!"

"Hear! hear!" cried Hamilton.

"Listen, all of you present," repeated she. "I do solemnly

promise, that if ever this garrison is induced to eat mule-meat, I, Caroline Courtney, will eschew beef, or other animal food, and fare like the rest of them."

"We shall see," said Elizabeth, rising; "but, look, the sun is almost down! It is full time we were going home."

"And we'll get there," said Sue, "in full time for a good scolding from papa for being so late."

So saying, everybody turned towards the town, and sauntered leisurely along. The party was destined, however, to have a most unpleasant termination. The sun, as they proceeded homeward, was low in the western horizon, and was tinging the river and tops of the trees with a thousand brilliant rays. In thoughtless security, they stopped to enjoy and admire, till, one by one, the bright beams disappeared, leaving in their place a huge ball of fire, which lingered but a moment, and then sank behind the trees. Simultaneously with its going down, the mortar-boats reopened their fire, for the flag of truce was at an end, and every one paused to watch the effect of the missiles that whizzed across the river, and then burst in the air, scattering their fragments about in all directions.

Unfortunate for our party was this time the direction of the shells; for, just as they reached the spot where the first retrospective view had been taken of the valley and town below, a thundering sound, accompanied by a vivid flash, brightly seen through the gathering twilight, made them cast glances full of alarm below. There, along the bank of the little bayou, the destruction was visible.

A shell had entered and torn a tent to pieces, and two stout soldiers lay on the ground lifeless and weltering in their blood.

Two minutes more and another exploded near the same spot, killing a horse from under an officer, who was riding hurriedly along; and before a voice was heard, a third fell within a yard of the group on the hill, almost drowning, with its deafening noise, the screams of our lady friends, who, partly led and partly dragged by the gentlemen, dispersed in all directions, not knowing what damage had been done, and thinking of little else, in the terror of the moment, but the preservation of their own lives.

When silence succeeded, Fanny Lea turned round again, and disengaged her arm from Captain St. George. Her sus-

pense was agonizing; for she remembered, that but for her obstinate rejection of General Turner's advice, the other ladies would probably have been, for some half-hour, comfortably ensconced in their respective cellars and caves.

Great was her relief, therefore, to be joined by Caroline Courteny and Captain Alexander, who like herself had run up instead of down the hill; and to hear that Mrs. Woodville and her sisters were certainly not severely hurt, as they were in good moving condition, and could be seen running the gauntlet at full speed across the valley, closely followed by the exploding shells. A few steps brought them to view, and with breathless anxiety she watched their retreating forms till they crossed the bridge and commenced the ascent going into town. Just before they disappeared, the ladies turned, and handkerchiefs were waved on both sides, so that confidence was to some extent restored. Meanwhile, the shells continued to fall with frightful rapidity; and for Mrs. Lea and her companions to retrace their steps towards home seemed the height of folly. St. George begged that they should go on to the camp beyond the Devil's Backbone; and Captain Alexander desired that they should ask for quarters in a neighboring house, till the mortars took another range, when they might make an effort to walk back into town. The latter was decided upon, and the first house on the hill became the goal of their exertions, but, though gained safely, seemed scarcely tenable for the occupation of females, so full was it of soldiers, sick, wounded, and fatigued.

Alexander, after looking within, said to Mrs. Lea, "There seems nothing better to do than what St. George proposes. I have neither inclination nor authority to eject these poor fellows; so, with your permission and Miss Caroline's, I propose we seek a retreat on the side of the farther hill."

The ladies both looked uncomfortable. Caroline proposed that they should run across the valley at all hazards, and Fanny, too, seemed to think it best. St. George was quite violent in his entreaties and expostulations; and Alexander, though less obtrusive, was decided in his opinion, that it was running a frightful risk. The ladies, however, continued firm; and, in the belief that they were acting for the best, again turned their faces towards the town, and commenced the descent of the hill.

"I know my father will be uneasy," said Mrs. Lea.

"And my uncle will be perfectly miserable at our delay," responded Caroline.

This remark, no doubt, had its origin somewhere in her heart or mind, but it was by no means the sentiment which was most engrossing while she spoke, for she was stimulated and sustained in thus braving a danger she might have escaped, by the thought that Pierre Alexander would be near to share it with her, and to lend his protecting arm to ward off such of the consequences as were in his power. It was becoming a natural thing for her to look to him in time of danger, for when the shelling surprised them an hour before, they were not walking together, and yet the first sound of distress had brought him to her side, and in the midst of her alarm, the certainty had returned that she was beloved.

The descent was, as before interrupted. The shells were falling thick and fast; and Alexander, who had made up his mind not to interfere, was again obliged to urge the ladies to return and seek the cave. "Do not consider me importunate," he said, "but I feel responsible to some extent to your father and uncle, ladies, and cannot but insist that you turn back immediately. The detention may be shorter than you think, for, at any moment, the valley may be out of the range of the shells. If you will remain in Captain St. George's cave, I myself will go into town, and carry any message you desire to send."

Another volley, and the earth was ploughed up almost to their feet; and Fanny Lea, pale with fear and excitement, answered, "Caroline, I must decide for us both. It is foolish to continue longer; let us go where the gentlemen think best."

"Would such be your advice?" said Alexander; "or are you but jesting?"

The speakers were regardless enough now of the shells. Other matters were under consideration; and a conversation, commenced lightly, had acquired a deep seriousness on the part of Captain Alexander, and caused him to speak in this phrase to Caroline Courteny, while his eyes sought hers with an intensity that made her tremble.

They were seated together at the mouth of St. George's cave, in a state of personal security; and, while the gay voice of Fanny Lea was heard discoursing with a trio of young officers from within, the lovers were seated side by side,

watching the river beneath their feet and the stars above their heads, forgetful of all dangers past or to come, — thoughtless, indeed oblivious to all, save that they were together.

In placing her there, Alexander had not thought to make a declaration of love to her. He had firmly resolved in his calmer moments never to claim her; but, using every effort to control himself, bear his despair as manfully as might be, and trust to time, and absence in after-years, to give him peace.

With the reader's knowledge of his former life and connection with Marion Ludlow, it cannot fail to be admitted, that such a resolution would have been taken, under the circumstances, by any honorable man. Indeed, so fully determined was our hero, that he daily repeated to himself certain common-place maxims about keeping one's faith with a lady, etc.; and had learned them so thoroughly by heart, that, but a moment before our chapter begins, he had somehow lugged one of them into his conversation with Caroline in a not very *apropos* way. For, in answer to her hopes, that he would not be too severe in his opinion about the indecision shown by herself and Mrs. Lea on the hill, he had gallantly remarked (as gentlemen are wont to do) that a lady has ever the privilege of changing her mind, and that she is never more charming than while doing so. A man, on the other hand," he continued, "is made contemptible by such a thing." Then followed the few sentences he was accustomed to repeat to himself; in answer to which, Caroline said, —

"If Captain Alexander would be less polite and more sincere, I think we should understand each other better. Were women the whimsical creatures he portrays, they would not be fit subjects for anything like love in the other sex; and were men so entirely bound by their first impressions, they would be making, I think, but poor use of reason."

There was little in this remark to bring forth what Alexander said in reply; but so it was he asked, "Could God, man, or woman excuse a person who in a love-affair would feel or acknowledge change?"

"In the first instance," she answered, "I should hold him blameless; for who of us can control our feelings, as to expressions of change, that would depend on when and to whom they were made? If to the lady herself, I still say he is, or may be, blameless."

It was then that Alexander made the exclamation with which the chapter commences; and Caroline was led, in answer, to express herself as follows: —

"Love, I imagine, proceeds far more from the heart than the mind. Just as a man might love without premeditation, so, I hold, he might cease to do so. If to make choice of an object, on whom to concentrate our warmest affections, be a privilege as valuable to man as to woman, why deprive them of any precaution against making a mistake? Were I to fancy I loved a man, and time should prove to me I did not, I should tell him so; and I certainly should not respect him less for showing such frankness towards me."

"But," said Alexander, "if he were certain of causing unhappiness to one who really loved him?"

He spoke hesitatingly, for he thought of Marion, and longed, though dreaded, to know what Caroline would think was his duty towards her. Having spoken, he listened eagerly for her reply; for, at the moment, she seemed his guardian-angel, and he awaited her decision, like a pious Athenian at the shrine of the Oracle of Delphi.

Caroline spoke eagerly and earnestly in answering, all unconscious that she was arbitrating the fate of one whom heaven had made a shade more tender but far less proud than herself. "What," she said, "is a few months of fretfulness or mortification, to happiness or unhappiness for a lifetime? What woman is so mean-spirited as not to call to her aid every feeling of pride or philosophy to sustain her against a wound inflicted by any man before marriage?"

"The struggle may be hard, but eventually the victory is always her own. To a man, who, in a frank and courageous manner, would say he no longer loved me, I might give, after the shock of the announcement was over, my heartfelt respect. To a husband, who had deliberately married me, feeling indifferent from the time I knew it, I should lay to his charge the humbling of my pride, the destroying of my every hope, the compromising of my honor, and I should regard him then and ever with feelings of the bitterest hate."

Alexander gazed on her with admiration. The sparkling light of her eyes, the enthusiasm of her manner, the noble dignity of her sentiments, exhilarated him in the extreme. Even in his excitement, he contrasted her with a pale, frail girl in Louisiana, who he was accustomed to think he must



some day call wife; and so unimpassioned seemed her being, and so pusillanimous her spirit, that he stole a moment from his ecstasy, in order to despise her.

Ah, Marion! where were you while your cousin thus basked in the brightness of Caroline Courteny? Day after day, hour after hour, listening to the distant booming of the gun of Port Hudson, and fancying them but the echo of the more dangerous cannonade of Vicksburg, to which the dear one was exposed, till sleep, rest, and comfort had all fled, and nothing was left you but to pray. Why was the precious love that might have conferred happiness on another lavished upon one who held it so lightly? How hard is such a fate! for Marion Ludlow, who might, in the home of many a man, have been as proud mother and happy wife, seemed destined to pour out the richest treasures of her love, and to have them scorned by Pierre Alexander.

'Twas but a passing thought that Alexander gave to Marion, too much absorbed was he in the fair girl at his side to wander long.

For a moment neither spoke; and then Alexander laid his hand heavily on her arm, and his voice was husky, as he said, "Would such as you describe be a man's duty in every case, or is there a difference in women?"

"A difference in women?" she said. "Yes, a difference in this, that some pure natures would not suspect the evil till it came; but a frightful similarity when the blow descends, in the certainty and intensity of the suffering."

There was a movement in the cave, and Fanny Lea approached the door. Caroline affected a light tone, as she concluded by saying, "But, let every woman speak for herself; I have simply told you my own opinion."

And she knew not what it meant, when the young soldier said, in a deep, hoarse whisper, "For one other woman also you have decided."

As Fanny Lea interrupted the conversation with a jest, that it had continued too long, a courier ran up to the cave, and asked if there were women within. Being answered in the affirmative, he begged that one or more of them would come to the assistance of Mrs. Major Read, who had just been painfully wounded, and lay in a tent, in the camp of the Twenty-second Arkansas Regiment, not two hundred yards away.

"We will both go," said Fanny and Caroline, "at once;" and they persevered in their resolution, in spite of some opposition from the gentlemen who stood around.

Alexander wrapped a shawl of St. George's about Caroline, and offered her his arm. Mrs. Lea led the way, accompanied by the colonel of the Fourteenth Regiment and others. The wind had risen and the clouds gathered since they entered the cave; and amid the loose earth and stones, caused by the late excavations, the ladies would have found it no easy matter to keep their footing, save for the camp-fires along the river-bank, and the mortar-shells bursting in the air.

"The shells are not striking in this locality," said Mrs. Lea; "nor have they been for some hours. Call to the soldier, and ask him in what manner Mrs. Read was wounded."

The man said, in reply, that she had been walking in front of the cave, thinking herself secure for that very reason. "But it is said to be a shell-wound for all that," he continued, "most probably from the line."

Many soldiers crowded in and around the tent, where the unfortunate lady lay. They gave way as Mrs. Lea and Miss Courteny approached, thus enabling them to stand beside the sufferer. It was affecting to see how much had already been done in the absence of women, by both officers and men, to comfort and sustain the wounded woman.

They had piled the tent-furniture together to make her a bed, and spread over it a tattered Confederate flag. One held her head, and another, her torn and bleeding arm. Her husband was on duty somewhere along the line; but two surgeons had already reached the spot.

Mrs. Read smiled, in answer to Fanny's gentle enquiries. Her voice was weak from loss of blood, but she showed far less excitement and fear than might have been expected; and, when the surgeon suggested that amputation should be delayed till next morning, she insisted that the limb be immediately taken off, and that she should be carried, after the operation was finished, directly back to her cave, before her husband be informed of the accident at all.

"If such is your determination, madam," said the surgeon, "I will proceed with the operation at once;" and, turning to Fanny, "I would advise that yourself and Miss Courteny withdraw until it is over."

"It would undoubtedly be best for Caroline to go," said Mrs. Lea; "but for myself, I shall remain."

Alexander looked at Caroline, and noticed that she was very pale. He knew her strength was already overtaxed by the evening's exertion, and though long past midnight, she had had no sleep. How to advise or to provide for her to rest, he scarcely knew, but began to urge her to retire for at least a short time, from within sight or hearing of what he knew must be excessively painful to her. His efforts were not successful, "Do not fear for me," she murmured; "I feel as if I ought to stay." And, as a lamp was handed to him to hold during the operation, she drew her hand from his arm, and stood entirely unsupported within a short distance of the sufferer. There was no chloroform to be had, and every movement of the knife in the delicate flesh produced exquisite pain to the wounded lady.

The surgeon had done much of this sad work among the soldiers during the three weeks of the siege which had now passed, but even he was tremulous and hesitating about this cutting of a woman's flesh. The operation was but a little progressed, when a gust of wind coming into the tent with an unwonted violence, extinguished the lamp which Alexander held in his hand, and total darkness succeeded. Every heart sank, for the blood was flowing in a stream from the half-amputated arm; and, though voices called for matches, no one knew where to obtain them, and to attempt to bring a lighted lamp from the camp-fires, while the wind was so high, was impossible.

Mrs. Read, conscious of her danger, sat almost upright, and begged earnestly that there should be no delay.

"Lie still, madam," cried the surgeon, earnestly, "or cannot answer for your life."

"I shall bleed to death," she groaned. "O heavens! what shall we do for a light?"

A happy thought struck Caroline. "A lantern!" she cried. "Cannot some one bring a lantern?—that alone will answer our purpose."

"I have a lantern," said the surgeon, "and can find it myself in a moment. Come, some one, who has nerves strong enough, and hold the lady's arm tight, just below the shoulder, till I return."

Caroline sprang forward, and, feeling for the place, knelt

down and clasped both hands tightly about the limb. She spoke to Mrs. Read, begging her to be reassured, and lie quiet till the light was brought, and lent all her energies to prevent, as far as possible, the flow of blood which she knew had already been excessive. A dead silence reigned for some moments in the tent. Caroline felt the blood, in spite of every effort of her own to restrain it, flow through her fingers and down her arms. She had overtaxed her strength and nerves; for, though she still held the arm as if in a vice, a sickening sensation was creeping over her: she hesitated to call any one to her assistance, for fear of alarming Mrs. Read, and to relax her hold would be dangerous in the extreme. Alexander, who stood immediately beside her, noticed that her breathing was becoming very quick; he strained his eyes for a glimpse of the expected light, fearing that her strength might fail, yet knowing not how to relieve her.

There are times in our existence when resolution can for a moment conquer physical exhaustion, and so it was with Caroline now. She kept her grasp upon the arm, till there seemed to be no sensation in her whole body, except in her fingers' ends; but, as the surgeon entered with his light, and approached to take her place, the reaction was sudden, and, relaxing her hold, she lost consciousness, and fell back into Alexander's arms. He raised her up, and bore her out without speaking. He was troubled to know what to do for her. Stimulants were not to be had. The air was damp and the wind chill. For a moment, he thought to sit upon the bank, and warm her in his arms. Then came the fear that she might be offended, and, in the midst of his perplexity, she returned to consciousness, apparently as well as before, save that she was trembling violently with cold. "Let me go to the camp-fire," she said, and, with only the assistance of his arm, easily gained the river-bank.

"These are terrible times for females," said Alexander, as he drew a log close to the blazing pile, and seated her upon it. "At least," he continued, "let me see you thoroughly warm, since that seems to be all I can do for your comfort."

"My comfort is, or should be, but a secondary consideration, at present," said Caroline. "Go, if you wish to relieve me, and bring me news of poor Mrs. Read. I feel ashamed of giving way at such a time, and yet am scarcely able to return to the tent, as yet."

Going from time to time to inquire about the wounded lady, Alexander was, in the course of three hours, able to report to Caroline, that she had stood the operation with great courage, was pronounced by the surgeon to be in good condition, and had been removed to her cave.

"Mrs. Lea," he said, finally, "wishes to remain with her through the day; and recommends that I take you home, which I think had better be immediately, as it is nearly day, and I must report for duty at six o'clock."

Mrs. Lea appeared, coming from the cave, to offer said suggestion in person.

"Keep your bed during the day, Caroline," she said, "for you look almost ill. Captain St. George has ridden into town to tell my father of my whereabouts; and I will come myself to your house this evening, on my way back home, to bring you tidings of Mrs. Read."

Caroline was tired, sleepy, and hungry, and yet she was a woman to the last. As she walked over the hillside with Alexander, and descended on their way into town, the first glance of the dusky day began to steal brilliancy from the bursting shells, and add a hazy grim light to the morning scene. This breaking of the day, after a night of painful and laborious excitement, comes often with refreshing effect. There are few pains, either of body or mind, that are not intensified during the dark hours, and are lightened as the coming dawn, like a rainbow of promise, steals along the distant east, heralding the approach of another day. But this morning, Caroline was restrained in the exercise of her poetic sensibilities, by the genuine annoyance that every woman must feel, when seen by her lover for the first time "entirely out of fix." The day, then, on this occasion, which, in throwing its first rays of sunlight upon the couch of poor Mrs. Read within her cave, gave a short respite to fear and grief and pain, and showed Miss Courteny that her dress was stained and torn, her hair dishevelled, and her hands and arms red with human blood. Her face, pale before, grew red with annoyance and disgust; and, if escape from Captain Alexander had been possible, I think she would have started *solus*, and taken another route home.

Daylight will never be as propitious for lovers as the "pale rays of the silvery moon." Heart speaks not to heart under the broad glare as 'neath the softer beam, which shows so little and leaves so much to be understood.

Our hero had rather expected some expression of feeling from his companion, or, at least, an opportunity of saying something to the point himself; but not so. When they reached Major C.'s door, Caroline simply gave him her hand, without speaking; and he had to start for his post in the trenches, with nothing to comfort him save the remembrance, that his mistress could indulge in a bath and nap; while for himself, there was no alternative but to go, with an aching head and unwashed face, and stand upon duty for ten or twelve hours.

## CHAPTER XVI.

CAROLINE did not leave her room till late in the evening. She slept most of the day, and was feeling quite fresh, when Mrs. Lea came, as she had promised, to bring her news of Mrs. Read. The surgeon considered the state of his patient very encouraging. "All that is necessary to insure her getting along well," he had said, "is to be quiet and to sleep."

In addition to these tidings, Fanny had an ocean of things to tell — all new to Caroline, who had seen no one since morning. "Not heard it! Well, I am surprised," she said; "I directed St. George to call on his way to pa's this morning, and to ask after Mrs. Woodville and the McReas. He found no one in the house, not even the servants, and learned from a neighbor, that the family had made a hair-breadth escape just before quitting the premises. While they were despatching a hurried meal, after dark, a whole shell passed through the three-story building, entering through the roof, exploding in the cellar, tearing the ground, and splitting the furniture to splinters. Very little harm was done to the three upper stories. The shell did nothing but make a hole just big enough to pass through, but in the cellar everything was destroyed; beds and bedding riddled, and the place filled with dust and smoke. The family were terrified beyond measure, and ran in all directions. Judge McRea is now convinced that he chose a most unsafe retreat, and that even the open air is less hazardous than a cellar. Rallying his family, he took possession of a neighboring church, which is protected on one side by a bank of earth.

"Indeed," continued Fanny, "once outside of a cave, and I believe we are in quite as much danger in one place as another; and altogether, the McReas are benefited by the change, for Sue told St. George to tell me it was a great improvement on the cellar, that they had plenty of company, and hoped I would come down soon. But, Caroline, you will be shocked to hear some other and worse effects of the severe shelling, that occurred just as we made good our retreat yesterday evening. General Green, the famous Missourian, was killed on the left. Among other casualties were Colonel

Lockharth and Captain DeBlanc (who you have seen occasionally at Judge McRea's), badly wounded. A very sad thing happened near the Rock House, on Jackson Road. Two young ladies (daughters of Major Cook) were walking, like ourselves, and were both wounded (one severely so) in the chest. She is an acquaintance of St. George's, and he says she is a lovely girl. Then, another piece of news I have, but of a different character. A courier from Johnston came in last night; and this time, not an old, but a nice young man, the same that wrote 'All quiet along the Potomac, tonight.' He is said to have brought favorable news; but, about that (and this is the best part of it), we are to hear ourselves, for he is to be at the church tonight, to see the McReas; and Major Hoadly told me to tell you to be ready to go there with him, soon after dark. I'll meet you myself; for I shall, no doubt, be able between this and then, to pick up some kind of a beau, and we'll be introduced, and hear all about Johnston, and the people outside; but, in the meantime, good-evening, for I'm in a great hurry to get home."

Caroline looked a little for Alexander. True, 'twas uncertain, if, between his duties and want of rest, he could come; but she would have stayed at home cheerfully, feeding even on so slight a hope, rather than go elsewhere, and run the risk of missing him. Still, since Fanny and Major Hoadly had arranged differently, there seemed nothing left but to go. She half smiled at Major Hoadly's artifice, in going to spend the evening with the Misses McRea, with whom he was not particularly well acquainted. A stately mansion rose next door to the church, containing a fairy form of very slight proportions, yet large enough to fill every portion of the gallant soldier's by no means diminutive heart. This she suspected was taking him then, with the hope that a word or look, by no means freely given, as a general thing, might fall to his lot, and ease the burden of his soldier's fare.

The courier spoken of by Fanny (young F.) raised quite a sensation on his arrival. At time of the investment of the town by the Federals, rumors of Lee's campaign in Pennsylvania and his fight at Gettysburg had just begun to creep through. The accounts had been much exaggerated, as such things generally are; and, as the leading facts had been confirmed by several couriers, the garrison were quite enthusiastic, and began to hope that McClellan would be so hardly

pressed, as to require such reinforcements from Grant as would of itself relieve Vicksburg. They argued that such a weakening of Grant's forces would make Johnston's work easy; and that Kerby Smith, coming up on the other side of the river, to act in conjunction with him, the relief of the town would be certain. It is easy now to see that such reasoning was fallacious; but even those who should have been better informed, were either deluded or appeared to be so at the time; and the spirits of the garrison, save the poor inmates of the hospitals, were good.

Fanny Lea went early to take refuge in the sanctuary (as she called it) with the McReas, and Caroline and her escort came soon after. They found quite a crowd assembled, some accidentally, and some to see the famous courier, who was to be the lion of the evening. Mrs. Woodville and the Misses McRea considered the church an elysium, in comparison with what the cellar had been.

"O Mrs. Lea!" said Sue, her eyes as bright as diamonds. "See how clean we can keep our dresses, and how smooth our hair."

"You certainly look like a lily," said Fanny, glancing at her white dress, "and must find the change agreeable."

"You heard of our narrow escape, Fanny," said Mrs. Woodville, coming up. "We had not been out of the cellar ten minutes, when the explosion occurred. At the thought of it even yet, I tremble. I had the worse scare of all, for I thought little Mary and her nurse were below, for some time."

"I can imagine your alarm," said Fanny. "With such a large family as your father's, it seems miraculous that all escaped. I've been with Mrs. Read all day, and left her doing well; she bears her trouble like a soldier."

"So I have heard it said," answered Elizabeth. "Do you know, I've appreciated my arms, legs, and head better, ever since the siege began. Oh, what a blessing it would be, if we could be assured, that we would possess them all in good order when it ends."

"Did any ladies attend General Green's funeral, this evening?" asked Fanny.

"I think not. Papa would not consent for any of us to go, though ma was anxious to do so. General Turner and Major McCloud passed here on their way to it, two hours ago, and are to return before long."

"Look!" cried Estelle, pointing towards the church-door, "there is actually Mrs. Price! I did not suppose General Johnston himself could have tempted her from her cave after dark, much less a courier."

The lady spoken of made her way through the young people that crowded the aisle of the church, to one of the front pews, where Judge and Mrs. McRea sat. She was of middle stature, closely wrapped up in a cloak, and wore a Shaker bonnet, though the evening was by no means cool, and had an air about her, which was, had always been, and is still, habitual with her — of being in a great hurry. Why she was such a favorite with the young people of the town, it would be difficult to say, for a disinterested observer would never have supposed from her manner that she took the slightest notice, or felt the least interest in any one of them. She was, on this occasion, followed by her daughter, Mrs. Craft, whose manners were as bland as her mother's were phlegmatic, and who was regarded with particular scrutiny by the citizens at the time, on account of a reported engagement between herself and Doctor Plumber, an old and much respected physician of Vicksburg. Mrs. Price took her seat beside Mrs. McRea, let her cloak drop from off her shoulders, and laid her Shaker bonnet in the next pew. She had omitted to say good-evening, a thing not uncommon with her — perhaps, because she forgot — perhaps, because words with her always meant something, and ought not to be wasted. "Elizabeth Woodville," she said solemnly, and in a tone of reproach, to her friend, who had followed her up the aisle, "where is young Fortesque?"

"Not come yet, Mrs. Price," answered Elizabeth.

Mrs. Price looked at her watch. "Thirty-five minutes past seven," she said; "and you told me he would be here at half-past. What am I to think?"

And the old lady's mouth gave a nervous twitch which her friends knew meant disapprobation.

"General Turner promised to have him here punctually, dear Mrs. Price," said Elizabeth, in a conciliatory tone. "I'm certain it won't be long before he comes."

"I shall wait just —"

"Oh, don't put the time too short!" said Mrs. W.

"I shall wait just —"

"Oh, give yourself plenty of time, my dear friend," said Mrs. McRea.

"I shall wait just —"

"No necessity for hurry, my dear madam," said Judge McRea; and this was echoed by Fanny Lea and the two girls.

Mrs. Price's mouth gave another nervous twitch, and she this time finished her sentence. "I shall wait just fifteen minutes, and at the end of that time, all honest people should prepare for bed. Anna (to her daughter), do you take my watch, and look at the minute-hand closely."

"You had better set the watch full ten minutes back," whispered Estelle to Mrs. Craft, "or we'll never get her to wait."

Mrs. Woodville saw, and so did the other young folks around, that this was not one of Mrs. Price's sprightly nights; yet they were bent on having her stay, that they might hear her opinion of young Fortesque's news, for this lady had long been considered an oracle in the McRea family, on all subjects, from quilt-making up to politics; and when she admitted that she saw daylight through the smoke and fire of one of Lee's campaigns, the whole family, from the judge down to the youngest child, felt wonderfully encouraged as to the successful result of the war. Mrs. P.'s conclusions were generally arrived at suddenly, yet among her friends they had more weight than those conceived after the most laborious process of reasoning. Whether her reputation for sagacity was owing to her knowing when and where to hold her tongue, or whether with her, "the sunset of life gave mystical love," the author pretends not to decide; she only presents the facts.

The hum of conversation all over the church had by this time risen to a distinct clatter. The Misses McRea were receiving soldiers of all grades, from major-generals to privates, though of these latter there were fewer, for many of those who had been bred in luxurious homes were now so far separated from friends and resources, as to be bare of clothes.

Major Hoadly and Caroline were standing near the door, but not too far off for him occasionally to catch the light laugh of his gentle Annie, who, with a score of admirers, were seated in the body of the church.

Mrs. McRea took Mrs. Price into the basement for a few moments, to see how she had arranged for her household, by making different apartments with some old velvet curtains taken from the Masonic Hall.

"There is a singular conglomeration of character and individuals below here," said Mrs. McRea. "In this corner lodge the Rev. Mr. R. and his wife; in this, the Rev. Mr. Wheat, who is looking very miserable for want of his wife; this poor wounded soldier, we think, must have been at some time on the stage; this room belongs to Elizabeth; this to my girls; and these pews are often filled during the night with persons coming in from the street, for we do not think of refusing shelter to any one."

Mrs. Price gave a hurried look, and proposed going back upstairs. The shelling was, to use the common expression, "pretty lively," and while such was the case, she seldom left her cave, except to take food.

"Anna," she said to her daughter, sitting down again beside Judge McRea, "what time is it?"

"Twenty minutes of eight, mamma," was the response.

"A very long five minutes," and Mrs. Price fixed her eyes steadily on the door, and was silent.

"There comes Judge Wilkerson," said Mrs. Woodville. "I hear Mr. Fortesque brought him a note from Mrs. W., and must go and ask what it contained."

"Yes," the judge said, feeling in his side-pocket, "a note from Virginia. She sent it to General Johnston at Jackson, and it is to his courtesy I am indebted for its reception."

"But, how could she have sent it," asked Mrs. Woodville, "if, as you suppose, she is right in the midst of the Federal army?"

"Trust to her ingenuity for that," answered the judge. "She is in the midst of the Federal army; her mother's house is actually the head-quarters of General Smith, and yet she has contrived to send me a note, whether by stealth or permission, I know not. Here it is. It is very brief, but still satisfactory, for she says that, in spite of war and almost famine, herself and the children are well."

"Oh, think of her alarm," said Mrs. Woodville, reading; "the house full of Federal troops, the store-room broken open, her children's clothes torn to pieces before her eyes. It is dreadful. I have thought, heretofore, that pa decided badly



in letting us remain in town; but I believe I would rather stand the shells than such treatment from the army. What a brave woman she is, to say, in conclusion, 'Don't be uneasy about us, for General Smith says we shall be spared farther insult; and as regards health, we were never better.'

"Take care of the note," said Judge Wilkerson, "while I go forward, and speak to your ma and Mrs. Price."

"I suppose I may show it around," said Elizabeth; "it is not so different from other notes, and yet, somehow, I regard it as a great curiosity."

"Yes; but don't make it an excuse for a *tete-a-tete* with General Turner, for he has seen the official despatches."

Looking towards the door, Elizabeth saw General Turner entering, and with him a stranger, walking with a crutch, and wearing the Confederate uniform. "He must certainly be Mr. Fortesque," she said.

"Yes," answered Mrs. Craft, who stood near, "and came just in time to prevent ma from going home and taking me with her, for I believe she begins to suspect. Elizabeth, that we set the watch five minutes too slow, while she was in the basement."

General Turner took Mr. Fortesque up to introduce him to Judge and Mrs. McRea. Mrs. Craft and Mrs. Woodville followed, as did everybody in the church, anxious to get near the courier, and hear what he had to say of matters and things outside.

General Turner stepped back, and spoke to Mrs. Woodville apart. "I hesitated," he said, "about bringing this young fellow here, after all, for during the day, I have discovered he is a consummate humbug, and, while he is telling the truth once, tells a thousand lies."

"Oh, dear!" said Estelle, overhearing, "I'm so disappointed; I have buoyed myself up all day with the hope of hearing encouraging news, and now, if he tells me any, I shall be afraid to believe it."

"Take it, with many grains of allowance," responded General Turner; "for, if you can squeeze the truth out of him, you will be smarter than we've been at head-quarters."

"But surely," said Elizabeth, "the despatches are genuine."

"Oh, yes; and the man himself is a Confederate soldier, and many of the garrison have seen him before, but in his statements, he is a second Munchausen."

"Nevertheless, Estelle," said Elizabeth, after a pause, "we will listen;" and they, too, approached the courier, who had begun to discourse in his own peculiar style.

This coming in of Fortesque must be well remembered by both citizens and soldiers. He told many marvellous tales, and found a few people who were credulous enough to believe him. Finding himself in a large company this evening, and most of the company ladies, he outdid himself. He had been wounded somewhere, but his imagination exaggerated the matter to the extent of five or six wounds, and he represented himself as having been perforated by balls in all parts of his body. He gave glowing accounts of Johnston's resources, and would fain have had it believed that they exceeded those of Napoleon in his palmiest days. It was not easy for persons naturally unsuspicious, at a time when going through with the most wonderful experience of their lives, to discover at once that this man was trying to deceive them deliberately; and some of our friends listened to Fortesque at first with rapt attention. But he carried things too far; and Mrs. Price, whose patience had been sorely tried, waiting for him to come, was the first to show her incredulity, for she gave numerous twitches with her mouth and some ominous shakes of the head. Fortesque, unmindful of her impatience, proceeded. He had, he said, narrowly escaped detection by the Federal pickets eight or ten times. They had once gone so far as to strip him, and examine his clothes, without finding his papers. Another time, he had run a mile under fire from a battery, "and had my clothes pierced by seven minie-balls." Happening to catch Mrs. Price's eye, he said, in conclusion, "What do you think of that, madam?"

"That it is a most improbable story, sir," said the old lady, rising. "Reach me my Shaker bonnet, Estelle, if you please; I feel no disposition to stay longer. Good-evening to you all."

And she walked down the aisle at a rapid rate, saying to her daughter, quite loud enough to be heard by every one around, "The next time my instinct tells me to go, Anna, don't attempt to detain me. Here, I've been exposing my life for an hour, and in return for it have heard only nonsense and lies."

Fortesque must have heard like the rest of them, but if he felt chagrined, he soon recuperated, for, taking up the thread

of his discourse, he continued as before, till one by one dropping off, he by and by found himself with only Judge McRea for a listener; and he, too, might have gone, save that he was proof against all bores, for, taking a chew of tobacco, he relapsed into a state of oblivion to all around, and Fortesque, or any other man, was welcome to talk on till midnight.

"Do you believe he wrote 'All quiet along the Potomac tonight?'" asked Mary of Fanny Lea.

"I'll take my Bible-oath he didn't," was the response; "he can't say the commonest sentence in good English, much less write such beautiful lines."

"And yet, I am told, he claims to be the author," observed Judge Wilkerson, much amused at the disappointment of the ladies.

"He a poet, indeed," said Mary, scornfully. "I don't believe he can more than write his own name."

"A worthless fellow, I'll answer for it," said Mrs. McRea, "incapable of any good action."

"Hold, madam," said General Turner, laughing; "one thing I must tell you, that along with the despatches, he brought us plenty of caps."

"If such be the case," returned Mrs. McRea (and her features relaxed into a smile), "I shall request my daughters to avoid everything like rudeness in their conversation to and about him."

She looked towards the spot where Fortesque had lately been, but he was gone. Seeing that he had ceased to be the centre of attraction, he rather abruptly quitted the church, and walked off in the direction of head-quarters. Mrs. Woodville, Fanny Lea, Caroline Courteny, and the Misses McRea were at this moment talking apart.

It will be remembered by the reader, that at the commencement of the siege, Caroline Courteny's heart was stirred by the noble ambition to suffer with and for the soldiers, and to be of some use to her country and its defenders. Let not this thing produce a smile. Many women who lead every-day common-place kind of lives are capable of heroism. Caroline was eminently so. True; she devoted the usual amount of time to fixing of hair and adjusting apparel, to thinking of lovers and mending her stockings. Yet there was many a moment in which to indulge in patriotism; and the enthusiasm which lay dormant during her illness was now on the *qui vive* again,

longing to lend its aid to do sacrifice for the independence of her country.

As the ladies above-mentioned continued to converse, Mrs. McRea and Annie W. joined the group, and Caroline spoke to the former. "If we can mention our scheme to any one without fear of ridicule, my dear madam, surely it is to you; so, please, listen to me a moment. We want to send a message or paper to head-quarters, expressing our willingness, nay, our anxiety, to relieve the soldiers, and even assist them, if possible. We want to pledge ourselves to live upon soldiers' fare, and in case of its becoming necessary, as the siege progresses, to stand guard. Think what a reproach it would be on the women and citizens, to have it said that they in any way retarded or interfered with the defence of the town? Many say that my proposition is ridiculous, but —"

"That I did," cried Mary; "the greatest nonsense I ever heard."

"No nonsense about it," rejoined Mrs. McRea, with energy, "but a very laudable resolve, and one that I shall put into execution immediately. Wait here, ladies, all of you, while I go below stairs, and write a paper addressed to General Pemberton, for you all to sign."

Caroline was full of excitement at the idea. Mary said if her mother were to choke her, she would not sign it. And Mrs. Woodville remarked, "I don't like the proposition, for, after all, the gentlemen will do nothing but laugh at us."

"That is the only thing I dread," said Caroline. "Oh, I do so hate being laughed at. If I could keep uncle from knowing it! but I suppose that is impossible, if it goes to head-quarters."

"Indeed," said Mary, "not only your uncle will know it, but everybody else; and, if it is published in that horrid paper, the Yankees themselves will find it out, for I'm told the pickets always throw copies of it over to them, and it will pass for a good joke on the other side of the line."

"I think we had better ask mamma not to send it," said Elizabeth; "we are not living in the age of chivalry, but in the nineteenth century, when men think they can attend to their own business better than women can do it for them, and we shall get no thanks."

Caroline was in sore perplexity. Between her desire to be a heroine and her fear of being ridiculed, she scarcely had

made up her mind what to do, when Mrs. McRea returned with the paper, which was drawn up in the most approved style.

It began by expressing admiration for the defence of the town, which had already been made; sympathy for the sick and wounded; made honorable mention of such officers as had been killed; alluded in general terms to the privates; and ended by saying that the women in the town, both young and old, united in hoping that the garrison would hold out to the last extremity; and in order to decrease the supply of provisions as little as possible, they offered to pledge themselves to live on half rations, and, in case of necessity, to stand guard, if by so doing they could in any way relieve the soldiers.

Elizabeth asked when and by whom the memorial should be presented, hoping to gain time, and thus defer the matter of signing.

Fanny Lea, after hearing it read, was quite in favor of its being sent; as was also Caroline, who for the moment forgot her fear of ridicule.

"We are divided very like a Methodist meeting," said Judge Wilkerson, approaching the ladies, accompanied by Lieutenant Hamilton. "I propose to scatter. Let us have 'linked sweetness long drawn out,' instead of this concentration."

Mary most willingly accepted Hamilton's arm, and walked away to the front part of the church with him, thus escaping her mother. Mrs. Woodville stood talking with Judge Wilkerson, so that Mrs. McRea finding Fanny and Caroline more available than the rest, seized the opportunity, and being provided with pen and ink, compelled them to sign.

A diversion now occurred about the door by the return of some officers, in full uniform, who had been in attendance at the funeral of General Green. They had to report that two ladies, well known residents of Vicksburg, had just been wounded in the street, not three squares off. These ladies were Mrs. Hazard and Mrs. Peters; the former slightly, in the heel, the latter severely, in the leg.

Fanny Lea, who was always on the alert for deeds of kindness, wanted to go immediately to offer her services as nurse, but was assured that she was not needed, as the ladies had received all possible attention, and were in danger of having too much, instead of too little, care, judging from the crowd that surrounded them.

"Then, indeed, nothing can be done," she said, with a sigh; and she seated herself upon the church-steps beside Lieutenant Hamilton and Mary. Another person was there also, which Fanny did not at first perceive, — General Turner, with whom she had not made friends since their walk on Fort Hill.

Now the general, seeing Fanny come out and seat herself upon the steps, laid the flattering unction to his soul that he was the attraction that brought her there. He had been sorely provoked by her behavior, in continuing her walk in spite of his remonstrance, and had brooded over it the greater part of the day, — one hour resolving to go and talk it over with her and make friends, and the next, that he would never speak to her again as long as he lived. When he entered the church, the early part of the evening, the first person he saw was Fanny, laughing and chatting away with another beau, and he made a sudden resolve. Was it to avoid the young widow in future, think you? Contemplate her figure, as he saw it that night, clad in a white muslin dress, with only the tiniest bit of black trimming, — the shadow, rather than the remains, of her weeds; her auburn hair gathered into a large twist at the back of her head, which art and nature conspired to make look careless. Think of the little curl that fell just above her ear, of her roseate skin, her childish dimples, and her sunny smile. What would have been your own resolve, under the circumstances? The general determined, as would any man in his sober senses, that is, to make friends before the evening was over. He had been impatient to get an opportunity to say "I'm sorry," and had come out and sat down upon the steps, simply because she was so much engaged, and he saw he must wait.

Very strange caprices, however, a man's temper will take; and who can account for the fact, that, no sooner did he see Fanny make what he thought approaches to a reconciliation, than he made up his mind to be firm, and let her make the apology in full, before he vouchsafed her his usual attentions.

"How beautiful the bursting shells look after dark," said Mary. "Since they are going so far beyond us, we can safely admire them tonight."

"Yes," answered Hamilton, "your little nephew thinks them fireworks, and calls it a show."

"A pretty expensive one," said Mary, "and one to which Estelle says she would rather not take a 'season ticket.'"

"Expensive, indeed, to poor Mrs. Hazard," said Fanny. "Is a wound in the heel likely to be dangerous?"

"I should think not," said Hamilton, "yet most annoying, and probably disabling."

"I will go back into the church and call Estelle and Sue," said Fanny, "for here comes Mrs. Woodville, and they will all find it more agreeable here than within doors."

Sitting on the church-steps this bright, soft, moonlight night in June, our friends found it so pleasant, that hour after hour passed unheeded, and Mrs. Price, whose cave was only across the street, had long been slumbering, oblivious even of the shells, when a conversation occurred, well remembered by those present who still survive.

It became general by Caroline's calling out, from the pavement, where she was walking up and down with Major Hoadly, to Estelle—

"Angry? yes, I am angry at Major Hoadly's intimation; anybody would be."

"You do me great injustice in calling it my intimation," said the major. "I very particularly said I heard General Turner and other officers express the opinion while talking together."

"Something interesting going on below," cried Elizabeth, pressing through the ladies seated on the steps, to make her way down.

"Your sister is a regular Athenian," said Judge Wilkerson, in an undertone, to Sue, "in her desire to hear something new."

"And something new she does indeed hear," answered Sue, "from those people below. Listen! what General Turner is saying."

"Yes," said the general, with decision, "I said it; and it is my honest belief, that should this town fall into the hands of the enemy, there will be marriages between some of our ladies and the Federal troops."

Had a bombshell fallen in the midst of the company, it would scarcely have produced more excitement among the ladies than did this sentiment, coming from an officer of the Confederate army. Every one raised her voice, hands, and eyes to heaven, calling the higher and lower powers to witness how far from her heart, mind, and body it would be to commit such an action. Every one expressed indignation against

General Turner, or any other man, who would say, or even think for a moment, that she could have one kindly thought or feeling for a Yankee.

Amid the clatter, nobody could be distinctly heard; and some moments passed ere Mrs. McRea could have an opportunity of expressing her indignation, which was perfectly overpowering.

She turned to General Turner at last, and, unbottling her wrath, expressed to him then and there, that she considered both herself and her daughters insulted by such an intimation. That, dear as were her sons, she had sent them to the thick of the fight to do battle for the cause she loved; and rather than see a daughter of hers prove such a recreant to friends and country, she would recommend her to take a dagger and pierce her own breast.

"Marry a hateful Yankee! marry a hateful Yankee!" cried Sue, thoroughly wrought up. "Strike me dead, merciful Heaven, if such a fate is reserved for me."

"If it is to this end we are burrowing in the earth like foxes," said Annie W., "we had better court than shun the shells, and consider our best friend the one that sends a fragment with fatal effect to our hearts."

"Can you sit quietly," said Judge Wilkerson to Mary, "and hear this slur against your sex? why don't you answer him?"

"Answer him?" said Mary, with violence; "answer him? If General Turner were to accuse me of murder, of perjury, of theft, would I answer him? No, I feel no desire to speak at all to a man who has originated a thing so base;" and, hiding her face in her hands, she fairly sobbed with anger.

Meanwhile, Fanny Lea had been silent. Perhaps of all the party there was not one that felt more keenly injured by General Turner's words than she did, for she suspected that a personal motive (pique against herself) had instigated the expressions, with no other reason than to mortify and probably to insult her. General Turner was not a bad-tempered man, but he was at times violent; and, as the free expressions of the ladies had, he thought, given him license to say what he chose in return, what at first had been said with no other motive but to annoy, was now repeated with deliberate intention to wound; and in conclusion, he said, with bitter irony, "Yes, a prison is not a cheerful place at best; but how much more dim

will the bare walls and iron gratings look to those poor soldiers who compose this garrison, when rumors reach them of the merry weddings of southern maids and widows with the well-dressed, well-fed officers of the army of General Grant; and they, poor wretches, dying with hunger, and shivering with cold, deprived even the pleasure of congratulating the happy brides. Yes, ladies; in my opinion, there are upon those mortar-boats, watching the shells like yourselves, many who in less than a year will bear away to the northern and western states the very fairest of our women as willing wives. I repeat, the very fairest; even some of you that sit within the sound of my voice."

Before the sentence was finished, Fanny Lea sprang to her feet. So completely was she overcome by her feelings, that her countenance, and even her figure, seemed changed.

"I think it but my duty to reply to you, General Turner," she said, "since I alone am the cause of the insults you have so unscrupulously heaped upon every lady within hearing of your voice tonight. Your conduct, sir, is cowardly; your sentiments pusillanimous; your expressions insulting. Your ideas tonight are the conceptions of a base, grovelling mind; and your manner of attacking those who have no defence, the result of want of respect for women, of whom you are totally unworthy the regard, and shall hereafter be denied the society." She paused for want of breath, and Caroline seized her arm.

"Stop! stop! Fanny," she whispered; "you have said too much."

General Turner, for a moment, was almost mad with rage. As the moonlight fell upon his face, it showed features distorted with passion. He turned round and said, hoarsely, "Have you finished, madam?"

Fanny looked unutterable scorn, but was silent.

Receiving no answer, he put on his hat and walked slowly up the street, making the pavement vibrate with the noise of his heavy tread.

The silence continued some moments after his departure. Elizabeth was the first to break it. "Fanny! Fanny!" she said, "indeed you were too severe; you have said a great deal too much."

But the little woman was not yet cool.

"Too much!" she said. "If I could not have spoken, I

think I should have died. To a man who takes my money, I may grant forgiveness; but to him who reflects upon my honor, I give no quarter. Did I say too much, Mrs. McRea? Could too much be said in answer to such an atrocious —"

"Not one word too much, my dear Fanny," said Mrs. McRea, not able to control her satisfaction. "I hope he will remember every bit of it, to repeat to those at head-quarters who express similar sentiments."

St. George, who had been very quiet during the evening, seized the opportunity to express himself. "I think," he said (expecting to conciliate Mrs. Lea), "I think General Turner is too offensive. There is a kind of roughness about these officers in the line that one never meets with in the navy; no, never! Now, Miss Sue, I hope you don't think every gentleman would talk in that style; now indeed, Miss Sue, I don't believe that one of you ladies present would go to the Federal army and select for a husband a coward or a coxcomb."

"I don't see for the life of me why we should," said Sue, "when they can be had so much more conveniently. One need not go out of the Confederate army for cowards or coxcombs."

"He! he!" said St. George, joining in the laugh, without once suspecting that 'twas at his own expense. "I think like you — he! he! — that the idea is perfectly ridiculous, — he! he! — a good joke, upon my word."

Judge Wilkerson was inexpressibly tickled at the dialogue. "St. George is certainly a charming fellow," he whispered; "he makes more fun for us than a dozen wise men would do."

When the company in general, and Fanny Lea in particular, had grown quiet, they suddenly remembered that it was late, and rose *en masse* to say good-night. The general dispersing left only two occupants of the church, and these were Judge Wilkerson and Elizabeth Woodville. They mutually wanted to speak to each other, and were not surprised to find that it was about the same thing.

"I'm distressed," began Elizabeth, "about this misunderstanding between General Turner and Fanny Lea. I believe they mutually esteem each other, and that in a short time both will regret what has occurred. I never saw Fanny exhibit anything like bad temper before this evening; and, as for General Turner, he is so systematically polite, I did not think it possible he could be so completely thrown off the track."

"That little Mrs. Lea," said the judge, "is really a blooded animal. While she spoke to the general, she looked six feet tall, every inch of it. If she had addressed herself to me in that fashion, I think I should have succumbed entirely, probably fainted away; but Turner is a brave man, a very brave man, indeed. I doubt if there is another man among the garrison as brave as Turner."

"You should not say that," answered Mrs. Woodville; "there are many men among our troops as brave as the sun ever shone upon; such a comparison, then, is ungenerous."

"I tell you," repeated the judge, "he is a brave man, a very brave man, a man of great temerity; for he has done a deed of wonderful daring this evening."

"I do not understand you. What particular thing so very wonderful has he done?"

"Madam, he has spoken the truth to a woman."

"Do you, too," said Elizabeth, much offended, "mean to cast this slur upon the women of Vicksburg? Has their bearing been so conciliatory to the enemy, or their sacrifices so trifling, as to deserve such a reproach, and from you?"

"Listen, my friend," said the judge. "All that women can do, they have done. They have nursed the sick, comforted the dying, sustained the soldier even on the battle-field; and yet, I say, General Turner spoke the truth. I say it, and I repeat it with sadness; for, think you, that a southern man and a soldier can reflect calmly on the fact, that the hearts beating so warmly now with patriotism and love for the Confederate cause, will, in many cases, be wooed, won, and borne away to northern homes without regret? Yet the history of nations, of wars, of the world itself, speaking, says such will be the case. Are the women of the South (brave and noble as they are) better than their grandmothers of the Revolution? And there were certainly many marriages after the occupation by the British troops of New York, Boston, and Philadelphia. Such things have already happened in a few cases in New Orleans, and you yourself told me that the handsome wife of General B—I was but a few months ago the most popular belle of Memphis. Are women in Vicksburg different from other women?"

"Having been used as a target for the Federal mortars should certainly make them so," answered Mrs. Woodville.

"No," said the judge. "Why should reflecting people like you and me shut our eyes to the truth? The greater the sac-

rice that reason and prejudice is called upon to make to the heart, the more the thing will be fascinating when they are tempted. Still, I think General Turner showed an extremely unamiable spirit tonight in what he said. For a man to taunt a woman with softness, where her heart is concerned, is like seething a kid in its mother's milk. Mrs. Lea was not far from wrong in thinking he meant to be personally disagreeable to her, for he has of late been much out of humor at her encouraging the attentions of St. George (for whom she evidently has not one particle of respect), and I believe he was instigated in the matter by a little spark of jealousy."

"Fanny is wrong," said Mrs. Woodville, "to let that booby of a boy follow her about like her shadow; but General Turner is a man, and, if he has any claim on her, might easily rid both himself and her of such a puppy."

"There's the rub," answered the judge. "I believe he really has no claim, no authority to act in the matter. Very few women could play two such men against each other; but Mrs. Lea is a consummate flirt by nature and habit, and somehow succeeds."

"Well," said Mrs. Woodville, "I'm sorry they have really fallen out, and see no reason why it should not be made up. Shall we try? Suppose you talk to the general, and I attempt to manage Fanny; there should be some peace-makers in these warlike times."

"It's a bargain," answered the judge; "and I'll come tomorrow night to report progress. And since the half-hour's leave granted us by your mamma is over, for the present, I'll say good-night."



## CHAPTER XVII.

THE next night, Mrs. Woodville went with Hamilton, at her mother's request, to inquire after Mrs. Hazard and Mrs. Peters. In passing the residence of one of the citizens, they stopped to admire a charming *tableau vivant* through the window — such a one as once seen is seldom forgotten. A young girl, whose extreme beauty was at the time a source of great pride in Vicksburg, was singing; and an officer, leaning upon the piano, occasionally turned for her the leaves of the music-book.

Mrs. W. and Hamilton could not restrain their inclination to stop and gaze. The young man's eye lit up with admiration; for the forehead, throat, and hair of the singer were such as no one could behold unmoved.

"How like a bird is the voice, and how like an angel the form! Who is this lovely girl, and why have I not seen her before?" asked the young officer of his companion.

"I am surprised that such should be the case," answered Mrs. Woodville; "for she is the fair Eva B., and has been among us from childhood."

"And the gentleman beside her?"

"I cannot say, for though I've seen them twice together, I have never heard his name."

"Look, madam!" said Hamilton, as Mrs. Woodville made a movement to pass on; "is there not something singularly artistic in the joining of the head and neck? and how exquisite the arching of the eyebrows and the golden tinge of the hair!"

"She is very striking in her girlish beauty," said his companion; "but I cannot let you stay longer to admire. Come, now; and another evening, I promise you shall both see and speak to this apparition of loveliness."

Many sad memories were associated with this striking group by Mrs. Woodville and Hamilton afterwards; for the officer, who was at the time unknown to them (though seemingly a fit shield for one so frail), when he left the city a paroled soldier, took with him the gentle Eva, bedewed with a mother's blessing and her sister's tears. Blessings and tears which

were full of hope for the future, but which, in less than a year, were turned to wailings for her loss, for they had taken their last look upon her; and after shedding brief sunshine in the home of the soldier, she died amid the din and clash of arms, and went to that land where reigns eternal peace.

The condition of Mrs. Hazard was favorable, but small hopes were entertained of Mrs. Peters. The bone of her leg above the knee was literally shattered; and several surgeons concurred in thinking her only chance for life was in immediate amputation. To this she would not consent, and was for a time considered hopeless. But, by a strange freak of nature, she did survive; and the friends of that estimable lady have today the satisfaction of seeing her in excellent health, and except a very slight lameness, suffering no inconvenience from that dreadful accident.

When Elizabeth went back to the church to report to her mother what she had heard of the invalids, she found Judge Wilkerson waiting for her, and inquired for Caroline.

"For some reason," answered her uncle, "she did not fancy to come, and I was surprised, since she had no company. We had a little quarrel this morning, but are friends again; and I think something else, rather than displeasure of me, kept her at home."

"And the quarrel," said Elizabeth, "what was that about?"

"I must tell you," answered the judge; "for I've not had an opportunity of teasing her so much for many a day. You no doubt saw your ma's petition, last night, after she wrote it. Late in the evening, just before it was time to go home, she handed it to me to read; and, as something soon after happened to divert her attention, she did not ask for it again, and I slipped it into my pocket. In looking over it this morning, I was surprised to find it had only two names signed to it — Caroline's and Mrs. Lea. I thought it a little strange at the time, but have since learned how it happened. I wanted to punish Carrie a little, for taking so important a step without consulting me; so I walked up to head-quarters, and wrote a paper in General Pemberton's name, in answer to the petition, saying that the services of the ladies were accepted, and that Mrs. Fanny Lea and Miss Caroline Courteny were assigned to duty at the lower water-battery, to stand guard near the gun Betsey Egglestone, and must report punctually at six, P.M.

"I went down to dinner, after leaving directions to have the paper sent to Caroline by a subordinate from head-quarters, well known to her. We were at table when the man came in, and I cannot describe to you my niece's expression of chagrin and dismay, when she read what the forged order contained. She is shrewd, and suspected in a short time that the document was spurious; but so much disgusted is she at the whole affair, that she sent a note by me to your ma, begging that the petition should be torn, or at least her own signature erased."

"And I am glad she has come to that determination," said Mrs. Woodville. "Though I honor the sentiments it contained, it is useless to take such a public way of expressing them. Did you see General Turner?"

"Yes; and find him more unreasonable than I expected; for he talked at first of calling Mrs. Lea's father to account for what she had said to him. I have no doubt he will eventually dismiss that idea; he has too much good sense to carry it out. But one thing he said, that both surprised and angered me. He censured Mrs. Lea severely, for having passed most of the night, last week, in St. George's cave. This, I told him, I could not listen to, since Caroline was her companion on the occasion, and was forced to the same thing, which I knew was done with the utmost reluctance by them both. I never saw him ungenerous or vindictive before, and am sure he will regret it."

"I've not seen Fanny yet," said Mrs. Woodville, "and will not till you can report more favorably. How have the shells been behaving in your part of the town?"

"They have been quite considerate about Major C.'s quarters. I suppose you know my own dwelling (by the by, the only private residence that has met with such a fate) is entirely destroyed — merely a pile of broken bricks?"

"Yes, I've heard of it, and have been tempted in spite of the danger to walk up to Springfield to see it."

"Let me advise you to the contrary," said the judge; "surely you see enough of the shelling where you are."

"Indeed I do," said Elizabeth; "let me show you what a singular course a fragment took, that struck the church this morning. Do you see a hole in the side where it entered? Look at this broken plastering on the other side of the wall, where it next touched, a pretty long leap, you will admit, and

it made a tremendous noise. There was plenty of screaming on the part of the women and children, and some of the gentlemen skipped about in a way that would have won for them undying honors on the turf. Willy says he could have played marbles on their coat-tails with ease."

"Good gracious!" said the judge. "I hope these were not the clerical gentlemen, the expounders of the word ought at least to have more faith."

## CHAPTER XVIII.

ON the morning of the — of June, it was generally known through the town, that several gentlemen, not acting as couriers, expected to attempt getting through the lines, and would take letters from individuals to their friends outside. Captain Alexander was fortunate enough to procure an introduction to one of them, and to him committed the following note for Marion Ludlow:—

MY DEAR COUSIN, — You have always been my good angel; I know you and my mother offer up incessant prayers for me, and that is no doubt the cause why I've passed unscathed through this shower of shot and shell. My health is good, and rest assured I'm attending strictly to every item you gave me of parting advice. I keep out of the night air as much as possible, and avoid all contact with camp-disease. Say to my dear mother, that her injunctions have also been attended to. I say over my rosary whenever I can find time, make frequent use of my phial of holy water, and am careful never to remove the amulet she placed about my neck. I cannot write you as long a letter as I wish, for I must be at my post near the trenches in an hour. I have many things I wish to say, but must wait till I see you. One thing, dear Marion, I should be wrong not to mention, for you have so often urged me to give you my confidence in all things. It is that I'm terribly in love. Of course, I've not spoken to the lady about it yet, and will not till I hear from you, but the words are continually on my lips, and though they will never be spoken without your approbation, I long extremely to draw from Caroline what I believe she will say in return. Mr. Dana will tell you (for he goes direct to New Iberia) what arrangements I've made to get your answer to this. If you are punctual in writing, I shall get the letter, under all circumstances, in three weeks. Write me all about home matters, and above all, write that you wish me well in *mon affaire de cœur*. Adieu!

Votre cousin,

PIERRE.

This note, simple and plain as it was, caused Alexander no little thought and trouble. He had firmly made up his mind days before, never to fulfil his engagement (if engagement it could be called) with Marion, since his growing repugnance would make it as great an injustice to her as to himself, and yet he was very far from thinking that she had no claim upon him. There were moments when he thought, to be the accepted lover of Caroline Courteny was of itself happiness enough under any circumstances. But Pierre Alexander was an honorable man, and he wished to act honorably even to his pale, sickly cousin. That Marion loved him, he doubted not; that she would be happy with him as his wife, he very much doubted, for Marion, with her plain exterior, and by no means superior mind, had some strong points about her which inspired respect. She had from infancy sacrificed herself to him and his. If, now that the bloom of her youth was gone, she asked of him a sacrifice in return, would it not be unmanly in him to refuse to make it? And, until lately, he had thought it a small thing that she was asking, for love seemed to have little enough to do with life. And to think that the stronger feelings of his heart would never be called into play was no particular hardship.

He had once thought, that to make Marion his wife, to give her his name, and, as it were, the privilege of loving him, would be sufficient to insure her happiness; but now he felt the passion of love in its purity and intensity, he began to understand that one may have daily or hourly intercourse with the thing beloved, and still, if there be no reciprocal feeling, be all unsatisfied. Therefore, he doubted whether to marry Marion would be to make her happy, and the thought was some excuse for his unfaithfulness, but still, it did not remove the stern fact, that she must herself decide; and with this view he penned his note.

At first, he thought of trying to lay bare his heart, and let his cousin see that he had been no free agent in the matter, but borne along by his feelings, struggling all the while. After writing a few sentences, however, he tore the paper in disgust, for it seemed indelicate both to himself and to her. There had been no promise on either side. Suppose Marion should in her pride and anger reflect upon the fact, and consider that in thus avowing unfaithfulness, he added insult to injury. Would not the more considerate way be to ignore

apparently that there was an understanding at all, and, by simply asking her approval as a cousin, draw from her unconsciously whether she would willingly give him up? In this determination the note was written and sent, and Alexander made up his mind firmly not to see Caroline Courteny again, except in general society, till an answer was received. Whether or no he could have kept this resolution, we are not able to say, for the same hour that the gentleman left Vicksburg, carrying his note to Marion, an accident happened which prevented Alexander from seeing Caroline Courteny for many days.

While riding over to camp, a minie-ball entered the fleshy part of his right arm. The wound was not dangerous; but the next day a slow fever set in, which the discomforts of his tent and diet combined to accelerate, not to a dangerous degree, but sufficiently to confine him to his cot. It was the first spell of sickness he had ever had in his life, and somewhat affected his spirits. He had no possible way of hearing from Caroline, save from the light conversation of his messmates, which was not agreeable to him, for though girls sometimes talk of their sweethearts, a man (with the instincts of a gentleman) avoids mentioning even the name of the woman he loves, and only likes to hear it spoken by others with reverence. The young men who frequented his tent, not knowing the particular regard he entertained for Caroline, on one occasion discussed her and her affairs at length. Captain Dean came in to inquire where Hamilton could be found; "For," he said, "we have some diversion down at my battery in the shape of a deserter."

"A deserter?" said Alexander, surprised. "Is there really a human being so foolish as to leave comfortable quarters for this incessant din to listen to, and this execrable diet of beef and peas to starve on? He must be insane."

"*Au contraire*," as the French say, "he is a person of great dignity, and is at this time feeding with satisfaction."

"Feeding on what, in God's name?"

"Something he likes, though it wouldn't suit either you or I. The fact is, captain, we've both been foolish in not seeing more of the ladies about town; for, though I don't mean to intimate that my friend, the deserter, is an admirer of the sex, I am struck every day with the nice slick condition that St. George and Hoadly keep in; such good spirits, and such

unexceptionable neckties; and such dreamy, self-satisfied looks about the eyes; — and all upon the food called 'love,' for their rations are no larger than other people's. Now, if you had a lady-love, I know you and your tent would both look better. You would have a more dressed-up, starched look, and your tent would no doubt be enlivened by a book of poems, sent by the fair one, or at least a bouquet."

"There is nobody who would take so much trouble for me," said Alexander, with a sigh; "in which case, I suppose I must aspire to distinction, and woo no bride but honor."

"God help the man who takes her for a mistress," said Captain Dean; "he had better stand the whims of the most capricious of women. But here comes Hamilton and Hoadly. I've just been telling Captain Alexander that we have a deserter at our battery, just from the Federals."

"Just been to see him," answered Hamilton; "a person of fine appearance."

"Is he, though?" said Alexander, very much interested. "Then perhaps he is an officer of some rank. We might draw favorable conclusions from the circumstance; who knows but the Yanks are aware that Johnston is advancing to our relief?"

"This is a knowing-looking fellow, this deserter," said Captain Dean.

"But," said Alexander, "what does he say? Having taken such a bold step, there is no reason why he should not tell all he knows about military affairs."

"Ah," said Hamilton, with affected seriousness, "if we could only induce him to tell all he knows about military affairs, no doubt 'he could a tale unfold.'"

"If you could only induce him to tell," said Alexander, much surprised. "Why should he withhold a single item? Having once deserted, his life is forfeited, and any affectation of reticence is the height of folly."

Every one in the tent laughed, and Captain Dean said, "We have tried hard to convince him of the truth of what you say, but received no answer in return but a loud bray."

"A loud bray!" cried Alexander; "the man is certainly an ass."

"Thou sayest it," said Hamilton, amid the general merriment; "the deserter is no man, but an ass, one who actually swam the Mississippi River from the peninsula opposite, and no doubt belongs to the Federal fleet."

"Go to the devil!" said Alexander, "with your foolishness, or, at least, go and keep company with the donkey you have already captured, and don't attempt to make one of me."

"Alexander," said Major McCloud, who had just come in, "you creoles claim to be all good Catholics—you ought to think this a miracle, and that the mule was sent us by heaven, for I am told there is to be a general massacre of asses tomorrow."

"Then look sharply to your own hide, major," retorted Alexander.

"And by the Lord Harry!" said Hamilton, "we must all take our last look on St. George."

"And we could better spare a better man," said Captain Dean; "for just as their court-jesters were admitted to great privileges and friendship by monarchs of the middle ages, so St. George has a special claim upon us all. But you ought to have seen the capture; it was the best fun I've had for many a day. Smith went up on the earthen magazine, and saw in the water what he thought to be some dozen or more of human heads bobbing up and down, on the opposite side of the river. He called me, in great excitement, and, taking his view of the affair, I could not tell for the life of me what the thing meant, and ordered the men immediately to the guns. If the Yanks had gone in bathing, I thought they had certainly taken a strange place for their ablutions, right within reach of our guns; and, just to see how they would take it, I ordered one of the sergeants to give them a taste of a thirty-two-pounder. This made quite a commotion among the bathers, who started to swim in all directions, only this one keeping steadily across. We watched for a long time; and as he neared the bank and his ears betrayed him, the company drew up in line and saluted his stepping on shore with three cheers. He bore the honor like a person who was well used to it, and now walks around well-contented with the few canetops we issue him as rations."

"Speaking of mule meat, I tasted some yesterday," said Major Hoadly; "some Mexicans made what they called a tasso of an unfortunate animal, which had his leg broken the day before, and it was so much better than this execrable beef they are feeding us on. I consider it a delicacy."

"Will you give me a piece this evening?" said Captain Dean; "I want it for a particular purpose."

"Yes, I'll give you a small chunk; but remember, there is to be no waste of the good stuff."

"Hush talking of it," said Alexander, whose stomach was made delicate by fever. "I would almost as soon think of eating dog."

"Which you may come to yet," said Major McCloud, "before this siege is over—then, happy the man who is Chinese in his taste. But, since you desire it, I'll dismiss the subject, and talk of something more agreeable. What shall it be—the women?"

"Yes, yes!" cried Hamilton. "Talk of the girls, if you want to please Alexander and Captain Dean; for all they blush and stammer and profess ignorance, they like it of all things. And, by the by, I must tell you I've lately seen an angel, a perfect marvel of beauty, but one we all must admire at a distance, for I'm told she is engaged."

"That need not keep us from thinking her handsome," said Major Hoadly.

"*Cela depend!*" said Captain Dean. "Suppose the happy man objected? Now, Hamilton, if I were engaged to a lady, I should take every precaution to keep you from seeing her. Your kind of looks and talk spoils a woman. If a girl once consents to marry a bald-headed, dried-up fellow like myself, younger men, with ambrosial locks like you (who can get a sweetheart just for the asking) ought to keep away and let her entirely alone."

"You do me proud," said Hamilton, blushing like a girl; "and yet, in spite of all my attractions, I've not been fortunate of late, as Hoadly will bear me witness."

"Keep to the maids," answered Major Hoadly, "and let the widows alone. Captain Dean himself will not be surprised that Mrs. Lea is too much for you."

"No, Hamilton," said Captain Dean, "with all your good looks, I should not advise an attack on Mrs. Lea; one should have nothing of the boy about him to get along with such an experienced flirt."

"Well," said Hamilton, "I don't mind you all saying I'm a little under the weather, on account of Mrs. Lea, since it is certainly a proof of good taste; but don't say I've been cut out by St. George, for I know that is no such thing."

"Yet things look badly against you," said Hoadly; "St. George is allowed to follow her about on all occasions, while

you are turned over to the tender mercies of Mary McRea. How do you account for that?"

"Probably because she finds a footstool convenient, and St. George suits better for it than myself. But, in good sober earnest, I've not been discarded at all by Mrs. Lea. I reconnoitred, and, finding the post difficult to carry, did not put forth my strength, but retreated in good order; and next time, I'll take your advice, and lay siege to a young lady, instead of a widow."

"But who shall it be?" said Major Hoadly; "that is the question. Suppose we discuss Mary McRea's fitness for the position. I've an idea you have already conceived a fancy for her."

"Let that subject be barred by the statute of limitations, I beg," said Captain Dean, "since the lady is a relation of mine in the second degree."

"Then," said Major Hoadly, "what do you think of Caroline Courteny? It is strange to me that such a lovely blossom as she is should be allowed to bloom so long, and no gallant knight reach forth his hand to pluck it."

"I'll not say a word on that subject," said Hamilton, "till I know whether she has a cousin in the tent to call me to order."

"No fear of that," replied Hoadly, "for, with the exception of her uncle, she has no relation within the lines."

"Then I venture to say," said Hamilton, "that I don't think her at all handsome. She is too thin and delicate in appearance, and — well, I don't know, but somehow I don't take to her at all."

"Well," answered Major Hoadly, "I don't see how any man of good taste can know Caroline Courteny and not admire her. She has so much wit and humor, so much dignity, and at the same time vivacity, and though not exactly a beauty, she is so sweet and winning. I have been particularly fortunate in my intercourse with her; for, having no aspirations as a lover, we have associated on intimate friendly terms; and I cannot but pronounce her in every way charming."

"Say, Hoadly," called out Doctor Mockler, who till then had taken no part in the conversation, "how much did Judge Wilkerson promise you to marry her off? If you have undertaken the job, you ought to be thoroughly posted about her prospects in life in the way of substantial. What property

has she, my friend? And, another thing; there is some little talk in the other part of town about herself and Mrs. Lea going out by invitation, and spending the night in St. George's cave with some young officers. Quite a sprightly joke, and proves them both to be women of spirit; but a man about to commit matrimony might take such a thing seriously."

"Doctor," said Major Hoadly, "I beg you will let me explain that affair, if it has been so grossly misrepresented. I have heard both ladies speak of it several times, and I know that it happened as the veriest accident; and that, so far from there being any invitation from the gentlemen, that neither party had ever thought of it before."

Alexander listened, and felt as if on the rack. Should he speak, or be silent. He feared to trust himself to commence anything like an explanation, for he longed to take Doctor Mockler by the throat; and as he had himself been Caroline's companion on the occasion referred to, any exhibition of violence on his part might have reflected on her rather than otherwise. He writhed on his couch, in expectation of what would come next; for Doctor Mockler was notorious among his companions for a loose way of thinking and speaking of women and their concerns.

"Well, Hoadly," said Doctor Mockler, "I don't at all want to be severe on the ladies in question, but you won't blame me for saying I am sorry I was not along on the occasion, for I should certainly have had a good time."

Alexander, forgetful of his wound, half rose in bed and looked steadily at Doctor Mockler; but still without speaking.

Captain Dean, with his gentlemanly good nature, interposed. "I think you speak too seriously of a trifle, doctor," he said; "a friend of yours or mine, or even a sister, might have been placed in the same position, and have done just the same thing."

"Yes," said Doctor Mockler, "and have stood the consequences afterwards; for tell me, gentlemen, one and all of you, had you been with these ladies on the occasion, could you conscientiously ask one of them next week, or next month, or next year, to marry you?"

Major Hoadly looked really distressed.

Alexander retained his former position, but his face had assumed a sterner expression; and there was meaning in the look he cast on the surgeon.



Captain Dean rose impatiently, and said: — "With me it would not make the slightest difference. But come, Hamilton, since this conversation was commenced for the amusement of myself and Captain Alexander, I think we have the right to ask that it be discontinued; for I am not at all entertained by it, nor do I think is he. We have talked to a man with fever too much already, and I propose a general breaking up."

So the young men left the tent one after another, and Alexander was left alone. He was in no mood, however, to enjoy the respite. The tumult of feeling that pressed upon him threw him into a passion of fretfulness. He tossed and turned; he sat upright, and laid down again. One moment, he accused himself of pusillanimity in not denouncing Doctor Mockler on the spot; then he thought it was due Mrs. Lea, apart from Caroline, to make a simple explanation of how the thing happened, and what connection he had with it. It is very seldom that a female with mind, manners, and appearance more than ordinary, can pass through life, be she "chaste as ice, pure as snow," without having some crowd of idlers use her name in this light way; and yet society at large is kind to the weaker sex, and they seldom suffer actually from such attacks. Had this slur been passed upon any other woman living, in Alexander's hearing, except Caroline Courteny, he would either have protested openly against such injustice, or laughed like the rest, thinking it no consequence at all; but it seems to be a provision of nature, that as soon as a man falls in love, he loses common sense. Now, had Alexander in a dispassionate manner told how the necessity for the ladies staying away from home came about, it would have been satisfactory to most of the gentlemen present; but he knew full well that nothing short of making it a personal matter with Doctor Mockler, and avowing his sentiments towards Miss Courteny (which he naturally shrank from doing), would have closed his lips on the subject; and then the difficulty arose, did he have a right to place himself in such a position? What would Miss Courteny herself think of such a thing? He wished ardently that the good creole custom, where the betrothed has the same rights in society as the husband, was in vogue all over the world. In a few weeks, he hoped to be the accepted lover of Caroline; and did the state of society sanction it, might say publicly, in any place or company, that he had a right to defend her name against even a breath of scandal. Ah! when

would the letter from Marion come? Why had he written it at all? Had not the one woman, after all, equal claims with the other? And if reflections were made upon Caroline, was he not bound in honor (since the imprudence was committed not only by his advice, but after his earnest entreaty,) to show his disapprobation, at least, to the extent of appearing in public as her declared admirer.

The broad glare of a June sun shone into Captain Alexander's tent with very disagreeable intensity. The roaring of artillery from the line, distant yet distinct, tortured his aching head. The harrowing thought that he might have spoken in Caroline's defence, and had not, combined to make him feel uncomfortable. If he could only see her. If he could only hear from her directly. Did she ever think of him? There seemed so little to bring him to her remembrance; while for himself, there was the circle of hair taken from her inanimate finger, and worn ever since next his heart. How precious it had become! It was the tangible representative to him now of every hope in life; and when his love and its association with her seemed but a shadowy thing which avoided his clutch, one look at, or one touch of, the ring served to make it a reality. But did she know that he possessed it? That was the one link wanting to complete the chain that bound them, and to supply that link was what he now determined to do. He would write to Caroline, and tell her he had the ring. To part with it seemed next to shedding the ruddy drops that visited his heart, and yet scarcely worse would be an order to return it than this painful uncertainty. The resolution once taken was soon put into execution, and his servant soon after left the tent, carrying the following note to Caroline: —

IN CAMP, June —, 1863.

MISS COURTENY, — I have a confession to make to you. Instigated by a feeling you can well divine, I once took from your unresisting finger a ring. My conscience will not allow me to retain it longer without your consent. Let me know what are your wishes on the subject.

ALEXANDER.

An hour passed, and a small piece of paper was sent to Alexander in return. With trembling eagerness, Alexander opened it and read, —

## QUARTERS OF COLONEL L——.

Miss Courteny has no desire to take from Captain Alexander anything which will serve as a solace during his illness. Whether or not her ring will do so, is for him to decide.

The heat of the summer's sun was not less scorching than it had been two hours before, or the noise of artillery less trying to the sick man's nerves; but the feverish excitement had left Alexander's pulse, and a calmness as delicious as if caused by the gentle sea-breeze of his native St. Mary's, pervaded his being, and made him sleep.

## CHAPTER XIX.

THE morning's paper?" said Judge McRea, looking over his spectacles in surprise.

"So says the newsboy," answered Estelle; and she called to him from across the street, to approach.

"What have you, my lad," said Judge McRea, looking at a bundle of wall-paper under his arm.

"Latest from Johnson! News from Kirby Smith! Something of Lee!" was sung out in reply.

"Then let us have it, by all means; and it is cheap enough at two dollars in Confederate money."

The urchin scampered off, and the judge looked at his paper. Estelle watched him with interest while he read.

"The printing is very indistinct, pa," she said; "but what is there in it of interest?—the newsboy promised a great deal."

"He has not made his promise good, however. Here is an encouraging address to the soldiers, pretty well written, but nothing of Johnston, except the same surmises we make hourly ourselves."

"I'll put the paper away, however," said his daughter, "for it may be something of a curiosity to us one of these days as a relic of the siege of Vicksburg. After all, pa, I'm glad we stayed within the town, instead of going a short distance away, for, from what we hear of the behavior of the Federal army outside, I would rather stand the shells."

"I hope you may be able to say so at the end, my child; but with so large a family, we have great cause for anxiety."

Turning round, Estelle came face to face with Captain Dean, who, just coming out of the church, was laughing immoderately. "Listen," said he, "and I'll tell you a secret. I have just been talking to aunt, and have left her in high good humor at the prospect of getting a supply of dried beef for her family. I have a sample of it in my pocket, that she has just tasted and pronounced excellent. Now, what do you suppose it is? The flesh of an old broken-legged mule."

Estelle's face expressed both loathing and indignation. "Don't put it under my nose, Tom," she cried. "You ought to be ashamed of yourself, to play such a joke on mamma, and

I have a great mind to go directly, and tell her how she has been imposed upon."

"Then you are very ungrateful, for I've made you the single exception to the joke; everybody else I've made taste it, and all pronounce it very fine."

"I wonder how the stuff would taste?" said Estelle, eyeing it as she would a rattlesnake.

"As good as any meat in the world, I assure you," said her cousin. "This great prejudice against mule-meat is folly, particularly when smoked and dried in this manner."

"I wish I could make up my mind to taste it," she said, hesitatingly; "but then, I know it would make me so sick."

"I tell you it would not. Here, now, shut your eyes tight, and let me put this shaving of it on your tongue, and my word for it, you will pronounce it good."

"Well, so it is," said Estelle, chewing; "I could not tell it from dried beef, to save my life. But no more of it at present, thank you; though three such breakfasts as we had this morning may bring me to it or anything else."

"I'm going to have plenty of fun tonight, Estelle, if you only won't blab," said her cousin. "I'll come to the church about the time your crowd of visitors gather, and I'm going to pass this stuff around, and get the opinion of each upon it."

"Well, I'll promise to be mum," said Estelle. "And above all, we will have the satisfaction of putting Caroline Courteny to the test. Do you remember the evening of the flag of truce, her protestation about thinking it no hardship to fare like the soldier, when it comes to actually eating mule-meat? I question if her stomach is stronger than other people's. But, Tom, will this tasso really be issued as rations?"

"Good gracious, woman! no," said Captain Dean. "The commissioners can't afford to furnish such delicacies; if mule-meat is given (and it would be much better fare than we are having at present), they will weigh out the raw material, and not trouble themselves fixing it up in this nice style."

"Look, Tom," said Estelle, pointing up the street, "they are dragging another poor horse down to throw him in the river, the third I've seen since yesterday morning."

"They have been surrendering to starvation very fast the last day or two," said Tom, "but they are generally taken and thrown into the river after dark, for any crowd (even a

small one) approaching the bank in daylight is apt to draw fire from the Yanks, and be scattered precipitately."

"Poor creature," said Estelle, as the carcass of the animal passed in front of the church, and its emaciation was apparent; "how sad to think of the suffering of these poor brutes. Is there nothing to give them to eat?"

"Positively nothing," said her cousin. "The men have climbed up the hillsides and into gullies, and have cut down every bush and cane that can afford one particle of nourishment, but this last resource is about exhausted, and we can only let them stand."

"Do you know, Tom, pa is afraid we will have to cut down our favorite oak tree for fuel. The locusts are nearly consumed, and in two weeks, it will be a question between the oak and the fence. How would you decide?"

"I declare, I hardly know. A fence is a good thing, but that tree I've always admired. It is a sort of Scylla and Charybdis. I should not know which to choose, for the life of me."

The same evening, when the usual gathering occurred at the church, of fair women and brave men, Estelle among the first noticed Judge Wilkerson. "And Caroline? I hoped she would come," she said; "where is she?"

"Gone with Major McCloud to fetch Mrs. Lea. Ah, there they come!" And advancing a short way up the street, he saluted one of them as the Maid of Saragossa, and the other as Joan of Arc.

Fanny did not seem to care, but Caroline, who understood immediately, that her uncle alluded to the petition of the ladies of Vicksburg, winced under the appellation, and from that time abandoned all ambition to distinguish herself, in spite of having such a splendid opportunity—even that of being in a besieged town.

"Carrie," said Estelle, "your patriotism is to be put to a severe test tonight."

"Then I'll hum over the 'Bonny Blue Flag,' to strengthen my nerves for the ordeal," said Caroline; "but let me know what you mean. Has General Grant sent a communication to me personally, to excite me to desertion or betrayal of the Confederate cause?"

"Perhaps he thinks you can fly with an olive branch, under the form of a dove," said Major McCloud, "and signify to

him the return of peace to the troubled elements within these walls."

"I fancy he would make overtures in some other quarter," said Judge Wilkerson, "since the asses are the first to show disaffection on his own side."

"If such be the case," said Hamilton, stepping up, "he had best make application to head-quarters at once; and Pemberton himself will be most available, for barring the length of his ears, he has all the other peculiarities required."

The ladies called out "Shame!" and "Hush!" and Judge Wilkerson said seriously to Hamilton, that he had once before been in trouble, for expressing himself in the same reckless style, and ought to be more careful.

All this was easy enough to stand, but the young man had prepared for himself a trial that he didn't like so well; for Mrs. McRea, who was present, asked him to step aside with her, and for half an hour talked about the folly of such expressions, and their bad effects generally upon "the cause" they all had so much at heart; and Hamilton, who had hated good advice from childhood as the devil does holy water, had to take some of that in conclusion, though the age and dignity of his monitress, and the bright eyes of her daughter combined, did not prevent him from getting a little restless before he was dismissed. "For," said the lady in conclusion, "I don't think we know or realize half General Pemberton's difficulties. True, everything seems to have worked wrong. He was surprised at Big Black, and the town is badly supplied with provisions; but, Captain Hamilton, if a man does his best, we should not condemn him. If General Pemberton has done what he thought right, what more can you wish concerning him?"

"That he had gone to the devil some time ago, and let somebody else take his position," thought Hamilton, but he bowed in retiring, and was careful not to respond one word.

Meanwhile, Estelle looked far down the street in expectation of Captain Dean's coming.

"Caroline," said Mary, "you look and talk quite like yourself tonight; do you know, sister Elizabeth thought last week you must be sick, you had so very little to say?"

"That is the misfortune of being a great talker," said Caroline. "If I don't keep up an incessant clatter, my friends are sure to say I'm either sulky or sick; but, indeed, I do feel as

merry as a cricket tonight. Estelle avows that she has a joke to play off on me, but, if my present mood continues, I think we will most probably be quits. It seems to have something to do with Captain Dean, and lo, there he comes!"

Estelle ran down to meet her cousin, exclaiming, "Now indeed, we shall have fun!" She put her arm in his, and looked into his face inquiringly.

"No; we shall have no fun tonight," he said, sadly. "I bring you sad news, very sad news."

The group upon the steps noticed his pale face and agitated manner, and gathered about him to hear.

"Major Hoadly," he said, "has been killed."

Caroline sank down upon the steps; she had been in momentary expectation of his coming as usual, to spend the evening with her—she could not believe he was dead.

"Dead!" said two or three together. "Are you certain? Is your information correct?"

"I have just seen his body," answered Captain Dean. "He was standing on the hillside, just before sunset, in a place exposed to the enemy's guns. His negro man had called him twice to come to supper, but he seemed abstracted, and stood in the same position, looking through his glass. A shot, apparently aimed with that purpose, struck him, and he fell down the hill to a distance of fifty feet. Whether the shot alone caused his death, or the fall did so after he was wounded, we cannot tell. The firing was so heavy about the spot, the body could not be recovered till after dark, when the guns became silent, and then every vestige of life was gone."

"I will go immediately," said Judge Wilkerson, "to take a last look on him."

"And I," said Hamilton, "will accompany you."

"Uncle," said Caroline, "where will they bury him?"

"That," said Captain Dean, "his messmates have sent me into town to decide. I wish to speak to my aunt, and, if she sees no objection, to bring the body here, and bury it in the churchyard, so that we can with more ease identify it when called for by his friends."

"Cannot we construct a rude coffin?" asked Judge Wilkerson.

"His men have already with great difficulty procured one, and all is ready for interment, which must take place immediately."

"Immediately?" said Fanny Lea, "Oh, no. Let us not hurry his body so soon into the ground; it seems unfeeling to our friend and companion. Surely, Captain Dean, you will allow us the sad privilege of watching beside his body."

Captain Dean hesitated. "What you say, Mrs. Lea," he answered, "seems reasonable and humane, and yet I doubt if it can be arranged. The burial must necessarily take place at night, for his men cannot be spared from the batteries during the day to perform that duty. He has already been dead six hours, by the time the body reaches here, eight. I see no alternative but to bury him at once."

Fanny still petitioned for delay. "If not longer," she said, "at least two hours. Think of his mother and sisters — what a comfort it will be to them."

"I will try my best," said Captain Dean; "and if possible, it shall be as you wish. At any rate, ask such ladies as are here to remain till we return with the body; and they can, at least, attend the ceremony of his burial."

The ladies waited in sad expectation till the body of the soldier was brought. A couch was fixed for the coffin to rest upon; and they sat round it, conversing in whispered tones, and with tearful eyes.

Evening after evening Major Hoadly had spent with them, since the occupation of the church, and his gentlemanly bearing and cheerful disposition had made him valued by them as a friend. There was not an officer of the garrison more confident of the preservation of his life than he; but, had he known his fate, few would have made the sacrifice more cheerfully.

As Fanny Lea sat by his body, and looked at the face so calm in manly beauty, she said, "That look is indicative of the peace which has fallen on his soul."

They watched him with affectionate care till almost day; and, as the chaplain in solemn tones read the burial service, they heaped the sod upon his breast, and left the soldier to take an eternal sleep.

## CHAPTER XX.

ON the twenty-fifth of June, Captain Hill came into Vicksburg, bringing despatches from General Joseph Johnston to General Pemberton. What those despatches contained, of course, the garrison at large were not permitted to know; but to the citizens, who went in crowds to converse with him, he gave only encouraging news. Mrs. Price did not think proper to leave her cave for the purpose, but she sent to ask that he would come to her; and, as the McReas were informed when he was expected, several members of the family went over to be present at the interview. Captain Hill was a small man, and wore spectacles. He spoke little, but impressed everybody with the idea that he was telling the truth.

"I hope you told General Johnston, Captain Hill," said Mrs. Price, "the sad extremity to which we are reduced."

"I did, madam," said the courier, "as plainly as I possibly could."

"And when do you think he will come to our relief? Surely, as a Christian and as a military commander, he must think it his duty to put an end to this carnage as soon as possible."

"About that, madam, General Johnston said nothing to me. True, he expressed sympathy for the sufferings of persons within the lines, but farther than that was silent."

"I did not expect," said Mrs. Price, "that he would tell you when he is coming, in so many words; but could you not form an idea as to when his army will advance, from the looks of things?"

"I did form an idea that it would be soon," said Captain Hill, "for everything seemed ready."

"What opinion did you form as to the number of his troops?" asked Mrs. McRea.

"I had very poor opportunity of judging; but I cannot think them less than fifty thousand."

"In that case," said Mrs. McRea, "we will soon be relieved; the joyful day is not far distant."

Mrs. Price asked Captain Hill if he had brought in many letters for private individuals.

"A large bundle, madam," he said; "but they were taken

away from me at head-quarters, and will be delivered when called for."

At this, the ladies were in a fever of excitement, for each and every one of them were in expectation of epistles. Mrs. Price begged Lieutenant C., of the First Louisiana Artillery, who happened to be present, to go and get such as were directed to her. "I am so anxious to hear from my grandson," she said; "not one line have we had since he went into Pennsylvania; and no doubt, if he is living, he has written frequently."

Lieutenant C. stretched himself and yawned. "I would go in a moment, Mrs. Price," said he, settling himself more comfortably on his seat, "in fact, am very anxious to do so; but they never pay any attention to my demands at head-quarters. I might wait there six hours, after asking for letters, without getting an answer."

"That is every bit nonsense, Charlie," said Mary McRea, angrily; "you are only too lazy to go; that is the matter."

"Not at all," said the lieutenant, still without making a move.

"You ought to be ashamed of yourself to be so disobliging," continued Mary. "How in the world would we ever get our letters, or anything else, if all men were like you?"

"Go after them yourselves," said the young man, looking for the world as if he was stuck to the stool, "and the very thing you ought to do, for then you would get them. General Pemberton or any of his staff would give a lady her own letters."

"The girls shall do no such thing," said Mrs. McRea, with dignity; "and since their father is in bed with a headache, there seems no alternative but to wait till after dark, when Tom Dean comes, who will no doubt oblige us."

"Indeed, I cannot wait," said Mrs. Price; "and I consider it a reflection on every one present, if a person of my age has to walk up the hill at this hour of the day, which will certainly come to pass without somebody does it for me. I see not the least objection, Mrs. McRea, to sending the girls. What Charlie C. says is true, in spite of its being so rude. General Pemberton will be much more likely to give them their letters in person than to send them by another."

"I am certainly as anxious as any of you to hear," said Mrs. McRea, hesitatingly, "and have as good prospect of get-

ting letters. I wonder if Elizabeth would mind going? Sue, you are little more than a child, go over to the church, and ask your sister if she will oblige me so far as to take you and go and see General Pemberton about this matter. I am really almost sick to hear from my boys on the Potomac."

"Yes, Sue," said Mrs. Price; "and tell her to have mine examined first, and not to have any foolish scruples, but to go immediately and bring the letters down."

Mrs. Woodville reluctantly consented to do what had been asked. The walk must be taken, she knew, without her father's knowledge or approbation; for he never allowed any member of the family to go more than one square away from the church. Besides, she had no desire to come in contact with General Pemberton, still less to ask a favor of him. On the other hand, however, she was willing to oblige her mother and Mrs. Price, and very anxious to hear from her brothers; so she started, taking Sue along, who was rather pleased; thinking a trip to head-quarters something of an adventure, besides the pleasure of breathing the fresh air.

General Pemberton occupied the residence of Mrs. Garland, on Grove Street. It was on an elevation which descended with three terraces to the street, up which Mrs. Woodville and her sister, after passing two sentinels, made their way by flights of wooden steps to the gallery in front.

"If I felt certain that General Turner would receive us kindly," said Elizabeth, "I should be at no loss what to do; but for that unfortunate scene, I would ask immediately to see him. But as he has not been to the church since, I fear he is offended with us all."

"I am acquainted with Lieutenant Turnbull," said Sue, "suppose we ask for him; or Captain Simms would, I think, oblige us, if he is here; but that is hardly probable at this time of day."

At the door, the ladies hesitated. At the end of the passage, and through the open windows, they saw plenty of officials passing about and sitting down, but not a familiar face among them all.

Fortunately for them, Captain Dean was within, and just as they were meditating a retreat, after two unobtrusive knocks, which produced no favorable results, he, having finished his business, walked out of an adjoining room and met them face to face at the door.



"Good lord, girls!" he said; "what can you possibly be doing here? Elizabeth! Sue! I'm surprised."

"O Tom!" said Mrs. Woodville, "I'm afraid ma has made us do a foolish thing. Mrs. Price took a fancy that General Pemberton would give us our letters, brought in by Captain Hill, much sooner if we came for them ourselves; and they are so anxious to hear from the boys, I could not say no."

"There is no possible chance of your getting your letters this morning," said the captain. "The office is overrun with business; so much so, I could scarcely get a moment's audience, though I came to report the bursting of the best gun in my battery, the Brooke."

"The Brooke gun broken!" exclaimed both ladies, in surprise. "Oh, I'm so sorry!"

"So was I," exclaimed Tom; "but all to no purpose; for there is a crack in it half an inch wide, and it will never shoot another round. But about those letters; I think you had better give up all idea of getting them, and return home. I'll come myself, tomorrow, and see what can be done."

"Perhaps you are right," said Elizabeth; "but now we've come, I really don't like to give it up without an effort. Mamma will not be satisfied without we try."

"What do you propose to do—to go right into General Pemberton's office when it is crowded with men?"

"Not for the world," said Sue, shrinking back.

"Of course, we have no such idea," said Elizabeth. "I think, Tom,—I don't much like to do so either,—but—I think I'll ask to see General Turner."

"Well," said Captain Dean, "you can do so if you wish, but I don't think he can serve you in the least."

"Will you ask him to come here?" said Elizabeth, still hesitating; "but," as her cousin started off, "if you find him very busy, don't say anything, but come back, and we'll go immediately home."

General Turner came out directly, and in high good humor; and the ladies saw at a glance that if they had ever been, they certainly were not at present, included in his anger against Mrs. Lea.

"Why do you hesitate to come in? You surely can't suppose we have no accommodations for ladies. There is a little sitting-room at the other end of the gallery, sacred to that

purpose, when we occasionally entertain the fair. About the letters," he said, after they were seated, "I really know very little; but wait a moment, and I'll do my best for you."

Elizabeth looked exultingly at Tom as he left the room. "You see, I was right to persevere," she said.

In five minutes, General Turner returned. "General Pemberton has every desire to oblige you, ladies," he said. "You will not think it strange that an examination is necessary; but, in your case, it shall only be nominal. We've been so much engaged that the package of private letters has not yet been opened, and, but for your coming, would not have been till tomorrow. I claim the assistance of the ladies, and your own, Captain Dean; and, all together, we will soon finish the job."

"I hope General Pemberton keeps his office a little cleaner," said Elizabeth, elevating her dress, to avoid dust and tobacco spit, when they were ushered into another room.

"He has not greatly the advantage of the staff in that particular," answered the general; "but don't be severe on our housekeeping. Your visit was unexpected this morning, or I should have called in Billy to sweep up. Before the town was invested, the ladies came occasionally to see us; but since, we've not been honored. The citizens will probably complain of this detention of their letters; but what now seems quite easy to do, with your assistance, I should myself have pronounced impossible two hours ago. Nothing like a woman, captain, to stir a man up; but, now I think of it, you are not a married man, and know nothing about it. Get to work on this bundle, Miss Sue," he continued. "Take out anything directed to members of your father's family or to Mrs. Price, and I'll break the seals and put a big cross-mark on the envelope, which I reckon is all the examination necessary."

"You are very kind," said Elizabeth; "but if you think it best, don't hesitate to read them over. There can be nothing in the letters that it would be at all disagreeable to us for you to see."

"I will, however," he answered, "trust to you entirely. Don't mention publicly, if you please, that they have not been looked into, lest some might expect a similar favor, to whom it could not be granted. That is all I ask."

"For Mrs. Price!" called out Sue, holding up an envelope badly made of brown paper and stuck together with starch.

"For Mrs. Price, sure enough," said Captain Dean; "and from the army of the Potomac."

"I see," said the general, "that, with all their victories, they are not much better off for writing materials than ourselves."

"For Caroline Courteny!" continued Sue, laying them respectively in pile. "For Captain St. George!"

"You are exceeding orders, Sue," said Captain Dean. "You only had permission to take out your own letters and those of Mrs. Price."

"Well," said Sue, "I put back Captain St. George's; but, general, please let me take Caroline's."

"Certainly, certainly," said he; "no objection whatever;" and he broke the seal, as he had done Mrs. Price's, and made a cross-mark on the back.

"For General Turner!" cried out Sue; and she demurely broke the seal, and with the pen made hieroglyphics on the outside, passing it to the general, who, laughing, received it with a bow.

"Have I your gracious permission," he asked, "to peruse it now?"

"No! no! There will be plenty of time when we have gone. But see, I'm through with this package, and still nothing for mamma. Why, sister, how strange of you, not half done with your parcel yet, and I've entirely finished. Good gracious! you are pale — no, I mean red. Is there any bad news?"

Captain Dean, who was looking over Mrs. Woodville's shoulder, burst out laughing. "Elizabeth's expression of countenance has been alarming," he said, "for ten minutes. Seeing her look so perfectly transfixed, I crept up to see for myself. I want to know what there is in this simple direction, to upset a woman so entirely. 'To Captain Robert Smith, Company C, Twenty-fourth Texas, care of Colonel Gower.'"

"Pass it over to me," said Sue; and taking the letter, she turned it over and upside-down. "There is nothing in it that I can see. Why, sister, I don't think you know either Colonel Gower or Captain Robert Smith. Why should the contents of this interest you at all?"

"I feel no interest whatever either in Colonel Gower or Captain Robert Smith," said Mrs. W., faintly. "Don't laugh at me, Tom, but get me some water, quick; for my head swims dreadfully."

Captain Dean picked up the letter again, while Sue supported her sister's head and gave her water to drink. He repeated, mechanically, "'Captain Robert Smith — Colonel Gower.' Are there such persons among the garrison, general?"

"I myself know very little about the Texas regiments. There may be half-a-dozen Captain Robert Smiths," answered General Turner, "for all I know, either *pro* or *con*. A man commanding a Texas regiment, named Gower, has been here occasionally before the investment; but it strikes me the Twenty-fourth is at present with Lowring, outside. If it is really of any consequence to you, Mrs. Woodville," and he eyed her with some curiosity while speaking, "I might possibly find out."

"I have said," answered she, "that I have never known, indeed never heard of, either of these gentlemen before. Is not that sufficient to convince you that I do not care who or where they are?"

"It is walking in the sun, then," said Sue, "that has made you sick. And you begin to show it, for your face is now as red as it was pale before."

"I was only sick for a moment, the sun may have been the cause. Don't talk about it any more, if you please, but let us go on looking for our letters." Thus spoke Mrs. Woodville, and to outward appearances, she was calm; but what a torrent of recollections and anticipations that simple direction had caused, was a thing even she would have believed (till that moment) impossible. Had a heap of gold been within a miser's grasp, the temptation could not have been greater to seize upon it, than was hers to get possession of that letter. Had Johnston's despatches, telling Pemberton when and how he would be relieved, been laid beside it, she would have regarded the information as nothing compared with what was enclosed to "Captain Robert Smith, care of Colonel Gower."

That the information was within her grasp now, and might soon be beyond it, was the predominant thought that filled her mind. Could she devise some way of taking it home with her? To do so would be a breach of honor. But what was honor in comparison with the lifetime of happiness that might yet be hers, could she but find out what had been written to "Captain Robert Smith, care of Colonel Gower." She had drawn her seat to the table, and was looking over the letters like the rest of them. She passed over one and another,

without having the slightest idea for whom they were. General Turner noticed this, but he said not one word. That the letter, and nothing else, had been the cause of her excitement, in spite of her assurance to the contrary, he fully understood; and was very curious to know what there could be so suggestive, in the simple direction, "Captain Robert Smith, care of Colonel Gower."

Scarcely knowing why, he took up the letter from before Sue, and, after looking at it intently, laid it between himself and Mrs. Woodville, so that it was constantly in her sight and reach; then, by shifting his chair a few inches, he continued to receive the contents of the bundle from her, in such a manner, that every letter she passed, her hand and wrist touched the one that bore the inscription, "Captain Robert Smith, care of Colonel Gower." The others talked, but Elizabeth said nothing. Thought was so busy with her, she had no time for words.

Finishing one bundle, General Turner turned to hand her another; and while he was so employed, her fingers lay at full length upon the letter. Should she seize and conceal it? Now was the time, for Captain Dean and Sue were talking together. She felt the blood, which had been flushing her face, rush back again in torrents to her heart, and, making a mighty effort, she nerved herself to grasp her happiness while she could.

The propitious moment came, but she trembled too violently to take advantage of it; and, raising her hand for a moment to her head, when she looked again she saw, with horror, that Sue had reached over, and, with some others, was tying also the letter directed to "Captain Robert Smith, care of Colonel Gower."

She watched the package as it was thrown into the basket, and felt that sinking of the heart, which occurs when bitter disappointment succeeds the brightness of a short-lived hope. But with her despair came also self-control, and when General Turner, coming to the table again, saw the letter was gone, he understood intuitively that it was not in her possession, for her eyes were full of tears. Sue, too, noticed the tears, but she thought it not strange, for, a moment before, her Cousin Tom had said, "Two letters for Major Hoadly, and both in a lady's hand: and to think he will never read them; ah, how sad!"

"Two for ma, two for Estelle, and one for Mrs. Price," said Sue, counting over the letters in her hand. "Well, Mrs. Price was right; it was a great deal better to come ourselves than to send."

"I am glad you did so," said General Turner, "for otherwise there might have been considerable delay. Give my best respects to your mamma, and say it has given me much pleasure to oblige her."

Elizabeth, as she withdrew, looked again towards the basket. It seemed to her now as if she had been dreaming. Though but a moment before she had clutched it with a nervous grasp, she actually doubted whether the letter was there. She turned to General Turner to express thanks for his kindness, and continued to do so in audible tones.

"You have visited us very seldom of late," she said. "When shall we see you again?"

"Soon, very soon," said the general, heartily. "I'll be down at the church again, without fail."

"I'm glad he is not mad with us," said Sue, as they descended the steps, and passed the sentinel at the gate, "for he is good and kind, and nobody ought to give him offence."

"Indeed, he is kind," said Captain Dean, "and very few persons would so soon have forgotten the scoring he received the other night. So admit, Elizabeth, that if red-haired people are sometimes violent, they are not always ungenerous."

"Indeed, I do admit it," answered Elizabeth, "and most particularly, in the case of General Turner."

## CHAPTER XXI.

THE package of letters brought in by Captain Hill caused more than one heart in the city of Vicksburg to palpitate. Captain Alexander, now firmly on his feet again, looked anxiously for his answer from Marion Ludlow. He doubted not what that answer would be. Marion, he knew, would rather die than stand between himself and happiness; and yet he resolved, over and over again, that if her communication showed signs of grief or disappointment, he would even yet control himself, and fly the effects of Caroline Courteny's charms. It was on the first of July, that the desired paper, after much circumnavigation from the time it left head-quarters, reached his hands. It read as follows:—

LA BELLE PRAIRIE, ST. MARY'S.

DEAR PIERRE,—Our mother and myself can never be sufficiently grateful to that God who has preserved you through so many dangers. Our greatest pleasure is to pray for your safety day and night. There was great rejoicing in the house when your letter came, for the very outside was an evidence that you still lived.

About being in love, dear Pierre, I hope you will believe me, when I say it gave me great pleasure to hear of it. If my approbation is really of value to you, rest assured that you have it; and the name of the person you love shall be hereafter always joined with yours in our prayers. I wish you had told us more about her. I hope she is both handsome and good; and would beg you to send her picture, but that I know it would be very difficult to have one taken just now. I feel so much happier than I did ten days ago, for besides knowing that you still live, I think a great deal of the time when you will bring home your wife, and how much we will love her, and that she will love us in return. About the matters of the plantation —

About the matters of the plantation Alexander did not at that time read. The thought that he was now free, and could ask for a return of his love from Caroline Courteny, absorbed

every sense. The few hours that expired before he could see her were passed in wondering where she would be, and how she would look, in the evening. How sweet to both man and woman is the memory of sensations such as his! How ecstatic the dreamy bliss that pervaded his soul. The past was forgotten, the future ignored, the present alone contained enough of happiness. Why, then, blemish it by one thought of things that had passed, or aught that was yet to come?

In the twilight of the evening Alexander sought Caroline, and found her alone. Few words were necessary, for love in youthful and passionate natures must ever render language bankrupt.

"Ask your love?" he said, in answer to her half-reluctant acquiescence; "ask your love? I do more—I demand it. Do you think I have remained all this time in uncertainty? No, my Caroline; from the moment I held you in my arms, livid and motionless as a corpse, my heart told me that you would one day be mine. Now that I have explained to you the motives that kept me silent so long, you can fully understand how much I feared to forfeit your respect, for what other thing under heaven could have kept me from speaking? Listening to the rich melody of your voice, how often I've been tempted to forget all other considerations, and tell you how passionately and tenderly you are loved. I have thought so often, and longed so ardently, to hear one word of affection from your lips during my late illness. I've built so many air-castles, all tenanted by one slight form. I have ceased to anticipate the aspiring roof, that I dreamed, during my foreign travel, would one day shelter my bride; but, in my cottage on the sea-island, I'll show her beauties that the painter might love to portray, or the poet to sing. How lovely will be those shades when we sit beneath them together, and the perfume of the magnolia shall mingle with the breath of my love. We'll talk of the day in my boyhood when I greedily sought the pirate's hoard; but heaven with lavish hand has poured into my arms a far more priceless treasure. In lieu of a jewelled head-dress, I'll make you a wreath of orange-flowers; and the mocking-bird shall spring from many a thicket to greet you with its sweetest song. I'll hold your slender figure in my arms on the shelly beach, and the cooling waves shall cover us when the tide comes in from the sea; but I'll clasp you tightly when the waves go out again, and

laugh at your girlish fears, for my arm could bear you up even in the surging billows, and the scaly ones that people the gulf would but think that a mermaid had come to greet them. I'll make you a throne on a grassy bank, with a canopy of nature's own emerald tapestry, and, kneeling at your feet, I'll pay you the honors of heathen worship. Tell me, would this be world enough for you? There is eloquence in your downcast eye and in your silence, but let my farther yearning be gratified; give me one word."

The lady's hand had been given reluctantly, but her promise was spoken firmly and aloud.

"Keep the ring," she said, "and regard it as a talisman that controls my heart."

Taking it from him, she pressed it to her lips, and returned it again; and that, which had before been dear, was now of priceless value to the soldier, for it was the representative to him of God's best gift to man — the pure and devoted love of a lovely woman. What words can express the happiness that comes to the heart with the knowledge that it is beloved? How keen this enjoyment to Alexander and Caroline, who had never been so blessed before! Theirs was not the faint ebullition of the heart grown weary with the effort of loving; but the spontaneous outbursts of youthful and passionate feeling, coming with overflowing tenderness, stronger and tenderer, that it had been for a short time restrained.

"And you have said to me what no man has ever before heard from your lips?" said Alexander.

"I have never even been asked to say it before," answered Caroline.

"And for me," said her lover, "think not that I offer you other than the first-fruits of my heart; for though some calls have been made on it for tenderness, it has invariably refused to respond, hoarding always its feelings with intuitive anticipation of the idol, who would one day claim every thought."

Hour succeeded hour, but Alexander still lingered with his new-found bliss, and he did well; for fate granted him few such moments between the cradle and the grave. It was like the accidental mingling of two gently-flowing currents, which for a space seem to have one channel and destination, but which the relentless hand of fate separates again just as it united, and drives into different paths, growing farther asunder every day. But no fear of such a destiny weighed on

the lovers now. They forgot the sad condition of country, of home, and of friends. For this one evening life seemed given them as much to be happy in, as if their vows had been made listening to the sound of delicious music, instead of the steady booming of cannon; or a white-robed peace looked down on their native land, enlivening with a dovelike smile what was becoming a scene of desolation, frowned upon by "grim-visaged war."

Sweetly passed the time while they conversed with that voice, "more felt by the heart than heard." When Alexander rose to say good-night, Caroline raised her eyes, and fixed them steadily on his face. "Promise me," she said, gently, "to take care of your life."

"Shall I go into a cave, my love?" he asked, in playful tones.

"No," she answered, responding to his smile; "but what I ask is reasonable. Take all possible precaution against the shells, for is not life worth more to us than formerly?"

"Indeed, I feel it so," he said; and, as he left the house with her warm kiss upon his lips, he thought of the dangers that surrounded them both, but scarcely feared them, for heaven had been all-merciful; and it seemed to him as if an armor, strong and firm, had been made to protect him — albeit composed of the frail fabric of a woman's love.

When Caroline, next day, made a blushing confession to her uncle of what had passed, he was astonished but not displeased.

"You should have told me sooner," he said.

"How could I, uncle," she answered, "when I had not yet told it to Captain Alexander? Surely, we were to speak together first!"

"There is something in that," said Judge Wilkerson, smiling, "so I cannot withhold my blessing and congratulations. I could wish my pet no greater blessing than the regard of this brave and honorable man, which her youthful bloom and gayety has won; but, look well to it, my child, trust not to these attractions alone, to keep the heart which is now yours; for the years will soon come when virtue and good sense will be more valuable to Captain Alexander than the pink and white, which he now regards with such admiration, or the flippancy that he cannot long mistake for actual wisdom. One thing more, and my preaching will be at an end. Give

your heart to your lover as thoroughly as you please, but he takes not this precious little body from my keeping till times are more propitious; for as a soldier, he owes his first duty to his country, and must bide his time before he calls you his wife."

"As to that, dear uncle," said Caroline, "there is no cause for alarm, for Captain Alexander said not a word of an immediate marriage; and but for your own remark, I should not have once thought of it, as yet."

"Then, if I have put it into your head, see that you get it out again, on the spot;" and pinching her cheek, her uncle drew her to him and pressed his lips to her forehead.

## CHAPTER XXII.

IT was the evening of the third of July, eighteen hundred and sixty-three, that the firing from the line suddenly ceased, and the citizens of Vicksburg asked themselves and each other what it meant. It was supposed that a flag of truce had been sent out; but before information could be gained of its purpose, the guns began to sound again, and curiosity which had been on the alert was lulled.

At night, the McReas held their usual levee; and first among the arrivals came Captain Alexander with his fair *fiancee*, Caroline Courteny, both happy in each other's society, and proud of each other's love. They spoke little, and yet there were few present who did not divine, before the evening was over, the state of feeling that existed between them. Captain Dean, when Estelle drew his attention to the fact, wondered how he could have been so blind as not to have suspected it before; and Fanny Lea charged herself with great want of sagacity. The company of lovers (unlike that of new-married people) is universally agreeable and generally sought. When it becomes public that a certain young lady's charms have been appropriated, all other bachelors except the one in possession are apt to give the lady a more searching look than usual, and to see in her perfections before unknown. Just so Caroline was more admired than she had ever been before, and had certainly never appeared more charming in her whole life. Her conversation, usually lively, was made brilliant by a flow of spirits more than common. Her eyes, always bright, beamed with renewed lustre under the influence of new-found happiness; and many who had thought her plain before, this evening called her a beauty. And if Caroline was happiest of women, Alexander was surely proudest of men. Though an admirer of the sex, he had associated with them to a very limited extent, and never hoped to be a favorite, being fully conscious of his reserved manners and character. That this woman, so lovely in appearance, so warm in her feelings, so brilliant in society, had really given him her love, was more than he had hoped; and while he recognized her real attractions, he clothed her with a thousand besides, the natural off-



spring of a lover's fancy; and, as a miner gazes with rapture on the dazzling brightness of a ruby or glittering diamond, exhumed from the dark recesses of the earth, so Alexander wondered at the glory of the jewel which had lately come to be his.

"General Turner will be down tonight," said Judge Wilkerson, to Estelle.

"I'm glad to hear it," she answered; "first, because it is an evidence that he has gotten in a good humor with us; and again, because he can tell us (if he will) the object of the flag of truce this afternoon, if flag of truce it really was. Have you formed any conjectures about it, judge?"

"Why, no, not particularly," was the answer. "I think it more probable than otherwise that it was to negotiate the exchange of prisoners that are in our court-house, and have been very much exposed to the shelling."

"The Federals ought, I think, to be anxious to get their men out of such a fix," said Estelle.

"And yet they do not seem to be so," answered the judge; "for a colonel and some privates sent over to 'the fleet' a few days after the siege commenced, were returned by the officer commanding immediately back into the town."

"What reason did he assign for such a thing?"

"Only that he had no authority to receive them. Several of them were killed in the court-house a few days afterwards."

"Well," said Estelle, "that seems barbarous; just like a Yankee, for the world. But I forgot to tell you, we are to have Charlie C. and Lieutenant Bruce here tonight. Though they are such particular friends, we have not been able to see them often since the investment; for they are stationed at the lower batteries, and can seldom get leave to come up into town. But they will be nearer hereafter; for the portable mortar they have been using with such good effect below, is now required on the eastern line, and they have been engaged all day in moving it."

"Carrie," said Fanny Lea, "I'm told you have really redeemed your promise, and ate some mule-meat. Is it true?"

"Certainly," said Caroline. "I can prove it."

"But," said Fanny, "I don't consider that which was so nicely prepared and smoked, a test; for I tasted it myself, and had to admit it good."

"Nor I," said Miss Courteny; "but I did not keep my word so easily. I had a genuine, unadulterated mule-steak for breakfast this morning, and ate a considerable piece of it, as Captain Alexander, who was present, can bear me witness."

"I was present," said Captain Alexander, "when the promise was made, and also when it was redeemed, and must give my testimony accordingly."

When General Turner came, Estelle asked him the meaning of the sudden stoppage of the guns in the afternoon. He pretended not to know, but she thought it evident he did not wish to tell. As she did not press the matter, he took occasion soon afterwards to move his seat to a place in the church, where Elizabeth Woodville sat talking to Lieutenant Bruce. As the general advanced, the lieutenant retreated, and finding himself alone with Mrs. W., he said:—"I came this evening more particularly to see you, and am glad we have the opportunity of conversing apart. Excuse the liberty I took in watching you narrowly the morning you came to head-quarters. I concluded that there was something of interest to you connected with a letter which is to pass through my hands. Was I mistaken?"

"You were not," was the answer.

"I wish to serve you," he said, "if you will confide in me so far as to tell me how it can be done. Have I your permission to inquire about the whereabouts of either Captain Smith or Colonel Gower?"

"My anxiety," said Elizabeth, "has nothing to do with either of the gentlemen in question."

"Then I am to infer that some information contained in the letter is what you wish to know."

"I have told you truly," answered Elizabeth, "in saying that I never heard of those gentlemen whose names are mentioned on the back of that letter, and yet of all things on earth, I would rather have it in my possession; for it would tell me of one who was very dear to me many years ago; one I scarcely dared to believe alive, and who with the self-same hand that penned this letter, wrote my name in my first spelling-book."

"Madam," said General Turner, "beware how you build hopes on so slight a foundation. Be not too confident; there may be some mistake."

"There is no mistake," said Elizabeth, firmly. "As soon

may the polestar mislead the mariner, as my instincts deceive me in this matter."

"Then," said the general, "you shall know all you wish. It is my privilege, indeed my duty, to examine this letter before delivery. I have no desire to possess myself of your secret, save by your own consent, and therefore will place it in your hands, hoping that it may contain all you wish." Drawing from his pocket a package, he handed it to her, and rising, walked away to the other part of the church before she could collect herself sufficiently to speak. A short time afterwards, he saw her leave the upper part of the building and go below, and though he waited till late, expecting her return, she did not make her appearance again during the evening.

It was about ten o'clock that Mrs. McRea, who had been spending the evening at Mrs. Price's cave, returned. She asked hurriedly for her husband, and, on seeing him, exclaimed:—"I cannot understand it, but something unusual has occurred during the evening. Mrs. A., the lady at whose house General Pemberton takes his meals, has just been talking with us at Mrs. Price's cave, and she says, to her certain knowledge, there was a personal interview this evening between Pemberton and Grant. What can it possibly mean?"

"What, indeed?" said Judge McRea, looking alarmed.

Mrs. McRea's consternation spread like wildfire about the church.

"Pemberton conversing with Grant!" was the universal exclamation, as the scattered groups simultaneously moved towards the pulpit and concentrated into one. "Pemberton conversing with Grant! Good heavens! What can it mean?"

After a pause, everybody began to surmise what could have been the subject of the conversation. Some said one thing, some another; but everybody avoided giving utterance to what they most feared. No one spoke of—surrender. There were present, at the time of which we speak, officers of all ranks; yet it was easy to see, that with the exception of General Turner, who was on Pemberton's staff, they were completely taken by surprise, and had (is it not the way of the world?) received their first intimation of this thing from the ladies.

Within fifteen minutes after Mrs. McRea's announcement, everybody had grown silent and thoughtful, and every face looked careworn and sad. Each one thought to deceive the other; for so confident had they been, that this suggestion of

surrender, coming so unexpectedly into their minds, seemed a phantom,—the creation of a diseased brain, and the offspring of cowardice, of disaffection, or of treason. Both ladies and gentlemen tried hard to banish the incubus, and think and talk as usual, but in vain. Caroline's laugh became restrained; Mary's merry clatter fainter and fainter; and Sue's saucy repartee subdued.

Many efforts were made to restore cheerfulness to the conversation, and banish for a time the painful thought. Judge McRea spoke of the quantity of provision on hand; Captain Dean, of the supply of ammunition.

The ladies talked lightly of their hardships, and the probability of their having to endure them so much longer; and Mrs. McRea, who had long been forming plans for a ceremonial with which to compliment Johnston and his victorious troops when they entered the town in triumph, commenced to discuss the details, the mottoes, the designs for the wreaths and bouquets, but without success. Everybody talked in jerks; everybody knew that the other was trying to deceive both themselves and the company at large.

When a painful restraint falls suddenly upon a number of people sitting together, how impossible it is to ignore the fact. Words are the same, smiles come as frequently; yet so intuitively do human beings recognize want of sincerity in each other, that, as a general thing, nobody is deceived;—and as Mrs. McRea talked of Johnston, of victory, and of final relief, she might just as well, for the effect it had on her hearers, have cried out in the agony of heart.

General Turner, who had seen Johnston's despatches from the first, and knew that the preliminaries to a capitulation had already taken place, had intended when he came that evening to intimate to Judge McRea that he had better prepare his family for the worst; but he saw from the conversation that everybody's fears were assuming (fast enough) a tangible shape, and thought it best to be silent.

That was a wretched night for every one present,—for every one within the town that suspected the truth.

When Mary McRea found her bed intolerable long after midnight, and got up to look about her, she saw, seated by one of the windows, her mother and father, who during the long night had never once laid down. Their careworn faces, their mute gestures of despair, told how keenly they suffered. Es-

telle, too (her companion), was tossing with restlessness and anxiety. The young girl grew sick with the load of care that was gathering at her heart. She knew well the many sources of anxiety that were weighing her parents to the earth. She knew well that their hearts were lacerated with crushing distress for sons whose lives were daily and hourly exposed in Virginia and Tennessee; that their pecuniary resources were almost exhausted; and that the occupation of the town by Federal troops would expose a large and helpless family to privations worse than they had known — to probable insult, and to almost certain starvation. She thought of the gallant soldiers of the garrison who had done their best; of the noble courage of the officers; of the mute patience of the privates; until it seemed too much to endure; and hiding her face in her hands, she burst into a passionate fit of tears. This was a sad night.

If the citizens suffered, not less acute were the feelings of those who had with manly courage borne the brunt of the fight. Sad whisperings among the officers at the batteries broke the stillness of the night. They had grown weary and worn with the bloody work, and yet it was with acute agony that they suspected they would never more fire off their guns; and that with crossed arms and lowered heads they would be marched out on the morrow, to stack their guns before a victorious army. They had been driven before a conquering army at Port Gibson, at Jackson, and at Champion's Hill; but the general rallying-point was supposed to be at Vicksburg, and their hearts had beat high with the hope that here Forts Donelson and Henry would be avenged, and the pride of the mighty host for a time abated.

At head-quarters, this expectation had early been dissipated. Yet there the distress must have been great; for the system of deception that it was necessary to keep up towards the garrison, the privations imposed upon the troops, the murmurings of an injured people against the mismanagement of the whole campaign, must have been anticipated and felt; and General Pemberton, whether his misfortunes were the results of a blind obstinacy and disobedience of orders, or of want of resources furnished by the government, must have been that night a miserable man.

Mary McRea thought no more of sleeping. As the "still small hours" began to wane, she tried to buoy herself up again

with the hope, that at daybreak the firing from the line would recommence as usual; for it was at that hour that the Parrott-guns (suffered to rest from dark till day) poured again, and with greatest energy, their deadly missiles on the devoted town.

The mortars had been discharging steadily through the night, and, since the result of the negotiations were not positively known, the siege might go on as before. This she remembered was the morning of the Fourth of July. Mary had looked forward to that time with dread. She had thought to take refuge in a cave, as so many were doing, and knew that her mother and father had spoken of the same thing. It had been understood that a general charge was meditated by the Federals on this day. The pickets had on more than one occasion called aloud, telling it to the occupants of the trenches; and it was a common expression among the soldiers, "We are to see sights on the Fourth of July." We have said that Mary had anticipated this time with dread, but now her ears ached, for the booming sounds and showers of shot and shell would have been less awful than was the stillness with which the day broke and the sun rose slowly in the distance. Her sisters, who, more fortunate than herself, had been resting for a few hours, as they woke up one by one, noticed the stillness, and looked at each other in silence. What their parents and herself had suffered from and received as a fixed fact, it now became their time to endure.

Hope for a brief space was revived; for, by some misunderstanding among the Federals, about six o'clock, the guns at a distant part of the line were put in motion, and continued to discharge at intervals for half an hour, but at the end of that time they ceased, and the mortars, too, were silent.

Mrs. McRea then spoke to her daughters. "It is useless," she said, "for us to hope for relief from General Johnston any longer. Your father and I have come to that conclusion; and if our fears are not misplaced, a capitulation is already in progress. Let us not deceive ourselves farther; but as well as we can realize the truth, for we shall soon be prisoners in the hands of General Grant."

In making this declaration to her daughters, the mother's suffering will readily be understood. There can be few positions in life more painful than was hers that morning. The hope of final success, which had sustained her during the investment of the town, was so strong, that she had seen her young

daughters and grandchildren constantly exposed to danger, and suffering severe privations with comparative cheerfulness. This hope was in a moment snatched from her, and she beheld in anticipation the harrowing mortifications that herself and husband must endure, and the insults her children might suffer, from the hands of a licentious and brutal soldiery, inflamed by a thousand feelings of rapacity and revenge. If she had trembled for the dangers encountered by her sons in battle, she shrank with even more horror from the position of her daughters now. In New Orleans (when the city had yielded without a struggle), the passions of the soldiers had been excited and encouraged by Butler's proclamation. How much less mercy could be expected, when the foe had been kept forty-nine days at bay, and would now have an opportunity of venting their pent-up rage on a prostrate and disabled enemy.

That the United-States government, or the officers in command of the army, did not desire the town to be sacked, she believed; but, should the wish become general among the soldiers, it might be impossible to control them; in which case, every citizen in the place would be at the mercy of an unbridled and cruel mob. Rumors of shocking outrages, committed on the outside, had crept in with exaggerations, that made them sickening to relate; and to the mother's agonized heart, it seemed for a time a misfortune, that she had not laid all her children in the grave, rather than reserved them for that dreadful day. The extent of her fears, of course, could not be made known to her daughters. So having stated the fact, Mrs. McRea made no farther comment, but suggested that their residence at the church be immediately broken up, and that they should make the best of their way home. For two hours, there seemed to be little known as to the terms of the capitulation, or indeed, whether it had been made at all.

Though again domesticated within their own house, the Misses McRea found it impossible to engage in any settled employment, but walked from window to window, looking about in every direction in the most painful state of expectation.

At ten o'clock, the heavy sound of tramping on the pavement led them to the door. A regiment of Confederates were passing, — the first, who, after stacking their arms, had been allowed to come back into town. A variety of feelings, no doubt, animated these men. Some, who had suffered keenly

from loss of health, rest, and friends, who despised their officers and lost hope of success, were grown dogged, and saw the town delivered to the enemy, almost with a sensation of relief. But these were the few. The greater number heard the announcement with the deepest feelings of anger and wounded pride. As these men passed the door of Judge McRea's house, one by one, the ladies regarded them with looks of sympathy and commiseration. Their torn and soiled garments, their haggard and sickly countenances, their matted and dishevelled hair — all spoke of their heroic courage, their severe privations, and their bitter disappointment. The ladies, standing on an upper gallery, had not been observed at first, but afterwards attracted the attention of some of the soldiers. These, stopping to exchange a few words, were touched, in their turn, with the pale faces and tearful eyes that looked down upon them.

"It was not our doings," said a young boy to Mrs. McRea; "it is not our doings, but those that command us."

"Had it been left to me," said one of his comrades, "I would sooner sit in one of those muddy ditches till I starved, or shed the last drop of blood from my heart, than deliver this town, with the women and children in it, into the hands of the Federals."

This remark drew forth others from those around.

"We were willing to fight longer," called out a tall, gray-haired man, at some distance off; "but they didn't give us the choice; we have been bought and sold like oxen."

"Yes!" was echoed by many — "it was too soon to surrender; and, by God! we have been betrayed."

"Betrayed! betrayed!" sounded on all sides; "betrayed by the traitor Pemberton;" and an appearance of rage and excitement pervaded the crowd.

The ladies were distressed and alarmed.

Mrs. McRea endeavored to speak, and was, after some difficulty, heard.

"Let not your courage fail now, O brave men!" she said, "in this the bitterest hour of your trial. Your officers are but human, and may have made mistakes, but, my life for it, they are pure of heart, and you are but the victims of the fortunes of war, and not of treason."

With quiet salutations, blessings, and even with tears, the regiment passed on; and the ladies waved them a sad farewell, as their worn gray coats disappeared from view.

An hour afterwards, some jugs of beer were placed on the pavement, for the benefit of the weary Confederates, who suffered intensely from thirst, after walking from the line, in their weak and exhausted condition. This was the cause of Mrs. McRea's first encounter with a Federal soldier, which occurred in a somewhat ludicrous way. Handing about the beverage promiscuously, she observed that one of the drinkers wore blue jacket and pantaloons. Not supposing that any of the enemy had as yet crossed the trenches, she helped him with a lavish and friendly hand, remarking, as she did so, "It looks strange to see one of the garrison clad in this style. Pray, my good man, where did you capture your uniform?"

"I did not capture it at all, madam," was the reply. "I am one of the army of General Grant."

"A Yankee!" cried Mrs. McRea, regarding him with horror; "a Yankee—and come up to my door asking a favor!" and in her dismay, the tumbler dropped from her hand, and fell in pieces on the pavement.

"I did not mean any harm, ma'am," said the soldier, with innocent surprise. "I was thirsty like the rest, and thought, of course, you would give me a drink. Have I done any thing wrong?"

"A Yankee!" exclaimed she again, regarding him with a look in which curiosity was mixed with amazement; and, almost doubting his second reply in the affirmative, she turned to the crowd of graybacks with inquiring looks.

"Yes, madam!" called out several; "a *bona-fide* Yank, but a clever fellow in his way; and one who leaped across the trenches early this morning, on purpose to shake hands with us."

"Of course I did," said the Fed; "and to divide my rations with you. And, ladies, if I were not afraid of giving offence, I'm told all private families are badly off for provision, I should like to offer —"

"Good gracious!" said Mrs. McRea, retreating towards the door; "listen to the man. He talks for all the world like he was crazy."

Estelle and Sue, who had been amused observers of the scene, from the window, now burst into an unrestrained and hearty laughter, which became general; and this little incident, trifling as it was, contributed no little to restore confidence and cheerfulness to them all. There was something affecting

in the fellow's good nature; and in this early recognition of a heart under a Federal uniform, their situation was divested of much horror to the flexible imaginations of the female prisoners.

Not discouraged with the singular reception his kind offer had met with, the soldier did more. He called the younger children to him, begged that their attention should not be directed to the color of his clothes, and ere long they sat upon his knees within the doorway; their eyes brightened by the possession of toys, and their little palates pampered with the long-forgotten taste of delicious *bonbons*.

"I can hardly believe it," said Mary, peeping over the gallery, "and yet it seems true. I wonder if he would set the house on fire, or put anything in the candy to make the children sick?"

"For shame, Mary," said Estelle. "He has a benevolent countenance, and no doubt is really kind. But oh, look, look! What a heart-rending sight for us to see!"

"I know what you mean," said Mary, with a half shriek; "but I'll not look. I have been expecting it all the morning, but I'll not look upon it. No power on earth shall make me do so."

Sue followed with her eyes the direction in which her sister pointed, and saw that the tattered Confederate flag which waved near the court-house was being slowly lowered.

Mary hid her head in the bedclothes, to avoid hearing the cry of exultation which she expected the Federals would send up simultaneously with the disappearance of the banner. But though, after it was lost to view, the broad standard which had marched in victory over a prostrate foe through many States, and was now about to be raised on the Gibraltar of the enemy, and which seemed like the Roman eagles destined to be stopped only by the want of territory to conquer, unfurled its bright stars and broad stripes to the breeze, there was no shout of joy; and just as the Confederates bore their sad reverses without complaint or murmuring, so the Federals, impelled by a momentary generosity and respect for a fallen foe, looked on their triumph in silence and almost in sadness.

It was from an elevated position near head-quarters that Mrs. McRea and her daughters witnessed the formal surrender of the town.

Towards noon, General Grant, attended by members of his

staff and soldiers to the number of about fifty, rode through the city and dismounted at the gate of the house occupied by General Pemberton. He was no doubt expected, for the Confederate general and his staff were assembled on the front gallery, and rising, stood uncovered as the former approached them.

"Which is General Grant?" said Estelle, to Judge Wilkerson.

"The one on the left," was his response.

"What, that quiet, unassuming-looking person? I should select rather the tall person on the right as the hero of the occasion."

"Nevertheless, the one I mention is Grant, and very like the pictures we've seen of him in the newspapers."

"There seems to be no excitement on either side," said Mrs. McRea, as she watched the respective generals converse in dumb show.

"Oh, heavens!" cried Mary. "See! General Pemberton has offered his sword;" and she kept her face steadily averted, unable to control her feelings.

"And see!" cried Sue, touched by the generosity of the conqueror, "General Grant has refused to take it."

"Let us go home," cried Mary. "Spare me from looking again on this shameful sight." And such was the excited state of her imagination, that the quiet-looking person whose generosity had just been admired, was the very personification of her dream; so much so, that he lacked neither the horns nor the caudal appendage.

Nearing their house, on returning from this walk, their situation was most painfully brought to the minds of our friends; for, drawn up in line down the street in front of their own door, on the ground lately occupied by the Confederates, was a full regiment of Federal troops. With swimming eyes and sinking hearts did the ladies contemplate this handsomely-dressed, well-conditioned army of their conquerors. And how sadly did they contrast their brilliant stand of colors and silver-mounted arms with the torn and faded banner which had been the representative to them of new-born hopes of liberty; or the tarnished swords and rusty muskets which had been used so bravely (though unsuccessfully) in their defence. Nor was this all; for as they made their way to the door, wishing to gain the solitude of their chambers to shut out the harrow-

ing sight, there was a cry in the street of "The fleet! the fleet!" and a glance at the river showed the water, which had flowed past in an undisturbed current for so many days and months, bearing upon its bosom an army of crafts of many sizes and shapes, from the tiny despatch-boat to the stately man-of-war, rams and iron-clads, hospital and sanitary barges. Heralded by a small steamer, the flag-ship of Commodore Porter led the way, decorated at mast, stern, and on deck with many banners spread out to the breeze. Closely following in its train, and crowding upon each other, came others of the fleet, their decks filled with tars wearing their holiday attire as the ensign of victory, and struggling to get the first look on the place which had so long been the goal of their exertions. Last in the triumphal procession came the clumsy iron-clads and heavy rams; and so arranged, they steamed slowly past the now silent guns of the Confederates; and amid the inspiring sound of martial music, cast anchor in the river, or moored their huge forms at the foot of the captured town.



## CHAPTER XXIII.

**I**T was late in the evening before Mrs. McRea remembered that no member of her household had tasted food. Going to the kitchen to give directions for the preparation of some, she was told for the first time that the servants (six negro slaves), with the exception of one old and decrepit woman, had left the lot, avowing their intention never to return. This simultaneous desertion of cook, washer-woman, nursery-maid, and steward, was paralyzing to the lady, who had never been left without servants before in her life, and who had, since the beginning of the war, always said and believed that if every other negro in town deserted their masters, Judge McRea's would remain faithful, she knew. It was, therefore, not only with annoyance at the inconvenience, but with real distress, that she learned this fact. Her husband and herself had arranged their establishment so that the comfort of the servants was considered and their rights respected. For all of them she felt a warm attachment, and some she had reared from infancy. This sudden abandonment of home and friends, she feared, would be as disastrous to themselves as it was disrespectful to her; but she had no time to lament over the domestic misfortune, for the dinner was to be cooked, and the question was, how? There was no question of what, in the matter; for all the house afforded was bacon, meal, and peas, and of these raw materials was to be concocted immediately a meal. She was by no means a person to cry over spilt milk, and no sooner realized her dilemma than seized it by the horns. There was a general mustering of the girls, while Mrs. Woodville was left in charge of the juveniles. Mary got down on her knees to blow the fire, Estelle washed the iron pot, and Sue rolled up her sleeves over the roundest, whitest arms imaginable, and insinuated a couple of ivory hands into corn-meal dough.

"But there is no getting along without wood and water," said Estelle; "and pa is so distressed and unwell, I would not trouble him for the world."

"Certainly not," said Mrs. McRea; "rather than trouble Judge McRea to such an extent, I would give up the dinner and let us all go to bed hungry."

"We will be no better off tomorrow, as far as I see," said Estelle; "and we certainly cannot do without eating altogether, if we are in the hands of the Yankees."

"Charlie C., by the powers!" said Mary, looking up suddenly, as that young gentleman with his accustomed deliberate walk entered the kitchen, and without invitation seated himself on a chair. "How on earth did you find your way out here, at the very time we least want to see you? I never heard of such impudence in all my life."

"Then, pray tell me what I was to do?" said the lieutenant. "I rang the bell; I knocked at the door; I called aloud, without attracting the least attention; I seated myself in the parlor for five minutes, hoping to see somebody; but in vain. There was no alternative, since I could not find the mistresses, but to come and see the maids."

"You should not have done so," said Estelle, with real annoyance; for her dress and hands began to show sundry black marks, the usual results of pot-washing. "You may be sure we don't want anybody to see us now."

Sue blushed when she found herself observed, but went on mixing up the corn-bread, and tried to look unconcerned.

"If it was Major McCloud or Tom Dean," said Mary, who kneeling down, was blowing hard at two nearly exhausted chunks of wood with a few sparks of fire on the end, "I believe they would sympathize with us, instead of sitting idle, and grinning in that senseless way; but there is no use in expecting anything rational from you."

"Why, certainly, Charlie can help us," said Estelle, brightening up suddenly with the thought, "and no doubt will. Come along, sir, directly; bring this bucket to fill with water, and I'll show you the wood-pile, that you may saw us some sticks of wood."

"Upon my word, ladies," said the soldier, crossing his legs and looking foolish, "I—I think you had better let me step into the street and try to get you a servant; there are plenty of them strolling about that would no doubt for a trifle consent to perform so slight a service."

"Oh, but we've no money to pay them," said Mary; "not a cent; and besides, we know it will give you the greatest pleasure to perform so slight a service for us yourself."

"Instead of one bucket of water, lieutenant," said Mrs. McRea, "be so good as to bring us two."

"And also to fill this pitcher," said Sue, with remarkable *sang froid*, placing one inside the bucket.

Now Charlie C. was the last man who ought to have been selected as an assistant in such a matter, for it was proverbial of him that he could outsit everybody, and beat any man doing nothing that could be found in the whole southern confederacy. Not having the temerity to contend against four ladies who were disposed to play a practical joke on him, in return for a little amusement he had enjoyed at their expense, he went reluctantly to the cistern, piloted by Estelle.

"This seems to me," he said, "to be the stiffest of pump-handles, and verily," he continued, after pumping a short time, "I think the bottom has fallen out of the bucket, for the life of me, it will not be filled."

The cutting of the wood was what capped the climax; and as he threw the third armful beside Mary, who at last admitted it would be sufficient with which to finish the dinner, he reseated himself on the chair, and regardless of the presence of the ladies, indulged in a half-hour's cursing of the Yankees, which, strange to say (although Mrs. McRea was the strictest of church members, and never failed to thrash her little boys for swearing), drew from both herself and daughters more smiles than frowns of disapprobation.

As the dinner was arranged on the table, and the family, *en masse*, summoned to partake of it, they were enlivened by the addition of other guests. General Turner, Tom Dean, and others, dropped in; and many were the experiences that each had to relate.

General Turner spoke with warmth of the generous and gentlemanly behavior of General Grant. "In every way," he said, "the feelings of the Confederates have been spared. Not only did he refuse to take Pemberton's sword, but he has avoided everything like a ceremonial, or display of triumph, which could be distressing to the people. Some few outrages have occurred, and some of the citizens walking about the streets have been insulted; but it is the unavoidable consequence of the presence in any community of hostile troops, and I believe, when feasible, has been punished. From what I've seen and heard, I think it evident that those citizens who remain quiet will be unmolested, and their property protected."

"I don't know about that," said Mrs. McRea, "for the end

of our fence is already torn down and a sutler's tent erected on the spot."

"Yes," cried out Willie, "but the sutler is a clever fellow, and is going to pay rent, for he told me so. And when he heard we had nothing to eat but bread and meat, he cut off half a cheese and set it aside with two bottles of strawberries, to send up to you for dinner. And he says he is no Yankee, and that I must not call him so; but a poor man, trying to make an honest living."

"If he really has a desire to act uprightly," said Judge McRea, "he should certainly have consulted me, before appropriating any of my property to his own use."

"You were not on the hill at the time of the fight, this morning, general," said Captain Dean. "By George, you missed a treat."

"I did not even hear of it," said General Turner. "What do you mean?"

"That we, poor prisoners of war, had the satisfaction of seeing the Yanks pitch into each other," said the captain. "About an hour after the landing of the fleet, some twenty-five or thirty sailors, dressed as clean as pennies, came up into town to look around. We were very much amused at their disappointment, when once in the streets. They had expected, it seems, a much larger place and a great many more people. About the same time, some Feds from the line came walking along, and, overhearing the remarks of the sailors, curtly told them to shut up, for, as they had nothing to do with taking the town, they had better hold their tongues. This produced the rejoinder, that the mortar-boats had done everything, and that the surrender was made to Porter, and not to Grant. One struck another for expressing these sentiments, and in five minutes the row became general, with about equal numbers on either side. The men of my battery enjoyed it, I assure you. They gathered round, and excited the pugilists with words and cries, delighted at the sight of the bleeding noses and broken crowns. One man was killed, several wounded, and the mortality would undoubtedly have been great, but that a regiment of cavalry coming up made a charge, and the combatants were dispersed."

"Lord!" said one of the ladies, "I wish I could have seen the dead Yankee."

General Turner, at Judge McRea's request, told the terms of the capitulation.

The ladies blamed Pemberton severely, for surrendering on the Fourth of July.

"For," said Mrs. McRea, "in thus celebrating the birthday of the United States, he has deliberately pampered the pride of that already haughty people; and I cannot listen to a word in extenuation of such an act."

"Perhaps," said General Turner, willing to deprecate the fact, "he thought to make better terms on that day than another."

But nobody was willing to hear an excuse.

"He should have surrendered on the second or third," said Mrs. McRea; "or even held out at any risk till the fifth."

"In defence of that part of General Pemberton's conduct, nothing can be said. We are allowed to keep our side-arms," said Captain Dean; "for which reason I've buckled on my sword, which has for a long time been hanging against the wall."

"And how long are we to have you with us?" asked Estelle.

"We are to be paroled in regiments and companies," answered her cousin; "and then to march into Confederate lines, to stay at parole-camp till we are exchanged as prisoners of war. It will take some four or five days to finish paroling, probably more, at the end of which time we'll go into Dixie, and would to God it were tomorrow!"

"There will be very little delay in the business of exchange," said General Turner, "for the Federals owe us thirty thousand prisoners, including those lately taken in Pennsylvania by Lee; and you will soon hear from us again, fighting under the 'bonny blue flag.'"

"Has my uncle decided positively to keep his family within Federal lines?" asked Captain Dean of Mrs. McRea.

"There seems to be no alternative," she answered. "He has no means of supporting us, either in or out of the Federal lines; but, here we have a roof over our heads, and here we must remain, without the Yankees turn us out-of-doors, of which I am sorely afraid."

"I trust they will not do that," said Captain Dean, "as uncle is over conscript age; however, if they consider it a military necessity, it may be done, for I'm told General McPherson is already occupying the lower story of Doctor Balfour's house, and that the family have retreated upstairs."

"So soon!" said Mrs. McRea. "That indeed looks ominous for the citizens."

Judge McRea was much annoyed at the confusion at table, which was incident to the non-attendance of servants. The ladies, who were not prepared for the emergency, had, in their preparations for dinner, omitted many things.

"These peas are cooked without any salt, Mary," said her mother. "Go quick, and get some."

"Where does John keep the salt, mamma?" said Mary, getting up from the table very much bewildered.

"How should I know, my dear?" was the response. "You can do nothing but look."

"Sue, General Turner has no water; his dinner will choke him without it," said the lady, presiding again. "Bring the pitcher from the sideboard. And here is Lieutenant C., eating without a fork; step into the pantry, Elizabeth, and get one."

"Good gracious!" said Judge McRea, much excited, "I would rather fast forever than eat in such confusion. Sit down, girls, immediately, and let us eat the dinner just as it is."

"Oh, mercy!" said Mrs. Woodville, who had cut bacon into small pieces for all the little children, and was nearly exhausted. "How shall I ever get along without black Harriet? I do wish the Yankees would send her back."

"Ladies," said Major McCloud, "you think your domestic troubles are overpowering, but they are not near as bad as those of poor Mrs. Lea. I called there, and learned that her servants had not only gone as soon as the gunboats touched the wharf, but that one of them had left two small children (one an infant), and that they were continually crying, and she at a loss what to do for them."

"I think," said Lieutenant C., "I should be strongly tempted to cut their throats were I in her place."

"Mrs. Lea," said Major M., acted with her usual originality in the matter. She saw a handsomely-dressed, fine-looking Federal officer riding past, as she stood on the gallery, and, calling to him, told exactly the fix she was in."

"Is it possible?" exclaimed the ladies. "Was she not afraid to do so?"

"It seems not," said the major; "and that she had no reason to be, for he dismounted, and coming into the house,

asked if he could be of any service, and expressed a desire to be so. She requested him, either to oblige the mother to return, or to take the children away, which he promised to do, and then conversed in most conciliatory style, baffling Mrs. Lea's thrusts with impenetrable good humor, and hearing himself called a Yankee and a negro thief, without any apparent feeling but amusement."

"I wish I had been there," said Mary. "I think I would have made him insinuate a little gall into the conversation."

"Well, I must tell you the end," said Major M. "Mrs. Lea told him, when they parted, that she would certainly expect the United-States Government to feed the little imps, as she would not pretend to do it; and he promised to see the commissary on the subject without delay. When I called in, I found her divided between her desire to be mad with a Yankee, and her amusement at having gotten herself into a scrape; for, soon after the officer went away, an orderly rode up to the door, laden with choice fruits, and confectionery, and a few new publications, and handed her a note, which said, 'That, being a Yankee and an abolitionist, as she herself had charged, he thought little negroes ought to be fed on delicacies alone; and that, as the party to which he belonged advocated their immediate education, he hoped, also, the literature would be used for that purpose, and that, as soon as possible, he would send a bouquet.'"

As everybody else laughed, even General Turner could not refuse to smile. It was almost dark when our friends rose from dinner, and entered the parlor. Mrs. M. sent her daughters in all directions to look for lamps, but nothing could be found but a few tallow candles, which were placed in the chandeliers. Sue and Estelle, with Captain Dean, engaged the small fry in a romp, and Elizabeth Woodville walked out on the gallery and stood alone, looking on the strange sight of boats upon the river, lighting it up with a brilliancy it had never reflected before. In the few hours which had passed since the occupation of the town many changes had occurred in the streets. Sutlers had erected tents on every corner, and made a brilliant display of their tempting wares, exposing articles, which had not been seen nor tasted by the Confederates for many months. The busy hum of the soldiers' talking was interrupted by their heavy tread along the streets and on the pavement, and an occasional shout (from some

jolly worshipper of Bacchus) was echoed from square to square. Mrs. Woodville was not surprised when General Turner joined her. It was necessary for her to speak again to him, and he knew it.

"You have no doubt suffered today," he said, "in common with your mother and sisters."

"Yes," said Elizabeth, "it has been a sad sight to see my native town delivered into the hands of a hostile army; and yet through it all, I have been sustained, inspired, almost joyful, because of the letter you brought me."

"Did I tell you," said General Turner, "that it was necessary for me to have it again?"

"No; but I knew it was, and have it about me to return to you."

"I need scarcely repeat it to you, madam," said General Turner, "that I am truly happy to have obliged you in this matter. Is there anything that I can do?"

"Nothing," she answered, "but to forward the letter to its destination; and since you must have thought my conduct strange, to listen to a few words of explanation. The handwriting I so immediately recognized at head-quarters was that of a person with whom I came daily in contact, when I was very young. That circumstances made it wrong for us to remain together we both realized, and I was the one who decided that it was best to part. There was no opposition or repining on his side, but he said, 'Had you been more decided, we might have conquered fate. I leave you (most probably forever), but should circumstances ever change with you (for with me they cannot change), you have but to say, Come, and though mountains and oceans divide us, I shall be again at your side.' For years, I never trusted myself to breathe his name, and lately, I have supposed him dead. The letter I have had in my possession not only shows to the contrary, but that he is nearer by many miles than I could have believed it possible. Circumstances have changed with me, and my heart already says, Come. That I shall see him again is my firm belief. Need I say more to convince you that I am happy?"

"Madam," said General T., "may heaven grant you the realization of your fondest hopes." And as he took the letter from her hand, he pressed it and withdrew.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

**W**HEN Alexander, after getting through with camp business the evening after the surrender, rode to — Street, he saw a pair of bright eyes watching for him from an upstairs window; and the sound of light footsteps descending soon placed a fairy form within his arms.

"I have waited for you," said Caroline, "so very, very long. I thought you would have been here before dinner."

"I hoped myself to be with you earlier; but I have had a great deal to do, and am very tired," replied her lover; "at least, I thought myself a moment ago both tired and sad, but now I look on you, all is forgotten but —"

"But what?"

"But that you are beautiful, and that I love you."

"Heaven grant," she answered, "that you may never forget to love me. But sit down, and tell me all that has passed during the day. I've staid at home close, and have in consequence heard nothing."

"You know, no doubt, that I am a paroled prisoner?"

"Yes, uncle told me as much, and I felt really relieved, for I have of late been haunted with visions of a northern prison; and to think of such a fate for you would almost break my heart."

"Caroline, have I done right in making you plight your faith to a soldier?"

"How can you ask it? Have I looked less happy since I promised to be your own?"

"I have never seen your brow wearing a cloud; but sometimes, and today more than ever, I've thought of the long and painful separations that must necessarily occur between us after you become my wife; for a soldier, you know, can never have a home; and I have asked myself, will you not regret it?"

"Then let me answer, no. I shall never regret having enjoyed or reciprocated your love."

"But tell me, my love, in the long tedious hours when I am gone, how will my Caroline occupy her time? for in our home

on the sea-island in the Gulf, though the natural beauties are pleasing to the eye, there is nothing like society; and so young a woman as yourself may suffer from weariness, and almost from fear. What will you write me at such times? Will it always be, 'I love you;' or will I sometimes have to read, 'Ah, Pierre! why did you bring me here?'"

"I do not imagine," said Caroline, "that I could easily weary with those scenes which were the haunts of your childhood; for the shade of the trees, the songs of the birds, and even the waves of the sea, would speak sweet music in awaking thought of you, even while absent; but for the present, I shall not be able to test my constancy so far. I cannot go to the sea-island."

"But that is my home. Where else shall I take my wife?"

"Listen to me. My uncle forbids our marriage for the present, and he is right. Do not frown, for he will be glad to bless our union in more propitious times; but while the war continues, and you owe your first duty to your country, he will not trust me out of his own keeping; and I have made a pledge for you that such a thing will not be thought of or asked. Let us hope that the time will be short when you can with honor demand what I shall with so much pleasure grant; and in the meantime, we must comfort ourselves with loving."

"And where will you reside during our separation?"

"I shall follow my aunt wherever she goes, but it will most probably be within Federal lines."

"Caroline, this is a sad mandate you have issued. My heart must yearn for you whenever we are not together; but I should be far better satisfied, at such times, that you should be called by my name, and live within the precincts of my own home."

"The day will no doubt come," she said, "when your wishes will be my law; but till then, I owe obedience to one who protected my childhood; and he has decided differently."

"Does he not ask too much?"

"I think not. He has talked to me fully, and I think with him that it is best."

"Caroline, were I going with a victorious army, instead of leaving you a poor paroled prisoner, are you certain that your decision would be the same?"

"Already a doubt? O Alexander! this is unworthy of you."

"Then it shall be the last. I will urge you no farther."

Speak to your uncle for me, and say I will abide his wishes and redeem your pledge."

"And you have been your own maid?" said Alexander, later in the evening, when he had laughed with Caroline over the disappearance of the servants in her uncle's employ, as they had done elsewhere. "That is indeed encouraging to a lover."

"Yes," she said, "and my own cook; and the merits of my coffee you shall test. I have a hot cup all ready, because I knew you would be tired and hungry this evening."

Now Alexander was a judge of coffee; for, being a creole, and having that beverage in perfection in St. Mary's parish, he had even learned, in his boyhood, while camping out with Gonsalve, to manufacture it himself. The cup that Caroline handed was neither clear nor strong; but so entirely was he bewitched by the power of the lady's charms, that he thought he had never tasted anything so fine in his whole life; and poured many praises of it into her willing ear.

"Then you can even forgive this?" said Caroline, blushing, as she wiped from her finger an atom of soot.

"Anything, everything," he answered, as, seizing her hand, he pressed a kiss upon the finger from which he had purloined the hair ring.

There are few things more interesting to a man than to watch the household motions of, or to have his wants ministered to by, the woman he loves. Every little incident speaks so eloquently of the time when occupations and ambitions assimilate, and the separate beings of individuals are merged into one by the almighty power of love. Alexander had promised Caroline to give up the idea of an immediate union; but, before an hour had passed, he regretted it. If her brilliancy charmed him in society, how much more did her playful tenderness throw dreamy revery with narcotic power through all his senses, when they were alone. Why not take with him, he thought, the simple presence of what conveyed so much bliss? Why should he give her up? How small seemed the hardships she would endure as a soldier's wife. How groveling the considerations of food and raiment, compared with the ecstasy of a linked fate. How inviting looked the vista of life, contemplated from this point of view; the incense of youth and hope rising in rosy vapor, to light up the landscape. How high rose hope upon hope, nearing the dome of heaven itself; its mighty accumulations clinging together with steady

clutch, growing stronger at the summit, though built upon the slight foundation of a woman's smile. "Caroline, my love," he said, "go with me. What signifies the vicissitudes of a stormy fate? will there not be shelter for you in my heart?"

There was little in the words, but much in the look that accompanied them. What woman ever lived that could resist persuasion when she truly loved? Caroline believed herself strong. Had she thought differently, she would never have trusted herself to discussion with her lover, but have asked her uncle to say to him what she could not. She had thought of every argument he would use, had a pleasurable expectation of some persuasive words, but some things she had forgotten. Against the tender look that beamed from the noble eye, the softened tones of the voice so fitted to command, she had buckled on no armor, and found herself defenceless. The struggle was short, and, as Alexander read the upturned face, he saw in it sudden and helpless relenting. But with the enjoyment of his triumph, came also compunction to the brave man, that with a weaker nature he had used his power so unscrupulously. In the mute gesture of submission with which his words were answered, his high-souled nature recognized a reproach; and sudden as had been the offence, came also the regret for offending. Should I not rather sustain than unnerve her in this resolution, dictated by reason and authority, whispered his heart. Is it manly thus to contend against the dictates of her uncle's judgment, cooler than my own? Is not the love selfish which cannot make sacrifices for its idol? If the impulse had been ungenerous, the sober second thought was kind; and the lover spoke not less tenderly when he had firmly resolved to give up his own will. "Look up, and look more brightly, my love," he said, "for I will urge you no farther. Since you have decided, so let it be; and when I leave these lines for parole-camp (though, God knows, my heart is here), I will do so alone."

"And when must that be?" said Caroline, in saddened tones.

"Soon. Even within a few days," he answered. "But let us not talk of it now. Let us revel in the short period of happiness that remains to us; and, in thinking of the future, ignore the dark gulf of our separation, and look only on the brightness of the spreading shore that lies with its tempting beauty beyond."



## CHAPTER XXV.

**I**T was just one week from the day the town of Vicksburg was surrendered to General Grant, that the last of the Confederates were to pass through the lines, on their way to parole-camp, the situation for which had been selected near Enterprise, Miss., near the line of the Southern Railroad. The terms of the capitulation had been considered favorable at the time they were made, but the contrary, in a short time, proved to be the case. Had General Grant committed the whole garrison to the fleet, to be transported to northern prisons, and in due time to be exchanged, the Confederacy would have lost far less than was done by General Pemberton's arrangement; for the troops would have been kept together without that demoralization, which is almost the inevitable consequence of a promiscuous granting of furloughs, to be spent at home. The terms were apparently liberal, and General Grant is said to have used every effort to have them executed to the letter; but so impossible did the thing appear to be, that, between desertions, stragglings, and furloughs, many thousand of those who had occupied the trenches never reached parole-camp at all. A spirit of mutiny gained considerable ground, not in all cases the effects of disaffection, but in an overpowering desire in the men to go (at least for a season) back to their homes.

This was particularly the case among the creole regiments, and the feeling was natural. Where the shores of fair Louisiana lay spread out to view, it must indeed have required a struggle to turn their faces to the east, when every day's march separated them farther from their firesides by many miles, and the dull monotony of camp-life was offered in exchange for the cheerful faces of friends. The officers, besides that pride of honor which comes from education and refinement, had each his private reputation to sustain, and were enabled to stand the test; but the privates, refusing to be paroled, deserted in large numbers, and in many cases swam across the river in the dead hours of the night, undertaking with willing hearts a weary journey on foot of many hundred miles. The week that came to a close, at the time alluded to, had been spent in constant excitement in Vicksburg.

The Federals, restrained by orders, at first came rushing into town, filling the streets and crowding the sidewalks. The shining blue jostled against the faded gray uniform; the insane Bacchant whooped from his galloping horse, and the inebriate Confederate sometimes obstructed the doorstep. The long drought had parched the earth, and the rising dust pervaded every house, while the atmosphere without was filled with it as a cloud, and seemed to make painful the very effort of breathing. Conspicuous in the streets were the lately emancipated negroes. Their inexpressive faces had quickly dismissed the look of joy and astonishment produced by their new condition, and they wandered about in listless enjoyment of that freedom which had, in many cases, taken them from homes and deprived them of friends.

If life in the street was such as to tax the health and nerves, life in doors was still more intolerable. The females, who were taking their first lessons in manual labor, turned with disgust from the newly-imposed task, which their habits and education, together with the extreme heat of the climate, made depressing to their spirits and injurious to their health. Yet it was probably fortunate that this necessity existed, for, disagreeable as it was, it diverted their minds to some extent from the painful surroundings, and required an effort, which, in the end, resulted for their good. The condition of most families, suddenly deprived of servants, and with almost exhausted larders, was pitiable. No small inconvenience was felt for want of water, for almost every cistern in the city was dry. The only way to supply this urgent need was from the river, but the water of the Mississippi is, at this extremely warm season of the year, almost nauseating; and, when obtained after much difficulty and at great expense, was in no way improved by its transmission into whiskey-barrels, from which emanated a very disagreeable smell. To such an extent did this necessity prevail, that in many families a bath became one of the luxuries of life, and at certain hours of the day, when the river was heated by the piercing rays of the sun, mothers heard their young children crying with thirst.

In the unsettled state of things, a female could not appear in the streets alone, and the Confederate officers who remained would occasionally take their lady friends out for an evening walk, who would otherwise have been deprived of any exercise in the open air.

To entertain the Confederates, and occasionally with good cheer, became the greatest happiness of the women of Vicksburg. The brave fellows looked comely in their eyes, from the consciousness, that they would soon be lost to view, and return to the hard fare of parole-camp.

On the third day after the occupation, orders were issued to supply the citizens with rations, in proportion to the size of their families. These rations consisted of bacon, flour, and coffee, and were of themselves delicacies in the eyes of people who had fasted, as it were, so long. But a farther sacrifice could be offered to Epicurus by a visit to the sutlers' tents; and in order to furnish their military friends with cheese, mackerel, tea, and confectionery, before the opportunity was lost, many a fair lady laid down a long (and sometimes a last) hoarded gold-piece, and did not always withhold the jewels that dangled from her wrists and ears. What might, under other circumstances, have seemed a degradation, became now a matter of pride, and matrons and maids vied with each other in the culinary department, serving with their own hands those who had so lately faced death in defence of their country.

During this week, Caroline Courtney remained so closely at home, that she did not even see the McReas. That the time did not hang heavily upon her hands will readily be believed.

Among the persons mentioned in this story, the reader will no doubt remember Mrs. Price. Simultaneously with the cessation of the bombardment, she had vacated her cave, and returned home. Being very anxious to preserve her property from trespass, she went, at an early day, to the Federal General McPherson, to ask protection papers for her house and lot, and more particularly, for a cistern of clear water, which, in spite of the great demand, she (only of all the citizens) had been able to preserve. The day afterwards, some Federal soldiers, five in number, came with buckets, asking in rude tones for the cistern, that they might get them filled. The lady's expression was very much that of the beadle, when Oliver Twist asked for more. "Ask for water by the bucketful?" she exclaimed, in astonishment. "I don't know whether I'd even give you a glass."

"Then, by G—d, we'll take it," was the rejoinder, and they rushed round *en masse* for the gate.

But Mrs. P. was before them. Looking about in vain for

the poker, she seized what afterwards proved to be a turkey-wing; and, taking a short cut down the back-steps, reached the cistern first, and, stepping upon the top, assumed an attitude of defiance. The Yanks formed in line, and prepared to charge. Mrs. Price raised the turkey-wing with threatening gestures on high, standing her ground entirely undaunted, against five to one. That she would have gained the victory there is little doubt, but the issue never arrived; for a Federal officer, who at that moment was passing in the street, seeing the excitement, rode up to the fence, and with only a word, caused a general scattering of the squad, which was about to attack. This exploit of Mrs. Price was a source of much boasting among her citizens, and will no doubt be handed down, for some generations in her family, as an evidence of the prowess of an illustrious ancestress.

There was some bustle in Judge McRea's kitchen, the morning before the one appointed for the last of the Confederates to pass out of the lines.

The fair Sue, who had profited by a week's experience in making hoe-cakes, expected to serve up at dinner one of the best of that kind; and Estelle, through the kind offices of a neighboring sutler, had procured from the commissary a piece of beef with actually a streak of fat on it. They had issued some invitations to dinner, with due formality, and expected to see, for the last time, some dozen or more of their acquaintances, who formed part of the captured garrison. Mary had been excused from the kitchen, because she had a still more difficult duty to perform, that of clear-starching a muslin, so as to leave a respectable impression on those who were coming to take a last look.

In spite of the scarcity of time and money, these ladies had found both funds and leisure sufficient to purchase and digest several numbers of "Frank Leslie" and "Bon Ton," and were much shocked to find their every article of wearing apparel at least three years behind the fashion. The absence of hoops, which had been sufficiently general not to attract attention, after a sight of the immense skirts in the fashion-plates, produced now a painful feeling of awkwardness. This difficulty was easily surmounted, as a female of any ingenuity can counterfeit a hoop; but the mystery of rats remained, in spite of every effort, impenetrable; and our lady friends, after being thoroughly posted as to the fact, that

such was the style, were compelled, after much twisting and turning of the hair, to confine themselves to plain bandeaux. What success the noble Mary met with in clear-starching her white muslin, our authority does not state; but she is said to have looked somewhat crestfallen during the evening, when it was taken for a yellow satin.

Early in the afternoon, and before the toilets were made for dinner, a family council was called by Mrs. Woodville to read and pronounce upon a note she had just received from General Turner.

It was to the effect, that, with her permission, he would call during the evening, and introduce to herself, parents, and sisters, two gentlemen, — one a Federal officer, who had been a classmate of his own at West Point, and whose acquaintance it might be both pleasant and useful for the family to have.

"What shall be my reply, sir?" said Mrs. Woodville, turning to her father.

"That we will not be at home," said Mary decidedly, before her father could speak, "either this evening, or any other time, to a Federal officer."

"Tell General Turner to bring him," said Sue, showing fight; "I only want to give him one look."

"If I thought we could find leisure to discuss the Bible on slavery, or the constitutionality of emancipation," said Mrs. McRea, "I suppose it would be better for him to come; for I think I could say some things that would make him feel heartily ashamed of himself and of his government."

"But it would not do," said Elizabeth, "if we receive him as a guest, to mention either of those subjects."

"I am by no means certain of that," replied her mother; "for if his eyes were once opened to the truth, he might regret having borne arms against the South, and by resigning his commission, his example might do much good to the Confederate cause. Indeed, it has occurred to me before, that many of these men who have gone into this thing lightly might be brought to their senses by some plain sober talk."

"I should rather not try the experiment, if I were you, mamma," said Estelle. "The Federal officers have certainly good opportunities of informing themselves as they require; and, situated as we are, to introduce disagreeable subjects or discuss them, might result in things we should not at all like."

"I do not think it right," said Mrs. McRea, "to let personal

considerations prevent me from trying to do them good." And as she spoke, her manner and feelings were so earnest, she could not understand why everybody else laughed.

"Ma talks," said Sue, "as if all the Federal army were Indians, and she a missionary."

"But we have come to no decision," said Estelle, "in spite of our talking."

"And must not," said Elizabeth, "till we hear what papa has to say."

Judge McRea now removed his finger from the page, and laid down his book. "I have every desire to express myself," he said, "if I can command silence long enough to do so. It is very well that this matter of receiving Federal officers as guests has been brought to our minds by General Turner's note, for, sooner or later, the discussion of it will, no doubt, be necessary. That we have little in common with them, you all know, and, therefore, association is not likely to be pleasant on either side. According to the present regulations, when a box of blacking cannot be bought from a sutler, or a pound of bacon drawn from the commissary, without a written permit from head-quarters, there is no alternative left but to come into almost daily contact with them, or to starve. As long as we remain within Federal lines, we occupy our houses by their permission, and get our food from their bounty; and it does not become recipients of constant favors to display any amount of spirit, whether their position be their fault or their misfortune."

"You will readily understand, my daughters, that the less you seek acquaintances with strangers (and more particularly with the officers of a hostile army), the more prudent your conduct will be. But I question if it is possible to avoid association entirely; and what I wish to say to you is this: — Where such necessity occurs, be careful not to discuss any subjects which will be likely to lead to disagreeable or exciting disputes. I will have no spitting nor spewing, no rudeness nor frowns. It is easy even for a clown to be polite to a friend, but the instincts of good breeding and refinement alone can dictate courteous manners to an enemy. Therefore, Elizabeth, say to General Turner, that we will receive the gentlemen he proposes to bring; and see that, on this occasion, and on every other, my children, that, in your reception of a Federal officer, you act according to the simple dictates of politeness."

This advice from their father proved of benefit to this family, and much of the ill-treatment which women, young and old, received from Federal officers in neighboring cities, was spared them.

It was after dinner, that General Turner entered the parlor to make his visit. His companions were introduced as Major Saunders and Mr. Hill.

Both had the manners and appearance of gentlemen; and were representatives each of a class found in, or connected with, the Federal army. Major Saunders was an officer in the regular army. Mr. Hill was a capitalist, and supposed to be speculating in cotton. It is strange with what perfect indifference we often make the first acquaintance of those, who, in after-years, influence or control our fate.

As Mary McRea bowed stiffly in answer to her father's introduction, she noticed Mr. Hill just sufficiently to know that he was rather under medium height—that he had light hair and whiskers—and nothing more. Mr. Hill, in his turn, thought her a fine-looking girl, with a very badly-washed dress on; but, had he been put upon the witness-stand, could have testified no farther. She thought Major Saunders much the best-looking of the two; and he was far more attracted by the beauty of her younger sister.

Among the whole company, not one person was unrestrained. Major Saunders, having heard Judge McRea spoken of as an unconditional old Reb, strove hard to keep the conversation on indifferent subjects, lest he hear some fire-eating talk; and to Judge McRea and his family, nothing was lacking to make either or both of the visitors a Guy Fawkes, except a dark-lantern. It is the natural instinct of the human heart to behold with abhorrence the sod of country and home pressed by the foot of an invader. Whether this feeling is deeper when excited by a foreign war than a civil war, is doubtful; for the first sight of the northern barbarians, as they neared the Roman capital, could not have inspired more horror in the polished orators of the forum, than did this army of General Grant to people who spoke the same language, had been governed by the same laws, were in many cases connected by close ties of blood, and had been for so long covered by the same flag. The German mercenaries, whose brutal ferocity had terrified the planters of Warren County more than Porter's mortar-boats had done the town, were regarded with no more

hate than the *ci-devant* slaveholders from Maryland and Kentucky, who had lived always under a southern sun, and regarded the negro as little better than a beast of burden, when once they donned the blue uniform, or placed themselves as soldiers, under the stars and stripes.

Now Mr. Hill, in times of peace, had been a daily visitor in the house of Mrs. McRea's uncle in New York, and had graduated at Princeton College with her oldest son. Major Saunders and General Turner had wandered barefooted together about the Cumberland Mountains, been flogged at the same time for robbing hen-roosts, and afterwards had been chums at West Point. These reminiscences were talked over one by one, but with no abandon; for so completely did present scenes engross their thoughts, that it was impossible to ignore them for one evening, and each saw in the other an enemy. Nevertheless, the intentions of the visitors were kind. They were both anxious to be of assistance to persons thrown suddenly into a cruelly dependent position, by the force of circumstances, and unfit for the situation by nature, habit, and education.

Unfortunately for the peace and unity of the party, the fact of Mr. W. and his family being turned out of doors the day before came under discussion. The circumstances of the ejection were these:—The night of the surrender, a Confederate officer, who had been staying at Mr. W.'s house as his guest, soon after the Federal troops entered the town, met a Captain Bland, whom he had known before either of them became warriors or drew the sword from the scabbard. The exchange of compliments over a julep created quite a friendly feeling between them, and on parting, the Reb gave the Federal officer an invitation to spend the evening with him at Mr. W.'s house; which was accepted. On that evening, there was, as usual, a gathering in the parlor when he was announced; and his appearance created general surprise, the more so from the fact that he did not come unattended, but brought with him friends to the number of four or five, handsomely dressed, decorated with side-arms, and who had apparently been "keeping their spirits up by pouring them down." Mrs. W. and her daughter, who were talking with some Confederates, were at a loss to account for the visit, and though polite, were by no means warm in their reception of these gentlemen. The Federals, who affected to ignore the Confederates, were anxious

to improve their acquaintance with the ladies, and, in proportion as their approaches were repelled, became importunate.

This was by no means agreeable to the Confederates, who, in their excitement and wounded pride, considered this a fair sample of Yankee manners, and of what their countrywomen would have to endure daily and hourly from the Federal troops. One word brought on another between the rival soldiers. Mrs. W. and her daughter were silent, but other ladies present were less discreet, particularly one (also a visitor) who made a display of a small Confederate flag, apostrophizing it in exaggerated language, and endeavoring to wave it over the heads of the company.

Captain Bland, meanwhile, had said less than the others. That his companions were committing a breach of hospitality by their boisterous behavior and sneering remarks, must now have occurred to him, for to prevent an open rupture, he rose and proposed to retire. In saying good-evening, he addressed himself particularly to one of the Confederate officers. "I am sorry for this excitement," he said. "Bear me witness that it is not my doings; and, since I see that you, too, have taken no part, I conclude it meets also with your disapprobation. I deem it (in spite of what has occurred) not impossible for officers of the two armies to associate on friendly terms, and hope sincerely that you and I may meet again."

The officer, who had remained silent, was not on that account less indignant. Thus addressed, he responded, and with insult. "I've said nothing," he answered, "because I've been too busy cursing. Damn the day that brought the southern people to such degradation! Damn the door that opens to admit a cursed Yankee into the house of a gentleman. You hope that we shall meet again! So do I; and God grant that it may be in hell!"

The presence of females alone prevented a single combat, but by this means it was prevented; and the Federal officers left the house, as much disgusted by the rudeness they had met with, as the Confederates were at their intrusion.

That the family of Mr. W. were unwilling witnesses of the scene, will be observed; and their distress and amazement can be imagined, when orders came next day from the post-commander for the immediate vacation of their home. Only two hours were granted them to make preparations for the move, and they were forbidden to take a single article of household

or kitchen furniture. In their excitement, they thought to resist the order, but were dissuaded from doing so. The whole family (twelve or fourteen in number) did not have time to collect their wearing apparel, and Mrs. W., returning later in the evening to get some clothing for her younger children, found every door locked, and was rudely ordered off the gallery by a guard. The reduced condition of their friends, who had lost their servants, and exhausted the contents of their store-rooms, made Mr. W. hesitate to carry so large a family to be entertained by any one of them; and as it was late in the evening when the ejection took place, few of the citizens learned the fact till next day, and therefore could not offer assistance. In this distressed condition, himself, wife, and children, after vacating one of the handsomest residences in Mississippi, spent the whole night under a shed near the landing, with only such food as they could buy already cooked. It would be useless to attempt to describe the indignation and terror that was felt through the town, when the thing was generally known. Many of the Federal officers themselves disapproved of it, and felt and expressed great sympathy for the unfortunate family, more particularly as a beautiful little boy, just recovering from measles, took cold, and several weeks afterwards died in consequence.

Now Major Saunders was not a man to justify such tyranny on the one hand, or exult in such misfortune on the other; but in the conversation that occurred this evening, the ladies waxed very warm in discussion, and, in order to maintain the dignity of his government, and show his attachment to his uniform, he thought it best to be proportionately cool. To the insinuations that were first thrown out, he kept silence; but later, when the words "tyranny," "corruption," and "robbery," were spoken pretty liberally, he made use of the expressions "rebellion," "infringement of the laws," and "retributive justice," in return. General Turner was very uncomfortable, and felt himself ill-used. He had hoped, by introducing the parties, to provide the McReas with friends that might protect them in time of need, and to impress Major Saunders and Mr. Hill with the dignity of southern misfortune. Both ends were about to be defeated by a foolish wrangle, as dangerous on one side, as it was undignified on the other, and he regretted having undertaken the affair. Mr. Hill, meanwhile, maintained a cautious silence,

and was much relieved when the conversation was brought suddenly to a close by a message to General Turner, asking his immediate attendance elsewhere.

"I suppose I must say good-by in sober earnest," said the general, rising, "for we are to leave town tomorrow at sunrise, long before the young ladies will have left their beds."

"On the contrary," said Mrs. McRea; "we will be up, and will certainly see you again. Tom Dean says the march will commence from the corner of Locust and Grove Streets, and a good many of us poor benighted creatures who are to be left behind will come to the rendezvous to say farewell."

"In that case," he answered, "I shall only say *au revoir*."

At parting, Judge McRea politely asked his visitors to call again; and no sooner did the door close upon them than he turned to his daughters, to ask if they thought they had carried out his wishes in selecting their subjects of conversation during the evening.

Everybody owned she had said and done wrong, and no one knew how the thing commenced, or how she had been drawn into the discussion.

"Then," he said, "let it convince you how impossible it is to maintain anything like moderation in talking even of facts with persons whose prejudices in regard to them are the very antipodes of your own."

## CHAPTER XXVI.

THE sun itself seems obscured this morning," said Estelle, as she looked towards the east from her bedroom window.

"It would not be wonderful to me," said Mary, "if it refused to rise at all on such a sorry sight as people driven from their own territory, and forced to leave their homes."

"We have but quarter of an hour left us," said Mrs. Woodville, "and have to go two squares out of the way for Caroline Courteny."

"No," said Sue; "she sent a message to ma, last night, saying she would come with her uncle, and meet us on Grove Street at the appointed hour."

"At all events," said Elizabeth, "we must go, for ma is calling from below. I hear her."

"This thing of rising early is not half as trying as I thought it would be," said Estelle, as they went downstairs. "We have only commenced it since a week, and already it has become a confirmed habit."

"Not with me!" exclaimed Sue. "I sometimes think it will be the death of me. If I hate the Yankees one time more than another, it is when I have to make that horrid hoe-cake early in the morning."

"But there is something pleasant connected with it, you must admit," said Estelle; "the air is so fresh and pure, and the dew really refreshing."

"How foolish you are," said Mary, "to talk of dew, when you know, if the atmosphere had ever so much of the ingredients to make it, there is not a blade of grass in sight for it to settle upon."

"Yes, there is," said Estelle; "a little bit in the back-yard. Besides, I don't intend to say that this town is pleasant in the morning, now, or ever can be again, under any circumstances; but if we were in the country, and could make up our minds to get up, indeed I think we might enjoy it."

"Our friends in the country," said Mrs. McRea, "have fared far worse than ourselves. Do you know, there is not a



fence left between here and Jackson, and that almost all the houses have been burned?"

"Yes," said Mary; "and that every cow and chicken is killed, and every peach-tree cut down. What desolation these fiends in human shape have brought to our hearth-stones!"

"It would be dangerous," said Estelle, as they passed through the door into the street, "for Mary to meet a Yankee, in her present state of mind; for, by the powers! I think she would throttle him."

"I feel very like it," was the answer. "They look so sleek and well-fed, so perfectly satisfied with themselves and their doings. I bet there is not one of them who has an idea how our hearts are aching this morning, or what hardships the poor Confederate troops are to endure in parole-camp. Mrs. W.'s house is already occupied by Federal officers and their wives; and who knows but our own may strike the fancy of some titled monsieur wearing a blue coat, and request be sent to pa to vacate as precipitately."

"Papa thinks," said Estelle, "that will depend a great deal on ourselves. He says he intends to abide strictly by the laws, as long as he stays in Federal lines, and hopes to escape attention or persecution, and he believes it possible to do so."

"I doubt it," said Mrs. McRea. "They know our sons are in the army, and can, no doubt, seize on that or some other pretext for turning us out-of-doors, if they wish to do so; and I believe them devoid of humanity even to individuals."

"Then you are wrong, mamma," said Sue; "for General Turner told me last night, while the rest of you were talking, that the greatest sympathy was felt by Federal officers for Mrs. Major Read. He said repeated inquiries had been made of him about her; and when it was ascertained that she was in reduced circumstances, a subscription to quite a liberal amount was raised, and disposed of for her benefit. She left town yesterday, provided with a small cart and two horses; and not only was the cart filled with necessaries, but many delicacies were added. General Turner told me that Major Saunders and Mr. Hill both contributed liberally, and said they had never in their lives felt more pleasure in giving."

"Now, Mary, you must admit that was kind," said Estelle.

"Then, if I must admit it, I wish you had not told me of it this morning; for I want to keep my ears shut to anything good of the Yankees, and as to my heart, that will never relent."

"How many of our friends will we see this morning, to say good-by to?" asked Mrs. Woodville.

"Nearly all that we know well," answered Mrs. McRea. "The whole of the engineer corps has passed out, but we have not many acquaintances among them. But walk on quickly, for I see we are late. Look! what a crowd is assembled on the hill; and there comes Judge Wilkerson and Caroline. I'm afraid we'll be the very last to get there."

"One can never be last, where Fanny Lea is expected," said Estelle. "You might almost as well try to be before Mrs. Price. But let us hasten, it is not pleasant to be even next to the last, on such an occasion as this."

At the corner of Locust and Grove Streets was the end of a terraced lot; and this was the point agreed upon by the citizens to look their last on the garrison, as they passed out on their way to parole-camps. When the McReas reached this spot, most of their acquaintances were already there.

A few hours later, the dust in the streets would have made the walk intolerable; but at this time of day, when the sun had scarcely risen, the passing of wagons, carriages, and equestrians had not yet commenced, and the air, though warm and sultry, seemed fresh in comparison with the scorching heat which had to be endured as noon approached. The crowd assembled were conversing in audible though subdued tones. Many persons were seeing each other for the first time since the surrender; for some of the civilians, who had been taken prisoners, both male and female, had been so alarmed and distressed at finding themselves so situated, that they had never once left their own doors. Mrs. Price was one of these; and when she found it necessary to take off her Shaker bonnet for a few moments, a change was remarked in her appearance by her friends, for she had cut off her hair to within an inch of her head. Her daughter had expostulated, when she first proposed to send for the barber, but Mrs. P. was firm. "Anna," said she, "don't attempt to interrupt me when I know I'm right, and the state of my feelings is such I must cut off my hair."

As soon as Sue McRea saw the style of Mrs. Price's *coiffure*, she was seized with a violent panic, for she knew the extent of that lady's influence in domestic matters at home; and it occurred to her, that every female might be expected to mourn the loss of the town by following the fashion, and, though firm

as a politician, she was by no means enthusiastic enough to lay a long, glossy suit of black hair on the altar of sacrifice.

Fanny Lea came by-and-by, her face flushed and steps quickened, for she said, as she was helped up on to top-terrace, that the Confederates could be seen at the bottom of Grove Street, and were just turning into Cherry. "How terribly warm it is!" said she to Mary McRea.

"Is it?" was the answer. "I don't feel it; I think there are cold chills running over me."

"To think of not seeing our friends any more for so long a time," said Estelle; "how sad to us all, but especially to Caroline Courteny!"

"I think," said Mary, "had I been her, I should have gone with my sweetheart, just as Eva B. has done."

"But her uncle was opposed to it," whispered Sue; "that was the reason they had to give it up."

"If I were Captain Alexander, I would hate Judge W.," said Mary. "I don't think he had any right to interfere in the matter. Do you, Mrs. Price?"

"Indeed I do," answered that lady, "and they will both, no doubt, thank him for it some day."

"Poor Caroline," said Elizabeth: "how closely she is veiled!"

"Hand her my fan," said Mrs. McRea. "I see she has forgotten her own."

"Yes," said Mary, again. "Were I in her place, I should have gone out. I would like to see the power that would keep me within these lines, if I had a lover beyond."

"Then," said Mrs. Price, "it is not likely that you would be happy with your lover, either in or out of the lines."

"I don't see how you can argue that," said Mary, "for the Bible teaches that people shall live only for each other."

"Yes," answered Mrs. Price, "after they became each other's — not before."

"But do they not become each other's as soon as they fall in love?"

"The tie exists certainly, but the obligation not at all," was the reply. "The love that cannot submit itself to proper restraint before marriage, will never be blessed afterwards."

"Why, Mrs. Price," said Mary, growing a little warm, "that sounds very strange, coming from you, for you like to have your own way about everything in the world. You surely

do not think that two young people, when they are madly in love, ought to be kept apart and made miserable by any third party."

"I certainly do think," said Mrs. Price, "that people who are madly in love ought to be kept apart by their friends, at all hazards; and that it is well to counsel delay even to people who are soberly and truly in love, I honestly believe. As to my being fond of my own way, an old woman's way is plain enough; and few people have either the right or the desire to interfere with her, but I do not remember that my own youth was less guarded or more ill-advised than other people's."

"But surely, you think that people are the best judges of their own business," persisted Mary.

"What is a man's business?" asked Mrs. Price.

"If getting married is not a man's own business," was the response, "I should like to know what is?"

"And yet," said Mrs. Price, "no man is born, or dies, or gets married entirely to himself. It takes very strong love to stand even the ordinary vicissitudes of life; and should greater misfortunes come — disease, estrangement, or starving children, with eyes to look hungry reproach — the man or woman is best nerved to sustain them who can say, 'In forming this connection, I violated no law either of God or man.'"

Mrs. Price's attention was at this moment called off to look at the advanced-guard of the Confederates, which was just coming in sight.

"I think," said Mary McRea, "that Mrs. Price says very disagreeable things. When I was speaking of love and lovers, why should she come in, about starving children and the like?"

"And yet," said a lady, who had been an amused listener to the dialogue, "in acting the play of marriage, they are almost certain to appear in the second scene."

"Ladies and gentlemen," said a prominent citizen, standing on a slightly elevated part of the terrace, and raising his voice.

"Listen!" whispered Sue. "Mr. C. is about to make a speech."

"Ladies and gentlemen," repeated the speaker, "we are allowed to assemble here, to take our last look on the rear-guard of the late garrison of Vicksburg, by the indulgence of the pres-

ent post-commander, General McPherson; but on certain conditions. I have stipulated with him, as your representative, that nothing will happen here this morning which can be construed into anything like a public manifestation, and have given my word of honor that there will be no excitement of any kind, and particularly no cheering. I rely on each and all of you to redeem my word." So saying, Mr. C. descended, and was lost to view among the crowd.

An indignant murmur ran from mouth to mouth among the ladies.

"I suppose," said Sue McRea, "they will call it a crime if we cry;" and partly from anger at the idea, and partly because the gray-coats had commenced to pass slowly by, she hid her face in her hands, and sobbed aloud. Nor was her action singular in the matter; for nearly all the younger ladies present, instigated by the same feeling, namely, distress at parting with their friends, and anger at being restrained by their conquerors, yielded to their first impulse, and wept unrestrainedly.

Meanwhile Mr. C., having descended, made his way through the crowd, and took a position at Mrs. Price's side.

"I am afraid," said he, "from the way everybody looked during my remarks, that General McPherson is misunderstood. I found him most obliging during my interview yesterday; and though he gave me very satisfactory reasons for not wanting the peace disturbed, or the military regulations violated, he was free to say, that anything not directly bearing on the question of the war, which the citizens wished to be indulged in, he would allow. He said that the necessities of the soldiers in the way of clothing had already been supplied by his permission, and that he had no desire to interfere, either with the tears of the young ladies, or the prayers of the old."

Now Mrs. Price had, just before Mr. C. drew near, settled her mind to commence her private devotions. The Confederate cause was dear to her, and as the captive soldiers marched along, two and two, in the street beneath her feet, she thought to invoke a blessing on every one. Her eyes had been lowered, and her hands clasped beneath her cloak, in the attitude of prayer. But so entirely was her indignation roused by what Mr. C. had just said, that every feeling but that of deepest ire was in a moment extinguished. That the Yankee should think he could interfere with the tears of the

young women, and the prayers of the old! That he had the cool impudence to speak of such things being done by his gracious permission! It was too much for mortal woman to bear! As well might he give her a permit to breathe, or indulgence to eat her own dinner. Suiting the action to the word, Mrs. Price drew back from Mr. C., and recalling instantly some of her dancing-school accomplishments, she made, not one very low courtesy, but three, and looking full at Mr. C., as if he were the Yankee general himself, she exclaimed, in prolonged and sarcastic tones:—"I am very much obliged to General McPherson," she said, "for allowing me the privilege of praying to God without interference—truly grateful! very much favored! at such indulgence and gracious clemency; and I hope you'll tell him so, the earliest opportunity." And turning again to look at the Confederates, either because she could not recover her equanimity, or was afraid of carrying on her religious exercises in accordance with the mandate of the Federal general, the lady did not again attempt to pray.

"Stop crying, and wave your handkerchief," said Estelle to Mary; "there is Charlie C."

"Ah! poor Charlie," said Sue; "to think of his walking so many miles, this hot, dusty July day."

"He is not going to walk all the way," said Willie McRea, thinking to comfort his sister. "I heard him say he was going to steal a mule, as soon as he got outside."

"Hush up! talking so loud," said Sue, "where everybody can hear you. I don't believe Lieutenant C. would act like a thief; he was only trying to fool you."

"Well, then," said the child, "what made him put a rope in his pocket?"

"I wonder," said Mary, "who filled St. George's knapsack? He did not bring it to our house for that purpose."

"Fanny Lea attended to it, I suspect," said Elizabeth; "at any rate, I don't fear that he will let himself be forgotten."

"Girls!" said Mrs. Price, who, having dismissed the spiritual, took up the material again; "did you remember to fill all the canteens you could with cold coffee, as I told you? It will quench the thirst of these poor fellows on their long march better than anything else in the world."

"Yes, madam," said Estelle; "and we were much obliged to

you for the suggestion, for the water about town is so dreadful to drink. Thank Heaven, these poor soldiers will soon be able to quench their thirst at refreshing springs; that is at least one comfort."

"How small some of the companies seem to be," said Mrs. McRea to Judge Wilkerson.

"Yes," he answered, "between death and sickness during the siege, and the late desertions, the ranks are sadly thinned. One of the companies in the First Louisiana only numbers eleven; and I'm told (though I do not know it to be the fact), that a company in one of the Tennessee regiments is reduced to three."

"There are our friends," said Mrs. Woodville.

"There they are, sure enough," said Mary. And she, too, who had controlled herself till now, at the sight of those gallant men whom she had seen daily for some months, and was now to see for the last time, for months perhaps, for years, burst into tears and sobbed aloud.

"Yes," said Mrs. McRea; "there is General Turner and Major McCloud near the front, Captain Alexander and Lieutenant Seymour at the head of their company, and St. George on the left. And there is Tom Dean; I never saw him so pale before; no, not even the night he buried Major Hoadly in the churchyard."

The ladies had expected their friends to pass on, with only a nod of recognition, as the rest of the soldiers had done. They were both surprised and pleased, therefore, when there was a halt (whether by command or general consent, it did not appear), and such officers as had just been mentioned by Mrs. McRea, with others who discovered friends in the crowd, commenced the ascent of the terraces, and were soon standing by their sides.

"We did not expect this," said Mrs. McRea to General Turner. "It is indeed a pleasure to shake you once more by the hand."

"Do not speak of it as the last time," said the general. "Remember, that, in spite of the labyrinth of war, in which we are at present engaged, we must one day have peace."

"Ah!" sighed Mrs. McRea, for her spirits had been seriously affected during the week that had passed; "I feel as if many of us would go to seek peace at the end of our last journey, before it came to us here."

"My word for it, you will feel differently in the course of a short time," said General Turner. "Though our reverses here have fallen so heavily upon you, do not forget the glorious news that Lee is sending us from the Potomac. Let that keep hope alive within your breast."

"Alas!" said Mrs. McRea; "we shall hear no more of it. Every source of information from the Confederacy, I'm told, is to be cut off from us; and hereafter, if Lee is victorious, they will tell us the contrary."

"But you can read it in their very faces," he said. "Rest assured, though they block up every point where information is likely to creep in, good tidings will be irrepressible, and will, in spite of every precaution, reach your ears. But I must bid you a hasty farewell, and go to say the same to your daughters."

"And to Mrs. Lea?" said Mrs. McRea, partly in a suggestive tone.

"Certainly, to Mrs. Lea," said General Turner, looking towards the spot where Fanny stood with the Misses McRea — all, endeavoring to control themselves sufficiently to talk to the soldiers, but, in spite of every effort, weeping audibly.

It needed not Mrs. McRea's good offices at that moment to make General Turner think kindly of Fanny Lea. One look at her sweet face, alike lovely, whether wreathed in smiles or bathed in tears, now that they were about to part, was sufficient. He approached her, and took her hand in his.

"We are friends again, general," she said, "are we not?"

"Yes," he answered, with all his heart; "and would to God we had never been otherwise. It has cost me many sleepless nights."

"And me some very disagreeable days," said Fanny. "Before you go, let me have the satisfaction of hearing you say, that what I said to you, that unfortunate night at the church, shall be entirely forgotten."

"I question," answered General Turner, "whether it is in my power to forget anything that concerns Mrs. Lea; but, at least, I can say, it shall never be remembered in anger."

"May heaven bless you, general!" said Fanny, bursting again into sobs.

"And may angels watch over you, wherever your lot in life may lie!" was the response; and as General Turner made it, his own eyes were not dry.

Meanwhile, St. George had shaken hands with all around, and came, lastly, up to Sue McRea, whose eyes were red with crying, and who had not entirely outlived her childish peculiarity of getting about half-mad whenever she was distressed. She held out her hand kindly, as he approached, for he was like the rest, a Confederate soldier; but her patience soon gave way, when the ruling passion, strong even in death, prevailed, and he said: — "I'm truly mortified to pass out of the lines in this condition, on foot, and not even a servant with me (for my man, curse him! has run away to the Yankees). In truth, I'm quite disgusted. Such a thing could not possibly have happened, if a fellow had been afloat; and if it were not for the deuced sea-sickness, it would decide me in an idea I've long had, to go into the Confederate navy again, where I flatter myself I once cut a respectable figure, and not to come on shore till the end of the war."

"If I thought that," said Sue, in audible tones, "I would be far better reconciled to its continuing a long time."

The gay Captain Hamilton had thought his spirits proof even against a woman's tears; but the sight of the fair Mary, with her marble cheeks bedewed with pearly drops, created within him a nervousness, which he hoped to conceal under an appearance of affected gayety. "What, weeping, Miss Mary?" he said. "This is, indeed, a poor way to encourage a soldier. And what you say of not seeing us again is more like nonsense than anything I ever heard from you. Wait till we're exchanged, and that can't be long, for the Federals owe us a bushel of prisoners; and some dark night, when you least expect us, we'll dash through the streets of this town, and raising the Confederate flag on the Court-House, we'll chase every Yankee lover you may have into the rolling waters of the dark Mississippi."

"But you won't be able to hold it," said Mary, smiling through her tears.

"Then if we won't, we will each take the fairest lady he can find, behind him on his horse, and make off as fast as we came. But my colonel is beckoning me. Farewell!"

"Good-by!" "Farewell!" "God bless you!" was said by all.

"Come once more, and kiss us round," said Estelle to Captain Tom Dean.

"O Tom!" said his aunt, "you are a brave soldier and a

good boy. God grant you may be spared to comfort us all for many years."

"Fear not, dear aunt," he answered. "Your prayers will be a safeguard for me against all harm."

And now the soldiers turned to descend into the street again, but the tenderest farewell of all had not been said. Alexander held the hand of Caroline Courteny. He had bid her a last adieu the night before, not expecting to speak to her again. She had not even told him her intention of coming to take a last look in the morning; but when the crowd appeared on the terrace, and the soldiers halted in the street below, it took but a hurried look to enable him to recognize the sylph-like figure, though the face was covered with a thick veil. "Is there witchery in that white dress?" he thought. "In good sooth, it seems so, for I think the sight of its shadow would make the blood vibrate in my heart."

"Is there magic," thought she, "in the glance of his noble eye, for its every look wakens a sensation that flies to the centre of my brain?"

"I will not approach her," he thought, at first, "for it will be no satisfaction to converse when every word is heard, and can be repeated by others."

"I hope he will not leave the ranks," thought she, "for I should suffer more to have him beside me, and still separated by the impassable barrier that exists."

"And yet," whispered Alexander to himself, "but one touch of her hand will be some happiness; and surely, she will not refuse to her lover what she is even now granting to others in his sight."

"Ah!" whispered a responsive voice to her heart, "now that I've seen him, he must not go without one word — one single word. Surely, he knows my heart better than to leave me thus."

Yes, sweet Caroline; he knew thy heart better than his own. But a moment more, he was at her side, and his voice, tremulous with emotion, had spoken words in her ear — words that said nothing to the world — words that said to her everything.

Caroline Courteny's delicacy shrank from the exhibition of any feeling in such a place. That she felt as much may readily be believed; yet her sobs were more subdued than any woman's present. Truly, the poet says, —

"For, it is with feelings as with waters —  
The shallow murmur, but the deep are dumb."

Now that Alexander stood beside her, a sense of choking was in her throat, and to her lover's greeting she answered not a word.

"I told you I would write from Jackson, did I not?" he asked.

Miss Courteny bowed, but still was silent.

"Do not attempt to speak, if the effort is painful to you as yet; but I must once more hear the sound of your voice. Remember, you have promised not to mope or be sad; and" (now he whispered in her ear) "you are to forget our separation, and think only of the time when we will meet again."

"Fall into ranks!" was called aloud, by the officer commanding, from the street.

"Still silent, Caroline?" said her lover. "Then I must leave you so. Think not that I misinterpret it; but give me your hand, and let its gentle pressure tell me more eloquently than words, that I am loved."

Caroline laid her hand in his, and though her voice still failed, she gave the sign for which he asked; and standing there, Alexander forgot for a space that they were not alone, for she was his world, and her presence shut out every other thought.

Press again the hand of your lover, Caroline, for it is the last time in life he will ever be electrified by your touch. The love, so entirely a passionate dream now, is never doomed to be realized.

Hold tight to thine idol, Alexander, for now she passes from thy grasp. Clutch the slender fingers that lay within thine own, for they will never rest there again.

"But one moment is left you," said Judge Wilkerson. "Caroline, speak to Captain Alexander; he must go."

Then the young girl gained her self-control, and as Alexander bent his ear, she pronounced in low but distinct tones, one word — it was, "Farewell."

## CHAPTER XXVII.

THREE long weeks within Federal lines!" exclaimed Estelle McRea, "without even Confederate letters to cheer us up."

"Yes, three weeks," said Mary, since the occupation of the town, and surely no woman alive ever had a more disagreeable time."

"It is certainly very bad to have to stay in the house all the time," said Estelle; "but really, this thing of getting along without servants I don't find so bad, since we are relieved of the cooking and washing. I really don't mind the housework much, for now that we have to put things in order ourselves, instead of ringing the bell for a servant, I notice we are much more particular about putting them out of order; and altogether, there is less confusion than before."

"Estelle," cried Mary, "I do wish you had been born in Connecticut; you were cut out for a Yankee, body and soul; and it is a pity you were not born, and did not have to live and die, among them."

"I certainly am living among them at present," said Estelle, "and not only myself, but all of my sisters."

"Yes," said Sue, "but the rest of us don't take to the thing as you do. Positively, when you tie up your head and begin to sweep, I would take you, at any time, for one of those odious sanitary women, that go about making people swallow medicine even when they are not sick."

"The ones that Major Saunders calls 'insanitary women?'" answered Estelle. "Well, you mean to be cutting, I know; but since their clothes are a great deal better than our own, and some of them are not bad-looking, I shall take no offence."

"Sue," said Mrs. McRea, "if keeping the house clean, and taking care of our few pounds of sugar, is what makes you call your sister a Yankee, I request you will select a less abusive epithet, at least, while in my presence."

"It is strange, ma," said Estelle, "that the girls cannot understand me about this thing. I think about the policy of the Federal government just as they do, that is, that the sudden emancipation of the negro is dishonest to their masters and inhuman to the slaves; but as regards home comfort, I do not



think we are any worse off than formerly, for the work that employed two servants all day, and was then often done badly, we despatch ourselves in two hours. Almost all of the negroes we have ever owned have been by nature lazy, by no means neat, and very unreliable. I believe their influence in a family is bad, for even old Mammy, who was the soul of amiability, filled our childish minds with superstitions, and taught us to deceive. Of course, we cannot come down to breakfast as nicely dressed as we used to do, or be ready to receive company at all hours. But I think (as poor as we have gotten to be) that these things ought to be secondary considerations, in comparison with a comfortably-arranged house, or a store-room without waste."

"You may talk as you please, Estelle," said Sue; "but I see very little comfort about having to wait on ourselves. The few days the Confederates stayed here, I did not so much care, for the novelty of the thing made it amusing, and it was something of a pleasure to attend to the wants of a soldier; but if any one should come in now, I would really be ashamed of the way things go on at the table. Do you pretend to compare this incessant jumping up and down, and passing plates from one side of the table to the other, to the time when Henry stood behind our chairs, dressed a great deal better than papa himself, or received our guests at the door with a bow that would rival a dancing-master?"

"As regards looks, of course, I do not; but you must not forget that Henry, with all his bows and good looks, gave papa a great deal of trouble, for scarcely a week passed without his getting beastly drunk, and having to be punished, which you know caused a great deal of distress to us all."

"I wonder, girls," said Mrs. McRea, "that in speaking of the negroes, you speak of the inconvenience of being without them alone. For my part, I think it is a small matter, in comparison with the distress of finding that they are unfaithful, and that though they have lived with us for years, they not only run away, and leave us in trouble, but seem really glad to contemplate our misfortunes."

"That is the very thing that makes me so mad," said Sue. "Henry himself came past here yesterday, while I was sweeping the gallery, and stood for a moment looking at me, with a broad grin on his face. But for fear of the police, I think I should have struck him."

"But Mammy's behavior was worst of all," said Mary; "for old Mrs. Cever told me she could have sold my pink satin for thirty dollars easily enough, but that Mammy stepped up and told the woman who came to buy, that it was old, and old-fashioned, and dyed; though she knows better than anybody else that we are bare of clothes, and wanted to buy some with the money."

"Yes," said Elizabeth, "and more; she knows we need meat and bread. But the negroes having been unfaithful and ungrateful, is rather an argument against than for slavery; for if, after living with us for years, and being treated well, they are still not friends, is it not better to have them go, than keep an element of population among us that cannot in any way be conciliated?"

"Let them go," said Mary; "but to what a fate! Have you ever seen, till the last few days, such a thing as a negro beggar? Have we not known since last week of two negroes dying in the street, and one suffered to lie there eight hours after he was dead? Major Saunders told Fanny Lea that the suffering and distress among the five hundred negroes now in the Prentiss House, was sickening to behold."

"Yes," said Sue, "and more shame for him! to make such a declaration, and still march under a flag that carries out such an inhuman policy. What excuse does he make for stealing people's slaves, and then letting them die of hunger? Does he call himself a Christian or a gentleman?"

"I believe he claims to be both," answered Elizabeth; "and Fanny says, the more she associates with him, the more she is convinced he is so."

"Then she in her turn ought to be ashamed," said Sue, "to have such an opinion of a Yankee. For my own part, I hope I shall never meet any but the mean, rascally ones, that I may go on hating them worse and worse, as long as I live."

"I don't know about that, Sue, after all," answered Elizabeth; "for I think you smiled when Willie told you Colonel Claborn said you were the prettiest girl he ever saw, the day you went to get rations; and you certainly did not refuse the ten pounds of white sugar he put into the basket that black Jim carried, though you must have observed there was no mention made of it in General McPherson's order."

"I tell you," said Sue, getting very angry, "I couldn't help taking the sugar. Pa told me if ever I insulted a Federal

officer, he would get mad; and but for the fear of falling under his displeasure, I should have thrown the bundle right into Colonel Claborn's face, and have said, 'Keep your old sugar for those who want it.'"

"Your father would have been both displeased and mortified at such behavior," said Mrs. McRea.

"But, Sue," said Elizabeth, "admit that since we've had the sugar, you have not scorned to season your tea; and besides, you have not explained about the smile, for your face did certainly break into dimples when you heard that Colonel Claborn thought you handsome."

If the young lady had been pleased upon first hearing the compliment, she certainly looked cross enough now, at its being repeated, and was much relieved when her mother came to her and said:—

"I request, Elizabeth, you will not allude to this again. Since the poor child has to endure such mortifications, I shall be careful not to send her to the commissary's again, but arrange for one of the rest of you to go in her place."

At this, there was a general outcry among the other sisters. They were loth to think Sue too handsome for the practical purposes of life; and as they insisted she was badly spoiled already, they felt no inclination to make her more capricious by this indulgence.

"I think what you say is very unfair, mamma," said Mary; "the rest of us find it quite as disagreeable to go into that dirty commissary building, and be mixed up with rude negroes and soldiers, as she does; but, since pa has been refused rations, without he takes the oath, and you certainly cannot stand such a walk in the sun, we have no choice, without we wish to starve, but to go as usual;—and because Sue's cheeks are a little pinker, and the men will stare at her, is no reason why she should not go when it comes her turn, and beg for her bread from the Yankees, just as the rest of us have to do."

At this, Sue burst into tears, and vociferated that she would go for rations no more, and that she would rather starve a thousand times than be a beggar, as Mary had called her. Mrs. McRea's eyes also became suffused with tears. She was keenly alive to every mortification that had occurred since falling into Federal hands; but that her handsomest daughter, who looked so like a queen, should have to bear the appellation, was most galling. Elizabeth, observing this, said:—

"Don't be a goose, Sue! Colonel Claborn is always polite, even when he is run to death with business. I'll relieve you in going as often as I can; and if occasionally you have to do so, don't scruple to take anything in addition to the regular rations that is offered you. Don't you remember that Major Saunders said we ought to make a point of doing so, for it is simply a spoliation of the Egyptians. Besides, if papa is willing for me to ask so great a favor of a Federal officer, I think Major Saunders can arrange for us, as he has already done for Fanny Lea; in which case, we can send a dray, once in a week or ten days, instead of going ourselves. Would it not be a great deal pleasanter?"

"Of course," said Mary, "I should like to be spared the mortification of going ourselves; but as to asking favors of Major Saunders, I would scorn to do so. He talks in a very gentlemanly way to us women about spoiling the Egyptians, and makes all sorts of excuses for sending Fanny Lea good things and pretty things; but I'll put my judgment on it, that he is as big a Yankee as the rest of them, and will be found fighting, in spite of his smooth words, when plenty of rude talkers have stopped."

"Mary," said Estelle, "I don't know that we should think the less of Major Saunders for that. We should make some allowance for birth, education, and prejudice; and, though we hold to our own opinions firmly, can we not admit that a few of the Federal officers are instigated by rather better motives than pillage and murder?"

"Have we not every reason," asked Mary, "to think them thieves and incendiaries, from their conduct in Warren County at the time this town was invested?"

"Undoubtedly their behavior was shocking, in many cases brutal," replied Estelle; "but I believe, from what I've heard since, that it caused the deepest regret among all of the better class among them; and you know, General Grant, in his official report, went so far as to say, that if the officers of those regiments did not in future prevent such outrages, they themselves should be sent home in chains. Now, in the case of Major Saunders, I am certain there is no want of moderation in his opinions or course of action. Fanny Lea says he expresses the greatest sympathy for the sufferings of the southern people, and great admiration for the courage of the men and the patience of the women. She tells me that even about

the institution of slavery, about which most northern people are so unreasonable, that he talks and thinks like ourselves, believing it to be rather a misfortune than a fault of our particular section; and thinks the sudden emancipation of the negro the cruelest necessity of the war."

"Does he think it," said Mary, "one of the necessities of the war to let them starve?"

"Not actually a necessity, but certainly one of the effects of the war. But he says so many deaths among them is not so much caused by actual starvation, as by a sudden breaking up of their regular habits and diet, and the dreadful epidemics that are now raging among them."

"But he certainly has the sense to see, that, dying at this rate, they will soon have passed away from the face of the earth."

"Yes, and he says so frankly; but hopes that, though this generation will be sacrificed in being liberated, the next will be elevated."

"He is, then, one of those spoken of in the Scriptures, who say, 'Let us do evil, that good may come;' and of whom the apostle farther remarks, 'Whose damnation is just,'" said Mary. "But I wish you would stop preaching to me about Major Saunders, for after all you say, he is but a Yankee at last. And as to Fanny Lea, I tell you what I think, and it is just this, that she ought to be ashamed of herself. She did as much crying and sobbing as the rest of us, the day the Confederates left town. And now, according to her own account, she is as thick as hops with that Federal major; and the end of her flirting and fooling, and giving and receiving bouquets will be, that she will sell her birthright for a mess of pottage. People don't walk and ride and sit up night after night till after twelve o'clock, and nothing come of it. If it was not that our letters have to be so strictly examined at head-quarters by that sore-eyed lieutenant on McPherson's staff, I would just mention it in writing to one of our Confederate friends."

It was but a few hours after the above conversation, that Mrs. McRea was called to the parlor, and received (from a citizen prisoner like herself, who was in communication with the outside), some very painful news. It was that her eldest son, a soldier in Lee's army on the Potomac, was captured soon after the battle of Gettysburg, and had been already

more than a month the occupant of a northern prison. It was with a sad heart and distressed countenance, that she made known the fact to the other members of the family.

"It seems as if heaven," she said, "had decreed that we shall never dry our eyes or enliven our spirits again. I could have heard with much more resignation, that George had received a wound, than that he had lost his liberty. In the former case, I know our friends in Richmond would nurse him well, and would have everything for which to hope. But, with his temperament, to be confined in a loathsome prison, with hard fare and bad treatment to endure, and perhaps wicked, coarse men to come in daily contact with. It is, indeed, too much."

"Mamma," said Estelle, "do not forget, in your sorrow, that some good may come to us of it. Our brother's life will not be exposed on the battle-field, and by this very means may be spared till after the war. You know, he has a strong constitution, and it may not suffer from the climate as much as you fear; and for food, it can scarcely be worse than the ordinary camp-fare to which he is accustomed."

The spirits of the mother were much crushed. She had seen her boy start for the army with pride, for the bright uniform became him well, and the self-satisfied air with which he donned it was mixed with a more elevated expression, as he was jubilant at the idea of meeting the invaders of his country face to face on the field of battle. But to pine away in a cold, damp prison, had not once entered his mind; and the mother knew that the boyish nature would chafe at restraints on his liberty more than it could quake at all the horrors of war.

"To him, the dungeon was a gulf,  
And fettered feet the worst of ills."

And though her family and friends did all in their power to encourage her with the hope of an early exchange, and that all might be well, the grief she endured made her health, even within a few days, suffer so seriously, that, at the end of that time, without any settled complaint, she took to her bed, and seemed likely to become ill. There were few hours during the day or night, that she did not imagine the proud, well-dressed young soldier, who left her in joyful anticipation of gratified ambition, transformed into a ragged, starving prisoner

of war, his rounded cheeks grown pale and sunken with sadness and disease.

"Draw the curtains tightly," she said, with morbid sensitiveness, "I cannot endure the sunlight or the air. Since my boy must hereafter live within bare walls, and eat only prisoners' fare, in these best days of his youth, why should I care, when sorrow and disappointment have crushed my heart, to have what is denied him?"

Estelle, with unfailing assiduity, spoke cheerfully around her bed. "Mamma," she said, "I wish you would look at the thing more rationally. Some of the northern prisons are not very disagreeable; and, at this time of the year, George is not likely to be hurt from the climate, as you fear. Who knows, but that he is at this moment the inmate of some picturesque fort, and commiserating us for being in this town, exposed to this scorching Mississippi sun. Do let us look on the bright side! Trouble comes soon enough, without our anticipating it; and we may one day find that all this anxiety was unfounded."

Some days after, she entered her mother's room with the brightest of smiles upon her face. "See," she cried, "here is something that will raise your spirits more than anything that can be said by us. Here is a letter in George's own handwriting, from Fort —, and I see he is alive, and believe he is well."

"Read, read it quickly!" was the universal exclamation, as one and all of the sisters gathered round.

Its contents gave the particulars of the young man's capture, something of his experience of prison-life, which was by no means bad, and directions by which a letter sent from the family (on condition that it contained only one page) could reach him. He ended by saying, "I should have written before, but have only learned during the last few days of the falling of Vicksburg into Federal hands, so slowly does news penetrate through a prison's walls. If you can find out any way of sending me an overcoat and a pair of blankets, it will add very much to my comfort to receive them."

"My poor, poor boy!" said his mother, "I know it is a stern necessity which makes him ask for these things, in our present situation; for he is proverbially careless about his comfort, and seldom realizes his own wants. What shall we do to get these things, and once gotten, how can they be sent?"

"Don't disturb yourself, mamma," said Mary, "about getting

them, for we have plenty of trinkets left to raise the amount of money required. And we will no doubt learn, sooner or later, how they can be sent, for to my certain knowledge, prisoners do receive such things from their friends, and, of course, our opportunities are as good as other people's."

Mrs. McRea already looked better and brighter; and the girls, noticing the change, thought to keep it up, and each went to her room to select such trinkets as were most available to dispose of for the desired purpose.

"Estelle," said Mary, "be sure to keep up this talk about the coat and blankets as long as possible. If the money can't be raised any other way, I can easily sell my watch, but don't let us be too precipitate, for the delay and a little difficulty will do mamma good. If she sends us to the sutler's to look for the articles, we must make a good deal of talk, and insist that she looks at and discusses the merits of a great many; for, mark me, this excitement, slight as it is, will do her more good than doctors or medicines."

When Mary McRea went the same evening to a sutler's store to look for the talked-of overcoat, she met at the door (and, by-the-by, did not consider it a particular piece of good fortune), Mr. Hill.

"I am somewhat surprised," said that gentleman, following her to the counter, "to hear you ask to look at an overcoat, having understood till now that you were a single lady."

"Say, rather, that you know I am still," said Mary.

"Then, since I suppose, if your father wanted this coat, he would come for it himself," said Mr. Hill, "I can form but one conclusion, that it is for some one blessed with your particular favor within the Confederate lines."

"There are many thousand persons within the Confederate lines," said Mary, "upon whom I should like to bestow such a coat, but not one single individual, blessed as you seemed to intimate, with my particular favor."

"Am I to think," said Mr. Hill, "that this is as meaningless as the usual denial of ladies in such matters?"

Mary looked up a little surprised that the question should be asked with an appearance of interest, but answered with her usual frank simplicity, "I have no lover in Confederate lines, but you need not suppose it all my own fault, for though many applications were made for hearts, when our troops left the town, not a single soldier asked for mine."

"Am I to suppose," said Mr. Hill, "that southern girls keep their hearts in their hands, to give away just for the asking?"

"State the proposition differently," said Mary, "and say, rather, that girls never know that they have hearts, till asked by some one to bestow them."

"A nice-sounding maxim," said Mr. Hill, "and no doubt learned from mamma. But don't waste your time in an examination of that coat, which is almost worthless. But if you are really in earnest about buying such a thing in this intensely hot weather, look rather at this, which is lined with velvet and trimmed with fur, for it will wear well, and afford at least twice the protection."

"No," said Mary; "I shall be much more likely to give the preference to the first, ugly as it is." And turning to the storekeeper, she said, "I have as yet no permit from headquarters to buy this coat, but if you will let me take it home for my mother to look at, and she is satisfied with it, I will make immediate application for permission to purchase it."

"There is no objection in life, miss," said the sutler, "to your taking it home, but as to getting a permit to buy it, I fear it will be next thing to impossible, for, strict as our orders have been heretofore, we were this morning notified of new regulations, by which it is proposed to prevent goods of any kind from passing through the lines."

"But," said Mary, "this coat is not intended to pass into Confederate lines, but is to be sent to my brother, who is at Fort —, in the hands of the Federals as a prisoner."

"That may make a difference as regards your application, when it is made at headquarters, but makes none with me," said the sutler; "for my orders are imperative to sell to no citizen of Vicksburg, under any circumstances."

"Do you think," said Mary, turning to Mr. Hill, "that there will be much difficulty about arranging this matter?"

"It will be very difficult under the late regulations, but there may be a marked change soon, for these may become null and void, and others go into effect even within the next day or two."

"I could hardly venture to tell mamma," said Mary, thoughtfully, "that the thing is impossible, for the interest she feels in getting the bundle ready has made her sit up nearly all day, the first time she has done so since news came of my

brother's imprisonment. Do you think the authorities are likely to become more indulgent soon?"

"Of course, I cannot say positively," said Mr. Hill; "but it is by no means improbable that they may. But let me again draw your attention to this overcoat you have thrown aside. Look at the quality of the cloth and the softness of the velvet. It is very strange taste in a young lady to take a fancy to a dingy-looking blanket affair, when such a one as this is by its side to tempt her."

"I by no means said that it suited my taste best," said Mary, laughing.

"Then," said Mr. Hill, "may I inquire why you deliberately select one thing when another best suits your fancy?"

"Certainly," said Mary, laughing, but this time also blushing; "I should be very foolish not to confess that it is because it suits my purse."

Mr. Hill, in his turn, grew red, and felt that he had touched upon delicate ground; for though Judge McRea's house was furnished with soft carpets and velvet furniture, he knew that the occupants of such establishments in Memphis after the surrender (and he supposed it was so in Vicksburg), were frequently destitute of the comforts of life.

Mary turned round to say good-evening, as she left the store, and saw that he looked embarrassed and annoyed. The feeling must soon have passed off, however, for as soon as she was gone, he turned to the sutler, bought the coat that was trimmed with fur, and, taking the bundle under his arm, walked up the street with the same air of unconcern that she had walked down. "She is a pretty girl," said he to himself, "but has a will of her own, I'll warrant you."

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

**Y**OUR complaint against intolerable *ennui* must have been heard by your patron saint, Mary," said Elizabeth, "for here is really some prospect of diversion."

"I don't believe it," said Mary, sullenly, "although I see the letter in your hand, for I think the fates have decided, that we shall all stay in this house, and mope ourselves to death."

"Nevertheless, there is a slight variety in our grasp," said Elizabeth. "What would you say to going across the river in a tug?"

"That it would be perfect felicity," answered Mary. "But how are we to buy such happiness for ourselves?"

"It is not only offered freely for ourselves, but we are urged to bring as many of our Confederate friends (see, the words are underscored,) as will accompany us, but with the understanding, that our escorts will be Federal officers. What do you think of it?"

"Then, of course, we can't go," said Mary, "and our fun is spoiled; for even if this devouring *ennui* could make us so far forget ourselves, ma and pa would never consent."

"There you are mistaken; they have already done so, in consideration of the circumstances."

"I should like to know what particular circumstances can have brought them to this determination. They must indeed be singular!"

"No, simple enough. Some Confederate prisoners, taken by the Federals across the river, in a skirmish with some of Kirby Smith's men, are camped just below De Soto, on the opposite side. This note is from Fanny Lea. She says Major Saunders, Mr. Hill, and two other gentlemen, have provided a nice lunch, and some articles of comfortable clothing; and propose going on the tug this evening, if they can get some ladies to accompany them, to give the poor fellows a treat before they are put on a steamboat, to be sent up the river."

"But what will the authorities say?"

"That is not our affair, but the gentlemen's by whom we are invited, and has no doubt been arranged already."

"And you say we are going?" said Mary with brightening eyes.

"Going," answered Elizabeth.

"Going," said Sue, who came in fairly dancing with delight; "going to leave these dusty streets, and sail for a whole hour on the water, to see—" and she finished the sentence with a strain from Donizetti.

"Yes, to see the blessed graybacks again," said Estelle with hearty enjoyment. "But, sister, did mamma give her consent readily?"

"Yes," said Elizabeth, "and apparently with much pleasure. She said the more she thought of poor George being a prisoner, the less she felt inclined to see us make ourselves such; and that any recreation which would not compromise our dignity, she was more than willing to see us enjoy."

"Three cheers for Major Saunders!" cried Sue. "If there is a clever Yankee living, I think he is the man."

"But you say nothing of Mr. Hill," said Elizabeth. "I fancy we are quite as much indebted to him for the treat as the other."

"Oh, I don't call him a Yankee at all," said Mary.

"Yet he happens," answered her sister, "to have been born many hundred miles north of the major."

"Oh! but he has never worn the shocking uniform, that makes the difference. But how are we to get to the boat? Are the gentlemen coming for us?"

"No. Pa will take us down; and Fanny says she will come with Major Saunders."

"I'm going to put on my prettiest dress," said Sue, "and cut Fanny out."

"You ridiculous child!" said Estelle, "to talk of entering the list against a widow, and one young and handsome, like Fanny. Why, don't you know that sister Elizabeth herself could get the better of you, in spite of her houseful of children, and ten additional years."

"But my blue muslin," said Sue; "is that to go for nothing?"

"Fanny Lea would wrap herself in the 'star-spangled banner,' simpleton, rather than give you the pin's point of an advantage with the major."

"But there is one thing that must be attended to before we go," said Elizabeth. "Fanny proposes that I also bring Caroline Courteny. I've a great mind to ask pa to walk round while we are dressing, and see if she is willing to go."



"You need not put him to the trouble," said Estelle, "for Carrie is not in town. She has gone, since yesterday, to the country, to do penance with her elderly cousin, Miss Glimes, and is no doubt by this time helping to milk the cows."

"Then it is my opinion they will be very badly milked," said Elizabeth. "But let us go immediately, to dress for our frolic."

"Is it as pleasant as you expected, Sue?" said Fanny Lea, as the little tug labored along down the Mississippi, its deck made festive by the light fabric of women's skirts, and their handsomely dressed military attendants.

"Pleasant?" said Sue. "Oh, yes! even more so than I expected; and that, you know, is saying a great deal. Indeed, Fanny, the dusty streets in town now are past endurance. And think of poor mamma! confined to her bed this season of the year. If we don't have rain in a few days, I fear she will be ill."

"I hope," said Fanny, "now that her mind is somewhat relieved about your brother, she'll soon get better; but there is really a poor chance for an invalid this intensely hot weather. I'm sorry Caroline Courteny did not come."

"So am I, more particularly as she has not been well lately; but perhaps she'll return from the country all roses again. Her aunt expects her back next week."

"Fanny," said Elizabeth Woodville, when they happened to be standing together, looking over the sides of the little boat into the water, "I hear a great deal of this flirtation of yours with Major Saunders. What does it mean?"

"What a question!" was the answer. "Why, nothing, of course."

"Well," said Elizabeth, "nothing is generally what you mean, when you let a man dance attendance, and act shadow to your substance. But have you no scruples?"

"I don't know why I should have," said Fanny. "I am one of those unfortunate persons who must be amused; and if I meet with another person of the same temperament, is it strange that we 'get on' together?"

"Not at all strange. But are you certain that two good-natured, good-looking people like yourself and Major Saunders can stay together daily and hourly, and have no other sensation but that of being amused?"

"One thing will shield me from danger," said Fanny, with a

sigh, and a sentimental look in the corners of her eyes. "I have determined positively never to marry."

"Hush your nonsense!" said Elizabeth; "and don't forget that you are talking to another widow. I am speaking in all candor, and you are trying to gull me with what papa calls 'twaddle.'"

"But in all seriousness, I mean what I say," said Fanny. "I am not jesting."

"How long since you formed the resolution?"

"Well — I don't know exactly, about—"

"Come, be candid. How long?"

"About two hours."

"Well, then," said Elizabeth, "you have kept it longer than I thought you would."

"Don't make a jest of my feelings? I tell you, since I ought not to marry the man of my choice, I really think, if I know myself, I shall remain single."

"It ought to be a very serious obstacle indeed, that could prevent a woman like yourself, so entirely her own mistress, from marrying the man of her choice."

"Am I to understand that you think a woman should forget home, country, friends, everything, in such a case?"

"Am I to understand, when you speak of the man of your choice, that you honestly believe yourself in love?"

"It is so sudden," said Fanny, looking down, "I really mistrust myself."

"And you are wise to do so, Fanny," answered her friend. "Four or five weeks, or six weeks, is too short a time to pronounce any one the man of your choice."

Doctor Bard now came up, and Elizabeth walked away. She was surprised to find that what she thought only a flirtation was likely to become a serious affair, and a little uneasy lest Fanny had been precipitate. And yet, she thought, the instincts of the heart are sometimes more correct than the reasoning of the mind.

Meanwhile, Mr. Hill and Mary were entertaining themselves with throwing orange-peeling into the river, and watching it do mimic battle with the current.

"What splendid fun!" said Mary, leaning far over the guards of the boat, to see which piece held out the longest, and looking up again, with her eyes full of glee.

"Very nice," said Mr. Hill; "but I see Mrs. Woodville

looking at us. Won't she think this very childish amusement for grown-up people?"

"Oh, no," said Mary, "she won't think strange of it. The reason it is so jolly to go out with sister, is that, though she is sent by pa and ma to play dragon upon us, she is more apt to go seeking her own pleasure, and forget that we are alive."

"Just my idea," said Mr. Hill, of the way a chaperon ought to behave. A young lady who goes out alone is not so apt to be free and easy as one that has the name of a protector, while the office remains a sinecure."

"That sentiment is a barbarous one," said Mary, "but there is some truth in it. Sue and I would fret as much as possible at any actual restraint, but, after all, we feel more comfortable with sister's eye upon us, when we are in pursuit of pleasure."

"I don't believe you know what pleasure is," said Mr. Hill.

"Who—I?" said Mary, in great surprise. "Well, that was never said of me before."

"It is true."

"Upon what do you base your opinion?"

"The simple fact, that you are so unwilling to bestow pleasure upon another."

"Our acquaintance has been too short for you to make such an assertion about me. I have never had it in my power to oblige you in any way."

"You had it in your power, and neglected it so entirely as to make me feel badly at the time, and afterwards."

"Tell me what you mean."

"Do you remember meeting me in a store some four days ago, while you were in search of a suitable overcoat to send to your brother in prison?"

"I do; but what has that to do with the matter?"

"Did you remember at the time, that George and I were at college together, and knew each other very well?"

"I did not remember it at the time. But since you remind me, General Turner mentioned it in the note he wrote pa, proposing to introduce you."

"Well, what I complain of is this:—I stood by your side while you were sorely perplexed, first, about getting permission to buy the coat, and, secondly, about sending it to the prison after it was bought. I could have given you assistance without any trouble to myself, and felt most anxious to do so. I do not remember that there was any particular intimacy

between George and myself, but at least there was thorough good feeling. Times have changed with us both. He is the inmate of a prison, his home desolated, and his friends impoverished. I have met with no such misfortune, and have been rewarded with what men call success. You cannot doubt, if you think I have a heart in my bosom, or if you are willing to admit that a Yankee can have the feelings common to human nature, that I had every desire to relieve the friend of my youth, or serve him in any way. I waited in great anxiety for a word from you that would encourage me to make the offer. It seemed to me that you framed your every sentence so as to make that offer next thing to impossible. Since you were unwilling to gratify me, even a trifle, what am I to think?"

"The truth is," said Mary, "I never thought of the matter as you present it to view now. And to convince you that I have a disposition to oblige, and to be obliged, you shall still get the permit (for we have been unable to do so), and forward the package for me."

"It is too late," said Mr. Hill; "I have lost the extreme desire to do so."

The tone was still kind, if the words were not, and Mary looked up in expectation of farther explanation.

"I will make a clean breast of it," said Mr. Hill, "and trust to your generosity not to be offended. I (the day after you acted in that manner, regardless of my feelings,) sent to George, at Fort —, the overcoat trimmed with fur, and blankets; and lest he, too, would scorn to receive a favor at the hands of a Yankee, I wrote that they came from his sister Mary."

"You were truly kind," said Mary, warmly, "and mamma will thank you even more than I do. Don't talk any more of being a Yankee, for I see that in time we shall bury the tomahawk;" and she held out her hand, which he pressed warmly in his.

A year afterwards they did bury the tomahawk, and deeply, and after this style:—Arm in arm, before the altar, she wrapped in a white veil, her hair dressed with a wreath of orange-blossoms, and a promise on her lips, to "love, honor, and obey."

It was after nine o'clock at night, when Mrs. Woodville and the Misses McRea were left by Mr. Hill at their father's door.

"I wonder if we can creep up the back-steps without disturbing mamma," said Elizabeth; "at least, we must try and do so."

"I almost hope she will wake up," said Sue. "I want to tell her what a delightful time we've had."

"Then your wish is gratified," said Estelle; "for there is pa calling us to come into mamma's room immediately."

It was four very bright-looking faces that gathered around Mrs. McRea's bed, each eager to speak first.

"Such a delightful time on the boat!" said Sue.

"Such very considerate behavior from the gentlemen!" said Elizabeth.

"A good time generally!" exclaimed Estelle.

"And such unprecedented generosity, on the part of Mr. Hill," thought Mary; but she said nothing, reserving the recital, till she could have her mother's entire ear, that she might do full justice to the tale.

"But tell me of the prisoners," said Mrs. McRea. "Did you really see again the blessed gray-coats, and shake hands with the men that wore them?"

"Yes, indeed," said Sue, "with fifteen live Confederates; and I handed each one of them a glass of iced punch, with my own hands, which Doctor Bard mixed up in a bucket."

"And I," said Estelle, "counted out fifteen shirts, and as many pair of flannel drawers, and put one of each into a small carpet-bag, and handed them round promiscuously."

"And I," said Elizabeth, "was given some very nice pocket-knives and cakes of soap to distribute, while Fanny Lea took charge of the pipes and tobacco."

"And what did you for the prisoners, my daughter?" said her mother to Mary.

"The girls left me nothing to do," she stammered, in return; but she blushed deeply, for she had been otherwise engaged — walking in the woods with Mr. Hill.

"Papa," said Elizabeth, as she rose to go to her room, "I don't know whether you and ma will think I did exactly right; but these gentlemen have been so polite to us, and so kind to the Confederate prisoners, that I did not like to refuse them a request; and I have half promised to take the girls, and go on a short trip on the railroad with them, next week, if you have no serious objection."

"We will think of it," said Judge McRea. "For the present, good-night."

"Mary," said Elizabeth, when they had reached their own room, "I must tell you something very funny about Fanny Lea. You know the walk you took down in the woods with Mr. Hill (which, by-the-by, excited remark, and you should not have done with a stranger). Well, Fanny, who had been sitting on a log by Major Saunders, apparently oblivious of everything in the world but him, turned to look after you, and seemed to wake up. She came to the place where I was mixing lemonade, and said, in a mysterious tone, 'Elizabeth, did you observe Mary start and walk with that Yankee whom nobody knows, all by herself?' I would prefer her not having gone, Fanny, I said; but since I did not observe her in time to prevent it, it is not of much consequence; they won't go far. 'Elizabeth,' she said again, 'I think it my duty to tell you, I don't approve of the way Mary has behaved. I saw her myself shake hands with him, in the midst of conversation on the guards of the boat. I've thought till now, that Mary had a great deal of dignity, and that the Confederate cause was dear to her heart; but if she can, a month after our troops are gone, form an intimacy with a cotton-buyer, — a man who comes in our midst, not with a sword in his hand, to meet our soldiers face to face on the battle-field, but coldly to speculate on our misfortunes, — if, I say, she can do this, I am much disappointed in Mary McRea, and I must express it.' I was very much amused," continued Elizabeth, "too much so to retort; but I thought to myself, if ever there were two women in the world (after their conduct today) who ought to sympathize with and sustain each other, it is these two; and yet, nobody is as severe upon them as they are on each other."

"Tired!" exclaimed Fanny Lea, as she threw herself into an arm-chair, and her straw hat across the room; "tired! yes, very tired!"

"And something more!" said Major Saunders, as he approached her. "You are not only tired, but irritated and depressed. I see that I have in some way (while striving for your amusement) offended you. Oh, tell me frankly and at once, what I have done?"

"You have not offended me," said Fanny; and in her innermost heart, she thought, "Would to God, you had!"

"Then why this change in your manner, just as I thought myself certain of your regard? Why did you refuse me your

hand, in getting out and in the carriage? Why are your eyes steadily averted from mine? Tell me! Have I in the course of conversation said aught to pain your sensitive heart? But one word, and you will see me penitent."

"Oh, no!" said Fanny; and now her beautiful eyes were raised, with an imploring expression, to his own. "It is of this I complain. Talk to me as you used to do, when we first met; so that each word will bring a stinging repartee to my lips. Say more than you have said already. Ridicule the misfortunes of my country; make light of the hunger and rags of her soldiers; jeer and scoff at the wounded and the dying; let your conversation hereafter never wander from strife, war, and politics. All this it will take, and more, to prevent me —"

"To prevent what?" cried her companion, seizing her hand with wild impetuosity. "Speak! speak!"

But Fanny said nothing; and after a moment, she suffered herself to be led from the chair to the sofa, and he was seated by her side, and with his arm about her waist, that Major Saunders whispered — "We have talked our last of politics; but, with God's blessing, we will often speak of love."

## CHAPTER XXIX.

NEVER saw such evidence of weakness in you before, Caroline," said her aunt.

"O aunty!" said Caroline, and she was very pale; "don't urge me to go; I would so much rather not."

"But I do," answered her aunt. "I not only urge, but insist, that you finish dressing immediately. What can there be in the color of a dress, to keep a young lady from fulfilling an engagement?"

"But it seems so like a fatality, that I should have to put on this black dress."

"No fatality, but two ridiculous accidents, that prove you are a careless girl. If you had not first spilled water on the white one, and then torn a rent a yard long in the green one, this necessity would never have occurred."

"I cannot account for my repugnance to put on this dress," said Caroline; "I have worn it often before."

"My dear child," said her aunt, "it not only distresses, but alarms, your uncle and myself, to see you in this nervous state; and if a change does not soon occur, we will have every reason to regret giving our consent to your engagement with Captain Alexander."

"Then you shall see a change," said Caroline; "for I never will repent my engagement, or make you do so. See! I have put on the dress; fasten it for me, and say that I have done well."

"Well, in this particular instance," answered her aunt; "but I ask more of you. We wish to see you shake off this depression, and be bright again. What is it that you wish? Have you not told me repeatedly, that your uncle was right in opposing an immediate marriage? Have you not received several letters from your lover, and every assurance that he is well? Trust me, my dear girl, were you this moment called by Captain Alexander's name, and his companion in camp, you would but add to his cares."

"I know it well, dear aunt. I am thankful to my uncle for his advice, and feel it was wise. Why my heart is heavy, and has been, for many weeks, I cannot tell. Believe me; I have struggled and do struggle against it. The constant remarks

of my friends upon the loss of my spirits is both embarrassing and annoying; but when I try to talk and laugh, as I used to do before — before — I seem to myself to be acting a part with hollowness."

"Then you must seek constant diversion. To mope in your own room, or sew listlessly all day, is but nursing the evil that distresses us so. Bring all of your good sense and energy to bear on this thing. Try to become interested in objects around you, and accept your present destiny just as it is. Be our comfort and delight as you were of yore, and we will have reason to say, that Captain Alexander, in tempting our Caroline to love him, has not destroyed our happiness in her."

"I am going," said Caroline, as she stood ready in her black dress, and smiling sadly. "Give me a kiss, and believe that I shall come back this evening, with many a smile in return for those I love."

"I said you would come," said Elizabeth, as she mounted the steps of the ambulance and seated herself. "Your aunt spoke quite positively yesterday evening. Don't attempt to jump up, Sue; I've almost broken my neck. Go back into the house and get a chair."

"If there is anything hateful in the whole world to get up into," said Estelle, struggling to reach the top, "it is an ambulance."

"I wonder some of the gentlemen did not come along, instead of having us run such risk of our lives in getting into this contrivance. It is not very polite," said Sue, who, with the assistance of a chair and the driver, had reached the inside of the vehicle, and now seated herself between Mary and Estelle.

"There you are wrong," said Mary; "it is consideration for us that keeps them from coming; for Mr. Hill told me only yesterday, that he knew it would be disagreeable to us to drive through town in an open ambulance with Federal officers."

"I think," said Caroline, "that it would be very inconsistent for us to say so, when we are going twenty miles in the cars by their invitation."

"Nonsense about consistency," said Sue. "Now I think of it, I'm glad enough they didn't come. I would feel terribly ashamed to be seen in their company."

"Then what do you go for?"

"Why, to enjoy myself, to be sure. The dust along the track is entirely laid by last night's rain; we shall see the green trees, and no doubt have a nice lunch; that is what I'm going for."

"What would the Confederate officers say, were they to see us going on a Yankee frolic, I wonder?" said Elizabeth; "for we can hardly call this little episode by another name?"

"I hope they would not misunderstand it," said Caroline; "our attachment to our country's flag and its defenders is surely above reproach."

"You did not want to come, Carrie, did you?" asked Sue.

"No," said Caroline. "I never in my whole life felt less like meeting strangers; but aunty has taken into her head that I am sick, and she was so urgent, I came just to please her."

"But why, may I ask, did you wear a black dress? It is becoming, I admit, but most unsuitable for the season. You will be too warm."

"Don't mention it, please," said Caroline. "I am really annoyed at my own appearance; but, between leaving one half of a limited wardrobe in the country, and tearing and spoiling the other, it became the question of this or nothing."

"Carrie wants to pass for a young widow," said Sue, "and thinks to catch a Yankee beau."

"And is likely to succeed, with her charming paleness," said Elizabeth; "if the Federals think, with me, that the droop of the lily is one of its charms. But, see! there is Fanny Lea already at the gate, with every vestige of her mourning gone, and a blue ribbon under her collar. Do you observe it?"

"Of course I do," said Estelle; and, as Fanny, with the same difficulty the others had encountered, climbed up into the ambulance, she sang:—

"When she comes she'll be dressed in blue,  
And you may be sure her love is true."

"Hush your foolishness!" said Fanny, turning red. "I hoped this little blue ribbon was unassuming enough to escape attention."

"My attention, you mean, but not Major Saunders's; for I'll lay a wager, before night, he'll be wearing your colors in his button-hole."

"Why, Fanny," said Elizabeth, "you have reversed matters. In days of yore, the gentleman wore his lady's colors, but it seems you have adopted those of your lover."

"Have you commenced with that already?" said Fanny, but this time looking far from displeased. "How is it, Caroline, that you fare so well? I never hear people teasing you about Pierre Alexander."

"Because I ask them so earnestly not to do so," said Caroline; and Fanny, seeing that the light mention of his name was painful to her, said no more.

"Good gracious!" said Mary, as they neared the depot, "I had no idea we would meet so many people. Look, what a crowd!"

"Pa and ma would have opposed our coming," said Elizabeth, "had they thought of the thing being so public; but it is now too late to return, and there is nothing left to do but to behave as well as we can; and, Sue, keep your temper (Sue had already begun to pout). As to Mary, I notice a marked change in her; so much so, that for some time she has been an example of discretion to us all."

## CHAPTER XXX.

**T**HIS is indeed kind," said Major Saunders, as he helped the ladies one by one out of the ambulance. "Not one of our invitations declined. Even Miss Estelle, of whose company we were led to fear we might be deprived."

"Mamma is so much better," said Estelle, "that I had no fancy at all to stay at home. Let me introduce my friend, Miss Courteny."

Major Saunders bowed, and led the way into the car.

"I have procured a surprise for you," he said, "and, I think, an agreeable one."

"Is it this beautifully furnished and tastefully finished car?" asked Fanny Lea, looking round in admiration.

"Oh, no! I cannot claim that as a speciality of the occasion. What I mean is, that in spite of Mrs. Woodville's age and dignity, I have been able to procure for our party a still more experienced chaperon, and that Mr. Hill will soon be here with Mrs. Evans, who will also bring her daughters."

"Then our enjoyment will be secured," said Fanny Lea; "or," she continued, as the major walked off, "at least, we'll have company in our misery."

"Don't you feel very awkward?" said Sue, in a whisper, to Caroline.

"Emphatically so," was the answer. "I don't know what to do, either with my hands or my eyes."

"Who is that tall man," Sue whispered again to her sister, "that Major Saunders is introducing to Fanny Lea?"

"What! The one with side-whiskers?"

"The same."

"Colonel R., of General Grant's staff."

"And that curious-looking person, without uniform and with spindle shanks?"

"I do not know, certainly not an officer. The handsome gentleman beside him, with long black whiskers, is Mr. Grant, of Covington, Ky."

"Where did you ever see him before?"

"One morning at Fanny Lea's. He has a brother in the Confederate army."



"Then I hope he'll fall to my lot," said Estelle, "when the cars whistle, and we all pair off."

"What will it profit you? He himself is true blue; but hope, rather, for the company of Colonel Howe, who, in spite of his display of blue and gilt, can make not only an excuse for slavery, but an eloquent justification of it."

"There is Mrs. Evans," cried Fanny, as Mr. Hill handed in that lady, accompanied by a trio of handsome daughters. "Now we shall be off."

"Do you know," said Sue to Mr. Grant, after the whistle had sounded, and the cars moved off, first slowly, then more rapidly, and that gentleman, after an introduction, seated himself beside her; "Do you know, though I've lived in sight of this depot all the time, I've never been on this train before, since I was grown?"

"Never?" said he, with mock astonishment. "That must be a great while to be deprived of the pleasure of railroad travelling. May I inquire how many years?"

"I am almost sixteen," said Sue, not thinking the question strange, which, a few years later, she might have considered impertinent.

Mr. Grant was amused at her simplicity.

"I suppose," he said, "in associating with Yankees, you are well prepared to answer questions. So, pray tell me, since you have been grown so many years, how it happens that you have never been on this railroad before?"

"Why, pa has felt during the last year, that a trip upon it would be certain death. Some kind of an accident happened almost every day, and many lives were lost. The stock company which owns it, for want of iron and other materials, could not keep it in repair, and published a notice to the public, saying they could no longer be responsible either for goods shipped or lives. Before that time, you know, I was constantly at school."

"So I suppose," he said. "And are you not grateful to the kind, good Yankees, for coming down and fixing up the road so nicely, that even your 'paw' is willing for you to take a long pleasant ride?"

Sue showed fight, just as he expected she would; but seeing her sister Elizabeth cast a restraining glance upon her, she was silent.

"How many of you pretty girls," said Mr. Grant, "have already made up your minds to marry Federal officers?"

"Not one of us," began Sue, proudly, "except" — and she looked a little crestfallen, "except it be Fanny Lea."

"Fanny Lea," repeated Mr. Grant; "well, that is exactly as it should be. A young widow will set the example, and all the girls will follow. We shall have plenty of fun in this dusty old town, when the winter sets in; and though a married man myself, with a houseful of children, and some of them older than yourself, I want you to promise me, here on the spot, that I shall have an invitation to your wedding, and may dance the first set with the bride."

An angry retort rose to the young lady's lips, and her eyes flashed fire; but as her sister's foot, which was next her own, was placed on the end of it, with no very gentle pressure, she contented herself with casting a scornful look, and thinking he was the most disagreeable person with whom she had ever met.

Mrs. Woodville's experience had been different. The spindle-shank gentleman, who had, in addition, a pair of very red eyes and teeth stained with tobacco, had, when the cars started, and the gentlemen shuffled about for partners, slipped into a seat by her side, and, without any formal introduction, commenced a conversation. The man and his manners struck Elizabeth as being extremely singular. There was something ambiguous (if I may be allowed the expression), in everything he said and did; and the lady, who prided herself rather on her knowledge of the world, found it impossible in what grade of society to locate this person, or to form an idea to what profession or trade he most probably devoted his attention. In proportion as his appearance and manners disgusted her, his remarks excited curiosity and amusement. He seemed thoroughly conversant with the details of the war and the political issues of the day, and, though occasionally guilty of very disagreeable gallantry, seemed to have some chemical process for abstracting information from the dross of conversation. In spite of her repugnance and fear of being spit upon (for the spindle-shanked gentleman poured a constant stream of tobacco-juice over her left shoulder), Elizabeth found her monosyllables lengthening into sentences, and her sentences, in their turn, becoming arguments. The knight with the spindle shanks (to use Mr. Grant's expression) was in con-

versation no slouch himself; and while treating the lady's opinions with the most distinguished consideration, knew exactly where to interpose an unassuming dissent, to prevent the talker from running aground.

Mr. Grant, who had teased Sue into another rage, in a discussion as to the relative size of female feet, north and south, thought it best to let her recuperate her energies for some minutes, and became an amused listener to what was going on between the neighboring interlocutors. Mrs. Woodville, noticing the expression of quickening interest in his eye, began to feel conscious that she was observed, but a well-timed question from him of the red eyes turned the flow of conversation again in the desired channel. And some fifteen minutes after, the lady turned pale with horror, for Mr. Grant whispered to Sue (and she overheard), "I wonder if your sister suspects that she is wasting all that pretty talk on a newspaper reporter?" Though weeks later, Elizabeth read a detailed report of the conversation, with some remarks on her personal appearance, in the *Chicago Times*.

When the cars, at the end of an hour, suddenly stopped, and the ladies thrust their heads out of the windows, they looked round in pleased surprise. They had left the open fields through which the track runs for some miles after leaving Vicksburg, and were now in a small skirting of woods, on the bank of Big Black River. The spreading branches of the trees composed a dense shade, such a one as had not refreshed them for many months; and grassy banks, too, shaped into rustic seats by nature's canny hand, offered a hospitable reception to those disposed to linger. Nor was this what most attracted their attention. Farther up the hill, yet still beneath the shade, were rows of tents, and temporary arbors, covered with magnolia and holly branches. The Federals truly had chosen a pleasant spot for their camp (for such it was) and had done much to render it more so. From the platform where the cars had stopped, and again from another part of the hill, ran little winding paths, covered with gravel, descending to the river-bank. In the midst of the camp was a farm-house, from which the family had long since fled, and its rooms and gallery were occupied with soldiers and the luggage of camp. Before the scene was examined in detail, Fanny Lea called out from the other side of the train, "Look! look! there is surely the 'Grotto of Calypso!' and there is

a female wrapped in a blue cloud. Can that be the goddess herself?"

Mr. Hill and Major Saunders now approached to tell the ladies what they had not before mentioned — that they were in attendance on a regular picnic party, and that this was the camp of the famous General Sherman.

"But why did you not let us know it before?" said Elizabeth, looking decidedly aghast. "We are not dressed for a picnic, and are very much afraid to meet this illustrious soldier."

"The truth is," said Mr. Hill, trying to laugh, but feeling a little uncomfortable at the panic-struck faces of the ladies, "there was a change in the programme after we sent our notes, that I cannot explain at present; but as to General Sherman, why are you so much afraid?"

"I would just as soon," said Sue, "meet the King of the Cannibal Islands!"

"Yet he never eats women and children."

"Yes, but he burns down houses, and puts people in jail."

"But," said Major Saunders, "we have his royal word on this occasion, that all parties shall return home unmolested. Come, let us assist you from the car."

"O Lord!" said Sue; "I wish we had confessed ourselves, before leaving town."

"Oh, my poor father and mother!" exclaimed Estelle; "you little thought that your children were going into the lion's den."

"This way!" called out an officer. "Mrs. Sherman requests that the ladies be brought immediately to her tent."

"I believe I shall die with fright," said Sue. "I would rather encounter the general himself than his wife."

"Take the right-hand path," called out the herald; "you will find that it leads directly to the door of the pavilion."

"How perfectly beautiful!" exclaimed Sue, getting the better of her terror. "How perfectly beautiful is this tent, or pavilion, or grotto, as Fanny calls it. Look at the rich silk hangings, the soft carpet, the marble vases. It must be enchantment that calls into existence such a retreat for a lady, in this desolated country and these thick woods."

"And oh! such a wilderness of flowers," cried Fanny, who, through the open door, had seen huge bouquets, reaching from floor to ceiling, and heavy wreaths, draping the

door-ways and arched roof of the tent. "Surely this is fit home for a fairy."

Not fairy-like, but certainly interesting, was the lady who now descended the hill with her husband, and after being introduced, gave the party a graceful welcome and invitation to enter. To speak of General Sherman's appearance would be but to describe the delineations of hundreds of wood-cuts and photographs which have appeared in newspapers and store-windows, till the features are familiar to every man, woman, and child within the limits of the United States, and probably many beyond. But the public is loser from the fact that pictures of his wife are so seldom seen; for that lady, though no longer young, with her deep blue eye, very fair complexion, and profusion of wavy golden hair, presents an appearance eminently poetic, which, united with charms of manner and expression, cannot fail to interest and please the beholder. Whether the profound intellect the Federal officers attributed to her at this time, was really her due, it was, of course, impossible to determine in the acquaintance of a single day; but certain it is, that the graceful ease and kindly courtesy extended to her guests on this occasion, and the tact which (even in their awkward position) made them appear the bestowers of favors, rather than the recipients of hospitality, would bespeak a mind and taste by no means ordinary. In our country and generation, when fortune so often selects upon whom to lavish her favors those unfit for distinction, either by birth or education, it is no common satisfaction to know that in this case, the laurel wreath is worn by one whose character and example will stimulate us to domestic virtues at home, and whose dignity and accomplishments may well seem a source of national pride in the eyes of those abroad.

That General Sherman was anxious for a respite from fighting battles, and casting fierce glances about him, was evident; for he seemed more than willing to give way to relaxation for a single day. The ladies, who, fearful lest their looks should bespeak the treason that was running riot in their hearts, kept their eyes steadily fixed on the ground, and their cautious and restrained answers for some time gave promise of little else than monotony and dulness through the day. This was by no means to the taste of the host and hostess, who really were anxious for general enjoyment; and Mrs. Sherman, thinking to try the usual expedients in such cases, called

Fanny Lea's attention to the flowers, and provided Sue with a book of plates, by which she produced a thaw; till the general, appearing at the door of the tent, called to the ladies to come out and repair to the arbors, in company with their expectant gallants, thus raising the social thermometer to some degrees above zero.

The scene was indeed brilliant. Nature made her contributions of shade, grass, and flowers; while soldiers of every military species, cavalry, infantry, and artillery, donned their parade attire and buckled on their swords, to gather round the picturesque arbor, where cards and billiards within, and croquet without, were dispersing amusement to fair women in fleecy robes.

"Look at my beautiful bouquet," said Fanny Lea to Sue. "They are all handsome, but mine most so."

"Yes," said Sue; "I suppose Major Saunders took particular care that should be the case; but oh, Fanny, something makes me sad."

"What is it?"

"That the cost of these bouquets, to say nothing of other items of this entertainment, would buy so many comforts for the brave Confederates, who are so needy."

"That is true," said Fanny, with a sigh; "and yet it would be foolish to let that consideration interfere with our enjoyment; for since the Federals made this preparation for their own amusement, they would probably have spent quite as much money if we had not been here."

"How beautiful these surroundings are," said Fanny to Major Saunders, who that moment joined them. "With brilliant imaginations, we might think ourselves on the famous 'Field of the Cloth of Gold,' where the English and French kings held festivities for so many days. I cannot think, that of all the retinue brought to that spot by these rival monarchs, there was a much more exciting display."

"Certainly not of fair women," said the gallant major, in return.

"Nor of brave men, I'll answer for it," said Fanny Lea, with a smile.

O General Turner! General Turner! did not thy prophetic words, uttered by moonlight on the church-steps, occur? Surely this little woman's heart was drunk with her new-found happiness, or the cock of her conscience would have crowed, not once, or twice, but thrice.

"O Fanny!" said Sue, "in spite of all its beauty, there is a great deal lacking here to make this the 'Field of the Cloth of Gold;' for where is bluff King Hal, and haughty Priest Favorite, the cardinal? Where is the handsome admiral who afterwards stole the heart of the queen? where —"

"Don't crowd your questions so fast," said Fanny, "and I'll answer them every one. General Sherman himself shall be Henry the Eighth, and wait till I select the handsomest chaplain for Wolsey."

"But what I complain of, is that the illusion will so soon vanish," said Sue. "Suppose I go farther, and select an Earl of Leicester, or Duke of Oxford. Plenty of these young men look well enough to bear such high-sounding names; but upon nearer acquaintance, Major Saunders would have to break the spell by introducing one as Captain Jones, and the other as Lieutenant Simpson."

"Yes," said Major Saunders, much amused; "and upon inquiry, we should find that instead of having passed their lives in riding at tournaments, and redressing the wrongs of fair ladies, that one had been conductor on a railroad, and the other just left the coal-oil business."

"Shocking!" said Sue; and she made such a face that General Sherman, who was some distance off, came up and asked, in some anxiety, if she had the toothache.

"Oh, no," she replied; "I'm grieving to think of these degenerate times. Fanny and Major Saunders were speaking of the good old days of the sixteenth century, when gentlemen did nothing but fight, dance, and play on the guitar, and women of noble birth never had to sew on shirts, or sweep up the house. And now, one cannot find a real true warrior, even among so many soldiers, on either side; for he ever so brave and bescarred, and his uniform ever so bright and new, he is not the genuine article; for he has had to work for his living in some common-place way before the war."

"Well," said General Sherman, "that is very discouraging to the romantic ideas of a young lady, I admit; but I can administer some comfort. The brave Cincinnatus, have you not heard of a certain implement of husbandry that he was found exercising, at the very moment he was called to take command of the Roman army? If a ploughman gains so much *eclat*, after the lapse of time, why, I ask you, may not a dry-goods clerk, or any other honest, hard-working fellow? But what is the use of my talking? Let the young men speak for themselves,

and I'll warrant you some one of them will one day persuade you that he is a much greater man than Julius Cæsar; and, in the meantime, I'll go and invite your sister to a walk."

Estelle, who understood the mood of her companion in their stroll about the camp, talked freely and fully, and was not rebuked for her treason, which only served to produce a smile.

"You have heard me spoken of," said General Sherman, "as being hard and unmerciful."

"Have not desolated homes, and starving fugitives," she asked, "told that very tale?"

"It was told," he said, "that I cannot wage war against a country, and leave it all brightness and sunshine. Who can?"

At this moment, they came, in making the rounds of the camp, to numerous huts and tents occupied by negroes, and having that air of sloth and discomfort that invariably occurs, when that unfortunate race are first unshackled from the bonds of slavery.

Estelle, encouraged by his forbearance, paused and said, —

"Do you justify this policy of your government? Why take these people from comfortable homes, and restraints wholesome for their ignorant minds, to relapse into indolence and misery, which makes even a scene like this a cloud with a sable lining?"

"To weaken the enemy," he said, "do I drag them at my chariot-wheels like an incubus. If I feed them, they will not work; if I starve them, they are swept away by consuming disease; and yet, I cannot let them go back to raise corn for the Confederate army — that would be poor policy indeed! Look you, young lady," he continued, "I cannot make war a pleasant thing. What humanity would there be in my prolonging the death-struggle of your suffering country? It is because I know the firmness of the people, that my policy is severe. You tremble at the thunder and lightning that accompanies the storm, but bask in the bright sunshine and balmy air that succeeds, which are the purifying effects of its violence. When ashes and desolation follow the steps of my army; when cries of anguish rise with the smoke of burning houses to heaven; when green fields are turned to desert wastes, and women and children beg for bread in vain, — then will the South return to the Union again, and —"

"And then?" said Estelle.

"She shall be received as a child of the same mother."

And General Sherman kept his word. For when, in two years, a suffering people lay humbled in the dust, and the boot-heel of tyranny was raised to crush the dying worm in its gasp, he, who had most heavily laid on the scourge, extended a friendly hand, and would have offered her honorable terms at the last.

## CHAPTER XXXI.



MOMENT, if you please, General Sherman," said the adjutant, touching his hat; "a Confederate flag of truce has just arrived across the river."

"A piece of good luck for you," said General Sherman, turning to Estelle. "Now we shall have some 'gray-coats' among us, and each of you ladies shall select a partner for croquet."

"Have I your orders to bring them to camp?"

"Go immediately, and give them a pressing invitation to join us."

Estelle broke away, and ran back to the arbor to tell the news.

"Good gracious!" said Sue, when she found she had her sister's ear, "I'm not glad; quite the contrary. What will the Confederates say, and more especially if any of our acquaintances are among them, when they see us out here, actually making merry with the Yankees?"

"She is right," said Mary, turning a little pale; "they will be very likely to misunderstand our position, won't they?"

"If you sit *tete-a-tete* with Mr. Hill, as you have done during the whole morning," said Elizabeth, "they will be very likely to understand yours."

"Oh, me!" said Fanny Lea, and her face elongated perceptively. "I hope Major Saunders and Mr. Hill will have the consideration not to be very attentive, for dreadful reports might creep out into the Confederacy highly injurious, both to myself and Mary."

"I'm sorry you are so crestfallen, ladies," said Estelle; "for myself, since I have no lover, I'm not afraid to meet my friends. But here comes Captain Dunlap, without a single Confederate."

Captain Dunlap came into the arbor in search of General Sherman, and finding him, said that the Confederate officer in charge of the flag begged to be excused from crossing the river, and requested to be allowed to transact his business, and return immediately to General Jackson's camp.

Estelle's face expressed keen disappointment.

"Did you mention that some ladies from Vicksburg were with us?" asked General Sherman.

"I told him," said Captain Dunlap, "that some pishun secesh girls were up here; but he laughed, and said he didn't believe it. From something he said afterwards, however, I concluded that he felt unwilling to accept the invitation, because General Jackson was unable to extend a similar one to the officers in charge of the flag sent by yourself some days ago."

"Then I cannot on that plea excuse him," said General Sherman. "Go again, and tell him that I claim to be much better fixed to entertain company than General Jackson; and insist, together with the ladies, that he come immediately and lunch with us."

While Captain Dunlap went again across the river with General Sherman's message, the ladies were surrounded with Federal officers, waiting, like themselves, for his return.

"I am so much afraid," said Estelle, "that he will again refuse. Why should General Jackson have acted discourteously on the occasion referred to? He is said to be a gentleman, and an old army officer."

"There is no actual discourtesy complained of," said General Sherman; "only an omission, and for it we can readily make excuse; as General Jackson's department has been thoroughly ravaged, and his command must be scarce of food."

"I cannot excuse him on that ground," said Estelle, "for, in the first place, I am not willing to admit any part of the Confederate army as actually starving; and as for offering plain fare, he should not have been ashamed, for did not General Marion feast the proud representative of King George on sweet potatoes?"

Then followed sundry innuendoes from the surrounding officers, not in good taste, but by no means unkindly meant, on the necessities of the Confederate troops and the general poverty of the revolted states. And Lieutenant Gregg said, in conclusion, "These gray-backed fellows, ladies, on whom you put so much store, are, most of them, reduced to their last suit, and from starvation have lost that symmetry of figure, of which the southern men used so much to boast, and look just as thin as laths."

"There!" cried Estelle, as Captain Dunlap appeared, accompanied by the dashing Confederate major, who had been sent with the flag of truce; "behold the living refutation of

your words. There is Major Morgan; and I leave it to any disinterested person, if he carries not near two hundred pounds of flesh? And as for the dear gray uniform, looked it ever brighter or more beautiful than now, when it comes for a moment before our captive eyes, to gladden them with hope and promise?"

"Don't be so enthusiastic," said one of the Federals near; "that person is no sample of the Confederate army at large; but is kept (suit of clothes and all) for flag-of-truce occasions. And do you know, I have heard, that when it becomes necessary to send a message to the Federal camp, a whole regiment of men are often deprived of rations for a week, that he may be fattened?"

Sue threw at the Yankee a glance of withering scorn, for the sight of only one gray-coat had revived the spirit of defiance within her.

But we will not detain the reader longer. He may already have wearied with the common-place trials and light talk of those, who, in the midst of war and misery, found time to expend the natural exuberance of youth in laughter and pleasure-seeking. The bright Fanny Lea and the high-spirited Mary McRea have long since become the pride of northern homes, and reached out their hands with peace-offerings to their brothers, like the Sabine women of old. Those mentioned in our story, who still live beneath the sun of fair Mississippi, have learned to bear their chains in patience, and slowly, from the ruins of former days, to build up hopes for the future. But ere the paper is wasted and the pen laid aside, look with me upon a scene of sadness, the extent of which was not realized at the time, but which comes back with stunning recollection now. For there, on the bank of that sluggish river, a young girl, clad by chance in black, and over whose hair Elizabeth Woodville, as the evening approached, had accidentally thrown a widow's veil, took her last look upon one that she loved to idolatry, and upon whom she had cast her every hope in life.

The sun was setting, when the gay party, who had spent the day in laughter and feasting, gathered on the bank of Big Black (then the dividing line between Federal and Confederate lines), to see Major Morgan embark in a little boat, and bid him farewell. Among the females, each wore a smile except the pale face of Caroline Courteny; and Fanny Lea, who had



twined many a wreath of the wild yellow jessamine, had been requested, in crowning every other brow, to leave hers undorned. She had not suspected that her lover was near, and he, equally unconscious of her proximity, had thought the day long and tiresome, while waiting for Major Morgan on the other side. It was Elizabeth who first saw the tall, soldierly form in the group of gray-clad figures upon the hill, and, turning to her friend, whose listlessness had moved and half-irritated her, she said, "Wake up! wake up, Carrie! for as I live, there is Pierre Alexander!"

"Pierre Alexander!"

"There, just mounting his horse," cried Elizabeth; "run to the foot of the bank; for another moment, and he will be gone."

On the wings of the wind, she flew to the nearest point, and forgetful of the hundred eyes that looked upon her, she called aloud, repeating his name.

But a moment, and he was opposite, his eye made luminous with surprise and joy.

"Know that you were there! Of all things, the last of my thoughts, to see you in General Sherman's camp. Think, only think! what pleasure we have lost."

"And is it really too late?" she asked. "Can we not even yet have a half-hour together? Cannot I come to you, or you to me?"

"Let me ask," he said, disappearing up the bank, "but I fear it is now too late."

In wild expectation she stood, her bosom heaving with hopes and fears, which turned to a weight of disappointment when her lover came again, shaking his head with a sad smile.

"Fate has decided against us," he said; "they will not spare me even a moment for you. Let us hope that another time—"

"I fear there will be no other time."

"Let us hope."

The crowd upon either bank vanished from his sight. The hundred voices were hushed; everything was forgotten, but the frail fair form that stood opposite; and Pierre Alexander, stretching out his arms as if to encircle it, pressed them tightly across his heart — and was gone.

## CONCLUSION.

**B**Y the shores of a northern lake, where the snows lie deep in winter, and the fierce winds whistle with deafening sound, there is a grave, and in it lies Pierre Alexander, the noble, the tender, the brave. 'Mid the walls of a prison, near the city where they bend the knee to Baal, where the jingle-of money-changing and the busy feet of men on 'change incessantly disturb the air, and naught is worshipped but the golden calf, the manly spirit, born beneath the almost tropical sun of St. Mary's, and nourished by the balmy breezes of the southern gulf, was frosted by the rigors of a northern winter, and withered slowly beneath the destroying blast. Brave and courageous in battle, patient and enduring in affliction — true type of the Confederate soldier — with manly heroism he laid him down to die; and Hamilton, his fellow-prisoner, he sent a message to her he loved.

"Tell her," he said, "that I have prayed to God this may not blight her youth. Tell her to weep for me while the winter lasts; but with the enlivening influences of spring, let peace and sunshine enter again her soul. When I am dead, take the ring she gave me, from off my heart, and if you survive these prison hardships, and this frigid cold, lay it again in her hand. Tell her, in after years, to give the warmth of her smile and comforts of her love to another, if such should seem her fate; but to ask of him the favor to look sometimes on this ring, and cast a thought upon one who would have loved her well."

Caroline Courtney survived him one year. 'Twas not that her heart was broken, for the youthful heart can never break, but that a merciful heaven granted her an early respite, from the trials of a saddened life.

When Hamilton gave her back the ring, she took it with a steady hand and tearless eye.

"Since with such noble courage he met his death," she said, "think not I shall be too cowardly to endure life."

But, when an epidemic fever the next summer seized upon her, and weeping friends stood round, a glad smile, as of yore, lit up her face.

"Rather rejoice," she said, "than grieve for me, that one in whose life the only green spot is a grave, should be called away so soon. Fate has decreed that the ashes of the southern soldier shall mingle with the northern soil; and that the cyprus which is planted above my resting-place shall never cast its shadow where he sleeps. But what signifies it, that the caskets moulder apart, for the jewels shall beam bright in heaven, enclosed in the setting of immortality."

So, by the cruel fortunes of war, ended the hopes of many a brave man and fair girl; and the busy world soon dried its tears, leaving to angels the record of their loves. But to one heart which beats beneath the serge garment of a new-made nun, the memory of Caroline Courtney and Pierre Alexander will ever be green, and for them Marion Ludlow will offer a daily prayer.