

HOPE MARSHALL;

OR,

GOVERNMENT AND ITS OFFICES.

BY

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AUTHOR OF "ANNIE GRAYSON; OR, LIFE IN WASHINGTON," "THE IMPROVVISATRICE," "BESSIE LINTON," ETC. ETC.

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TO
SARAH POLKE,

My Mother,

THIS BOOK IS AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED

BY

N. P. LASSELLE.

PREFACE.

A FEW years since, I gave to the public a volume describing social life in the national metropolis. The favor it received has induced me to send forth another book, exhibiting glimpses of Washington life from a different point of view.

The characters portrayed in this work are pictures drawn from observation, not imagination. The incidents related with regard to claims and claimants are actual occurrences, with no fiction about them; and the description given of the manner of disposing of offices is more fact than fancy.

Deeming it unnecessary to write a long preface giving the why and wherefore of my having written this volume, I will merely say to the distant reader that in these pages I have endeavored to give a true portraiture of "how things are done in Washington." How I have succeeded, only those who have been in the Federal City can say.

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CHAPTER I.

RETURN FROM ABROAD.

"WELCOME home, dear mamma!" said a beautiful bright-eyed girl, as she kissed the pale cheek of her mother, who was reclining, in an invalid-chair, near a window curtained by the flower-laden boughs of the wild rose.

"Thank you, dear child; thank you. Oh, it is so pleasant to be at home!"

"And you look so nice and cosy in the dear old room where, when I was a little girl, you taught me my first lessons both in reading and sewing. I am sure you will soon recover your health amid the dear old familiar scenes. The color will come back to your cheek and the elasticity to your step. Then my darling mamma will be the blooming rose instead of the faded lily. When you are entirely well, won't the dear old rooms, that have been so long unoccupied and silent, be filled with company, and we'll make them echo with mirth, music, and dancing?"

"I hope, my dear child, your happy anticipations will all be realized. Oh, I have so yearned for home! I trust the air of my native land and the quiet comfort of my country-home will restore me to health."

"Yes, yes, mamma, I know it will. I feel just like a bird uncaged. I can now realize fully the beauty as well as the truthfulness of the words of the poet." And she trilled forth, in a voice of rare melody,—

"Mid pleasures and palaces though we may roam,
Be it ever so humble, there's no place like home."

Looking into her mother's face, she asked,—

"Have not we realized the truth of this couplet? We have resided near and joined in the pleasures and gayeties of one of the proudest courts in the world; we have visited the finest palaces in Europe; yet there is more true heart-happiness to be found in this dear home, humble though it be in comparison, than in all the gayety of courts and splendor of palaces."

"True, my dear child," answered the sweet, low tones of the pale-faced woman. "There is no place like home,—particularly when each member of the family cultivates those kindly feelings and gentle graces which give to life its greatest happiness."

The conversation was here interrupted by the entrance of an old family servant. She bore in her hand a tea-tray, upon which was placed a cup of chocolate and a bit of nicely-browned toast. Drawing a small stand to the side of the invalid, she laid the tray upon it and urged her to eat.

Thus urged, the invalid took the spoon and sipped some chocolate,—more for the purpose of satisfying the faithful servant than from any inclination she had to eat.

Whilst the mistress was sipping the chocolate, the servant took a seat at a short distance from her and scanned her face with an earnest, wistful gaze. Having contemplated her thus for some time, she drew a long breath, and a tear glistened upon her eyelashes.

"Miss Maggie, honey," said she, "now that I comes to git a good look at ye, I 'scovers you looks mighty poorly. You done wrong, chile, goin' to furrin parts 'thout takin me 'long of you. Ef you'd bin tuk proper keer of, you'd not bin so changed in five years. I'se be bound you missed Minta many and many a time."

"Yes, Minta, I did miss you; but if I had taken you with me what would have become of the house here?"

"The house mout have gone to the dogs for all me 'fore I'd stayed, if I had 'spected you'd come home looking sich a shadder of your own sweet self. Well, it's the fust time I was ever parted from you sence I nussed you a baby; and I knows 'twill be the last, while dere's breaif in both our bodies."

"But, Aunt Minta, you'll soon nurse her up well again," said the glad young voice of the daughter.

"Dat I will,—please God. But bless you, honey, while yer mamma was fadin' away in them furrin parts, you was growin' purty as a pink. 'Deed, you's mighty good-lookin'. Is you full of fun as you used to was? I tell you what, chile: the house has 'peared mighty solemcholy while you wur away."

"Never mind: I'll make it gleesome enough now, to make up for lost time, if you'll just nurse mamma back to her old-time health."

But let us introduce to our readers the entire family, who, after an absence of some years, have returned to this beautiful homestead.

Judge Marshall had for many years been one of the most influential politicians of Kentucky. Being a fine speaker, frank and cordial in his social intercourse with the people, he was just the person to carry the masses with him; and generally, whatever cause he espoused, he won the people to its support.

Mrs. Marshall was one who by her unostentatious piety and gentle womanly character won the love of all who knew her. Wherever there was sorrow to soothe or distress to relieve, there was she seen. Some, who could not conceive of that true religion which prompted her to practise the precepts of her Divine Master, said she performed these gentle charities for the purpose of increasing her husband's popularity with the people.

These remarks being repeated to her by some 'busybody, she replied,—

"It matters not what motives the world attributes to me, so I feel a consciousness in my own heart that I am actuated by a true sympathy for my fellow-beings."

Her children—of whom she had three—were what might be expected of them, having received the training of such a mother. The daughters were gentle, pure-hearted, and kind; the son was brave, honorable, and just.

At the time we present them to our readers, they had just returned from Spain, where they had resided for some years, Judge Marshall having during that time been minister to the Spanish court.

He would have remained abroad longer; but the health of his wife became so delicate that he was alarmed for her safety and yielded to her desire to return to her native land.

The homestead to which they have returned was a gift from the father of his bride on the day of his marriage. Here the honey-moon was spent; and here they had always resided save when called from home to attend to the important official duties committed to him.

The beauty of location was such as to make it a desirable place in which the weary spirit might seek to rest, independent of the tender associations clustering about it in the bosom of Mrs. Marshall.

Sweet Maggie Gray was the only child of a man of great wealth. When her gentle heart was won by young Charlie Marshall, who had nothing but his profession and brilliant talents to begin life with, the worldly-wise said, "He will never get her for a bride." But they were mistaken in their prophecies with regard to the future of these young people.

When Charlie Marshall went to Mr. Gray, acknowledging his love for the gentle Maggie and begging the father not to reject his suit on account of his want of wealth, the old gentleman asked, in a voice of assumed sternness,—

"What business had you—poor dog that you are—to fall in love with my daughter?"

"Indeed, I did not mean to," stammered the young man; "but her beautiful face and gentle manner made my heart captive before I knew I was in danger."

"And you told her so, I suppose, you young scamp! Repeat to me every word you said to her."

"To save my soul, I could not remember what I said. But this I do remember:—when my devotion to her got the better of my pride, and I avowed my love to her, regretting that the great disparity of our fortunes prevented me from asking hers in return, she generously told me she would in that case bestow her love upon me unasked."

"She did, eh? The saucy baggage!"

"Yes, sir; and she furthermore said she was sure, if I would ask it, you would give your consent to our marriage, because you prized your daughter's happiness more than you did gold."

"So I do, boy; so I do," answered the father, dropping his sternness of voice.

"Then you will give your consent to our marriage?"

"Yes: take her, and be kind to her. It shall never be said that old Harry Gray preferred gold to the happiness of his only child. I have enough for you both."

When the young man, in glowing language, commenced expressing his thanks, his rapturous speech was cut short by Mr. Gray with—

"No words, Charlie, no words: acts will prove how you value my darling. She has always been a petted child; yet she is not wayward nor capricious. Unkindness would break her heart. Mind you never forget that when you take her happiness into your keeping."

Charlie promised he would not. And faithfully was the promise kept; for, however impetuous and quick-tempered he was toward others, to his cherished Maggie no expression of impatience ever escaped his lips.

Mr. Gray had been dead many years previous to the opening of our story; but he lived long enough after the marriage of his daughter to feel assured her happiness was safe in the keeping of Charlie Marshall.

CHAPTER II.

GOSSIP OF HOME.

It is a lovely morning early in June. The family of Judge Marshall is seated around the breakfast-table, enjoying with a keen relish the fresh butter, white honeycomb, new-laid eggs, with the etceteras, that constitute the morning meal in the country.

"Oh, isn't it delicious to have every thing so fresh and nice? Home forever!" said the voice of Hope, in gleeful tones.

"Yes, home forever, say I too," responded Mr. Marshall. "Yet I shall have to leave to-morrow and be absent for some days."

"Oh, Charles," said Mrs. Marshall, looking wistfully into the face of her husband, "don't go. Have you tired of the quietude of home already?"

"No, Maggie, I have not tired; but I must go. You know I have, when at home, attended every Democratic convention that has met to nominate a candidate for the Presidency; and it will not do to absent myself now."

"I was in hopes your long absence from political excitement had lessened your interest in it."

How little can woman comprehend the restless ambition of a politician! Every thing must yield to it. Mr. Marshall loves his accomplished and gentle wife with a devotion as tender as when he first won her to be his bride. He is proud of his beautiful and spirited children, and is happy in their happiness; yet the greater portion of his time and thoughts is given to his country, or, in other words, to political excitement and management.

Even when at home he has but a small share of his time to devote to his family, his residence, which is but four miles from

the city of Lexington, is such a convenient distance for the politicians to ride out and partake of the hospitalities of the mistress and have a political conference with the master of the mansion.

For example, here he has been home but a few days, and two or three Lexington politicians are dining with him. One of them—the editor of the leading Democratic paper of the State—says to him,—

"Well, Charlie, we are truly glad to have you here at this time. I tell you, we will need you this summer; for we are going to have a warm time and a hard fight this Presidential campaign."

"You must not expect too much from me. I have been so long absent I expect the people have forgotten me."

"Not a bit of it. They do not forget an old favorite so easily."

"But it seems they have a new favorite. Since my return I hear Bringham's name upon every lip, as if he were considered the great man of the party."

"Well, he has been regarded as the leader since you left. He is a trump with the politicians, but not a favorite with the people. No, no: you are the man with the people. I suppose your sojourn with the proud old Dons of Spain has not unfitted you for stump-speaking?"

"Oh, no; I shall engage in my old vocation with renewed spirit from the fact of my having been so long withdrawn from it."

"I am truly glad to hear you say so; for you will be our main stay to stump it through the entire State."

"Why not Bringham?"

"Well, you know this is the long session, and he will be occupied with his Senatorial duties till August or September. Then, when he returns, he may be sick. He is very subject to sudden and violent attacks of inflammatory rheumatism."

"Indeed! I am truly sorry to hear such an account of my old friend's health. But perhaps you are mistaken. He was looking remarkably well when I met him in Washington as I returned home."

"Oh, these attacks do not affect his looks greatly; but he is very liable to be afflicted with them when the drudgery of an election comes on, or when some question comes up in the Senate that it is doubtful upon which side to vote to please the popular will. Sickness at such a time prevents him from committing himself by a vote."

"Your words admit of a strange interpretation: you do not mean to imply that my old friend Bringham would shirk a vote or stand back from work in the hour of need?"

"I do not imply any thing: I simply state facts. But we all know Bringham would rather appropriate the honors and profits of a success than do the drudgery necessary to secure it."

"Nothing very remarkable in that."

"Yet a high-toned man of honor would not do it. You would not."

"As Bringham is a friend of mine, we will not depreciate him in his absence."

"I fear you will not find him reliable, should you ever happen to need his friendship."

"I cannot doubt him. Was he not most earnest in securing me the appointment to Spain? Indeed, it was he who first proposed it to me."

"Yes; and he had an object in it."

"Certainly he had. He knew I wished to go abroad with my family, and his object was to serve a friend."

"And with him a more potent object was to have that friend out of the way when the Senatorial election came on: otherwise, the friend's popularity being so great, he might be elected to the United States Senate instead of himself."

"You are unjust to Bringham."

"No; I have watched him closely for the last ten years. I can read him like a book. I *know* him to be a political trickster, who will sacrifice any one, no matter how much the person has trusted and served him, if by so doing he can promote his own interest either with regard to money or political advancement. I only trust you may never have occasion to acknowledge the truth of my remarks."

"I trust I never shall. There is nothing so painful to me as to find one whom I have trusted unworthy."

"It is so with all honorable men. But let us dismiss this subject. We have already given it too much time,—for which I beg the ladies will excuse us."

"Certainly we will," replied Hope, the elder daughter; "and we will do so the more readily if you will tell us some of the gossip of the city. I am dying to hear about the young folks."

"Really, miss, I would gladly relieve you from your dying condition, but you have applied to a poor person for gossip that will interest a lady. However, mention those of whom you would like particularly to hear, and perhaps I can think of something."

"Oh, well, tell me about the Caldwells, the Offutts, the Clays, and your own young people."

"To begin: Gus Caldwell has grown up a very fine young man, but he cares no more about the ladies than my old shoe. Miss Bringham has been spending some weeks with the Caldwells, and his mother can hardly get him to pay her the attention which, as a guest of the family, is imperatively due her. But young Offutt makes up for the remissness of Gus. He is her most devoted cavalier. Tom Clay—Well, there is some talk that he will be a character in a romance."

"Oh, that will be charming! But in what manner?"

"Well, some months ago he went to Terre Haute, Indiana, to look at some lands owned by his father in that vicinity. It is said, whilst there, he made such an impression on the heart of a sentimental young lady that her friends are afraid she will become a fit subject for a lunatic-asylum."

"Not by his beauty, I am sure, unless he is much changed since I saw him."

"No, but by his Byronian readings. She was an enthusiastic admirer of Byron; and he read Childe Harold, The Corsair, and some other poems to her with such exquisite taste and so much feeling that she fell desperately in love with him; and since his return home she has gone melancholy-mad."

"Why, that is romantic. Now tell me of your own young folks."

"Well, let me think. Oh, I'll send Alice out to see you to-morrow, and she can tell you all the gossip of the city."

When the dinner was ended, Mr. Marshall accompanied his friends to the city, and Mrs. Marshall, with the children, went to take a stroll through the beautiful grounds. Mrs. Marshall soon became fatigued, and she and Hope seated themselves beside an old elm-tree, beneath the shade of which they had spent many happy hours before they went abroad.

Harry raced with Maggie through the shaded walks, whilst Hope and her mother sat beneath the old tree, recalling pleasant memories of the past and weaving bright plans for the future. Or, at least, Hope was gilding the future with rainbow-hues; and the mother did not dim its brightness by an expression of her own sad fears that for her there was nothing but sickness and suffering until she entered that unclouded future beyond the grave.

The mother of Mrs. Marshall died with consumption when she was very young. She could just remember her. She now felt that the seeds of the same fatal disease were rapidly developing themselves in her own system and she was doomed to go soon. Her husband and children were so hopeful that her health would be restored by a return to the old home-scenes, she could not distress them with her own fears.

CHAPTER III.

FAMILIAR CHAT OF TWO FRIENDS.

"AH, Alice! here you are," said Hope, as she skipped lightly down the marble steps to meet her friend. After almost smothering her with kisses, she continued:—"Your papa is a real clever old foggy, to send you to see me as he promised! Come into my room, Allie. Mamma is asleep; and we won't disturb her. Poor mamma is very weak, and she has not recovered from the fatigue of her journey. But come to my room: we can there have one of our nice old-time chats before mamma awakes.

"Oh, Allie, you don't know how glad I *am* to get home! If it were not that I have a shadow on my happiness by mamma's ill health, I believe I should go wild with joy. But never mind: she'll soon be well,—I know she will; and then won't we turn the old house topsy-turvy? I'll have you, Lizzie Woodford, and Carrie Green with me whilst the warm weather lasts. By-the-way, why didn't Carrie come with you? I thought she would be the first person to welcome me home."

"She is not in the city. She has gone to New York with her uncle, and they will not be back for some days."

"Oh, I am so sorry. She could tell me more news in one day than you will in a week. Is she as great a rattle-pate as ever?"

"Just about. But were not she and you a sweet pair at old Barry's Academy! And poor Miss Pinchem,—you were a thorn in the flesh to her."

"We were too bad. It makes me ashamed of myself when I think of the pranks we used to play upon her. But let us not waste our time talking of the past: I want to hear of the present. So, Allie, just tell me all about everybody."

"That would be a hard task. I see, Hope, you have your old quick, impulsive manner: you want to know every thing at once; and I will gratify you as far as it is in my power. Let me see: with whom shall I begin? Miss Bringham, I guess, as she is a visitor."

"I'm all attention; or, as an Indian would say, 'my ears are open.'"

"Well, she has been spending some weeks with Mrs. Caldwell, and she has been the reigning belle during that time. All the gents are bowing at her shrine."

"Why, your papa said Gus Caldwell cared no more for her than his old shoe."

"Well, he is an exception, but the only one. Ed Offutt is her shadow."

"She must be very intellectual, accomplished, and beautiful so to captivate Ed Offutt. He used to be remarkably fastidious in his taste with regard to ladies."

"Yet she is neither intellectual, accomplished, nor beautiful."

"Then what is the charm? Do describe her to me."

"I am not good at delineation; but, to gratify you, I will attempt it. In the first place, she affects what the gentlemen designate a charming frankness, but which is, in truth, saying disagreeable things in a manner so blunt that it would be called rudeness were she not the daughter of a wealthy and distinguished man. As to her accomplishments, she has no musical taste nor talent. Her dancing, Gus Caldwell says, has about as much grace as he would expect a cow to exhibit, were that useful animal to attempt dancing. But then he qualified his remark by saying, how could we expect grace of motion from one whose figure resembled a bag of mush dressed up more than any thing he could think of? You know Gus always did make queer comparisons. However, in this instance it is tolerably apt."

"Then it is very evident to me she is not sylph-like in form. But has she a pretty face?"

"Well, her complexion is good and her features are regular,

but the expression is not pleasing. She has a glittering black eye, indicating cunning and shrewdness; and she converses with flippancy and ease upon the ordinary topics usually discussed in the fashionable world."

"And that is her picture?"

"As truly as I can portray it."

"Don't you remember the rhapsodies Ed used to go into about female perfections? The woman that could come up to his standard must equal Madame de Staël in intellect, be beautiful as an houri, graceful as a sylph, and sing like Jenny Lind."

"Were you to remind him of that picture now, he would say it was the pencillings of a college-boy's folly."

"But what can be the attraction that Miss Bringham exerts over him?"

"*Metallic*. Her father is very wealthy. Then he holds a distinguished position, and aspires to a still higher. He expects to be President of this glorious galaxy of States before he shuffles off his mortal coil."

"Indeed! Then Ed sees her through a medium well calculated to dispel his school-boy fancies. It would be something worth giving up a boyish dream for, to become the son-in-law of a President."

"It is not likely he will attain that honor, even should he become the husband of Miss Bringham. It is thought by knowing politicians that the aspirations of her noble papa will never be realized."

"That may be. Yet he has the money; and that, in this age of the world, is the all-important consideration. Beauty, grace, intelligence, and accomplishments are unsubstantial visions for college-boys to go into ecstasies over; but when they become men and mix with the world they become sensible of the great superiority of the *solid* charms. That reminds me of Clara Dudley. Tell me about her. Carrie wrote me she was married."

"Oh, yes: Clara's money bought her a husband, but not happiness. He spends her money in dashing style, but neglects her sadly."

"I am truly sorry for poor Clara. Being an orphan, with no relative living, she so much craved the sympathy of some heart whose love she had a right to claim; and she looked forward to marriage as the means of giving her that happiness. Though plain and attractive in person, she has a noble and affectionate heart; and it is too bad that she is a neglected wife."

"He played the devoted lover to perfection till he had her money and property secured; then his devotion began to cool, and before a year of her married life had passed she saw but too plainly it was her money, not herself, to which her husband was wedded. There is not an unmarried man in the city a greater beau than he. In the getting-up of parties, picnics, and every thing of the kind, he is the leader; whilst poor Clara, whose health is wretched, remains at home alone, often unable to leave her sick-room. He is famous for Platonic friendships; and I doubt not he will contract a violent friendship for you, Hope."

"Well, I can assure you it will not be reciprocated if he neglects Clara. But where did she come across him? He is not a Kentuckian."

"No: he is a New Yorker; and she met him at Saratoga, whither she had accompanied Carrie Green and her uncle."

"Ah! an adventurer picked up at the Springs! She ought to have known——"

"As I live, there he is now!" interrupted Alice, looking out from the window. "Coming to pay his respects to the newly-arrived."

Hope had scarcely time to cast her eyes toward the shaded drive leading from the public road, before a beautiful carriage stopped in front of the portico. A footman sprang from his seat, opened the door, let down the carriage-steps, and a gentleman of very elegant manners and great personal beauty descended therefrom.

"I should certainly feel disposed to admire the husband of my friend," said Hope, turning to Alice, after having watched him enter the house, "were I not aware that his qualities do not correspond with his handsome exterior. I am half disposed not to see him. I can very properly excuse myself upon the plea of not being rested from the fatigue of my journey."

Hope had scarcely finished the remark when a servant brought her the card of Mr. and Mrs. Alvord, with the compliments of Mr. Alvord, and he would be happy to see Miss Marshall for the purpose of delivering a message from his wife.

"Of course you will see him?" said Alice.

"Yes, for Clara's sake. John, tell him I'll be down in a moment. You'll go with me to the drawing-room, Alice?"

"Yes, I'll go. But I know the gentleman would rather not see me, because I occasionally give him a rating on account of his neglect of Clara."

The two girls descended to the drawing-room. Mr. Alvord, with a graceful ease, congratulated Hope on her return to her native country. Then he offered an apology for calling so soon; "but," said he, "my poor wife, whose health is very bad, so urged me to bring you a message from her that I could not resist her solicitations."

"I am pleased to hear from my friend Clara, and I regret exceedingly her inability to call herself."

"She told me to present her love and beg you would call to see her as soon as you are sufficiently rested to do so."

"Tell her I will call in the morning, and, if I find her able to sit up, I will bring her home with me."

"I am sure she will not be able to accompany you home, unless the pleasure of seeing you should give her an accession of strength."

The message of his wife being disposed of, Mr. Alvord entered into conversation with Hope, discussing foreign countries, music, the last new novel, and all other topics suitable to touch upon during a morning's call. He possessed fine conversational powers; he had exerted himself to please; and he went away believing he had made a favorable impression upon his new acquaintance, —which would have been the case had she not heard beforehand that he was neglectful of his wife.

Besides being a fine conversationalist, he understood human nature well, and knew how to adapt himself to those with whom he came in contact; and thus he was a general favorite. Although his wife was dying of an aching heart, none, save one or two

intimate friends of hers, deemed him other than a kind, affectionate husband. His acquaintances, in speaking of him, would say, "True, he does leave Clara alone a good deal; but he is so social and gay in his disposition, and, besides, his society is so much courted, it is not to be expected that he can be constantly by the bedside of a sick wife." Clara was rather blamed that she did not exert herself to go more into society with him.

Thus matters stood in the opinion of the world. This was the impression he wished to give; and he succeeded admirably. But, could this same world have seen the reality as it was known to Clara herself and to one or two intimate friends, it would have perceived she was not to blame. He was glad when ill health kept her at home. Often she wished to accompany him, and he would prevent her from doing so by harsh and cruel words.

When Mr. Alvord had left, Hope went to her mother's room. Finding her awake and much refreshed, she took Alice to see her; and the balance of the day was spent in this pleasant family-room.

The sun was just setting when Alice Brandon took her leave. Its last rays fell upon Hope as she stood upon the marble steps watching her departure; and never did sunbeams fall upon one more lovely. Her figure, slightly above the medium height, was grace personified, and her face was beautiful as a poet's dream. Its expression usually is that of arch playfulness; but now there is a look of grave earnestness in the soft brown eyes, which, joined to the slightly-drooping attitude, gives the impression that she is thinking of something that saddens her. And such is the case; for, as she turns to go into the house, she murmurs,—

"Yes, poor friend, I will come to you. It makes my heart sad to think your life-dream is shattered. My own life has ever been made so happy by the love and care of such a dear, good mother that I feel the more for thy lonely orphanage."

Her reflections were interrupted by the sound of hasty footsteps, and in a moment her brother was by her side.

"I say, sis," was his exclamation, "I have been to the city to-day with papa. We met Gus Caldwell; and he told me his

mother intends giving a grand party in honor of our return. Won't that be glorious? You and I will of course be the distinguished guests of the evening."

"You, Harry! you! Why, you are but a child!"

"I'm nearly sixteen years old," said he, drawing his slight boyish figure up to its full height.

"A venerable age, truly."

"Now, don't you go to laughing at me, sis, or I'll not tell you any thing more; and I've got lots of news."

"Then I'll be gravity itself till I get the news. So let us go sit beneath the old elm-tree whilst you unfold your budget."

Placing her hand upon his shoulder, they proceeded to their favorite seat,—where we will not follow them, as we feel no particular interest in Harry's boyish communications.

CHAPTER IV.

THE GRIEF-STRICKEN WIFE.

How true it is that wealth and external surroundings cannot give happiness! For, were such the case, how happy would have been the life of Clara Alvord!

Her home was one of the most splendid found in the wealthy and aristocratic city of Lexington. The grounds surrounding the palace-like mansion were beautiful with the rarest shrubs and plants. In the conservatory bloomed the most beautiful exotics. Her own boudoir was a perfect temple of taste. Every thing that could gratify the sense or minister to comfort is there collected. Yet who that looks upon the pale, wan face of its occupant but will discover how futile are these surroundings to give happiness?

Although she has been a wedded wife for two years, she is now but eighteen,—scarcely past the age of young girlhood; yet, as you look upon her, you have a painful impression that hope and happiness have died out in her bosom. No glad smile plays about her lips; and her eyes are heavy with unshed tears.

"Lottie," said she to a faithful servant who loitered in the room, "come brush my hair and arrange my dress. Hope Marshall is coming to see me this morning; and I do not wish her to think I have grown careless of my personal appearance since my marriage."

"Yes, Miss Clara, 'deed I will. I's glad to see you take notice 'bout yer dress, and I's glad Miss Hope am cum home. She's so full of life and sperrits, I know her 'ciety will 'liven you up and do you a power of good."

"Yes, Lottie, it will; for she is the dearest friend I ever had. Even the thought of seeing her makes me feel better than I have done for a long time. I wonder if she won't soon be here.

I feel as if I could scarcely await her arrival. Were I to hear the door-bell this minute, I believe I would try to run and meet her, as I used to do in the days of our childhood."

Lottie had just completed the arrangement of her mistress's toilette when the door opened and Hope entered. No door-bell had announced her arrival; for, finding the door open, she skipped up-stairs, as was her wont ere she went abroad; and, before Clara had time to utter an exclamation of joyful surprise, she was encircled in the arms of her friend, who kissed her lips, cheek, and brow ere she spoke a word. Then, clasping the thin, pale hands lovingly in her own dimpled ones, she said,—

"My pet darling, I was so sorry to hear of your ill health! But, now I have got home, I am not going to let you be sick. It is bad enough that you married before my return, cheating me out of being bridesmaid, as you promised I should be. Never mind: I'll pay you for it. If I can do nothing else to annoy you, I'll flirt with your husband; for, really, he is the handsomest man I have seen for a long time."

Hope ran on thus to hide the shock she felt at seeing her friend so changed.

"Well, Hope," said Clara, a faint smile playing about her lips,—for she was pleased to hear her friend commend her husband,—“I guess it will be an easy matter for you to get up a flirtation with Robert. When he came home yesterday, he went into rhapsodies over your beauty, grace, and intelligence. Had it been any other than you, I should not have been pleased to hear him speak so admiringly."

"Ah, well, you would better take care. You must not stay moping in a sick-room, or I shall certainly play the agreeable to your husband at a furious rate. Did he tell you I meant to take you home with me?"

"Why can't you spend the day with me, Hope?"

"Because it will be better for you to go with me: the country air will benefit you."

"But I am so weak."

"Yes; and you will grow weaker still if you remain always

in your room, even if it is fitted up like a fairy's palace. How exquisitely it is furnished!"

"Do you like its arrangement? It is Robert's taste."

"And a charming taste he has."

The husband now entered the room; and Hope appealed to him with—

"Mr. Alvord, you must command your wife to go home with me."

"I cannot lay a command upon her," replied he, in a tone of suavity. "I always leave her to her own feelings. Yet, if it would be agreeable to her, and she thinks the fatigue will not be too great, I advise her to go."

"Oh, Robert, you know it would be agreeable; but I feel——"

"I do not intend to leave it to your feelings," interrupted Hope. "Sick people must be treated like children,—not be allowed to do as they feel like. So, if your husband won't command you, I will take you upon my own responsibility. Lottie, you go bring your mistress's shawl and bonnet: she is going home with me. You, Mr. Alvord, will come dine with us and bring your wife home in the evening."

Hope spoke in such a positive, determined manner that neither husband nor wife made any objection. Indeed, neither wished to do so. Clara was anxious to go, but feared Robert would object should she express a wish to do so,—as he usually objected to whatever she desired.

With that aptness for reading character for which he was remarkable, Mr. Alvord perceived at once, if he would win the favorable opinion of Hope, it must be done by kind attention to his wife. He therefore, when Lottie brought her mistress's shawl, wrapped it carefully about Clara's shoulders, and, when she was ready to start, assisted her tenderly down-stairs. When the carriage drove off, he kissed his hand to her with a lover-like gallantry.

Such attention from her husband was so unlooked for by the poor neglected wife that the tears sprang to her eyes; and ere he was out of sight she was sobbing on Hope's bosom.

"Why, what is the matter, Clara? What are you crying about?"

"Oh, Hope, I am an unloved wife. For months Robert has not shown me the kind attention you have just witnessed. It reminded me of the first happy months of my marriage; and I could not help crying."

"Well, well, take a good cry, and you will feel better."

"I know I will. It has been so long since I shed a tear, it seemed as if my brain were scorched and my heart withered. Perhaps it is wrong for me to be telling you of my trouble; but you know I always did tell you all my griefs and look to you for comfort."

"Well, tell them to me now, and I will the better know how to comfort you."

"I know you must think me weak and foolish to be crying like a baby. But, oh, Hope, to know you have been deceived where you have so loved and trusted, and to still love, despite that knowledge! I ought to have known one so handsome, brilliant, and gifted as Robert should not have mated with poor, plain-looking, unattractive me. Yet it was such happiness to believe him when he told me he prized my gentle, loving heart more than the most brilliant beauty or sparkling intellect. It is so natural to believe that which we wish. Having no relative on whom to bestow my love, my heart was unoccupied, and ready to receive the first who asked a place in it. Oh, Hope, girls who have parents, brothers, and sisters can have no conception how the heart of the lonely orphan yearns for love! And when it was offered to me by one so calculated to win a young girl's heart, how could I distrust?"

"I, who had never known the want of money, dreamed not it was my fortune drew Robert to my side and prompted him to feign a love he never felt,—to whisper, in soft, low tones, words that made my heart overflow with happiness and gave a new charm to existence. Yes, Hope, I had one year of unalloyed happiness. I knew not, till I had been eleven months a wife, that it was my wealth—not myself—had induced Robert to seek me for a bride. But, oh, the agony of awakening from that dream of

bliss! It was that awakening has reduced me to what I am. Life has not one charm for me; and I shall not long remain to crave the love of any. Poor Robert will soon have the fortune without the encumbrance. I may well endow him with it; for one year of perfect happiness he gave me. And I tell you, Hope, I would rather suffer what I now feel than never to have known that one year of happiness.

"Is it wicked, Hope, to feel that I care not how soon the heart that now beats but feebly will soon be stilled in death?"

"Nonsense, Clara! do not give way to such sad fancies. It is ill health makes you feel thus. You will soon be better: then you will feel differently."

"No, Hope, I will never be better; nor do I desire it. All I ask is that my husband's heart may turn to me kindly ere I die, and that my last days may be soothed by his presence and care."

"But, oh, Clara, it is so hard for the young to die!"

"It is hard for the young and happy to die, but not the lone-hearted and weary. It would be hard for you, Hope, to give up life. You are cherished by loving hearts; and that is a boon more precious than all else the world can bestow. Hitherto no shadow has ever fallen on your pathway. But, should misfortune ever come, and those you deemed friends neglect you, still, whilst you have your own loving family you have much to make life desirable. But me,—I have nothing to attach me to life: no, nothing! Why, here we are in sight of Elm-Wood, and I have done nothing but fill your ear with complaints all the way! I should not have saddened you thus at our first meeting; but my heart was so full, and there is no one but yourself to whom I would breathe these things. None of my friends dream of my unhappiness. They say, when they look on my faded cheek, 'Poor Clara! you have your mother's delicate constitution.' I am glad they do attribute my ill looks to an inherited delicacy of constitution. I would not for the world they should know I am dying of a breaking heart. I sometimes think Lottie suspects I am not entirely happy in my marriage."

"Ah," thought Hope, "and others too,—more than suspect."

But not for the world would I hint it to you. If you think your friends blind, it is well."

When the carriage stopped, Hope assisted her out, took her to her own room, and insisted she should lie down. She then seated herself beside her, took a fan in her hand, and playfully commanded her to close her eyes till she fanned her to sleep. The eyes were closed; and, sure enough, soon she slept. As Hope gazed upon her wan features in the repose of slumber, she felt that it was indeed true she would not long remain an encumbrance to her husband.

When Clara awoke and found her friend still beside her, a pleased smile played about her lips, giving her face something of its old expression.

"I feel better and happier than I have done for months," said she, as Hope assisted her to rise.

"Certainly you do. Did not I tell you you should not be sick now I had got home?"

"There must be something in your very presence that exerts a happy influence. You must visit me very, very often, to make up for the long time you have been absent. And when you come to the city you must stop with me, as you did in old times when my guardian lived with me. Dear old man! he was very kind to me. So were his daughters,—particularly Alice. She often comes and sits with me when I am alone. I think she does not like Robert much; and he does not like her. I am glad he is so much pleased with you."

"So am I, for I intend visiting you very often; and you know it would not be pleasant if your husband disliked me. But come: let us chat about old times."

"No, Hope: you must tell me of your travels and experience of life in Europe."

"Ay, that I will, with pleasure."

Hope went off into a description of persons she had met and places she had visited, delineating with so much spirit that Clara became much interested and forgot for a while the sad thoughts that so constantly weighed upon her heart.

CHAPTER V.

A PLEASANT VISIT.

"Ah! there is Robert already," said Mrs. Alvord, as she looked out of the window and saw her husband driving up to the door.

"Already, do you say?" replied Hope. "It is about time he should be here. It is near the dinner-hour."

"So late as that? Why, how quickly the day has gone by!"

"Yes: the conversation of a friend gives wings to time. Had I permitted you to mope at home, how would it have passed?"

"At a snail's pace."

"Just in time," said Hope to Mr. Alvord, as he entered the drawing-room; "for there is the dinner-bell. Bring your wife to the dining-room. I will lead the way."

When they got to the dining-room, they found Mr. Brandon—Clara's guardian before her marriage—there. He and Mr. Alvord bowed distantly to each other.

Hope would have been surprised at this, but she had learned from Clara, during the day, that hers had been a short wooing,—only six weeks having elapsed from the time of her meeting with Mr. Alvord till they were married.

Her guardian wished her to defer the wedding till as many months had gone by. This made Mr. Alvord indignant; but it produced no actual difficulty between him and her guardian. She had been married nearly a twelvemonth when she was induced by her husband to put her entire fortune into his possession, beyond her own control. This her guardian urged her not to do; and since that time they had not spoken to each other, but merely gave a bow of recognition when they met at the house of a mutual acquaintance.

They being the only guests, there would have been a feeling of constraint and awkwardness but for the tact and graceful ease of the hostess. She introduced topics of conversation in which all could join, without addressing directly any individual. When dinner was ended, Mr. Brandon accompanied Mr. Marshall to his library, and Mr. Alvord returned with the ladies to the drawing-room.

Hope's first care upon returning was to draw an easy-chair near the window and seat Clara in it. Having made her comfortable, she said,—

"Now, what shall I do to amuse you?"

"Sing some of the songs I used to love so much; and I can assure you you will find Robert an appreciative listener, for he is no mean musician himself."

Hope complied with Clara's request at once. When she seated herself at the piano, Mr. Alvord took his stand beside her for the purpose of turning over the music; and she found he was indeed no mean musician, as he occasionally joined his voice with hers. When they had sung several songs, Harry came in, and Clara told Hope she would tax her no further at this time, as she wanted to have a chat with her young friend Harry before going home.

Hope, seeing her engaged with her brother, entered into conversation with Mr. Alvord.

"I regret exceedingly," said she, speaking in an under-tone and casting a glance toward Clara, "to find my most cherished friend in such bad health."

"My poor wife! I fear—" had he said "hope" he would have spoken the feeling of his heart—"she inherits the delicate constitution of her mother, who, she tells me, died ere she could lisp her name."

"Poor Clara! She too is doomed to an early grave."

"I trust not. Cannot something be done to avert such a fate?"

"The destroyer has laid his grasp upon her too firmly. All we who love her can do is to make her gentle, loving heart happy by our kind sympathy and tender care whilst she is per-

mitted to remain with us. Not long will we have even that mournful pleasure. She will likely pass away with the fading of the summer-leaves; and the sadly-sighing winds of autumn will chant above her grave a requiem for the early dead."

"Do you really think her hold on life so frail? I had not deemed her in immediate danger."

"I regret to pain you, but her hold on life is very slight. It is liable at any moment to be snapped asunder."

"Miss Marshall, you startle me? My poor Clara! can it be possible her condition is so critical? Advise me what to do for her. I will be guided by you."

"You can do nothing that will restore her to health. You can only soothe her rapidly-passing life by those tender attentions which her affectionate heart so truly appreciates. You must bring her often to spend the day with me; and I, in return, will visit her as often as opportunity will allow."

Hope had a purpose in talking thus to Mr. Alvord. When she heard Clara, in such sad tones, say she only craved the kindness of her husband to brighten her last hours, she was resolved she should have it; and she took this manner of procuring it for her.

"Ah, Hope," said Clara, looking toward her friend, "what subject is it that so interests you and my husband? Are you already engaged in that flirtation you threatened me with?"

"Oh, no: I was just telling him he must bring you very often to spend the day with me. Do you think your visit of to-day has injured you?"

"On the contrary, it has greatly benefited me. I feel stronger and better than I have done for weeks."

"I knew you would. I do not intend you shall wither away in a sick-room. You need pure air and glad sunshine; and I here lay my commands on your husband to devote his whole time to you, and whenever the weather is favorable he must himself take you out."

"I fear it will be asking too much to expect Robert, who is so social and is so much sought after by the glad and gay, to devote himself to a moping sick wife."

"Now, for shame, Clara! Just recall that speech. You speak as if it were not a pleasure to your husband to devote himself to you."

Robert, feeling that his wife had too much cause for speaking thus, prevented the necessity of her disclaiming what she had said, by remarking,—

"Gay company shall no more draw me from your side. I was not aware how feeble your health was until Miss Marshall drew my attention to it."

"I should like to see Mr. Alvord dare devote himself to gay society and social pleasure when you are not able to enjoy them too," said Hope, playfully. "Were he to do so, I would never speak to him again; and I know that would be a punishment."

"It would indeed, Miss Marshall; for I desire to secure your friendship, seeing my wife places so much value on it."

"You may well covet it. I only bestow it on the worthy,—as Clara here can attest."

"And the unfortunate," replied Clara.

"No: I give my sympathy to the unfortunate, but my friendship only to the deserving."

Hope kept up a lively conversation, touching first upon this subject, then upon that, with a graceful ease that much interested Robert Alvord. He acknowledged her to be superior to most women he had met. When she gave him a parting charge, after he had placed his wife in the carriage, to be sure and bring Clara to spend the day with her frequently, he resolved the charge should be complied with, not for his wife's sake, but that he might enjoy the society of her friend.

As the carriage rolled from the door, he sat silent for a few moments; then, putting his arm around Clara, he drew her tenderly to his bosom and kissed her pale brow.

"My dear," said he, "I do not now wonder that you entertain so warm a friendship for Miss Marshall. She is one of the most agreeable ladies I have ever met. I have rarely spent a day so pleasantly. I trust you will not be injured by this visit. I will take you to spend the day with her frequently, if you are not injured by it."

"Oh, I shall be benefited. I am always better and happier when I have been with Hope Marshall. Even when we were children such was the case. I think she imparts to me something of her own gay, happy temperament."

"True: she does seem to diffuse a portion of her own spirit over those with whom she converses. There is a sportive playfulness in her manner that is very winning. Yet, notwithstanding this sportive manner, she has a depth of thought and feeling rarely met with in one of her age. I admire her very much."

"I am truly glad to hear you say so; for I love her so dearly!"

But two or three days had elapsed when Hope went to spend the day with Clara.

"I declare, you have bewitched Robert!" was her exclamation to Hope the first moment they were alone. "He is so changed! He is thoughtful and kind ever since the day we spent with you. He now stays at home and reads to me of evenings. He says he will not leave me to loneliness any more. I know I am indebted to you for this kindness."

"Of course you are. Did I not lay my commands upon him, attaching a heavy penalty if he disregarded them?"

"Well, you have my thanks for this great blessing."

"Nay, Clara: no thanks are due me. Do not allow yourself to think it is any thing I said which has influenced your husband. He has just perceived that you really need his care."

"Yes, but you pointed it out to him; for he says so."

"Oh, well, then have it so. I am always willing to take as much credit to myself as people are willing to give. When are you coming to spend another day with us?"

"Soon; very soon."

Another day sped quickly by with the two friends, and, when Hope took her leave, Clara reiterated that she would very soon return her visit. But, alas! that promise was not fulfilled; for the next morning she took a severe fit of coughing, which ruptured a bloodvessel. The loss of blood so weakened her that she never recovered sufficient strength to pay another visit. She lived some weeks, almost as helpless as an infant; and

during that time her husband was unwearied in his care of her. She told Hope, ere she died, she thought she had done him great injustice in speaking of him as she did the first time she met her after her return home.

Hope's prediction with regard to her was verified. The autumn winds swept over her grave.

CHAPTER VI.

MISTRESS AND SERVANT.

"WELL, Aunt Minta, how do I look? Is not my toilette the perfection of taste?"

"You looks beautiful, Miss Hope. But I dun-no what you means by your twollet."

"My dress, to-be-sure."

"Oh, yer dress looks very nice; but it 'pears to me you ort to 'a' dressed a leetle more grander-like."

"Why do you think so, Aunt Minta?"

"'Case this is the fust party you's bin to sence you come from furrin parts; and they'll 'spect somethin' grand-like in yer dress."

"I am sure this is very beautiful."

"Oh, yes, Miss Hope, but why didn't you wear that splendiferous one you showed me?"

"I showed you several. Which one do you mean?"

"Why, that one you got for the last ball the Queen give afore you cum home. If you had weared that, you would be 'stinguished from all the other ladies,—sartin."

"Oh, Aunt Minta, that would not do. I would be rather too 'stinguished for my taste. No, no: a court-dress in a republican drawing-room would be out of place."

"Well, chile, you knows best. You's mighty purty, anyway. You looks jis like an angel ready to flew away to heaven dis blessed minnit. 'Deed you does, honey."

"I prefer being a mortal, to dance a while longer on this earth, Aunt Minta." And, as evidence of the truth of her assertion, she commenced singing the last new waltz, keeping time to the music by floating round the room two or three times before she stopped. Aunt Minta, who stood looking at her nurseling with

admiration, when she became suddenly stationary in front of her, exclaimed,—

"Heaven help de beaux dis night! If you doesn't captivate all deir hearts, well, den, all I's got to say is, dey has none."

Aunt Minta thought Hope just as near perfection as it was possible for any earthly thing to be; and Hope repaid the devotion of her faithful nurse with sincere love and unvarying kindness.

As Hope stood before the mirror to give the last examining glance to her toilette before going to her mother's room, Aunt Minta, who stood by, gazing on her fondly, exclaimed,—

"Well, I 'clar' to goodness, Miss Hope, you is de most beautifullest young lady I knows on! an' you's jis as good as you is purty."

"Thank you, Aunt Minta, for the closing portion of your sentence. Beauty is a gift to be thankful for; but goodness is far more desirable."

"Yes, honey, yes. Dat's jis what your mammy allers said. Dear, precious, darlin' mistess! isn't she a saint on de face of de yeth? I tell you, chile, if you's only like her, you'll be a blessin' to your husband, if you ever gits one."

"Well, Aunt Minta, I'll try to be like dear mamma. I believe my heart is right; but I do so love frolic and fun I am afraid I will never be so thoughtful of the happiness of others as she is. I would do any thing to make my friends happy, if I would only think of it."

"Never mind, honey. Be frolicsome while you can. Thoughtfulness will come soon enough:—yes, honey, soon enough."

An expression of anxiety swept over the face of the faithful nurse as she contemplated the bright face of Hope. The cause of that anxiety was a fear that the ill health which had frequently during the past year confined Mrs. Marshall days—and sometimes weeks—to her room, would, ere the close of another year, lay her in the grave. Hope felt confident home-scenes would soon restore her mother; but Aunt Minta had no such confidence. Yet, when thinking of it, she would say to herself,

"Poor chile! let her be gay and happy long as she can. It's time enough for her to be sad-hearted when the wust comes to the wust."

"Aunt Minta," said the light-hearted girl, as she turned from the mirror with a satisfied look, "I am going to mamma's room. When the carriage is ready, you will bring me my fan, shawl, and gloves."

Mrs. Marshall was seated by the window of her room, and, as her daughter entered, the light breeze blew back the curls from her pale face, and Hope for the first time was struck with its almost transparent whiteness. She seated herself on an ottoman at her mother's feet, and, looking tenderly into her face, said,—

"Oh, mamma, I should enjoy myself so much more this evening were you able to accompany us! Indeed, I feel as if I ought not to go and leave you looking so pale and weak. Papa gone too: I am afraid you will be lonely."

"I am never lonely, my child; and there is no need of your staying with me. Should I require any thing, Minta understands waiting on me better than you. This party is given especially to welcome you home: so do not let a thought of me cast a shadow on your enjoyment of it."

"But, dear mamma, you do look so pale! I thought getting back to dear old Kentucky and meeting old friends would restore you at once. But here we have been home a month, and you look paler and weaker than when we left Spain."

"You must remember, my child, I have not yet recovered from the fatigue of travelling; and the excitement of meeting old friends after so long an absence has prevented my health from improving as rapidly as it would otherwise have done. I will soon be much better. So do not let the ghost of my pale face haunt you to-night."

"Come, Miss Hope," said Aunt Minta, bringing the shawl and gloves: "the carriage am waitin', and Mass' Harry am all impatience to go."

Hope rose from the ottoman, and Aunt Minta wrapped the shawl about her shoulders as tenderly as if she had been a babe.

The affectionate daughter then kissed the pale cheek of her mother, saying,—

"I will now give you good-night. It will be late when I return, and I will not disturb you."

"Good-night, darling. You will present your papa's compliments and mine to Mrs. Caldwell. Say to her we regret exceedingly that we cannot partake of her kind hospitality this evening, but your papa is from home, and I am not able to mingle in such a scene."

Aunt Minta went to the carriage with Hope, to see that her dress was not tumbled by getting into it.

Although Mrs. Marshall had spoken so cheerfully to her daughter, when she found herself alone she lay back upon the invalid-chair upon which she was seated, closed her eyes, and became absorbed in a train of sad reflections.

"Poor children!" thought she: "I will hide from them as long as possible my real condition. I may live for months; and I will not cloud the joy of their return home by letting them even suspect that the shadow of the angel of death is near. How heavily it will fall upon their hearts when the truth can no longer be kept from them!"

"To me death will be a blessed relief from pain and suffering. Yet, for my children's sake, were it the will of the heavenly Father, I would accept life with thankfulness, even had it to be borne with as much pain and weakness as it has been burdened with during the last year.

"My quick-tempered and proud-spirited Harry! my timid-hearted and love-requiring Maggie! How much will a mother's patient counsels be needed to restrain the one and encourage the other! And Hope,—my laughter-loving, joyous-hearted Hope!—upon her will the blow fall most heavily. She has ever been so dependent on a mother's care to guide and direct her that I scarcely know how she will be sustained. Yet I will not doubt. The God in whom I have trusted, and to whom I have taught her to look for strength in the hour of trial, will support her when that dark hour comes,—yes, and give her wisdom to guide and counsel Harry and Maggie with a mother's care."

Mrs. Marshall had been a member of the Baptist Church from her girlhood. Her Christian faith was perfect and pure, and her whole life had been in consonance with that faith. She could in truth say, with the Psalmist, "In the Lord put I my trust: I will commit my way unto him."

Notwithstanding the firm faith and Christian resignation of Mrs. Marshall, as the thought of leaving her children pressed upon her heart, a tear-drop forced itself through the closed eyelids and rested upon her pale cheek.

The thought of leaving them motherless weighed upon her spirit more heavily from the fact that their father, though noble and generous, was quick and choleric in temper; and, from having so long mingled in political strife, he could not understand and enter into their feelings as he could have done had he given to domestic intercourse with his family the time which had been devoted to political management.

When Minta returned, seeing her mistress lying so motionless, she went noiselessly to her side. The eyes were still closed and the tear-drop resting on the cheek. As the faithful servant gazed upon it, a moisture gathered in her own eyes, and with a quivering voice she addressed her:—

"Miss Maggie, honey, chile, what makes you grievous-like? Is you lonesome?"

"No, Minta, no: I'm not lonesome."

"Case, if you is lonesome, I'll fotch Maggie home. I tole her she mout go an' stay with Emma Shepherd till nine o'clock."

"Let her stay as long as you promised. Indeed, I am glad she is gone. I wish to be quiet. I feel very weak this evening."

"Yes, honey, you looks mighty weak,—'deed you does."

"Minta, you must be a mother to the children when I'm gone."

"Where is you gwine, Miss Maggie? Won't you take the children 'long?—and me too?"

"I hope you and the children will come to me: I cannot take you. I am going to the heavenly Master. I have come

home to die,—not to get well, as I fondly hoped I would when I left Spain."

"Oh, Miss Maggie, honey, don't say dat! You'll broke my heart,—'deed you will! An' Miss Hope, an' Mass' Harry, an' Miss Maggie!—what'll come of dem? Oh, Miss Maggie, don't say you's gwine to die! I can't bore it! 'deed I can't!"

"Minta, are you not a Christian?"

"Yes, Miss Maggie, I hopes to de bressed Lord I is. I tries to be."

"You know, as a follower of Christ, it is your duty to say and feel, 'Father, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.'"

"Yes, Miss Maggie; but 'deed I can't feel dat way if I does sez it. So, honey, don't say you's gwine to die. Say you's gwine to git well."

"But, Minta, saying it will not make me get well."

"No, no! shore 'nuf 'twon't; but 'tis so hard to hear your own lips 'firm what I's been 'feared of eber since you come home. I 'members too well all the simptoms when yer mamma died. I's ben watchin' you fadin' away and fadin' away eber sence you cum home, an' it made me 'member ole mistess more and more, an' I was 'feared you was nearer your last home than Miss Hope was 'ware of. But I keeped a little sperrit while you didn't say nothin' 'bout it. But now you's squinched out de last spark of hope: 'deed you has. Ah! poor Miss Hope! I guess she wouldn't 'joy dat party if she knowed what you an' me is talkin' 'bout in dis here room!"

"It is not necessary that she should know, whilst it can be kept from her. I wish her to enjoy the society of her friends this summer. This she could not do did she know how little hope there is of my restoration to health. I may live two or three years, and I may not live six months. I shall never be perfectly well again. But, Minta, do not hint this to Hope."

"No, indeed, Miss Maggie: trouble and sorrow will come to drive the glad smiles from her sweet face, and hush up her merry songs, soon enuf, 'thout my sayin' any thing."

Mrs. Marshall had been the nurseling of Minta's mother. Minta, who was some years the elder, had nursed her when a

babe, played with her in her young girlhood, and she had learned to love Miss Maggie—as she still called her mother's nurseling—with a singleness of heart never found save in persons situated as she was toward her mistress.

She was Mrs. Marshall's own maid before her marriage; and she retained that position afterwards. When Hope was born, she became nurse to the babe and confidential adviser to the mother. She performed the office of nurse for Harry and Maggie; but she always declared Miss Hope had the warmest place in her heart, because she was her first nurseling. When speaking her love of the pet darling, as she often designated Hope, she usually ended with a declaration somewhat in this wise :—

“Well, now, I tells you what, honeys, if anybody says or does any thing to 'sturb dat chile's feelin's, dey mout just as well tech dis nigger's heart's blood; an' I knows dat won't be good for 'em.”

This devotion to her young mistress was continued through life; and it was a great comfort to her when she had but few friends on whom to lean in the hour when misfortune and trouble came heavily upon her.

CHAPTER VII.

THE PARTY.

THE drawing-room of Dr. Caldwell's proud mansion was filled with company when Hope and her brother arrived. Many of the guests had not seen Hope since her return, as this was the first party she had attended. Consequently, when she entered, approached the hostess, made her salutation, and stood chatting with her a few minutes, all eyes were turned toward her,—the ladies, for the purpose of noting her dress, expecting to find it very expensive and elegant, as she had just returned from a court where the etiquette with regard to dress was most strict; the gentlemen, to observe the manner of one who had not only mingled with the nobility of the Old World, but had even attended the drawing-rooms of royalty.

Hope, with an intuitive perception, was aware she was thus observed; and, as soon as she could do so with convenience, she withdrew from the side of the hostess to a less conspicuous position. Yet, during the time she remained there, almost every one had made some remark with regard to her appearance or dress,—the gentlemen expatiating on her beauty and graceful ease of manner, and the ladies——But we will not repeat what the ladies said, for fear our readers would say their remarks were prompted by envy or jealousy.

This party was given for a twofold purpose,—one, to welcome Hope home, the other, a parting compliment to Miss Bringham ere she returned to her home in Louisville, which she designed doing in the course of a few days.

Miss Bringham considered it but half a compliment, before she saw Hope, because she wished to be the sole object of attraction upon this occasion. But when she saw her—so easy in man-

ner, so graceful in person, and with a face uncommonly beautiful—she felt herself actually injured.

Hope having arrived late, the guests were nearly all present; and not long after she had paid her respects to the hostess the ceremony of receiving was done with, and Mrs. Caldwell felt herself at liberty to mingle with her guests.

She at once went to Miss Bringham and proposed presenting her to Miss Marshall. Miss Bringham was about to decline the pleasure, but Mr. Offutt, her favorite gallant, who was by her side, answered,—

“Oh, do present us. Hope was a favourite playmate of mine before she went abroad; but I dare say she would not recognise me now, I have changed so much.” And he placed his fingers caressingly upon a tolerably well-grown mustache, as he made the closing remark.

At this moment, Hope, escorted by the son of her hostess, approached the group.

“Ah,” said Mrs. Caldwell, “I was just going in search of you, Hope.”

“I am happy to have saved you that trouble. I am at your service.”

“I wish to present you to my young friend Miss Bringham and your old acquaintance Mr. Offutt.”

Miss Bringham bowed distantly; but Mr. Offutt grasped her hand warmly with—

“Would you have known me, Hope?”

“Indeed, Edward, I hardly think I should. You have changed much; but I am happy to say that change has added greatly to your fine personal appearance.”

“Thank you, Hope, for the compliment; and I can return it by saying the change Time has brought to you is a tenfold gracefulness of manner. As to your personal appearance, that was perfection ere you left: consequently, nothing could be added.”

“I perceive you retain your old fondness for making fine speeches. But I understand you, and know their value.”

“And I discover you have not lost your old manner of re-

ceiving them. But tell us, Hope: are you as wild a rattle as you were before you went abroad?”

“Oh, no: my intercourse with European society, where they are remarkably strict with regard to the deportment of young folks, has taught me a proper gravity and dignity of demeanor.”

“I am afraid you have left it where you learned it.”

An ominous frown was gathering on Miss Bringham's brow that Mr. Offutt should dare to devote so much attention to any one but herself; and Hope, perceiving it, did not reply to his last remark, but addressed Miss Bringham, by saying,—

“I am most happy, Miss Bringham, to have the opportunity of making your acquaintance.”

“Thank you,” replied that lady, in the coldest tone possible, and looking like an icicle.

Hope resolved not to notice this want of courtesy, and continued:—

“I have often heard papa speak of your father as a friend whom he valued much. I am therefore the more pleased to have an opportunity of knowing you.”

“Thank you,” with frigidity, were again the only words uttered.

“I believe they served together in the same Congress.”

“Possibly.”

Hope still endeavored to converse with Miss Bringham, notwithstanding the shortness and coldness of her replies; but she felt relieved when Carrie Green, who had just arrived, ran up to her, threw her arms around her neck, and kissed her on each cheek, exclaiming,—

“Welcome home, Hope! welcome home! A'n't you glad to see me?” But, without giving time for Hope to reply, she ran on, stringing her sentences together with the rapidity of chain-lightning.

“I would not have been here to-night, but I could not wait till morning to see you. It was almost dark when uncle and I got home. I was real tired, too. But, when Aunt Patty gave me my invitation to the party and said you were here, I was rested in a minute. Aunt could hardly get me to take time to

drink a cup of tea, I was in such a hurry to get on my party-fixin's and be off to see you. And here I am. Aunt tried to coax me not to come; but I should not have slept a wink to-night if I had not seen you."

"I appreciate, truly, your having held me in such kind remembrance, Carrie."

"Why, how could I help it, when I missed you so much every time I wanted some joke played on any teacher I did not like? But look here, Hope: are you as big a—no, I won't say the naughty word—as you used to be?"

"I am afraid my friends will impress Miss Bringham with the idea that I have been a terrible scapegrace, by the references they make to the past."

That distinguished lady took no further notice of this remark than to shrug her shoulders, wrinkle her brow, and pinch her lips more closely together; but the voice of Carrie Green came piping in with,—

"And so you were, Hope. A perfect mother of mischief,—not exactly the mother, for we all helped to hatch up the mischief, and you had the ingenuity and daring to execute what we all together contrived."

"Of which ingenuity and daring I am now heartily ashamed."

"Pshaw, Hope! 'twas only fun. Do you remember Miss Pinchem and the bonnet?"

"Yes, indeed. That is one of my mischievous performances which I shall never forget nor cease to regret. Yet it was one the termination of which did more toward making me reflect on the impropriety—not to say wickedness—of amusing myself at the expense of others, than all the punishment and lectures I ever received; and you know mamma never spared either when she thought I needed correction."

"Don't you remember the time she made us read the fable of the boys and frogs, after which she gave us a lecture, taking that as a text?"

"Yes, I remember that, with many other instances of her patience and kindness in trying to impress me with the wrong I

did others by indulging in what we termed innocent practical jokes."

"But the bonnet: she never knew of that. It occurred just before you left school to go to Europe. Ha, ha, ha! It makes me laugh every time I think of it, even if I am alone in my room."

"It makes me sad every time I think of it."

"Pray, what was the joke? Do tell it," cried a half-dozen voices.

"Oh, the telling of it will convey no idea of the incident. You should have known Miss Pinchem to be able to form a conception of its richness."

"Oh, well, tell it, tell it," echoed several voices. "Give us a description of the teacher first," said others.

"Oh, didn't we have fun, though, at old Barry's school?" continued Carrie,—“especially while Pinchem was music-teacher?"

"But tell us about the bonnet," said one. "Describe Miss Pinchem," cried another.

"You just all be quiet, and I'll attempt a description." And with this she drew her figure up erect as a church-steeple, puckered her face into wrinkles, dropped down her eye-brows, and commenced casting quick, furtive glances from the corners of her eye. She remained thus a moment, but soon resumed her natural look with a—

"Pshaw! I cannot personate her, but I'll try to describe her. You must understand she was an old maid from Deown East. She was the primmest of the prim school. Boston had the honor of being her birthplace; and she took great pride in boasting that she was educated in the Athens of America. She was about forty years of age when she came to our academy. Her hair, if it ever had been silken and luxuriant, had now become wiry and scant, and she wore it in gimlet curls. Her countenance was what might be called weazen-faced, and its expression was decidedly vinegary. Her figure was of the bean-pole style."

"Quite a beauty you have painted," said Gus Caldwell.

"That was not our opinion at the time; for the day Mr. Barry introduced her to us he descanted largely upon her intellectual superiority: in fact, he made us quite a speech upon the subject, and ended by hoping we might all resemble her.

"No word was spoken by any of us; but Hope looked at him in a manner that said, as plainly as words could have done, 'A set of beauties you would have for pupils if we did!' The rest of us observing her look, a suppressed titter ran through the room, which would probably have resulted in an explosion of laughter, had he not immediately dismissed us to our studies.

"For two or three weeks we were very respectful to our new teacher. We felt quite an awe of her, on account of her intellectual superiority. But before the end of a month we began to conclude she was not so much smarter than ordinary people as Mr. Barry would have us believe. Still, we were manageable enough, till she commenced making comparisons between the New England and Kentucky girls, disparaging the latter. This, of course, was not taken very quietly. At length she one day said she would about as soon undertake to polish and refine a field of our unbroken mules as a parcel of untutored Kentucky girls. This aroused the very Old Nick in us, and we resolved to show her what mettle Kentucky-girls were made of. After this no week went by that we did not play some mad prank on her; and, when she complained, we insisted it was only a harmless 'Yankee trick' to keep her from getting homesick."

"But the bonnet? what of the bonnet?" said two or three voices.

"Oh, yes: that was one of Hope's own conceptions. Miss Pinchem had caused her to be reprimanded in the presence of the whole school. As we left the scene of her mortification, Hope whispered in my ear, 'I'll match her, if it takes me a month of Sundays.'

"This was in June; and it was Miss Pinchem's habit, in warm weather, to go to bed without lighting her chamber-candle. She said the light attracted bugs and insects into the room; and she had a perfect horror of all kinds of insects and creeping things. She had just bought a new summer bonnet, which she thought

very becoming to her; and, as a matter of course, she prized it very much. About a week after the reprimand, Hope, whilst Miss Pinchem was engaged in the parlor, slipped into her room, whilst I stood sentinel at the door to notify her should I see Pinchem coming. 'She humiliated me before the whole school,' said Hope, as she came out, 'and I guess we'll have an exhibition of her for the amusement of the girls.' We immediately retired to our room, which was opposite to hers, and we spent the time, till we heard her go to her room, conjecturing what she would say and do when she got into bed.

"At length we heard a screech, a bound upon the floor, and the word 'snake!' She sprang to the corner where the tongs stood, seized them, and commenced thrashing the bed-clothes.

"Hope and I were soon in her room with a light. 'What is the matter, Miss Pinchem?' said I. 'Is there a robber in the room?'

"'No; but there is a snake in my bed. Ugh! it makes me shudder to think how cold the pesky thing felt.'

"By this time several girls were in the room, all inquiring, 'What is it?' 'What's the matter?'

"'A snake in my bed,' answered Miss Pinchem.

"This announcement made them all retreat toward the door, none of them, save me, being in the secret.

"'We must look for the hateful creeping thing,' said I, 'and, if it is not dead, we must dispatch it.'

"None had courage to approach the bed. Some of them said, 'Let us go for Mr. Barry.'

"'Oh, no,' said Hope: 'rather than disturb him, I will examine the bed myself.'

"She approached just near enough to reach the bed-clothes. Taking the corner of the counterpane, she drew it to the floor: she then did the same with one of the sheets.

"'There the horrid thing is!' exclaimed several voices.

"'Give me the tongs,' said I, taking them from Miss Pinchem's hand. 'I'll soon put the varmint beyond doing mischief.'

"I struck one severe blow upon the supposed snake; but the

only effect produced was the clear, ringing sound of metal striking against metal.

"Why, it is nothing but the shovel!" said I, picking it up and exhibiting it to full view.

"A roar of laughter burst from the girls, and Miss Pinchem turned toward Hope, with the expression of a tigress.

"You imp of the evil one!" shrieked she, in a voice shrill as an engine-whistle. "This is your work! I know it is! That is the reason you had so much courage to search among the bed-clothes. I suppose you think, because I am a poor, lone girl and have to earn my living among strangers, that I am a stock or a stone and have no feeling. But I tell you I have got feelings,—yes, I have feelings, and as delicate, sensitive feelings as yours, if you do live in a fine house and have a rich father to gratify all your caprices. Oh, I wish you may come to want and have to earn your living among strangers! I hope you may! Your parents can't live forever; and I've known people as rich as you have such a change of fortune."

"She had pretty well exhausted herself, when Edith Walton observed her new bonnet lying in a washbowl of water.

"Oh, my! see your new bonnet!" exclaimed she, calling Miss Pinchem's attention to it.

"If she was angry before, she was now perfectly furious. Her former outburst was a calm, in comparison to the reproaches she now heaped upon Hope.

"Oh, yes!" she screamed: "it is great sport, exceedingly lady-like, very considerate, extremely witty, quite a joke, to spoil my best bonnet! You might just as well steal so much money out of my pocket. I, too, that have to earn my money! Why, I would rather live among a parcel of Indians. Then I would not expect civilized treatment. Oh, you imp! you audacious! you mischief! you monkey!" She thus went on till she had exhausted her vocabulary of epithets, and then stood still and actually made faces at her.

"Hope took advantage of the quiet thus produced to humbly beg Miss Pinchem's pardon, saying she would never forgive herself for her unfeeling thoughtlessness. It would be a life-

long lesson to her, and she would repair the injury, as far as it could be done, by purchasing her another bonnet. This closing sentence somewhat mollified her, and she ordered us all to leave her room,—which we did, without waiting for a second bidding.

"The next morning, Hope went out and ordered the most expensive bonnet she could find, to which she added a lace shawl and veil. When Miss Pinchem received them, she said she fully forgave Hope; but I have my doubts. She is not one to forgive; and, if it should ever be in her power to do Hope an ill turn, I guess her great piety would not prevent her."

"Bravo!" exclaimed Ed Offutt: "why, Carrie, your reminiscence is as good as a play."

"To me it was better than a sermon: it cured me of playing practical jokes," said Hope.

"The putting of her bonnet in the wash-bowl was too bad," said Mrs. Caldwell.

"Oh, Hope did not put the bonnet there. When she put the shovel in the bed, she placed the bonnet upon the tongs, intending, when Miss Pinchem's outcry drew the girls into her room, to slyly direct their attention to the bonneted tongs and ask them if they did not resemble Miss Pinchem when dressed up to go to meeting. But this portion of the fun was frustrated; for the bonnet fell into the wash-bowl when Miss Pinchem seized the tongs. Look here, Hope: do you remember the walk?"

"For mercy's sake, Carrie, do not recall any more of my school-girl follies."

"Oh, Hope, the wild-goose chase you led her——"

The sound of music in the dancing-room put a stop to Carrie's tongue; for the young folks at once selected partners for the dance.

The evening was one of unalloyed pleasure to all save Miss Bringham. Hitherto, every party she attended she had been the reigning star; but this evening her brilliance paled before the vivacity and gayety of Hope Marshall.

CHAPTER VIII.

KENTUCKY HOSPITALITY.

"HERE is a letter from Lucy Anderson," said Hope, coming into her mother's room with an open letter in her hand.

"What does she say?"

"She wants me to come and spend a few weeks with her."

"Do you wish to go?"

"I would love dearly to visit her; but I do not like to leave you. Although your health is greatly improved, I do not like to leave you."

"You place a great estimate on yourself, to imagine we cannot spare you for a few weeks. Your papa goes to Louisville within a few days: so you just make up your mind to go with him to that city; and Colonel Anderson can send his carriage to take you out to his plantation."

"Why can't papa take me out? It is only a short drive from Louisville. I know he would enjoy a visit there."

"Your papa has no time to make visits."

"Yet he can go to every village, or even school-house, in the State, to make a political speech."

"His party expects it of him."

"'Politics!' and 'party!' I am actually tired of hearing the words! Mr. Brandon and the rest of the gentlemen who come to the house never talk of any thing else,—just as if life were nothing but a political bubble, and party the stream upon the surface of which it floats."

"Well, well, don't let it trouble you, but go make the visit to your friend. You may there find something more to your taste."

"Ah! that I will. We will have riding-parties, fishing-parties, and every other amusement, with Colonel Anderson to join us.

He is just as full of fun as any of the young folks. He does not bother his head with politics."

Lucy Anderson had invited several of her young friends to meet Hope and spend a few weeks in the country; and when she arrived she found quite a gay party assembled to welcome her.

With true Kentucky hospitality, the whole family gave their entire time to the entertainment of their guests. The old colonel and his wife entered into the amusements of the hour with a zest which indicated that Time, whilst sprinkling the snows of age upon their heads, had spared their youthfulness of heart.

Each day, when the weather was fair, had its picnic, fishing-party, or fox-chase. The evenings were given to music, dancing, and acting charades. Hope was the life of the company. Intellectual, gay, and a fine musician, wherever she moved a crowd of admirers followed.

A few days before she returned home, it was proposed to spend a day at a picturesque spot in the vicinity of Beargrass, a stream famous in the early history of Kentucky.

This spot being a favorite resort of the gentry when they wished to spend a day in Nature's own temple, the undergrowth had been cleared away and rustic tables and benches provided for the accommodation of those who visited it.

Many persons besides the party visiting at Colonel Anderson's were invited to join them on this particular day, and, among the number, Miss Bringham and her brother.

When the party arrived at their destination, the young folks dispersed themselves in groups, to stroll along the banks of the stream or clamber up the rocky bluff, as fancy might prompt.

Whilst the young folks amused themselves by singing snatches of song or whispering love-tales, the elders preferred to loiter on the benches beneath the shadow of the trees, the gentlemen discussing farming and politics, the matrons superintending the arrangement of the viands, which were stowed away in baskets upon the rustic tables, in the mean time chatting over the reminiscences of their own young days.

At one o'clock—the hour designated for dining—the strollers had all returned, ready to enjoy the delicacies with which the

tables were loaded. During dinner the laugh and jest went merrily round. The merriest were those in the immediate vicinity of Miss Marshall. Her genial spirit seemed to communicate itself to all about her, old as well as young. The universal attention she received was any thing but agreeable to Miss Bringham.

When the craving of appetite was satisfied, it was proposed that each person should tell a story, sing a song, or give some sentiment. This proposition was hailed with applause. Colonel Anderson, being first called upon, told an amusing story. Then came song, sentiment, and story by turns. When it came to Miss Bringham's turn, she gave this sentiment:—

"Retiring modesty:—the most charming quality of woman."

She was seated opposite Hope, and as she uttered it she raised her eyes to her face with a manner which said, "That is for your benefit."

A slight color rose to Hope's cheek, showing that the quick blood was stirred; but no other indication that she was conscious of Miss Bringham's intent was perceptible.

"We must have a song from you, wild bird," said Colonel Anderson to Hope, when it came to her turn.

"What shall it be?"

"Any thing you deem suitable to the place and occasion."

"Let me think a moment."

"We will wait just one minute: no more."

Ere the minute had elapsed, her rich, clear voice was ringing through the grand old woods in the following song, which she improvised for the occasion:—

"Oh, I love the flashing sunlight,
As it glimmers through the trees,
And the music of the leaflets,
When they're played on by the breeze;
I have pleasures in the streamlet:
As its bright waves glide along,
With the sunbeams glancing o'er them,
It gives forth a gladsome song.

"And I love the graceful flowerets
Which upon its borders bloom;

It in summer is their mirror,
And in autumn 'tis their tomb.
Though earth's fairest things must perish,
Let's enjoy them while they stay,
And find pleasure in remembrance
When from sight they've pass'd away.

"We have forest-trees above us,
Flowers bright beneath our feet,
Summer winds about us playing,
Strains of music low and sweet:
Where can be a fairer picture,
Where a brighter scene, than this?
How fair and beautiful this earth!
And life how full of bliss!"

When the song was ended, the face of the singer was aglow with enthusiastic feeling; for Hope was a true lover of Nature, and this was one of Nature's loveliest spots. The flashes of sunlight that occasionally gleamed through the dense foliage, the rustle of the leaves above her, and the entire surrounding scenery, suggested the idea of her song.

Ere the company separated, Colonel Anderson invited them all to attend a fancy-dress ball which he designed giving.

"I shall expect every one of you," said the colonel.

Some doubted whether they could accept his invitation, as they feared they would not be able to get up a costume for the occasion.

"Oh, you are not required to assume a character unless you choose; but I thought proposing it; and those who wish to do so may make sport for the rest, by assuming and maintaining the character assumed."

With this liberty, the invitation was accepted by all. As they returned home, the events of the day were discussed; and they all, save Miss Bringham, came to the conclusion they had never spent a day more pleasantly. She remarked to her brother, when they had parted from the balance of the company, "I never spent a more disagreeable day. The boisterous gayety of Miss Marshall destroyed every particle of my enjoyment."

"Pshaw, Moll! don't talk your stuff to me. You are jealous of her grace, beauty, and the admiration she elicits."

"Shut your mouth, Jerry. None of your impertinence to me! I jealous of Miss Marshall? Preposterous! She is a regular hoyden; and people crowd around her to be amused,—not because they admire her."

"You may possibly be able to convince yourself of the truth of that assertion, but I can assure you no one else will agree with you,—not even your affectionate brother."

"I tell you what it is: I won't go to Colonel Anderson's ball."

"Well, I guess nobody will cry if you don't."

"Yes, I will go, too,—just to see what character that girl will assume and how ridiculous she will make herself."

"I knew you would go. We could not keep you away. If we were to tie you with ropes, you would gnaw them asunder with your teeth but what you would go."

"Jerry, you are the most disagreeable wretch I ever knew."

"You are, ditto, sis."

"You are a perfect bear."

"And you a tigress."

"Oh, I could scratch your eyes out!"

"I have no doubt of it, my charming pussy-cat; but I shall not give you the opportunity."

It was thus the brother and sister usually talked to each other when alone; but it must be admitted that the sister was to blame. Jerry was naturally social and kind; and, had his sister been amiable, he would have taken as much pains to please as he now did to annoy her.

CHAPTER IX.

THE FANCY BALL.

THE large dancing-saloon in the spacious mansion of Colonel Anderson is very brilliant in appearance. It presents to the eye a strangely-mixed assemblage of dukes, duchesses, flower-girls, peasants, and gypsies. Costumes of all ages and classes are intermingled. The pioneer hunter, with his buckskin suit, the Yankee pedlar, with his striped pants made so short that they lack at least six inches of reaching the coarse yarn stockings which come just above the top of his stogger shoes,—even the famous Mrs. Partington, with Ike and his gal,—are represented.

Mrs. Partington has her knitting-work along with her, and expatiates in her own peculiar style on the usefulness of industry and the dignity of labor. When asked to dance, she requests her partner to wait till she knits to the middle of her needle. She then rolls it up and puts it in a work-bag made of curtain-calico, which she keeps hanging on her arm for that purpose. Lucy Anderson—who personates Ike's gal—contributes greatly to the amusement of the company by her witty imitations of Mrs. Partington.

Hope, who has taken the character of a Spanish fortune-teller, is surrounded by a crowd, eager to have their future read by one, whose manner of reading it, independently of the fair fortune she gives them, is quite an attraction.

She had a guitar, and, after drawing from its strings a strain of music as a spell to call up the spirits, she would chant in rhyme what the Fates had in store for those who sought to know from her their future. As we before remarked, she gave to each a fair fortune; and, as she knew something of the heart-history of two or three, she made their fortunes to suit their wishes.

The first who approached her was Emma Norton. Her lover was sent abroad by his father to transact some business, which had detained him from home much longer than was anticipated. Emma's was a gentle, loving heart; and some ill-natured person had whispered in her ear that Charles Thornton lingered unnecessarily, because he cared not to claim his betrothed.

Although Emma knew Hope's fortune-telling was a mere play, there was an earnest wistfulness in her looks and a tremulousness in her gentle voice when she asked to have her future read.

Hope swept the strings of the guitar, drew forth a low, sweet strain, and then chanted,—

"O lady fair, with soft brown hair
And eye of azure hue,
The spirits bring with coming spring
A happy lot to you:
One now doth roam afar from home
Who then will claim thy heart;
Treasures most rare he'll bring his fair,
Glean'd from each foreign mart."

A pleased smile chased the look of sadness from her sweet face as Hope assured her she received messages from none but reliable spirits.

The next who tested her powers was Cora Appleton. She was brilliantly beautiful. She was queenly in appearance. Her raven hair made more striking the fairness of her smooth pale brow; her cheek was colorless; and her large dark eyes wore a proud, cold look. She strove to assume a tone of indifference as she said,—

"Lady, I ask you to read my future only that I may hear the rich music of your voice as you give utterance to your prophecies."

Hope raised her eyes to the beautiful face, gazed upon it admiringly for a moment, and then said, "Compliment not my voice at the expense of my nobler gift. Listen:—

("Bright gems are gleaming in the mine
To deck that regal brow of thine;

And he whose hand will place them there
Is striving still, with tireless care,
To gather up the glittering gold,
That he may bring thee wealth untold.
Thy stately step will be more proud
When he, the idol of the crowd,
Will only seek to be approved
By thee, his bride, so long beloved."

"A proud fortune you have given me, for which I tender thanks, as you—unlike the readers of the future whom we ordinarily meet—accept no other guerdon."

These words were spoken in a calm, measured tone, although the depths of her heart were stirred. She too had a history. But she was proud beyond the conception of ordinary natures; and she was determined none should see the trace of an emotion in her tone or manner.

When she had seen but eighteen summers, her heart was won by a wooer worthy of so peerless a bride. He was accomplished, talented, and endowed with every quality that ennobles manhood. But he was not the possessor of wealth; and her ambitious mother said her beautiful daughter should never wed with poverty. She forbade him the house, and ordered him to never again speak to Cora unless he could endow her with a fortune worthy her peerless charms.

He sought Cora once more, told her he would go to California, from whence he would return with wealth, or, failing to secure a fortune in that land of gold, he would find a grave beneath its glittering sands. "I ask you not to be true to me. I judge your heart by my own." He had been absent four years. Cora had been addressed by suitors of sufficient wealth to satisfy even the ambition of her mother; but she had rejected them all. About three months previous to this time, she had read a paragraph, copied from a California paper, describing the death and burial of Alvin Ford; and from that period she had worn the proud, cold look which characterized her on this evening. It was rumored she was about to wed a rich merchant of Louisville. She had yielded to her mother's importunity, feeling that life had no charm for her and nothing could add to her wretchedness.

When her mother won her consent to become his bride, she gave it in these words:—"They say he is worth a million: true, he has been threescore years getting it; but I suppose you think it a fair price for your daughter's happiness, and you have my permission to close the bargain." But we have devoted more time to Cora Appleton than we designed doing. Let us return to Hope, and the crowd about her soliciting her to tell their fortunes. She, being in one of her merriest moods, gratified all who appealed to her, with some sparkling thought or happy sentiment.

Miss Bringham was attracted, against her will, into the circle that surrounded her. The applause elicited by the admirable manner in which she sustained the character she had chosen was gall and wormwood to her jealous spirit, and she sought to interrupt it by saying,—

"Miss Marshall, I would give some of them a dark fortune, just for variety's sake."

Hope replied to her, in her character of fortune-teller, by chanting,—

"I read but what the spirits bring;
And none that I command to-night
Would mar this brilliant, festive scene
With words of sorrow, care, or blight."

The approach of Henry Anderson, attired as a brigand of the Pyrenees, who claimed Hope's hand for a cotillon just forming, released her from the importunate crowd surrounding her.

"By Jupiter! a'n't she a beauty, though?"

"I swan to man she is! And didn't she fetch the music eout of that fiddle?"

"I don't mean she with the fiddle."

"I'm shore she be the only beauty I see in this crowd about this time. Which un *do* you mean?"

"Her that's got gold and jimeracks enough on her neck, in her ears, and on her arms to buy a boat-load of peltries."

"Whew! She's my sister."

"I'd like to trade for her."

"I tell ye, neow, yeou'd be bit like blazes. She's the most cantankerous critter yeou ever did see."

"I'd like to own her. I'd soon take the hifalutin outen her."

"Heow?"

"Sarve her as the Kickapoos do their squaws."

"And heow do they sarve 'em?"

"Make 'em do all the drudgery."

"Neow, deu tell!"

This conversation took place just back of Miss Bringham; and it was gotten up for her annoyance. The individuals engaged in it were Buckskin Jim and Yankee Jerry,—the names taken for the evening by James Finley and Jerry Bringham,—the one a pioneer hunter and the other a Yankee pedlar. They had sustained the characters assumed, and made much sport during the evening. They now took advantage of the license it gave them to annoy Miss Bringham.

James Finley had at one time been the most favored escort of Miss Bringham; but since her return from Lexington she had treated him rather coolly, and this evening she had refused to dance with him, in the rudest and most unladylike manner. And Jerry, her brother, had taken this means of revenging himself upon her for an ill turn she did him the day previous by influencing his father to refuse him a hundred dollars he had asked of him.

When their voices first fell on her ear, she resolved not to notice them even by a look. But when Buckskin Jim expressed a desire to have it in his power to make a drudge of her, it was more than human nature could bear; and she gave him a look which, had looks the power to kill, would have struck him dead where he stood.

Time flies most fleetly where hearts are gayest; and the morning's dawn was streaking the east ere this merry party left the dancing-saloon. Some of them never met again, and others under circumstances sadly changed.

CHAPTER X.

A SHADOW ON YOUNG HEARTS.

HITHERTO we have known Hope only as the fun-loving, gay-hearted girl. Now the stronger and more noble traits of character are to be exhibited.

When she returned from her visit to Lucy Anderson, it was the beautiful September,—the season when the lover of nature most loves to ramble beneath the grand old woods and listen to the many-toned voices of the autumn winds as they play with the leafy boughs. She, Maggie, and Harry often wandered for hours in the beautiful grounds of Elm-Wood, the name she had given the home of her happy childhood.

Maggie insisted she should accompany them in all their strolls, to make up for having left them so long. When wearied with rambling, they would seat themselves beneath some noble old forest-tree and speak hopefully of the future. To these young dreamers life had no shadow nor care. Hitherto all that makes life bright had been theirs, and upon the future they saw nothing but rainbow-hues. Who would o'ershadow the bright dreams of the youthful heart? Let them enjoy them whilst they can; for all too soon will stern reality dispel them. To this happy party, so unconscious of its approach, how near was the shadow! Harry had been unfolding to his sisters his plans of enjoyment for the coming winter; and the tones of his voice had scarcely ceased to vibrate on the air, when they were startled by the voice of Aunt Minta, calling,—

"Miss Hope, oh, Miss Hope, do come to the house disminnit. Your ma has got a chill; and it 'pears to me she'll never live to come outen it. She looks for all de world as if she wur dyin'."

With a cry of anguish, Hope started up and ran to the house, followed by Harry and Maggie. When she got into her mother's room, the pallid, death-like appearance of that dear parent's face sent a thrill of agony through her heart. But, with a presence of mind not to be expected in one upon whom no care had ever fallen, she applied such remedies as she had seen used for chills, and sent for the family physician. The chill had passed ere he arrived, and a burning fever had set in.

When Hope told him what she had done, he commended her, saying he could not have acted more promptly had he been in the house. He then prepared some medicine, with written directions how it should be administered, remaining to give some potions of it himself, to see the effect it produced. When he rose to leave, Hope followed him into the next room. Although she had retained her self-possession whilst in her mother's presence, she was now greatly agitated, as she laid her hand nervously upon the doctor's arm, saying,—

"Oh, doctor, will she die? Has she got the fever?"

"No, child: she is in no immediate danger. She has taken a cold, which has thrown her into this chill."

"I'll write to papa to come home."

"Oh, no: your mother will be as well as usual before a letter could reach him. Besides, there is no knowing where a letter would find him."

"But mamma could not stand many such chills."

"I will see that the chills are broken up at once: so do not be anxious."

"I cannot help being anxious; and I will write to papa just to let him know how ill mamma is."

"I will write myself. Should you write, your anxiety would give a tone to your letter making him unnecessarily uneasy. You know he is our main stay in this campaign, and he must have all his wits about him; for our opponents will leave no stone unturned to beat us."

"Well, doctor, don't neglect to write to papa. Thank goodness, he will be home in two weeks, for he is to speak at Lexington, Georgetown, and other places near, about that time. Oh, I do

wish papa would stay at home and never have any thing to do with politics more!"

"Why, you selfish little sinner! Your papa is the only person we have who is able to cope with the powerful speakers our opponents have on the stump. It is a godsend that he happened to come home in time to assist in this fight. All *you* have to do is to give the medicine as I have directed, and your mother will be well enough in a few days."

"I hope so, doctor; but I am afraid you are mistaken."

"I will come to see her again to-morrow."

"Oh, yes, and every day till she is quite well."

When the doctor drove from the door, Hope returned to her mother's room, and continued bathing her mother's face and hands in cold water, for the purpose of cooling the burning fever with which the chill had left her. She remained by her bedside during the whole night. About daylight the fever abated, and Mrs. Marshall sank into a quiet slumber. Hope then left her in charge of Aunt Minta and retired to her own room.

Although much fatigued, so anxious was she that it was some time before she slept. And, when she did sleep, painful dreams disturbed her. At one moment she stood beside her mother's bed and saw her in the death-struggle; then it would be her father, lying pale and cold, clothed in the habiliments of the grave; again, it was her mother, reclining in her invalid-chair, pale and languid, begging her to be a mother to Harry and Maggie when she was cold in death. These dreams caused her to moan uneasily in her sleep; but she did not awake, till Minta, who had come into the room, laid her hand upon her, saying,—

"What's de matter, chile, honey? Is you sick?"

"Oh, Minta, I am so glad you awakened me! I had such horrible dreams!"

"Well, you knows dreams always goes by contraries."

"I hope so, indeed, in this instance. How is mamma?"

"A sight better. The fever's all gone. I giv her a cup o' tea: then she sent me to see how you felt a'ter stayin' up all night. When I heard you groanin' so, I was 'feard you wur sick too."

"Oh, no: it was only a hateful dream. Go tell mamma I am rested and feel very well. I will be there myself in a few minutes."

When Hope found her mother free from suffering and looking as she usually did; only a little paler, her natural buoyancy of spirit returned.

"Oh, I am glad," said she, seating herself beside her mother, "that I did not write to papa yesterday. I was so frightened! I thought you would certainly die. I could not believe the doctor when he said you would soon be well again. I thought he only said it to comfort me."

"I am very glad you did not write: it would have given your papa unnecessary uneasiness."

"That is just what the doctor said; yet I would have written, had he not promised to do so."

"He was the proper person to write, because he knew my condition, and could inform your papa of my illness without giving him needless anxiety."

"I have been grieved to see you suffering with ill health during the past year, but never thought of death being near till yesterday; and oh, mamma, what a shock it was! How I reproached myself for having been so gay and light-hearted whilst at Colonel Anderson's! and I made up my mind, if you got well, I would never leave you again, as long as you lived. And I won't. No gay company shall ever tempt me to leave you. I am so thankful to see you so much better! for if you had died I should never have forgiven myself for that visit."

As Mrs. Marshall had no second chill at this time, Hope dismissed from her mind the fear of her mother's death; but she was more tenderly careful of her, seldom leaving her even to walk with Harry and Maggie.

In about two weeks there was a return of the chills. This time she did not recover as she did from the former one. The fever lingered about her, the cough increased, and she was no longer able to leave her room; but she walked about it daily, seldom lying in the bed. Hope's fears were again awakened; and, oh, how glad she was that her father would soon be at

home! "He will certainly not leave again when he sees how ill mamma is," was her constantly-recurring thought.

Poor child! she had not yet learned how a long devotion to party politics blinds its devotee to all else save the one subject.

CHAPTER XI.

POLITICAL SPEAKING.

THE day upon which Mr. Marshall was to speak in Lexington at length arrived. An immense audience was collected, and his opponent had just commenced speaking when he stepped upon the temporary stand erected for speaking. He looked worn down with travel and speaking. His opponent was fresh and well prepared. His speech was very eloquent, and happily interspersed with telling anecdotes. When he took his seat, a shout of applause rang out that made the grove in which he had spoken reverberate with a thousand echoes.

Mr. Marshall waited a short time for quiet to be restored, ere he took the stand. During that time his friends became somewhat anxious, from hearing among the crowd such remarks as these:—

"I guess he's backed out."

"He jist mout as well; for them arguments can't be gain-said."

"He looks jaded down; and, if that's their best nag, we'll beat 'em without tryin'."

"Ef he's got any thing to say, I wish he'd say it. I came to hear both sides."

"I guess our old thunderer has giv him more than he bargained for."

Some of these remarks even fell upon his own ear; but he heeded them not. He rose slowly, and stood for a short time glancing his eye rapidly over the audience: then he commenced with—

"Fellow-townsmen:—It has been years since I have addressed you. My long residence abroad has enabled me to appreciate the more truly the institutions of my native land. None

know the inestimable blessings we enjoy, save those who by a residence abroad are able to compare our own with other lands. I have had this experience: therefore I am the more earnest that our own institutions shall remain without a particle of change."

After a few introductory remarks in this style, to attract the attention of the audience, he took up the arguments of his opponent, one by one, showing their sophistry; he referred to the anecdotes he had told, and ingeniously reversed their application; he then closed with a burst of impassioned eloquence, that thrilled every heart in that vast assemblage. Opponents as well as friends had to admit his unrivalled power in stirring up enthusiastic patriotic feeling.

When he sat down, one who had most loudly applauded his opponent remarked,—

"By jingos! a fellow ought never to give his opinion till he hears both sides of a question. I guess I'm with the last speaker."

"But a'n't he a swinge-cat, though?" replied the person thus addressed. "Talks a derved sight better 'n he looks. I guess I'm on his side too."

Whilst such remarks as these are passing in the crowd, his friends are gathered around him, shaking hands and congratulating him upon having sustained during the canvass his old reputation for untiring energy and convincing eloquence.

"We had feared," said one, "you had become rusty in the art of electioneering, having been so long abroad."

"Your speech of to-day," remarked another, "has convinced us that the praise bestowed upon you by the press, in the localities where you have been, is no more than justice. We allowed something for party exaggeration in the notices we saw of the wonderful effect of your speeches; but they have rather fallen below than gone above the reality."

Harry, who when the speaking was concluded had drawn near to speak to his father and deliver a message from Hope, found it impossible to get to his side, so surrounded was he by political friends.

Indeed, so pleased was the son in hearing the extravagant praise bestowed upon his father that he forgot Hope and her message,—in fact, every thing save the success of his father.

At length he got sufficiently near to touch his father's hand.

"Eh, my boy, you here?" said the gratified speaker. "How are all at home?"

"All well but mamma."

"Hope and Maggie well?"

"Yes; and Hope told me to say to you she would keep dinner waiting; she had prepared it expressly for you; that you must come as soon as you were done speaking, and not stay to talk politics."

"A woman's message," said he, laughingly. "But I must heed it, for I have been so long absent. So good-by, all of you, till to-morrow."

"Not so fast," said Dr. Caldwell: "we must have you first. There are several persons from a distance waiting to see you for the purpose of learning when you can speak in their neighborhoods. We have made arrangements to all dine with you at Bland's Hotel. After dinner you can decide upon the time you will speak at those places, and send out the appointments at once. The day of election is so near at hand there is no time to lose." Then, turning to Harry,—

"Go, my boy, and tell your sister to eat her dinner,—and supper too, should your father be detained beyond tea-time. It won't do to let a girl's impatience interfere with important political arrangements."

"I am very anxious, doctor, to see my family; but, if you think it so important I should see those persons from the country, I must yield my own wishes and be guided by you."

"Certainly you must see them. There is no knowing how much injury it would do us were you to fail to do so."

"Well, Harry, my son, go home at once. Tell your mother and sister I am obliged to remain; but I will be home just as soon as possible. It may be nine or ten o'clock; but I'll certainly be there to-night. I know they will be disappointed; but you must tell them just how it is."

"Yes, papa, I'll tell them."

"Be off with yourself, then," said the doctor; "and you, my old friend, come at once; for both the dinner and our friends are waiting at Bland's to give you a warm welcome."

We will not accompany the orator and his friends to the hotel, nor describe the dinner, which passed as dinners generally do where there is a crowd of party politicians and plenty of wine to drink. Much loud talking, a depreciation of the candidates of their opponents, with corresponding exaggeration of the popularity of their own, is, as a matter of course, to be expected.

We will transport our readers to Elm-Wood, where Hope, in her impatience to meet and welcome her father, cannot remain in the portico, but runs down to the gate about the time she expects him.

She peers down the road; but no sign of him is seen. She looks again and again; but still he is not in sight. At length she turns her back toward the road, and takes a seat with a mental resolve that she will not look again till she hears the sound of his carriage. She had sat thus about ten minutes,—which to her impatient spirit seemed an hour,—when she was startled by Harry's voice.

"Why, Hope, what are you doing here?" said he.

"Waiting for papa. Where is he?"

"In Lexington, of course."

"Did you deliver my message?"

"To-be-sure I did."

"Told him mamma was sick?"

"Yes."

"And he could stay after that? I do declare, it is too bad! Men haven't one bit of feeling."

"Don't blame papa, Hope. He was obliged to stay. His friends would not let him come."

"Pshaw! Nonsense! They could not have made him stay if he had not wanted to."

"Oh, you women-folks are so unreasonable. What great dif-

ference will it make if he get home two or three hours later?"

"Oh, I don't mind myself. But mamma will be disappointed; and she is sick, and so weak."

"I bet you a sixpence that mamma won't be one bit disappointed. She knows a little more of politics than you do, and she knows he will be obliged to stay and see the leading politicians."

"Well, you may tell her yourself that he has not come; for I won't."

They entered their mother's room together. She raised her eyes to her son's face, and inquired,—

"How is your papa?"

"He is well, and wanted to come right home as soon as he finished speaking; but there were a good many people there waiting to see him. He was obliged to stay. It will not be possible for him to get home till nine or ten o'clock; but he said I should tell you he would certainly be here by that time. I hope you are not badly disappointed that he did not come with me."

"I am not disappointed. I did not expect him. In fact, I knew it would be impossible for him to get off from his friends. We are obliged, in a great contest like this, to give up our individual wishes."

"There, Hope! do you hear mamma? She talks sensibly."

Then, turning to his mother, he went on to tell her how completely his papa overwhelmed his opponent, and what a grand speech he made. He described enthusiastically the speech, the audience, the effect produced, and the crowd that gathered around the orator when he ceased speaking; and Hope in listening forgot her disappointment in the pride she felt in her father's popularity with the people.

CHAPTER XII.

THE VISIT OF THE DARK ANGEL.

THE clock has just struck ten. Maggie is in bed, but Harry and Hope are still in their mother's room. Mr. Marshall has not yet arrived; and, although Hope says nothing, it is evident she is growing impatient. A few minutes more elapse, when the door opens and the husband and father is with his expectant family. Hope sprang up and threw her arms around her father's neck, with the exclamation,—

"Oh, papa, I am so glad you have come! I could box the ears of all the politicians for keeping you from us so long."

"I guess your hand would be tired before you got through," replied Harry, whilst the father kissed the daughter's cheek and then passed on to the bed where lay his invalid wife. He took the almost transparent hand in his own, kissed the pale brow, then gazed sadly on her for a moment.

"You are better, my love?" said he, in a tone of inquiry, his voice tremulous with emotion.

"Yes, Charles: I suffer but little, save when I have one of those dreadful chills."

"It is too bad that I am obliged to be from home. Our darling Hope is a good and tender nurse, is she not?"

"I could not have a better."

"Never mind: the canvass will soon be ended: then I will not leave you again till you are perfectly recovered."

"And you, Charles? How do you bear the fatigue you are obliged to undergo?"

"I never was better. Sometimes, when I have made two speeches a day, besides travelling some distance, I feel worn down; but a good night's rest, and I am fresh as ever."

"You must be very tired now. Children, bid your papa

good-night: it is late, and he needs rest," said the thoughtful wife.

The children retired immediately; but he did not follow their example. He sat beside his wife, and a feeling of saddened self-reproach oppressed him as he noted how pale and worn she looked. It struck him for the first time that she might possibly not recover. She had changed much during his last absence; and he deeply regretted that he had made an engagement, after spending two days with his family, to speak every day till the election took place.

Had he seen his wife previous to his sending out the appointments, he would have refused. But, now that his promise is given, he must not disappoint his friends.

As he sat alone beside the suffering invalid, in the gloom and darkness of night, these were his feelings; but when the morning came, bringing around him his political friends, he was again the politician, every thought and feeling merged into a single one,—the success of his party.

The two days he was to spend with his family have passed; and so constantly has he been occupied with the party leaders that he has had scarcely an hour's time to devote to them. In taking leave of his wife, he bade her keep up her spirits, as this would be the last time he would be under the necessity of leaving her.

He had been gone but a few days, when Mrs. Marshall had a return of the chills, bringing her almost to the grave. Hope begged to send for her father; but her mother would not consent.

"He is in honor bound to keep his appointments," said she, when Hope was urging her; "and why should we make him anxious? Were he here, he could do me no good."

"But, mamma, suppose you should never get well?" said the daughter, thinking this suggestion would win her consent.

"My dear child, it is not right that I should longer hide my true condition from you. It is certain I will never again be well; but how long I may be permitted to remain is known only to God. It may be months, and it may be but weeks."

At this announcement, a cry of anguish escaped from Hope, and she buried her face in the bed-clothes, sobbing as if her heart would break.

Witnessing this outburst of grief was a sharper pang to Mrs. Marshall than the thought of death. For some days she had felt it was time to tell Hope of her true condition; yet she had put it off, feeling she had not strength to endure the sight of the grief which her communication would call forth. She laid her hand tenderly on the head of the sobbing mourner, but spoke not a word, thinking it better to let the first violence of her sorrow exhaust itself in tears. At length Hope raised her head.

"Oh, mamma, I have feared for the last month that we might lose you. Now your own voice confirms my fears. Is there no hope, no chance, of your restoration to health?"

"None."

"Oh, how can we spare you? What will become of Harry and Maggie without you to counsel and guide them?"

"Hope, you must supply my place to them. Harry is impetuous and quick-tempered; but he is the soul of honor, and his heart is full of generous impulses. Promise me you will have patience to counsel and guide him. And poor little Maggie!—though so full of glad playfulness, she is so sensitive and dependent. Her you must cherish and encourage. It is much to expect from one so young; but I know you are equal to it. I know there is much strength of character hidden beneath your playful gayety of manner: therefore I fear not to consign my darlings to your charge."

"Oh, mamma, I will do all I can; but never can I supply your place, I am so thoughtless and you so wise."

"God will give you wisdom and strength. Forget not, in the hour of tribulation and trial, to look to him."

At this moment Harry came into the room. He glanced from the earnest face of his mother to the bowed and weeping form of his sister, then again to his mother. She understood his look of inquiry, and told him the cause of his sister's grief.

Upon him this announcement seemed to fall with more crushing weight than it had done upon his sister.

To him it was altogether unexpected. He had never thought of her as in danger; but Hope's fears had familiarized her with the thought of losing her mother, and thus in some degree prepared her for it.

From this time forth the invalid failed rapidly. The cough increased, the hectic glow burned upon her cheek more brightly, and she was no longer able to walk about her room. Her children scarcely ever left her; and, after the first outburst of sorrow, they never gave expression to the anguish with which their hearts were almost crushed. They saw it gave her pain; and that was sufficient to make them repress every exhibition of grief. The constant, affectionate care they bestowed upon her was the only indication they gave of their feelings. They listened to every sentence that fell from her lips with an attention bordering on reverence. She gave them much counsel and advice, which was treasured in their hearts as a dying legacy; and its memory strengthened and sustained them in future trial. Her sands of life were almost exhausted ere she again looked upon her husband's face,—which was not till after he had deposited his vote on the day of the election.

Ere he had been one week at home, the patient sufferer passed away, gently as a wearied babe falling asleep. The anguish of the orphaned children we will not attempt to describe; but of the husband—upon whom this bereavement fell the more heavily from the fact that he had not deemed such a loss was so near—we will say a few words.

He is alone with his dead. And who that during the summer has listened to his soul-thrilling eloquence, and marked the kindling glance of his eye, would recognise as the same individual that grief-bowed form standing beside the flower-strewn bier of his gentle wife? See! he stoops and kisses her marble brow: then, gazing sadly on the beautifully-chiselled features, he murmurs, brokenly,—

"My gentle Maggie, my life's counsellor and comforter, no more shall thy voice cheer and advise me! How desolate is

my heart! Doubly crushing is my grief that I was afar from thee as thy pure spirit was day by day approaching its eternal rest. Ay, so absorbed was I in the contention of a political canvass that I scarce had leisure to bestow one thought on thee, my gentle one! How vain seems now to my soul that wild excitement which then so entirely absorbed it! How crushed, how broken, is my spirit! How hateful the memory of those shouts of applause, which were then music to my ear! Yes, more than hateful; for it was the voice of popular applause that in part made me forgetful of thee, my faded flower. One short week since, it rang in my ear, filling my heart with exultant pride; and now the desolation of death reigns in my heart and home. No more will thy voice fall on my ear. No more will thy hand lovingly grasp mine, and thy softly-beaming eye shall no more speak the language of thy true and faithful heart. The eye is dimmed and the heart is stilled in death, and the joy of my life hath departed."

At length he turned from contemplating the calm, pale face, and retired to his own room, there to wrestle with sorrow.

CHAPTER XIII.

POLITICAL SCHEMERS.

THE last sad rites of earth have been performed for the loved and lost. The grief-stricken mourners are gathered in the family sitting-room; but, oh, what a void is in the heart of each! She, the presiding genius, whose presence made it the dearest spot on earth, is no longer there. Hope, although her own heart was almost bursting, endeavored to converse on commonplace subjects, for the purpose of withdrawing her father from his own sad thoughts.

Of all periods of sadness, none is more oppressive than the first evening spent in the old familiar room after having buried a beloved member of the family. So deeply was it felt by this little circle that it was a relief when Aunt Minta came to take Maggie to bed, as it gave an excuse for each to retire. Each felt stronger in spirit and better able to again enter upon life's tasks when the light of the next morning fell brightly upon the face of Nature.

Hope was no longer the gay, thoughtless girl, but a thoughtful woman taking at once her mother's place in the household. For a few days they were left in the quiet of their home to recover from the first shock of their grief. Then Mr. Marshall's political friends again came around him. His party was triumphant; and they urged that, as he had contributed so greatly to its success in his own State, he must participate in the rejoicing consequent thereupon. He at first refused to be drawn from his home. Hope joined her solicitations to theirs.

"Papa," said she, "a remembrance of the dead does not require us to neglect our duty to the living."

"True, my child; but the general rejoicing will contrast too

painfully with my sadness: therefore I will avoid coming in contact with it."

"Nay, papa, could mamma herself advise, she would say, 'Shrink not from mingling in any scene in which you would have been an actor had I remained with you.' To me she said, ere she died, 'When I am gone, remember, you will the sooner regain your cheerfulness by engaging earnestly in every duty and occupation which would have employed you had I not been called away.' The same will apply to you. I therefore beg you will be guided by the advice she gave me. For my own part, I consider every wish expressed by her as a rule by which to guide my life."

"But, my child, you will be so lonely should I leave you even for a short time."

"I must learn to be self-reliant. I am no longer a child, to be entirely dependent on others. I must think and act for myself and find resources in my own mind. I promised mamma that I would supply, as far as it was possible for me to do so, her place in the household."

"You are a dear, good girl. I will be guided by you in this instance; yet, were I to follow the dictates of my own heart, I would never again mingle in political strife."

"You feel thus now; but it is not so easy to give up habits and associations that have almost become a part of your existence. It is necessary that you mingle with your fellow-men, as you have hitherto done, or you may fall into a state of brooding despondency."

Hope was thus earnest in urging her father, because she feared he would give himself up to hopeless melancholy. She knew, if she could get him aroused from the stupor of grief which had fallen upon him, he would from habit become interested, his mind would recover its proper tone, and he would be diverted from dwelling continually upon his loss. How great this loss, the outside world had no conception.

Mrs. Marshall was generally considered an accomplished, gentle-hearted woman, who presided over her husband's household with graceful elegance but taking no interest in the political

contests of the day, and, consequently, having no sympathy with her husband upon those subjects. This was a mistake. She was not a chatterer of politics, and she never intruded her opinion of political men and measures upon the gentlemen who were frequently her husband's guests and who discussed these subjects in her presence. Yet it was not because she was incompetent; but she thought it unwomanly to do so. Her judgment upon these subjects was remarkably correct, and her husband always had the benefit of her opinions; but they were not given in the presence of visitors.

Much of his success was owing to her counsels. She was observant and clear-sighted, and often disabused his mind of an unjust prejudice, and pointed out the false professions of political tricksters. He had not only lost a pleasant home-companion, but an able adviser. Her intellect was almost equal to his own, —to which was added a quickness of perception that enabled her to discriminate between the true and false with almost unerring certainty.

Hope in this respect was very like her mother; and she resolved to fit herself to supply her place not only as manager of the household, but as adviser. Her father, as she hoped, in mingling with his political friends had become interested in his old pursuits, and was withdrawn from the constant contemplation of his bereavement.

When the day set apart to select an individual to bear to Washington the vote of the State arrived, Mr. Marshall received the appointment. It was furthermore agreed among the party leaders that their State was entitled to a Cabinet-officer, and that Mr. Marshall, from the satisfactory manner in which he had discharged his duties whilst minister abroad, was well qualified to fill the position of Secretary of State. They instructed their delegation in Congress to ask that office for him. They proposed him because, in the first place, he was qualified for the office, and, secondly, they thought it due him in consideration of the untiring energy with which he had devoted himself to the party during the canvass.

Believing he would receive this or some other good appoint-

ment from the incoming administration, he sold his furniture and rented his homestead; for he was anxious to leave a spot where he was so constantly reminded of his loss. Immediately after his arrival in Washington, he placed Harry in Georgetown College, Maggie in the Academy of Visitation, and took a suite of rooms for himself and Hope at a hotel.

This man, who since his marriage had never known the want of money, found his purse exhausted about the middle of February. This gave him but little anxiety; for he thought he would only have to ask his friend Bringham for a loan, and that gentleman, who in former days had often had such accommodations from him, would be glad of an opportunity to thus oblige him. Accordingly, the first time he called at his room, he accosted him with,—

"Bringham, my expenses have been greater than I expected. I wish you would let me have a thousand dollars."

"I am very sorry," replied he, "that I cannot oblige you; but just at this time I have not one hundred dollars of spare money by me."

"The dickens you haven't! Why, the world gives you the credit of being a millionaire."

"That is just what it has always said of you."

"Yet it seems to have made a mistake with regard to each of us."

"I have a good deal of property, but I am much pressed for money. I really wish I could let you have the thousand dollars, were it only that I might repay you for the many favors of the kind I have had from you."

"Don't speak of that. I was always happy to oblige a friend; and hitherto I have never been under the necessity of asking any thing of the kind."

"It is too bad that I have no money by me. Perhaps Tompkins or Williams could let you have it."

"I'll not trouble them; nor would I have troubled you, but I thought it would be no inconvenience for you to let me have it. Could I get my account at the Department adjusted correctly, there is considerable due me there; but they have suspended so many items that they have withheld from me over a thousand

dollars, and I do not like to insist upon a readjustment just now, as this administration is so near an end. I have money that will soon be due on the sale of my furniture; but I cannot make that immediately available; and I must have money before the end of the month."

"I might be able to raise you some by that time. If you desire I should, I will try."

"No, no: I will not give you the trouble. I will borrow in bank. There it will be a business-transaction. I will pay for the use of their money and feel that I am asking no favor. I shall have to ask you to endorse my note. I had determined never to ask such a thing from a friend; but I will secure you from all risk by giving you a mortgage on my homestead, to be cancelled when my note is paid. Have you any objection to lend me the use of your name upon these terms?"

"None in the world. I am most happy to oblige you."

The mortgage was given and the money borrowed. When Bringham related the transaction to Sprott, his man-of-all-work,—one of a class of persons found nowhere but in Washington,—he did so in a manner that was repugnant even to that individual.

"Aha!" said he, in an exultant tone: "things are working just right. I guess we will get Marshall out of our way now, if we play the right game. One reason why he has always been so successful, he had plenty of money, and was as liberal with it as if it had no value beyond that of obliging his friends or securing the success of his party. It seems the fine fortune he got with his wife is about used up."

"So he came to you to borrow money, and you could not oblige him?"

"Oh, I could have done so well enough, but I—it is not my policy."

"Why, I don't see that it has much to do with policy, one way or another."

"It is only this. If I had lent him the money, I could not have spoken of it; and I want it known that he is under the necessity of borrowing. Had it been a private personal transaction between friends, if a hint of it had got out it would reflect

discredit on me, as having mentioned it. A transaction in bank is a different matter. You might mention—incidentally, you know—in certain quarters that it is said Marshall is not so flush of funds as he has been; and his being in bank will sustain your assertion.”

“I do not exactly understand your object in this, and what you expect to accomplish by it.”

“Why, Sprott, is it possible, with your acuteness, you have lived to your age without understanding that nothing makes a fellow’s friends lukewarm so soon as a knowledge that he is in want of money? Those having money will stand aloof, fearing he may want to borrow; those having none will conclude it is not worth while to attach themselves to a poor dog who is not able to help them.”

“True: that is generally human nature. But you must not forget that Marshall has political influence, and that will secure him friends.”

“Just allow me to change the tense of your verb. Say he *has* had political influence.”

“No: I adhere to the present tense. He *has* political influence. Does not our State claim, with a good prospect of success, a Cabinet officer? And the people at home, with the entire delegation in Congress, yourself included, say he is the man who has earned and for whom the State asks this honor.”

“Bosh, Sprott! You are pretty shrewd, but you cannot ‘see punkins in the ground.’ I’ll have a hand in the cooking of that mess; and you’ll admit, before six months are over, that ‘has had’ is the tense to use with regard to Marshall.”

“Why, you won’t dare to oppose him, in the face of the wishes of the entire State?”

“Certainly not in the face; but a good deal can be done behind the back of States, as well as individuals, that they never see. I’ll urge his claims seemingly with more earnestness than any other member of the delegation; but I’ll manage it. I am called a Western man, from having lived in the West from my youth; but I was born in New York, and I have as much tact in managing as the shrewdest politician that comes

from my native State. I want to see Marshall crushed; and now is the time to do it.”

“Yet you have always been a very warm friend of his. At least, you have been so considered.”

“Yes: that was my only policy. One must never attack the fortunes of a political rival unless certain of sufficient strength to put him down; for, when the issue is once made, yourself or rival must go down. I have always had the will to push him aside, fearing he might sometimes be in my way; but I have never had the power, for he has always been too popular with the people. Here politicians are to be dealt with: I have the cards in my own hands, and a few more throws will win the game.”

“How so?”

“Well, I don’t know that it is necessary to show my cards even to you.”

“Just as you please. But, as I work for you, I like to do it understandingly.”

“You are right. So I will give you an inkling. In the first place, Marshall and I are particular friends. He depends upon me to see that his interest is not neglected in the forming of the new Cabinet. Letters upon this subject from our delegation have been received and answered by the President elect; and he gives the impression that our request will receive favorable consideration.”

“I have seen that letter; and that is why I said Marshall would probably be Secretary of State.”

“You are aware that the President will be in the city soon, to have personal consultations with the principal men of the party with regard to the formation of his Cabinet.”

“Yes.”

“Well, I, as the oldest Senator from our State, will be the person to call upon him in behalf of our delegation.”

“Certainly.”

“Now, the correspondence which has passed shows that we have urged Marshall’s claims with much earnestness.”

“It does.”

"The record is very satisfactory. Is it not?"

"It is."

"Conversations have no record which might come to light in some unlucky moment. I shall find the President elect sorely pressed, each State insisting she should be represented in the Cabinet and bringing forward the name of some favorite son. I will commence by insisting our State must not be overlooked, particularly when she presents the name of one so competent to fill the place we ask, but end by admitting our State will not be unreasonable, and, should we be disappointed in what we ask, we are too good partisans to allow it to affect the party disastrously. This to a practical politician like the President elect will be plain as day, without my having said a word to compromit myself. Do you comprehend?"

"Perfectly. A wink is as good as a nod to a fellow that is wide awake; and I guess nobody will find me a-napping where the interest of my friend is concerned."

"Say your own interest. It is not worth while for you and me to make a pretence of humbugging each other. I know you work for me because it is your interest to do so, and you know I patronize you because I need your services. So it is a waste of breath for us to palaver about disinterested friendship to each other. Save that for our victims. We are friends because we are useful to each other."

"Now you've said it, and the case, plainly stated, would stand thus. 'I have a great facility for scribbling. I am in Washington, and paragraphs get afloat in the newspapers, emanating from the pen of a close observer of men and things in the national metropolis, representing you as one of the greatest statesmen of the age. Your name is constantly kept before the public in this way, until finally this gullible public believes what it so often reads. I, as a matter of course, in return for having made the world acquainted with your greatness, which it would otherwise never have discovered, am entitled to a place with a good salary and some pickings.'"

"Ha, ha, Sprott! you are a keen one. Now be off with you.

Fall in with Marshall accidentally, and be sure to let him know how determined I am that he shall be Secretary of State."

"Over the left, you know," said the recipient of the above confidence, casting a comical glance at his patron as he left the room.

CHAPTER XIV.

A DISAPPOINTMENT.

THE residence of the Hon. Jeremiah Bringham is in the neighborhood of Cabinet-officers, foreign diplomats, and wealthy bankers. Among the elegant mansions surrounding him, his is one of the finest. It is one of those fine days in February which rival May in the balminess of the atmosphere. The carriage is before the door, and Miss Bringham, in out-door costume, is seated in the parlor.

"Ha, Mollie!" said her father, coming into the room, "going out this lovely morning?"

"Yes: ma and I are going to make some calls; and I don't see what's keeping her. I do despise to be detained after I am ready!"

"Going to make calls, eh? That puts me in mind to ask if you've called on Miss Marshall since she came to the city."

"No; and—what's more—I don't intend to."

"Why, child?"

"I don't like her."

"The families of politicians cannot always be governed by their likes and dislikes, even in visiting. They must often be guided by policy, my child,—policy."

"I don't see what policy has to do with my calling or not calling on Hope Marshall."

"You know she is from our own State; her father and I are great friends; and etiquette requires that you should call. They might think it neglect should you fail to do so."

"Who cares if they do?"

"I care, and—But here comes your mother. She will understand this thing better. Amy, my dear," said he, addressing

his wife, "I want you and Mollie to call on Hope Marshall this morning."

"Certainly, if you wish it. I proposed calling before; but Mollie objected. However, if you desire us to go, I shall pay no attention to Miss Moll's whims."

"I desire it very much, and I wish you to treat the Marshalls with marked attention. This interchange of civilities between women is by some men considered a trifle unworthy of their notice. Not so do I. It is an incident of history that it was this deemed-by-some-trivial matter that broke up the Cabinet of General Jackson and ruptured the friendship between him and another distinguished statesman, with whom he had been as intimate as a brother."

"Come on, ma: it is of no use standing here talking. We can call on Hope Marshall, if papa thinks it of so much importance that he must make a set speech upon it."

"I do think it important; and you must not only call, but you must make yourself agreeable."

"That's my own dog," muttered the daughter, in an undertone. "You can make me call, but you can't force me to be agreeable."

Mr. Bringham, having made up his mind to act the traitor, was particularly attentive to his intended victim, lest he should suspect him of indifference to his interest.

Soon after this call was made, a large party was to be given by the honorable Senator. Again the father and daughter came in contact. She objected to sending a card of invitation to Hope Marshall; but, as in the former instance, the will of the father was the stronger. The invitation was sent; and the angry frown which settled upon the brow of the daughter at this disregard of her wishes did not disappear until a note was received from Hope begging that both she and her father might be excused, as they did not attend parties, on account of their recent bereavement.

The winter went rapidly by; and, although Hope did not mingle in the gayeties of the season, she drew about her a circle of intellectual and refined acquaintances,—minds far more con-

genial to her taste than she would have met with in the whirl of fashionable life. The cultivated and refined often assembled in the drawing-room, forming a kind of home-circle, where each was appreciated, and whence far more enjoyment was derived than could be found in the crowded saloons of fashion or the mixed society of a party. Invitations to parties were often declined for these pleasant home-evenings, where Hope is ever ready to contribute, by music or conversation, her share toward the entertainment of those who choose to spend their evenings thus. From the acquaintances thus formed, Mollie Bringham often heard her name mentioned.

It is within a week of the Inauguration, and Mr. Marshall, though wholly unsuspecting of treachery, begins to feel somewhat anxious that he has received no communication direct from the President elect. His friends assure him, and Bringham more positively than any, the place asked for him is certain; still, he does not himself feel assured. Another day has passed, and rumors are rife that the gentlemen who are to compose the Cabinet have been notified of their selection. Upon hearing this, he goes at once to Bringham and asks what he thinks of these rumors.

"All stuff," replied that wily politician,—“unless you have received a notification of your appointment. It is a fixed fact that you will be Secretary of State.”

"I have received no communication of any kind from the President elect. Nor have I even seen him. Knowing you and our entire delegation were urging my name for a place in the Cabinet, I felt a delicacy in calling on him unless he intimated a desire to see me."

"You were right in acting thus, for his time is occupied. Your delicacy will be duly appreciated. Your friends will see that your interests are not neglected."

"I trust so. Yet I feel strangely dispirited."

"I see no reason why you should feel so. You saw his letter in reply to the delegation. It contained almost a positive promise; and when I called on him personally my interview was perfectly satisfactory. So dismiss your anxiety."

"I will endeavor to do so. But since the death of my wife I am so much more liable to be despondent, so easily depressed."

"You must rid yourself from that feeling."

"More easily said than done. However, I will be advised by you in this matter, and entertain no anxiety. The Inauguration is so near, I cannot be much longer in suspense."

The day after this conversation, Mr. Marshall was sitting alone in his room, when the door was suddenly opened without a rap, and Bringham rushed in, with a well-gotten-up look of indignation and surprise.

"Oh, the treachery of man!" exclaimed he, before Mr. Marshall had time to offer him a seat. "I could not have believed it! I am astonished beyond measure!"

"Well, what is it? I thought you too old a politician to be astonished at any thing."

"This confounds even me!"

"What is it? Let me hear."

"Why, as I was coming over to ask you if you had received a notification of your appointment yet; I met Stringer, and he showed me a letter tendering him the office of Secretary of State. The letter was received by him about four days since; and he has accepted the place. I never was so surprised in my life."

"I am not surprised nor disappointed."

"Not disappointed?"

"No: your news only confirms the impression which to me has been almost a certainty for the past week."

"I tell you what it is: I am not going to take such treatment coolly, if you do. I have considerable influence in the Senate, and I will prevent his confirmation."

"That would be wrong. I am sure you would not be the cause of trouble to the President and injury to the party merely to gratify a personal pique?"

"It is not a personal pique, but wrong to a friend. Were it myself, I would let it pass."

"And you must let it pass for me. I would be deeply pained were you to give trouble to the incoming President on my account."

"I would not pain you for the world, and, if you insist upon it, I must gulp down my indignation; but, I assure you, such a disregard of the wishes of Old Kentuck is a bitter pill to swallow."

"Better swallow it quietly, how bitter soever it may be, than make difficulty."

"Well, as you—the one on whom this injustice falls most heavily—take it so calmly, I suppose I must do so too."

"Certainly: that is the proper course. And as to injustice, I do not know that we are justified in using the term. We had a right to ask the place; and hundreds of others had the same right, perhaps with just as strong claims. Had we succeeded, others would be disappointed; and, had we been the successful one, we would think very hard were others to pursue the course you propose doing."

"Your argument is convincing. But I was so sure you would be the Secretary."

"We had no right to any such certainty. But, now that the matter is decided, I will call on the President as soon as convenient after the Inauguration takes place, and tender him my hearty support."

"I would not go near him if I were you. I would show my spirit, and let him see I resented his treatment."

"It would be an unworthy act to withdraw my support because I did not get a Cabinet-appointment."

After continuing the conversation some time longer, Bringham left. Had Mr. Marshall been less honest and more observant, he would have perceived the indignation exhibited was all acting.

At the supper-table that evening, nothing was talked of but the new Cabinet. Much regret and surprise were expressed that Mr. Marshall was not one of its prominent members, it having been generally understood he was to be Secretary of State. And he would have received that appointment but for the double-dealing of Bringham. Yet no one suspected such a thing.

The evening previous to the Inauguration, several prominent politicians from Kentucky arrived, and among the number Bran-

don. The city was so crowded with strangers, they found it impossible to secure comfortable quarters; and Mr. Marshall offered them the use of his parlor, if they would be content to occupy such beds as could be furnished them. The offer was gladly accepted. After supper, whilst the servants were arranging sleeping-places for them, they were all assembled in Mr. Marshall's room; and they were loud in condemnation of the President for the slight put upon their State in refusing an appointment to one of her sons so capable of filling the place, and to whom he was so much indebted for service rendered during the hardy-contested canvass.

"Don't denounce the President," said Brandon, who had sat silent till now. "I suspect treachery nearer home."

"Who?" asked several voices.

"I do not wish to mention names, for it is only a suspicion. But I'll find out before I leave the city."

"And let us know?"

"Yes, if I find my suspicions confirmed."

When they had all left but Brandon, whom Mr. Marshall had invited to share his own bed, there was silence for a moment; but it was interrupted by Mr. Marshall.

"Whom do you suspect?" inquired he, looking eagerly into his old friend's face.

"Of whom did I warn you last summer?"

"Bringham?"

"Yes."

"Oh, no: you do him injustice. He has been particularly friendly this winter."

"Judas betrayed our Savior with a kiss."

"But Bringham was furious when he learned I was overlooked."

"Then you believe he was true to your interest?"

"True as steel."

"I may do him injustice, but I doubt it. However, I will find out before I leave."

The two old friends continued talking till long past midnight;

and during that time domestic and pecuniary as well as political matters had been touched on. When Mr. Brandon understood that Bringham had a mortgage upon the property of his friend, he shook his head dubiously; yet he said nothing, although he had his misgivings.

CHAPTER XV.

VERDANCY OF OFFICE-SEEKERS.

THE Inaugural address, the Inaugural ball, and all the pageantry of the installation of the new Administration, have gone by.

The Inaugural ball exists as a bright memory in the hearts of the young men and maidens who danced to the strains of glad music, or promenaded beneath the chandeliers which made light as day the spacious dancing-saloon temporarily erected for this occasion.

Of the thousands who thronged the city to witness the pageantry or partake of its festivity, but hundreds now remain. Those who have not left belong to that class of individuals who rush to the seat of Government upon the incoming of a new administration, for the purpose of receiving their reward for service rendered during the Presidential canvass, in the shape of a good office. Each claimant is fully convinced in his own mind that his individual exertion secured the elevation of the present incumbent of the White House to the position he occupies; and he feels assured he can make this fact evident to the President if he can only get his ear for ten minutes.

All labor under this hallucination: consequently, there is a crowd thronging the White House from "rosy morn till dewy eve," and occasionally a more experienced and adroit manager contrives to slip in under the cover of the night: thus he gets a hearing when the prying eyes of rival applicants may not spy out his movements.

Each is anxious his petition should be first listened to; and it is a rich treat to the student of human nature to mingle with the anxious crowd in the ante-room and observe the shoving and elbowing of the more self-confident that they may keep ahead of their competitors. Modest merit is sure to come in hindmost in

this instance. Nevertheless, the scriptural saying, "The first shall be last, and the last first," is sometimes verified even in this scramble for office. For it has happened that he who was first in the presence of the President goes home with a flea in his ear, whilst he who got only to the door of the reception-room, ere the time for receiving visitors was over, carried an appointment in his pocket.

That our readers may have some idea how these things are managed, we will introduce them into the private consultation-room of Mr. Bringham.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared that dignitary, throwing himself back in his chair.

This peal of laughter roused Sprott, who was sitting at a table on the opposite side of the room, inditing a paragraph for a newspaper. He cast a look of inquiry upon his patron, which was answered with,—

"'Pon my soul, 'tis too amusing! I cannot refrain from laughing whenever I think of it."

"Think of what?"

"The performance of the simple uninitiated."

"To whom do you refer?"

"The office-seekers."

"They are rather a *verdant* set."

"*Verdant*! Why, I tell you, Sprott, they know just nothing at all! A chap having worked hard during the campaign, when his candidate is successful, concludes he will come up to Washington to see the Inauguration and get an office. Before leaving home, he takes the precaution to get a recommendation, with the names of all the principal men of his party, who set forth his claims and testify to his capacity. Thus armed, he imagines all he has to do is to pay his respects to the President, present his credentials, and get a commission for the place he desires. He would not attach so much value to these names if he knew there were ten chances to one that his papers will never be looked at, and, even if they are looked at, they are of no more consequence than so much waste paper. There is quite a different estimate put upon these names before and after an elec-

tion. Occasionally you find a fellow 'cute enough to find out that the matter of appointment to office is all settled in private conversations between the President and the delegation of his own State."

"I suppose you don't consider it a part of your duty to enlighten them upon this subject?"

"No, *sirree*! But listen, Sprott, whilst I draw a picture of one of them. He represents a class; and you may put it in the newspaper if you like."

"Well, go ahead. I'll take it down in short-hand, as I would a speech in the Senate."

"I will commence with his arrival in the city the day previous to the Inauguration. Carpet-bag in hand, he jumps from the cars and hastens to find a place to stow himself away. This attended to, he visits the Capitol, Patent-Office, Treasury, and other public buildings. In the evening he calls upon a Senator or member of Congress from his own State. He is enthusiastically eloquent in his praise of *our* public buildings. The thought of his share in the proprietorship makes him feel at least a half-foot taller. 'Magnificent! beautiful! perfect marvels in the way of architecture!' are the exclamations that fall from his lips; and he winds up with, 'It is well worth a visit to Washington to witness such an assemblage of the sovereigns of the greatest nation on earth, and look upon *our* public buildings.' Having got through with this rhapsody, he incidentally refers to the office he is after; but that is referred to with no great emphasis. He thinks he can well afford to speak about the office with seeming indifference; for does not his hand rest upon the pocket containing the important document that needs but be presented to the President and his appointment is secured beyond a question? At length he retires to his dreams, in a good humor with himself, 'all the world, and the rest of mankind.'

"In the morning he is up betimes. He has come to see the sights; and he is bound to waste no unnecessary time in sleep. At this early hour, before the crowd is too great to prevent him from getting into the Senate-chamber and Hall of Representatives,

he gives an hour or two to the observation of our dignified law-makers, and——"

Sprott here interrupted with,—

"And he finds them wonderfully dignified, after having sat up all night and been obliged to recruit their exhausted natural spirits with a drop of the artificial. Ha, ha! it makes me laugh to think of some of the pictures of dignity I have witnessed after a night-ses——"

"Don't interrupt me, Sprott."

"Go on. I'm mum."

"Well, after having seen the law-makers, he goes to see the grand cavalcade which escorts the President to the Capitol, where the oath of office is taken, after which the Inaugural speech is delivered in the presence of listening thousands. Oh, this is a soul-stirring scene!—banners flying, drums beating, and all Washington in its gala-dress to honor the incoming President. Another day of perfect enjoyment goes by; and he retires again to his slumbers in a most complaisant mood.

"The next morning something of a reaction has taken place. The exhilaration of spirit caused by the excitement of the last two days has passed, and he feels rather listless and depressed. But the pleasure has been partaken of; and he must now attend to the business-part of his trip. He goes to breakfast, drinks a cup of strong coffee, takes a walk in the open air, and is himself again.

"He now wends his way to the Presidential mansion, with the all-important document in his pocket. To his great surprise, he finds the ante-room crowded with persons who, early as he thought himself, have gotten there before him. An hour passes in anxious expectation. At length a messenger announces, 'The President is so occupied with his Cabinet it will be impossible for him to see visitors to-day.' He retires, much disappointed, but still hopeful. After two or three such disappointments, he calls upon some Senator or member from his own State to assist him in getting an interview. After some little management, this is accomplished, and he has the inexpressible gratification of grasping the hand of the President, who receives him with much

cordiality. The visitor is bade welcome, and, learning his locality, the President is full of kind expressions: he has unusual regard for his friends in that particular locality, because they sustained him so nobly in the hard-fought battle just passed.

"The visitor now takes the opportunity of presenting his papers and letting the President know the manner in which those friends expect him to testify his regard. The papers are taken, and a slight change passes over the countenance of the President, not perceptible to the uninitiated, but very evident to the old stager. He holds them in his hand without unfolding them, as he says, 'Um! Aw! yes: an office. What office do you want?' The place being named, he replies, with alacrity, 'Yes, yes; ah, yes: that comes under the supervision of the Secretary of State,' 'Treasury,' or, 'Interior,' as the case may be. 'I will refer your papers to him, and request him to give your claims a favorable consideration.'

"The member who accompanies him gives him a hint to leave, by saying to the President, 'We will not trespass any longer upon your time, knowing how completely it is occupied.' Again hands are grasped in friendly adieu, and they leave the White House.

"The candidate for office is in an ecstasy of delight as he refers to the expressions of friendly regard addressed to him by the President. He is not aware he has been listening to a stereotyped set of phrases addressed to all who call. And as to the office, he thinks that just as certain as if he had the commission in his pocket."

"I guess he'll find out he's mistaken, unless he should happen to be the lucky individual decided on in secret confab. The names of these home-politicians are not worth the paper it takes to write them, so far as the getting of office is concerned."

"That is true. They are at a premium before an election, but we have no use for them at the seat of Government afterwards."

"They are rather annoying."

"Decidedly so."

"See! there is one of them coming up the steps now."

"Brandon, as I live! I would rather see any of them than him. You may go now."

Sprott lingered till Brandon entered, and, as he witnessed the meeting of these two wary politicians, a significant smile passed over his face. He knew each hated the other with all the bitterness of which his spirit was capable; yet, had they been twin-brothers, they could not have expressed more pleasure at this meeting.

CHAPTER XVI.

ADJUSTMENT OF ACCOUNTS AT THE STATE AND TREASURY DEPARTMENTS.

"WELL, Marshall, I have found out who was traitor with regard to your appointment."

"Who?"

"Brigham."

"It can't be possible!"

"Not only possible, but certain."

"How did you discover it?"

"Suspicion makes one sharp-sighted. I called on him a day or two after the Inauguration, and mentioned, as if incidentally, how great was our disappointment that you were not in the Cabinet. The indignation he exhibited was so violent, I felt certain it was mere acting; and I determined to ascertain if my convictions were correct. For the purpose of doing this, I called upon the President. In the course of our conversation, I asked him if he did not think we had some grounds for accusing him of have acted unfairly by us, in giving us the impression that you were to have the Secretaryship and at the last minute giving it to another.

"He replied that it had been decided to give it to you, but when he had an interview with Brigham he told him we wanted the place, yet we would not be too unreasonable, seeing how much pressed he was by clamorous aspirants."

"The two-faced scoundrel! Why, he was all the time telling me how urgent he was in demanding my appointment!"

"That is the way he manages,—making a pretence of the greatest friendship, whilst he is secretly doing all he can to injure any whom he thinks may be in his way. He is jealous of your popularity with the party: he was therefore anxious to prevent

you from occupying a position that would bring you prominently before the whole people."

"Yet he was the most earnest friend I had in securing me the place of minister abroad."

"He had a personal interest. He knew, if you remained at home, the seat he now holds in the United States Senate would be given to you. He therefore wanted you out of the way before the election came on."

"Can it be possible that what I attributed to disinterested friendship was the result of interested motives?"

"Bah! What an idea!—disinterested friendship in the heart of an ambitious politician! I tell you, now, Bringham is one of the most ambitious and unprincipled men I have ever known; and I have had a good deal of intercourse with politicians during my long career as editor. Why, he would sacrifice his own brother, were it necessary, for his advancement politically or pecuniarily! He is as covetous of wealth as he is ambitious for political preferment."

"He would better look out. His election for Senator comes off before the close of this administration. He has balked me in a place, and I will try to balk him of a seat in the Senate. I will return home as soon as I can arrange my affairs here. Whilst he makes interest with the bankers and politicians of Washington, I will secure friends at home; and when the Senatorial election comes off we will see who is strongest."

"That is just the course I would advise you to pursue. Why not return with me? What is there to detain you?"

"The settlement of my accounts with the Departments."

"That can be done in two or three days; and I'll wait that long for the sake of having your company."

"Have you ever had business with the Departments?"

"Never."

"I supposed not; or you would have said weeks, and perhaps months, instead of days."

"Well, well, get through as soon as you can. Don't loiter about Washington; for, if you do, you will learn a lesson that will be very mortifying to your self-esteem. You will find a

decided difference in the estimation placed upon a man in power and one out."

"I shall leave just as soon as possible. When do you go?"

"To-morrow; and, if there is any thing I can do for you, command me."

"You can oblige me much by collecting what is due me and remitting it."

"I will attend to your request as soon as I get home."

"If I am out of office?"

"You may rely on me. I esteem you for yourself."

"I always believed such to be the case."

"Yes; Charlie Marshall in office or out of office is the same individual to old Jack Brandon."

"And I doubt not, Jack, I shall find scores of others just as true. I do not distrust all because Bringham has played me false."

"Don't let Bringham know we have discovered his treachery. We must fight him masked, according to his own tactics. Treat him as you have always done."

"I cannot treat as a friend one whom I believe to be false-hearted. It is contrary to my nature."

"You need not treat him exactly as a friend, but you can refrain from telling him you know of his treachery. And let me intimate to you, should you find others less cordial than they have been, do not let it affect your spirits."

The day after this conversation had taken place, Mr. Brandon left.

"I do not know why I feel so reluctant to leave you, Charlie," said he, in taking leave of his friend. "Were I superstitious, I should think some evil were about to befall one or the other of us. I feel as if I were taking a last farewell."

"You are getting sentimental in your old days."

"No, no. But be sure and let us see you among us soon."

When the new Cabinet were fairly settled in their places, Mr. Marshall, determined to ask nothing of the administration save a just settlement of his accounts, called upon the Secretary. He was referred to the clerk having charge of the accounts of

foreign ministers. This clerk was a new appointment, and knew nothing of the duties of his office: consequently, Mr. Marshall was put off week after week, that the new accountant might learn something of his duties. Finally the adjustment was made, but not to the satisfaction of the ex-minister, and he took an appeal to the Secretary. Here was more delay; for this honorable gentleman had been so occupied in finding places to bestow on his own immediate political friends that he had been unable to give any attention to the actual business of the Department: therefore he was not prepared to make a decision, and he excused himself for not taking it up, under the plea of the great pressure of more important business.

Thus weeks passed into months, and Mr. Marshall became impatient and heart-sick at the delay. This was increased by his overhearing occasionally such remarks as the following:—

“What keeps Marshall here? It is surprising a man of his talent, and one who has held such important offices, should dwindle down to a lounge about Washington.” Added to this, persons who had once esteemed it an honor to claim his acquaintance now scarcely recognised him when they met. All these things chafed his spirit, and he grew irritable and petulant.

Hope observed, with a pained heart, that day by day the lines of care grew deeper on her father's brow. She strove by her gentle cheerfulness to win him from his sombre moods. Finding she could not succeed, she proposed they should go home and leave the old accounts without settlement.

“No, Hope,” said he to this proposition: “I am resolved to have my account properly adjusted before I leave the city?”

“Is the amount of money involved of so much importance?”

“No: the paltry sum of money would not keep me a day; but I said they should adjust my account on a correct basis, and I'll stay here till I die but what I'll compel them to do it.”

“Indeed, papa, I am afraid you will die if you stay here worrying yourself by running to the Departments these hot days. Let me persuade you to go home.”

“No, child, no: when I make up my mind, I seldom change it; and I can assure you I will not do so in this instance. I am

bound to teach these gentlemen, who are so puffed up with their newly-acquired importance that they fancy it is impertinence in a simple citizen for him to insist upon having his business attended to, that I, at least, will not be prevented from insisting upon my rights.”

“Well, if that is your determination, I will not add to your annoyance by my importunity; but indeed, papa, I feel very anxious about you.”

“Don't fret yourself, puss; for the next time I go to the Department I'll give them a little plainer talk than I have done yet. I'll bring them to their senses.”

Hope little knew how soon her worst fears were to be realized when she expressed her anxiety to her father.

CHAPTER XVII.

PLAIN TALK TO A SECRETARY.

"PAPA, do let me send for a doctor," said Hope, in a pleading voice, as she looked upon the flushed face and listened to the heavy respiration of her father, as he reclined upon the sofa in his own room.

"No, my child: there is no need of a physician. I am only fatigued."

"Why, papa, you have a high fever," said she, laying her tiny hand upon his throbbing temples.

"It is only a fever of indignation and excitement."

"I would not get indignant and excited this hot weather."

"Advice easily enough given, but difficult to be followed,—particularly when insult is added to injury."

"What is it, papa?"

"This morning I went to the Department determined not to leave without seeing the Secretary. I sent in my card. The messenger returned, as he had done many times previously, saying the Secretary was occupied and could not see me to-day. I seated myself in the ante-room, remarking, 'I will wait till the Secretary is disengaged.' I sat there watching the door, intending, when the person with whom he was engaged should get through with his business and leave, I would enter unannounced. In a few minutes, peals of laughter came from the Secretary's room, then the sound of voices, as if they were telling anecdotes, and another peal of laughter,—which plainly indicated it was not grave and intricate business-matters that occupied them. I sat thus hours,—how many I will not pretend to say; but, in the mood I was in, it seemed to me an age. At last the door opened, and Bringham came from the room. I was near a window, and he did not see me; or, if he did, he failed to acknowledge it by

a bow of recognition. When he had passed out, I started toward the door of the Secretary's room. I was just placing my hand upon the knob to open it, when it swung back on its hinges, and the Secretary and I met face to face.

"'Really, Mr. Marshall,' said he, looking much surprised and slightly confused, as I saluted him, 'I was not aware you were waiting. I sent word by my messenger I was engaged and would see you another day. Did the rascal fail to deliver my message?'"

"'I received your message,' replied I: 'so you have no cause for entertaining angry feelings toward that *gentleman*, who fills his office most *worthily*; but I have called so often and been put off to that other day that I concluded I would wait till your other engagements were disposed of: then perhaps you could give me an audience of half an hour. I will not detain you longer.'

"'You must excuse me. It is three o'clock, and I have not dined.'

"'Neither have I; but I presume it will not spoil our appetites should we dine half an hour later.'

"'But I expect a friend to dine with me; and I would not keep him waiting.'

"'I have waited hours; and you can let him wait half an hour.'

"'I could not think of such a thing. So I will bid you a good morning.' As he uttered the last word he took a step forward, as if to leave me.

"'Stop!' said I, laying my hand upon his arm. 'You shall hear me ere you go.'

"'You need not think you can compel me to attend to your business against my inclination,' replied he, angrily.

"'No,' retorted I; 'but I can compel you to hear what I have to say.' And I tightened my grasp upon his arm. I presume I must have looked devilish, for a tremor passed over him and his cheek blanched as he said, in a mild tone,—

"'Why, Marshall, you are not yourself to-day. What is the matter?'"

"'Matter?' roared I, re-echoing his last word: 'why, matter enough to turn a man to a fiend, unless he have more patience than I can boast. Here have I come to the Department week after week, asking but a few minutes of your attention to my business. Sometimes you could not be seen; at other times I got sight of you accidentally, and fair promises was all I got. Thus over four months have gone by, and I am heart as well as home sick. I would have gone home long since, but I had declared I would not leave Washington till my accounts were settled justly; and I wished to keep my word. I now revoke that declaration, and say I will never cross this door-sill again whilst you are in office. I will waste no more time, but go home and tell the dear people a fact they do not know, and of which I was not aware until within the last few weeks. This fact is, that many of the persons holding the highest offices in Washington imagine they are placed there not to attend to the business of the people, but for their own personal benefit. At least, the manner in which I have been treated justifies me in believing such to be the case.'

"Whilst I was speaking, he did not attempt to interrupt me. But when I had finished, and thrown his arm from me, saying, 'Go! hurry! don't keep your friend waiting,' he said, 'Marshall, you are certainly crazy.'

"'Perhaps I am,' said I; and I raised my hand as if I were going to take hold of him again, whereupon he hurried out of the room in double-quick time, without waiting to give me a second good morning."

"I think he well might dispense with courtesy after all you said to him."

"I have not told you half I said, for I don't remember; and, if I did, my head aches too badly for me to repeat it."

"Nor do I care to hear any thing more, if you are really going home."

"Yes, daughter, I made up my mind to-day whilst I sat in the ante-room. You may begin to get ready to-morrow."

"I am so glad! But, papa, you are really sick."

"I do feel badly. But, as I told you, it is only excitement and indignation."

"Please let me send for a doctor."

"No, no: I cannot bear to be dosed with their drugs. You leave me alone for an hour or two; if I can take a sleep I shall wake up well, and in a few days we will hie for Old Kentuck."

Hope left her father as he requested; but she could not shake off a vague fear that he was more seriously ill than he was willing to admit. Impressed with this fear, she crept quietly to his door to listen if he were stirring, ere the half of an hour had gone by. Hearing no movement, she supposed he was asleep, and slipped quietly away without disturbing him. She was still so restless and uneasy that she could not remain in one place, but was soon again near the door of the room in which her father was lying. A low groan fell upon her ear, and she was by her father's side in an instant.

"Papa, dear papa, you are very ill. Oh, do let me send for a doctor. I am so anxious!"

"Do as you choose, child. Perhaps it would be better; for I do suffer intensely. I feel as if my head were bursting and every drop of blood in my veins were molten lead." And, turning over, he murmured, almost indistinctly, "The Lord have mercy on my poor children!"

A physician was immediately sent for, and when he arrived Mr. Marshall had fallen into a heavy sleep. Hope met him at the door.

"Doctor," said she, "I am so glad you have come! Papa is easier: he has just got to sleep. He said if he could only sleep he would be well when he awoke. We will not awaken him now, shall we?"

"I will see." The doctor then felt his pulse, laid his hand upon his temples, and even partly turned him over; but he gave no indication of awakening.

"Give me a sponge wet in cold water," said he, turning to Hope. "Your father must be awakened."

The sponge was given, and he sponged Mr. Marshall's hands; but this did not arouse him. He then rubbed it over his brow and temples, calling his name at the same time. At this he unclosed his eyes, gazed vacantly into the doctor's face, muttered

something indistinctly, then closed them again with a heavy groan.

"When was he taken sick?" asked the physician, looking at Hope, who stood by his side watching anxiously the expression of his countenance.

"This afternoon," was the low reply.

"It is a violent attack."

"I feared so. Do you think him in danger?"

"Yes."

"But you can save him?"

"I'll try."

"Oh, doctor, use all your skill, give him all your attention if necessary. Should he die, we will be alone,—all alone!" And she sat down and sobbed convulsively.

"I will; yes, I will." And the heart of the physician was moved with pity as he looked upon the bowed girlish form beside him. The first glance had assured him that the stricken man was beyond the power of medical skill. Congestion of the brain had already taken place; but he was not willing to announce that fact to her at once. He wrote a prescription, handed it to her to have the medicine procured immediately, and he would remain to assist her in giving the first potion.

Minta, the faithful servant, who had insisted upon accompanying her young mistress to Washington, was despatched for the medicine; and whilst she was gone the physician occupied himself with rubbing the hands and bathing the head of his patient for the purpose of arousing him, if possible, sufficiently to make him comprehend he was desired to take medicine. He partially succeeded. When the medicine was prepared and placed to his lips, he swallowed it without seeming to know why he did so. The physician then asked Hope if she had any one to remain with her father during the night, as it would be necessary to give him constant attention.

"I will watch beside him myself. No one will tend him so carefully as I."

"But you will not be able to sit up all night."

"I could not sleep, nor even lie still, were I to try, whilst he

is so ill. Minta will stay in the room with me; and, should he get better before morning, she can watch whilst I sleep."

It was the dusk of the evening before the doctor left. The sad, pleading expression of Hope's face, as she begged him to come early, touched him deeply; and he assured her the first visit he made would be to her father.

"And, doctor," said she, trying to smile, "do not let your morning nap be long. Even if my father should not need you, the early morning air will be good for your health."

"I promise you I will be here soon. You shall have no reason to call me a laggard."

We will leave the sorrow-stricken daughter with her faithful nurse to watch beside the bed of her death-smitten father, whilst we look into the mansion of the honorable Secretary of State.

CHAPTER XVIII.

A GAME OF CHESS.

ONE of the finest houses in the city is occupied by the Secretary of State. It is superbly furnished. Every thing that can contribute to the comfort or gratify the taste of the owner is there collected. The appointments of his own room are perfect,—book-cases filled with rare books, to attract the lover of literature, and fine paintings hung upon the walls, to please the eye of the artist. It is dusk; and a chandelier of a quaint device sheds a softened light over the rich furniture. He and Bringham are sitting beneath it, with a chess-board between them, upon which they are placing a beautiful set of chessmen. They are both silent; but it is evident they have been conversing, for the face of each wears an anxious, thoughtful expression.

"So Marshall threatens to go home and tell the people that the higher officers of the Government, instead of attending to their duties, spend their time in telling jokes, talking politics, eating, drinking, and making themselves generally merry," remarked Bringham, as he placed the last bit of ivory upon the board.

"Yes: he used very strong language. It is unfortunate we did not know he was in the ante-room waiting."

"It is indeed; for, although we have managed to break him down here, he has great influence at home, and can give us trouble."

"I am of the opinion we have stirred up a hornet's nest; but I acted by your advice."

"Well, we must quiet him."

"How?"

"By conciliation. Yes, we must conciliate him. It will not do to let him go home in this temper."

"It is easy enough to say conciliate; but how is it to be done?"

"Let me think. Well, I guess you would better write to him in the morning. Tell him you have examined his account and find he is entitled to all he demands. Send this letter by your own messenger, thus indicating your anxiety to do him justice. When he calls, you can make it all right by abusing the clerk who had charge of it for his ignorance and want of capacity in not being able to perceive he claimed only what was due him."

"But he said he would never cross the door-sill again whilst I was at the head of the Department."

"That was said under excitement: he will forget it all when you come to his terms."

"I doubt it; for he was terribly in earnest. God! if you had seen the expression of his countenance!"

"Let us dismiss him from our thoughts and commence our game."

"I am ready."

"I believe the proposition is that he who loses the game is to withdraw his claim to a nomination for the Presidency in the next election and throw all his interest to the winner."

"Yes: those were the terms you proposed."

"You see plainly it is much better for us to settle the matter in this way than to oppose each other. Either of us singly would be defeated; but, united, I believe we have sufficient strength to secure the nomination. Let us throw the dice to decide who shall have the first move; and he who wins the game is to be the next candidate for the Presidency."

"Ah, Bringham, you are a captain. Whose brain but yours would ever have originated such an idea for deciding which of us should step aside and leave a fair field for the other?"

The dice were thrown, and declared in favor of the Secretary. He accepted this as a favorable omen, and proposed that they should pledge each other in a glass of old Madeira and again declare they would remain true to the agreement entered into.

They stepped to a side-table, pledged each other in a brimming

glass, then commenced the game, each striving for the victory with all the caution and cunning of wily politicians.

Whilst they are bending over the chess-board, Hope, in tearless despair, is bending over her father. During the livelong night she never left his side; and, as soon as morning dawned, she sent a messenger to Georgetown for her brother.

"Tell Harry," said she, "papa is very, very ill." "Yes," murmured she, as she wiped the damps from his brow, "I might have said 'dying.' Oh, I feel there is no hope! Medical skill is powerless. Yet I wish the doctor would come."

The wish was scarcely uttered before the doctor was by her side.

"Oh, I am so glad you are here so early! How is he this morning?" was her earnest exclamation.

"He is very, very sick, indeed."

"I know it; but will he get well? Tell me the truth. I want the truth. Tell me at once. I can bear it."

"Lady," said the physician, in a sad voice, "I fear there is no hope. Has he suffered any violent excitement within the last day or two?"

"Oh, yes: he was very angry and indignant yesterday."

"I thought so. This attack is congestion of the brain, brought on by this excitement. It is so sudden and severe that nothing can be done for him."

"Sudden and severe," said she, abstractedly. "Yes, it is sudden. Yesterday he was well,—perfectly well; and now he is dying! O God, give me strength to bear my sad bereavement." And she sank in a chair beside the bed, as if entirely overcome.

Her face wore an expression of intense agony; but she shed no tear. She had sat thus some time, when hurried footsteps were heard in the hall, and Harry's voice, saying,—

"Papa must be extremely ill if Hope sat up all night. Why did she not send for me yesterday?"

At the sound of her brother's voice she started up and met him at the door. To his anxious inquiry, "How is papa now?" she simply answered, "Dying."

He sprang to the bed, grasped the cold hand, and covered it with kisses, sobbing and weeping like a girl.

"Oh, papa, papa!" cried he, "see your poor boy! Speak to me! Tell me you know me! Oh, Hope, why did you not send for me yesterday? Oh, it will break my heart! Why could I not have his dying blessing?"

"Alas, Harry, his sickness was so sudden that he gave no parting word nor blessing even to me who was by his side. Yesterday he was well: he thought not of dying. Almost the last words he spoke were, 'Get ready: I am going home.' He then expressed a wish to sleep, and the heavy stupor that now locks his senses came upon him."

"Going home!" said Harry, when Hope ceased speaking. "Ah, yes: he is going home. It will be home to him, for our angel mother is there. But for us, Hope,—we will be alone. What will we do! No father, no mother! Oh, what will we do? What will become of us?"

"Harry, Harry, do not give way so. Calm yourself. If papa is conscious, it will disturb him."

Thus adjured, he grew more calm. The physician, who had not yet left, told them if they had any friends in the city whom they wished to come to them, he would take any message they might wish to send.

"Alas!" said Hope, "there were many who professed much friendship during the winter; but none of them have come near me lately, and I feel unwilling to trouble them with my sorrow."

"But you must have some one to stay with you. Your father may not——" He hesitated, as if unwilling to close the sentence.

"I know what you would say. I do not expect him to live through the day; nor would I desire that the struggle of the immortal spirit to release itself from the suffering clay should be long protracted."

"I would stay with you myself, but others need my attention. I will call again during the day. In the mean time, all you can do for your father is to wet his tongue and lips with cold water."

The departure of the doctor left the brother and sister alone with their dying father. It was mentioned at the breakfast-table that Mr. Marshall was sick; but, as he had sat at the dinner-table the day previous, no one thought of his being very ill, and no further inquiry was made about him.

Between nine and ten o'clock, a servant brought a letter to the room and handed it to Hope, saying the man who brought it wished it given to Mr. Marshall immediately.

"Does he wait for an answer?"

"No: he just said, 'Give it to Mr. Marshall right away,' and left without saying another word."

Hope looked at the address; and, seeing it was from the State department, she broke the seal and read:—

"DEAR MARSHALL:—

"Come to the Department at twelve precisely. I will deny myself to every one else, so that I may be able to see you at that hour. Every thing will be settled as you desire. Upon examination, I am surprised that there should ever have been any difficulty or delay.

"Yours, &c. &c."

"*Too late! too late!*" fell from Hope's lips, in heart-rending tones, as she laid the letter in her father's desk. Harry was too much absorbed in grief to give it any heed.

Our readers will perceive Bringham's advice was followed; and the letter just read by Hope was the consequence.

Whilst the Secretary is awaiting with impatience the arrival of Mr. Marshall, Hope is moistening his parched lips, and her heart is filled with bitter thoughts as she reflects upon the contents of this letter. Unconsciously to herself, her thoughts take the form of words.

"Why should it be received now,—seeming a very mockery?"

"What is it, Hope?" said Harry.

"That letter."

"Who is it from? And why a mockery?"

"It is from the Secretary of State. It is a mockery, because,

after having, by annoyance and delay, brought papa to the condition in which he now lies, it conveys to him, when too late, the intelligence that all he asks will be granted."

"Why, Hope, do you think papa's business at the Department had any thing to do with his sickness?"

"The doctor thinks so; and I do not doubt it. In truth, I have felt for the last month that disappointment, day after day, was wearing the soul out of his body. Oh, Harry, if these officers who sit in their rooms telling jokes or talking politics instead of attending to their duties could only know the weary heart-sickness occasioned by their neglect, they would not put off as they do the business of the office. Yes, we may say they joked papa's life away!"

As Hope ceased speaking, she bowed her head and wept piteously. Not long did she give way to her feelings. She thought of her brother, and for his sake strove to regain her calmness.

About one o'clock the doctor called again. He was accompanied by Mrs. Wilde, a lady to whom Mrs. Marshall had been a true friend in her hour of need.

"The doctor told me you were alone with your sick," said she, in a kind, sympathizing tone; "and I have come to stay with you till to-morrow."

"Oh, thank you, Mrs Wilde, for your kind remembrance of us in our sorrow."

"I would be ungrateful indeed could I forget the children of Maggie Marshall when in sorrow,—she who, when I was overwhelmed with grief and misfortune, comforted, encouraged, and assisted me. Child, you must go to your room and try to sleep. The doctor told me you were up all night."

"But I cannot sleep."

"Well, you must rest. Your father is not conscious whether it is a stranger's or a daughter's hand that ministers to him. Come; you and Harry would both better go. Minta will stay with me."

"I do not feel fatigued. My anxiety of mind prevents me from feeling fatigue of body. No, Mrs. Wilde: I cannot leave

the room. I will stay with you. Do not ask me to go from my father till the last heart-throb is stilled."

"Well, child, well, I will not urge you further. Stay if you wish; but I thought you needed rest."

The long, sultry afternoon of a June day crept slowly by, whilst Charles Marshall, the brilliant orator, the sagacious diplomat and honorable statesman, is passing rapidly away. He to whose words of burning eloquence admiring thousands listened one short year since now lies struggling in the last agony, with none to watch beside him but a lone woman and two orphaned children.

Where are those who in the hour of his strength and power thronged about him? Ah! he can serve them no more; and they have no time to devote to him. This is the friendship of the world.

As the last rays of the setting sun faded from earth, the struggling spirit passed to heaven. When the features had settled in the calm beauty of death, Mrs. Wilde prevailed on Hope and her brother to retire to their own room. It was she who the next morning had Maggie sent for and attended to all the arrangements for the funeral.

Many came to offer sympathy and condolence when it was known throughout the hotel that Mr. Marshall was dead. These Hope shrank from, feeling it was an empty form of words proffered. Toward Mrs. Wilde her heart overflowed with grateful emotion; for she knew the kindness shown by that lady was prompted by sincere and kindly sympathy. When the hour arrived that the last farewell must be taken of the lifeless clay, hers was the hand that drew the weeping group from the confined form, and hers the voice that whispered of resignation and faith.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE CONVERSATION OF THE ORPHANS.

THE last sad rites are over; and to the inmates of the hotel, now that the inanimate body is put away out of sight, it is as if Death had not crossed the threshold. But the bereaved ones are grouped in their own apartment, feeling doubly desolate, now that they may not again look upon that loved face which it was a pleasure to gaze upon even in the quietness of death. What a picture for the pencil of a painter, as they sit there each busied with thought, and no word spoken!

Hope is near the window, apparently looking out upon the scene before her; but she is so absorbed in painful reverie that her eye takes no cognizance of the objects upon which it seems to rest. Maggie is sitting on a low seat at her sister's feet, her head resting on her knee, whilst Hope's hand nestles among the soft brown curls. Harry is beside a table with his head bowed upon his hands; and, though but a boy in years, the stern thoughts of manhood are taking form in his mind. Minta forms one of the group: her dark face, upon which her thoughts are legibly written, wears a troubled expression, as she looks from one to the other of those absorbed and thoughtful mourners.

The sun is low in the heavens, and the stillness of the grave reigns in that room. At length Harry raises his head, brushes back the hair from his noble though boyish brow, and rouses his sister from her painful reverie by uttering the simple words,—

"Sister Hope."

"What is it, Harry?"

"Will we go back to Kentucky?"

"I think not, till you and Maggie have completed your education."

"Then we will go back to school."

"Yes: I think you would better go to-morrow."

"You cannot stay here alone in this great hotel."

"No: I will go to Mrs. Wilde's. Her kindness makes me feel that she is nearer my heart than any one I know. She was a friend of mamma's."

"I am glad you are going there. I want to leave this hotel, where all the inmates are so indifferent to our sorrow. When will we go?"

"Just as soon as you and Maggie shall have returned to school."

"You will be so lonely. Would I not better stay with you for a few days?"

"You have striven hard for the highest honor of your class. You hope to attain it. A few days' absence now would disappoint that hope."

"Yes; but never mind that, if you want me to stay with you. I must not think of self now that papa is gone." He remained a few moments as if thinking,—then added, "But I was ambitious to secure the highest honors."

"And I too am ambitious that you shall not only win the highest honors of your class, but that you shall attain the highest excellence in all that elevates and ennobles manhood."

"Sister Hope, I'll strive to be all you wish. My father's noble example and my mother's gentle teaching shall be my guiding star."

"And I will give you a sister's watchful love to encourage and assist in attaining that excellence you covet."

In talking of Harry's future, their thoughts were for a while withdrawn from their sorrow. (What a blessed provision of nature, that the young heart, when it has given way to the first burst of grief, instead of brooding over the darkness of the present, naturally turns to a brighter future!)

The next morning, when Harry met his sister, his first salutation was,—

"Do you still think you will send us back to school to-day?"

"Yes. You will go soon after breakfast: then I will pack and make arrangements about moving to Mrs. Wilde's."

"Hope, I could not sleep all night for thinking. We will have to get some one to attend to our business. How unfortunate it is that I do not know more of papa's affairs! But, even if I knew, I am not old enough to be allowed by law to take charge. Oh, I wish for your sake I was at the age of manhood! then I could take all the business-cares. It is too hard! Here we are in a strange city, I a mere boy, you, though two years older, unfitted by your tender rearing to come in contact with the world's rough usage."

"Harry, my brother, bear with a submissive spirit what our heavenly Father sends. Though we have much cause for grief, we have much to be thankful for. How much greater would be our misfortune were we obliged to struggle for a support, instead of being able to keep you and Maggie at school and providing a pleasant home for me! There have been instances where children tenderly reared as we have been were suddenly reduced to this condition. We are secure from that trial."

"True, true; and I will try, my good sister, to learn patience and resignation."

"Do, my brother; for patience and resignation rob misfortune of more than half of its sting. But you were speaking of business."

"Yes: we must get some gentleman who was a friend of papa's to take charge of our affairs. I presume they are in a condition to give but little trouble to an administrator. Elm-Wood, our dear old home, we would better let remain in the possession of the person to whom it was rented by papa, until Maggie and I complete our education. We will then return and occupy it ourselves. The balance of our means is, I know, in Government and State stocks. I have often heard papa say he would own no other kind of property, as this was safest, least troublesome to manage, and most easily cashed when he wanted money. So, you see, an administrator will not have much trouble with our affairs."

"Why, Harry, you talk like a man of experience and knowledge!" said Hope, with surprise.

"I have no experience and but little knowledge. But last night, when I could not sleep for thinking of you and Maggie, and planning how I might, as far as it was in my power, supply papa's place to you, many things he used to say to me about business, which at the time made but little impression, came to me vividly. I do not know the amount nor kind of stocks he held; but that makes no difference, for he was very systematic in all his business-transactions, and all his papers of that kind are together in a trunk used only for that purpose."

"I am truly glad, Harry, you know so much of these things; for I knew nothing, only that I always had plenty of money, without thinking how or whence it came, and that from my childhood people have said to me, 'Oh, you can have any thing you choose: your father is worth a mint of money.'"

"Whom shall we get to take charge of our affairs?"

"If we were at home, we could get Mr. Brandon; but here, I really do not know."

"Oh, I'll tell you. Senator Bringham is still in the city: we will get him."

"I should not like to ask him unless he would offer his service. It was he who was with the Secretary the day papa was kept waiting, and since then I have a feeling toward him almost amounting to dislike."

"He was not to blame for the treatment papa received."

"No; but his being there was the cause; and I don't feel just right toward him: so, unless he calls and offers his service and counsel, I will not ask it."

"I am sure he will call to see and advise us as soon as he thinks we can bear to talk of business. Indeed, it seems strange to me that I can think and talk of it, and papa just buried. Nor could I; but, as I go back to school to-day, I thought it would be well, as far as it lay in my power to do so, to remove all business-care from your mind."

"You are a good, thoughtful boy, Harry, and, for one so

young, a capable adviser. I will do as you wish, and ask Mr. Bringham to take charge of our affairs."

"Do, Hope: I am sure there is no other person in this city who would take so much interest for us."

The conversation was here interrupted by breakfast, and was not again resumed; for, immediately after that meal was partaken of, Harry and Maggie returned to school.

CHAPTER XX.

TWO VISITORS.

Now that Harry and Maggie are gone and Hope is seated alone in her room, she realizes how sad her bereavement and how great the responsibility resting upon her. Maggie's future gives her but little anxiety: she is but a child; and, even were she older, being a girl, she can keep her under her immediate care. But Harry,—a high-spirited, impetuous boy, and just at that age when a father's watchful care is most needed to shield him from the influence of evil associations and counsel him aright:—it is this thought which causes a deeper shade of sadness to settle on her brow. At length she clasps her hands and raises her eyes toward heaven, as if in supplication. A holy expression steals over her face as she murmurs,—

"Yes, O my heavenly Father, I will cast all my cares on thee, trusting thou wilt keep his heart from evil and his feet in the path of rectitude."

She had scarce finished this ejaculation when Minta entered, saying,—

"Now, you jis' guess, Miss Hope, who am here from home."

"I cannot guess."

"Why, Mr. Alvord,—Miss Clara's husband what wus. He tole me to give you d's card an' ax you if you would see him."

"Yes, Minta: show him into papa's parlor. I will be glad to see any one from home."

Not long was he kept waiting. Hope entered ere he had been a moment seated.

"Have you been ill?" asked he, his gaze resting on her sad, pale face as he grasped her hand.

"No: I have had no sickness."

"You are deathly pale."

"It is from anxiety and fatigue. We buried papa yesterday." Her voice trembled as she spoke the latter part of the sentence; but no tear-drop moistened her eye.

"I had heard it," answered he; and, not knowing how to speak words of comfort, he sat silent.

"When did you get to the city?" asked she, for the purpose of breaking the painful silence.

"I came in the six-o'clock train this morning."

"How long do you think of remaining?"

"My stay will be short, as I am on my way to Europe and have engaged my passage in the next steamer that sails. I came over from New York for the purpose of getting letters of introduction from your father to some of his friends on the Continent."

"Then you did not hear of his death till you came to the city?"

"Not till I asked for him at the door."

"His death was very sudden."

"How long was he ill?"

"Not more than thirty hours."

"It was indeed sudden; and for that reason the blow must have fallen more heavily upon you."

"Oh, it did. As yet I can scarce realize that I have to act without a parent's counsel."

"Miss Marshall, if I can in any way serve you, do not hesitate to let me know it. You were the most cherished friend of my wife; and for her dear sake I would be as a brother to you. Should you or Harry ever want the assistance of a friend, you will find a true one in me."

Hope thanked him for his kind interest, and then drew the conversation to a less painful subject, by inquiring about her old friends in Kentucky. When he bade her adieu, he again expressed his sympathy and desire to serve her.

Again Hope is alone; and, were she to yield to the heart-sick loneliness that weighs upon her, she would throw herself on the bed and give expression to the feeling that oppresses her by hysterical weeping. She presses her hand upon her eyes, as if to

shut out all external things whilst she composes her mind for thought. Having sat thus some minutes, she seems to have resolved to take at once upon herself the cares and responsibilities of her situation. Rising from her seat, she steps to her father's desk. A spasm of grief sweeps over her face as she places her hand upon a bundle of papers. "It is no use," said she, as if communing with herself, "to put it off: his papers must be packed preparatory to my removal; and I will shrink from nothing that it is necessary for me to do. The task will be none the less painful by being deferred."

She had just got through with removing from the desk the papers, which were for the most part a miscellaneous correspondence, when another visitor was announced. This time it was Mr. Bringham. When she entered her father's parlor, whither he had been shown by Minta, her visitor rose from his seat and extended his hand to her with a look of fatherly kindness. His look and manner drove from her heart the feeling that had been nestling there and which she had mentioned to Harry: so she grasped his extended hand with a kind of clinging dependence.

"Poor child!" said he: "I come, in the name of the friendship that existed between your father and myself, to offer any assistance and advice you may need."

"I have often heard papa speak of you as his best friend; and I thank you for the kindness you show the orphan daughter for the father's sake."

"Do you think of returning to Kentucky soon?"

"No: I think, as Harry and Maggie are now in school here, I will not return to Kentucky till they have completed their education."

"It will be well to do so."

"I remain in the city because I wish to be near them."

"Will you continue boarding here?"

"No: I will leave to-morrow."

"That is right. That is just as I would advise."

"I leave the hotel on account of being here alone."

"Where do you go?"

"To Mrs. Wilde's."

"A very proper place."

"She has been as kind to us in our sorrow as our own mother could have been."

"Yes, very kind,—very kind,—exceedingly kind. Ahem! my dear young friend, it may seem like a want of consideration for your feelings that I should speak to you about business the day after your father's burial; but my apology must be that I expect to leave the city in a few days; and, as you design remaining in the city, I would like to render you any assistance or advice you may need before I go."

"No apology is necessary; and, as the business has to be attended to, it may as well be done at once. It would be just as painful to talk it over a month hence as to-day."

"A very sensible remark,—very sensible. You see, as you intend remaining in this city, it will be necessary to take out letters of administration on your father's estate; and, as you and Harry are both too young to act in the capacity of administrator, it will be requisite for you to get some trustworthy person to act for you. Do you know any one here whom you could trust?"

"None but you. Could you act for us?"

"My dear young friend, I am very sorry I cannot; but my public duties occupy my time so entirely that I have to neglect my own private business. Think of some one else."

"There is no one else here whom I could ask. Mr. Brandon was always one of papa's warmest friends. I will write to him. I know he will come at once; but I am sorry to give him so much trouble, and I would not do so if you could have taken charge of our affairs."

"It will indeed be asking a great deal. Let us see. Cannot you think of some one here?"

"I know no one. Perhaps you can recommend some person. I would take any one you could recommend."

"Let me see. Oh, yes, I have it. Spratt. You have seen Spratt at my house?"

"I believe I have."

"Well, he's just the man. The fellow seems born with a natural talent for and love of business. He would rather look

over old papers for the settlement of an estate than eat a good dinner. I know him to be perfectly trustworthy; and, as he is from our own State, he is the very person. Shall I bring him to see you?"

"If you please."

"Has your father any papers here?"

"Yes: I have just taken them from his desk and packed them in a trunk preparatory to moving."

"Did you examine them?"

"Oh, no: it was a sad task enough to remove them from the desk in which his own hand had placed them."

"True; true. Well, if you say so, I will bring Sprott over at once and let him take charge of them. It will save you the trouble of moving them; and he can look into them at his leisure. I will see that all proper forms are complied with and every thing legally done."

"Thank you for your kind thoughtfulness. The God of the fatherless will reward you. Your generous kindness is grateful to my spirit as dew to the sun-parched flower."

"As the friend of your lamented father, I could not do less than interest myself for his bereaved children."

A man less unprincipled than Bringham would have faltered in speaking of his friendship to one whom he had injured and betrayed. But he had an object to attain.

In the commencement of his political career, he had written to Marshall with a freedom and confidence which he would not have done at a later period, when he had grown more wary. He now wanted to have the overlooking of his papers, to see if these letters had been preserved, and, in case they were found, to take possession of them. Whilst they were in Mr. Marshall's hands he knew they were safe; for that gentleman was so truly honorable that he would sooner have had his right hand taken off than give publicity to any thing communicated to him in confidence. But should these letters fall into the hands of an administrator he might not be so scrupulous. This is the reason why he takes so much interest in the affairs of the orphan children. Perhaps some of our readers may say, Why, if this is

his purpose, did he not accept the office of administrator himself when Hope offered it to him? Ay: that is a trick of his.

Whenever he wants any dirty business performed, he has an agent to do the work, so that in case it should by accident come to light he can wash his hands of it and keep his garments unsoiled.

Had Hope known the motive which prompted what she termed his generous kindness, she would have retained the feeling which had nestled in her heart previous to his call, instead of driving it away to give place to gratitude. But it is another peculiarity of his that he has the knack of making persons believe he is doing them a favor, when he is working for the accomplishment of his own purposes.

CHAPTER XXI.

LOOKING OVER LETTERS.

"I SAY, Sprott, I must have been born under a lucky star. Had I had the ordering of every thing myself, matters could not have turned out more to my satisfaction."

This remark was made by Bringham to Sprott, his confidential agent and man-of-all-work, as the two sat in his own private room, with the trunk containing Mr. Marshall's papers between them, and each holding a bundle of letters in his hand. The individual thus addressed looked up smirkingly and replied,—

"Yes, you are lucky; but I think your luck is as much attributable to the active, trusty agent who works for you as to the influence of the stars."

"Oh, yes, Sprott; I am willing to give you all the credit due. Yet some things are purely luck. Now, for instance, that Marshall's children should, before I called, have made up their minds to remain in the city, thus making it the most natural thing in the world that letters of administration upon the estate of their father should be taken out here, and I the person to whom they would apply for counsel."

"Yes, that is luck. For, if they had gone to Kentucky, old Brandon, having been the most intimate friend, would of course have taken charge of their affairs; and if these letters had come into his hands he would have blown you sky high. Do you know I have a strong suspicion that the sly old coon smelt out, before he left here, the part you acted toward Marshall?"

"Why do you think so?"

"From some hints that dropped from him in my presence."

"Oh, I would never have let Marshall's papers go into his hands."

"How would you have prevented it had they gone at once to Kentucky?"

"I would have made them believe it was necessary to have the estate administered on here, where their father died."

"Yes, you could have done that; but it would have given some room for remark."

"True. And that is the reason I say it is lucky they had made up their minds to remain."

"Yes, it is a streak of luck for us both,—you, because you get possession of your letters, and me, because it gives me an opportunity to read the entire correspondence of a prominent politician, which is a rare school for the study of human nature."

"Let us go on with our examination. There are some letters I have not found yet. I am afraid they are not here. He seems to have been very particular in putting the letters of each correspondent together in one package. I have examined this, and find some missing."

"Do the missing ones contain any thing of particular importance, as you remember?"

"Oh, no. They were written during the last Presidential canvass. Still, I would like to know where they are."

"I was not aware you had written any letters to him during last canvass. Thought you were too busy to do so."

"Sure enough, come to think of it, I did not. You answered for me the letters I received from him. Still, my name being connected with the transactions referred to in those letters, I would like to have them in my possession, if you have no objections."

"None in the world; and, if you will assist me, we will look over my package."

The India-rubber band which held them together was removed, and one by one the letters were examined, but the ones sought for not found.

"I do wonder where they can be?" said Bringham.

"I have no idea."

"Oh, well, they are of no particular consequence: so let us go on and examine his other correspondence. Though Mar-

shall is dead, the writers of these letters are many of them active, living politicians, and we may get knowledge from the perusal of their correspondence which we may use to advantage."

"That is true. Shall we examine them as they are arranged, in alphabetical order?"

"No: let us take Brandon's first. I want to see what he has to say. After that, we will take them alphabetically."

Both were soon deeply engaged in reading Brandon's letters. They had been thus occupied for some time, when Sprott exclaimed,—

"I was right!"

"Right? How? What do you mean?"

"Why, here is one of Brandon's letters, written soon after he got home; and from its contents it is evident he knows the manner in which Marshall was treated with regard to a place in the Cabinet. I do wonder how he found it out?"

"The old fox! he always noses out every thing connected with politics. What does he say about it?"

"He advises Marshall to come home as soon as possible, and they two would go to work and let the people know how things are managed at the Federal City."

"They would have been a strong team; but the stronger one is out of our way. I think we need not fear Brandon alone."

"No, no; for when it comes to writing for a newspaper I am his equal any day. But Marshall would have given us trouble: he always carried the people with him."

"And it is lucky we know just where Brandon is. I must pacify him by getting him a fat job of public printing."

"Do you think that will do it?"

"Oh, yes: the best of them will yelp to any tune you set them, if you pay them their price."

"That is the reason there is no relying on any thing you see in the papers. Well, we who understand the ropes can turn all these things to a good account."

"Bless my soul! how time flies! There is the twelve-o'clock bell, and I have an engagement to see the President at half-past

twelve. I will leave you to examine the balance yourself, and you will note every thing that is of any consequence."

"You may depend upon me."

"I am well satisfied of that. We are necessary to each other."

When Bringham was gone, Sprott continued the perusal of the letters, and considered himself well paid for his labor.

CHAPTER XXII.

A NEW FRIEND.

NEARLY three months have gone by since Hope has made her home with Mrs. Wilde. It is autumn, and she has been sitting for some time beside the open window, listening to the sighing of the winds which were playing among the leaves of a sugar-maple which was so near her window that she could almost touch its branches with her hand. It is evident sad memories are stirred in her heart, for her eyelids droop and a tear-drop glistens on her cheek. She takes her guitar, and gives expression to her thoughts:—

("Oh, softly, sweetly, mournfully,
Is falling on mine ear
The music of the south winds,
Recalling memories dear.
It whispers to the maple-boughs
Of summer's faded flowers;
And it whispers to my spirit
Of by-gone happy hours;

"When loving hearts were near me,
And loving lips were press'd
On my brow with murmur'd blessings,
As I nightly sank to rest.
Then my pulses bounded lightly,
And my songs were glad and gay;
But the friends that gave life beauty
Have like summer pass'd away.

"Now the music of the south winds,
With its sadly-sighing tone,
As it plays among the branches,
Is an echo of my own.

Then let our voices mingle
In sighs for treasures fled:
It mourns for faded blossoms;
I mourn for loved ones dead.")

The low, plaintive voice had just ceased its vibrations on the air, when a gentle rap at the door recalled her from her dreaming. Ere she had time to reach it, Mrs. Wilde opened it, and greeted her with,—

"Hope, I have come to ask a favor of you."

"Dear Mrs. Wilde, I will be most happy to grant it."

"I want you to call on a lady who occupies the room next this."

"I am too sad-hearted to seek the acquaintance of strangers. My society will give no pleasure."

"In this instance it will; for the lady upon whom I wish you to call is not only sad, but sick."

"I would not hesitate one moment if I thought I could do aught to cheer her sadness or alleviate her sickness."

"You have to come with me. You promised to grant my request before I made it; and I will not release you."

Thus urged, Hope accompanied Mrs. Wilde, and was presented to Mrs. Hathaway and her mother Mrs. Prescott. When they entered, Mrs. Hathaway was reclining in an invalid-chair near the window. She would have risen; but Hope begged she would not do so, remarking that she would feel that her visit was an intrusion should the invalid relinquish her recumbent position.

"Yes, darling, lie still," said the mother: then, turning to Hope, she continued, "My poor daughter is very languid; but she is growing stronger, and we hope she will soon be well."

As Hope looked upon the slight figure and sweet, pale face, almost transparent in its whiteness, she mentally exclaimed, "Vain hope! vain hope!"

"Mrs. Wilde, I must thank you for giving me this room. I have just had such a treat!"

"What was it?"

"Music. I was lying here, enjoying the soft autumn winds as they swept through the room, when they made themselves doubly welcome by bringing to my ear a strain of sad, sweet music, just in consonance with my feelings. I listened attentively, and discovered it came from the room of my next neighbor."

"And this is the neighbor herself," said Mrs. Wilde, pointing to Hope.

Mrs. Hathaway cast an inquiring glance upon Hope, and her eyes seemed for the first time to note the sad-colored robes.

"Your song indicated the loss of friends; and your dress confirms it."

"I am an orphan."

"And I a widow." The quivering lip and tremulous voice that marked the utterance of these words told volumes.

Thus commenced a friendship pure as earth has ever known. Each felt she had communicated to the other, in one short sentence, a history of life's greatest sorrow.

The mother, whose whole thought seemed devoted to her child, stooped and kissed the pale brow, as if she would say, "You have a mother who thinks only of your happiness." Hope noted the caress; and it recalled—oh, so vividly!—her own tender mother.

Both Hope and Mrs. Hathaway were for a few moments absorbed in sad thought. The silence was broken by Mrs. Hathaway.

"Miss Marshall, I must thank you for the pleasure your music gave me."

"It was but a sad strain."

"That is why I enjoyed it so much."

"Come, come," said the mother: "you are both too young to indulge in sad fancies. The next summer will reproduce the faded flowers referred to in your song, Miss Marshall: it will also bring again bright hopes to both your hearts."

Mrs. Hathaway's lips parted to say, "Never to me;" but, remembering, before the words escaped her, that their utterance would pain her mother, she repressed them.

"A child's musical laugh, and the pattering of feet, were heard. In a moment the door opened, and a noble-looking man entered. He was leading by the hand a lovely child of about five summers.

"Oh, mamma, grandpa took me to——"

The sentence was broken off when her eyes fell on Hope, and she said,—

"Grandpa, that is the sweet lady I told you of."

"My father, Miss Marshall," said the low, musical voice of Mrs. Hathaway.

The stately form bowed with a graceful dignity, and he addressed Hope with,—

"I perceive, Miss Marshall, my little Jenny claims acquaintance with you."

"We are acquaintances. I met her in the hall near my door this morning; and I love children so much I coaxed her into my room."

"Take care that you do not find her troublesome. She is an untiring chatterbox. Hey, puss?" (turning to his grandchild:) "is it not so?"

"Yes, grandpa," lisped the little one.

"Come here, pet," said Hope, reaching her hand toward the child. "No danger that your prattle will tire me."

"Won't you tell grandpa that pretty fairy-story?"

"No, darling: grandpa does not wish to hear it."

"Yes, he do. Don't you, grandpa?"

"Not now, puss."

"Why, grandpa!" exclaimed the little lady, with a womanly air: "a'n't you 'shame to tell the lady you don't want to hear the pretty story?"

The tone and manner of the child produced a general laugh. Even the sad face of the mother was illumined with a smile as she listened to the artless prattle of her child.

"I like the looks of that young woman," said Mr. Prescott, turning to his daughter, when Hope had withdrawn.

"I am sure she is a noble girl."

"Is she a native of this city?"

"I do not know. She boards here, and her room is next to ours."

"She will be a pleasant companion for you."

"Yes, papa; and she can sympathize with me. She too has known sorrow."

"Lost friends?"

"She is an orphan."

"What is her name?"

"Marshall."

"Ah, yes: I remember now. I wonder if she is not the daughter of my friend Charlie Marshall? I heard of his death whilst we were at the Sulphur Springs. His was as noble a soul as ever animated mortal form. I think it very likely she is his daughter."

"I never met a stranger to whom I was so much attracted. We must be friends."

"What a sad, sweet face Mrs. Hathaway has!" remarked Hope to Mrs. Wilde. "And did you observe how her father's voice softened when he addressed her?"

"Yes, I observed it, and her mother's fond, caressing manner, as if, were it possible, she would gladly bear all the heart-griefs of her child."

"She reminded me so much of my own dear mother," said Hope, with a sigh.

"Yes: I too have often thought she and your sainted mother were strikingly alike in character."

"Then she is indeed lovely. And the father, too: I have often, when in the gallery of the Senate, been attracted by his dignified manner and grave, noble-looking face; and a wish to know him always arose in my heart. What a charming family they are! I am so glad I accompanied you!"

"I knew you would appreciate them. That is why I was so desirous you should know them. Mrs. Prescott is a model of piety. She is a member of the Baptist Church,—the same to which your mother belonged; and she has that same Christian charity in her opinions of her fellow-beings which characterized your mother."

"Have you known her long?"

"She boarded with me last session."

"Was Mrs. Hathaway with her?"

"No: her husband was then living, and they boarded at a hotel."

"How long since he died?"

"About four months."

"Was she in delicate health before his death?"

"Oh, no: she was full of life and health, and her laugh was musical and mirthful as a child's."

"Her voice now is sad and plaintive in its tones as the note of the mourning dove."

"I think the similitude will go further. They say the dove pines itself to death for the loss of its mate; and I think grief for the loss of her husband has sapped the foundation of her young life. He idolized her, and she was devoted to him. His death was sudden, and fell upon her heart with such a crushing weight that it destroyed her health."

"My own sudden bereavement teaches me to feel for her."

"I knew there would be a sympathy between you. That is the reason I urged you to call and see her."

"When did they arrive?"

"Yesterday evening."

"I did not observe them at the breakfast-table."

"They have a suite of apartments, and take their meals at a private table in their own rooms, on account of Mrs. Hathaway's ill health."

"I am truly glad I called; for otherwise I might not have met them; and I am sure we will be a mutual comfort to each other."

Hope's words were verified. They were indeed a mutual comfort to each other, for from that time forth they were constantly together. When Mrs. Hathaway took a fancy to remain in her own rooms, she would send for Hope to come sing, read, or talk to her, as she felt in the mood. At other times she would sit for hours in Hope's room, speaking of her husband. She never

tired of telling how kind, noble, and handsome he was. She always went to Hope's room when she wished to talk of her husband, because she knew it would pain her mother's heart to perceive how entirely her thoughts were with her buried husband.

CHAPTER XXIII.

LOSS OF FORTUNE.

"HOPE, can you bear up under poverty?"

"What do you mean, Harry?"

"That we, who have never known any thing but luxury and ease, are without the means of support."

"Oh, Harry, that can't be so! What put such an idea in your head?"

"You told me to call on Mr. Sprott and get money to pay my next year's expenses at college."

"Well?"

"I did so; and he told me that, upon an examination of all papa's papers and letters, he was well assured the estate was barely solvent, and he could not let us have any more money till it was entirely settled. Then, if after the debts were paid there was any thing left, we should have it."

"Harry, there must be some mistake. Papa had no debts. He had plenty of money. We never made bills."

"So I thought; and I suppose I must have looked my surprise; for Mr. Sprott said,—

"I was as much surprised to learn the condition of your father's affairs as you possibly can be. I have just got through with examining his papers, and intended calling in a few days to notify you and your sister how matters were, and also to submit to her inspection such papers as would satisfy her of the correctness of my statement."

"I was so astounded that I scarcely knew what I said to him, more than to assure him we had perfect confidence in his honor and capacity, yet it would be well enough for you to know something of our affairs, and, as he had proposed submitting certain papers to your inspection, he might do so. Was that right?"

"Perfectly right."

"So I thought,—because we have always believed we were wealthy, and I feel as if I would like to know how it happens that we are not."

"I too have the same feeling. I am glad we know our situation at once; for we will have to earn our own support."

"But how?"

"That is to be considered. I would prefer teaching; but, if nothing else offers, we will have to labor with our hands."

"You, Hope? you?"

"Yes, me. Why not?"

"You have been so delicately reared. You are so unfitted for hard labor."

"I am not the first girl who, after having been tenderly reared, has been obliged to earn a support by the labor of her hands."

"Oh, Hope, it would break my heart to see you, my accomplished, refined, and beautiful sister, reduced to such a necessity! I have taken so much pride in observing the admiration your grace and accomplishments elicited in the refined circles in which you moved. No, no: I must try to support you. For myself I care not; but, to spare you such a degradation, I will work night and day."

"Why, Harry, labor is not degradation. It develops strength of body and vigor of mind. Some of the brightest names in our history are those of men who in early years were employed in life's humblest labors. But, even admitting it were a degradation, do you suppose I would burden my young brother and allow him to take upon him a condition I would not share! You have little conception of a sister's love if you think so. No, no, Harry: I regret our changed circumstances more on your account than my own, because it will prevent you from completing your education."

"Oh, Hope, why is it that our young lives are so darkened by sorrow and misfortune?"

"Our heavenly Father knoweth. It is said that the beating of the storms on the young cedars of Lebanon causes them to

take deeper root and thus attain a more stately and beautiful growth. And it may be that the storms of sorrow and misfortune are permitted to fall on us to strengthen and beautify our characters. We only know it is our duty to receive meekly every trial, saying, with lips and heart, 'Thy will be done, O Lord.'"

"But, Hope, I cannot! Oh, I cannot!" cried Harry, passionately.

So absorbed were they that they heard not the gentle rap at the door, nor knew that Mrs. Hathaway had entered, as was her wont, without waiting to be bid come in, until her soft, low voice fell upon their ear, saying,—

"What is it, Master Harry? What has excited you so much?"

Harry rose hastily and offered her the chair upon which he was seated beside his sister, saying, as he did so,—

"You must excuse me, Mrs. Hathaway. I am so impetuous and quick-tempered I suffer myself to become excited by trifles."

"But I am sure this can be no trifle; for I see a troubled expression on the usually calm face of your sister. Come," said she, taking Hope's hand within her own; "tell your friend Lily what troubles you."

Hope hesitated; whereupon Mrs. Hathaway hastened to say,—

"I will not ask it if it is something you prefer not telling. But you have so often been my comforter, I hoped I might now perform the same kind office for you."

"It was not unwillingness to let you know the cause of Harry's excited manner that caused me to hesitate; but I was reluctant to give you pain. But I will tell you."

Hope repeated to her friend what Harry had just communicated to her.

"I am glad, Hope, it is nothing more serious than a little money-difficulty. I can remedy that myself. I have more than I want: so just let me be your banker till your business is settled."

"But, even then, we may have nothing to repay you."

‘Well, if you should not, it will do nobody an injury. I have more than I want; and it would be a pleasure for me to divide with you.’

“Our self-respect will not permit us to receive assistance from you without a probability of being able to repay you. No, no: we must at once seek something to do to earn a support.”

“But what *can* you do?”

“I have not yet determined what I will attempt; for I have just heard we will probably be penniless.”

“Well, just accept a loan from me till something may offer itself.”

“No: not even from you can I receive an obligation which I may not be able to repay.”

“Well, if you will not receive money, you will let me ask papa’s advice what you would better do. You cannot have one more competent to advise or who would take more interest in your welfare.”

“If your father would not think it too much trouble to interest himself for one who has no claim upon him, I would be most happy to be guided by his advice.”

“It will be no trouble to him, but a pleasure. You don’t know how good papa is. Strangers think him stately and cold; but his heart is just as warm and kind as Frederick’s was. It is only papa’s manner; but I do wish you had seen Frederick!”

When Mrs. Hathaway wished to convey an idea of a superlative excellence, it was equal to Frederick; and often, when speaking to Hope of her husband, she would end by saying, “But I do wish you had seen Frederick!” A smile passed over Hope’s face as Mrs. Hathaway concluded the above sentence, and she replied,—

“If he was superior to your father in manner or any other quality, I do wish I had seen your husband; for I have met few men equal to your father.”

“But Frederick was faultless. You will see his brother Frank when he comes to see Jennie and me. He is very much like Frederick, but not near so perfect a character.

“But here I am chattering away without knowing how to stop,—as is always the case when I begin to tell you about Frederick,—when I ought to go talk to papa before he goes to take his evening walk.” And, giving Hope a kiss, she left her.

When she entered her father’s room, she found him sitting in his arm-chair half asleep. Seating herself upon his knee and pushing the white locks from his noble brow, she covered it with kisses.

“Hey?” said he, rousing himself up: “what does my baby want now?”

She was his youngest child, and “my baby” was his pet name for her. When he wished to use a term of endearment, he called her by that epithet.

“She wants you to do her a great favor, darling papa.”

“What is it?”

“Promise you will do it.”

“Why, my daughter knows her old father will do any thing for her she may ask, if man can do it.”

“Then you promise? Say yes.”

“Yes. Now, what is it?”

“I want you to get Harry Marshall a situation in one of the Departments.”

“Baby, you are dreaming. Harry Marshall does not want a situation. He has not completed his education yet; and it was only yesterday he was telling me how hard he intended to study and how much he expected to accomplish the coming year.”

“We none of us know what a day may bring forth.” And a look of deep sadness passed over her face as she made the remark; for it called to mind the sudden blighting of her own bright dreams and anticipations.

Her father gazed at her a moment with a strange look of anxiety, and then asked,—

“What do you mean, my daughter?”

In answer to his interrogation, she told him of her hearing by accident Harry’s exclamation, the conversation between her and Hope, and ended by saying, “I would not have troubled you, papa, if I could have prevailed on her to receive aid from me.”

"I honor her independent spirit," said the old Senator, when Mrs. Hathaway finished her recital. "Yes," said he, more emphatically, "I honor her for it; and I'll try to get her brother the situation you propose."

"That thought came to me just as I opened your door. I thought they could accept such assistance as that without wounding their self-respect."

"A happy thought, my daughter; and I will try to get the place."

"When, papa?"

"In the morning. When I propose doing a thing, I go to work at once."

"Oh, that is a dear, good papa," said the daughter, kissing him again and again.

Her father looked into her face with a pleased expression; for she exhibited more of her natural childlike manner than she had done since the death of her husband. He thought it a favorable omen to see her so much interested; and he resolved her wish should be satisfied if the procuring of a place were possible. She nestled her head lovingly upon his shoulder for a few moments; then, raising it, she asked,—

"Do you believe you will get the place?"

"I cannot tell, my baby. There are always so many asking situations and so few to be given; but, if effort of mine can procure it, he shall have it."

"Oh, thank you, papa; thank you. It is secure; for when you determine to accomplish any thing it is sure to be done. I will run tell Hope and—No: I won't tell them, either. It would excite their hopes; and you might possibly fail: then there would be a disappointment."

"You are right, my child. Just say to them I will think what is best to be done and give them the benefit of an old man's experience when I have decided."

He not only thought, but acted so effectually that, before a week had gone by, Mrs. Hathaway had the pleasure of announcing to Hope the appointment of her brother to a twelve-hundred-dollar clerkship in the Treasury Department.

"Dear Mrs. Hathaway," said Hope, upon receiving this intelligence, "words are inadequate to express how much I appreciate your kindness."

"Then just oblige me by not attempting such expression; but call Harry and send him to papa, who is waiting to take him to the Department for the purpose of introducing him to the Auditor, under whom he is to be employed."

Whilst Hope is searching for her brother, we will attempt a description of his patron, Governor Prescott. Though near seventy years of age, his step was steady and firm. His tall form was straight as an arrow, and his brow wore the impress of noble, generous qualities, written by the hand of God himself in characters so plain that none could mistake. His life from early manhood had been spent in the service of his country. Ere he was called to a seat in the legislative councils of the nation, his name was honored throughout the land as a brave and successful warrior. Being among our early Western pioneers, he was necessarily engaged in our border-wars with the Indians, where he greatly distinguished himself. The sagacity, courage, firmness, and justice which governed his actions in his intercourse with the Western Indians made him eminent as an administrative officer; and his service in the United States Senate had given him a reputation proud and honorable as a statesman. Grave almost to sternness, a mere passing acquaintance never approached him with familiarity. This is the man who interested himself in the fortunes of Harry Marshall at the time he thought himself most unfortunate and friendless.

When Hope found and announced to Harry their good fortune, he hastened to Governor Prescott's room. His face was aglow with gratitude when he entered, and, grasping the hand of his benefactor, he raised his eyes to the noble face of the old gentleman, exclaiming, with heart-felt earnestness,—

"The service of a lifetime cannot repay you for the great favor you have done. Words are too feeble to express my thanks."

"No thanks are necessary, my boy. Let your acts declare your appreciation of what has been done for you. Perform the

duties of the office you are to fill faithfully and well, that I may be proud of having recommended you."

"You may rest assured you will not have cause to blush for me, if application, industry, and a determination to perform every duty devolving on me will secure success."

"I have no fear of your failure, boy. You are the true metal. I read it in the clear, steady glance of your dark eye. But a son of Charlie Marshall could not be otherwise than worthy. He was true as steel."

It was a study for a painter,—the noble face of the boy upturned to the scrutinizing gaze of that eagle-eyed old man, who read human faces as others read the pages of a book.

CHAPTER XXIV.

EXAMINATION FOR OFFICE.

"I DECLARE! that is too bad, too provoking!" exclaimed Mollie Bringham, petulantly, as she handed her father the evening paper after having glanced over its contents.

"What is it that is so provoking?" asked the father, as he received the paper from her hand.

"Why, Harry Marshall has a clerkship."

"And I suppose this self-same Harry Marshall is some young scamp who has failed to pay his adoration to my daughter's charms, and she would punish him by keeping him out of place. Is it so?"

"No. It is Hope Marshall's brother."

"True; Charlie Marshall did leave a son. But I thought he was a mere school-boy."

"So he is. And it is a shame that he should have a clerkship."

"Why, what particular objection have you to his holding the office?"

"I want to see Hope's pride brought down. She thinks because she has been presented to royalty, danced at a court-ball, converses in the French and Spanish languages, and squalls Italian, that she is a head-and-shoulders above the rest of us girls. Now that the old man is dead, and the great fortune he was supposed to be possessed of found to be nowhere, I was in hopes she would have less opportunity for exhibiting herself. And I guess if Harry had not got this office she would have had to earn her own bread and butter. I would like to see her placed in that situation. I think it would humble her a little."

"Aha! So it is jealousy of the sister makes you object to the brother?"

"Gracious knows I'm not jealous of her. Why should I be?"

"Presentation to royalty, Spanish, French, etcetera, etcetera."

"No, I'm not jealous. But I hate her for her pride; and I do not know what else she has to be proud of but these things. Her father was never a Senator."

"No, no,—not jealous, Moll, not a bit jealous,—but some other feeling amounting to about the same thing. Now, I have a more weighty objection than you to the young snipe's having the place."

"What is it?"

"Why, I have been wanting a place for a friend of mine for some time; and I was promised the first vacancy that could be made. Never mind: I'll raise a row with them for giving a place to a boy, when I have a man waiting for a situation. I'll have him ousted to-morrow. See if I don't."

"But can you do it, papa, when he has just been appointed?"

"Easiest thing in the world. Much easier than if he had been in some time."

"How?"

"There is a law requiring persons who have received an appointment to pass an examination, for the purpose of ascertaining if they are capable of performing the duties of the office to which they are appointed."

"Well, what of that?"

"Why, the persons whose duty it is to make this examination in the Department where Harry Marshall is are all my friends; and I can get just such a report as I wish. If he is reported not qualified, of course he cannot have the place."

"That is elegant."

"It makes me laugh, Moll, to think what a humbug these examinations are. Yet it is a great convenience for us politicians."

"How so?"

"Well, in this way. A fellow who has worked hard for us at

home comes on here and wants a clerkship. We cannot refuse, without making an enemy of him, to try to get him the place, although we may not want him. So we go, with a great show of zeal, and get him the appointment, managing to see the examiners before he presents himself, letting them know that, although the new appointee is a friend of ours, we want them to do their duty faithfully. We are understood, and he is reported not qualified: thus we are as well rid of him as if he had never wanted a place, and yet have made him more firmly our friend than ever, by the zeal we manifested in getting him a place."

"It does work admirably. I suppose the law was passed so the Senators and Congressmen could get rid of these beggarly office-seekers without giving them offence."

"No: I do not believe the originator of the law thought of such a thing; but that is its practical working. And, by-the-way, Moll, I must tell you a good joke. Two or three years since, a young friend received a notification that he was appointed to a certain clerkship, and a request that he would, as soon as convenient, present himself for examination. He arrived here in the evening, and came to my room the same night. He was in great trepidation about the examination. 'I know,' said he, 'I can perform the duties of the office; but still I might make a balk in answering the questions. If I only knew what questions would be asked, I could prepare myself. I wonder if I would not better see some clerk that has been examined and find out what questions will be asked?'

"That would be labor in vain," said I; "for different questions are propounded to different clerks. But make yourself easy: I know you will be able to answer the questions."

"So the next morning I went with him to the Department, introduced him to the examiners as a *protégé* of mine, then stepped out into the hall, leaving him to undergo his examination. The manner of my introduction was understood as being equivalent to saying, 'Don't be hard on him;' for in a few moments he came out laughing as if he would split his sides."

"Hey?" said I, slapping him on the shoulder as he came up to me: 'the examination was not such a terrible ordeal as you anticipated, judging from your looks.'

"Ha! ha! ha!" roared he,—then, catching his breath, said, 'Why, anybody but a natural-born idiot could answer the questions they asked me.'

"What were they?" said I.

"The first, Where do you live?"

"I answered by telling the name of the town and State.

"Indeed. Do you know Judge such-a-one?"

"Intimately.

"How many children has he?"

"Four.

"Is he doing a pretty good business?"

"Making money like dirt.

"I am glad to hear it. He is an old friend of mine. You may let us see your handwriting.

"I wrote a line and handed it to them. They looked at it, then at one another, and said I would do; and here I am, ready to die with laughter to think how I have puzzled my brain trying to imagine what the questions would be and how I should answer them.'

"It is the same men who have the examining of Harry Marshall; and I'll have them make him dance to a different tune."

"Oh, do, papa. Won't it be nice to have him go packing to Hope with the news that he has been displaced? Why, it will be far better than if he had never got the place!" And, elated with the idea of Hope's discomfiture, Mollie Bringham went dancing out of the room.

The preceding description to the uninitiated may seem unnatural and untrue. But all who have observed closely the trickery of some of the managing politicians of Washington know it is not all fiction.

There is a class who consider the offices to be disposed of as a kind of stock in trade belonging to themselves, and the ap-

plicants for office puppets to be played with as they choose. In the giving of appointments, with this class, the consideration is not the fitness or capacity of the individual for the office, but, will it assist their own political advancement? And it is said there are instances where competent officers have been removed to gratify a personal pique of the wife or daughter of a Senator or Congressman.

CHAPTER XXV.

MISS BRINGHAM'S CALL.

"HAVE you ousted Harry?" asked Miss Bringham of her father when he returned from the Department, whither he had been for the purpose of displacing Harry that his own friend might have the place.

"No, Moll: it would not do to interfere. He has too strong a friend to back him."

"Pshaw!" was the petulant reply of Miss Mollie, as she turned to the window and commenced drumming upon the polished panes.

Her father well knew, when he ascertained who was Harry's friend, that it was useless to try to displace one sustained by Governor Prescott; and, secondly, he was very anxious to secure the good opinion of the "iron Senator,"—an appellation given him because of his unyielding opposition to any measure that had the seeming of trickery or intrigue.

"Who is this very powerful friend of Harry's, that even you are afraid to interfere with?" asked Mollie, turning toward her father.

"I am not afraid, Moll; but it would be useless; and I make it a rule never to touch any thing unless I am sure of success. Failure shows weakness; and a politician's success depends very much upon making people believe he has strength. They will uplift those they think strong, but push the weak aside. So I am careful to keep them well humbugged with regard to my power."

"I did not ask you for a homily on political management, but who was Harry's friend?"

"Oh, yes: Governor Prescott; and, by-the-way, my daughter,

I must tell you while I think of it, Mrs. Hathaway is with her parents at Mrs. Wilde's. I wish you would call to see her."

"Oh, pa, it will be a real penance to visit her! They say she is so low-spirited and gloomy since her husband died that a body daren't laugh in her presence."

"If she is gloomy, I presume her brother-in-law, Mr. Frank Hathaway, has not lost his agreeable and elegant manner."

"Is he with her?"

"I do not know, but suppose he is; for his brother, when he was dying, commended his wife and child to his special care; and you know how devoted he was to Frederick. He would be likely to regard his lightest wish."

"Poor Mrs. Hathaway! I will call and see her at once. It will not do to neglect her when she is in sorrow."

An almost imperceptible smile passed over the father's face as he listened to the last remark of his daughter. He knew it was the probability of meeting the wealthy and admired Southerner that prompted his daughter to play the part of comforter to the bereaved widow. He cared not what motive took her, so she made the visit. He had perceived attention and kindness to his sad-spirited child touched the old man's heart more readily than any thing else.

The carriage was ordered immediately; and soon Miss Bringham was lavishing upon Mrs. Hathaway expressions of extravagant affection.

"My darling friend," exclaimed Mollie, imprinting kiss after kiss upon the pale cheek of the invalid, "papa just told me you were in the city. When did you arrive?"

"About three weeks since."

"You are unkind to have been so long in the city and not let me know you were here. I would not have treated you thus had I visited your place."

"I was not forgetful of your last year's kindness; but I cannot expect the glad and gay to find pleasure in the society of one so sad as I. That is the reason I did not send my card to you."

"We must induce you to be more cheerful. You must visit me as you did last winter."

"My health is so bad I will not be able to make any visits."

"Then I must visit you the more frequently. We will not permit you to be lonely."

"Thank you. I shall be pleased to see you when you find time to visit me. Yet I am not lonely. I have made the acquaintance of a lovely young lady who boards in the house. She too has known sorrow; and, when I feel as if I wished some one to talk to, I send for her."

"And your brother-in-law is excellent company."

"He is not with me."

"Indeed. I am somewhat surprised at that. He enjoyed so much the gayeties of last season I supposed he would visit our city again this winter."

"He would have accompanied me, but he was detained by business. Yet he would take no pleasure in gay society were he here. He has not recovered from the sadness of heart occasioned by Frederick's death."

Miss Bringham, having ascertained that Frank Hathaway was not with his sister, did not prolong her visit. She assured Mrs. Hathaway of her deep sympathy, and, promising, to visit her very often, took an affectionate leave.

The promises were not made good; nor did Mrs. Hathaway think of her enough to remark that her promise was not performed. Hope was just the friend suited to her sadness of heart and failing health; and she desired no other.

It was Hope's gentle voice that soothed the restless invalid to slumber when the excited nerves repelled the approach of that repose which the weak and exhausted body so much needed; she it was, too, who quietly withdrew the frolicsome Jenny from the room when even the music of her child's prattle and laughter grated harshly upon the mother's ear.

CHAPTER XXVI.

NEW TRIALS.

"A GENTLEMAN waiting to see you and Mr. Harry," said a servant, placing a card in Hope's hand as she rose from the dinner-table.

"Conduct him to Harry's room," replied she, after glancing at the card.

The gentleman was Mr. Sprott. She and Harry had barely reached the room and seated themselves, when the servant ushered him in.

"I have called," said he, addressing himself to Hope, "for the purpose of having you look over some papers, if you have no other engagement for this afternoon."

"I have no engagement; and, as you desire it, I will look over the papers. But I have perfect confidence in your integrity and capacity, Mr. Sprott. Although but slightly acquainted with you myself, the word of the gentleman who presented you to me is a sufficient guaranty of your trustworthiness and capacity."

"Thank you for your good opinion. The business intrusted to my care shall be attended to in a manner that will convince you your confidence is not misplaced. Yet I find myself somewhat unpleasantly situated. When I took possession of your father's papers, I and others believed him to be the possessor of great wealth. Upon examination, I find there is barely sufficient to pay the demands against him. This is why I wished you to look over such papers as would give you a knowledge of the state of his affairs. I have the papers here in my portfolio; and, with your permission, I will place them upon this table, that you and your brother may examine them; and when you have done so we will consult as to what is best to be done."

The papers were placed upon the table in proper order for

examination, and Harry and Hope commenced looking them over. The papers were so well arranged, and the explanations by Mr. Sprott, where he had deemed them necessary, so plain, that it required but a short time to make Hope acquainted with the condition of her father's affairs at the time of his death. Having finished the examination, she turned to Mr. Sprott, saying,—

"If I understand these papers aright, the indebtedness of the estate is eleven thousand dollars, consisting of a note for ten thousand in a bank of Kentucky, and another for one thousand in this city."

"Yes, miss: you are right."

"And, as a means of raising this money to pay these amounts, there is no property but Elm-Wood, our home."

"Rube, Dick, Netta, and Minta."

"You will excuse me, Mr. Sprott, but I have been so accustomed to think of them only as a part of our family that I would as soon have thought of Harry and Maggie as a means of cancelling a debt, as of them. But 'tis true they will bring money."

It required the exercise of all the pride and firmness of which Hope was mistress—and she possessed no ordinary share—to enable her to give utterance to this speech in a steady voice.

"This giving up of family servants is a hard trial," remarked Sprott.

"Life is a series of trials; and all we have to do when we cannot overcome them is to bear them bravely. You, Mr. Sprott, have, I suppose, given some thought as to the mode in which this money is to be raised. If you have devised any plan, I will listen while you state it."

"Yes, miss, I have devised a plan, and only wait for your approval to put it in execution. As you remarked, there are ten thousand due in Kentucky and one thousand in this city. Mr. Bringham is the endorser of the note in this city. He proposes to pay the money to the bank: then he will be the creditor of the estate. At the time he endorsed the note, your father gave him a mortgage on Elm-Wood. I now propose selling to Mr. Castleford, the gentleman with whom they are hired, Rube, Dick, and

Netta. Understanding they had to be sold, he has made me an offer which I think is fair. The money I shall receive for them will more than pay Mr. Bringham: so I will first pay him, which cancels the mortgage he holds and gives me entire control of Elm-Wood. I will then try to realize the balance of the money for that property; but, should I fall short, I will then have to sell Minta."

"Oh, Mr. Sprott, it will be like selling my mother to sell Minta. Do try to realize from the sale of Elm-Wood a sufficient sum to spare Minta. It is worth more than twice that amount."

"That is true, my dear young lady; but when property is obliged to be sold for cash down it often does not bring one-third of its value, or what it would bring if there could be a credit given on some of the payments. I will make every effort to spare Minta."

"It is hard enough to part from the rest of them; but Minta, who has been my nurse in infancy, my comforter and adviser in hours of deep trial,—if I can only save her I will thank God."

"I will make every effort to do so. You have not told me if you approve the plan I have proposed: or have you some other to propose?"

"I have nothing to propose. I am sure you have given much attention to our business. I approve of what you design doing, and thank you for the thought you have given it."

"I am most happy to have your approval; and, if you do not wish to make a more thorough examination of these papers, I will place them in the portfolio and retire."

"I do not wish to examine them further. I am satisfied you will do better for us than we could do for ourselves, even if the law permitted us to attend to the settlement of papa's business."

In the presence of Mr. Sprott, Hope had managed to retain a tolerably calm and self-possessed demeanor; but, when the door closed upon his retreating figure, she looked into Harry's face, saying,—

"What desolation next? I can bear poverty;—but the thought that these faithful servants must go from us! Poor old Rube, mamma's coachman, who was so devoted to her,—and Dick, who

loved you and Maggie so much,—Netta, Minta's only child,—all to be sold! and perhaps even Minta herself may be taken! Oh, it would break my heart if they were to sell Minta!" And, as she finished speaking, she gave way to a fit of hysterical weeping. Harry, with tears in his own eyes, looked sadly upon the bowed form of his sister, but essayed not to comfort her. In all their sorrow he had never seen her so overcome; and he knew not what to say. When the violence of her emotions had become exhausted in tears, she raised her head, and, in a voice low but determined, said,—

"Harry, Minta must not be sold. We must save enough from your salary to pay for her value."

"Can we save it in time?"

"I presume not. But Mrs. Hathaway has often wished to loan me money; and, should it be necessary to keep Minta from being sold, I will accept her kind offer, painful though it may be to receive a favor of that kind. But I would coin my heart's blood into dollars, were such a thing possible, rather than see Minta sold."

"We could soon pay it should you borrow; for we would live so savingly. And even Minta's wages would be some help. Only to think of the faithful creature hiring herself for wages, when she found out we had to depend on my salary for a support! I shall never forget her look and tone as she said, when I told her it was not necessary for her to do so, 'Why, Master Harry, do you s'pose I'd let you slave to support the children, and me airnin' only my own vittles?'"

"She would lay down her life for us, dear old soul!" And Hope could not refrain from another burst of weeping. Minta, who was passing, fancied she heard a sob; and, opening the door, she looked into the room. Seeing Hope with her head bowed upon her hands, and Harry looking sad and grave, she entered and closed the door after her. Going up to Hope, she took her hands from her face, and, covering them with kisses, said,—

"What is it, darlin'? If that poor white man I see jis' now a-leavin' here has been a-worryin' of you to make you cry so,

I'll be bound I'll look out for him that he don't git in here agin."

"He is not to blame, Minta."

"Then what is you cryin' fur?"

"Oh, Minta, Rube, Dick, and Netta are to be sold. Mr. Castleford has offered to buy them; and we are obliged to let him have them."

"Well, I'm shore they could not 'a' got a better home. Dick's wife b'longs to 'em; and she's told me over an' of'en thar never wus a kinder master an' mistus than they is."

"Yes, that may be true; but to think,—Netta, the only living child you have, and who I thought would be such a comfort to you, has to be given up to strangers."

"No, honey,—not strangers. She's bin a-livin' 'long of Misses Castleford ever sence we cum away; and the last letter Jack Castleford writ Master Harry she sent me word that she wus monst'us well satisfied. I think it's a God's 'blessin' that Misses Castleford will buy 'em,—her'specially. Why, what could we do with the young nigger if she wusn't sold? For my part, I'd ruther see her dead and buried this minute than have her fotch' to this city, whar she might get to be as idle and wuthless as these young wenches we see gallivantin' about the streets here with flounces and furbelows till they looks a sight wus than a sugar-hogshead. So, honey, if that's what you is cryin' fur, you jis' hush up. I'm 'joiced, myself, to hear she is gwine to git a good mistus and one of the most 'spectablest homes in all Kentuck. Why, Mr. Castleford has nigh on to a hundred people of his own; and, as I said afore, what could we do with the young nigger, seein' as we is not gwine back to our old home?"

"We would have to hire her out, I suppose."

"To be shore we would. And isn't it a sight better for her to have a good mistus of her own to look a'ter her? They allers takes better keer of thar own than they duz of hirelin's; an' its human natur' that they should. The gal will do well enough: so don't fret about her."

"I have not told you the worst yet: he said even you might

have to be sold. I begged him to try to save you; and he promised he would do so."

"Sell me, eh? *sell me?*" Setting her arms akimbo, she again repeated, "*Sell me?* Ho, ho! well, now, I'd jis' like to see that poor white man take me from you children. I'd like to ketch him tryin': ef he didn't find out this darky wus of the true Guinea blood, then my name isn't Minta Mingo: that's all. Now, honey, you jis' wait till I is sold 'fore you goes to frettin' 'bout me; and ef you don't spile your eyes cryin' till I is sold, why, they'll never be spile't. 'Tis 'stonishin' to me what stuck-up airs these poor white folks do put on. I 'clar to goodness, thar goes Liz Denton's bell, and I must go right off; for ef I a'n't thar in a minute she's so sassy; an' it hurts my feelin's to take sass from the likes of her." And Minta hastened to answer the bell that had ended her speech so suddenly, muttering any thing but benedictions on stuck-up white folks.

Hope felt better from reflecting on Minta's opinion with regard to the sale of her servants; and now she thought only of how she should keep her old nurse. But, could she have known what was passing in Sprott's mind after he had left them, she would have been saved all anxiety on Minta's account.

"She shall not lose her nurse, even if the sale of Elm-Wood does not bring the entire amount," said he, his thoughts taking the form of words. "What a noble girl she is! No, no: I won't sell her nurse. I'll pay the balance out of my own pocket first. But I'll not do that, neither. I'll make them all pony up should there be a deficiency: see if I don't. In honor and justice, not one cent of their property ought to be touched to pay that ten thousand dollars. But the note is in Marshall's name; his property is liable for it; and I, as administrator, cannot do otherwise than pay it."

CHAPTER XXVII.

MAGGIE PROVIDED FOR.

It is about mid-winter. Mrs. Hathaway is in her mother's room, reclining upon a lounge made expressly for her use. She was in that state of nervous prostration that made even the presence of her child irksome; and Hope had taken the little prattler to her own room, as she frequently did when she perceived her mother in this painful condition.

When Hope had taken Jennie from the room, Mrs. Hathaway closed her eyes, as if to shut out from her sight the sunlight, which, as it came into the room softened and mellowed by passing through the crimson curtains that draped the windows, contrasted painfully with her own sombre and blighted life.

No word had been spoken for some time; and so still was she that her mother thought her sleeping. She would not stir, for fear of awakening her. At length the eyes unclosed, and a sweet smile stole to her lips as she said,—

"Dear mamma, how can we ever repay Hope Marshall for all her thoughtful kindness? I have been lying with my eyes closed and pleasing myself with a pretty fancy about her."

"What is it, darling?"

"That some good angel must whisper to her all my wishes. Just at the time I feel Jennie's presence an annoyance, she is sure to take her away. When I am restless and cannot sleep, she always happens at that very time to sing some sweet, soothing song that lulls me to rest. Strange! isn't it?"

"Not so very strange."

"Why, how can she know with such certainty when I wish to be alone and when I want to hear her sing?"

"Through the gentle sympathy of her nature."

"Well, it is a real blessing to have such a friend; and I must

think of some plan to repay without wounding her for all her kindness. She is proud as she is kind: so I cannot offer her money."

After saying this, she again closed her eyes. Having lain some time, her mother was startled from a reverie into which she had fallen, by her exclamation,—

"Oh, mamma, I've thought of it!"

"Thought of what, my child?"

"How to do Hope a kindness without wounding her feelings."

"How?"

"Pay Maggie's school-expenses."

"Yes, daughter: that will be a very delicate way of acknowledging your appreciation of her great kindness."

"Oh, I am so glad I thought of it! You remember the three thousand dollars Frederick deposited to my credit before we left last year? He told me I should buy velvets, laces, or jewels with it this winter. Now, I want none of these things. I only cared for them because he loved to see me wear them. I will give that three thousand to sister for Maggie's use. Don't you think that will be right, mamma? If it were twice that amount, Hope deserves it?"

"Yes, darling, for money cannot pay for such kindness as she has shown to you."

"Well, mamma, have a carriage brought in the morning: we will go to Georgetown, and I will attend to it at once."

"Think you will be able by to-morrow? You are so weak to-day."

"I am stronger already. The thought of having it in my power to do something for dear Hope gives me strength."

"Well, my daughter, you shall do just as you please. If you think you have the strength to go, the carriage shall be here."

When Hope again came into the room, she was surprised to see Mrs. Hathaway so much better and seemingly more interested and cheerful than she had been for several days.

"Maggie's expenses are paid," said the sister who transacted the business of the convent, when Hope on the first of the next month offered her the monthly pay, as she had bargained to do.

"How is it paid?"

"A lady who knows and admires your brother paid it, and told me to give you this receipt for the year's expenses when you called."

"Who is the lady?"

"She requested me not to mention her name."

"Then I will not ask it. Yet I know; for there is but one who would do us this disinterested kindness, and with so much delicacy, too."

Hope knew at once this lady could be none other than Mrs. Hathaway; and when she returned from Georgetown she went to her friend's room, and, gently kissing the pale brow, she placed the receipt in her hand, saying,—

"Dear Lillian, you are determined I shall receive favors from you. Here is one conferred in a manner that puts it out of my power to refuse its acceptance."

"And, dear Hope, you are constantly conferring favors on me which I am humble enough to receive with thankfulness and gratitude. Yet, when I attempt to repay you with any thing more substantial than thanks, your pride takes the alarm, and you declare you cannot be under obligations even to me,—forgetting that you are daily heaping obligations on me that would weigh me to the earth did they not fall upon my spirit so pleasantly."

"I do nothing for you but what it gives me pleasure to do."

"Then why not permit me to enjoy a similar pleasure by conferring on you such kindness as it is in my power to bestow? No, no, Hope: whilst I approve that independence of spirit which prompts you to rely upon your own powers, I think you should not be so reluctant to accept from me, bestowed as my own heart may dictate, an acknowledgment for all you have done and are doing for me."

"I have not been acquainted with misfortune long enough to have learned the practice of humility; and, besides, I believe in that precept of the Bible which says, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'"

"And do you suppose none but yourself appreciates that

passage in the Scriptures? I declare, Hope, I shall have to give you a lecture on the sinfulness of pride."

"As you are not very strong, I will spare you the exertion of delivering a lecture, by receiving with becoming humility and thanking you in Maggie's name for the delicacy with which you have conferred this kindness."

Had Hope known the extent of the kindness she was receiving, she would have found it more difficult to accept it. This Mrs. Hathaway knew: she therefore left her under the impression she was receiving but the amount of one year's expenses.

Three thousand dollars may seem a large sum to be thus bestowed; yet to Mrs. Hathaway it was a mere trifle. For, as she had told Hope when urging her to accept a loan, she had more than she needed. The estate left by her husband was estimated as being worth near a million. And this three thousand she felt she never could appropriate to her own use. The thought of depositing it had occurred to her husband when he was in one of his happiest and most playful moods. She would not use it for the purpose he had named when he made the deposit, nor, in fact, for any thing else pertaining to her own person. Even the thought of the money brought so vividly to her mind the state of her feelings when it was deposited, that it made the present doubly painful to her.

It occurred in this wise. She and her husband had just returned from a ball given by the British Minister in honor of his royal mistress's birthday. Lily, who in her happy days had great taste for elegance of costume, was expressing her admiration of the dress of Mrs. Gaskell, a lady who was most superbly attired.

"Well, my pet," said her husband, "if you admire Mrs. Gaskell's dress so much, why not get one like it? You know I wish to have every wish of yours gratified."

"Why, Frederick, I could never have the face to ask you for three thousand dollars for one dress. That was the cost of Mrs. Gaskell's. I saw it at my mantuamaker's, and she told me that was its price; and I have no doubt of it; for the trimmings are of the most costly lace."

"I have as much money as Gaskell; and I desire that my Lily be as gorgeously arrayed as any flower who exhibits herself in the parterre of Washington society, where rival beauties display their fine gilding. So, if my modest Lily-bud cannot make up her pretty mouth to ask for that amount of money, I will place it to her credit in bank, and she will only have to draw it out when she wants to use it."

Mrs. Hathaway regarded this as mere playful chat, and thought no more of it until the next day, when he presented her the certificate of deposit.

"Why, husband," said she, when she glanced over it and saw what he had placed in her hand, "I have no use for this money. I have more dresses now than I have room to stow away."

"Well, sweetheart, just give some of them away to make room for this. I have no doubt but your maid will accept any you may choose to give her, and find room to stow them away, too."

"I shall not give her the trouble, as my desire for this dress is not sufficient to make me subject myself to the bother of getting the material and having it made up."

"Bother! did you say bother? Why, I thought it was one of the greatest delights of a woman's life to go a-shopping and tumble over silks, velvets, and laces."

"It may be the greatest delight of some women's lives; but do you want to know what is my greatest delight?"

"Yes, Lily-bud."

"To have you beside me, calling me pet names and telling me you love."

"Ah, you cunning little diplomat, you only say so to make me present you with another three thousand."

"It is no such thing; and, to prove to you I am in earnest, I will not touch one cent of this money during the whole winter."

"Then it can just stay where it is till the next. We will spend our winters here whilst your parents do theirs, and next season you can spend this money for silks and laces. But,

in the mean time, those little fingers of yours will be searching in my vest-pocket for many a twenty-dollar piece."

"Ay, that they will, if only it be for the pleasure of hearing you say, 'Oh, you thieving Lily-bud, you are not content with having stolen my heart, but you want to steal all my money.'"

"Another pretty piece of diplomacy to make me more completely your slave."

"And am I not your bond-woman? Oh, Frederick!" and her voice lost its playfulness of tone, and became tremulous with deep feeling, as she continued, "I sometimes fear I love you to idolatry, and that God will punish me by taking you from me. But, were you to be taken, I should not long remain. (My heart would be so crushed I would perish like some flower from which the sap that sustains its life had been taken.)"

These words, so earnestly spoken, startled her husband, and he clasped her to his heart, covering her face with kisses. Some moments elapsed ere another word was spoken.

"Were either of us taken," at length he said, "the other would not long remain. So perfect is our union in life, death could not long separate us."

How often during the present winter had she recalled this conversation, its playful beginning and its earnest ending! And always when she thought of it she would say, mentally, "Yes, Frederick's words were prophetic: I am going rapidly: death will not long separate us."

That bright winter morning, as she lay upon the lounge, with eyes closed, thinking of all Hope's kindness, a thought of this conversation and of the money deposited flashed across her mind. It was the first time she had ever thought of the money, since her husband's death, without absolute pain. But now it gave her pleasure. She would appropriate it to Maggie's education,—a tribute to friendship as pure as the love that placed it there was devoted. And when it occurred to her thus to appropriate it, she waited not, but at once, with the assistance of her mother, made the disposition of it which her heart dictated.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

REST TO THE SORROW-CRUSHED.

THE March days have come, but not the March winds. The breeze is as soft, and the atmosphere as balmy, as if it were May; but the hope Mrs. Prescott had during the winter cherished, that this pleasant weather would bring health to the feeble body and cheerfulness to the drooping spirit of her daughter, was not realized. She declines more rapidly; and it is evident even to her parents that she cannot remain much longer. The word "death" had never been uttered by them; yet that a knowledge of its nearness dwelt in the heart of each was evinced by the increased tenderness of devotion lavished upon their idolized child.

It was a beautiful sight, and one rarely seen, to behold the dignified, and, as some called him, stern old Senator seated beside his dying child, reading to her from the sacred pages of the Bible. It was touching to note how the full, firm voice, which had rung clarion-like on the field of battle or in the Senate-chamber, would take a low, softened cadence as he thus read. The mother, too, by her oft-repeated caresses indicated what she had not uttered,—that she was aware the privilege of ministering to her darling would not much longer be hers.

Even the pleasure-loving brother-in-law, who had been summoned on account of Lilian's fast-failing health, accepted none of the invitations he was constantly receiving to mingle with the young and joyous, but devoted himself to the sorrow-blighted wife of his brother. Hope never wearied in her attention, although constantly called upon by the suffering invalid. No hand could arrange the pillows so comfortably as hers. She it was who must brush and braid the long, shining tresses,

which she would still have dressed as her husband had loved to see them in his lifetime. And, when she was restless, Hope must be near, to soothe her with some low, sweet strain of music. Whilst that gentle-hearted maiden was thinking only of making as comfortable as might be the last days of the fast-fading Lilian, she little dreamed she was weaving about the heart of the noble-souled Frank Hathaway a spell which was to affect the whole tenor of his life.

Lilian had never spoken to her parents of her dying; yet it was a frequent theme of conversation between her and Hope when alone. And many messages she gave that friend to deliver to them when she was gone, in case she could not get courage to speak to them herself before her departure.

April, with its sunshine and showers, has gone by, and earth is invested with the bright beauty of May. Lilian, who had been fading so rapidly, seemed to gain suddenly and unexpectedly considerable strength, and with it some of her old-time playfulness. The heavy cloud of sorrow was lifted from her spirit, and a hope that her child might be spared her again grew in the mother's heart.

She was so much improved that she could leave her chamber and gather about her in her mother's parlour those she loved. Here none were admitted but her heart's most cherished friends. Mollie Bringham, since the arrival of Frank Hathaway, had called very often; but she invariably received a message indicating Lilian was too ill to see company. She cared not for this: she accomplished the purpose for which she called,—the opportunity of a few moments' conversation with Frank, and also to give him the impression she was a devoted friend.

One of May's balmy days was near its close. The last lingering sun-rays were giving a good-night kiss to the flowers. Lilian was sitting in an easy-chair, with her head thrown back and eyes half closed, as if indulging in dreamy thought. Suddenly she sat upright, saying,—

“Give me my guitar, Hope.”

Hope went to bring her the guitar, wondering what Lily meant. When it was placed in her hand, she said to her mother,—

“Would you like to hear me sing?”

“Yes, darling, if it will not fatigue you.”

“Why, baby, it will indeed seem like old times when you get to singing again,” said the father, his face aglow with a renewed hope that his child might be restored to health.

Lilian ran her fingers over the guitar-strings and drew forth a short strain of music; then her voice rose sweet and clear, giving utterance to the thoughts that filled her heart:—

“Though earth is fair and beautiful,
My thoughts will soar above,
Wishing to join, in that bright sphere,
My lost but cherish'd love.
Although the soft-breath'd spring is here,
And Nature bright with bloom,
It stirs no glad pulse in my heart:
My hopes are in the tomb.

“I am coming, loved one, coming;
I hear thy spirit-voice:
We again will be united;
And it makes my heart rejoice.
I have borne, with weary spirit,
Life's boon since thou wert gone:
Though loving friends were near me,
My heart was sad and lone.

“I now am glad and joyous:
I feel that thou art near,
To guide me o'er death's valley:
My soul hath not a fear.
And you, the friends who love me,
Weep not when I am gone:
I go to join my spirit-love,
No more to be alone.”

Ere she ceased singing, the glow of hope faded from the father's face, and tears, like rain-drops, fell silently upon the mother's cheek.

When the song was ended, the heart of each listener was so full none dared attempt to speak. The silence was becoming painful, when Lilian went to her father, seated herself upon his

knee, put her arms about his neck with the clinging fondness of a little child, and said,—

"Papa, your Lily will soon rest. You must comfort mamma when I am gone. Jennie will be to you both what I was at her age. Poor child! she is so young she will scarcely remember her parents, and she will never feel their loss. The place my death will leave vacant in the hearts of her grandparents will be given her, and you will give her a parent's love and care. You must not grieve for me."

The father by an effort of will retained a calm exterior as he listened to his daughter, although his heart was almost bursting with suppressed emotion. Some moments elapsed after she had ceased speaking, ere he could command sufficient steadiness of voice to reply. Then the only words he uttered were,—

"My own darling, I cannot but grieve, yet not as one without hope."

"Oh, papa, do not grieve at all. You and mamma will soon come to me. Your life-tasks are almost finished."

"Yes, darling; and there is much comfort in that thought. Yet the trial is great to see you die, when I believed your hand would wipe the damps of death from the brow of your old father. How mysterious are the ways of God! (The young flower is cut down in the freshness of its beauty, and the old stem is left.)"

"Yet he doeth all things well. I have so much wished to talk to you and mamma of my departure, but never till this evening could find courage to do so. There is much I wish to say to you. I know you will regard as sacred the wishes of your dying Lilian, and it is only necessary they should be known to you to secure their performance."

At this moment the prattle of a child was heard, and Jennie, accompanied by her nurse, appeared at the door. Seeing Hope, the child called out,—

"Oh, Miss Marshall, nursy and I have had such a beautiful walk, and I brought you lots of flowers. They are in your room. Do come and see them."

Hope rose at once and accompanied Jennie to see the flowers

and admire them to the heart's content of the donor. Warmly-expressed admiration was the compensation Jennie always expected for the "lots of flowers" she usually brought Hope when she went out with her nurse. She had received her meed of praise, and was nestling quietly in Hope's arms, almost asleep, when her nurse came to take her to receive the usual good-night kiss from her mother and grandparents preparatory to putting her to sleep.

"No," said Hope, "you need not take her to them to-night; nor need you put her to sleep. I will attend to her this evening myself. You can, if you wish, go down-stairs; and, if you should be needed, I will call you." Hope had given this permission that she might secure from interruption the conversation between Lilian and her parents.

Some time after Jennie had been soundly sleeping, Hope, as was her custom, went to bid Lilian good-night before retiring. She found her seated on a cushion at her mother's feet, her head resting upon that dear parent's lap. She raised her head when Hope approached, saying,—

"Oh, I feel so happy since I have talked to papa and mamma of my leaving them so soon! It has removed all painful feeling from my heart!"

"Yes, Miss Marshall," said the father: "we are much better for our conversation of this evening,—more content to give up our child. She has communicated to us her wishes; and it will give us a pleasure, when she is gone, to execute them."

After the conversation of this evening, the invalid sank rapidly. There was no more rallying of the powers of life; and in a few days she passed away without a struggle or a moan. There was no shedding of tears beside that peaceful death-bed. The mother, with clasped hands, knelt for a few moments beside the inanimate form of her child. When she rose, she placed her hand upon the arm of her husband, who stood near with bowed head, and they each stooped and kissed the calm, beautiful brow, then silently left the room.

Hope's hands robed her for burial. The snow-white, fleecy

flannel which enveloped her was most becomingly fashioned, and the satin folds with which it was plainly but tastefully trimmed took from it the look of grave-clothes. Upon her bosom was placed a cluster of white roses; and among the silken braids of her glossy hair was intertwined the orange-blossom, indicating she was the bride of death.

When she had thus arrayed her, she brought the bereaved parents to the side of the flower-covered bier upon which she lay.

Each gazed upon the loved one without uttering a word. The silence was broken by Hope's exclaiming,—

"How surpassingly beautiful is the casket that contained the soul of our Lily!"

The father stooped and kissed the beautifully-chiselled lips without uttering a word; but the mother, after bestowing on the inanimate clay a similar token of affection, murmured, in an undertone, as if addressing her child,—

"I'll not weep that thou art gone;
For thy life had lost its brightness,
Thy voice its bird-like tone,
And thy step its sylph-like lightness.
'Tis less sad to see thee dead,
In thy calm, cold beauty lying,
Than to hear thy languid tread
And to feel that thou wert dying."

The father, upon whose ear these words fell, turned to Hope, saying,—

"It is true, my young friend, she was joyous as a bird and graceful as a sylph. I wish you had known our Lily ere she was a crushed and broken flower. She was so winning, so lovable, she drew all hearts to her."

"And she drew all hearts to her in her dying beauty. She was then more than winning: she was angelic. How I loved her none but my own heart can know."

"Your acts have attested it. Never, never can I repay you for all you have done for my Lily. It needed not her dying

charge that I should ever be the friend of yourself and brother. My own heart would have prompted what she requested. And here, beside the lifeless clay of her whom we both loved, let me tell you, never hesitate in asking any act of friendship from me that it is in my power to bestow. It will be a pleasure to do a service to the cherished friend of my sainted child."

And faithfully were these promises made in the presence of the dead performed for the living.

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE FAITHFUL SISTER.

THE young wife is gone. The brother-in-law has taken her to be placed beside her husband in his own Southern home. Hope, who knows by sad experience that a full sense of bereavement is not realized till the body of the beloved one is borne from our sight, is unwilling to leave Mrs. Prescott to her own sad reflections on the first day after the departure of her child's remains. She therefore took her work in her hand and went into Mrs. Prescott's chamber.

"Dear Mrs. Prescott," said she, "I have been so accustomed to sit in your apartments that I feel lonely in my own. I beg you will allow me to remain with you to-day."

"Yes, child, do stay with me. Your presence will drive away the crushing sense of loneliness that was creeping over me. Oh, I never fully realized my great loss until the coffin containing my child was borne from my sight! But, poor thing! it is better thus: her heart was in the grave with her husband; and why should I desire her to remain on earth, taking no joy in life?"

As the mother ceased speaking, she bowed her head upon her hands and wept. Hope, feeling she had no words that could comfort the sorrowing mother, remained silent. When her paroxysm of grief had passed, she went to Lily's writing-desk, took from it a letter, and handed it to Hope.

"I know not its contents," said she. "My poor child wrote it a few days before her death and told me to give it to you when she was gone."

Hope broke the seal and read.

"MY DARLING HOPE:—

"Your poor Lily would be your friend even from the grave. She would, were it in her power, make life's pathway smooth and flowery for yourself, your noble brother and sweet sister Maggie. Dear Maggie! may her clear, sunny brow never have one shade of care! I deposited, with the sister who attends to the business-part of the school, a sufficient sum of money to defray the expenses of her education. This you might not have accepted from the living Lilian; but you cannot refuse the gift of your dead friend. Hope, you will never be friendless while papa lives. And dear brother Frank! he is noble and generous; and, in consideration of all your kindness to me, he will be Harry's friend. I am weak, and can say no more. God forever bless you, is the dying prayer of your fast-fading

"LILY."

When Hope ceased reading, she wept as she had not done since the death of her mother. Mrs. Prescott, hearing her sobs, and seeing how deeply she was grieved, stepped to her side and placed her hand upon the bowed head.

"What is it, child? What moves you thus?"

"Lily's generous kindness as expressed in this little note overcame me. But I shall feel better for thus giving way to my feelings. My heart was heavy beneath the weight of unshed tears."

And the truth of this remark was verified. Both she and Mrs. Prescott were more cheerful after having relieved their hearts by shedding tears. They could now talk of Lilian without a quivering lip; and she was the daily subject of their conversation. Each loved to recount to the other some beautiful sentiment remembered as having fallen from her lips. Thus day after day sped by, till finally a letter was received from Frank Hathaway, announcing his arrival at home. It also gave a description of the lovely spot where Lilian and her husband lay side by side, with the sweet summer flowers blooming beside them and the bright stars shining above them.

Some days after the reception of this letter, Mrs. Prescott and

Hope were sitting together, each absorbed in thought, as if unconscious of the presence of the other. Mrs. Prescott was the first to rouse herself from this reverie.

"Why is it, Hope," said she, "that you never sing any more?"

"I feared were I to do so it would seem I had forgotten your loss, and thus give you pain."

"No, no: I would love to hear you sing again. I miss your music much, particularly at this hour,—the time that you used to soothe our Lily with your songs."

"What shall I sing?" asked Hope, taking up the guitar.

"Any thing your own feelings may dictate."

Hope ran her fingers over the strings of the instrument to see if it were in tune; and then the mother's ear was greeted with,—

"Dear Lily's at rest,
And upon her breast
The purest white roses are lying;
From its home of clay
Her soul pass'd away
So gently we scarce thought her dying.

"In her dreamless sleep,
The stars brightly keep
Their watch o'er her last earthly dwelling,
And the night-winds moan
With sorrowful tone,
As if they a requiem were telling.

"The flowers that bloom
Beside her lone tomb
With bright drops in morning are gleaming,
As if they had wept
Whilst vigils they kept
With the silver moon over them beaming.

"All things that are fair
On earth and in air
For the beautiful dead seem grieving:
Then why may not I
For the dear one sigh
Whilst this tribute of love I am weaving?

"Ah, no: I'll not sigh:
She now is on high,
In beauty and grace daily growing.
She there hath found rest
With the pure and blest,
And her soul with bliss is o'erflowing."

"May Heaven's choicest blessings rest upon you!" said the mother, when Hope ceased singing.

"It has given me one blessing, for which I trust I shall be able to show my gratitude,—in giving me the friendship of yourself and husband."

"And you are a blessing to me. Lily said you would be a solace to me; and already have her words been verified. In the first place, your kind thoughtfulness so arrayed my child in her last toilette that my impressions of her are not associated with death and grave-clothes. The picture daguerretyped upon my heart by my last look at her is one of pure, calm beauty, with no shadowings of the grave to mar its loveliness. And now thy music is as an invocation, bringing her to me, an angel of light and beauty."

"I ever think of her thus."

"How I shall miss your society when I leave! and it is but a very short time now till Congress will adjourn and we go home."

"But how much more will I miss you! Change of place, and the greeting of other friends, will occupy you; whilst I shall have nothing to compensate me for the loss of your society and counsel."

"Why not accompany us? Maggie is at school, and Harry has a situation. You have nothing to hinder you from going with us and returning when we do, at the time of the re-assembling of Congress this winter."

"I cannot go. Although Harry, through the kindness of your husband, is provided with a situation, I must not leave him. Were I to do so, I should feel as if I were not fulfilling the promise I gave my dying mother that I would watch over and counsel him as she would have done had she been spared. I

must stay near him, to guard him, as far as it lies in my power, from the snares and temptations which beset the path of an impetuous and impulsive youth. I thank you for your kind invitation, but must decline its acceptance. My place is by Harry's side. My life must be devoted to him and Maggie. Its pleasure must consist in guarding them from evil influences and promoting their happiness. It is the behest of my mother: to me it is sacred, and religiously will I observe it."

"You are right, child; you are right. Next to a mother's love and care to shield the young and inexperienced is that of a sister."

CHAPTER XXX.

SINCERITY AND HYPOCRISY.

THE summer has gone, and the busy month of October is upon us. Busy it may truly be called to the Washington hotel and boarding-house keepers. They are preparing for the assembling of Congress. This, to them, is the harvest of the year. Each proprietor hopes to fill his house and thus make up the loss sustained by having an empty house during the recess.

Mrs. Wilde's rooms are all taken. Governor Prescott and his wife are expected within a few days, and Hope is assisting Mrs. Wilde in preparing for their reception the same rooms they occupied last year. Whilst they are thus engaged, a servant enters, saying, "A gentleman is waiting in the parlor who wishes to see Mrs. Wilde." Hope bade her go at once, and she would attend to the completion of the arrangements in Mrs. Prescott's rooms.

"Why, Mr. Hathaway!" exclaimed Mrs. Wilde, upon entering the parlor. "I am really surprised to see you."

"It is early; but I had nothing particular to detain me at home, and I thought I might as well spend a month or two previous to the assembling of Congress here in Washington as anywhere else."

"True: you were elected to a seat in Congress since you left us, I remember now; but I did not think of it when I first saw you."

"I have come, Mrs. Wilde, to ask the privilege of making my home with you this winter."

"I regret that it is not in my power to grant you that privilege. Every room in my house is already occupied or engaged."

"That is too bad!"

"Too bad that I should have the good fortune to fill my house?"

"No,—not that you should fill your house, but that I cannot secure a home with you. I found it so pleasant when stopping with you last spring. You expect Governor Prescott to stay with you again this winter?"

"He will be here in a few days."

"Is our dear Lily's friend, Miss Marshall, still with you?"

"She is."

"What a noble spirit is hers!"

"And what a kind and gentle nature!"

"I shall never forget her kindness to Lily, nor feel that I can ever repay her for all the tender care she bestowed upon her during her illness. Will you present her my compliments and say I will call to see her this evening?" said Mr. Hathaway, rising to leave.

"Guess who the gentleman was," said Mrs. Wilde, when she returned to Hope after he had left.

"I am not Yankee enough to guess."

"Some one you will be glad to see."

"My circle of friends is so small I ought to be able to guess; but, in truth, I can think of no one but Governor Prescott, and had it been him I should have seen him ere this."

"It was Frank Hathaway."

"Indeed! Well, I would be pleased to see him."

"He told me to present his compliments to you and say he would call this evening."

It was early in the evening when Frank called; yet there was another visitor before him. The first object that met his glance, when he entered the parlor, was a fine-looking man seated beside Hope, and she listening with a pleased and interested expression to the conversation he addressed her. The thought flashed across his mind that this might be an accepted lover; and for a moment his heart stood still. This sensation revealed to him how dear to him was the friend of the dead Lily.

Hope greeted him warmly, and presented the gentleman who was seated beside her as an old friend.

"Ah!" whispered the heart of Frank Hathaway, "I trust it is no warmer feeling than friendship she entertains for him."

After a graceful interchange of salutations, the gentlemen took their seats and entered into conversation. Each had travelled, both were fine conversationalists, and Hope was an appreciative listener, throwing in an occasional remark, giving increased interest to the themes spoken of. Time sped so pleasantly that they noted not its flight till the striking of the clock, marking the hour of ten, reminded them it was time to take leave. Both gentlemen rose to their feet; but who one of them was we have not told our reader.

It is Mr. Alvord, just returned from Europe. In all his travels he had met no lady who in his estimation was the equal of Hope; and he had returned home with the purpose of wooing and winning her. It never for an instant occurred to him he might not be successful. Was he not wealthy and she poor? His looking-glass told him a flattering tale with regard to his personal appearance; society complimented him on his elegant manners and mental attainments; and he never dreamed any woman would be so silly as to overlook all these advantages for the want of moral excellence.

When the gentlemen bade good-night and left, they discovered on their way home that they were stopping at the same hotel. Thus this accidental meeting at Mrs. Wilde's made them acquaintances, and in a short time they grew to be friends; or, rather, Frank Hathaway entertained a sincere regard for Robert Alvord, whilst Alvord was only acting a part. For, to tell the truth, he was too selfish to be capable of the feeling of true friendship. He attached himself to Hathaway because he had an object to accomplish. He was one of those close, cunning observers reading the hearts of others as the pages of a book, keeping his own hidden the while. The first evening he met Frank Hathaway at Mrs. Wilde's, he discovered the feeling entertained by him toward Hope; and he resolved his own wishes with regard to her should not be interfered with by him. His wily spirit at once conceived the idea of winning the friendship and confidence of this accidental acquaintance, as he could thereby keep a closer

watch over his actions and prevent him from whispering a love-tale in Hope's ear. Hitherto he had believed he could have Hope whenever he chose to offer her his fortune and heart. But now he felt he had a formidable rival in Frank Hathaway. For, in addition to elegant, agreeable manners and a handsome person, he had wealth greater than his own, and the right to place Honorable as a prefix to his name.

Hathaway, unsuspecting and frank, gave his entire confidence to Alvord on every subject save his regard for Hope; and this he considered a thing too sacred to be made a subject of conversation even with his most trusted friend. Alvord was glad he refrained from making a confidant of him on this subject, as it enabled him, without a seeming breach of friendship, to put into practice the plan he had conceived the first evening he met Hathaway to prevent him from declaring his love to Hope.

CHAPTER XXXI.

BRINGHAM AND SPROTT.

THE gay season is drawing to a close, and Hope has attended none of the hops at the hotels nor the receptions of the Cabinet-ministers, though much importuned by Alvord, Hathaway, and Mollie Bringham to do so. By-the-way, Mollie Bringham during the winter has become most assiduous in her attention to Hope, professing the most extravagant friendship for her,—a friendship about as sincere as Alvord entertains for Hathaway, and inspired by the same motive.

Though Hope had attended none of the large parties, she contributed much to the entertainment of the pleasant social circle who in the evenings assembled in Mrs. Wilde's parlor. Being a fine performer on the piano, if the young people wished to dance, she was ever ready to accommodate them with music; or if any elderly lady or gentleman desired to hear a song, she never had to be asked twice: the knowledge that she could contribute to their enjoyment was sufficient to procure her immediate compliance with their request. This kindly, obliging disposition made her a favorite in the house.

In the early part of the winter she was reluctant to mingle with the glad and gay, preferring to spend her evenings in Mrs. Prescott's room, listening to the instructive conversation of the Governor, or to the artless prattle of little Jennie, the child of Lilian. But, when Harry asked her to come play for them to dance, she could not refuse. She was ever ready to gratify him, without considering her own feelings.

Frank Hathaway and Robert Alvord often declined invitations to some brilliant party, for the purpose of enjoying a pleasant evening at Mrs. Wilde's, the attraction to them being the society of Hope Marshall. Mollie Bringham, too, some-

times joined them. Each visit increased Frank's regard for Hope, and, in every picture of the future which his fancy drew, Hope was a prominent figure.

And what was Robert Alvord doing all this time? Making himself generally agreeable, delighting all by his elegant manners and graphic delineation of incidents of travel, seeming to pay particular attention to none, but giving all his thought to amuse the entire company. Yet, whilst apparently thus occupied, not an emotion that showed itself upon the countenance of Frank or Hope but he noted it, reading their feelings almost as correctly as they could have spoken them.

It is a stormy afternoon in March. Alvord is pacing his room restlessly, and a perturbed expression is on his countenance. At length he thinks aloud. "Yes, I must put a stop to this matter. Hope is becoming too much interested. Her eyelids droop beneath his glance, and her cheek wears a rosier glow when he is near. Frank will soon read these signs of love and offer his wealth and honors for her acceptance. Action must be taken at once. Delays are dangerous; and in this case it might thwart my well-conceived scheme. Yes, yes, I must see Mollie Bringham at once, and let her know I have read *her* heart-secret too, and enlist her in my service. She will lend herself to any project I may propose for the purpose of causing Frank and Hope to misunderstand each other. She has set her heart upon being the Honorable Mrs. Hathaway; and, to do her justice, she loves him as truly as her selfish nature can love. There is no danger in making her my ally, for she is as deeply interested in the success of my scheme as I am myself."

Stopping before the window, he looked out upon the snow-flakes which were being whirled about by the March wind as it swept wildly down the avenue. "Good!" said he, turning from the window: "this miserable wind will keep Mollie at home and her friends away. It will give me the opportunity of an uninterrupted conversation with her. I guess this storm was gotten up for my especial benefit: so I will call and see Miss Bringham while it lasts."

When he rang the door-bell, the servant who answered it

looked as much surprised as a well-trained servant dare do, to see a visitor out in such weather. To Alvord's inquiry if Miss Bringham was at home, he answered,—

"Why, sartinly she is. You jis' go in the parlor, an' I'll tell Miss Mollie you is called."

When Alvord entered the drawing-room, he found Mollie there. She was standing before the window, her back toward the door; and she was so absorbed in thought that she noted not his entrance, nor was aware of his presence till his voice sounded in her ear.

"Eh? Miss Bringham in a brown study?"

She turned toward him with a startled look, and replied,—

"No: I was looking out upon the wild weather."

"Or, rather, you were looking in upon the wilder emotions of your own heart. I can tell you of what you were thinking at the time I entered."

"I bet you a pair of gloves upon it, unless you are a wizard."

"I am no wizard; and I accept the bet."

"Well, of what was I thinking?"

"The Honorable Frank Hathaway."

She colored slightly, as she laughingly replied,—

"Pshaw! You men are the vainest creatures that can be conceived of. You think no subject can win a thought from us girls but your almighty selves."

"But, honor bright, were you not thinking of Frank?"

"What an absurd notion!"

"Not so absurd, either. You are in love with Frank; and, as we generally, when alone, give most of our thoughts to those we love, it is the most reasonable thing in the world that I should suppose you were thinking of him when I surprised you in such deep thought that you did not hear the opening of the door."

"And you are in love with Hope Marshall."

"Is it strange that I should love one so gifted and graceful as she?"

"But it is strange that you should let another win her right before your eyes, and you not see the game that is being played."

"Not see, eh?"

"It seems so; for you have been making yourself agreeable to all the ladies of your acquaintance, while Frank Hathaway has been devoting himself to Hope."

"And I have been watching them as a cat watches a mouse she means to pounce upon, seeming unobservant the while. But now the game has been played long enough; and we must put a stop to it."

"Easier said than done."

"Not if you will assist me."

"How can I assist you?"

"You are aware that the Rev. James Totford, a distinguished missionary just returned from India, is now in this city creating quite a sensation among all classes?"

"Yes."

"Well, he is stopping at our hotel. And who do you think his wife is,—or rather was?"

"I have no idea."

"Why, she in her spinster-days was known as Miss Pinchem, at one time a music-teacher at old Barry's academy, Lexington, Kentucky."

"That is news. But what has that to do with the matter of which we were speaking?"

"Every thing."

"How?"

"Although she is now so pious that her eyes are always turned heavenward, she is just as vinegary as ever. Marriage and a residence in India have not sweetened her temper. She is, if possible, more bilious and bitter than formerly. She has never forgiven Hope for the tricks she used to play upon her at old Barry's. I think we can make her useful to us."

"I guess you must be mistaken in your estimate of character for once in your life. I have heard her spoken of as almost a saint upon earth."

"So she is to strangers. For, with them, conversation turns upon India, and she recounts to them the sacrifices she has made and the trials she has endured, all for the sake of saving

the souls of the heathen, till they sit agape with wonder and admiration that mortal woman could become so heavenly-minded as she represents herself to be."

"So you, with your keen-sightedness, have discovered this heavenly-mindedness has a little of the old Adam in it to mar its perfection."

"It has, beyond a doubt."

"How did you ascertain with so much certainty as to justify you in speaking so positively?"

"From the first day I met her I was skeptical as to her having attained such an exalted state of Christian love and charity as is generally believed. I had a suspicion that all she had endured was not so much for love of the souls of the heathen as for love of fine raiment for her own body."

"You are too bad,—too uncharitable."

"You know she always had an inordinate love of dress; and now she is clothed in the finest fabrics of the looms of India. But, as I was saying, I had my doubts of her wonderful saintliness; so, for the purpose of having them confirmed or removed, I called on her alone. I commenced talking to her of Kentucky, of old Barry and his scholars; and finally I asked her if she remembered Hope Marshall."

"Remember her!" said she: "I should never forget her were I to live to be as old as Methuselah. I do think she was the worst imp I ever met. I used to think she was given over to the evil one. I do wonder what *has* become of her?"

"Although these words were spoken in a low, even tone, instead of the usual saint-like expression worn by her, the look of an enraged tigress sat upon her face. I looked at her a moment, to assure myself that I was not mistaken in the expression: then I answered her last exclamation, by saying, 'She is in this city.'

"Indeed! What brings her here? I heard both of her parents were dead."

"So they are."

"And she is here to scatter the money left to her, and play off the foreign airs and graces she acquired whilst her father was minister to the court of Spain?"

"Her father left no money; and you know the poor are not allowed the display of airs and graces."

"You must be mistaken: it was thought the wealth of her father was unbounded."

"Yet it came to an end."

"Are you certain?"

"Yes, there is no doubt but she, who once thought not of the value of money, now has precious little of it."

"God is merciful and just!" said she, in an ejaculatory tone.

"I looked at her in a manner that said, 'I do not comprehend you.' She understood my look and hastened to explain.

"Ah, you worldly people, who think only of the pleasures of earth, do not look at things in the same light that we Christians do, who think more of the treasures of heaven. Yes, God is merciful in taking from Hope Marshall worldly prosperity, that she may be brought to realize a sense of her sins. Better sore trial in this world than everlasting torment in the world to come. He is just; for the proud he hath abased and the lowly he hath exalted. He in his divine wisdom has permitted me, who was the poor hireling music-teacher on whom she, the spoiled child of wealth, might unreprieved play her malicious pranks, to become the helper of the Rev. James Totford in the converting of the heathen; and I am exceedingly blessed in being the honored wife of a man whose reputation for learning and piety is world-wide. I may truly say, the lowly he hath exalted, and the proud hath he abased; for is not she now poor and friendless? Yet I would like to see her now she is in tribulation. I might speak a word of comfort to her; and it is my duty, as the wife of a Christian minister, to return good for evil."

"I watched her closely whilst she spun out this speech, and I am convinced we can make use of her to accomplish what we wish without her being aware of it. All I want is your assistance."

"You shall have it. Only let me know how it is to be rendered."

Alvord laid before her a plan he had concocted, and instructed her in the part he wished her to act; and, as he felt there was no time to lose, they designated the next evening as the time, and Mrs. Totford's parlor the place, for its execution.

CHAPTER XXXII.

VISIT TO MRS. TOTFORD.

THE chandelier in the Rev. Mrs. Totford's parlor sheds its light brilliantly; but there is no one in the room save the lady. The reverend James has gone to attend a prayer-meeting. She had designed accompanying him; but during the day Miss Bringham sent her a note, saying it was her intention to come and spend a quiet evening with her in her own parlor, if she had no engagement. Of course she had no engagement when Miss Bringham, the daughter of a wealthy and distinguished Senator, proposed spending the evening with her. Prayer-meetings,—what were they in comparison with such an honor, particularly where there were no heathens to be saved? Besides, she could attend them at any time, and she could not have the honor of Miss Bringham's company at any time. So the reverend James had gone unaccompanied by his spouse.

She is momentarily expecting her visitor; and soon the door opens, and Miss Bringham, accompanied by Mr. Hathaway and Alvord, enters.

"Dear Mrs. Totford," said she, kissing that lady upon each cheek, "I met these two gentlemen at the door, and I insisted they should come and spend the evening with you, as I knew they would be more profitably employed in listening to your edifying conversation than in going to see some silly girl and talking nonsense all the evening."

"You were right, my dear young friend. Young people do spend much precious time in trifling, idle conversation, that might be profitably spent in listening to the teachings of experience."

"That is just my opinion; and that is the reason I declined

an invitation to a brilliant party this evening, that I might spend the time with you."

"I assure you, I appreciate the compliment. I wish there were more young ladies in this sinful city of your way of thinking. Indeed, I sometimes tell the reverend James, my husband, that it appears to me the people of this city are about as God-forsaken as the benighted heathen."

"Dear Mrs. Totford, do tell me some of your experience and trials among the heathen. I have heard it is so interesting to listen to your narratives."

"I will with pleasure: it is such a beautiful thing to see a young person like you, surrounded with every earthly blessing, take an interest in the heathen."

When she got started upon her favorite theme, she knew not where to stop. Her words flowed on and on, like a stream of running water, leaving no room for any of her auditors to speak a syllable. At length Alvord interrupted her, in the midst of one of her most touching descriptions of the piety and simple faith of the converted heathen.

"You will pardon me, Mrs. Totford, for interrupting you; but, while I think of it, I wish to ask you if Miss Marshall called on you to day. She told me this morning she designed doing so."

"Yes: she called, accompanied by a Mrs. Prescott, wife of Senator Prescott, a most charming lady."

"And you found Hope greatly changed since you knew her?"

"Well, not so much as I expected from what you told me. She does not seem much bowed down. I think the Lord will have to lay his afflicting hand upon her more heavily yet before she expiates the wickedness of her childhood."

Frank Hathaway looked the astonishment he felt at hearing this remark of the Rev. Mrs. Totford; and Mollie Bringham hastened to say,—

"She is greatly changed since I first knew her. I shall never forget the first time I met her. It was at a large party at Mrs. Caldwell's, in Lexington, Kentucky. The company was

entertained the whole evening—or, at least, those who were heartless enough to be so entertained—by a repetition of the mischievous tricks she had played on you when you taught in some school where she was a pupil. For my part, I was pained, particularly by the recital of one incident, in which, it seems, she destroyed a bonnet for you."

"Did she speak of that? It cannot be possible she spoke of that! And she pretended to me to be so penitent! I should think she would never think of that piece of devilry without remorse and humiliation, much less to speak of it. Oh, the depravity of human nature! She is actually worse than the heathen!—yes, than the unconverted heathen!" And the Rev. Mrs. Totford groaned in spirit, whilst her eyes scintillated with the anger this reminiscence aroused in her saintly bosom.

Miss Bringham, in pretending to defend Hope, increased her ire by recalling various other tricks which had been played upon her, in which Hope was a conspicuous actor. Indeed, so towering did her passion grow that she forgot all about the saintly character it was her duty to sustain, and abused Hope in a tone and manner altogether unbecoming the saintly spouse of the Rev. James Totford.

Hathaway sat silent, and almost motionless with anger, whilst Alvord manifested great impatience and restlessness; but he said nothing for some time. Finally, as if impelled in spite of his will, he said,—

"I regret that you should think so ill of my most valued friend."

"‘Most valued friend,’ indeed! I guess if you would say ‘affianced wife’ you would only say the truth."

"Mollie,—Miss Bringham,—I do not know why you should make such an assertion."

"Well, I know; and I guess, if you would own up honestly, you would admit my assertion is true."

"We will not discuss that question; and, Mrs. Totford, allow me to assure you that Hope Marshall is not the same that she was when you knew her; and I hope you will know her better before you leave the city. I esteem you very much; and—it is a

weakness of mine—I always wish the friends whom I esteem to esteem each other.”

“I may have been too severe in my censure of Miss Marshall’s childish mischief, but the remembrances called up must be my excuse, and I beg you will excuse me. Had I known the relation in which you stood to her, I should not have expressed myself as I did.”

“I am only her friend.”

“Of course, but a very dear friend.” And the lady smiled knowingly.

Mollie, having performed the task assigned her, soon took her leave. Alvord and Hathaway both accompanied her to her carriage, which was waiting at the door. When it had driven off, Alvord proposed to Hathaway that they should go to the hotel-parlor and see what was going on there. Hathaway excused himself, saying he had letters to write; but this was merely an excuse; for he felt he could not endure the gay chatter of a hotel drawing-room just at this time. The assertion of Mollie Bringham that Hope Marshall was the affianced of his friend had fallen painfully upon his heart; and he desired to be alone.

More than two hours have passed since the two young men parted, after Mollie Bringham’s carriage drove from the hotel at which they were stopping.

Alvord is sitting in his chamber, with an open book on a table before him. He is not reading, but listening to the footfall of Frank Hathaway, whose chamber adjoins his. A look of intense satisfaction settles upon his face, as he mutters,—

“All right! Mollie’s words have made just the impression I desire. No man walks his chamber with step so restless at this hour of the night, unless much excited.”

The measured tread ceases, and for some time all is perfectly quiet in the next room. The satisfied expression fades from Alvord’s face, as he adds, “I thought he would have seen me ere he slept.”

Silence continues for some time. There is not the slightest movement in the adjoining chamber, and Alvord begins to fear

for the success of his plan. At length there is a sound, and he says,—

“Hark! he is not in bed yet. His door opens. He will come in. I thought I was not mistaken in my man.” “Come in,” was uttered, in a louder tone of voice, as a light rap at his door fell on his ear.

“What? you not in bed yet?” he exclaimed, as he raised his eyes from the book which he pretended to have been reading, and rested them on Frank Hathaway.

“I might also say, ‘What? you not in bed yet?’”

“True; but I was so absorbed in this new novel.”

“What is it?”

“The ‘Haunted Dell.’ Have you read it?”

“I have not.”

“It is an admirably-written thing. I do not know when I have been so much interested.”

“I will return to my own room, then, and not interrupt you.”

“No, no: my eyes are tired and need rest. You will do me a kindness to remain.”

Thus urged, Frank took a seat, but seemed ill at ease, as if there was something he wished to say but knew not how to begin. At length he commenced by saying,—

“I think Mrs. Totford has a great deal of vindictiveness in her heart for so pious a woman.”

“And—did you notice?—the more Mollie defended Hope the more furious the pious lady became.”

“I did. Is it true, as Miss Bringham asserted, that there is an engagement between you and Miss Marshall?”

“Why do you ask?”

“I am deeply interested in knowing. And, in the name of friendship, I beg you will answer me truthfully.”

“I am most painfully situated. Adjured by you in the name of friendship, I cannot refuse you my confidence; but I beg you will never let any living soul know I have done so. Hope would be deeply pained if she knew our betrothal was even suspected.”

“Why did you not warn me ere I became so deeply interested in Miss Marshall?”

"You would have deemed me impertinent had I done so; for I could not violate the promise I had given Hope: consequently, I could give no reason for interfering with what you would have deemed was no business of mine."

"True. But I scarce know what I am saying."

"How Mollie Bringham came to make the remark she did I cannot conceive; for, in compliance with Hope's wish, I have striven to so guard every look and tone that none would suspect a warmer feeling than friendship exists between us. I thought I had well concealed my true feeling."

"You have, oh, you have,—as the anguish I now feel truly attests. I am the last person who would have allowed myself to fall in love with the affianced of my friend."

"Would to God, my friend, would to God I had told you all when I first learned to regard you with friendship! I shall never forgive myself!" exclaimed Alvord, with much seeming emotion.

"Blame not yourself: you acted honorably and right. And, on second thoughts, I am glad you did not. I had learned to love Miss Marshall ere I met you. The memory of the pleasure I have enjoyed in her society during the past winter, with a hope of winning her to be mine, will be one of life's sunny spots to look back to when I am a lonely old man. Had I known she was your betrothed, I should not have enjoyed this pleasure."

"Don't talk of being a lonely old man. You will forget her, and be happy in the smiles of some other."

"Could you forget her were she lost to you?" asked Frank, passionately; but, without waiting for a reply, he continued, in a calmer tone, "I will not longer detain you from your novel. Good-night."

"Good-night," responded Alvord; and the door closed on Hathaway.

"Good!" was the only word that escaped the lips of Alvord when he found himself alone.

Hathaway locked his door after entering his room, but he did not resume his restless tread. He sank into a chair, as if overcome with the violence of his emotions. He sat long in painful

silence; and what was the subject with which he was occupied may be gathered from the following sentences, to which he gave utterance:—"Robert does not love as I do, or he could not imagine it possible for me to forget and find joy in the smiles of another. No: there is no second love for me. I will henceforth devote myself to ambition: my restless spirit must be occupied. I will become famous; she shall hear my name spoken with praise; I will attain power, and should Harry ever need a friend I will assist him. I doubt not many a man's fame has for its foundation some bright hope crushed. I have been rudely awakened from a dream of paradise."

Whilst Hathaway is proposing to fill with the cold gleam of ambition the vacuum in his heart caused by the shattering of his dream of love, Alvord is exulting over the success of his plan.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

THE HEART'S AWAKENING.

THE dark clouds of March have given place to sunshine. The wild winds have crept to their cavern-homes, and a breeze, light as that which kisses the flowers on a bright June day, is sweeping through the elegantly-furnished parlor where Mollie Bringham sits in the attitude of expectation. Not long has she to wait till Robert Alvord enters and greets her familiarly with—

"So, Mollie?"

"Well, Mr. Alvord, how did I enact my part last evening?"

"To perfection."

"Did it produce the effect you anticipated?"

"Precisely. He came to me last night before he slept, or rather before I slept,—for I judge no slumber visited his eyelids last night, from the state he was in when he left my room."

"And you gave him to understand that the words I spoke at random with regard to an engagement between you and Hope were a truth?"

"I did."

"I have been thinking this morning it might be as well to practise a little on Hope, too."

"How do you propose doing so?"

"Why, you know Lizzie Denton is boarding at Mrs. Wilde's. She is one of those gossiping, meddling idlers that can sometimes be made useful. She shall give Hope the impression that an engagement exists between Frank and me."

"No, no: that won't do. Let me give you a bit of advice, Miss Bringham. When you wish to accomplish any thing by manœuvring, never admit as a confederate one who has no personal interest in the success of your scheme: should you do so, you may be betrayed. Now, in this matter you and I can trust

each other, because we are both interested; but we must make no confidant of any third person,—least of all of Lizzie Denton."

"Oh, I do not intend making a confidant of Lizzie; but I will lead her to say what I desire without letting her know I wish it said."

"How is that to be accomplished?"

"Ha! curiosity?"

"No: not curiosity; but I wish to know if your plan of proceeding is safe."

"Never fear me. I am my father's own daughter, where management has to be resorted to."

"Be careful. We have made a good beginning, and it would be a pity should any false move lose our game."

"I suppose you have never heard a rumor that Frank and I were engaged to be married?"

"Certainly not."

"Nevertheless, it was currently reported and generally believed, winter before last, that the day for our marriage was set."

"You expect me to swallow that story?"

"I don't care whether you swallow it or not: it is true; and, what is more, the gossips had reason upon which to base such a report, for he was my escort upon all occasions during the entire season. I will contrive to get Lizzie to set that old rumor afloat again, or at least revive it in Hope's hearing."

"Well, only be careful not to put yourself in the power of a disinterested person."

"Never fear. I have the bump of caution wonderfully developed."

"Trusting such is the case, I bid you good-morning, wishing you success in your undertaking."

A few days after this conversation between Alvord and Miss Bringham, Hope was sitting alone in her own room. Whilst her fingers plied the needle rapidly, her thoughts were busy with the long past. So absorbed was she that she noted not the entrance of a visitor till the voice of Lizzie Denton sounded in her ear.

"How in the name of goodness can you stay cooped up in

your room this lovely day, sewing as if your life depended on the labor of your hands?"

"It is a lovely day. Have you been out?"

"Yes: I went with Mollie Bringham to look at some spring hats. Mrs. Allen opened to-day, and she has some of the sweetest goods you ever looked at."

"She always has beautiful goods."

"But these are extra beautiful. Her ribbons, French flowers, and hats are exquisite, and her bridal veils, with orange-blossom wreaths, are the loveliest things my eyes ever beheld."

"Ah! so you have been looking at bridal wreaths? What does that portend?"

"Mollie was looking at the veils, and I suppose it portends a wedding. I accused her of it, but she denies it,—though, you know, this is no sign. Girls never will acknowledge they are going to be married till the invitations are sent."

"Is there a talk of Mollie's being married?"

"Not lately. But she and Mr. Hathaway have been engaged for two years, and they would have been married long since but for deaths in his family. First his brother died, then his brother's wife. But I think it was foolishness to put it off on account of Mrs. Hathaway's death: she was no blood-relation. For my own part, I don't believe in long engagements. There is no knowing but a fellow might change his mind. Why, at one time this winter Mr. Hathaway seemed so devoted to you I was sure you were about to cut Mollie out. I warned Mollie of it, and told her she'd better look sharp; but she only laughed at me for my pains, and said he was carrying out the wishes of his sister-in-law, who had requested him to act a brother's part by you. I told her his attentions were very lover-like,—at least more tender than I should like to see a *fiancée* of mine bestow upon any lady, even if he had been requested to do so by a dozen dying sisters. She merely said, 'Perfect love begets perfect confidence,' and she honored him the more for his attention to you. So I know they *are* engaged,—although she never exactly told me so."

There is no knowing how long the voluble Miss Denton might

have thus run on, had she not been called to see some company waiting for her in the parlor. Her departure was a great relief to Hope. The rattling conversation she had just listened to showed her there was a guest nestling in her heart of whose presence she was not aware till the pang which shot through her heart, upon hearing it intimated that Frank Hathaway was about to wed Mollie Bringham, showed her the feeling she entertained for him was more than friendship.

When Lizzie left the room, the sewing dropped from her fingers and she clasped her hands tightly. She sat mute and motionless, resembling a statue of despair. Finally, as if the intensity of her feelings must find relief in words, she moaned, rather than spoke,—

"Alas! another sorrow has fallen on my young life! God give strength to bear it bravely!"

Mrs. Prescott, who entered at this moment, exclaimed, in a tone of alarm,—

"Why, bless me, Hope, what is the matter? You look as pale as a cloth. Are you sick?"

"Oh, no: nothing is the matter."

"Yes, but something is the matter. You look as if you had not one drop of blood in your whole body. Why, even the tone of your voice is unnatural."

It was with great effort Hope had spoken the first short-sentence in reply to Mrs. Prescott; but now, having somewhat recovered herself, she answered,—

"I did suffer severe pain just before you came in; but I am much better now."

"Oh, yes: the color is coming back to your face. I was frightened when I first came, you looked so deathly."

"It was stagnation of the blood about my heart; but it has passed."

"Are you subject to such attacks?"

"No: this is the first attack of the kind."

"I came to ask you to take a walk in the Capitol-grounds with Jennie and me. It is such a lovely day I cannot keep Jennie in-doors. Do you feel well enough to go?"

"I fear not. I guess I will lie down a bit. I feel rather dizzy since the pain left me."

"Yes, dear, do, and I will close the door and darken the window, so you may not be disturbed."

A desire to be alone was the only feeling of which Hope was conscious, and she lay down at once, that being the readiest way to get rid of the kind solicitude of Mrs. Prescott; for at this moment even her gentle sympathy was painful.

When Mrs. Prescott had left, Hope lay perfectly quiet, till she heard the pattering feet and childish prattle of Jennie as she passed down the hall with her grandmother. Being thus assured that Mrs. Prescott had gone out, she rose and locked the door, so in case any one came to her room they might think she was not in. She felt as if the very life-currents must congeal about her heart were she again interrupted before she had strengthened her spirit and calmed the tumult of her bosom by communing with God and her own heart. Having thus secured herself from interruption, she knelt down, clasped her hands, and raised her face to Heaven in mute and tearless agony. Her lips breathed no prayer; but a silent invocation rose from her aching heart, and its speechless agony was softened. A tear-drop gathered in her eye; and she found voice to murmur,—

"I have no mother upon whose bosom to lay my aching head and sob out all my griefs, no father to guide and counsel. But thou, my heavenly Father, wilt give strength and comfort to the orphan. Thou hast promised it in thy holy word; and I will trust thee: oh, I will trust thee. I know not why such heavy trials are laid upon my young life. It may be, as pious Mrs. Totford says, a kind of retribution for the follies of my young girlhood,—a baptism of grief for the purification of my spirit. But thou, O God, knowest thy own purposes, and wilt give me strength to bear whatsoever thou sendest."

When she rose from her kneeling position, there was an expression which indicated a determination to meet life's trials bravely and bear them meekly. Her heart's silent aspirations were answered: she was strengthened; and her pulses beat almost evenly as she unlocked the door and seated herself at the

window. She sat some time with her head bowed upon her hands. At length she raised it proudly, and gave utterance to the thoughts which had been passing through her mind:—

"I trust none suspects the weakness of which I have been guilty. Oh, it is too humiliating that I should have given my love unasked! I cannot crush it out of my heart; but I can hide it from every eye. He was so noble, so kind! And I have been self-deceived, believing the feeling I entertained for him was only friendship, till the secret of my heart was revealed to me by hearing he is soon to wed another. It shall be revealed to none other; for I will bury it away, and, if possible, drive it from my remembrance. I have seen him but once within the past week. To Mrs. Prescott's inquiry why he did not visit us daily as he had been in the habit of doing, he replied, it being so near the close of the session, business occupied all his time, and we must not expect to see much more of him before the adjournment of Congress.

"I then regretted we should have so little of his society. Now I am, oh, so glad! With the self-awakening I have had, I shall feel constrained and embarrassed in his society until time shall have familiarized me with this knowledge. (It is well this delusion is past. Had it remained, I might have been forgetful of the dying charge of my sainted mother. Henceforth my whole life shall be devoted to the loved ones committed to my care with her latest breath. In the first moment of my despair, I felt that for me the future had no brightness. Now it seems a gentle voice is whispering me, 'Perform with a meek and earnest spirit all life's duties, and, if thy heart regain not its girlish gladness, thou wilt find calm content.' And, O God, thy grace sustaining me, I will not falter beneath the trials thou hast laid upon me.")

As Hope uttered the last sentence, she drew her hand across her pale brow, as if to clear away the painful thoughts that were busy in her brain. She then rose, and picked up her work from the spot upon which it had fallen when Lizzie Denton was called from the room. When she reseated herself, she commenced sewing, as calmly as if no wild storm of grief had just

swept over her spirit. It was true, as Hope almost unconsciously had murmured, she had seen Frank Hathaway but once within the week. But it was not business—the excuse given by him—that kept him away, but a belief that Hope Marshall was the betrothed of Alvord. The two plotters had been successful inasmuch as they had caused these two, whose tastes and sympathies had drawn them together, each to believe the other betrothed.

Whilst Hope was proposing, despite the blighting of one bright dream, to make her own life happy by devoting it to the happiness of others, Frank Hathaway was determining to drive the shadow from his heart by ambition.

When Mrs. Prescott returned from walking with her grandchild, she came immediately to Hope's room. Finding her up and sewing, she exclaimed,—

"Oh, I am so relieved to find you able to be at work! My walk gave me no pleasure, I was so anxious about you. I was afraid the severe pain which left you so deathly pale was the forerunner of a violent attack of illness. I expected when I got back to find you in a high fever; but instead you are sewing, and looking as you always do, save you are a little pale yet."

"And you look flushed and tired: so just sit down upon this easy-chair and let me put away your bonnet and shawl."

"I will do so. I am so accustomed to having you wait upon me that I do not know how I shall get along when I go home, unless I can persuade you to go with me."

"It would require no persuasion to induce me to accompany you, did not my duty detain me here."

After putting away the shawl and bonnet, Hope again took up her sewing, and chatted away as cheerfully and pleasantly as if no bright hope had been crushed within the last hour. And good Mrs. Prescott never suspected it was other than physical pain that had driven the life-blood from her face to settle about her heart, leaving her so ghastly pale.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

AUNT MINTA'S INDIGNATION.

CONGRESS has adjourned. The Senators, members, and managing politicians have gone home, leaving Washington quiet as a country village.

After the departure of Mrs. Prescott, Hope had many lonely hours, in which sad thoughts would intrude themselves upon her, despite her efforts to drive them away. However, ere long she thought of a plan for occupying her leisure hours so as to leave no time for bitter reflection.

Mrs. Wilde had two orphan grand-daughters with her; and Hope proposed giving them lessons in music and French. One was eleven and the other thirteen years of age. Their mother had been dead about two years, and they had been with their grandmother since her death. They were naturally amiable and very bright children; but they had become wilful and wayward, as children in a boarding-house generally do when there is not a constant, watchful attention given to them.

When she first took charge of them, they gave her much worry and annoyance; but by patient perseverance she had overcome their reluctance to apply themselves to study, and they were now as docile as they were at first ungovernable. The task to accomplish this had been a trying one; but she had her reward in seeing that she greatly lessened the care and anxiety of her kind friend their grandmother.

One day, about two months after she had commenced giving them instruction, just as she was dismissing them from their French lesson,—which she always gave in her own room,—Minta came in. Shutting the door after they left, she took a seat, and, assuming an air of solemn importance, as was her custom when

she wanted to give her child—as she still called Hope—a little wholesom' vice, she said,—

"Honey, I jis' wish you'd quit 'structin' them thar children."

"Why, Aunt Minta?"

"'Case it hurts my feelin's to see my young mistress makin' sich a drudge of herself."

"Why, Minta, it is no drudgery, but a real pleasure to me."

"Well, the folks in the house thinks it's drudgery, and they thinks you is paid for 'structin' 'em."

"How do you know?"

"I hearn 'em say so."

"Did they say so to you?"

"No, not 'zactly to me. But to-day, when I wur cleanin' the room next to the parlor, thar wur a leetle chink in the foldin' doors; and that Liz Denton, whose tongue runs faster than a windmill when a harrycum is tearin' over it, wus tellin' that Rev. Misses Totford, what has bin a mishenary to Ingy—I can't bar that Misses Totford, nohow. To be shore, she talks mighty saint-like, and is allers castin' her eyes to heaven like a duck in a thunder-storm; but my honest 'pinion is, she is a mean, spiteful hippercrit—"

"Stop, stop, Aunt Minta! you a shining light in the Methodist Church and have so little Christian charity? Do you remember what the Bible says? 'Judge not, lest you be judged.'"

"I'm not a-judgin' of Misses Totford: I'm jist tellin' my 'pinion of her. You see, when I hearn your name mentioned, I peeked through that chink in the foldin' doors, to see who wur in the parlor; and thar she sot, talkin' 'bout you. 'Cordin' to her tell, she teachd you once't, and you parsecuted her to sich a degree that she could not a-bore it at all; but she wus powerfully held up by the 'flection that she was predestinated to eternal happiness, and she warn't the fust 'zample of God's chosen ones who had to wade through parsecution and trials. You know she's one of them kind what believes in predestination. I wonder what makes her go a mishenary to Ingy with sich a belief as that? 'case them what God predestinated to be saved will be saved anyhow, 'cordin' to her belief. But only to

think of the mean critter sayin' you parsecuted her! You, what wus allers so tender-hearted! you would not hurt a worm. I wus on the pint of hollerin' right out and callin' her a liar; but then it 'curred to me Liz Denton might make a fuss, and Misses Totford might say I had no business thar, a-listenin' to their conversation."

"Neither had you."

"But how could I help it? Thar wur that chink in the door, an' I wur in the room cleanin' it up. Howsumever, that's nyther here nor thar; but, as I was sayin' 'bout 'structin' these children, when that Misses Totford got through with her rigmarole, Liz Denton's glib voice struck in, sayin' you were well punished, 'case now you had come to teachin' yourself to airn your bread. I wonder what Master Harry would say if he knew she talked that way? But it is a blessed thing the poor chile doesn't, for it would only make him feel bad, he's so proud an' ondependent like. Well, as I was sayin', Lizzie Denton 'marked that you had come to teachin' yourself, and that the Old Scratch hisself wusn't wusser nor the two imps you wur teachin'. I jis' wish Misses Wilde know'd she calls Miss Minnie an' Miss Flora imps. I'd tell her; but I know that gal would deny sayin' it, and threep me down as a liar."

"Or eaves-dropper?"

"Eaves-droppers never hears no good of theirselves."

"Nor of their mistresses, it would seem from your experience."

"Now, that jis' brings me back to what I wur sayin',—that I wish you would quit 'structin' them thar children, 'case you're not obligated to. Master Harry pays for yer board."

"Have I not heard you say often that you would go on your knees to serve Mrs. Wilde at the hour of midnight?"

"An' so I would. For didn't she come to act the part of the good Samaritan when ole marse died an' we wur in sich deep trouble? Do you think I kin forgit that? Why, to be shore, I'd go on my knees to sarve her at the hour of midnight."

"Do you think I am less grateful than you?"

"But, 'member, thar's a difference atween I an' you. I's only a sarvant, an' you's a young lady."

"Nevertheless, do you not think I should do for Mrs. Wilde so trifling a service as that of taking charge of and instructing her orphan grandchildren,—particularly as it gives me pleasure to do so?"

"Oh, it is all right, an' I've no 'jections so fur as Misses Wilde is consarned; but I don't like to give that gabblin', meddlin' Lizzie Denton 'casion to make 'marks 'bout you. My 'pinion is she's jealous of you, 'case she, with all her riches, doesn't git as much 'tention from the gen'lemen as you does. Thar is no knowin' what tales she may tell 'bout you to the gen'lemen. You see, it was accident I hearn her to-day. But, now that I know the 'ceit of her, I'll keep my ears open, I tell you."

"It is not worth while to give yourself so much trouble."

"Lor' bless your soul, honey, it'll be no trouble at all, but a downright pleasure. I'd like to ketch her sayin' somethin' disparagin' 'bout you to the gen'lemen. I guess I'd give her a good settin' down. I'd let her know you wur her betters. Oh, it makes my blood bile to see the likes of her, 'case she's got plenty o' money, takin' airs an' talkin' 'bout you! An', what's meanest of all, when she's afore your face she's like milk-an'-honey."

There is no knowing how long Aunt Minta would have continued her indignant declamations, had she not been called away by the ringing of a bell demanding her service in another room.

CHAPTER XXXV.

THE LABORER AND HIS SALARY.

ALTHOUGH a mere boy, Harry, ere he was six months in office, had won the confidence and respect of his colleagues. He was industrious and prompt at his business, investigating thoroughly and deciding justly all matters that came under his supervision. One day, about nine months after he had got his situation, when he came home the first word he uttered, upon entering his sister's room, was,—

"I vow, I do not know what to think of an incident that came to my knowledge to-day."

"What is it?"

"Well, I'll tell you; for I want to know what you think of it. You see, it is a rule of the Department for the employees, clerks, messengers, laborers, and all, when they receive their pay, to sign their names to what is called a pay-roll,—which is a paper designating the amount of their salary; and their signature to this paper is in lieu of a receipt. To-day, one of the laborers in the Treasury Department told me he had every month to sign for eight dollars more than he receives; and he is not satisfied. Now, what do you think of that?"

"My opinion is, he is not justly dealt by."

"So he thinks; and, when he mentioned it to me and asked my opinion of it, I told him if it were my case I would let the chief clerk know it. He said the chief clerk did know it and was in favor of it. I then told him I would speak to the Auditor. He said he was told the Auditor approved it also. I mentioned an appeal to the Secretary. He replied he had spoken of that, but was told if he dared to bring it before the Secretary his place should be taken from him. So he had concluded it

was better to put up with the injustice than to lose his place entirely."

"It is certainly a great injustice; but, Harry, you would better have nothing to do with it. You can do him no good, and may do yourself harm by getting the ill-will of your superiors in office should you presume to censure their acts. So give no advice to this person."

"I do not intend to advise him."

"It looks very much like it, telling him to appeal to the Secretary."

"I did not tell *him* to appeal to the Secretary. I only said I would do so were I in his place."

"True; and, were your chief clerk to hear you did so, it might create an enmity toward you, and he has it in his power to do you much injury: he might even have you removed from office."

"If I can retain my situation only on condition that I abstain from expressing my honest opinion, the sooner I am out of office the better. Why, I should lose my self-respect were I to consent to such a thing. Be a lick-spittle, eh, and say I think a thing is right when I know it is wrong?"

"You misunderstand me, Harry. I would not have you say it is right, but just say nothing at all,—be perfectly quiet."

"Be perfectly quiet, eh? When my opinion is asked, just pinch up my lips and say never a word? No, no! I cannot be such a sheep as that comes to. Now, my fellow-clerks respect me; and why is it they do so, suppose you?"

"Because you deserve their respect by doing your duty faithfully."

"No: because I have courage to express my opinions when asked."

"Well, I hope it may bring you no trouble."

A few days after this conversation, Harry told Hope, with a look of triumph, that the poor laborer, taking courage from his opinion, had appealed to the Secretary, got justice done him, and no one said a word about removing him. "So you see the threat about his losing his place was only a scarecrow."

"It may come yet. And as for you, I advise you to give

your chief clerk no excuse to do you an ill turn; for, depend upon it, you have made an enemy of him if the eight dollars were taken from the laborer with his consent. I am very sorry you ever said a word in the matter."

"So am not I," said Harry, gayly, as he went whistling from the room.

Time sped on, and no change came to Harry, nor to the laborer who had appealed to the Secretary; yet Hope could not divest herself of a vague impression that Harry had incurred the displeasure of his chief clerk, notwithstanding his confidence to the contrary.

"Why, sis," said he, one day when he was speaking of it, "he thinks more of me than of any other clerk in his Department."

"What evidence have you that such is the case?"

"Why, he always comes to me when he wants extra work done, and when I do it for him he assures me he will remember me; and I know he means it. If there should be an opportunity for promotion, he will recommend me."

"Very well: we will take it for granted he is very much your friend; but I trust you will never have occasion to test his good will. So let us say no more about it. But, Harry, I'll tell you what I have been thinking lately."

"What is it?"

"Why, you know I have laid by every month the sum I had designed to defray Maggie's expenses, but which was provided for by Mrs. Hathaway's kindness. I now have enough to purchase a land-warrant. Governor Prescott will soon be in the city, and we might get him to have it located for us. Who knows but we might get a town-site, and some morning wake up to find ourselves rich from the increased value of our investment?"

"Oh, that would be glorious! For, to tell you the truth, although I devote my whole mind to the performance of my duties, I do not like office, and I only hold on to it from necessity. It is a kind of treadmill existence, that does not suit my aspiring spirit. Sometimes, whilst I sit perched up at my desk, examining papers, making calculations, and studying the different laws so

that I may be able to decide justly in reference to the accounts I have to adjust, my brain becomes so wearied with exertion that I am obliged to give it a rest. At such times I lean my head upon my hands, close my eyes, and give myself up to day-dreaming. And of what, think you, do I dream?"

"Some bright-eyed, sweet-voiced maiden, I suppose. You are just at the age to be haunted by such fancies."

"No, indeed. My dreams are of different stuff. I am back in Old Kentucky. The voice of popular applause, as it greeted our father after one of his soul-stirring speeches, is ringing in my ear; and, oh, how my spirit yearns to go forth into the world and make myself a name among men such as was his!"

"And yet this popular applause is as fickle as the winds upon whose wings it is borne."

"That may be, sis; but it is soul-stirring and glorious while it lasts."

Harry's face was aglow with the memories stirred in his bosom; but in a moment it faded, and he continued:—

"But it is nonsense for me to indulge such dreams: my duty lies in performing worthily the labors belonging to my position. If I cannot have the applause of the crowd, I will win the approbation and respect of my official associates."

"That is right, Harry. Never neglect the proper performance of present duties in dreams of the accomplishment of great deeds in the future."

"My own sense of honor will prevent me from neglecting my duty: yet it is well to have by my side such a sensible and considerate Mentor as you, my dear sister. It keeps my wild dreams from running away with my better judgment."

This conversation with Harry decided Hope to invest the small amount of money she had saved in the manner she had previously thought of; and she would have the location made in some new State or Territory, where she and Harry would make their home at some future time. "And who knows," thought she, as she sat in the quietude of her own room, "but Harry's boyish dreams may be realized? He may become the popular orator swaying the hearts of the multitude, as did our father.

At least, he shall have the opportunity of testing his powers. Now that I know he feels the holding of office as a trammel to his spirit, I will endeavor so to arrange matters as to release him from it. To me all places are alike, so Harry and Maggie are happy."

In a few days Governor Prescott arrived, and he had the location of a land-warrant which Hope placed in his hands for that purpose made by one well acquainted with the best localities in the Northwest, and in whose judgment with regard to these matters he had the utmost confidence. The place selected was on the southern shore of Lake Superior, a wild, uninhabited country; but the location was made with reference to its being a town-site when the country becomes settled. When Harry's title to this spot of land in the wilderness is placed in Hope's hand, she feels there is to be the field of his labor at some future day, and, whether success or disappointment is to be the fruit of that labor, time only can determine. Yet she felt less like the dove which, when sent forth from the ark, could find no place whereon to rest the sole of the foot, than she had done since she knew the home of her childhood could no longer be theirs. Now there was a spot she could look to as the place where a home could be made. That it was yet a wilderness prevented her not from thinking of the time when, by her own and Harry's industry and taste, it would become as a blooming garden. And it was a relief to her to have some definite spot upon which to rest her future plans.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

HARRY'S ENTHUSIASM.

AGAIN is the whole nation in a state of political excitement; for again has the period for the election of a President arrived.

Hope is sitting in her own room; and, although her hands are busily occupied, her thoughts are not upon her work. The shouts of the crowd in the street, indicating their approval of the nomination, which has been borne to the national metropolis on the telegraph-wires with the speed of lightning, call up sad memories. They remind her it was her father's voice announced to her the name of the nominee in the last Presidential canvass; and she contrasts the present with the past. Then she had father, mother, a pleasant home, and a heart light and joyous as the birds that sang their matin songs in the acacia-tree whose branches shut out from her window the burning rays of a July sun. Now parents and home are no longer hers, and every earthly hope, save that of contributing to the happiness of Harry and Maggie, has faded from her heart.

But when Harry rushes into her room, his fine face radiant with enthusiasm and excitement, she puts away her own sad thoughts to become a listener to his extravagant praises of the present nominee. When he had exhausted his vocabulary of admiring epithets, he concludes with the following:—

"And, what is best of all, sis, he is a warm personal friend of my chief clerk; and, should we elect our candidate, Mr. Mahoney will have a great deal of influence; and he told me just now he would not forget me. I tell you, there is nothing like political excitement to stir up a man's blood."

"Say a boy's," remarked Hope, casting an arch glance at the animated, boyish form before her.

"Well, well, sis, though but a boy in stature and years, I have

a man's ambition and aspirations for fame; and the youthfulness that makes you smile gives me the more time to win honors and make myself a name in the world before I die. But hark! there swells the shout of the crowd. I just ran in to tell you who was our candidate."

As the enthusiastic boy uttered the last sentence, he sprang down-stairs, and was soon mingling in the crowd below.

The canvass was a hotly-contested one; and Harry entered into it with all the earnestness of his nature.

When not engaged in the duties of his office, he labored incessantly backing documents for distribution over the States. He also contributed liberally to the fund required for electioneering-purposes. When it was ascertained that his party had elected their candidate, the President-elect scarce felt a greater thrill of triumph than did this youthful politician.

But his restless yearning for active political life has been increased by the excitement of the Presidential canvass, and he cannot settle down contentedly to his unvaried clerky duties. True, the business of his desk is promptly and faithfully performed; but his ambitious dreams recur with an increased force, rendering him nervous and restless. It is but a short time previous to the day when the inauguration of the new President takes place. He is bending over an account, deeply absorbed in calculations. At length he throws down his pen, and, passing his hand over his brow, murmurs, in an under-tone, "Weary, weary, weary! but it is all right at last." Then, rising to his feet, he walks rapidly across the room several times ere he resumes his seat; and when he does so he does not immediately commence work, but indulges in the following soliloquy,—

"Oh, I must be free! I cannot stand it to be cooped up between these four walls all my life. I feel just like a caged eagle, that would spread his wings and soar aloft, but is restrained by the bars of his cage. There are hundreds coveting the situation I occupy; and how gladly would I give it to them, but the iron bar of circumstances prevents me. I must not let my wild dream of ambition make me forgetful of the welfare of Hope and Maggie. They have but me to look to for a support, and I

must for their sake content myself, because my salary secures them from want; but, oh, how I pine to accomplish something that will place my darling sister Hope in a position worthy of her!"

Having given this expression to his feelings, he resumed his work; but a close observer could perceive his mind was not on it. Every few minutes he would lay down his pen, lean his head upon his hand, and fall into a reverie, from which he would rouse himself, grasp his pen, and write rapidly and nervously, as if endeavoring to drive away the thoughts which seemed to take possession of him against his will. What these thoughts were, a conversation held with Hope after his return home will explain.

"Sis," said he, upon entering her room after dinner, "guess what I have been thinking about to-day."

"I am not Yankee enough to guess: so you will have to tell me."

"Well, the thought popped into my head, and I could not drive it out."

"What was it?"

"Why, when the President-elect is inaugurated, the new Cabinet appointed, and every thing settled under the new administration, I would ask a leave of absence and go out to see that piece of land you bought for me. What do you say to it?"

"A very good idea."

"Then you don't think my going will be a waste of the money it will take to pay my travelling-expenses?"

"Certainly not. You work very hard, and need some rest. A trip to the West will be the very thing."

"I am so glad to hear you say so. I was almost afraid to mention it, for fear you would discourage me, and the moment it entered my mind it took such possession of my heart that I could not give it up without much regret. Indeed, I was so bothered with thinking of it, I could not keep my mind upon my work."

"Well, you need be bothered no more, if it was a doubt of my approval that troubled you."

"I tell you what, sis, the country on the Lake-shore is filling up very rapidly since its copper-mines are found to be so rich; and when I go there I will see about laying off my land into town-lots; and if I can make any thing of it, then farewell to my clerkship: we will go out there to live."

"Remember the fable of the milkmaid who counted her chickens before they were hatched, and do not be in too great a hurry about giving up your clerkship. Never leave a certainty for an uncertainty."

"Oh, I do not think of giving up my clerkship till I am sure of making a support for you and Maggie by some other means. I will not give it up, anyway, for a year or two; and in the mean time I will devote all my time after office-hours to the study of law, so when I go West I shall be fitted to practise. Charlie Grant, my best friend, is now reading law with one of the most distinguished lawyers of the city: he will be admitted to practice soon; and he says I may have the use of his books, and he will give me any instruction I may need."

"I approve of your purpose with regard to the study of the law; but you must not be too sanguine. Remember, there is much hard study to be accomplished before you acquire a knowledge of the law; and then you may find it difficult to get clients."

"I have thought of all that. But I must have my mind on some aim beyond the daily routine that now occupies without satisfying me. Even should I fail, I will feel better satisfied from having made the attempt. But I will not fail. When I have a purpose to accomplish, I can work unceasingly. Now that I have your approval, I feel doubly confident of success."

CHAPTER XXXVII.

HARRY VISITS THE WEST.

THE Inauguration is over, the new Cabinet formed, Harry has obtained his leave of absence, his carpet-bag is packed, and he is ready to take his departure for the West in the afternoon train. His friend Charlie Grant is to call for him and take him to the depôt in his own buggy. Whilst he is waiting, Hope says to him,—

"So the work of your desk is all up, and you are sure there is no danger of some person being put in your place during your absence?"

"No danger in the world. Charlie Grant promised me, if there should be any work on my desk that needed to be done before my return, he will attend to it. I took him and introduced him to my chief clerk to-day; and he is to call every few days to see if there is any thing to be done."

"You did well to think of that; for you cannot be too careful. You know there are so many wanting places, and each new Secretary has his particular friends to provide for: so they will be glad of any excuse to create a vacancy, for the purpose of accommodating their own favorites."

"But there is no danger for me. I have always performed my duty so promptly, and been so obliging to give assistance wherever it was required, that I stand number one in our Department. Besides, our chief clerk, who has a great deal of influence, is my particular friend; and he still says he'll not forget me. However, I hope I shall in a year or two be able to get along without office; and then it will be at their service to bestow on whom they please."

"I wish your bright anticipations may all be realized; yet I wish you had got your leave of absence a month later. I am

afraid, when you get north, you will find the frost-king has not taken his fetters from stream and lake, and you may be detained by difficulty in reaching your destination."

"No danger of that; but should I encounter a little difficulty I would like it, because it would give something of a spirit of adventure to my journey. Ah, here comes Charlie to accompany me to the cars: so good-by till I return."

"Good-by; and don't neglect to write and keep me advised of your journey."

The first letter Hope received from him was dated Indianapolis, Indiana. He had gone thus far without any remarkable incident having befallen him; and Hope perceived, by the style of his letter, that his spirit was overflowing with happiness. According to his impressions, there was no place upon the habitable globe equal to the great West. Every thing was charming, glorious, grand. He had but one regret; and that was that necessity compelled him to return East and remain a year or two longer in Washington.

Hope receives another letter. This is dated Chicago. He speaks of it as a wonderful city for the Far West. The business done there is immense. Yet she perceives the exuberance of spirit which animated him when at Indianapolis is gone. He is fatigued with travelling, and does not see things through quite so bright a medium. Besides, he is uncertain how the balance of his journey is to be accomplished. The ice is still upon the lake, and no prospect of an immediate thaw: so it is of no use to think of getting there by water. There is no railroad, nor even a mail-coach, running from Chicago to any point near where his anticipated town is situated.

In the hotel where he is stopping, he has met two other young men who are bound for Northern Wisconsin; and they have about concluded to go in company and hire a conveyance to take them through to their destination. Better this than remain at Chicago uncertain when they will be able to get off by way of the lakes. At the close of his letter he expresses a fear that it will not be possible for him to get home within the month, and

thinks it will be well to get an extension of his leave of absence in case he should be detained by the difficulties he encounters in travelling.

Hope sent for his friend Charlie at once, and requested him to go to the Department and ask an extension of Harry's leave, stating the reason why that leave was asked.

Charlie went immediately to the chief clerk, made the request, and received for answer that he feared no extension of leave would be given, and advised him to telegraph to Harry to return immediately without attempting to go farther. Charlie told him it was useless to telegraph, as there was no knowing where Harry was at this time, the probability being that he was where there was no such thing as a telegraph-wire.

"I am truly sorry such is the case; for I do not believe an extension will be given. These new heads of Department are very strict."

"New brooms always sweep clean. But I think if they were made aware that Harry was detained by circumstances beyond his control, they would show him that favor particularly, as I am willing to do his work till he returns."

"I think it very doubtful. But I tell you what I will do: just say nothing about it, and they need not know but what he is at his desk."

"You know what is best; and, if you propose that course, I will come regularly every day to do the work of his desk."

"Oh, no: it is not worth while for you to come, because it would take as much time to show you how the work is to be done, as to do it myself."

"I think I could do it without showing, for I have been in office; and I promised to keep up his work for him during his absence."

"There is no need at all of your coming. I guess I can manage to have it all right."

Charlie returned to Mrs. Wilde's and told Hope what course the chief clerk proposed pursuing.

"I do not approve of his proposition," said she.

"Why?"

"I believe in the old adage, that 'honesty is the best policy.' If he thinks an extension of leave would not be granted, there is a moral wrong in giving it in the manner he proposes."

"Yet we should not find fault, as he does it through friendship for Harry."

"I would not deviate from the straightforward path of right even for a friend; and I much doubt if the friendship of one who will do so is to be relied on. No, no: had I been in his place, I should have gone at once to the Secretary, laid the request before him, urged the reason why it should be granted, and then, if it were refused, I had acted the part of a friend, and could do no more. I do not subscribe to the sophism, 'do wrong that good may come of it;' and, what is more, I greatly doubt if good ever does come of wrong-doing. My motto is, do right and take what follows. If every young man starting in life would make that his rule of action, we would see a much higher standard of morals than now exists."

"I believe you are about right. Yet very few, even among ladies, are so conscientious about little things as you."

"Yet they should be; for it is by familiarizing ourselves to little errors—I will not give the harsher name crime—that we are fitted to tolerate greater ones."

"I will remember your opinions and try to square my life by your rule."

"If you do so, you will never regret it. That is the principle I have endeavored to impress upon Harry's mind."

"And he has profited by your teaching; for he is one of the noblest fellows living."

Nearly two weeks have gone by since Harry's letter from Chicago was received, and Hope is anxiously expecting another. She is the more anxious as his leave of absence will expire soon, and she wants to know something definite when he will be home.

"Ah, here comes Aunt Minta with a letter. See, 'tis post-marked from a small town in the northern part of Wisconsin." Hope tears off the envelope and glances over it hastily.

"What does Master Harry say?" asked the waiting Minta.

"Oh, he has had rough times since his last letter. He has travelled over a wilderness near a hundred miles in extent, seen plenty of Indians, and camped in the woods, where the wolves were howling round him all night."

"Lor' bless you, honey! didn't the wolves eat him up?"

"No, I presume not, or he could not have written this letter."

"Shore 'nuff: I didn't think of that. But didn't the Injens kill him?"

"No: he was preserved from their murderous scalping-knives too."

"Well, it's a God's blessin' he did, the pizen varmints. I only wishes he wur safe back wid us agin."

"And I wish so too," said Hope. But Aunt Minta was off to relate to her fellow-servants what awful scenes Master Harry had gone through. Hope, finding her auditor gone, gave the letter a more careful perusal.

"It is uncertain," he wrote, "when I shall get home, as there is no possible chance of returning, save by way of the lakes; and as yet there is no indication of the clearing away of the ice so as to allow of navigation to vessels being possible. I would return by the route I came, notwithstanding the hardships I encountered in coming were enough to deter a less determined person than myself, but that route now is impassable, for there has been a sufficient thaw to break up the roads and set the running streams free, and there are no means of crossing those streams since the ice-bridges have left them. I shall be compelled to wait and come by the way of the lakes. You will therefore get Charlie to go to my office every day for the purpose of keeping up my work till I can get home."

"Ah," said Hope, as she folded the letter and placed it in her writing-desk, "Charlie has offered to go every day, but they refuse his service. I really feel very anxious. I am afraid Harry's work is accumulating. But stop: I will write a note to the chief clerk and request him to get some one who understands the business to act as substitute for Harry till he returns; and I

will send him Harry's letter as a proof that it is out of his power to get here."

When the note was sent requesting the employment of a substitute, Hope felt there was nothing more she could do. She strives to feel that all will be right; yet she has a strange misgiving that it will not be so. Notwithstanding Charlie Grant's assurance that Mr. Mahoney is very much Harry's friend, she has her doubts.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

HARRY'S REMOVAL FROM OFFICE.

Two weeks, and something more, have elapsed since the expiration of Harry's leave of absence, and Hope has received no letter from him since the one announcing his arrival in Northern Wisconsin. She is very anxious, yet says nothing. Aunt Minta goes to the post-office daily, and, returning without a letter, she is clamorous in the expression of her fears that them pizen Injen varments have sculped Master Harry.

She has just returned from her bootless errand, and, to use her own language, she is a-givin' 'spression to her feelin's, when Charlie Grant came in and handed Hope a missive. She cast her eyes upon the superscription, and saw it was addressed to Harry. When she took it from the envelop and noted its contents, she grew pale. Aunt Minta, who was watching her mistress's face, started up, exclaiming,—

"What is it, Miss Hope? Somethin' drefful happened to Master Harry? Them pizen Injens sculped him at last?"

"It is not news from Harry."

"No, I reckon not. How can he write, poor, dear chile, when he is welterin' in his gore, and no sculp on his blessed head?"

"Pshaw, Aunt Minta! you must dream about the Indians. Harry is well enough, I dare say. This letter is written to him."

"Well, what made you turn so pale when you read it?"

"It surprised me."

"Well, gracious knows, I do wish——" What Aunt Minta wished remained unsaid; for she was interrupted by the violent ringing of a bell, and she left the room, muttering, "I 'clar to goodness, I'd ruther wait on any two ladies in the house than that

thar Liz Denton. 'Pears to me she 'grudges me one minnit in Miss Hope's room; 'case I never do stop in here, but jing-a-ling jing goes her bell."

When the door closed on Minta's retreating figure, Hope addressed Charlie, saying,—

"This is Harry's dismissal from office."

"I supposed it was, when I saw it on his desk this morning. That is why I brought it to you."

"Is there not a substitute employed in his place?"

"I suppose there is."

"It is strange they should have dismissed him after employing a substitute."

"I cannot understand it."

"Nor I. I am glad Governor Prescott has not yet left the city. I will show it to him and get him to call upon the Secretary and make some inquiry about it. He got the situation for Harry; and it is perfectly proper that he should make some inquiry about his removal."

"That will be the best thing you can do. You and I can do no more than we have done. I offered to do the work, and they would not accept my service, and you authorized them to employ a substitute in his place. We can do no more."

Hope took Harry's dismissal in her hand and stepped in to Mrs. Prescott's room. Finding the Governor in, she gave it to him, saying, as she did so, "I am very sorry to trouble you, but I have no other friend to whom I can apply."

"No one, at least, who would take more pleasure in serving you."

"So I believe. Therefore I ask you to call on the Secretary, who removed Harry from office. If any thing can be done to reinstate him, I know it will be done for you."

"How comes it that he is removed? Did you not tell me you had written a note requesting that a substitute might be employed in his place till he returned?"

"I did."

"You could do no more. I will call on the Secretary at once, and see what can be done. I am very glad you proposed the

employment of a substitute, because it showed a desire to do justice."

The Governor went immediately to the Treasury Department. The Secretary himself was not in; but the Assistant-Secretary received him.

"I have called," said he, addressing that gentleman, "to make some inquiry in regard to the removal of a young gentleman who was appointed upon my recommendation and in whom I take much interest."

"Indeed! Who is it?"

"Young Harry Marshall. I have always understood from your predecessors that he was a good clerk, performing his duties promptly and well. Is there any charge against him?"

"He was removed upon the statement contained in a report from the bureau in which he is employed. It says he is absent without leave, and work accumulating on his desk."

"It is true he is absent beyond the time given him; but he is so because he cannot get here. As soon as he found it was impossible for him to return within the time granted, he wrote to his sister, directing her to ask an extension of his leave. She did so, sending to his chief clerk his letter detailing the cause of his detention, also a note requesting him to employ a substitute to do the work of her brother's desk till he could get home. She could do no more than this."

"None of that was reported to us: had it been, we should have given it our consideration. May you not be mistaken?"

"I will call on his Auditor and chief clerk, and ascertain if my statement cannot be proven."

"Do so, and make us a statement. Should we have removed a friend of yours without sufficient cause, we will see what can be done to correct the mistake. But you must admit, if the report submitted to us be correct, we but did our duty."

"Certainly; and I commend you for it. However, I will ascertain if mine be not the true statement."

The Governor went to the Auditor and asked, "Is Harry Marshall a good clerk, and has he performed his duties faithfully?"

"There is not a better nor more faithful clerk in my employ."

"Yet he has been removed."

"Yes; and I am truly sorry such is the case. I would rather have him than any one they can put in his place."

"Then why was he removed?"

"On account of his absence beyond the leave granted him."

"But could not some clemency be shown him when you received his letter showing it was impossible for him to get here, and the more particularly as it was accompanied by a note from his sister requesting that a substitute be employed in his place till he could get home?"

"I received no such letters."

"Send for your chief clerk. They were handed to him. If you have not received them, it is because he has neglected his duty in laying them before you."

The clerk was sent for, and inquiry made for the letters. He acknowledged having received them, but excused himself for not laying them before the Auditor by saying he thought Harry would probably return before his absence was noted.

"And thus you have caused the removal of my young friend from office. Mr. Auditor, I request that these letters be immediately sent to the Secretary, to convince him I was *not* mistaken in my statement."

When the chief clerk had retired, the Governor said to the Auditor,—

"Are you willing to give me a written statement that you would rather have Harry at the desk—the duties of which you assure me he has performed so well—than any one whom they may put there? I ask this, because I will try to have him reinstated, and such a statement will be of much service."

"I am perfectly willing that you repeat what I have said and call on me to testify as to his capacity and faithfulness."

After his interview with the Auditor, Governor Prescott again went to the Secretary's room; and this time he found the Secretary in. He related the result of his inquiry with regard to the letters which had been sent to Harry's bureau, and received

a promise that, when the facts were before him, Harry's case should be reconsidered.

"I believe," said the Governor to Hope, when he returned, "I shall get Harry reinstated. He was removed by a mistake, which I have corrected. I can assure you his Auditor is truly his friend."

"I have no doubt but all would be well were you here when he returns; but, as you will be gone, I fear they will never think of him again."

"He must call on the Secretary as soon as he returns, and let him know he is ready to perform the duties of his old desk."

In a few days Governor Prescott left, and Hope was unusually lonely and depressed in spirit. She felt that she had no friend possessing influence with the Administration to whom she could look for assistance. The fear that Harry might not be reinstated preyed upon her mind; yet she performed every duty she had taken on herself with as much attention as if no anxiety oppressed her. The lessons of Minnie and Flora Allison were regularly given. They had, under her care, become all their grandmother could wish. It was well for Hope that she had continued to give them instruction despite Aunt Minta's objections, for it was the means, the coming year, of defraying the expenses of her board.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

HARRY'S RETURN FROM THE WEST.

"WELCOME me home, Hope," said Harry, coming into his sister's room, carpet-bag in hand, a few mornings after Governor Prescott's departure.

"I am truly glad to do so; but I wish you could have returned sooner."

"It was utterly impossible. I have gone through all kinds of rough experience since I left. Did Charlie Grant keep up my work as he promised?"

"He offered to do so; but your chief clerk told him it would be more trouble to show him how it was to be done than to do it himself."

"Oh, well, it makes no difference: I'll soon bring it up."

"You will not have the opportunity. You are removed, and your place filled up by another."

"Removed! Did you not get my letter asking to have my leave extended?"

"Yes: and I sent it to your chief for the purpose of showing why you asked the required leave; but it was of no use: the extension was not granted."

"They have not treated me generously. During the whole time I have been in office I never before have had but two weeks' leave, and I should not have asked an extension now could I have got home. You say you sent my letter?"

"Yes."

"That should have convinced them it was no fault of mine that I was not back at my post. I also requested that a substitute who did understand the business might be employed."

"This, I presume, was not done. It is my opinion you are indebted to the kind offices of your chief clerk for your removal."

"What reason have you for entertaining such an opinion?"

"He withheld your letter until you were removed. When Governor Prescott called to see the Secretary about your removal, even your Auditor did not know a letter had been received from you asking an extension of leave. At his request the letter was sent to the Secretary, who promised him he would consider it; and the Governor thinks there is no doubt but you will be reinstated. He regretted that he was obliged to leave before you returned, but advised you should call at the Department as soon as you got home."

"I will go at once and report myself ready for duty, and see what they will do for me. I cannot believe they will treat me so ungenerously as not to restore me. I have always been an earnest, faithful Democrat as well as a faithful clerk. I am sure my Auditor will testify that I never neglected my duty."

"Yes: he told Governor Prescott you were one of his very best clerks; that he would rather have you than any one they could put in your place. There is no doubt in the Governor's mind but he is honestly and truly your friend."

"I think I will be restored."

Harry would have entertained no hope of restoration could some one have whispered into his ear the conversations which took place in the Department the day previous to his removal.

The Hon. Howard Dumpling, Secretary of the Treasury, and his assistant, Phineas Claxton, are alone in the room they usually occupy when they wish to hold a consultation upon some important question. It is evident some momentous subject is now before them; for the face of each wears a perplexed, thoughtful look. Perhaps it is some difficult financial question. But see: the Hon. Howard addresses Phineas; and we will use our privilege as author, listen to their conversation, and gather from it what this important matter is.

"I tell you, Claxton, I *must* have six more places. You, having more experience in the Executive Department than I, can certainly tell me how they are to be had. Were it in the House of Representatives, I should know what to do. I have served there so long that I know how to manage the machinery of that

branch of the Government with as much adroitness as any member that ever had a seat upon that floor. I am new in the Executive branch; but you, having served eight years, must be acquainted with all the wheels, cogs, and pulleys of the machine."

"There would be no difficulty if the preceding Administration had been of different politics; but, as it was not, we will have to be very circumspect. It is a ticklish business, this removing one Democrat to make place for another."

"Ticklish or not, the places must be had. What do I care for a Democrat, when I want places to oblige my own special friends? You know, if I had let the leaders of the party control my actions, you would not have the place you now hold. But you are my friend, and I was determined you should have the place despite all opposition. Now, there must be six vacancies at my disposal in the course of the next two or three weeks. How are they to be had?"

"Let me consider. Well, the only plan I can suggest is to send a notice to the chief of each bureau under your supervision and let each make one vacancy for you."

"Very well. You attend to it."

When the chief clerk of the bureau to which Harry belonged received this notice, he threw it on his desk, after reading it, and, clapping his hands together, exclaimed, "Good!"

"What is it?" asked a crony, who had just lounged into his room.

"Why, I am required to make a vacancy. I am so glad that young dog Harry Marshall is detained beyond his leave of absence."

"Why so?"

"It gives me an opportunity of having him ousted from his place. The Secretary wants a place for a friend of his; and, the requisition coming at this particular time, I can have Mr. Harry reported absent without leave. Were he here, there would be no chance of getting him out; for he is never found tripping, and the Auditor is his friend. Yet the old gentleman

cannot save him now. He will be obliged to report him absent, however reluctant he may be to do so."

"Why do you want him removed? He is one of our best clerks."

"I believe I told you about his interference about the salary of one of the laborers. Did I not?"

"Yes, you did."

"Well, I have kept my eye on him ever since, determined to pay him off if ever an opportunity was presented; and now is my time."

"He thinks you are his best friend."

"To-be-sure he does. And that belief now puts him in my power. Had his application for extension of leave gone into the hands of the Auditor, instead of coming to me, there is no doubt but that the old gentleman would have gone to the Secretary and got it extended. Then, instead of removing Harry to make the required vacancy, I should be obliged to send off some one of our jolly boys, of whom the Auditor makes so much complaint because it takes them so long to get their brains in working-order after we have had one of our glorious nights."

"Well, I must confess, I am sorry to see Harry lose his place. But, as you say, the Auditor will be obliged to send your statement."

"And I am delighted that chance has put it in my power to pay the young jackanapes for meddling with what was none of his business. My own private opinion is that our present Secretary will value him none the more for his excessive honesty. The Honorable Howard likes to have about him persons whom he can use for his own advancement."

Harry presented himself before the Secretary, believing he would only have to make the cause of his detention understood to be restored to his former place; but in this he was soon undeceived.

When Harry insisted they should show him some generosity, and not charge his absence as a fault, as it was caused by circumstances which no effort of his could overcome, the Secretary replied,—

"You were removed for disobedience to your superiors."

"*Disobedience!*" repeated Harry, with a look and tone of astonishment. "Why, I never thought of such a thing. Nor did Governor Prescott, when he called upon you after my removal, understand *that* to be the ground upon which my removal was based."

"Yet here is your own letter, which condemns you. In the concluding paragraph you say, 'I will overcome every obstacle, and reach the point for which I started, if it takes me a year to accomplish it.' Young man, I admire the courage and perseverance which prompted you to write that sentence; yet it clearly establishes your disobedience."

"I am to understand I am removed for disobedience, the proof of which is the closing paragraph of my letter?"

"Yes."

"I little dreamed, when I wrote that boyish boast to assure my sister that my spirit was unconquered by difficulty and hardship, that it would be the ground upon which to base my removal from office. Am I to understand all hope of my being reinstated is precluded by that unfortunate bit of boyish braggadocio?"

"We cannot reinstate you, because the place you occupied is filled. However, make a new application, and a written statement of the causes of your detention, and we will consider it."

When Harry returned from the Department, he described his interview with the Secretary to Hope. In concluding, he exclaimed, with much indignation,—

"Only to think he should have taken advantage of a private letter to accuse me of disobedience and make that a cause for my removal!"

"But, Harry, that was not the cause; for the letter had not been submitted to him when you were removed."

"Yet he now brings that forward as a justification of his action toward me."

"Well, well, never mind: it is clear to my mind that he intends to give you another place, or he would not have told you to make a new application."

"I suppose he does; but, in requiring me to make a new application, he places me in the humiliating position of admitting I have committed a wrong,—which I am not willing to do; and, were it not for you and Maggie, I would go without the place rather than obtain it by such an admission."

"There is no humiliation in it; and, even were it so, he has the power, and necessity obliges us to bow to his will."

"But it goes very much against the grain."

"Yet I do not know but it is well enough. Young America needs disciplining sometimes to teach him to be less self-willed."

"But to be disciplined by a Dumpling, even if it is an honorable one," said Harry, with much bitterness. "I do think, if ever a man was suitably named, it is he, with his roly-poly figure and his stump nose stuck between his puffed-out cheeks——"

"Never mind giving me his portrait, Harry, but go and write the application, as he proposed you should do. There is no doubt but he intends giving you a place: so do not find fault that he chooses his own way of doing it. Be thankful to get it on any terms."

"And what if he should not give me the place after all, but just require me to make an application for the purpose of humbling me?"

"Oh, Harry, you are unjust to entertain such a thought. In my own mind I feel as certain of your getting the place as if you now had it."

"Well, you may be right. I will be guided by you in this matter; but I will wait a day or two before I write, as I am tired now, and not in the best mood for writing. I may by that time hear from Governor Prescott."

Two or three days after this conversation, Harry brought a letter to Hope, asking her if she thought it would answer. It ran thus:—

"HONORABLE HOWARD DUMPLING,

"Secretary of the Treasury."

"SIR:—On Monday last, the day on which I returned from the

North, when I called on you to ask you to reinstate me in the place from which I had been removed, you informed me the vacancy occasioned by my removal was filled; consequently, that matter was closed; but, if I would make a new application and make you a statement, you would give it your consideration.

"Acting upon this suggestion of yours, I now make application for a situation in your Department. The grounds upon which I base my claims are—Firstly, whilst I was in office, I always performed my duties as clerk promptly and conscientiously. For the truth of this assertion, I refer you to my bureau. Secondly, I was a warm and earnest supporter of our present chief magistrate and the party that gave him the Presidency; and, lastly, my remaining absent after the expiration of my leave was occasioned by causes which no efforts of mine could overcome. When I obtained leave of absence for a month, I had no doubt but I could accomplish the trip for which that leave was obtained, and return, within the month. This I should have done, but for the extraordinary lateness of the season. Last year Lake Superior was clear of ice on the 9th of April; this year it was closed till the 27th of May. I certainly never had any thoughts or intention of disobeying the rules of the Department.

"The reason why I am particularly anxious to procure a situation in your Department is, I wish to stand acquitted of blame in the estimation of the friends to whom I was indebted for my situation.

"During the three years I have been in office, I have been absent only two weeks, until this spring. I would have made this application immediately after having seen you, but I was expecting a letter from Governor Prescott, having written to him previous to my interview with you. As no letter has been received, I presume he had left New York before my letter reached there. I therefore concluded to wait no longer, but send you my application at once.

"Yours, respectfully,

"HARRY MARSHALL."

"Will it answer?" asked Harry, when his sister, after reading, returned the letter to him.

"I find no fault with it. You would better go and hand it to him at once,—thus indicating you comply willingly with his requirements."

"But I do not comply willingly. Nevertheless, as the thing has to be done, there is no use in putting it off. Besides, the sooner it is presented the sooner I will know what I am to expect."

When Harry placed his letter in the Secretary's hand, he asked how soon he should call to learn his decision with regard to it. He was told to call in the course of two or three days. He did so, and was informed by the Secretary his time was so completely occupied he could not immediately consider his application. He waited about ten days before he called again; then, in answer to his inquiry with regard to his case, the Secretary replied,—

"I have considered your application. Can do nothing for you, and beg you will trouble me no more."

The quick blood mounted to Harry's cheek, and he was about to make a reply expressive of the indignation he felt at being thus trifled with. However, he controlled himself, and answered, with a calm tone,—

"I regret exceedingly having troubled you with my application; nor should I have done so had you not suggested my making a new application. I beg your pardon for having acted upon your suggestion, and hope you will excuse me for being so obtuse as to suppose you meant any thing by it."

When Harry returned after being thus dismissed, and told Hope of it, she remarked,—

"It is very strange he should have dismissed you thus, after giving the impression he intended doing something for you."

Had she understood the nature of a thorough politician, she would not have made such a remark; for, most assuredly, the soul of an aspiring politician is "that harp of a thousand strings" referred to by the hard-shell preacher. We cannot aver that it is composed of the "spirits of just men made perfect," but rather

of the spirits of unjust men with many imperfections. This particular harp, which had given forth the strain that grated on Harry's ear so harshly, had been tuned and played upon by Mr. Mahoney, the chief clerk of Harry's bureau.

For the information of our readers, we will describe the performance of this skilful player.

"What can be done for this young fellow?" asked the Hon. Howard, placing in Mr. Mahoney's hand Harry's letter.

"Then you have made up your mind to do something for him?"

"I suppose I must. I see by his letter he is very determined in maintaining his rights. However, I would not mind him, for he is but a young man, and, as a matter of course, has but little political influence, were it not that Governor Prescott interested himself in his behalf and I promised him I would see justice done the young chap."

"Places are very scarce: none to throw away."

"I know that as well as the next fellow; but I must not disoblige Governor Prescott: he is a strong man with the party."

"Is anybody afraid of a dead lion?"

"What are you driving at?"

"A Senator who has served out his time and no prospect of a re-election is something like the dead lion: his strength has gone from him. Governor Prescott is in this condition; and we would better keep all the places we can, to oblige the ins."

"Pretty good counsel. I guess I will be guided by you, and when young Marshall comes again I will just tell him nothing can be done for him."

"That will be your best course. No use to waste time on him: it won't pay."

"If you will read his letter, you will see he makes a strong case for himself. One of the reasons he urges is the faithful performance of his clerical duties."

"He did perform his duties well; but he is not a desirable person to have in office. He has too much of a notion of thinking for himself; and that, you know, is troublesome. A clerk has no business with an opinion of his own. It is his duty to

do as his superior bids him, without stopping to question whether it is right or wrong."

"Your opinions are in accordance with my own. Implicit obedience is their duty."

"So say I. But young Marshall is so rabidly democratic that he thinks the opinion of a clerk is as good as the opinion of a Secretary and he has just as much right to maintain his opinions."

"Is it possible? What presumption! Well, if that is the young gentleman's character, we have no use for him: so we will leave him just where he is."

"A wise decision."

"He referred me to his Auditor. But you and I look at things more in the same light: so I sent for you instead."

"I feel proud to have obtained so favorable an opinion from you. And at any time that you need the service of one well versed in the ways of the Department, just call on me. I have served a long apprenticeship under different Administrations."

"I will certainly do so; and I consider myself fortunate in having in my Department an officer so obliging and competent."

At the close of their conversation, each felt he was understood by the other; and, when the chief clerk retired, the Hon. Howard said to himself, "He is just the man I want. I have only to make it his interest, and he will do my bidding without a why or wherefore. I am glad I understand him."

CHAPTER XL.

HOPE'S APPEAL TO THE PRESIDENT.

"WELL, Harry," said Hope to her brother, a day or two after he had been so unceremoniously dismissed by the Secretary of the Treasury, "you may as well go and get the salary due you from the 1st of the month to the 17th,—the date of your dismissal from office. Now that it is decided you are not to be reinstated, it is as well to get the balance due you."

"Yes; and, that disposed of, we must decide what I would better do."

When Harry entered the room which he had occupied whilst a clerk, he met Mr. Mahoney, who greeted him with a bland smile.

"Can I do any thing for you?" said he to Harry.

"Yes. I called to get the balance due me."

"There is nothing due you."

"I was not removed till the 17th. I believe it is customary to pay the salary up to the time of removal."

"Such is the custom. But your sister requested me to employ a substitute when your leave of absence expired,—which I did, and paid him your salary."

"Then you employed a substitute?"

"Yes."

"We supposed you had not complied with my sister's request, as I was reported to the Secretary absent without leave, and work accumulating on my desk. Why was not the report 'Absent, but a substitute doing his work'?"

"It would have made no difference. You would have been removed anyway."

"That may be; but it would have been only just to have made the report in that way. However, I will not stop to dis-

cuss the matter. I will only say, your notion of justice is very different from mine if you conceive I have been treated justly."

He left the room without waiting for a reply from his chief clerk, convinced Hope's opinion with regard to him was correct.

"Another disappointment," said he, throwing himself upon a chair in Hope's room, upon his return from his bootless errand.

"What now?"

"No salary due me."

"You were not removed till the 17th, and you were paid only to the 1st."

"But a substitute was employed, and the salary paid him."

"Then why was not that fact stated when your absence was reported?"

"Why not? Ay, that is just what I would like to know; but Mr. Mahoney does not choose to tell."

"Taking every thing into consideration, you have been badly treated, Harry; and, as there was a substitute employed, I would lay the whole matter before the President."

"But how am I to get it before him? If I write, he will never see the letter; if I call on him, ten chances to one his time will be so much occupied he cannot listen to my statement."

"I'll tell you how we will get it before him. A lady who is a friend of mine is also a very particular friend of his. She often calls to see him socially at hours not devoted to business. I will write to him in your behalf, and get her to hand it to him, with a request that he read it."

"A good idea. We may get the circumstances to his knowledge in that way. I know he will have justice done me, if all the facts are known to him."

"It is worth trying, at any rate. I will write my letter this evening. Call upon my friend to-morrow, and get her to bear it to the President, so it can be but a few days till we know the result of an appeal to him."

"I have no doubt as to the result if we once get the matter before him. He is a just and honorable man."

"I believe he is; yet my experience lately makes me less confident. However, my motto is, 'You will never succeed in life if you allow yourself to be discouraged by the first disappointment.'"

The letter was written; and when Hope called upon Mrs. Overton, and stated the object of her call, she was advised by that lady to be the bearer of the letter herself.

"Go," said she, "and take your brother with you. Be there at the hour he receives those who call on business. Give him your letter, and tell him you will leave it with him to peruse at his leisure, and call again for his decision with regard to it."

"It will be very embarrassing for me to go where there is a roomfull of gentlemen. You, being a friend, could see him and deliver it when he is not surrounded by an importuning crowd."

"I would do so with pleasure; but I think it better for you and your brother to go. Harry's appearance will interest him, and he will be more likely to give it his immediate attention."

"I will be guided by your advice. I must not shrink from any thing that will promote Harry's interest. I will call, no matter how unpleasant it may be to do so."

"That is right. To-morrow the President receives those who call on business. Go, leave your letter; then in one week call again."

At precisely twelve o'clock the next day, Hope and her brother were at the front entrance of the Presidential mansion. Her inquiry, if the President received visitors, was answered in the affirmative by the porter at the door, with a direction to a messenger, who conducted them to the large room above-stairs, where the Cabinet-consultations are held, and where the President receives, from twelve till one, all who call upon business.

Hope had gone early, thinking she would be able to deliver her missive and retire before the crowd came; but, to her surprise, there were already at least fifty persons in the room. The President was standing beside his desk, near a window, listening to a gentleman who stood near him, talking with much earnestness. At length this gentleman placed a package of

papers in the hand of the President, who intimated he could listen to him no longer. The next nearest then addressed him. *He* was soon disposed of; and, as he turned to leave, four or five others crowded forward, each anxious to be the first to get the ear of the President.

As Hope looked on, she felt that she could not thus crowd forward to claim attention, if her letter was never placed in the President's hand. Harry, who was watching Hope instead of the crowd, read in her expressive face the thought that was passing in her mind, looked for a chair, and, finding one, he drew it toward her, saying, "Be seated till the crowd is less."

She was glad to take a seat, feeling she was less conspicuous thus than standing. Could any of that waiting crowd have withdrawn themselves from their own anxious thoughts sufficiently to have noted Hope and her brother, they would have regarded them as a striking tableau,—Hope, with the bright blood mantling her cheek, called up by the thought that necessity obliged her to be one of this crowd; yet her manner was calm and self-possessed. The thought that it was for her brother sustained her. Harry stood beside her chair, his hand resting upon its back, his lips tightly compressed, a gleam in his dark eye, and his whole air denoting indignation that his sister should be placed in this unpleasant position.

They had remained thus some minutes, when an old and very feeble man came in. He stopped just beside them. So overcome was he by the exertion of walking up the stairs, that he drew his breath almost gaspingly, and looked as if he might faint from fatigue. Hope offered him her seat, but he refused to take it; and Harry sought and found another chair, which he accepted. So pallid was his look that he attracted the attention of the President, who came and addressed him as soon as he dismissed the gentleman with whom he was conversing when the old man came into the room. After conversing with the old man, he addressed Hope. This gave her an opportunity, of which she availed herself, to present her letter. He unfolded it, saying he would note its contents. But she, feeling it would require more time to read it than she had a right to claim

during his business-hour, told him she would leave it, he could look at it when he had leisure, and she would call again for his decision with regard to her behest.

Having made this short speech, she retired at once, not wishing to occupy one moment of his time more than was actually necessary. As her eye glanced over the anxious faces surrounding her, she felt there might be others there even more desirous than she to obtain a few moments' conversation with the President. After leaving the presence of the chief magistrate, she spoke not a word till her foot was on the pavement beyond the precincts of the Presidential mansion. Then, looking into Harry's face, she remarked,—

"Did it not make your heart almost sick to observe the expression of intense anxiety that sat upon the faces of most of that waiting crowd, and how eagerly they pushed forward to get a word with the President?"

"I observed no one but you, sis. And, as I noted the blush that dyed your cheek, I felt, had my fingers been upon the throat of those who were the cause of your placing yourself in that unpleasant position, I could have strangled them as willingly as I would a rattlesnake were it in my grasp."

"Harry, will you never learn to bear patiently the trials it is our lot to encounter?"

"Bear patiently! As well expect me to thrust my hand in the fire and not feel the heat, as ask me to be patient whilst seeing you, my gentle, retiring sister, obliged to become one of a beggarly, waiting crowd, who——"

"Stop, Harry! stop! Not beggarly: most of those composing that assemblage were gentlemen of refinement and intelligence."

"I don't care what you say. If they are very Chesterfields in refinement and Solons in wisdom, I insist they are a beggarly crowd, or they would not stand there watching with as much eagerness to get a word with the President as ever a starved dog watched the hand of a cook whom he expected to throw him a bone. And you and I were component parts of that crowd. Ugh!"

"Why, Harry, are you crazy?"

"No. But, Hope, you, with all your calm philosophy, felt humiliated. You need not deny it. I read it in the expression of your tell-tale face."

"True, Harry, I did, when I first entered the room; but it lasted only a moment. I drove that feeling away by reflecting I was exercising the privilege of making an appeal to the President in behalf of my young brother, who, I deemed, had been unjustly treated. In truth, as I sat there waiting, a feeling of pride stole into my heart that I had the courage to do so."

"It was not so with me. As I stood there, my humiliation was increased by the thought that you on my account were placed in so unpleasant a position."

"You will admit that the manner of the President was exceedingly kind and gentlemanly in sparing me the necessity of approaching him, by addressing me where I sat."

"Yes; and for that gentlemanly kindness he has my heartfelt thanks. Although it was a very little matter for him to advance a few steps, it was much to you that you were not obliged to press forward to where he was standing, with unseemly haste, or perhaps not be able to place your letter in his hand."

"And it enabled us to leave much sooner than we otherwise could have done."

"For which I am more than glad. To me there was something stifling in the attitude in which I felt myself placed. It seemed I could not have breathed ten minutes longer had I not got out of that presence into the fresh air."

"It was your pride rising in your throat which produced that sensation. You will have to learn to keep it down."

"No, sis, the world may take every thing else from me, but my pride I will retain. A man without a proper pride of character is a pitiful pup."

"True, Harry; but the question is, What is this proper pride? Some say one thing and some another."

"What I mean by it, is never, under any circumstances, to be guilty of a mean or unworthy act."

"My own opinion precisely. You and I agree in opinion upon that subject."

"Well, I felt that it was an unworthy act on my part that I, a man, should suffer you, my sister, to be subjected to the gaze of fifty or more persons each wondering what that girl was after."

"I guess each of that fifty to whom you refer was too much occupied with his own petition to give a thought to any one but himself."

"That may be so; yet I do wish we did not have to call again."

"The next time we only have to hear the decision of the President."

"I hope to goodness it will be favorable. But I am beginning to doubt everybody."

"Well, well, let us give ourselves no undue anxiety. 'Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.' Should the decision be unfavorable, God will make plain the path in which we must tread, if we seek his guidance."

Harry could not entirely subscribe to all Hope's teachings of faith, patience, and humility; yet in after-life they had much influence in the government of his actions.

CHAPTER XLI.

THE PRESIDENT'S DECISION,—WHICH AMOUNTS TO NOTHING.

"TO-DAY we are to go again to the President's," said Harry, coming into his sister's room.

"Yes; and a lovely day it is. Let us accept it as a favorable omen, indicating you will be restored to your place, thus making sunshine in our hearts bright as that which falls upon the face of nature."

"No: I'll not anticipate any such good luck. I believe just at this time in that promise, *not* recorded in the Bible, which says, 'Blessed are they who expect nothing; for they shall not be disappointed.' So, you see, whilst you are sustained by the promises contained in the good book, I keep myself from being overwhelmed with disappointment by clinging to those not found in the Bible."

"Oh, Harry, Harry, are you aware your levity and bitterness of spirit borders on sacrilege? Oh, my brother, you cannot conceive how much I am pained to hear you refer to the Bible in that manner. I fear I have not faithfully performed the charge committed to me by our dying mother."

The sorrowful tone in which this reproof was uttered touched Harry more deeply than the words; and he exclaimed,—

"Forgive me, Hope: I would not for the world give you unnecessary pain. Our dear mother herself, had she lived, could not have watched over and instructed me more faithfully than you have done. I did not mean to be irreverent; but that thought flashed through my brain, and I spoke without thinking. Indeed, it seems the lessons of human nature I have learned since I came home have changed my own."

"It is not right, Harry, to let it so affect you. When we see wrong in others, it should make us more watchful of ourselves."

"I know it, Hope; and I will try in future to govern my quick, impatient spirit. If I do not, I am sure it is not for want of a worthy example in you."

"It is rarely, Harry, that I have occasion to reprove you for errors of this kind."

"And it shall be more rarely in future. I will keep in mind you have enough to pain you, from causes that I cannot control, and thus keep a constant guard upon my lips. But I came to ask you what time we should go the President's this morning."

"We will try to be there precisely at twelve, as we were on the day we called before."

"Very well. I will be on hand to accompany you at that hour."

About the time this conversation was passing between Hope and her brother, the Hon. Howard Dumping and Mr. Mahoney were holding a consultation over the letter she had left with the President, which had been referred by him to the Secretary. We will insert the letter, that our readers may the better understand the conversation between these two worthies:—

"TO HIS EXCELLENCY THE PRESIDENT.

"HONORED SIR:—Permit me to ask your attention to the following appeal. I will make my statements concise as possible, hoping you will give them a perusal.

"I write in behalf of my brother, who had a clerkship under the administration of your predecessor. He was an earnest supporter of your claims during the late Presidential canvass.

"On the 1st of April, he asked and obtained leave of absence for one month, for the purpose of attending to some business on the southern shore of Lake Superior. When that leave was obtained, he believed he could without difficulty attend to his business and be back to his desk within the month. With that belief he started. But, ere he reached the point at which his business was to be transacted, he became convinced it would be impossible for him to reach that point and return against the expiration of his leave. He immediately wrote to

me, requesting that his chief clerk might be made acquainted with these circumstances, an extension of leave asked, and a substitute offered to attend to his work. In compliance with this request, I addressed a letter to the head of his bureau, offering a substitute and asking a longer leave.

"On the 16th of May he was reported to the Secretary as absent without leave and the work accumulating on his desk. Nothing was said of his having offered a substitute and asking an extension of leave: consequently he was at once removed.

"When he returned, he reported himself to Mr. Dumpling, his chief, and asked to be reinstated, as his being absent without leave was occasioned by circumstances beyond his control. The Secretary informed him the vacancy occasioned by his removal was filled, and that matter was closed. He furthermore stated he was removed for disobedience to the rules of the office, but if he would disprove that charge, and make a new application, he would consider it. My brother then addressed him a letter, a copy of which I send you.

"A few days after sending this letter, he called to know the Secretary's decision, and was informed he had not considered it, on account of the press of other business requiring his attention. Wishing not to be intrusive, he did not call again for several days; and when he did so Mr. Dumpling informed him he had considered his application and could do nothing for him.

"It is thus his case now stands; and I appeal to you.

"Let us look at the charge upon which he was removed:—'Disobedience to the rules of the office.' 'Tis true he was absent beyond the time of his leave,—which he could have avoided by returning home and leaving the business for which he obtained that leave unattended to. But was it not reasonable for him to depend upon the generosity—not to say justice—of his chief for an extension of that leave, when a substitute was offered, rather than require him to return after having encountered so much difficulty and expended so much money, and leave the business for which he had gone unattended to? He the more expected this, as during the three years he had been in office he had never been absent from his desk but two weeks.

"Having been an active supporter of your claims for the Presidency, his removal seems to cast discredit on him by implying unworthiness. Had he been of different politics, that would be sufficient excuse for him.

"He claims the right of appealing to you on the ground that, as the substitute was employed at his desk from the 1st of May till the time of his removal, the Secretary might have let matters remain thus till his return; then, if his place must be made vacant for the purpose of giving it to some other person, give him the opportunity of resigning.

"Had this been done, I should not have troubled you with this appeal; and my apology for now doing so is my anxiety to remove from my brother's name even the seeming of censure, as he is just entering upon manhood. I therefore ask for him some situation at your hands. I would not ask the removal of another to make room for him; but, when a vacancy occurs, I beg he be remembered.

"Yours, most respectfully,

"HOPE MARSHALL."

"When Mr. Mahoney finished reading this letter, he turned to the Honorable Howard, saying,—

"So Marshall's sister went whining to the President, thinking she would get him reinstated?"

"Not much whine in that letter. She seems to insist upon it as his right."

"She closes with, 'I beg he be remembered.' Did you observe that?"

"Yes; and he will be remembered, so far as I'm concerned. To think of taking an appeal from my decision! I'll show them which has the stronger will, the President or I. If there be yielding in this case, the President will have it to do."

"But such would not be the case had we a Jackson for President."

"But we haven't a Jackson for President."

"So you will not reinstate young Marshall?"

"Certainly not. Had I been disposed to do so, this appeal from my authority would have decided me against him."

But we will leave these two worthies and turn to the Executive mansion, where visitors are assembling, and, among them, Hope and her brother. Again, as on the preceding visit, Harry procured a chair for his sister. This time a very few minutes elapsed before she had an opportunity of speaking to the President; and to her inquiry if he had found leisure to read her statement he replied,—

"Yes, I read it; and, your brother's being a peculiar case, I referred it back to the Secretary, requesting him to reconsider it."

"Then you advise my brother to call again on the Secretary?"

"Certainly; *certainly*."

The manner of the President as he spoke this short sentence assured Hope that Harry would be reinstated; and when they were in the avenue, beyond the reach of other ears, she said to him,—

"Go to the Secretary, as the President advised. I can go home alone."

Harry went to the Treasury Department, and she pursued her way homeward, her heart full of happy thoughts. It had been a great trial for her to present herself before the President a petitioner in her brother's behalf; but now she felt fully recompensed for all the mortification it had cost her. She had been home about half an hour when Harry came in.

"Why did you not remain at the Department?" asked Hope, when he entered her room.

"I have no business there."

"Are you not reinstated?"

"No."

"Did you not think, from the manner of the President, that it was settled you were to have a place?"

"Of course I did, or I would not have called again upon the Secretary to be treated as a dog."

"What did he say to you?"

"I was so indignant I do not remember the exact words he

used; but the substance of them was, astonishment that I should present myself there again after I had been informed that nothing would be done for me."

"Did you tell him you called by the advice of the President?"

"I did; and he replied he could manage the business of his Department without any interference from the President. I tell you, Hope, I am provoked at myself to think I called again. I feel humiliated."

"Well, I am glad you called; nor do I think you are humiliated in doing so. But the result of that call causes me to honor the President far less than I have done. He either permits the Secretary to disregard his wishes, or he has been guilty of the littleness of trifling with us, leading us to believe he interested himself in your behalf without having done so. Either of these contingencies renders him unworthy of our highest respect. If he did not wish to interfere in your case, why could he not have told me so with a manly candor? If he did wish to have you reinstated, it would have been done had he the will of a Jackson."

"It won't do to mention him in the same sentence with Jackson. There is as much difference between our present chief magistrate and Jackson as their mode of getting into the Presidential chair was different. Jackson obtained his seat by going straightforward, boldly facing and overcoming all opposition by mere strength of character. The present chief magistrate attained his elevated position by a tortuous course, temporizing here and conciliating there, till finally he reached the goal of his lifelong ambition. And, now that it is attained, he from long habit pursues the same course for the administration of the Government that so long governed him in seeking the attainment of his wishes."

"Since when have you entertained this opinion of him? I have heard you speak very differently."

"Since I have become convinced what his opponents said of him is true. But, Hope, after having subjected ourselves to all the humiliation we have undergone, what have we gained by it?"

"Another lesson of life, and the consciousness that we have done all that is in our power to do for the recovery of your place. And I this minute would rather stand where I do, with a feeling of never having been guilty of one act of duplicity, than to occupy the Presidential mansion, if such a pre-eminence be gained by pursuing a tortuous course."

"What are we to do next? Were it not for you, I should not mind the termination of this matter. I can stand the rubs of fortune myself."

"Well, Harry, I have not been so sanguine of success but what I thought of the course we must pursue in case of failure."

"What is it, Hope?"

"I will earn my own board; and we have the means of paying for yours one year. You must at once commence reading law with Charlie Grant. By close application you may fit yourself for practice within that time: then we will away to your new town, where you, as proprietor and village lawyer, will be the great man of the place."

"But how are we to get there at the end of the year?"

"It is time enough to make that inquiry when we are ready to go. In the mean time, all you have to do is to fit yourself for the practice of the law."

"Is it not fortunate that Maggie is provided for?"

"Yes. Dear Lilian! I now realize how truly she is my friend, even from the grave."

"You may think it strange, but it is true, I feel less heavy-hearted this minute than I have done since I knew I had lost my office."

"Not strange at all. It is suspense that wears the soul out of the body. When we know just what we have to expect, and set ourselves bravely to work to overcome difficulty, the very resolution to do so gives strength and elasticity to the spirit."

"I feel that you are right, Hope. And, to tell you the truth, I believe I am more glad than sorry that I did not succeed in recovering my place. Yet no one would credit my word were I to tell them so, knowing how perseveringly I have tried to be reinstated. But that was on your account; and, now that I see

you take it so calmly, I do not mind it. I will lose no more time dancing attendance on Secretaries and the President, but go bravely to work."

"Yes: that is what I desire you to do. And, being occupied with the present, you will have no time to indulge in regret for the past or dread for the future. The true secret of happiness, after all, is in having the present usefully occupied."

"Then you don't subscribe to that wise forethought which provides for the future?"

"Useful occupation of the present is in itself provision for the future. But we will not spend our time in discussing this question. I will go and make my arrangements with Mrs. Wilde: make yours with Charlie Grant, and commence study at once. I have no doubt but your removal from office is the best thing that could have befallen you. It will develop the manliness of your character to have to depend upon your own resources."

"Yes: a few years will show what I am. The Honorable Secretary thinks I am nobody. I trust I shall be able to prove to him, before he steps off the political stage, that there is the making of a man in this boy. I shall strive to be an actor upon the same boards before he retires. Sis, do you remember the incident papa used to tell of a chief of one of the rich and powerful tribes of Western Indians?"

"No, Harry. What is it?"

"Why, when this chief was very young, commissioners were appointed by our Government to treat with the chiefs of his nation for a valuable tract of land. The treaty was made, written out, signed by the commissioners and all the chiefs save this one. When his signature was required, he refused to affix it, insisting upon better terms for his nation. After some persuasion to induce him to sign it, the commissioners said to the other chiefs it made no difference about his name: he was but a boy, and his signature was of no consequence."

"'Ay,' said he, in reply to this speech, 'I am but a boy, and my signature can be dispensed with. The moons come and go. I will be a man. The time will come when there can be no

treaty without my name. Then, if your Government wants a slice of our land, I will dictate the terms of a treaty.'

"The commissioners laughed at his speech as the boast of a hot-brained youth. But he made his words good; and more than once, when the United States wanted some of the rich lands lying on the Wabash, he dictated the terms on which they were to be had, then required a large sum on his own account ere he would affix his name to the treaty."

"Yes, yes; I remember. It was Richardville, the principal chief of the Miamis."

"The same. The Hon. Howard Dumpling now thinks of me as these commissioners did of him: I am of no consequence. But I too will be a man, and I may——"

"Be a great chief in the wigwam," interposed Hope.

"Well, I'll work for its accomplishment. In the State where I intend making my home I expect to have some influence. I will always be on hand when delegates to the convention for nominating the Presidential candidate meet. The Presidency is what this Honorable Dumpling is looking to. But his policy is bad in sacrificing good and true Democrats for the purpose of giving place to his own immediate clique. I, for one, will remember him."

"You are but a boy. What can you do?"

"I will soon be twenty-one. Three years will elapse before the next nominating-convention. Much can be accomplished in three years by one who works with a will."

"If he knows how to work."

"I have not served an apprenticeship here in Washington with my eyes shut."

"Well, well, do not waste your time dreaming what you will do in the future, but occupy the present in fitting yourself to perform well whatsoever that future may require of you."

"You are right, sis. I really believe you are my good genius, always at hand to bring me to my senses when I run off into some extravagance. But I'll remember that Honorable Dumpling."

"Remember him; but be careful you are not yourself unjust."

CHAPTER XLII.

HOPE AND HARRY BOTH LABOR STEADILY.

HARRY applied himself closely to the study of the law, and his sister encouraged and sustained him by hopeful words. Her first thought was to keep every shadow from his heart, that his mind might be in a condition to take hold of knowledge with quickness. She had, as soon as she knew there was no prospect of Harry's restoration to office, made arrangement for one year's board. The next thought that occupied her mind was, "What can I do to earn the means of taking us to our Western home at the expiration of the year?"

She would willingly have offered herself as teacher in some of the academies of the city, being well qualified for such a situation; but she knew Harry's mind would be unfitted for study to see her occupying such a place. She proposed herself to some of the principal weeklies as a correspondent; but, failing to procure an engagement, she finally concluded she would recall some of the Moorish traditions with which she had been so much interested whilst in Spain, blend them with a description of that country and its court, and thus weave a pleasant story, which some publisher might buy.

She was almost afraid to touch a subject upon which Washington Irving had written; "yet," thought she, whilst debating upon it in her own mind, "why not make the attempt? The minds of men and women are so differently constructed, I may have observed what did not attract his attention. I must do something; and, being thus occupied, if it bring no other recompense, I will have no time for anxious thought."

It was a striking trait of Hope's character, when she made up her mind to any thing, there was no vacillation, but she went

steadily and perseveringly to work. Thus, when she determined to write a book, day after day, when Minnie and Fanny Allison had completed their lessons, she was at her desk writing. None knew—not even Harry—that she was thus engaged. Her two pupils received more of her attention than she had given them before her brother's removal from office. Now that she was instructing them as compensation for her board, she added composition to their lessons in music and French. Mrs. Wilde saw that much of her time was occupied in writing, but supposed she was correcting the compositions of her pupils, or was writing something of her own to give them an idea of a correct style. Her reason for not letting Harry into the secret of her undertaking was, that should she be unsuccessful he need not share her disappointment.

Thus she wrought daily, often weary in both mind and body; but she never faltered. Sometimes the overtasked brain must have a respite from labor. At those times she would seat herself beside the window, take her guitar, and give expression to any fancy that came into her mind. Those fancies usually went back to the scenes of her childhood and the home where those happy days were spent.

Months have flown by since Harry's removal from office, and the story Hope has been weaving is almost completed. It is April, and the weather during the day has been alternately sunshine and shower; but, as evening came on, a light breeze sprang up, drifting the clouds away, leaving the atmosphere pure and the sky of that azure hue which is so pleasant to the eye.

Hope had worked steadily all day. But now, with a weary look, she laid down her pen and closed her writing-desk. She took her accustomed seat by the window and looked dreamily out; yet her eye noted not the objects upon which she seemed to gaze. The rays of the setting sun fell upon window-pane and waving bough. The breeze that had swept away the clouds was playing among the branches of the beautiful maple that shaded her window, making a soft rustling among its young leaves. The scene was one to charm a lover of nature; but her memory was busied with a fairer, as is indicated by the song which she

poured forth on the evening breeze, whilst she touched her guitar as an accompaniment to her voice:—

"I wonder what the elms are saying,
Down in the meadow, by the brook,
And if the minnows 'neath them playing
Still wear the same attractive look
They wore when I in happy childhood
Oft sat beneath the elm-tree's shade,
To hear its whispers of the wildwood
And watch the minnows as they play'd.

"The wild-rose, too,—is it still growing,
Its branches clinging to the wall,
In June its bright red blossoms blowing,
Its green leaves fading in the fall?
And is the morning-glory creeping
To spread its shade o'er summer-bowers?
The willow-boughs,—are they still weeping
In contrast with the gay spring-flowers?

"The mignonette, call'd Frenchman's darling,—
Doth it still yearly ripe seed shed,
Where, not pick'd up by wren nor starling,
It grows again in last year's bed?
The four-o'clocks, so brightly blooming
When day is in a deep decline
And darkness on the earth is coming,—
Do they still woo the stars to shine?

"But I must cease this idle dreaming
Of that dear home I loved so well:
For me no more its dews are gleaming
On flowery mead, in mossy dell.
Now I must turn me to those pages
O'er which I've bent with weary thought
To weave a tale of bygone ages,
Nor call one more Forget-me-not."

"Ah me!" said Hope, with a sigh, as she placed the guitar in its case, "all that remains to me of that dear home is its bright memories. Yet I should be thankful that I have these. In fancy I visit all the dear familiar places, and my spirit is refreshed and strengthened and I turn again to my labors with renewed energy. Yes; and many a bright thought inwoven in

the story which is the result of this labor is gathered from those memories.

"Now that my task is almost done, the question is, Will it be a success? I will not strive to divine the future, but finish my work. Those passages of Scripture I have so often quoted to Harry I must now appropriate to myself; for truly 'sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.' It may be, by the time my work is completed, the mode of disposing of it will present itself to my mind."

The supper-bell interrupted her self-communings; and when she returned from supper she resumed her writing. So much interested was she in the final disposition of the characters that her fancy had evoked, but which were to her as real personages, she ceased to remember Harry was absent from the supper-table till it was recalled by hearing his voice in the hall. In a moment her door was opened by him.

"Congratulate me!" burst from his lips, ere she had time to ask what detained him from the supper-table.

"Congratulate you! And why? Has some rich old bachelor made you his heir?" asked she, demurely.

"No: better than that."

"I cannot conceive any thing better than that."

"Why, I had a law-case to-day. It was before a magistrate in Georgetown. I made a telling speech, gained my client's cause, and here I am to tell you all about it."

"Then you think you made a hit?"

"Indeed, I did. I took them by surprise. When I entered the magistrate's office and they saw how young I looked, the opposing counsel thought he could walk over me roughshod, and my client wilted right down. I sat there quiet as a mouse, till I saw it was the proper time to put in my oar: then I laid down the law in a manner that made the other side wilt. Didn't you notice I was not at supper?"

"I did, and wondered what kept you away."

"Well, you see, after the trial was over, everybody crowded round me, shaking hands and congratulating me on making such a splendid speech. Then my client insisted upon my taking

supper with him. I accepted his invitation; and that was what detained me. I tell you, Hope, I am bound to succeed. Isn't it nice that I gained my first case?"

"Yes, I am very glad, because, had you failed, you would have been as depressed as you are now elated."

"Let me see: this is April. Just as soon as the weather is warm enough for us to go North, we must be off. Charlie Grant says he will lend me money, and wait for his pay till I make it by my practice. You know he is so rich he can do it just as well as not. He got me this case to-day. He has great faith in me."

"Charlie is a true friend; and, if we can do no better, you may accept his kind offer."

"Of course we cannot do any better. True, I made five dollars to-day; but I may not make another fee in a month."

"You made so favorable an impression on your first appearance, I supposed you would be kept busy every day in the week."

"Now you are making fun of me. But I did make a good speech."

"I do not doubt it, Harry. And I believe you would succeed, but you are too liable to be elated or depressed without sufficient cause for either."

Hope often found it necessary to point out to her brother this trait in his character. She had confidence that he would succeed in life. He had industry as well as talent; and it was an axiom of hers that whatever an individual conceived himself equal to could be accomplished by him if pursued with untiring industry. She knew Harry had placed his aims high, and she wished him to understand he must not let disappointment or failure in one instance discourage him.

After he had thrown off the exuberance of spirits engendered by gaining his first case by talking to Hope, he retired to his own room, and she continued her writing. Often she wrote till twelve and one o'clock. She could better collect her thoughts, and her imagination was more vivid, after the inmates of the house had retired to rest and there was perfect quiet.

Upon looking over what she had written within the last few

days, she perceived it would require but two or three more chapters to complete her task. One of them was written ere she slept, and all were finished before the close of the week.

"Now," said she, as she laid down her pen after writing the last word, "I must write to a publisher and offer my handiwork for sale. That to me is a much harder task than weaving together these fancies. But for Harry's sake I must do it. They can but reject it; and they may give me something. I can but try them. Should I receive but a small sum in comparison with the labor and thought I have bestowed upon this romance, I will be content. However, I will take a few days' rest before I write to a publisher."

CHAPTER XLIII.

MEETING AN OLD FRIEND.

"God bless you, child! how do you do?" was the salutation addressed to Hope Marshall by a noble-looking, gray-haired old gentleman whom she met on Pennsylvania Avenue the day after she had completed her novel.

"Why, Mr. Brandon!" was her surprised and delighted reply: "I would rather see you than any other person in this wide world."

"Quite a compliment, truly, to come from the lips of a pretty young girl like you to an old man like me."

"You were my father's most valued friend."

"Ah, that I was, child. How is your brother?"

"Very well. But how long have you been in the city?"

"I arrived this morning, and just came out to hunt you up. Fortune favored me by bringing you in my way."

"Well, as you were coming to hunt me, you must now accompany me home. And, should you remain any length of time in the city, you cannot locate yourself more pleasantly than with Mrs. Wilde, the lady with whom I am boarding."

"I shall stop but one week: yet, if the good lady can let me have a room, I will stop with her, for the sake of being with the children of my old friend when I have a leisure moment."

"We appreciate your kind remembrance. It is but few of those whom he thought his friends that remember his children."

"The way of the world, child,—the way of the world. When he was living, had political influence, was rich and ready to lend a helping hand to all who applied to him, friends were plenty as blackberries in July. But when he died, and it was thought

his children might need offices of friendship, these summer friends fell away like autumn leaves before a wintry blast."

They continued in converse like this till they reached Mrs. Wilde's. Hope conducted him to the parlor, then brought that lady and introduced her to him. When he had made an arrangement to board with her, he rose, saying he would go to the hotel for his trunk. Hope insisted upon saving him that trouble by sending Harry to attend to it as soon as he came in.

"I will be gone but a few minutes," said he, as she continued to urge him not to go. "I must settle my bill; and, whilst there, I can attend to my trunk."

After his return from the hotel, Hope invited him into her own room, as she wished to hear all the news from her old home. He told her of the marriage of many of her old schoolmates,—his own daughters among the rest.

"And why," said he, after answering her inquiries, "are you not married?"

"I have had no time to think of committing such a folly."

"Yet we heard, just before Alvord sailed for Europe the last time, that he and you were about to make a match."

"But you gave it no credence? You could not, knowing Alvord as you did."

"I could scarcely believe you had forgotten his unworthiness. But the news came so direct. Mollie Bringham told it, representing she had it from one of the parties. So, knowing a fine face and elegant manners play the deuce with young girls, I thought it might be true."

"What could have induced her to tell such a thing?"

"I have no doubt but Alvord told her you were to be married. You see, he got money enough by his first marriage, and he thought he could gratify his fancy in a second. And he did fancy you, there is no doubt. But, tell me, have you never had a love-dream?"

The bright blood rose to her cheek as she replied,—

"It has occupied all my thoughts to attend to Harry and Maggie. They fill the place in my heart that other girls give to lovers."

"It may be so; it may be so. I will not question your veracity. So sweet a face as yours must have attracted many wooers. You have grown very like what your mother was at your age."

"Do you think I look so like her?"

"Her very picture."

"Could I only be like her in character, I would be content."

"She was a noble woman. Does Harry, now that he is grown, resemble your father?"

"In many respects."

"I suppose he will soon be home. It is near three o'clock; and I believe the clerks leave the Departments at three."

"He is not in office."

"Not in office!" repeated the old man, with a look of surprise.

"Why, when Sprott came to Lexington to settle the business of your father's estate, he told Bringham had got him a clerkship."

"He then had a clerkship; but Mr. Bringham did not get it for him."

"The political knave! He represented to your father's old friends in Kentucky that you were well provided for by Harry's holding a good office through his influence."

"Governor Prescott got the situation for Harry, which he held till the incoming of the present administration. He was then removed; and, as Governor Prescott's term in the Senate had expired, we had no one to take an interest in his behalf; and you are so old a politician that you know there is no chance of getting any thing here in Washington except by those who can have some strong political influence exerted in their favor."

"Bringham has influence with the present administration. Could he not have him reinstated?"

"We did not ask him. The more unfortunate we are the greater our pride. And, as Mr. Bringham and his family seem to have forgotten our existence, we could not humiliate ourselves so much as to ask a favor of him."

"The consummate scoundrel! Why, he represented to us—that is, your father's old friends—that he interested himself for your welfare as if you were his own children. Last winter, when the

Senatorial election came on, many of those who had suspected the sincerity of Bringham's fidelity to your father felt like dropping him and sending a new man in his place; and it was only by his making them believe he was so true a friend of the children of their old friend Charlie Marshall that he secured their support."

"I do not suppose he has troubled himself to inquire whether we were living or dead for the last twelve months."

"I said, at the time, ten chances to one there was not one word of truth in all he said. I know the trickster."

"He certainly has never taken any interest in us since he recommended Mr. Sprott to us to settle our business soon after papa died. I thought that very kind, as we were unacquainted with business and in deep trouble."

"Depend upon it, he had some object to accomplish by it. Yes, I know the trickster. Yet he is so cunning, I cannot convince our party at home of his true character. But I am surprised to hear Harry is not in office. How long since he was removed?"

"It will be a year the first of next month."

"What has he been doing the past year?"

"Reading law"

"Will he practise in this city?"

"No: we will go West in the course of a month or six weeks, if we can get money enough to take us there. And now, Mr. Brandon, I want to ask a favor of you."

"Well, child, I will assist you to the extent of my power. It is not much I can do: yet I will share the last cent I have with the children of Charlie Marshall. Many's the lift he has given me when I should have stuck in the mire of unpaid bills but for his helping hand."

"It is not money I ask. Whilst Harry has been studying law, I have written a novel. It is just finished; and the favor I wish you to do for me is to see if it can be sold to some publisher. The offering of it for sale would be a harder task for me than the writing of the book."

"And it will be a pleasure to me. I am going to New York before I return home: so just give me your manuscript, and I will

attend to it personally, as I am well acquainted with several publishers in that city."

"Oh, thank you for your kindness. You have taken such a weight from my heart!"

"You want to sell the copyright?"

"Yes."

"How much do you ask?"

"I do not know what value to put upon it. I have bestowed much labor and thought on it, and, if it be not taxing you too much, I would like to have you read it and see if it has any merit."

"No tax at all. I will take it to my room and look over it at once."

"No person—not even Harry—knows I have written it; and I would like you to keep my secret, Mr. Brandon."

"Certainly, child, if you desire it. What name have you given this creation of your brain?"

"I call it 'A Tradition of Spain.' But if, when you have read it, you think it has sufficient merit to secure a publisher, you can, in offering it, give him the privilege of naming it. I have been told publishers like to select a name themselves for the books they publish. And, as I do not wish to be known as an author, you may select some name to be appended as the writer."

"Very well. Now give it to me, and I will be off to the perusal of it. I am tired with travelling: so I shall not go out into the city till to-morrow; and it will be a nice recreation for me this afternoon and evening."

Hope gave the old gentleman her manuscript, and he was soon in his own room, deeply interested in its pages. To tell the truth, Mr. Brandon, though an old man and a thorough politician, relished a novel very much; and he was perfectly fascinated with the creations of Hope's fancy. So much interested was he that he not only read that evening till late, but he did not go into the city next day till he had finished its perusal. When he got through with it, he expressed himself delighted.

"Do you think I might venture to ask a hundred dollars for it?" said Hope.

"A hundred dollars, indeed! I will ask five hundred, and get it, too."

"You may ask that amount, but I will not allow myself to think you will get the half of it."

"We will see. I should not be surprised if it created quite a sensation in the literary world. But we will leave the novel and talk of you and Harry. You say you intend going West soon."

"Yes."

"Then why not go home with me and stop a while, to make a visit among your friends? You will find you are kindly remembered there. It is a different atmosphere. You will be made welcome in many a household."

"Then you intend returning to this city after going to New York?"

"I will do so if you promise to go home with me."

"Sell my manuscript for money enough to defray our travelling-expenses, and we will go."

"I will guarantee that amount, and more too. So you can just get every thing in readiness for travelling whilst I am gone, as I do not care about making any stay when I return."

"But it will be such a disappointment should we do so and then not be able to go. You may fail in getting a purchaser for my wares."

"I am an old editor, and consider myself a pretty good judge of these matters. So have no fears, but do as I bid you."

We will not attempt to describe the joy and encouragement Hope derived from the words of her old friend. His presence and kind interest were like a ray of sunlight in a wilderness of gloom. During the week he remained, all his time, when not occupied with the business which had brought him to Washington, was devoted to Hope and her brother. He encouraged Harry to pour into his ear all his hopes and aspirations for the future; and he made that ardent young gentleman most happy by assuring him he had no doubt that he would ultimately accomplish all he proposed. To Hope, when he bade her good-by, he said,—

"Go to work and pack every thing for travelling: you will hear a favorable report from me in a few days."

CHAPTER XLIV.

HOPE FINDS THE LETTERS BRINGHAM SOUGHT.

"HARRY," said Hope, placing in her brother's hand a small package of papers, "I want you to read this and give me your opinion of the contents."

"What! is it another law-case?"

"Oh, no: it is some letters of papa's. I found them in one of his coat-pockets to-day as I was overlooking his clothes preparatory to packing."

"Have you read them?"

"I have, and was much surprised at the contents."

"To what do they refer?"

"Read them."

"Miss Hope," said Minta, poking her head into the door just at this moment, "won't you jis' come to Misses Wilde's room one minnit? She wants to ax you 'bout Miss Fannie's dress what the mantermaker sent home jis' now. She thinks it's too low in the neck, and *she* wants to send it back to have it made so it will kiver up her neck and shoulders more. You know Miss Fannie has powerful purty neck and shoulders: so *she* 'sists the dress is just right. So Misses Wilde she wants your 'pinion on it afore the mantermaker's gal goes away."

Minta's message took Hope from the room, and Harry seated himself to read the letters. The first he took up was from his father to the Hon. Jerry Bringham, written during the last Presidential canvass previous to his father's death. It was dated August 6, 18—. It ran as follows:—

"DEAR BRINGHAM:—

"We are having a hotly-contested canvass. I wish you could be home to help us; for I am almost worn out. I often make two

speeches a day. Our opponents are sanguine of success. They spend money freely; and we, of course, must do the same.

"At this time we are in great need of funds. We must have, at the least calculation, an additional fifteen thousand dollars before the close of the present month. I sent out a paper for the purpose of raising it among our friends, this morning. I headed the list with a hundred dollars; and I would have made it a thousand, but my expenses during my embassy to Spain so far exceeded my salary that I find myself low of funds. I have already expended, since the commencement of the campaign, for travelling-expenses and other electioneering-purposes, over twelve hundred dollars of my own money.

"Now, although your Senatorial duties detain you at Washington, can you not assist us with money?—not from your own purse alone, but call upon the politicians from some of those States where the Democratic majorities are so large that it does not require the expending of money to secure the success of our candidate.

"It is said that the Whig central committee of this State has received over a hundred thousand dollars from the city of New York alone. You know Henry Clay is regarded by his friends in that city as almost a demi-god: hence the liberal donations to his party. Do what you can for us, and let me hear from you immediately.

Yours, with much haste,

"CHARLES MARSHALL."

The next one Harry read was a reply to the one we have just given. It was not from the Hon. Jerry Bringham himself, but from Sprott, his man-of-all-work. We will lay it before our readers also.

"TO MR. CHARLES MARSHALL.

"HONORED SIR:—In compliance with the request of the Hon. Jerry Bringham, I answer the letter received from you a day or two since. His public duties occupy his time so entirely, he has not time to write himself; and, as you requested an immediate answer, he commissioned me to do so for him.

"He is exceedingly anxious to be with you, but fears Congress will not adjourn before September. He further desired me to say he, upon the receipt of your letter, at once called upon many of the prominent politicians of such States as could best render assistance, but could get no aid from them. The universal reply to his petition was, 'Every State ought to furnish its own means.'

"He then called upon the chiefs of the different bureaus in the Executive Departments, but learned the clerks had been already taxed just as heavily as they could bear for the purpose of raising money to send to Pennsylvania. It will require an immense amount of money to secure that State; and, you know, it has grown to be almost a tradition with politicians that as the Old Keystone goes so goes the Union: consequently, the securing of that State is considered of the first importance. Thus, you see, it is impossible to do any thing for Kentucky here.

"He sends from his own purse one hundred dollars, and advises, as the money must be had before the end of the month, that, after raising all you can by subscription, you borrow the balance from bank. The plan he proposes is this:—Let the drawer of the note for the amount needed be a substantial name,—one that will command any amount of cash,—and let it be endorsed by two others standing equally fair, and one of the Frankfort banks will discount it. Get twelve months' time. There is no doubt but we can raise the money to pay it long before it becomes due; yet he says it is best to give ourselves plenty of time. He says it should be kept a secret from all save a few of the party-leaders that we are under the necessity of raising money by this mode, because it might injure our cause should it leak out that we are so hard pressed for means to carry on the campaign.

"He hopes to be home in September and do good service from that time till the day of the election. In the mean time, he sends his best regards to you and those of the party who are battling for the good cause.

"Yours, with profound respect,

"RICHARD SPROTT.

"P.S.—Mr. Bringham wishes you to let him hear how you succeed in raising the money needed."

Harry took up the third letter and read:—

"DEAR BRINGHAM:—We acted upon your admirable advice with regard to getting money. We raised five thousand by subscription, and the remaining ten we borrowed. These Whigs have greatly the advantage of us in raising money, their party being composed of the rich and aristocratic portion of our citizens. However, we had no trouble in borrowing. I drew the note, and it was endorsed by Augerman and Weston. All our names being, to use the phraseology of a farmer, considered 'good as old wheat,' the money was forthcoming at once; and we are now going bravely on. We got the accommodation from the bank you mentioned, and we depend on you to assist us in raising the money to pay it before it becomes due. We acted upon your suggestion of giving ourselves plenty of time.

"You mentioned in your letter that the clerks of the Departments were taxed. I do not think that right; for I do not see how they can live comfortably on the salary they receive, without contributing a portion of it for electioneering-purposes. I think the active politicians should pay the piper. However, I have no time to discuss this question. Let me hear from you soon.

"Your true friend,
"CHARLES MARSHALL."

The reply to this was from Sprott, and contained but a few lines:—

"HONORED SIR:—I again, at the request of the Hon. Jerry Bringham, answer your letter received within the last hour. He begs to assure you he is much gratified that you obtained the money without difficulty. We will assist in raising it as you desire before it becomes due. We will be among you soon, and go energetically to work in the good old cause of Democracy.

"Yours, with profound respect,
"RICHARD SPROTT."

When Hope returned, she found Harry walking impatiently about the room, with a look of great indignation upon his countenance.

"So we were swindled out of our home, it seems?" exclaimed he, as Hope entered.

"But it is all according to law, and we can but submit to it. Papa's note was in bank, and his property was liable for the debt. Is it not so?"

"That is so, Hope; and we have no redress. But honor required of Mr. Bringham and those other leading Democrats, who knew the money was procured for the party, that they should pay their proportion at least."

"But it is always the case where several are responsible, each waits for the other to go forward, and the consequence is, nothing is done."

"And in this case the consequence is, we lost our dear old home. Too bad! too bad!"

"Bad enough. I am glad I found these letters. It is relief to me to know that debt of ten thousand dollars was not incurred for us. I have, since I knew of its existence, reproached myself for the extravagant use of money at the time papa was under the necessity of borrowing to supply me."

"I only wish he had never got it. I am sorry the bank did not refuse to lend it."

"It is no use to indulge in useless regret for what we cannot remedy. So let us take it patiently."

"I am not sufficiently meek-tempered to bear injustice patiently, nor will I try to do so. It is not in human nature to do it."

"True: it is not in human nature to do so; but, if you will reflect a moment, reason will teach patience. Every misfortune in life is made tenfold more grievous by an impatient spirit. Any evil that may befall us, if it can be remedied, let us go to work and remedy it, instead of fuming and fretting over it; but, if it be something for which there is no remedy, what is the use of chafing our spirit about it?"

"It is easy enough to talk, but not so easy to take things indif-

ferently. I bet, notwithstanding all your fine speeches, if you would own up, you felt worried when you first read these letters."

"Of course I did; but a few moments' reflection brought a better state of mind, and I want to give you the benefit of that reflection. We are in no worse condition than we were before we possessed the knowledge derived from these letters; and why should we be less content?"

"I cannot bring myself to bear tamely such an act of injustice."

"Is there any way in which you can have justice done?"

"No: I suppose not."

"Then let us dismiss all thought of the subject from our minds."

"Master Harry, come down to the door. Mr. Charlie Grant is dar in hes buggy, and he sont me for you to come to him."

"Tell him I'll be there in a minute, Aunt Minta. These confounded letters made me forget I had promised to go with him to Georgetown this afternoon."

By the time the message was delivered, Harry was at the door; and when he returned from his ride all his impatience of spirit was gone. The ride in the fresh air had smoothed away the asperity of his temper.

CHAPTER XLV.

THE WHEEL OF FORTUNE TAKING AN UPWARD TURN.

"HERE is a letter for you postmarked New York," said Harry, handing the letter to his sister.

"From Mr. Brandon, I suppose," remarked she, as she broke the seal.

"Why, what can the old gentleman have to communicate that is of so much importance that he must write to you, when he expects to be back in a few days?"

"See," said Hope, placing in his hand the short note as soon as she had glanced over its contents. A puzzled look came over his face as he read:—

"MY DEAR YOUNG FRIEND:—

"I write you a line for the purpose of enclosing a draft, the amount I received for your manuscript. You now have no excuse for not accompanying me home. I shall be back to Washington in six days. Be in readiness by the time I come.

"Your true friend,

"J. BRANDON."

"What does he mean?" asked Harry, looking up to his sister when he had finished reading. "I confess, I comprehend not the tenor of this note."

"I will enlighten you. Whilst you were weighing down your mind with the dry details of law, I was airing my imagination in the bright regions of fancy; or, to speak in plain language, I was writing a novel, for which, if I may believe the evidence of my senses, I have received a thousand dollars."

As Hope ceased speaking, she handed her brother the draft she had taken from the letter. He looked at it a moment and then said,—

"Yes, it is for a thousand dollars; but I, like you, can scarcely credit my own eyesight. See, it is drawn by one of the wealthiest and best publishers in New York. Hurrah for us! A'n't we rich?"

"We are independent. We can now go to our new home without being indebted to any friend for the means to take us there."

"But why did you not tell me you were writing a novel?"

"I feared I might not get any thing for my labor, and I did not want you to be disappointed by my failure. My good fortune astonishes me; but I presume it is the friendship the publisher entertains for Mr. Brandon that induced him to buy my manuscript and pay such an extravagant price."

"Let our luck come from what cause it may, I feel that our success is now certain. You do not know how rich I feel."

"Yet six years ago you would have laughed at the idea of any one feeling rich who was only the possessor of one thousand dollars."

"I did not know the value of money then. I feel richer now with one thousand than I should have done then with fifty."

The assertion may seem paradoxical; but, in my opinion, it is a truth that the man who is possessor of a thousand dollars earned by his own effort is richer than he who has fifty thousand by inheritance. I reason thus: The effort and self-denial necessarily practised in earning the thousand dollars develop those qualities which give that self-reliance and independence of character that is true wealth. But it is not our intention to give a disquisition upon this subject. So we will return to the good fortune of Hope, and give our readers an idea of the cause which brought it about.

It was the first care of Mr. Brandon, when he arrived at New York, to call upon a publisher whom he had long known, to ascertain what he could do for Hope. After the first greetings were over and mutual inquiries as to how the world had gone

with each since their last meeting answered, Mr. Brandon introduced the subject for which he had called in this manner:—

"Now, Whippleton," said he, "I have some business in your line to which I want to call your attention."

"Any thing I can do for you will be done with pleasure."

"So I thought when I promised to a young friend of mine I would dispose of the manuscript pages of a novel."

"Is it a first production?"

"Yes."

"Then I will put it into the hands of our reader; and if he approves it I will purchase it certainly."

"You need not give it into the hands of your reader. I have examined it; and it is excellently written. I suppose you can depend upon my judgment; for I have had experience enough."

"Well, I'll take it on your recommendation. How much do you ask for it?"

"Five hundred dollars."

"A large price for a young writer's first attempt."

"Nevertheless, I must have it. I promised I would get that amount, and you must give it. However, should you fail to make that much out of it when published, call on me, and I will make up any loss you may sustain."

"Your young friend is not wanting in self-appreciation to ask that amount for a first production."

"Oh, she does not ask it. On the contrary, when I told her I would get that amount, she said she did not believe I would get the half of it."

"So it is from the pen of a lady?"

"Yes."

"One of your own daughters, who inherits her talents from you, I suppose."

"No. It is from the pen of one who, if justice had been done, would not be driven to the necessity of earning her own support."

"Ah! who?"

"The lady does not want her name known to the public; but I can tell you with safety. You publishers, like us editors, are

used to keeping secrets. It is the work of Hope Marshall, daughter of my old friend Charlie Marshall."

"Him that married Maggie Gray?"

"Yes. Did you know him?"

"I should think I did. He was the best friend I ever had. It cannot be possible his daughter is under the necessity of earning her own support?"

"It is truly so."

"I will give you a thousand dollars for her manuscript; and, if I do not make a cent out of it, it matters not. Charlie and I were college friends. We at that time were both poor, but ambitious of getting a good education. We struggled through many difficulties, and graduated at the same time. Soon after we had completed our education and returned home,—we were neighbors then,—he, to the surprise of all, himself as well as the balance of us, found himself the accepted lover of the only child of rich old Harry Gray. His marriage made him a wealthy man, but not, as is too often the case, forgetful of old friends; for he loaned me fifteen hundred dollars for the purpose of starting a political paper in Frankfort. He let me have the use of that money five years without charging one cent of interest. I may truly say he laid the foundation of my success in life; and I am more than glad to have the opportunity of repaying to his child the kindness I received from him."

"Yes, yes: he was liberal as a prince; and for many a one besides yourself he laid the foundation of their success; but you are the only one whom I have met that cares to remember it."

"When I forget the kindness of such a friend, may God forget to prosper me! No, no, Brandon: such ingratitude is foreign to my nature."

The draft for the thousand dollars was given at once; and, ere the day closed, it was despatched to Hope enclosed in the letter just received.

At the time designated in the letter, Mr. Brandon arrived in Washington. Hope's first act when he came into her room was to thank him for his kindness in disposing of her novel; the next,

to place in his hands the letters she had found during his absence, with a request that he should read them.

"Are you not surprised at the contents?" asked she, when he handed the letters back to her after reading them.

"Not so much as you were, I presume; for I knew something of them."

"And our home was sacrificed to pay a debt contracted for a political party. Do you think that right?"

"No, child, I do not; and so I told the leaders of our party when the administrator came on to sell your home. I would gladly have paid a portion of that debt had I been able. But you know how it is. An editor during a canvass is expected to give the labor of his brains and the use of his columns for the benefit of the party to which he belongs, without receiving one cent in return: consequently, they are not usually very rich. I am now an old, gray-headed man, have worked hard for my party ever since I became an editor; but as to the honors and profits of success, my share has been small. In truth, in many instances, politicians whom I have written into greatness have, when they felt assured of their positions, been the first to abuse and withdraw their patronage from my paper should I dare to have an opinion that did not agree with theirs. And this very Bringham is one of that class."

"Did you notice that paragraph in papa's letter that speaks about taxing the clerks of the Executive Departments?" asked Harry.

"Yes."

"I presume he little thought when he wrote that paragraph that I would one day be a clerk subject to that tax. However, I gave my proportion very willingly. Yet there are some cases, when men have families, where it comes real hard on them to pay. During last canvass there was one in our office I felt real sorry for. When he received his month's salary and it was intimated to him that he was expected to give ten dollars of it for the use of the party, he said to me, 'I suppose I will have to give it; but indeed I have not enough without that to pay the board and other monthly bills for my family. Still, should

I refuse to give this ten, I may lose my situation; and that I cannot risk."

"I agree with the opinion expressed by your father, that it is wrong, all wrong, this taxing of the clerks."

"So say I, too. Let those who wish to do so give; but this making of a requisition on them is another thing. And, now that I am going to be an active politician, I will go for abandoning the custom."

"So, so! you expect to step pretty high upon the political ladder, I should guess from that remark."

"If I do not, it will not be for want of trying. I love the excitement of politics. That is the reason I am so anxious to go West."

"By-the-way, when can you start?"

"We are ready to go whenever you desire," answered Hope.

"Then let it be to-morrow. And, if you have any farewell visits to make, you can make them to-day, whilst I attend to a little business that is yet unfinished."

She had no farewell visits to make, save to Maggie and her teachers. It was a hard trial to leave Maggie; but she would not subject her to the trials and hardships of a new and unsettled country. Maggie, in the society of her teachers and school-mates, would soon become reconciled to the separation, and her own feelings were not to be considered where Maggie's comfort was concerned.

Aunt Minta, who at first insisted she would not stay and let Miss Hope—poor child!—go into that wild out-of-the-way place all alone by herself, was prevailed on to stay to take care of Maggie in case she should get sick. This was the only argument she would listen to. She finally consented to remain; but it was with the understanding that, should sickness or trouble overtake Miss Hope, she was to be sent for.

Mrs. Wilde and her grand-daughters parted from Hope and her brother with much regret. Aunt Minta was vociferous in her grief, declaring "it was like tearing the heart out of her bosom to see her children—poor, innocent lambs!—go from her protecting care; but if it wur de heavenly Master's will,—and Miss Hope

had 'vinced her it wur his will,—why, it wur her duty, as a Christian disciple, to bore it with firmness."

When the last adieus were made, and Harry was seated in the cars waiting for them to start, he turned to Mr. Brandon, and remarked,—

"They say the wheel of fortune is always turning: so I guess we were at the bottom, and now it is on the go-up with us, or Hope would not have got that thousand dollars which enables us to go to our new home."

"Nonsense about the wheel of fortune! I guess you would have been a long time before the wheel of fortune would have turned you any thing, if Hope had not gone to work, like a noble-hearted, brave-minded girl that she is, and made it turn. Now, Harry, that you are just starting out to see what Fate has in store for you, let me impress this sentiment of the poet on your mind:—

'God helps them who help themselves.'"

CHAPTER XLVI.

A VISIT TO THE OLD HOMESTEAD.

At an early hour the morning after their arrival in Lexington, Hope and Harry were standing on the portico of Mr. Brandon's residence. They had been looking upon the scene before them in silence, which was interrupted by Hope's remarking,—

"It is with a sad pleasure I look again upon this city, where so many happy days of my childhood were spent."

"It has changed but little during our absence,—far less than we," replied her brother.

"You say truly, far less than we! Then we were children, so far as the experience of life was concerned. But we have learned its lessons rapidly since."

"How familiar all the principal houses look!"

"Yes; and to me none more so than Barry's old academy, where so many of my childish pranks were played. What a madcap I was! How fortunate for the young that the future is veiled from their sight! Had I then dreamed what was before me, it would have driven all thought of gayety from my heart."

"Well, sis, we have gone through our shadow: we will now have sunshine."

"So I trust; but still let us expect a mingling of sunshine and shadow."

"How long do you think of stopping here?"

"Not long."

"I am all impatience to get to my new home."

"Set your own time for leaving."

"I do not wish to hurry you, but give you as long a time you wish for the purpose of visiting all your old friends."

"Should our changed fortune have the same effect here that it did in Washington, there will be but few friends to visit us.

We must visit our old home, although it belongs to an entire stranger."

"What did Mr. Brandon say was the name of the present owner?"

"Mr. Ford; and he speaks of him as an amiable and noble man."

"And the possessor of immense wealth?"

"Yes."

"It will be a sad trial to look upon all the old haunts we visited so often with our dear mother, and remember they are in the hands of a stranger."

"Yet it will be more painful to go away without seeing them. We may never visit Lexington again; and my heart yearns to look again on the home of my happy childhood."

"I do wish it was owned by some one we knew."

The appearance of a servant, who announced that breakfast was waiting, put a stop to the conversation.

"You see, the two old folks are all that remain of our once large family," said Mr. Brandon to Hope, when she and Harry entered.

"Time has brought much change to you, as well as to us."

"Yes: the girls are all married; the boys, some have gone abroad, and some are sleeping in the churchyard. Alice, whose home is on the next square, would have been here to welcome you; but she is in the country, spending some time with Mrs. Ford. However, she will be here during the day. I have sent her a message, telling her you are here; and it will not be long after she gets the message till you see her."

"And how glad I shall be to see her dear face again!"

Soon after the breakfast was partaken of, Harry accompanied Mr. Brandon to his office, leaving Hope and Mrs. Brandon to talk of the friends of Hope's girlhood. So occupied were they that they heard not a carriage that drove to the door, and the first intimation they had of it was the voice of Alice, inquiring,—

"Where will I find her?"

Hope started to her feet at the sound of the well-remembered voice, and the next moment she was clasped in the arms of her

friend, who kissed her cheek, brow, and lips ere she presented the lady who accompanied her. The lady, when presented, grasped Hope's hand with the cordiality of an old friend, saying, as she did so,—

"I presume, Miss Marshall, you have forgotten me; but I remember you in my prayers, daily."

"I deem it a great favor to be remembered in your prayers; but I do not recollect having ever met you, Mrs. Ford."

"Not as Mrs. Ford. But have you forgotten the fancy-ball at Colonel Anderson's, where you assumed the character of a sibyl and read the fortunes of all who presented themselves, and, among others, that of Cora Appleton?"

"I remember well the proud, cold, and exquisitely beautiful face of Cora Appleton; and, now that I observe closely, I perceive yours is the same face; but the expression is so changed I should never have recognised you as the same person."

"And to you I am indebted for that happy change."

"To me! In the name of all that is mysterious, how do you make that out?"

"Never mind now. I came to take you and your brother home with me; and when we get there I will tell you all about it."

"I thank you for your kind invitation, but I feel that I am too much of a stranger to accept it."

"But you are not a stranger to my home. It is your own beautiful Elm-Wood; and, whilst you stay, you must remain with me and enjoy its beauty. Besides, your friend Alice Edgerton is spending some time with me, and, if you desire the pleasure of her society, you will be obliged to become my guest."

"Yes, yes, Hope, you must come with us. My baby has been very ill, and the physician prescribed country-air as the only thing that will benefit him. So, you see, I am obliged to stay."

"Dear Mrs. Ford, I cannot do otherwise than accept your kindly-proffered hospitality."

"Nor did we intend you should. Let the servant bring your bonnet and mantle. I want to bear you away before any of your

old friends call to detain you. I will send the carriage back for your brother and Mr. and Mrs. Brandon, who must come and dine with us to-day. I presume the trunks are not yet unpacked, and I can send a servant for them."

Hope was hurried into the carriage by Mrs. Ford, and in a few moments she was dashing off toward her old homestead. As she drove up the shaded avenue leading to the portico, her eye glanced over the grounds, and she perceived they were as beautifully kept as when her own mother was the presiding genius of that dear spot. She leaned her head out of the carriage-window, ostensibly for the purpose of gazing upon each well-remembered scene, but in reality to conceal the tears she could not repress.

The two friends, with that true delicacy which is innate in the generous heart, divined her feelings; and the merry conversation which had been kept up during their drive from the city was hushed when they came in the sight of the old homestead, and no word was spoken till the footman opened the carriage-door.

"Now, Miss Marshall, you must not feel as if you were in the home of a stranger," said Mrs. Ford, as she stepped from the carriage and extended her hand to assist her visitor to alight.

"I feel as if I had known you for years."

"That is just as it should be. Alice, you know the way to your own apartments, and I will show Miss Marshall to hers." And, throwing her arm around Hope's waist, with an affectionateness that touched her heart deeply, she conducted her up the broad stairway to her own old room. She seated her in an easy-chair, took off her bonnet and mantle, hung them in the wardrobe, and then retired, saying,—

"I know you have not yet recovered from the fatigue of your journey: so I command you to rest till I call you."

When the door closed upon the retiring figure of her hostess, Hope murmured,—

"Dear Mrs. Ford! How considerate, how kind, she is, to leave me thus alone, to commune with my own thoughts, the first

hour of my return to the home that sheltered my childhood! And the delicacy of manner, too, with which it was done, making it seem the most natural thing in the world that I should be thus left. How I thank her for divining so truly what my heart needed!"

True politeness is never obtrusive in its attention; and none knew better than Mrs. Ford how much the poor human heart needs solitude when stirred by deep emotion. So entirely was Hope occupied with memories of years ago that she noted not the lapse of time, till she was roused from her reverie by a gentle tap at the door, and, in answer to her "come in," Mrs. Ford again made her appearance.

"Are you now rested?" asked she of her guest.

"Perfectly so."

"Then I will send up your trunks and have them put in your dressing-room. But, before I leave you, let me introduce Netta, who is to be your own waiting-maid during your stay with us."

At the sound of the name, Hope glanced her eyes toward the door, where the servant was waiting, all impatience to approach, but restrained by her mistress from doing so till she was recognised.

"Netta?" said Hope, as her eye rested on the waiting-girl. "Can it be possible it is our own Netta, for whom I grieved so much because we were obliged to consent to her sale?"

"Yes, Miss Hope," said the girl, grasping the hand extended to her, and covering it with kisses. "'Deed 'tis your own Netta; and thar's jist no 'casion 't all to grieve 'bout me, 'case I'se got the bestest mistress what ever was, bress de Lord! Ole mistress herself couldn't be kinder nor Misses Ford is."

"I thought Mrs. Castleford bought you?"

"So she did. She was a good mistress, too,—not a bit of fault to find of her; but, you see, Rube an I wur kind o' homesick, and we allers had a hankerin' arter the ole place. So, when Misses Ford bought it, we axed Mr. Brandon to ax her to buy us; an so she did buy us,—God bress her all de days of her life an' take her straight up to glory when she die."

"Mrs. Ford, I do not know how to express my gratitude for your kindness to my unfortunate people."

"Do not attempt it. Had I done ten times as much, it would not repay the great kindness you once did me."

"Your words are inexplicable. I never did you a kindness."

"Inexplicable let them remain for the present. When Netta has attended to your toilette, she will show you into the drawing-room; and then I will unravel the mystery."

As Mrs. Ford ceased speaking, she imprinted a kiss upon Hope's cheek and left the room. She had just retired, when Rube came bustling in to see his young mistress, as he designated Hope. He, like Netta, was extravagant in praise of Mrs. Ford.

"Why, would you b'lieve, Miss Hope, she ha'n't never 'quired me to do de fust God's blessed turn sence she bought me, 'cept jist what I does of my own free will? To-be-shore, I tries to make myself useful, outen gratitude, 'case she brung me back to my ole home."

"And the master," interposed Netta, who seemed to think Rube was taking too much of Hope's attention, "is jist as good as the mistress."

"Oh, the master: yes; but he don't have much 'pinion only what the mistress has, 'case he thinks she jist the most perfectest piece of human flesh that ever was 'cr'ated on the face of the yearth. I ralely b'lieve he'd give her his eyes outen his head if she'd 'quire it."

"You jist shet up!—As if mistress would 'quire any thing so onnat'ral and cruel!"

"Sartin she wouldn't do it; but I jist said he would do it if she did 'quire sich a thing, to show Miss Hope how much store he sot by her."

"Well, I guess you better go 'long, and let Miss Hope be gittin' ready for dinner, or she'll be too late."

"Shore nuff, thar is master comin' now; and if thar a'n't young Master Harry with him, besides other company."

"What shall I take out of the trunk for you to wear?"

"Netta, I have learned to wait upon myself: so I will not trouble you to get me a dress from the trunk. I will get it

myself. I know just where to find it; and I am afraid I will keep them waiting."

"Plenty of time. I jist told that old blather-skite you'd be too late to git him off."

Harry, like Hope, was shown into his old apartment, with a request that he would make himself as perfectly at home as if he were in the house of a brother. And, in truth, although he had not known Mr. Ford more than an hour, he felt as if he had known him for years.

CHAPTER XLVII.

THE ROMANCE OF MRS. FORD'S LIFE.

WHEN Hope was shown into the drawing-room, she found Mr. Ford had joined his wife and her friend Alice. Mr. Brandon, his wife, and Harry, too, were there before her. Mrs. Ford met her at the door; and, as her husband came forward to welcome their guest, she presented her by saying,—

"My dear, the kind sibyl of whom you have so often heard me speak."

"Miss Marshall, I am most happy to meet you. Allow me to thank you for the happiness of a lifetime."

"Am I dreaming? Or have I been metamorphosed since I left Washington?" said Hope, casting a puzzled look on Mrs. Ford after having acknowledged the salutation of her husband.

"You are not dreaming, nor are you metamorphosed."

"Then you and your husband must be laboring under some strange mistake."

"No. Listen, and you will admit we are indebted to you for a lifetime of happiness."

At this moment dinner was announced, and Mr. Ford said,—

"Let us dine; and, whilst we sit at dessert, you can explain to Miss Marshall how it is we are indebted to her for our happiness."

As soon as dessert was placed upon the table, Mr. Brandon remarked,—

"Now, Mrs. Ford, do not keep us waiting any longer, but let us hear what Miss Marshall did to call forth such gratitude from yourself and husband."

"Yes, Mrs. Ford, do tell us; for, as school-girls say, I am dying with curiosity to hear it," said Hope.

"You remember I this morning referred to our meeting at Colonel Anderson's some years ago?"

"Yes."

"Well, the time I met you there, under the belief that Alvin, my husband, had died in California, and that nothing could increase the wretchedness that belief caused, I, to gratify my mother, had consented to become the wife of a suitor whom she urged me to accept. The wedding was to take place within a month. Brain, soul, and heart were torpid with the numbness of despair. The evening of the fancy-ball when you, in the character of a sibyl, were amusing all who approached you, some impulse impelled me to ask you to read my fortune. Whilst you were chanting the few lines you addressed me, the iciness which had bound my soul seemed suddenly to give way; yet my pride enabled me to seem as coldly calm as when I approached you. I retained my usual demeanor, permitting not one emotion that had been stirred in my heart to show itself on my face till I got within the privacy of my own room. Then I burst into a fit of weeping,—the first tears I had shed since I had read the account of Alvin's death. With that fit of weeping the torpor that had hitherto bound me passed away, and the lines you had chanted were constantly sounding in my ear, as if to warn me not to consummate the marriage, which was but one month distant.

"I was now sensitively alive to the added misery which that consummation would bring; but my pride was such that I would not even hint a desire to withdraw from my engagement. The morning previous to that on which the wedding was to take place, my mother came to call me to breakfast. I had slept none during the night, and I begged she would breakfast without me, as I was suffering intensely with headache. My mental suffering during the past month had been beyond conception; but I had felt no physical pain. After my mother left me, the fiery pains that were darting through my temples increased in frequency and violence; and a hope that I might die sprang up in my heart, and I prayed that I might thus be released from the horrible fate before me. Ere an hour had gone by, my

mother again came to my room. This time she was accompanied by the mantuamaker, who had brought my travelling-dress, for the purpose of having me try it on, so that she could alter it in case it was not a perfect fit.

"I begged they would not disturb me; but my mother insisted that I should try the dress, and finally, to gratify her, I attempted to rise; but the room seemed whirling round, and I fell fainting upon my pillow. I was recalled to consciousness by the shrieks of my mother, who was wringing her hands and exclaiming, 'My child is dying! Oh, my child is dying! Run for the doctor! perhaps he can save her.'

"The coming of the doctor, and all else, was a blank to me; for, ere he arrived, I was wildly delirious. My mad ravings whilst in that condition revealed to the doctor the cause of my illness. Days passed into weeks ere reason resumed her sway, and, during that time, those who watched beside me could not perceive that I ever slept. At length a heavy, deathlike sleep came upon me: it lasted several hours; and when I awoke I was weak and helpless as an infant, but perfectly reasonable.

"During my illness the physician had told my mother, if I should recover, she must be careful, when reason returned, not to refer to my marriage till I had recovered something like my usual health.

"It is strange how childlike the mind becomes when weakened by severe illness. A few days after my return to consciousness, the thought of my marriage came into my mind, and it occurred to me my mother might have forgotten it, as it had not been mentioned; and I determined I would never remind her of it.

"I had been so near the grave that my strength came back very slowly. When a month had gone by, I was just able to walk about the room, and I had no disposition to exert the little strength I had. Both body and mind seemed perfectly inert. Had my friends permitted it, I would have lain in bed day after day without care or thought. But my nurse was constantly urging me to walk about my room. I was docile as a child, and did whatever she required of me. It seemed I had not sufficient

energy to have a will of my own. It was a beautiful September day, and I was seated in my easy-chair after having walked two or three times across my room to please my nurse. My eyes were closed, and I was listening to the sad, low tones of the autumn winds as they played among the vines that grew about my chamber-window. Memories of the past were thronging my brain, and I was in that half-dreamy state which is so apt to be induced by the sadly-murmuring music which Nature with her many voices gives forth when the beauties of summer are dying. Suddenly I was roused from this state by the sound of a voice I thought hushed forever. In a moment more my door was hastily thrown open, and I was clasped in the arms of my first and only love.

"The announcement I had read of the death of Alvin Ford was that of another person bearing the same name. I should have been the bride of another when my own Alvin returned, but for that illness; and thus would the happiness of two lives have been wrecked."

"Yet I do not see that you have any thing to thank me for."

"I have every thing to thank you for. Because, had I not been aroused by your words from the torpor that paralyzed me, that sickness would not have intervened to save me."

"And what became of old Threescore?" asked Harry. "Did he give up his claim quietly?"

"Oh, no: he fumed furiously, and threatened to sue me for breach of promise; whereupon Alvin told him to state the amount of damage his young heart had received, and he would pay him the money without giving him the trouble of appearing in court."

"Whose side was your mother on?"

"She had been so near losing me, she only wanted to see me happy; and, as Alvin had been successful beyond his most sanguine hope, she was willing to give me to him. My recovery was now as rapid as it had previously been slow; and in one month from the time of his return we were married. After our bridal tour we came to Lexington. Soon after this beautiful place was for sale, we bought it, and have lived here ever since,

our lives being of more than usual happiness; for which, Miss Marshall, I feel we are, under Heaven, indebted to you."

Mr. Brandon was delighted with the little romance of their hostess, as he termed the incidents she related; and when, after rising from the dinner-table, she led the way to the music-room, he insisted Hope should give them a specimen of her improvisation, that they might judge how impressive it was.

Hope started toward the piano; but Mrs. Ford placed the guitar in her hand, intimating the instrument must be the same as the one used by the sibyl.

"The guitar is my favorite instrument," said Hope; and soon its music vibrated on the ear, whilst it was accompanied with a song referring to the return of Mrs. Ford's lover:—

"Summer flowers are fading, dying,
Autumn winds are sadly sighing,
And a maiden fair is lying
With her eyelids gently closed;
You might deem that she is sleeping,
But a crystal drop is creeping
Down her cheek: she's inly weeping,
Though her face looks so composed.

"Of a happy past she's dreaming,
When on her life was beaming
A joy that was but seeming,
So suddenly it fled:
On the stair a step is springing,
On her ear a voice is ringing,
One moment, and she's clinging
To the loved one she thought dead!"

"Very cleverly done," said Mr. Brandon, when she ceased singing; and all joined in complimenting her, till she begged them to desist.

The two weeks Hope and Harry allowed themselves to remain sped quickly by. Ere they left, Mr. Ford, who was anxious to assist them without seeming to do so, proposed making a partner in the new town Harry designed laying off. His offer was gladly accepted. Upon Harry's leaving, he placed in his hands ten thousand dollars, which was to be used in making

improvements in the town, for the purpose of giving employment to several poor families who were induced to become settlers by the offer of a lot on which to make a home.

He had a twofold purpose in placing this money in Harry's hands,—one, to give him that respect in the eyes of the settlers which the distribution of money always commands; and the other, to prevent want and distress from falling upon these settlers, and thus discouraging and making them homesick before they were permanently settled.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

A HOME IN THE WEST.

HOPE, her brother, and the families that accompanied them, have been settled about three months in their new home in the almost wilderness. They went to work with willing hearts and strong hands to build themselves comfortable cabins before the winter's cold came upon them; and ere the winter came on they had quite a village of hopeful, industrious citizens. There had been several families there before Harry and his colony arrived. Among these first settlers there was a storekeeper, tavern-keeper, carpenter, and blacksmith. Of these, all had prospered beyond their expectations, save the blacksmith; and he declared he was one of those unfortunates upon whom ill luck always falls. Such, he said, had always been his fate, and such it seemed was the case; for, although there was very little sickness among the new settlers, nearly every member of his large family was sick.

Little Dickey, the youngest child and the mother's idol, was so ill the physician had but little hope of his recovery. The mother, who had nursed him day and night, was finally stricken down. Hope, who lived upon the square next the family of the blacksmith, had visited them every day, and offered her assistance in nursing the sick child, which was refused by Mrs. Minick, the mother; but now she was glad to accept it, though she murmured under her breath, at the same time:—

"Dear knows, I have come to a pretty pass, to be obleeged to trust poor little Dickey to a fine lady like her, who, I dare say, knows no more about nussin' a sick child than a two-year-old. Howsomever, now that we're all sick 'cept Peg, I'm 'bleeged to take up with her offer, and thankee too. She can 'tend to the

poor sufferin' darlin', while Peg fetches water for us to drink and cooks a bite for the rest of 'em to eat when their fever goes off."

Hope's management of little Dickey soon proved that she understood nursing better than his mother. Her first act was to sponge the feverish skin with a mixture of vinegar and water: she then wrapped him in a sheet, laid him upon her lap, and wet his parched lips every few minutes with cool water. Ere half an hour had passed, the child ceased moaning and tossing itself restlessly about, and fell into a quiet sleep. When it awoke it was evidently better; but as the child grew better the mother grew worse; and Hope took care of both mother and child, leaving them only when it was actually necessary to take rest herself. When both mother and child became convalescent, Mrs. Minick declared she would henceforward have a better 'pinion of fine ladies, 'case she and Dickey would both have died if it hadn't been for Miss Marshall.

About a month after the restoration of the family of the blacksmith to health, Hope, who, like her neighbors, had to serve herself, was preparing supper for herself and Harry, when the door opened, and Peggy Minick stood before her. Without stopping to say "Good-evening," she blurted out,—

"Is it true, Miss Marshall, that, you've seed a rale livin' queen?"

"Yes."

"You've seed her with them same two eyes you're lookin' at me with?"

"Yes, the same two eyes," answered Hope, a smile playing over her face at the oddity of the question.

"Sakes alive! To think I should live to be 'quainted with a person who seed a rale livin' queen! I thought when our Tom come from the tavern jist now an' said you seed a rale livin' queen, that he was lyin', though he vowed he heerd two travellers sayin' so while they was eatin' dinner. He says you've writ a book, too. Is that true?"

"Yes, I've written a book."

"Gracious me! That beats all natur! Well, this is a cur'us world. Got a heap o' turns in it. Only to think of it! you, what's

writ a book, and seed a queen on her throne, to be 'way out here in the woods, livin' in a cabin, makin' bread and cookin' jist like the rest of us! Well, did I ever!—But you must be powerful 'cute to write a book. I'd be awful glad ef I could read one. But, dear me, I must run home; for, if mam comes home and finds I've left Dickey while she was out, she'll give me blazes. But I was so 'stonished when Tom told me, I had to run off and ax you."

About an hour later in the evening, Peggy Minick again made her appearance. This time she had her knitting-work with her; and, seeing Harry was not in, she accepted Hope's invitation to be seated.

"Gracious me, but I'd give a powerful sight ef I could read!" was the first sentence that escaped her lips.

"You could soon learn. I will teach you if you will 'come every evening after you have finished your day's work."

"I don't 'spect mam ud let me larn. She's powerful agin book-larnin', 'case she thinks it makes people triffin' about work. Leastways, that was what she told dad when he wanted to send me to skule afore I was big enough to work. She wouldn't 'low none of us to hev any larnin'; but sence Tom's hired down to the tavern he's larnin' to read. But mam doesn't know on't."

"If you really wish to read, I will call to-morrow and ask your mother to let you come here of evenings, and I will teach you."

"Well, mebbe she would let me if you'd ax her. She thinks a powerful sight of you sence you nussed Dickey through that spell of sickness; and she wouldn't like to say 'no' to nothin' you'd ax."

The next morning Hope stepped in to see Mrs. Minick. She found her busily engaged in making Dickey a new coat out of one of his father's old ones. She took her needle and thimble from her pocket and proposed making the sleeves for her. Her offer of assistance was accepted; and whilst they were sewing she broached the subject for which she had called, to which Mrs. Minick replied, "Now, I can't see one bit of use in book-

larnin'. I went to skule, myself, three whole days, when I was a gal; and I don't see that it ever done me one mite of good."

"Perhaps if you had gone longer you would have perceived the benefit."

"No, it would more likely have made me triffin'. Poor people have no business with edication. I believe that is jist what makes Tom, my husband, so triffin'. He kin read; an' it gives him a hankerin' to hear the news; and he idles his time, sittin' round the tavern, listenin' to the talk of big bugs, when he ort to be in the shop airnin' vittels and close for the children. If he had only scuffled and tugged for the children as I've done all my life, we wouldn't be so miserable poor now. Instid of making this old coat for Dickey, I could buy him a spic-span new one. No, no: Peg is a right-down good gal for work now, and I don't want her to git any notions of book-larnin' in her head to spile her."

"But she has them already. She told me last night she would like to learn to read."

"Well, she may put sich notions away; for I've sot my foot down long ago that none of my children should ever idle their time with books."

What argument Hope used to induce her to raise her foot, we cannot say; but, before she left, Peggy was made happy with the promise of one hour for study every evening, with the understanding that, the moment any remissness in the performance of her daily dasks was shown, she was to discontinue study.

Peggy commenced her lessons at once; and, knowing the terms upon which her studies were to be continued, she was doubly diligent in the performance of her daily labors. Indeed, so attentive was she, that her mother declared she b'lieved larnin' was good for some constitutions, 'case Peg, instid of bein' like her husband Tom, was more workin' now than afore she tuk to larnin'.

Before the close of the winter, Hope had all the young boys and girls of the village devoting their evenings to study; and the rapid improvement they made in the acquisition of know-

ledge fully compensated for all the time she gave to their instruction.

Whilst Hope's evenings were thus usefully employed, Harry was not less busy. He got up what in the city would be called a lyceum; but in the village it took the name of a debating-society. He got all the mechanics and laborers to become members. One evening in every week they were to meet at his office to debate upon some question agreed upon by a majority of those composing the society. In time they got into the habit of dropping in almost every evening to discuss political questions and the news of the day. Harry encouraged them in thus assembling around his office-fire, feeling it was far better for them to meet there than in the tavern bar-room, where they were too often tempted to take a drink. And by this means he became thoroughly acquainted with the men with whom his lot was cast.

The winter went rapidly by; and, though the brother and sister were isolated with regard to intellectual and refined society, never had a winter been spent more satisfactorily. The benefits conferred on others, by elevating and refining their aspirations, were returned by acts of generous kindness. Hope was regarded with a respect bordering on reverence,—a kind of angel of mercy, to assist them when in need and comfort them when in sorrow. Harry won the confidence of all by his uprightness and honor. Both he and Hope took much interest in developing those beautiful traits of character which often lie hidden beneath a roughness of manner peculiar to pioneer-life. This interest was repaid on the part of those with whom their lot was cast by bestowing on Harry the highest mark of confidence it was in their power to give. They sent him as their representative to the State Legislature; and, when he had served them two years in that capacity, so well were they satisfied with him that he was nominated and elected to Congress.

It is inconceivable how much influence one intellectual and refined mind exerts upon a community, particularly when its possessor takes an interest in and adapts herself to the notions of that community. This Hope did with that unselfishness which was so strikingly manifest in her character. In no house-

hold was the effect of her teaching more happy than in the household of Tom Minick. Peggy, instead of being "spile't" by "larnin'," as her mother feared would be the case, became more industrious and respectful. The mother, seeing the change for the better in Peggy, consented that the other children might be educated; and from a rude, brawling set of cubs they became gentle, affectionate, and obedient. And this change in his household had a most happy effect upon Tom himself. He no longer sat idling about the store and tavern-doors, but devoted every hour to labor. He now felt a pride in his children, and wished to give them a home as good as their neighbors'.

Whilst Hope is thus engaged, Mollie Bringham is still figuring as a belle in the gay society of the national metropolis, and her father is occasionally in tribulation as to the safest move to make upon the political stage. The ready wit of Sprott was frequently called into requisition, and did him good service, a few instances of which we will relate; but for that we will take another chapter.

CHAPTER XLIX.

"THE TWO CLEVER ONES."

WE will now transport our readers from the almost wilderness of the Northwest to the elegant mansion of the Hon. Jerry Bringham, and into the presence of the august Senator himself. He and Sprott are alone in his study. Sprott is apparently absorbed in the writing of an article for one of the home papers; but a close observer may perceive that he is looking out from one corner of his eye at the countenance of his noble patron, who seems perplexed and thoughtful. Soon he has an excuse to look him straight in the face, because he addresses him:—

"I say, Sprott, I'm in a quandary."

"Ah?"

"Yes; and I want the benefit of your ready wit to help me out."

"Well, what perplexes you?"

"The nomination of the candidate for the next Presidency."

"Then you haven't made up your mind yet to whom you will give your influence?"

"I have made up my mind to give it to the one who is sure of the nomination; but the mischief is to know who that one will be. It is impossible to calculate with certainty upon any one these times; and the worst of it is, it is more important now than it was formerly that a body should know for whom to go."

"Why more important now?"

"Because formerly at a nominating convention it was expected that a person would vote for the man for whom he had a preference the first ballot or two; and then, when it was ascertained who was the strongest, if you went in for the nomination of that man and supported him earnestly and in good faith during the canvass, your first preference was not re-

membered against you. But now there are so many aspirants for the Presidency, and there is such bitter rivalry among them, should you happen to indicate a preference for one, and he not receive the nomination, you commit a fatal blunder; for it will be marked against you by the successful one, and, when the loaves and fishes come to be distributed, your platter will not be overloaded."

"Truth."

"And it is all-important to me just now that I should be right with the incoming administration."

"Why just now?"

"You know our Senatorial election comes off next winter; and, Ritner having taken the place Marshall used to hold with the people and home-politicians, he may supplant me, unless I can control the vote of the Legislature by keeping up the belief that I am all-powerful here, and that the Federal offices to which our State is entitled will be distributed just as I direct. You see how important it is: do you not?"

"Yes; I see."

"Can you not suggest some course whereby I can avoid committing myself till there is no danger of making a mistake?"

"Let me think a bit."

"Think all day, if you can thereby devise some expedient for my benefit."

Sprott placed the palm of his hand upon his brow, and was soon absorbed in thought. Affery's term "clever one" was peculiarly applicable to him. He knew at once what Bringham wanted; but when his patron needed the benefit of his brain he took a delight in making him pay for it by detailing his motives and plans. He sat some time with his head resting in his palm, and when he raised it you might see by the gleam of his eye that he had come to some conclusion with which he was satisfied; yet he did not communicate it to his patron in a straightforward speech.

"Well," said he, "when I was a boy, if I saw a storm coming up, I watched the tall timber to see which way the wind blew. It is a singular fact that upon the approach of a storm the top

most branches of the tallest trees are violently shaken some seconds before the undergrowth is even stirred. Did you ever notice it?"

"No. But what relation has that to the question in hand?"

"Why, this. As you are tall timber among the politicians, watching eyes will be on you, and you will have to be very careful of your movements."

"I am perfectly aware of that; and, if that is all your deep thought has brought forth from the recesses of your brain, it is time wasted to have indulged in it," said Bringham, with irritation.

"Wait till I get through before you disparage my brains."

"Well, go on."

"It is a most fortunate thing for you that the coming nominating convention is to be held in Cincinnati."

"Why?"

"Because you have the control of a boat on the Ohio River that will stop whenever you choose and go when you order. Now, the plan I propose is this. You get aboard of that boat at Pittsburg or Wheeling. Let it be detained, ostensibly, for some business to which you are obliged to attend. You understand, do you?"

"Yes."

"Well, I'll hurry on to Cincinnati before you; and, I being undergrowth, nobody will observe me mingling with the delegates and watching the tall timber to see which way the wind blows: so, when I learn for a certainty how the matter stands, I will telegraph to you to hasten on, or you will not get here in time for the nomination. The business that detained you will, of course, be finished at once, and you will get to Cincinnati just in time to declare your preference and run no risk of making a mistake."

"Capital, Sprott! capital! You are a jewel. Why, this is almost equal to that device you put me up to about having Dennis tell the folks from our State, whenever they called about the dinner-hour, that I was taking a family dinner with the President, thus giving the impression at home that I was as

intimate with the President as a brother. Now, if this only turns out as well as that did."

"It will turn out well. If it don't, you may have my head for a foot-ball."

When the time for the meeting of the nominating convention came on, Sprrott's suggestion was acted on; and, as he predicted, it did turn out well. The boat on which Bringham went to the convention arrived just in time. Sprrott, who was on shore, as agreed between them he should be, when it arrived stepped aboard immediately it landed, saw his patron before he left his state-room, and gave him such accurate information as to how the wind was blowing, that he went right into the convention, and declared his preference so unequivocally for the successful aspirant that he actually made him believe it was his influence brought to bear just in the right time that secured him the nomination.

When the canvass was over, and he found himself elected President in consideration of this important service rendered at so critical a moment, Bringham's suggestions with regard to the formation of his Cabinet had more weight with him than the counsels of all his other advisers. This fact, showing the high estimation in which he was held, being duly chronicled in all the papers of his own State by a well-informed Washington correspondent, his re-election to the Senate was thereby secured. Now, this being achieved, one would suppose his troubles and anxiety were at an end for some time. Not so. The friends of Ritner, his competitor for the Senate, would not abandon their favorite unless they could secure some personal advantage by so doing. In consequence thereof, promises of offices had to be largely made; and, when the Legislature adjourned, a goodly number of its members came on to Washington to witness the Inauguration and—Well, we will hear what else they came for when "the two clever ones" hold their next consultation.

* * * * *

It is late in the afternoon the day after the inauguration of the new President. Dennis O'Flaherty, a smart Irishman, who has been a long time in the service of the Honorable Bringham,

and whose duty it is to attend the door-bell, wait upon the dining-room, and make himself generally useful in the household, takes his seat at the table for the eighth time since he commenced eating his dinner. He has just taken a bit of meat upon his fork and raised it about half-way to his mouth, when the door-bell again rings. He lays down his fork and springs to his feet, exclaiming, as he does so,—

"Je-e-r-oo-salem! but the master has a power o' visitors to-day!"

He returned from admitting the visitor, and had again seated himself at the table, when the cook came in with,—

"You Dennis dar, is you gwine to eat all day? You make haste and get done, 'case I wants to put away the cold vittles."

"Faith, Aunt Judy, and how can I get done atin', when I have to run to the doore-bell every blissed minnet?"

The words were scarcely out of his mouth before there was another ring of the bell. He rose from the table, saying,—

"Aunt Judy, you may put the vittles away. I shu'n't try to ate any more till dark. Guess they'll stop comin' then."

About dusk the Honorable Bringham found his room clear of visitors for the first time since ten o'clock in the morning. He called Dennis, and directed him, if any more visitors called, to say to them he had been sent for by the President and would not be at home before ten or eleven o'clock. After giving this order to Dennis, he sent for Sprrott. When that gentleman arrived, he found the Senator looking weary and worn.

"Sprrott," said he, "the office-hunters are down on me like the locusts in Egypt."

"I expected that."

"They all claim to have been promised that I would get them appointments, and insist the promise shall be fulfilled."

"Well, you must tell them your friends had no right to make such promises, and they cannot consider you bound by the promises of another."

"I did tell them so, and they flew up and said they would never have voted for me had they supposed my friends were not authorized by me to make the promises that were made."

"That is neither here nor there: you are elected, and they can't unelect you."

"True. But you know I am looking to a step still higher; and it won't do to let these fellows go home in the temper they are in. We must do something to pacify them."

"Ah! but what is that something to be?"

"I sent for you to devise some plan to extricate me from this perplexity, as most of these promises were made by you."

"But at your bidding."

"True. But never mind that now: contrive what can be done."

"Devil catch me if I think of any thing just now."

"Rub up your wits, and something will present itself."

"Let me see. Ah, yes: I've caught an idea."

"Well, hold on to it, and let me have the benefit of it."

"Just give a party, invite all these fellows, and let it be understood the party is given to do them special honor. And, to make the affair more flattering to them, invite the Vice-President and the great Washington banker to meet them."

"What! have my beautiful drawing-room carpets trampled over by their great clumsy boots?"

"Better do it, even if you have to buy new carpets, than let them go home in a pet."

"True enough. But as to inviting the Vice-President and the banker, what will those gentlemen think to be asked to meet such an outlandish set of country clowns as a great many of them who come from the out-of-the-way counties are?"

"Oh, you are so perfectly 'hand in glove' with those two gentlemen that you can let them know your object in inviting them; and, whilst about it, intimate to them it will be doing you a favor if they could bring themselves to treat with great affability and cordiality the guests whom they will meet. Get them to do so, and these fellows will feel themselves so glorified and elated by having grasped the hand and talked face to face with the Vice-President and the great Washington banker, that when they return home, instead of speaking of your failure to comply with the promises made, they will edify and astonish their acquaint-

ances and neighbors by describing the grand party you gave in their honor, and the affability of the distinguished guests whom you invited to meet them."

"A clever idea, Sprott. I believe it will work. I'll do it, if it is a bitter pill to swallow."

"I can think of nothing else: no other expedient that can be resorted to will satisfy so great a number."

"Oh, it's the very thing; and it shall be done."

"And remember, when you make up your mind to do a disagreeable thing, it is not to be done by halves; but do it gracefully, as if your whole heart were in it. Have the arrangements on as grand a scale as if you were entertaining all the Cabinet and foreign ministers. Be careful, too, that you introduce to each one separately the two lions you invite for their glorification; and, above all, have champagne and other tempting liquids served freely as water. Do all this, and before the evening is over they will be ready to cry out, 'Great is Jerry of Old Kaintuck.'"

The party being agreed upon, we will leave Bringham and Sprott to make all the arrangements with regard to it, and look after Dennis. Not long after the Honorable Bringham had directed him to admit no more visitors, Miss Mollie sent for him.

"Dennis," said she, "can't you invent some way to silence that confounded bell?"

"Dunno, miss. I'll try."

"Do; for, with its constant ringing, and the calling of those horrid men who have been trooping here all day, I have grown so nervous that I do believe I shall go into fits if it is not silenced soon."

Tingle-ling goes the bell, and off goes Dennis to answer it. Having done so, he began to consider how Miss Mollie's order was to be obeyed.

"Ah, I have it!" said he, snapping his fingers; "and glad I am Miss Mollie ordered me to silence the noisy cratur; for, be-dad, it's almost run off me legs I am, wiskin' to the door."

Dennis's plan was no sooner conceived than put into execution; and, as it was real Irish in its conception, we will describe it to

our readers. He procured a bit of paper and wrote upon it, in large, plain letters,—

“GENTLEMEN :—

“There is no occasion to ring the bell, because the master is gone to the President’s, and he won’t be home till eleven o’clock.”

Having finished writing this announcement, he got some gum, and fastened it upon the front door where the light from the street-lamp fell directly on it, so that all who came would be sure to read it. As he anticipated, the bell was rung no more during the evening. It was his intention to remove it before going to bed; but he was so overcome with fatigue that he fell asleep and forgot it.

“What in the devil have you that placard on your door for?” asked Engleton, the member from the district in which Bringham lived, who came in about eight o’clock the next morning.

“A trick of some mischievous boys, I presume. What is it?”

“Come and see.” And the two gentlemen stepped to the front door.

“It’s the work of that scoundrel Dennis,” said Bringham, giving the bell a furious pull, which brought the Irishman instantly to the door.

“Is that your work?” said he, pointing to the offending piece of paper.

“Yis, yer honor.”

“How dare you do such a thing?”

“Miss Mollie ordered me.”

“Mollie Bringham order you to stick that placard on my door?”

“No, yer honor: she had nothing to do with the plaggard, as yer honor calls it: that was entirely my own invintion. But she said it would put her into fits if the door-bell kept ringin’, and she ordered me to invint some plan to silence it; and that is the only one I could think of, yer honor.”

“It was bad enough to have put it here, but worse to have left it. Why was it not taken off?”

“Plaze yer honor, I fell asleep last night and forgot it entirely.”

“But you should have been at the door to scrub the steps and sweep the pavement before this time in the morning.”

“Yis, yer honor; but the mistress is givin’ a grand party to-night, and I’ve been busy this mornin’ carryin’ the orders for the wine and confections.”

“Well, well, take it off now, and be careful that you are never guilty of such a blunder again, or you quit my service immediately.”

“Yis, yer honor,” answered Dennis, and went to work to remove the placard. The two gentlemen returned to the Senator’s study, and were soon so deeply engaged in a consultation as to how the offices were to be disposed of, that Dennis’s original plan of silencing a door-bell was no more thought of.

When evening came, the Senator received his guests with a manner bland as a May morning. The two distinguished guests were present, and the party went off admirably. It went beyond even Sprott’s expectation in satisfying those for whom it was gotten up. We will not give a description of it, as it went off as all parties do where there is plenty of wine and no ladies present. They were all gloriously happy, perfectly charmed with their host and his two lions, who were as affable as could be desired. Indeed, one of the Western guests declared to his neighbors upon his return home that they were just as sociable with him as if they had “hitched hosses at the same rack all their lives.” Suffice it to say, the object for which the party was given was attained; and in the afternoon train of cars that left for the West the next day there was a goodly number of Kentuckians returning home, and they all united in lauding their host of the preceding evening.

“How, think you, did my plan succeed?” asked Sprott, coming into Bringham’s study the evening after the party.

“Oh, charmingly, Sprott; charmingly. The locusts are on their way home; and, as you predicted would be the case, they left well pleased. I swear, Sprott, you are a real jewel,—an emerald of the purest water.”

"Glad you think so. And, as emeralds among precious stones are considered next to the diamond in value, I trust, when your jewels are reset, you will see that this gem has a suitable setting, lest it be lost."

This sentence did not seem to have much meaning; but the look that accompanied it said plainly, "You may gull others and satisfy them with the fumes and gas of a champagne-party; but, if you want my service and assistance, you must give me the value of the service rendered."

And Bringham so understood it; for soon after Sprott received a responsible and important situation,—one everybody save his patron thought far beyond his merits. He fills the situation well: the ready wit which was so serviceable to his patron is equal to any thing required in the performance of his official duties.

CHAPTER L.

RETURN TO WASHINGTON.

HARRY and Hope are again in Washington. He has taken a house and installed Aunt Minta as housekeeper; and she is more than happy. Maggie has completed her education, and flits about the house like a sunbeam, bringing light and gladness with her merry laugh and gay snatches of song.

Hope looks upon her, and remembers how gay and joyous-hearted she herself was at Maggie's age.

Fortune had smiled most propitiously on Harry during his absence from Washington, so that he returned a man of wealth as well as position. Hope, as she looks on Harry's noble face, which bears the impress of high and honorable thought, and listens to Maggie's gleesome songs, feels there is still much brightness in life, although her brightest heart-dream was an illusion. But again she and Frank Hathaway meet. He has returned from Europe and is a representative in Congress; and Harry, suspecting nothing of the feeling that had existed in Hope's bosom, insists upon his being a frequent visitor. Frank finds the home-circle of his friend so attractive, he cannot deny himself the pleasure of accepting the hospitality so cordially proffered, and no week passed but one or two evenings were spent in the drawing-room over which Hope Marshall presided. There was a charm in the fresh joyousness of Maggie's spirit which was peculiarly attractive to him. If she sang, he was near her; or were she disposed for merry badinage, he was ever ready to join her; and by the gossiping world he was considered her devoted admirer.

Harry entertained with much hospitality; and those invited to his house were selected on account of their own worth, not for the estimate placed upon them by the world of fashion. He

sought the acquaintance of persons from whom he could acquire that knowledge which would be useful to him in the performance of the duties pertaining to his position. Among the acquaintances thus made was a Mr. Lancaster, from whom he learned much. Accident made them acquaintances, but business continued their intercourse.

Harry had always intended to investigate his father's unsettled accounts at the Department; and one day, in speaking of it in the presence of Mr. Lancaster, that gentleman observed,—

"There is an unsettled account of a Mr. Charles Marshall in the State Department, and there is considerable money due on it."

"My father's, no doubt. His name was Charles."

"Was he minister to Spain?"

"He was."

"Then it is his. Would you like to have it settled at once?"

"If I knew how to go about it."

"I understand that business thoroughly. It is my vocation. I will attend to it for you, give it a thorough investigation, and secure its payment."

"I will be glad to get you to attend to it,—not with any hope of your securing the payment of any money on it, but I want to know the condition of that account; for it cost my father his life."

"Indeed? How so?"

"He died from congestion of the brain brought on by anxiety, excitement, and indignation."

Harry then told Mr. Lancaster the circumstances of his father's death, with which our readers are already acquainted.

"Ay, you should hear some of my experience as collector of claims before the Departments," said Mr. Lancaster. "You have no conception of the annoyance and delay to which I am subjected. I am sometimes put off for years; and none knows, save those who are engaged in this business, how many life-chords are broken and bright hopes wrecked by this dire delay. We hear a great deal about claimants cheating the Government; but my opinion is, ten just claims remain unpaid for every unjust one

paid. The facts that came to my knowledge as a clerk in the Treasury Department justify me in my belief."

"I was a clerk in that Department once."

"Indeed?"

"Yes; and I thought I was not well treated in the manner of my removal. Were you removed?"

"No: I resigned. And for that reason the Secretary wished to deny me the right of attending to claims before the Departments."

"Of course he could not do it. Our Government is not yet a despotism, where the will of one man can disfranchise another."

"Yet in my case the disposition to do so was manifested."

"How so?"

"Soon after I resigned my situation, I made a statement for a gentleman who had a claim against the Government, and, in seeking to recover the money due him, he laid this statement before the Department. Upon examining it, my handwriting was recognised; and, although my name was not signed to the statement, they wrote to this gentleman, stating that I had been a clerk in the Department, consequently I would not be permitted to act as agent in the collection of claims."

"But has the Secretary any authority for such a prohibition?"

"In my opinion, he has not."

"What reason did he assign for so doing?"

"None, save that I had been a clerk, had resigned my situation for the purpose, using the knowledge I obtained whilst in office in collecting claims. Consequently, to prevent the effect of my example on other clerks, he thought it necessary to refuse to recognise me as an agent."

"What! to prevent other clerks from resigning?"

"I suppose so. I do not clearly comprehend what he *does* mean; but, if it be to prevent others from resigning, it is an unnecessary precaution he has taken; for it is a saying with regard to clerks that 'but few die, and none resign.'"

"True. I heard the remark often whilst I was in office. Yet I can perceive no other meaning than the one I mentioned."

"I will tell you what I believe to be the true reason why that

letter was written. The clerk who had charge of this business did not wish to undergo the labor it would require to investigate and make the intricate calculations necessary to ascertain the correctness of these claims, and by refusing to let me act as agent he would get rid of the work. Nearly all the persons who act as claim-agents have been clerks, and I am the only one who has been refused the privilege of attending to the business committed to his charge; and that is why I think the reason I assign the true one."

"It must be something of that kind.

"I can conceive of nothing else, unless they would urge this,—that the knowledge I possess would oblige them to pay money out of the Treasury. Yet certainly they would not urge this; for, if the money is justly due, no honest man would wish to avoid its payment; and, if a claim is not just, all the knowledge I possess will not compel its payment."

"But did you quietly submit to this dictation without writing to the Secretary to know where he got his authority to refuse you the right of attending to business before the Departments?"

"As the letter was not addressed to me, there was no excuse for me to write at that time. But afterwards, when I had some business before the Comptroller, he refused to attend to it, giving as a reason for so doing the existence of this letter. I then wrote to the Secretary, requesting him to inform me where he derived his authority for refusing me the rights and privileges enjoyed by other citizens."

"What answer did you receive?"

"None. But you, having been in office, understand how these things are managed,—that the letters addressed to the Secretaries are referred to the clerks; and this letter was, no doubt, referred to the clerk who had written the one saying I should not be allowed to act as agent: consequently, no answer was returned to my inquiries."

"True. And it may be the Secretary signed the first letter without knowing its contents."

"I think it very probable; for were he to read all the letters he signs it would leave him no time to attend to any thing else.

Besides, I do not believe the Secretary would be guilty of such an absurdity as the attempt to attach a penalty to the resignation of a clerk."

"Unjust, too, as well as absurd, unless the situations of clerks were permanent so long as they performed their duties faithfully. He can remove them at his own will, and they have no redress; yet should they of their own will resign, he would prevent them from engaging in a business for the performance of which they are well qualified. No, no: he has attempted to stretch his power beyond its limits. Whilst you were in office his position gave him power over you, but when you resigned you were independent of him. He has no right, no power, to prevent persons who have claims against the Government from employing you to attend to their business, and thereby availing themselves of the benefit they may derive from your knowledge and experience. That is a usurpation which will not be sustained by law."

"So I said; and, had they persisted in refusing to attend to the business I brought before them, I would have tested it."

"And rightly, too. But how came they to accord you your rights?"

"The question was never again brought up after I wrote to the Secretary."

Ere Harry and Mr. Lancaster parted, they regarded each other with respect; and from that time Mr. Lancaster became a frequent visitor at the house, and was ever a welcome guest.

CHAPTER LI.

A CABINET MINISTER'S MODE OF RECEIVING CALLS.

THE winter is wearing on, and Harry, although it is his first session, has made many friends among all parties, who love to call without ceremony and spend a social evening in his pleasant drawing-room. Thus warm partisans of antagonistic parties are frequently brought together; and, though the most exciting questions are sometimes the topic of conversation, the exquisite tact of the host and hostess prevents any thing like contentious argument.

It is one of those evenings when quite a number of visitors have called. The blinds are closed, the gas lighted, the anthracite burning cheerily in the grate; and every thing conspires to produce a genial interchange of thought. The subject being discussed by this social circle is the passage of the Lecompton Constitution,—a measure which has been some weeks before Congress, and which engendered more warmth of feeling than any question of the session: yet in this company, although it is composed of both Republicans and Democrats, there is no asperity in its discussion. Each maintains his own opinion upon this subject, and gives the reason why he entertains that opinion without bitterness.

Among the guests of this evening there is an old Senator from one of the Northern States, who during the winter has been a frequent visitor. Maggie's gay, buoyant spirit attracted him to her, and he has talked to, petted, and played with her till she, in her light, saucy manner, takes the liberty of saying to him just whatever comes into her head. During the discussion of the Lecompton question she sat for some time a silent and interested listener. At length she replied to some remark of the old Senator, by saying,—

"But I do think, Mr. Selwyn, the highest refinement and courtesy are more universal among the Southerners than at the North. For instance, you will never find a Southerner who has the least claim to good society but he is punctiliously observant of all the courtesies of life; whilst among you Northmen we sometimes meet with persons occupying the highest positions, brusque—indeed, almost rude—in manner, deeming the observance of the minor courtesies of social life unimportant. You never see any thing of that kind in a Southern gentleman. At least, that has been my experience."

"You are young yet, child, and have only seen life on its sunny side," said a plain-looking old lady who sat near the centre-table with her knitting-work in hand. "Perhaps by the time you have had as much experience as I, you may have to change your opinion in some respects."

"In what respect?"

"You may have to admit there are exceptions to the universal politeness of the gentlemen of the South."

"I trust not. But why do you think such may be the case?"

"I, in my experience of the last month, have met a gentleman from the South—at least it is to be presumed he is a gentleman, for he holds a high position—who treated me—I will not say with rudeness, but he was strangely negligent of what you term the minor courtesies of good society."

"You, Mrs. Wagner?—you?" exclaimed Maggie, opening her eyes beyond their ordinary size with astonishment.

"Yes, me. But why do you look so surprised?"

"I thought everybody would treat you with respectful attention."

"And why, pray, did you think so?"

"Because you are a lady whom everybody respects."

"Thank you, Maggie; but it seems he was not of that opinion. I presume he formed his estimate of me by my dress, which you must admit is very plain."

"Pray, tell us who it was, and all about it."

"I will do so," said the old lady, looking round the company.

"It will be a good lesson for my young friend your brother,

which he will remember when he becomes a great man having power and patronage."

"I shall ever be most happy to receive lessons from you, Mrs. Wagner: they will be useful to me whether I attain greatness or not," replied Harry. "Within the last month, you say, you experienced this rudeness. I cannot imagine who——"

"Rudeness is perhaps too strong a word; but I will narrate the circumstance, and you can give it your own name."

"Do let us hear it," said several voices.

"You are aware, Mr. Marshall, my grandson, Edward Percival, designs going West this spring."

"Yes."

"Well, he was very anxious to get a situation in the Land-Office for two or three months before going out there, as it would enable him to get a knowledge of the business which would be useful to him in his new home; and besides, as I am not rich, the salary for that length of time would give him the means of going without taxing my slender income.

"I called upon the Commissioner of the Land-Office, stated Edward's wish, and asked if he could give him work for a short time. The Commissioner said he could do nothing himself, but he thought by an application to the Secretary of the Interior the work might be procured. Not wishing to trouble my friends, I concluded I would call upon the Secretary myself, though not acquainted with him. However, that I might be properly accredited, I procured a letter of introduction from a distinguished Senator, who was a friend of mine and a friend of the Secretary's also.

"Being familiar with an old adage, that 'men, like animals, are better tempered after being well fed,' I called immediately after dinner. To my inquiry if the Secretary were at home, the servant gave an affirmative answer. Upon my stating I desired to see him if he were not too much engaged, the servant requested me to be seated in the drawing-room whilst he carried up my name. Instead of giving my card, I sent the letter of introduction. In a few moments the servant made his appearance and returned me the letter, saying his master was very much

engaged, but if I would call about the same hour next day he would be at leisure to see me.

"On the next day, at precisely the hour designated, I called. When the servant answered the door-bell, he did not wait for me to ask for his master, but immediately announced he was at dinner. I told him I would step into the drawing-room and wait till he had finished his dinner. When I had waited about half an hour, a little black girl came and said her master was too busy to see me. I requested her to ask her master to name a day and an hour when it would be convenient for him to give me a few moments of his time, and I would call at the precise time indicated. When she again returned, she repeated that her master was very busy, but if I would step up to his room he would see me.

"I at once availed myself of the privilege thus accorded me of seeing him, and when I entered his room found him *very* busy lounging back in a rocking-chair puffing away at a cigar. So busy, indeed, was he that he had not time to rise to his feet, nor ask me to be seated. I approached his chair and presented my letter of introduction. He did not take it from my hand, but discontinued the arduous labor of puffing his cigar long enough to say, 'I have read it.' I then handed and asked him to read the copy of a letter I had written, something in the form of an application stating what my grandson asked. He took that and read it, the smoke-wreaths issuing from his lips the while like puffs of steam from the safety-valve of a locomotive. Being an old woman, and having come up the stairs rapidly, I was somewhat out of breath; and once, whilst he was reading, I was on the point of taking a seat upon a sofa that was in the room. I had taken a step towards it for that purpose, when it occurred to me I should be guilty of as gross a violation of the usages of good society by taking a seat uninvited as the Secretary had been in not asking me to be seated. So I remained standing, thinking, the meanwhile, the honorable gentleman had not been indoctrinated in French politeness as it had been defined to me by an old French nobleman in my girlhood."

"How did he define it?" asked Maggie.

"He said in his country a person who treated an inferior with less civility and kindness than he extended to equals and superiors would be considered sadly deficient in true politeness."

"But you, Mrs. Wagner, are not inferior to the Secretary," said Harry, quickly.

"Nor do I acknowledge myself to be; but he deemed me so judging me by my plain mourning-garments, and from the fact that I was a suppliant for favor from him. His demeanor towards me was the result of his estimate of me, not my own. Nor did I feel I was a suppliant, but that I was simply exercising a privilege which belongs to me, of asking employment for my grandson. As to inferiority, bah! Had I been inclined, on account of his occupying a high position in our Government, to invest him with superiority, his deportment on the occasion of this call would have proved to me I had placed an erroneous estimate upon him."

"You must make some allowance for him," said Maggie, "because he is so much annoyed by persons asking for places."

"That is no excuse. Nor will it justify him in violating the usages of good society, particularly as I took a letter of introduction from a gentleman quite his equal in both political and social position. In fact, his deportment toward me was disrespectful to the writer of that letter."

"It was shameful. But do tell us how you felt standing up there whilst he was seated at his ease smoking his cigar?"

"At first I felt indignant, then amused."

"I do not see any thing amusing in it."

"But I drew amusement from it. I have an active brain and a keen sense of the ridiculous: so, as I stood there watching the smoke-wreaths curling from his lips, I drew a caricature in my mind of a Cabinet-meeting, each Cabinet minister with a cigar in his mouth, puffing away at a furious rate, whilst his Excellency the President was so enveloped and befogged in smoke that he could see nothing clearly, and consequently he was straining his vision to see how to steer the ship of State, till his eyeballs protruded beyond their ordinary position. But, strain his vision as he would, the murky atmosphere surrounding him so obscured

objects, and threw such strange shadows about him, that he could not distinguish a calm sea and fair sailing from shoals and breakers with shipwreck and ruin ahead."

"And what did he say to you when he finished reading?"

"Asked me to state particularly the object of my visit; and I stood before him like a girl saying her lesson to the school-'marm' seated in the chair of state. When I had made my statement, he said he could not promise to do any thing for my grandson: so I expressed a regret that I had occupied so much of his valuable time, made my best 'curchy,' and bade him good-evening."

"What have you got to say now, Miss Maggie," said Mr. Selwyn.

"I am so much surprised to know that a Southern gentleman has been guilty of such rudeness that I have not one word to say."

"Then, as you are disposed to say nothing, I will tell you another incident I witnessed a few days since."

"I am just in the mood for listening."

"Last week I was spending the day with a friend,—a Republican, by-the-way. When we adjourned to the family sitting-room after dinner, the husband of my friend remarked he was so accustomed to an after-dinner pipe that he felt unsatisfied till he had taken his smoke; and he begged I would not think it a want of appreciation of my society if he absented himself to indulge in this—to him—after-dinner luxury. I told him I did not wish to deprive him of his luxury, nor myself of the pleasure of his society; therefore he should just take his smoke as he was in the habit of doing when no one was present but madame his wife.

"He took from the mantel a pipe, already filled with the Virginia weed. Soon he was in the enjoyment of a comfortable smoke, and we of a pleasant chat. A rap was heard at the door; and my friend, thinking it was one of the servants, said, 'Come in,' without rising to open the door. The knob turned, the door opened, and a plainly-dressed woman stepped timidly in. Casting her eyes round and seeing me, a stranger, she hesitated, as if

uncertain whether to advance or retire. But this uncertainty was dissipated in a moment; for the husband of my friend rose, insisted she should be seated in the rocking-chair he had occupied, and the pipe could not have been laid aside more hastily had she been a princess or the President's daughter. Seeing that she felt embarrassed and at a loss what to do, he hastened to place her at ease, by saying, —

“My wife tells me you wish to consult me on some business-matter. If you will state what it is, I will be most happy to serve you to the utmost of my power.”

“By the time he finished this sentence, her embarrassment had passed away, and she was able to state her business clearly. It was his manner, as much as his words, that thus reassured her. When she rose to leave, he opened the door for her and bade her good-afternoon with as respectful a manner as if she had worn a robe of velvet instead of a faded calico gown. Now, this Republican gentleman was polite according to the old French nobleman's definition of the word; for the person to whom he gave this attention was a poor woman who did sewing for my friend.

“I have related this incident for your especial benefit, Maggie, to teach you that locality has nothing to do with making an individual a lady or gentleman. True politeness is an inborn, inbred quality of the soul; and when a person has this quality, it matters not whether his home be North or South, his politeness is a part of his being, not worn like a garment to be put on and off as occasion may require.

“I have lived long in Washington, have mingled much with the intellectual and refined who assemble here from all sections of our glorious republic; and I can assure you, child, that there is no ground for the opinion you expressed this evening.”

“Ah,” said Mr. Selwyn, “we can all understand the cause of Maggie's predilection for the South.”

“And what is it, pray?”

“Frank Hathaway.”

“Fiddlesticks!”

“And harp-strings! Haven't I watched him as he stood beside you whilst you drew such sweet strains of music from

your harp? and haven't I noted, too, how when you ceased playing your eye turned to his to read its expression, and when he gave a silent glance of admiration you seemed to prize it more than all the prettily-expressed compliments of a half-dozen other young gentlemen standing round you.”

“That was perfectly natural. The half-dozen young gents to whom you refer cared nothing for my music. They made those pretty speeches merely to show off their own cleverness in the use of fine phrases; but Mr. Hathaway's glance showed true appreciation.”

“Of the music or the musician?”

“Both, if you choose to have it so,” answered the merry girl.

“A candid admission, upon my word.” This remark provoked a saucy reply from Maggie, and a playful conversation was kept up for some time between the genial-tempered old gentleman and the merry-hearted maiden. The attention of the whole company was attracted by their light badinage.

It was well for Hope that the attention of the company was thus attracted, or some curious eye might have noted the pallor that overspread her face till she was able, by a strong effort of will, to stifle the heart-pang which was called up by the words of the old gentleman.

She had long learned to regard the love-dream that had once glowed in her bosom as a buried memory, which she in the loneliness of her chamber would occasionally disinter, and upbraid herself with folly for having allowed herself to believe, in years ago, that the delicate attention bestowed upon her by Frank Hathaway was prompted by a warmer feeling than friendship. Although she had often thus upbraided herself, she had not succeeded in crushing out the love which had taken such deep hold upon her heart.

She had observed that Frank Hathaway was very attentive to Maggie, and that he listened with much pleasure to her glad songs and gay sallies; but all who came to the house were attracted to her by the freshness of her mind and the playfulness of her manner. The remarks of Mr. Selwyn, in referring

to Maggie's performance on the harp, startled her; but she soon recovered herself, and when, a few minutes after, Frank Hathaway came in, she was self-possessed as usual.

That night, long after Maggie had fallen asleep, Hope's thoughts were busy with the past. She remembered Lilian's description of her own wedded happiness, and she breathed a prayer that Maggie might win the love of Frank Hathaway, feeling her happiness would be assured by becoming his wife. That spirit of self-abnegation which had characterized all her acts since Harry and Maggie were committed to her charge by their dying mother, enabled her thus to pray.

CHAPTER LII.

CONJECTURES REGARDING THE NEXT CANDIDATE FOR PRESIDENT.

WE will again look into the home of Harry Marshall. Although the wintry wind is piercingly cold, the usual genial atmosphere pervades the drawing-room over which Hope presides. Night has just closed in. Harry is absent, and the sisters are alone. But see: the door opens, and Mrs. Wagner glides quietly in. Maggie springs from the easy-chair in which she is seated, dreaming pleasant day-dreams, and, with the familiarity of a spoiled child, throws her arms about the visitor's neck, exclaiming,—

"You dear old lady, I am so glad you have come in! Just take that easy-chair and make yourself comfortable while I talk to you."

"Propriety would require that a young chit like you should be silent whilst I talk."

"Just as you please. I am willing to amuse or to be amused."

"Just listen to the vanity of the child! She amuse!"

"If I am vain, who is to blame for it? You, Mr. Selwyn, Mr. Beverly, and the rest of the dear old gentlemen who visit here. Why, Mr. Beverly——"

"Here I am," said a voice at the door,—which so startled Maggie that she left unfinished the sentence she had commenced.

After shaking hands with Mrs. Wagner and Hope, Mr. Beverly turned gayly toward Maggie.

"Well, miss, what is it you have to say about me? Let us hear."

"That you admire me exceedingly."

"Certainly I do. And there is another, who, if I mistake

not, admires you quite as much as I do, and for whose admiration you care twice as much."

"And, pray, who is that other?"

"Frank Hathaway."

"What in the name of goodness makes you fancy Mr. Hathaway and I have any particular regard for each other?"

"How in the name of goodness can I think otherwise? I believe this is positively the first time I have come in of an evening during the whole winter without finding him here; and I shall be surprised if he does not pop in now before I leave."

"Well, if you do find him here, it is not far more reasonable to suppose he is an admirer of Hope than of me?"

"So it is. And such would be my supposition, did he not exhibit such a tender devotedness toward you, whilst he treats Hope with a sort of brotherly affection. But I've observed all my life that these grave bachelors, who have passed the age of thirty, were sure to be captivated by some young rattle-pate like you."

This remark was scarcely uttered before the door was opened, and Harry, accompanied by Frank Hathaway, entered. Mr. Beverly cast a significant glance at Maggie, which called the bright blood to her cheek; but she threw off her embarrassment by exclaiming,—

"Oh, Mr. Beverly, is not the Secretary of the Interior a great friend of yours?"

"Yes."

"Well, I just desire you to give him a good lecture for his rudeness to dear Mrs. Wagner."

"You must be mistaken. My friend the Secretary is too truly a gentleman to treat any lady rudely, but least of all our friend Mrs. Wagner, whom everybody respects."

"I guess he was not aware of that fact, nor that, within her own lifetime, collateral branches of her family have given more than one President to the nation,—also Senators, Cabinet ministers, and foreign ambassadors. Why, if there is an aristocracy in the country, she belongs to it; for——"

"There, Maggie! that will do: you have enumerated reasons enough why I should have been treated with courtesy."

"To which allow me to add one, that is paramount to all these," said Mr. Beverly.

"Paramount? Then do let us hear it," said Maggie.

"Her own merit as an intellectual, refined, and Christian woman."

"True enough. And think, when she called, that he kept her standing, like a servant waiting for a command."

"What's that you say?"

"Just listen, and I'll tell you how she was received."

Mag, in her own inimitable manner, described the reception of Mrs. Wagner as that lady had related it to her. Mr. Beverly sat perfectly quiet till she got through; then, turning to Mrs. Wagner, he said,—

"It is not possible Jake treated you in that manner? I presume he was not perfectly courteous, and Mag, the witch, has made this exaggerated story of it."

"She has told the truth, with no exaggeration."

"Why, I would not treat my washerwoman so discourteously! And after reading my letter of introduction, too."

"Aha! so you were the friend who gave her the letter."

"Yes; and what of it, Miss Impertinence?"

"Why, had I been the writer of it, I would consider his reception of the bearer an insult to myself: that's all."

"So it is; and I ought to quarrel with him about it."

"Oh, do; and send him a challenge, and fight a duel. It will make Mrs. Wagner quite a character of romance. Won't it be charming?"

"Hush, hush, child," said Mrs. Wagner. "I cannot let you talk thus, even in sport. The putting of one's life in danger is too serious a thing to be jested about. And I have no doubt but just such light and thoughtless speeches have ere now been the cause of more than one duel. We should never allow ourselves to speak, or even think, lightly of an act which is a violation of the law of God as well as man."

Maggie felt quite abashed by the serious reproof of Mrs.

Wagner: consequently she remained silent and thoughtful for some time. Mr. Beverly continued the conversation by saying,—

"But I certainly do feel indignant that the bearer of a letter of introduction from me should receive such treatment; and I'll not forget it. He wants to be our next President; but my vote will never help him to the place."

"By-the-way," said Frank Hathaway, "who will be the candidate of our party for the next canvass?"

"It is impossible to guess. Every member of the present Cabinet is manœuvring for it."

"But who do *you* think stands the best chance?"

"None of the present Cabinet. Each will try to thwart the others."

"Why," said Harry, "I have understood it is considered certain by knowing politicians that Mr. Cobb will be the lucky man."

"A piece of news manufactured by his own special parasites. But I can tell you this much with certainty: we are beat dead if we take him for our candidate."

"Why, I thought he would be the very man, because, although a Southern man, his course has been so moderate and conciliatory that he will be supported by the North."

"His course has been so very conciliatory that he has the seeming of courting Northern opinion for his own especial benefit. But that is not what will beat him."

"What is it?"

"This. You know, when he took charge of the Treasury, Uncle Sam had fifty millions of money on hand. He immediately went to work and called in the Government bonds, paying a premium for them. Now, who was benefited by this transaction? The rich capitalists of the North and East, of course; because the premium paid went into their pockets. Well, when he had emptied the Treasury in this way, what next? Why, he proposes dismissing from employment thousands of laborers, because Government has no money to pay them. It is a very good thing to have popularity with the rich

capitalist; but it will not do to purchase it at the expense of the laboring masses, because it is their vote that elects the President. So, you see, if we select Mr. Cobb for our candidate, the opposition will place these facts in the hands of the laboring millions, and thus do him great injury, because we cannot deny them."

"True, they might injure him thus."

"*Might?* Ay, *would*. All former experience has proven such would be the case. Henry Clay, with his world-wide renown, brilliant talents, and great popularity, could never be elected President. And why? Whenever his name was before the people for that office, the masses were made to believe he was opposed to their interest. His opposition to a pre-emption law was the evidence adduced to prove that he had no sympathy with the laboring classes; and thus he was always beaten. And such will be the fate of Mr. Cobb should he be our candidate. Already it has been said that the fifty millions were thrown into the hands of the Northeastern capitalists by him for the purpose of making popularity in that section."

"You are right. The opposition could use him up in less than no time, should they bring these things up."

"Bring them up? Of course they would bring them up; and it would take from us thousand of votes. Not of our own partisan voters, because they will vote for the nominee of the party if the opposition were to prove that he had stolen a sheep. But there are thousands of persons in this country who have no very decided political bias, and it is their vote that decides the Presidential contest; for whichever party secures these persons is sure to be winner. And the opposition would take every one of these votes from us, by telling them our candidate had emptied the Treasury into the pockets of rich capitalists, and then wished to turn the laborer adrift, because there was no money to pay for his work. Don't you see how disastrously it would affect us?"

"Yes, I see: we will have to take some one else. What do you think of our present Vice-President, Mr. Breckenridge?"

"A good man and true,—one whom both politicians and people will endorse."

"Yes, and there is another man in the same State," said Frank Hathaway, who had been a silent listener to the preceding conversation, "who, although his name is not so much spoken of by politicians, would run a good race."

"Ah? Who?" asked Harry and Beverly at the same time.

"Ex-Secretary Guthrie. His management of the Treasury satisfied the whole country. He would carry the vote of the South and West, and Pennsylvania would go for him before any man in the nation."

"You are about right there, Hathaway: he is a strong man. The people are with him."

"Oh, pshaw!" said Maggie, turning impatiently toward Mr. Beverly: "I do wish, when you come here, you would let President-making alone, and let us have a chess, whilst, music, or something we ladies can participate in."

"Very well. You and I will try a game of chess, whilst Mrs. Wagner and Harry beat Hope and Mr. Hathaway at whist."

"Hope is a much better chess-player than I: you would better have her for your antagonist."

"Ho, ho! I see what you are up to," said Mr. Beverly, in an undertone: "you want to be Mr. Hathaway's partner."

"No, I don't, Mr. Smartness."

"Then why propose Hope to me?"

"Because she is a good chess-player. You could beat me so easily, the game would have no interest."

"Well, well, then, sing me a song."

"That I will do with pleasure. What shall it be?"

"Something light and joyous as your own heart."

"You must stand beside me whilst I sing, so that I may be inspired by your gay spirit."

He accompanied her to the harp. She ran her fingers over the strings to see if it were in tune, then, looking mischievously into Mr. Beverly's face, warbled, merrily,—

"Now I'll sing you a lay as light and as gay
As down upon autumn winds dancing away,
Of hearts beating so light, eyes beaming so bright,
That time will not dim them as years take their flight."

"Ahem! Very wonderful eyes! I suppose their owners would have no occasion to wear specs were they to live a hundred years," said Mr. Beverly, very demurely.

"Now you listen to the music, and make your comments after it is finished. It is not 'manners,' as Aunt Minta would say, 'to talk whilst a lady is singing;' and, changing the music to a more jingling measure, she continued:—

"Oh, the summer flowers are blowing,
And the summer woods are green,
Where a crystal stream is flowing
'Neath the sunset's golden sheen.
And upon its bank are straying
A dark youth, and maiden fair;
And the summer winds are playing
With the maiden's soft brown hair."

"To her cheek a blush is mounting
As she listens to the tone
Of the youth's low voice recounting
How she made his heart her own.
And her eye with love is beaming
When her glance to his is given,
Whilst in his dark orbs is gleaming
A joy that speaks of heaven."

"There!" said she, rising from the instrument: "now what have you got to say?"

"That you, like many a silly maiden has done before you, fancy a love-dream is a part of heaven."

"And so it is."

"It is, eh? Where did you learn so much about it?"

"Have not I read Moore's, Byron's, and other poets' descriptions of it?"

"A poet's fancy,—that's all; but believe it a reality whilst you can."

"Mr. Beverly, you are the hatefulest man in this city; and I'd serve you right never to sing for you again."

"So you would," said Frank Hathaway, joining them; "but now sing something for me."

She again took her seat, and her clear, silvery voice was less playful as she gave utterance to the following:—

“Both sunlight and shadow will fall on our way
As over life's ocean our fairy barks glide;
Where the bright flowers open their petals so gay,
The yew-tree is frequently seen by their side.
The south wind that sweeps over fair orange-groves,
And rifles their fragrance to sweeten its breath,
Through the yew's sombre branches as playfully moves:
Yet they give forth a tone that reminds us of death.

“Oft when hearts are the gayest some sorrow unseen
Is lurking anear, to o'erwhelm them with grief;
And again, when misfortune hath heaviest been,
Some hand, never thought of, is bringing relief.
Then let us be merry whilst kind friends are nigh,
And enjoy each bright moment Time shakes from his wing;
The dark clouds of winter flit rapidly by,
And then we are greeted by flowers of spring.”

Whilst Maggie was singing, Hope's thoughts were with the long ago when her own heart was full of joyousness, as Maggie's now is. Had any one observed her closely, they might have perceived the glitter of a tear-drop in the long lashes that drooped over her eyes. But none observed her; for Maggie kept the attention of all riveted upon herself by her gay sallies and merry snatches of song.

CHAPTER LIII.

A WIDOW'S CLAIM.

“Is Mr. Marshall in?” asked a sad, musical voice of the servant who answered the bell.

“He is not in, mem.”

“Will you please take my card to his room? He may be in. I know members of Congress are so much annoyed by calls upon their time that they are obliged sometimes to give orders to servants to say to visitors they are not at home when really they are not out. I have been told Mr. Marshall is a noble, generous-hearted man; and, should he be at home, I am sure he will not deny himself to a lady who has taken a long walk for the purpose of seeing him.”

“Mr. Marshall is not one of that sort, mem. If he is too busy to see visitors, he sends word he is engaged. No, indeed: Mr. Marshall would think it a sin, besides being mean and ungentlemanly, to have a *servant* tell a lie for *him*.”

“I am very sorry he is not in;” and the voice now, in addition to its sadness, was tremulous in its tones, as if the speaker were obliged to choke down a sob ere she could give utterance to the words.

“I am very sorry too,” said the servant, looking pityingly into the sad, pale face.

“I am weak; and my long walk has fatigued me much. Will you allow me to take a seat in the hall till I am rested?”

“Won't you walk into the parlor and rest upon a sofa?”

“No, thank you: I will rest here; but, if it is not too much trouble, I will beg you for a glass of water, as I feel faint.”

“No trouble at all, mem; no trouble at all,” said the compassionate voice of the servant, as he hastened to the dining-room

to get a glass of iced water. Finding his mistress there, he exclaimed,—

"Oh, Miss Hope, there is the sorrowfullest-faced lady that I ever sot eyes on out thar in the hall! And I know she's a rale lady, for all she's not dressed fine, 'case she speaks so soft and perlite."

"What does she want?"

"She wanted to see Mass' Harry; and, when I 'formed her he warn't at home, she axed me for a glass of water——"

"Make haste and take it to her. I will come out and see her. Perhaps I will serve her as well as Harry."

When Hope entered the hall, following Jim, Mrs. Boyer was leaning exhausted upon the arm of the chair upon which she was seated, so pale that even her lips were bloodless. When she heard the sound of footsteps, she raised her dark, sorrowful eyes, but was too near fainting to attempt to speak or rise. She seized the glass of water and drank it eagerly; and, as Hope gazed upon her, she thought Jim had well expressed himself by saying "it was the sorrowfullest face he ever sot eyes on." The glass of cold water revived her somewhat, and she raised her eyes to Hope's face with a deprecating look, as if she would apologize; but she was spared the necessity of words by Hope's remarking,—

"The boy tells me you wished to see my brother."

"I did, and regret exceedingly that he is not at home."

The sad, musical voice thrilled the heart of Hope, as it had that of the servant, and she hastened to say,—

"My brother has commissioned me to hear the statement of any lady who calls upon business when he is absent. If you will step into my room, I will listen to any statement you may desire to make, and communicate it to him as soon as he returns."

"Thank you for your kindness. I would not tax you, but my boarding-house is at some distance; and, as I am not strong, I may not be able to call again."

Aunt Minta, who was cook and, as she styled herself, general boss of Harry's establishment, managed, as was her usual custom

when the door-bell rang, to peep from the kitchen-door, which she kept partly open for that purpose, to note the appearance of those who came. Usually, if the caller was some plainly-clad person asking to see Mr. Marshall, when Jim entered the kitchen after having answered the bell, his ears were greeted with,—

"Laws sakes alive! I do declar', I'm tired of all these poor white folks comin' here a'ter Mass' Harry, wantin' him to do this thing and that for 'em! It mus' worry him eenymost to death. But, poor chile! he's jist like his poor dead mammy use, to be: he can't 'fuse anybody, but mus' listen to all their 'palamities.'"

But this time *her* heart was touched; and when Jim, after putting away the tumbler, came into the kitchen, she surprised him by her exhibition of sympathy.

"Poor, dear lady!" said she: "how pale and sorrowful-like she do look!"

"She do, indeed; and then her voice sounded so low and mournful-like, it made my heart riz right up in my throat to hear it. 'Deed it did, Aunt Minta."

"Poor creeter! She's none of your common poor white folks. 'Deed a'n't she. I could see that with one eye as I stood here in the kitchen-door."

Having made these observations, both she and Jim stood silent for at least a minute. The silence was broken by Aunt Minta.

"Jim, you go 'long fetch down a waiter, with two chaney cups and sassers on it. Poor creeter! she looked faint-like. The kittel's b'ilin': so I'll make a cup of tea an' carry in. I think a good strong cup of tea will revive her up. And you, Jim, mind you gits one of the very whitest napkins to put on that thar waiter. Does you hear, Jim?"

"Yes, I hears," answered Jim, as he went with alacrity to do Aunt Minta's bidding.

We will leave Aunt Minta to prepare her good strong cup of tea, which with her is a specific for every earthly ill, whilst we return to Mrs. Boyer.

Hope conducted her into her own pleasant room, seated her in her luxurious lounging-chair; and, the day being warm, she handed her a fan with a manner as kindly respectful as she would have shown to Miss Lane or Lady Napier. Having bestowed on her all these attentions to make her comfortable, she seated herself, saying,—

"Now rest yourself thoroughly, and then I will hear what you wish me to communicate to my brother."

"You are too kind. I, an entire stranger, have no right so to intrude upon your time."

As she uttered these words, the white, heavily-fringed lids drooped, to hide a tear-drop that gathered in the sad, dark eye.

"My time is entirely at your service," answered Hope: "therefore do not feel that you intrude; and I promise, in my brother's name, if he can in any way serve you, it will give him pleasure to do so."

The tear that had been slowly gathering in her eye could be no longer repressed by the closed lids, but it rolled down the pale cheek and dropped upon the emaciated, waxen-hued hand that lay in her lap. Some moments elapsed ere she could reply to this last remark; and Hope, knowing from experience how gentle words affect the heart almost crushed with sorrow, did not interrupt by further speech. When the dark eyes were again raised to Hope's face, the look of hopeless despair had left them. The first words she uttered were,—

"You must excuse my weakness. I have been sick and oppressed with care and sorrow, so that I have no more strength of mind than a child. Your words of kindness caused the tears that have long been dried up to flow. It is long since I wept; and yet now I could not repress my tears."

"Do not try to repress them. I too have known sorrow."

"You known sorrow, Miss Marshall? You?"

"Yes, I."

"But not such dark sorrow as mine."

"I thought it dark enough when my heart was o'ershadowed with it; but the grace of God gave me strength to bear the

trials he permitted to fall upon me. Now they are past. And the darkness may ere long be lifted from your pathway."

"I fear not. Oh, I fear not. I am less hopeful than fearful."

"Any thing my brother or self can do for you shall be done."

"Oh, thank you for your kind promise to one so friendless and world-weary. Already you have done much for me. You have in some degree dissipated the dark despair that was settling about my heart. Indeed, your kind sympathy and pleasant voice have so beguiled me that I was forgetting my errand; but it is so pleasant sitting here listening to its music instead of the dark whisperings of my own sad spirit!"

"It is my turn to beg you to excuse me for stealing away your time," said Hope, in a light, happy tone.

"No, no; it is not stolen. It has only induced me to take a rest which I needed; and now I must state the object of my call."

She drew from her pocket a bundle of papers and placed them in Hope's hand, saying, as she did so,—

"It will be necessary for your brother to read these papers. You perceive it is a claim, which I wish him to look into and see if any thing can be done with it. Indeed, I would not trouble him nor any one else with it, but I am in such great need. My childhood was bright and happy. I was reared in a home of luxury; but my own poor children—God help them!—have no such remembrances. In one night we by the devastation of fire were reduced from affluence to poverty. This occurred when my boy was three months and my girl not quite three years old: consequently, they retain no remembrance of a home of luxury. It was for the purpose of collecting this claim to which I now ask your brother's attention that my husband came to this city and accepted a clerkship. He had only gotten the papers in order to present to Congress, when he died, leaving me and my two babes—for they were scarcely more—alone, helpless, and almost penniless, in a strange city. Although he had not been long here, he had made some warm friends and true among his fellow-clerks.

"They came to me in my sorrow with assurances of sympathy and friendship. And one—may God forever bless him!—went to the Secretary of the Interior and procured sufficient writing for me to support myself and children. Thus I was relieved from a dread which, after returning from the burial of my husband, had crept into my heart. Yes, I feared I should soon be reduced to the lowest state of penury; for what could I, with my two babes, do in the way of ordinary labor that would supply us with even the barest necessities of life? I can write neatly and rapidly; and it was well, perhaps, that I was obliged to exert myself for the support of my children, as it kept me so much occupied I had no time to brood over the fading-out of life's bright hopes. Yet grief and anxiety have, I fear, undermined my constitution; for lately my health is very poor. It is this which induced me to try again to obtain this claim. I tried soon after my husband's death, but could get no action upon it: so I gave it up. But now the thought of leaving my children upon the cold charities of the world alone and unprovided for enabled me to overcome my reluctance to call upon and ask the interest of a stranger in my behalf."

"Believe me, if we can assist you we will not remain strangers."

"I do believe you. Already I feel as if I had been conversing with a friend."

As Mrs. Boyer uttered this sentence, the door was opened, and Aunt Minta appeared, bearing a tray, upon which was placed nicely-buttered biscuit, cold ham, and the "good strong cup of tea."

"Miss Hope," said she, ere her mistress could address her a word, "I fetched yer lunch airy, 'case you see I'm gwine to iron d'rec'ly: I hopes 'twon't make no difference if 'tis a leetle sooner than you commonly hev it."

"None in the world," answered Hope, who at once divined her reason for doing so and in her heart thanked her for it.

Aunt Minta set the tray upon a side-table, and, making her very best "curchy," as she informed Jim when she returned to the kitchen, she addressed Mrs. Boyer with,—

"Mem, won't you hev a cup of tea? thar's nothin' in the

world like it to reviven a body when they's tired and faint-like."

There was an expression passed over Mrs. Boyer's face indicating an uncertainty whether to accept or reject the invitation tendered by Aunt Minta; but Hope relieved her from her embarrassment at once, by saying,—

"You must not refuse to drink a cup of Aunt Minta's tea; for she prides herself on her tea-making."

"I will drink a cup of your tea, auntie, and thank you for your kindness in offering it," said Mrs. Boyer, raising her dark eyes; and a smile, beautiful as it was rare, swept over her face.

This short sentence, and the manner in which it was spoken, completely captivated Aunt Minta's heart; and she declared to Jim, when speaking of it afterward, if she had doubted it before she would have known she was a true lady as soon as she had heard her voice.

When the lunch was partaken of, and Mrs. Boyer rose to depart, Hope begged her to be seated till she gave a few orders to the servants. She left the room, and in a short time returned habited in her out-door costume. The order she had given was to have the carriage brought to the door, and her purpose in going out, to set Mrs. Boyer down at her own home, thus sparing her the fatigue of a long walk.

"I fear I have detained you," said Mrs. Boyer, resting her eye upon the street-dress.

"Not at all. The thought of going out came to my mind as you rose to leave. The carriage will be at the door very soon; and if you will allow me to set you down at the door of your boarding-house, it will give me pleasure to do so."

"Thank you. And, were I as weak and faint as when I entered your dwelling, your kind offer would be an exceedingly great favor. Aunt Minta's cup of tea has so 'revivened' me that I do not feel like the same person."

The sound of carriage-wheels was heard at the door; and Hope and Mrs. Boyer were soon seated in it. In a few minutes Mrs. Boyer was in her own room, bending over her work, but feeling less weariness than she had done for weeks. Hope's ready

sympathy and kind words of encouragement had revived her drooping spirit, thus lessening the weariness that weighed down the feeble body. As Mrs. Boyer's pen flew rapidly over the paper, transcribing mechanically the daily task which procured bread for herself and children, the following thoughts passed through her mind.

Did the daughters of wealth know how much a sister struggling with adverse fortune is strengthened by words of gentle kindness, they would be more frequently spoken. How often, when the last spark of hope is expiring in the overburdened heart, would a few words of kind encouragement rekindle it and make them strong to continue the struggle of life!

CHAPTER LIV.

HOPE INTERESTS HERSELF FOR THE WIDOW.

"OH, Harry, I had such an interesting visitor to-day! Or, rather, she was your visitor; but, you being absent, I received her, and furthermore promised you would without delay attend to the business upon which she called."

"It was a lady, eh?"

"Yes."

"Young or old?"

"Young, beautiful, and a widow."

"Oh, charming! I shall, of course, attend to it immediately. It will give me an excuse for calling upon her and looking upon her fair face."

"It is indeed very fair, but deathly pale, and oh, so sad!" And Hope's voice lost its playfulness as the picture of that sad, suffering face was vividly recalled.

"What does she wish me to do?"

"It is something about a claim. But here are the papers: you can examine for yourself."

Harry took the neatly-enveloped package which Hope handed him, and he was soon busy in looking over it. Whilst he was thus engaged, Hope sat perfectly silent; but when he had finished the examination and looked up, her first words were,—

"Well, can any thing be done?"

"I think so. It seems to me a very plain case."

"Then you will give it your immediate attention? I promised her you would. I know, if you were to see the hopeless expression of her dark, sorrowful eyes, you would. She has had it before Congress; but there has never been any action on it. The saying, 'Hope deferred maketh the heart sick,' is certainly illustrated in her case; for never have I looked upon a face whose

expression more painfully indicated heart-sickness than hers did to-day when she came. She looked less despondent when I parted from her; for I encouraged her with the assurance that you would give her claim your immediate attention. And you will, brother, for my sake?"

"Yes, Hope, I would for your sake, even were I not influenced by my sense of duty. But, sister, I make it a rule, whenever any business is put into my hands, to give it my immediate attention, more particularly if it be a private claim; because all such call up, oh, how distinctly!"—and his voice and look grew stern as he continued,—“your heart-breaking cry of ‘Too late! too late!’ when our father lay insensible upon his dying bed. And you remember—don’t you?—that the physician said he was brought to that condition by anxiety and excitement arising from the delay of those whose duty it was to attend to his business. I trust no one will ever have cause to bring such a charge against me.”

"I trust not, Harry; I trust not. What can you do for Mrs. Boyer?"

"I will have to refer her claim to the committee whose business it is to investigate this character of claims."

"And what then?"

"I will try to get a report from the committee as soon as possible."

"And then she will get her money?"

"She may, if the report be favorable."

"You have looked at and find it just: so it cannot be otherwise than favorable."

"That is not certain. It is so much easier to reject a claim without investigation than to examine it to ascertain its justice, that, no matter how clear the justice of a claim may be, that does not always secure its payment."

"Well, it ought to."

"So it ought; and so it would, were all the members of our body to take the same view of what was their duty that I do. But many of them, when they get here, think if they make flaming, fiery speeches, wrangle over and attempt to defeat every

measure proposed by the political party opposed to themselves, distribute among their constituents copies of their own speeches, with other documents of a like partisan character, that they have admirably performed their whole duty as legislators. Private claims are too insignificant to receive one moment's attention from this class of legislators, although their neglect may cause the heart-strings of more than one individual to snap asunder, worn out by hope deferred and long-continued anxiety.

"There is another portion, who think only of partaking of the social dinners to which they are invited, giving their nightly attendance to drawing-rooms, receptions, hops, and parties, for the purpose of sunning themselves in the light of beauty's eyes and whispering soft nothings into the ear of the gay butterflies who make up these brilliant assemblages. This class, as a matter of course, will not give themselves up to the dull, humdrum duty of overlooking old musty papers for the purpose of ascertaining if a claim be just: so nothing can be expected from them.

"Again, there is another class, to whom the mere mention of a private claim is sufficient to arouse their ire. These persons would reject all private claims in a mass, without ever looking at them, and take to themselves great credit that by so doing they save to the Treasury large amounts of money; forgetting this very money is paid into the Treasury by the people for the purpose of paying the just debts of the Government, as well as for defraying its current expenses. And we, the agents of the people, who receive our pay from their hands, have no right to refuse or neglect the investigation of a single claim presented by one of these people."

"Is this a true picture you have drawn, Harry?"

"Yes, Hope, too true."

"Then I fear I have given poor Mrs. Boyer more encouragement than I was justified in doing."

"No, Hope; you did right. I will exert myself on her behalf. I regret I am not on the committee to which her claim will be referred. However, I will examine it thoroughly myself before it is given to the committee, and give the member to whom it is referred the benefit of my labor."

"Do, Harry: that's a dear, good boy."

A smile played over Harry's features as his eye caught the reflection of his tall, manly figure in an opposite mirror; and he replied,—

"A good-sized boy, sister mine."

"No longer a boy, Harry. But I am so in the habit of thinking of you as you were when papa died, that, although to the world you are the gifted orator, to me you seem the boy you were then."

"And so I trust I shall ever remain to you, my sister. Yes, I will ever listen to your counsels as I did then, knowing I shall be guided aright."

"God grant you may! But do you know, Harry, since you have won the position you were so anxious to gain, and which I am proud that you attained so soon, I am sometimes afraid you will lose that nobility of sentiment which makes the true man, and become a political schemer for the purpose of retaining place and power?"

"Never, Hope! never!"

"I know you think so now."

"And will ever think so. My spirit scorns any thing mean or unworthy. And, besides, true honesty of purpose is more certain of continued success than trickery and management. Remember Governor Prescott: he retired from the Senate when he was seventy-six years of age, having been in the service of the Government for more than twenty years. I am sure there was nothing of the political schemer about him; and he is the model I intend to follow."

"You cannot follow a nobler."

"So I think. But, bless me! the clock is striking six! I have an engagement at half-past six; and, as I consider punctuality one of the cardinal virtues, I must leave you. You can examine these papers whilst I am gone; and, as I have a profound respect for your judgment, you can give me your opinion when you have done so."

CHAPTER LV.

HOW THE PAYMENT OF CLAIMS IS DELAYED.

WHEN Harry returned from the engagement which had called him away, he gave Mrs. Boyer's claim a thorough investigation before he slept. He found the evidence of its justice so clear that he was astonished that it had not before been paid.

The next day he presented the papers and had them referred to the proper committee. When this was done, he saw the chairman of that committee and requested him to give them at once into the hands of the person who was to examine the claim and report thereon, as he wanted immediate action. The chairman complied with his request, then notified him that the papers had been given to Mr. Clayton, and when the committee would again meet. The day previous to that on which the committee was to meet, Harry called upon Mr. Clayton, asked him if he had examined the claim of Mrs. Boyer, and what he thought of it.

"There is one insurmountable objection against it," answered Mr. Clayton.

"Ah! What is it? I did not discover it when I examined the papers."

"Why, if this claim is paid, many others having similar ones would insist upon their payment, and it would take a large amount of money from the Treasury."

"Is that the only objection?"

"Seeing that, I examined no further."

"And you think that sufficient to bar its payment?"

"I do."

"Should not Governments be as scrupulously just in the settlement of accounts as individuals?"

"They should."

"What would you think of a merchant who would refuse to correct an error made by an incompetent clerk, giving, as a reason for so doing, that if he corrected this one he might have many similar ones, thus hundreds of dollars would be taken from his money-drawer? Would you consider him honest?"

"Certainly not."

"I think this case is somewhat similar."

"Why, I myself might bring a claim like this of Mrs. Boyer's; but I do not intend to ask its payment."

"If you, a man of wealth and holding a high position, do not choose to collect money due you, is that any reason why a poor widow struggling to get bread for her children should not receive what is due her? No, no: our business, when a claim is presented, is to examine it, and, if we find it just, to pay it, without asking how much money may be taken from the Treasury. When Daniel Webster was Secretary of State, did he hesitate about paying some thousands of dollars to General Cass—a claim very similar to this—because by so doing it might cause large amounts to be taken from the Treasury? No: he gave an order it should at once be paid. Was Henry Clay ever known to calculate, when his judgment was convinced a thing was just and right, how much money it would cost? Never. This eternal clamor about saving money to the Treasury is only heard from the scheming politician, never from the liberal-minded, noble-hearted, and enlightened statesman. But excuse me: I have spoken warmly, because I feel deeply."

"No need of an apology. I thank you for having shown me how contracted and false a view I had taken of the matter. I will give the papers a more thorough examination, and if I find the claim just I will report in its favor."

"A thousand thanks for your kindness."

Mr. Clayton's promise to Harry was kept; and the consequence was a favorable report from the committee at its first meeting. When Harry told Hope it was thus reported, she exclaimed,—

"Oh, I am so rejoiced! Now the poor woman will soon get her money."

"It may be a long time yet before she gets it," said Mr.

Lancaster, who was sitting in the parlor and heard her exclamation.

"Why so?"

"Congress may adjourn without acting upon it. I have known many who, when they had thus got a favorable report, felt as if they almost had the money in their pockets: yet Congress would adjourn without action upon their case. The next session the same thing would have to be gone over again, and a similar fate would await it: thus year after year would go by, till finally the claimant would discontinue the prosecution of his claim, from sheer weariness and disgust."

"That may have been the case formerly, but it cannot be so now."

"And why not now?"

"For the best reason in the world. Formerly members received pay only whilst Congress was in session; but now they receive a yearly salary, and they cannot in honor adjourn till all the business before them is attended to."

"We will see."

"Yes, we *will* see. I, for my part, am well assured the change in the mode of paying members will effect this change in the transaction of business."

"A woman's opinion; but I fear it will be proven a mistaken one by the action of the present session."

"I have no such fear. Mr. Lancaster, you have too little faith in the honor and justice of Congressmen. There may be a few unprincipled men among them; but the most of them are high-toned, honorable, and just."

"And the misfortune is, these few unprincipled ones may defeat the action of the majority; and it is particularly so in the case of private bills. Why, I have known a member of a committee spend days in examining papers and making calculations to assure himself of the justice of a claim; and yet, when this claim was brought before the House, with the approval of the entire committee, it has been defeated by the objection of a single individual who had never looked at the papers, and consequently knew no more about the claim than you or I."

"That should not be permitted. It is throwing discredit upon the judgment or motives of the member who has investigated and reported in its favor, leaving alone the injustice which may be done to the claimant."

"That is true. Yet such a thing often occurs. Indeed, there is one member who makes it a rule to object to almost every private bill that comes before the House; and he takes pride that by this course he has gained the nickname of watchdog of the Treasury."

"It is surprising to me that any man should take pride in being called a cur."

"No, no; not cur: watchdog."

"Well, well, watchdog or cur, it is about the same thing,—an unreasoning animal. Yet I do not know but the name is well applied; for, from your statement, he must object without reason, as he has never examined the subject."

"But he accomplishes the purpose for which this objection is made."

"What is that purpose?"

"To impress his constituents with the idea he is particularly solicitous to serve their interest, by keeping the money in the Treasury and preventing extravagant expenditure."

"Yet if those constituents would reflect a moment they would be convinced their interest would be better served by having the money in circulation among them, than to have it locked up in the vaults of the Treasury, leaving the business of the husbandman, merchant, and mechanic to languish for want of its use. No, no: instead of keeping it locked up, let it circulate among the people. A nation's true wealth is the industry and energy of its people; and money is the stimulus that quickens industry; and the money we pay from the Treasury performs that mission, and returns to it to be again sent out. Therefore let Government pay to every citizen whatever may be justly due, and let it be done without wearing out a lifetime."

"Ah, you may well say 'wearing out a lifetime.' My being engaged in attending to claims has brought to my knowledge

many a sad and touching history, of which were I to write, it would make many a volume quite as pathetic as the story of 'Little Dorrit' from the pen of Dickens."

"I do not doubt it. I am sure there must be a touching history connected with Mrs. Boyer. I trust she will soon have her money."

"Do not be too sanguine. I will have to relate to you some of my experience in prosecuting claims before Government, to show you the uncertainty with regard to them. I now have one case in hand which has been for years before the Department; and, when I proved to them its justice and cited to them instances where precisely similar claims had been paid, what reason do you suppose they gave for not paying it?"

"I can conceive of none."

"Why, that they could not reopen an account that had been acted upon by a predecessor in office; and this plea for not paying it was made almost immediately after they had reopened and paid a claim of about forty thousand dollars, which had been acted on and positively rejected by the predecessor who had just gone out of office."

"Did you not ask where they got authority to reopen one case and not to reopen another?"

"I might ask till I turned gray. They have a habit of paying no attention to the questions of a claimant or claim-agent when they propound such questions as are difficult to answer. I have had serious thoughts lately, as the administration has its organ and the opposition its organ, of establishing a paper here as an organ for claimants and claim-agents, and inviting all who have incidents of this kind come under their notice to furnish me with the facts, and I will publish them."

"Well, can you see any reason why they should have reopened one and not the other?"

"None, unless this be a reason. The claim reopened and paid was due an active and influential politician; and the one that could not be opened was due a widow for service performed by her husband,—a man whose name while living was an honor to his country. As an orator, man of learning, and statesman, he

was among the first in the nation. When I was but a youth, I used to read his speeches in Congress as models of elegant and chaste composition. Oh, how unlike the violent, declamatory speeches, interspersed with personal epithets, which we now frequently hear! And how unlike was that high-toned, dignified statesman to the politicians of the present day, who make these speeches in the halls of legislation! But excuse me for this digression: it is not my intention to pronounce a eulogy. So I will return to the subject upon which we were speaking. I promised you some of my experience with regard to the collection of claims, and I will give you the history of one single case; but, in order to do so clearly, it is necessary for me to read some letters which I have in reference to it."

"Pray bring the letters when you call again; for since I have known Mrs. Boyer I take quite an interest in the subject of claims."

"I will do as you request; for I wish to give you some idea as to how these things are managed."

CHAPTER LVI.

CORRESPONDENCE WITH THE DEPARTMENTS.

"GOOD-EVENING, Miss Marshall. What! all alone?"

"Yes: Harry and Maggie have gone to a concert with Mrs. Ford, a lady-friend of mine, to whom I will be most happy to introduce you."

"Is she a widow?"

"Oh, no. What put such an idea as that into your head?"

"You spoke of her without her husband."

"True. He is gone to New York to attend to some business, and she will remain with me during his absence."

"From your State?"

"No; from Kentucky. But Harry and her husband are partners in the proprietorship of the town in which we reside. Indeed, it is to him Harry is indebted for the rapidity with which he made money; and she is one of the noblest of women. But we will not discuss her: you will see her. So now let me remind you of the little history you promised when I last saw you. Have you the letters with you which you then spoke of?"

"I have."

"Then let me claim the fulfilment of your promise."

"Very well. The claim of which I propose giving you a history was put into my hands a short time previous to the incoming of the present administration. I immediately called at the Department and asked the attention of the Secretary of State to this particular case. I was put off with the excuse that he was on the point of going out of office, therefore he did not like to take the matter up."

"That is a poor excuse. If money is due, why not pay it, just as well as if he were to remain in office during life?"

"Because he could throw the labor of investigation and the

responsibility of its payment on his successor. So, finding I could get nothing done, I made up my mind to wait patiently till the present administration was inaugurated and ready for business.

"Soon after the new Cabinet was formed, I called upon the present Secretary of State and asked immediate action upon this case. I was put off day after day, till finally six months had gone by, and I insisted they should come to some decision with regard to it. Finding I would no longer be put off with excuses, the papers relative to Mrs. Everton's claim, which I had filed in the Department, were returned to me, and I was referred to the decision of the Secretary in another case, to find the reason why hers was not paid. The decision to which I was referred was upon a claim somewhat similar to Mrs. Everton's; but the reason assigned for its non-payment was, the account was closed, and the claimant had acquiesced in its settlement at the time of its adjustment. This being the only argument advanced to sustain the decision, it was totally inapplicable to her claim. I therefore wrote the following letter to the Secretary:—

"TO THE HONORABLE L— C—,
Secretary of State.

"SIR:—I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 28th ultimo, enclosing two letters to which you refer me, addressed by you to the First Comptroller of the Treasury.

"In my opinion, the arguments used in reference to the claim of the representatives of Mr. F— do not apply to the claim of Mrs. Everton; and I respectfully beg you to order its reconsideration. Mr. Everton's accounts have never been closed. As evidence such is the fact, he now stands charged on the books of the Treasury a *defaulter to Government*. And he never 'acquiesced' in the adjustment of his accounts, as is proven by his letters dated 15th April and 4th May, 184—, copies of which, with his account, are herewith submitted for your perusal and consideration.

"Had time permitted you to examine her claim, you would have perceived its equity at a glance, because it is for an apparent gain in exchange, which was withheld from Mr. Everton and many other ministers at that time, yourself among the number. It was your own able argument that convinced Mr. W— injustice had been done you by the auditing officers; and he directed that the money thus unjustly withheld should be paid.

"Under this decision, Mr. V—, Mr. C—, and others, recovered the amounts withheld from them. Mr. Everton never received his, having been appointed Commissioner to China in 184—, and having died whilst abroad. His widow felt assured that now, you being at the head of the State Department and understanding the character of the claim, it was only necessary to present it to your consideration to secure its payment.

"In your letter addressed to the Comptroller, dated the 28th September, you say, 'It is possible, of course, that mistakes may occur and continue unredressed for a generation; and undoubtedly every debt which the Government clearly owes ought to be paid none the less freely because it has been a long time due.' That '*the Government clearly owes*' this debt is, in my opinion, satisfactorily proven by the fact that it is precisely similar to those paid Mr. V—, Mr. C—, yourself, and others in 184—. According to the paragraph in your letter which I have copied, the payment of the claim is not precluded by the thirteen years which have elapsed since that period. Then why is its payment refused? I can conceive of but one reason; and that is, the person to whom it was submitted failed to give it a thorough investigation, neglecting to examine the letters and arguments which were presented.

"Knowing it is impossible, on account of the press of more important business, for you to give a personal examination to those letters and arguments, I have given this short statement of the case, from which you will perceive that the decision with regard to it as it now stands, bearing your signature, is equivalent to an admission on your part that you, Mr. V—, Mr. C—, and others received money from the Government to which you were not justly entitled. For if it was just to pay a debt of that

character in 184—, in accordance with the paragraph I have quoted from your letter, the payment of a similar debt should not be refused now. I therefore respectfully beg you will direct a re-examination of this case.

“‘I have the honor to be, very respectfully,

“‘Your obedient servant,

“‘H. LANCASTER.’

“Of the two letters of Mr. Everton which I sent to the Secretary as proof that he never ‘acquiesced’ in the adjustment of his account, it is necessary to read but one to show you how convincing was the proof adduced to sustain the assertion made in my letter that he had not ‘acquiesced’ in the adjustment of his account, and how utterly it was disregarded.

“‘HONORABLE — — —,

Secretary of State.

“‘SIR:—I take the liberty of submitting for your consideration some remarks upon an objection that has been taken by the auditing officers to the allowance of my supplementary account as minister at the Court of Spain.

“‘I understand the objection to be that my account as originally presented was settled at the time, and cannot now be opened either for the purpose of correcting in any way the decision then made, or of admitting supplementary charges not before presented.

“‘In reply to this objection, I beg leave to say that my account as originally presented, though it passed under the action of the auditing officers, was not at the time definitely settled. Not being satisfied with the action of the auditing officers upon the account, I presented a memorial to Congress upon the subject, which was referred to the appropriate committee. The committee made a report favorable to the prayer of the memorial; but the delays incident to the transaction of all private business by Congress prevented it from being definitely acted on. At one or two subsequent sessions of Congress, the subject was again presented, and obtained favorable reports from the committees to

which it was referred; but it has never yet received the definite action of the two Houses.

“‘An account which is pending before a tribunal competent to decide upon it cannot be regarded as settled; and this is the opinion of the auditing and executive Departments of Government, as expressed in their decision upon the precisely parallel case of Mr. V——. The same charges which had been disallowed by the auditing officers in my accounts were also disallowed in his; and he, in like manner, addressed a memorial to Congress on the subject. His memorial, like mine, was referred to the proper committee, who reported in his favor; but there was no definite action of the two Houses. Under these circumstances, he submitted the account again to the auditing officers, who have recently, acting under the direction of the President and Secretary of State, settled it in his favor.

“‘That two accounts lying before the Government at the same time, under exactly the same circumstances, founded on the same sort of service, rendered at the same place and at immediately successive periods, without any intervening change of law, should be treated in a different manner and settled on different principles, would be hardly consistent with that equality of all the citizens in the view of the Government which is the basis of our institutions and the great glory of our country. I should have supposed that the auditing officers, immediately after the settlement of the account of Mr. V——, would have felt themselves at liberty to take up mine and dispose of it at once in the same way, without any further intervention on the part of the President and Secretary of State. As the auditing officers have not thought proper to do this, it devolves upon the high functionaries alluded to to settle the question once more; and I cannot doubt that they will do it in the way which impartiality, consistency, and justice alike dictate.

“‘I will not undertake on the present occasion to show in detail the propriety and reasonableness of the particular charges stated in my supplementary account. The question whether the account can be taken up is preliminary in its nature to any other, and, if decided in the negative, precludes all further inquiry. I

will merely add here that the case is prejudged in regard to its merits, as well as the form in which it comes before the Government, by that of Mr. V——. The charges made in my supplementary account have all been allowed to him under precisely similar circumstances, and, on the principles on which his account has been settled by the existing administration, cannot be refused to me.

“Requesting you to submit these remarks to the consideration of the President, I have the honor to be, with high respect, sir,

“Your most obedient servant,

“A. H. EVERTON.”

“And pray, what reason did he give for not paying the claim after these letters were submitted to him?” asked Hope, when Mr. Lancaster finished reading the last.

“None.”

“Did he not answer your letter?”

“Well, I received a short note, which I cannot call an answer to my letter. However, I will read it to you, and you can judge for yourself:—

“DEPARTMENT OF STATE.

WASHINGTON, 8th Oct. 185—.

“H. LANCASTER.

“SIR:—Your letter of October — relative to the claim of Mrs. Everton has been received. In reply, I have to inform you that I see no reason to change the decision in respect to this claim which was communicated to you in my letter of the 28th ultimo.

“I am your obedient servant,

“L—— C——.”

“I do not see how he could write such a letter after reading those I have listened to. It seems to me they show great reason for a change of decision; and an experienced statesman, holding the high and responsible position of Secretary of State, should be more astute to perceive the force of an argument than I. To me Mr. Everton's letter is irresistible in its logic; and you make some statements in yours that I do not see how the Secretary could overlook.”

“It is to be presumed the Secretary never saw the letters; and the clerk who wrote the letter which is signed by the Secretary never read them.”

“Indeed, one would suppose from the tenor of his letter that he had not read them. But certainly no clerk would take the responsibility of reporting on a case without having examined all the papers relating to it; and you should not make such a statement unless you knew it to be a fact.”

“I do know it to be a fact; and it was an accident that made me acquainted with the fact.”

“Pray tell me how.”

“Why, payment being peremptorily refused by the Department, I determined to again bring the matter before Congress. Upon examining the papers, to see if they were all in order, I discovered a portion of them had not been returned. I went immediately to the Comptroller's office in search of them. I was there told if any of my papers were missing I would find them at the State Department, as they had sent them all there, and when returned to their office they had sent them to me just as they received them. I then called on the clerk who had written the last letter I received, and asked him for the balance of my papers. He insisted he had returned to the Comptroller all the papers he had received from him, and if any were missing I would have to go to the Comptroller for them. I again went to him and told him the statement made to me by the clerk in the State Department; whereupon the chief clerk of the Comptroller accompanied me, and we together called upon the clerk who had reported the case, described the papers of which I was in search, and he persisted in declaring no such papers had been before him.

“I then proposed we should call upon an experienced and competent clerk whom I knew, and make some inquiry of him with regard to them, as he was the clerk who usually attended to such business. We did so. He told us the papers we sought were in his possession,—that he had examined them and written a letter reporting on the case, but when he sent the letter for the

Secretary's signature he was informed the case had been disposed of by another clerk.

"'But,' said I, 'he disclaims having had these papers before him.'

"'And truly, too; for they have not been out of my possession.'

"'Then how can he justify himself in reporting upon a case without examining the papers relating to it?'

"'You will have to get an answer to that question from him, not me,' said the gentleman, shrugging his shoulders.

"The report made by him was just such a one as would have been made by a man who had examined the letters and papers which I transmitted to the Department; but there it lay in his desk, unsigned by the Secretary, the opinion of the clerk who had investigated the claim, of no more value to the claimant than so much waste paper, whilst she had to accept as a final decision the report of one who had never seen the papers relating to it."

"It is a strange kind of justice."

"But a kind we are too often obliged to accept from clerks who are not acquainted with the business of the Department. And that is the reason I say a faithful, competent, and experienced clerk should never be removed; and any person having business to transact with the Departments will soon entertain the same opinion."

"In this instance, there is justice done to the Secretary as well as to the claimant. For in *your* letter there is one paragraph which, by not being refuted, rather throws discredit on the Secretary."

"To which do you refer?"

"The paragraph in which you say you have given a statement to show him the claim of Mrs. Everton is precisely similar to one recovered by himself in 184—, and then refer to his letter, which says that Government should pay its debts none the less freely because they have been a long time due."

"Discredit or not, I stated only the truth. And when the committee in Congress to whom it will be referred have investigated it, they will see it is precisely similar to a claim of near four thousand dollars which the Secretary himself recovered when

Mr. W—— was Secretary of State. And it was his own able argument that convinced Mr. W—— the auditing officers had unjustly withheld the amount he claimed, and he ordered its immediate payment."

"That is the reason I say injustice has been done the present Secretary. His attention should have been called to this letter: if the statements you made are true, he could not do otherwise than order the payment of Mrs. Everton's claim; if untrue, the records of the Department will prove them so."

"Yes, but it is so much easier to write a letter of half a dozen lines rejecting a claim, than to examine papers, compare them with the records of the Department, and then make difficult calculations to ascertain its justice."

"But can a man who is conscientious in the performance of his duty do such a thing?"

"I could not."

"Nor I. But to return to Mrs. Boyer's claim. All you have told me does not discourage me; because your experience was with the Departments, and her claim is before Congress."

"And so too has Mrs. Everton's been. Did you not observe, in the letter addressed by Mr. Everton to the Secretary, that he refers to his memorial to Congress having received favorable reports from committees during two or three sessions? But, on account of the delays incident to the transaction of private business, it never received the definite action of both Houses. There is just where the difficulty lies. The Senate passes a private bill, and it is not reached in the House, or the House passes it, and Congress adjourns before it comes up in the Senate. Thus it goes on, session after session, always commenced, but never finished."

"Yes, but Mrs. Everton's claim was before Congress when members were paid only for the time Congress was in session; whereas now they receive a yearly salary, and we shall hear no more of a bill having passed one House and being incomplete because it was not reached in the other; for of course Congress will not adjourn till all the business, private as well as public, is disposed of."

"As I said to you in a previous conversation, we will see."

"Your tone more than your words implies a doubt as to the correctness of my conclusions. But I am not shaken in my opinion, notwithstanding my astonishment at some of your revelations."

"I may astonish you more at some future time. But it is growing late, and I will bid you good-night."

Mr. Lancaster had not been long gone when Mrs. Ford, Maggie, and Harry returned from the concert; and Hope's thoughts were so full of what he had told her that she related it to them, and when she had finished Mrs. Ford exclaimed,—

"La! I wonder if he is not the claim-agent that all the papers made so much noise about his insulting the President by insisting he should hear what he had to say after the President indicated he was not disposed to listen to him?"

"Oh, no: that was another gentleman," said Maggie.

"Well, we in the West put ourselves into quite a state of excitement over it. But really, if his business was disposed of in the same way as the gentleman's of whom you have just told us, I do not wonder that he insisted upon laying the matter before the President."

"Ah, it is very little the President knows, or can know, of these minor questions," said Hope; "and for that very reason, as Mr. Lancaster remarked this evening, experienced and competent clerks should be retained in office."

Maggie, as usual, soon tired of this theme, and proposed they should have something more interesting; and an hour or two was given to music and other light subjects ere they retired.

CHAPTER LVII.

WHY COMPETENT AND FAITHFUL CLERKS SHOULD BE RETAINED.

It was perhaps a week after the conversation between Hope and Mr. Lancaster related in the preceding chapter, that he, with several other gentlemen, was spending the evening at Harry Marshall's. The topic of conversation was the adjournment of Congress; and Harry turned to Hope, saying,—

"I fear, sister, I shall not be able to get the bill in favor of your protégée passed both Houses before the adjournment."

"You will certainly not adjourn before all the business before you is disposed of, and that includes hers, of course; for the committee has reported on it, declared it justly due, and now it is ready for the action of the House."

"If they decide upon the day now spoken of for adjournment,—which I think they will,—the private calendar could not be got through with were we to give every day to private bills."

"Aha, Miss Marshall," said Mr. Lancaster: "what do you think of my experience now?"

"I trust Harry, as well as yourself, is mistaken. Poor Mrs. Boyer would scarcely survive the disappointment should she not get her claim. She grows more feeble every day, and it is only the hope of seeing her children placed above want that sustains her."

"Yes; and I doubt not but there are many others awaiting the action of Congress with the same heart-sickening anxiety that is consuming her. I have some cases myself almost as pitiful as hers."

"Oh! it is dreadful, dreadful, this heart-wearing suspense! And to think it will be prolonged an additional six or nine

months should Congress adjourn without action upon these cases! But I cannot believe their consciences will let them do so. Or, should conscience not compel them to act, humanity would, could they know the agony their failure to do so would inflict upon the hearts of such as Mrs. Boyer. Could they but see her sad, suffering face, it would plead for her far more effectually than the most impassioned eloquence:—that is, if political ambition has not deadened their hearts to every feeling of sympathy and justice."

"Miss Marshall," said Frank Hathaway, "many of us think as you do with regard to this matter; but we are obliged to be governed by the will of the majority. For my own part, I would vote for taking up every private claim upon the calendar, and giving it a fair investigation, if it kept us here till December. Indeed, I believe, with Miss Marshall, that we are in honesty bound to do so, now that we receive a yearly salary."

"I wish a majority were of your opinion: all the claimants ask is a fair investigation, and a disposition of their claims according to their merit."

"Lancaster," said Mr. Milligan, a member from one of the Western States, whose heart was full of sympathy, and who wished to do justice, "you have been a clerk in the Departments, and are now in the claims-business: can you tell us how it is there are so many claims before Congress, and if there be a remedy for this state of things? Miss Marshall and Hathaway here have kind of startled my conscience, so that I feel we ought to stay and dispose of these private bills; but, you see, the election in our State comes off this fall, and in my Congressional district there are so many talented patriots anxious to serve their country, that I shall be laid on the shelf unless I am there to attend to my own interest before the nominating convention meets: so I will be compelled to vote for an early adjournment."

"Well, Mr. Milligan, as you have asked it, I will give you the benefit of my experience and observation. To your question of 'How is it there are so many claims before Congress?' I will answer, it is caused by the constant changing of clerks;

to the other, 'Is there no remedy for this state of things?' There is."

"Do tell us the remedy, then."

"That I will, readily. Just fill the Executive Departments with capable and conscientious men. Let the clerks whose duty it is to adjust accounts consider they are as much bound by their oath of office to protect the interest of those having business with the Government as that of the Government itself. Put this class of men in office and keep them there, and the claims before Congress will soon be vastly diminished. Clerks, like judges of the Supreme Court, should be placed beyond political influences; because the auditing clerks are a kind of judge-advocate, to whose integrity and judgment the interest of both parties is confided, and it is their duty to render strict and impartial justice to both. The will of no man—not even the President—should have the power to remove them so long as they perform their duty faithfully and well. If this rule were adopted, another evil, much complained of, would be removed."

"Ay? What is that?"

"This rush after office when a new administration comes in. There has not been for the last twenty years a new President inaugurated, but the first six months you hear constant complaints that the President and Cabinet cannot attend to the legitimate business their station demands of them, on account of the annoyance they are subjected to by the hordes of office-seekers who besiege them for office. Now, just take from them the power of providing for these besiegers, and the annoyance is removed, leaving the time of the President and Cabinet to attend to the legitimate business belonging to them."

"That won't do. If you take this patronage away, you deprive them of a powerful engine for electioneering."

"And which is the better?—to have the business of Government properly managed by competent and experienced persons, or to leave in the hands of aspirants for the Presidency this engine for electioneering-purposes?"

"Your opinion," said Harry, "reminds me of Governor Prescott. He was very much opposed to change of clerks in

the Departments, save for incompetence or neglect of duty. He said, if they would just leave the old and experienced clerks alone, and let them attend to the business of the Departments, it made but little difference who composed the Cabinet, as it was the knowledge of the clerks that kept the wheels of Government going. And he furthermore said, any one who had served the public as long as he, and transacted as much business with them as he had done, would be convinced of the truth of his assertion."

"That is true. These reports sent annually to Congress by the heads of Departments are the handiwork of the clerks. Yet they get no credit; but the individuals whose names are signed to them are lauded from one end of the country to the other for the vast knowledge and research displayed in getting up these important documents. To this I do not object; but I would see these clerks placed beyond the power of those persons, and have the Government offices no longer used as a kind of trading-capital for managing politicians."

"Yes; and a far more serious evil might be removed by it," said Mrs. Wagner, who had been an attentive listener to the conversation,—“an evil which sweeps over the country, leaving more desolation of heart around many a hearthstone than pestilence itself would do.”

"Ah! To what do you refer?" said Mr. Lancaster.

"This banding together of mere youths into political organizations, whereby habits of idleness and dissipation are engendered, the result of which is recklessness, riot, and bloodshed. It is the hope of procuring office by their devotion to party that first brings them thus together, and by the time a Presidential canvass is ended they are no longer content to spend their evenings in the quietude of the domestic circle. They go forth in quest of excitement, and, the excitement of politics being ended, they resort to that of liquor: quarrels ensue, deadly weapons are used, murder is the consequence, and an ignominious death upon the scaffold the end. For a proof of the correctness of what I say, you have only to look at Baltimore, this city, and, indeed, all the large cities of the Union."

"Unhappily, there is too much truth in what you say. And there is another humbug of politicians I would like to have the people understand."

"What is that?"

"This everlasting outcry which they keep up about economy in the administration of the Government. The true wealth of a nation is the productive labor of its citizens; and I go in for Government doing its share toward giving employment to the laborer and paying him the full value for his labor. The money Government pays him goes into the hands of the husbandman and merchant, and from them to the Treasury, to be again circulated."

"Ha! ha! ha!" roared Mr. Milligan.

"What was there in my remarks to call forth such a burst of laughter?" asked Mr. Lancaster, with a look of surprise.

"Nothing in the remarks themselves; but they reminded me of an amusing scene I witnessed to-day; and I could not refrain from laughing."

"What was it?" asked several voices.

"You know my colleague is a rabid Know-Nothing."

"Yes."

"Well, to-day, as he, myself, and several others, were coming from the Capitol after we adjourned, he observed a workman, who attends a saw that cuts stone, fast asleep.

"See," said he, with considerable ire, 'just see that lazy foreigner, [he was an Irishman, by-the-way,] to whom your party is so anxious to give employment and high wages; and there he is, indulging in a snooze instead of attending to his work. But won't I stir him up?' When we came alongside, he gave him a poke with his cane, saying, 'Is this the way you work?' 'Faith, yer honor, the slape overkim-me a bit,' said the Irishman, springing to his feet and rubbing his eyes.

"What wages does Government pay you?"

"A dollar and a half a day, yer honor."

"And you earn it by sleeping, you lazy bog-trotter?"

"Now plaze, yer honor, don't be too hard on a poor fellow that

rises airily. It's very hard to kape off the slape these long, hot afternoons.'

"'Were you honestly conscientious about earning the wages paid you, you would not sleep.'

"'Will yer honor tell me how you kape yer eyes from gittin' heavy wid the slape?'

"Before my colleague could answer, I replied, 'Oh, he takes a nap every day after dinner.' There was a mischievous twinkle in the Irishman's eye as he looked up to me and said,—

"'Ah, yer honor, it's all right for a gintleman who gits eight dollars a day to slape whenever he plazes, but it's mighty wicked for the likes o' me to be wastin' the blissed sunlight in that way.'

"The Irishman's speech produced such a shout of laughter that my colleague moved on without any further conversation with him."

"The laugh was rather against him."

"It was the look and manner, more than the words, that produced the laughter. But I beg your pardon, Mr. Lancaster, for having interrupted you: will you continue your remarks?"

"I have nothing further to say but to ask Miss Marshall for a song before I leave."

"Maggie, darling, sing something for Mr. Lancaster," said Hope.

Thus requested, she seated herself at the harp, and song after song was given, all indicative of joy and gladness. When she rose from the instrument, Mr. Lancaster said,—

"Miss Hope, I must now hear one from you."

"I will oblige you, Mr. Lancaster, though I do not feel much like singing. Harry's doubts with regard to Mrs. Boyer's claim have saddened me."

"Then let your song be in accordance with your feelings. The hearts of these gentlemen may be touched by it."

"What shall it be?" said she, taking up her guitar and running her fingers over the strings.

"Suit yourself."

"Then I'll sing of a pair of sorrowful eyes,
In whose midnight darkness a deep grief lies,
And a brow as white as the driven snow,
Pale cheeks where the rose-tint no more will glow,
A form that is wasted by hopeless despair,
A heart that is breaking with sorrow and care,
And a voice so sweetly, plaintively low
That even its tones tell a tale of woe.

"'Tis a widow'd mother my song would portray,
Whose last sands of life are fast ebbing away.
From her dark misfortune hath wrested all joy
Save the love of her children,—a bright girl and boy.
Could ye who are guardians of money and State,
With your wealth, your ambition and power elate,
But look on this mother so sad, yet so fair,
Your hearts would be touch'd by her look of despair."

"It needs but the picture your song has painted to find the tender place in my heart," said Mr. Milligan, when Hope ceased singing.

All present promised they would exert themselves in behalf of her protégée; and Hope felt Mrs. Boyer would soon see her children placed above want.

CHAPTER LVIII.

A MISTAKE CORRECTED.

It is the day previous to the adjournment of Congress. Frank Hathaway is sitting in his room at the hotel, and his face indicates that sad thoughts are busy at his heart. Harry Marshall, who is so intimate that he enters his room without rapping, steps in; and, ere Frank can drive the sad, grave expression from his face, Harry notes it, and exclaims,—

"What! wearing a look of gloom when we are all so full of happiness at the thought of going home?"

"To you, going home is a happy thought. You have every thing to render it so,—your two charming sisters, whose presence makes it indeed a fairy spot. But me,—what is there for me? I am alone,—all alone,—no brother, no sister, to make bright and cheerful my hearthstone when I turn from the cares of the world to that spot called home."

"Get a wife, man; get a wife to brighten it with her smiles."

"Easier said than done."

"You undervalue yourself. There are enough ladies fair who would for the asking gladly consent to brighten the home of the honorable, elegant, rich, and intellectual Southron whose *sobriquet* is Frank Hathaway. Ay, they would catch at you with as much eagerness as ever gudgeon caught at baited hook."

"But suppose I do not feel disposed to catch those who would catch me?"

"In that case, just drive that dismal look away and make up your mind to go home with me. Our home shall put on its holiday-attire for your reception, and a trip to the Northern lakes during the warm months will be delightful. Then, this fall we could return by the way of Montreal. It is said there is no scenery in the world more beautiful than that of the St.

Lawrence, when Autumn with her brilliant dyes has painted the foliage of the forest-trees that overshadow the Thousand Isles."

"It would be madness for me to think of such a trip."

"Why so? Do you fear the chilliness of the climate or the dulness of the party?"

"Neither."

"What then?"

Frank hesitated: then, in a voice tremulous with emotion, he answered,—

"Marshall, I love your sister with a deep, undying love."

"Nothing so very maddening in that. Mag is a perfect sun-beam in a house; and she will make you a good wife, if she is full of fun and frolic. The dignity of wifedom will soon make her as sober and sedate as you may desire."

"Maggie! It is not Maggie of whom I am speaking."

"Hope?"

"Yes, Hope; and, if it be not impertinent to ask, will you answer me one question?"

"As many as you choose to propose."

"Why does not Hope's betrothed now claim his bride?"

"Hope? Hope Marshall betrothed? Why, you must be dreaming!"

"Would to God I were!"

"If you are not dreaming, you labor under some strange hallucination. Hope was never betrothed, never had even a love-dream. I have often wondered that one so lovable as she was never wooed."

"I can tell you why your humble servant never wooed her. Years ago I was told she was the betrothed of another, and that the marriage was deferred on account of her sisterly devotion to yourself and Maggie. Hence my first question."

"Not a word of truth as regards the betrothal. As to the sisterly devotion, there never was a nobler instance of it."

"Alvord himself told me that an engagement of marriage existed between him and Hope."

"An unmitigated falsehood. But let us dismiss the subject. I must tell you the purpose of my call, and then hasten home,

as Mag is bonneted and waiting for me to make some calls with her this morning."

"You can tell me as we walk; for I will accompany you home, and, with your permission, whilst you and Maggie do your calling, I will strive to ascertain if Hope's heart can cherish any other than a sister's love."

"You have my permission, and my wishes that you may win her; for I believe you are worthy of her. And that is saying much; because I think her one of the noblest of created beings."

In conversation of this kind the time was taken up during the walk home; and when they stepped into the hall they were met by Maggie, who exclaimed, with a pretty pout on her lip,—

"I declare, Harry, you have kept me waiting half a dozen ages; and, now you are returned, you have brought company that will detain me another age."

"I beg your pardon, Miss Maggie, for having called so inopportunely. However, I will not detain you, but impose my unwelcome presence on your sister during your absence."

"Never unwelcome to me," murmured Hope, in an under-tone, as his words fell upon her ear, where she was seated in the pleasant morning-room, where persons on terms of intimacy with the family were received. Frank waited on Maggie to the carriage, and *she* detained *him* some minutes with playful, bantering conversation. Whilst he was thus detained, Hope had time to speculate upon the unusual occurrence of his remaining with her instead of accompanying Maggie and her brother, as was his wont. Although he had been a constant visitor at the house during the winter and spring, he had always avoided being alone in Hope's company. This she had noted; and now, as he stood beside the carriage chatting merrily with Maggie, it flashed into her mind that he had proposed to Maggie, been accepted, and now sought her when she was alone to ask her to give the happiness of her darling to his keeping. For a moment the blood seemed to settle about her heart, and its pulsations were stilled. The next, her thoughts were in a state of wild confusion; but by the time Frank Hathaway entered the room

where she was seated, she had, by a strong effort of will, recovered her self-possession. After the usual salutations were exchanged, she observed the manner of Mr. Hathaway was agitated and embarrassed. This confirmed her in the opinion that the purpose of his visit was to ask Maggie of her. His usual fluency of conversation having deserted him, she felt called upon to speak of some commonplace subject to dispel the awkwardness arising therefrom, till he recovered from his embarrassment.

"We have passed a very pleasant season," remarked she, "and Maggie has enjoyed with great zest the gay society with which she has mingled."

"So it seems."

"I hope her heart may always be joyous as now."

"I hope it may."

"If I can only secure for her without interruption the happiness she now enjoys, I shall be content."

Hope made this remark through sheer perplexity produced by Frank's singular replies to her preceding remarks. He was silent a moment ere he responded to this: then he asked,—

"And my happiness, Miss Marshall,—would you promote it, were it in your power?"

"Most assuredly I would."

"I will test the sincerity of your assertion. It is in your power to make my happiness. My home is lonely. No sister is there to greet me with her smile, no mother to bless me with her gentle voice. A wife only can fill this void in my heart and home. May I hope you will listen to my suit?"

So impressed was Hope with the idea he had sought her to ask her permission to make Maggie his wife, had he spoken more explicitly she would probably have misunderstood; but, as it was, she thought the suit he urged was for her sister, and she answered,—

"I will not refuse the boon you ask. Yes, I will give you my darling Maggie; and may she prove as great a blessing to you as she has been to me! I shall miss her sadly. Her voice is to my ear like the music of gently-flowing waters, and her presence as

a sunbeam to my heart. I would she had been content to remain with me a while longer; yet, if her heart has found its rest with you, I will give her happiness to your keeping, knowing it will be assured by your love."

"Hope—Miss Marshall, you misunderstand me. It is your own, not Maggie's love I would win. I believed until this morning you were the betrothed of another: therefore I kept buried deep in my heart the intense love I have entertained for you. When I learned from your brother my mistake with regard to your betrothal, I resolved to declare my sentiments toward you and learn if you could find no place in your heart for any but a sister's love. For the present I ask no more than to be allowed to hope that in time I may claim from you a warmer regard than friendship."

Whilst Hope listened to this declaration, her cheek changed from red to pale and from pale to red, whilst a strange and unlooked-for happiness glowed in her heart. In a low tone, and with perfect frankness, she answered,—

"That warmer regard for which you are willing to wait was called into being years ago; and how earnestly I have tried to extinguish it without success, God and my own heart only know."

"Such being the case, how could you calmly listen and calmly answer me when you thought it was Maggie I sought?"

"Womanly pride enabled me to do so."

"And you loved me when I was restlessly roving from place to place striving to forget you?"

"Yes."

"How many years of my life have been darkened by the treachery of one who called himself my friend, and to whom my friendship was given! Alvord himself told me you were his betrothed; and the belief that such was the case caused my last visit to Europe."

"After you were gone, he addressed me; but, had my love not been already given to you, I could never have listened to his suit, for I did not respect him."

"Yet he was one to steal winningly into the heart. I never

doubted for a moment that you loved him. And he told me such a plausible story why the marriage was deferred."

"And at that time my love was wholly yours. Oh, how humiliated in my own estimation I have been by the thought that my love was given you unsought!"

Frank told her it was an unnecessary humiliation,—that he had loved her since she so gently ministered to the dying Lilian, how his love had strengthened and increased the following winter, and of his hope of winning her to be his, till it was suddenly crushed out by Alvord. He related the conversation which took place in Mrs. Totford's room, described the suspense Mollie Bringham's words called up, his visit to Alvord after, and the wild tempest that raged in his bosom during the weary watches of that ever-to-be-remembered night. When he ceased speaking, Hope said,—

"We were each misled with regard to the other. I believed an engagement of marriage existed between you and Miss Bringham."

So occupied were they with speaking of the past and enjoying the present that they did not observe Maggie and Harry when they returned from making calls, although they passed by the door of the room in which they were seated. Maggie glanced in as she passed, and when she and Harry ascended the stairs she remarked,—

"If Mr. Hathaway were not such a confirmed old bachelor, I should say, from the glance I caught, he looked marvellously as if he had been whispering a love-tale into Hope's ear."

"Perhaps he has. At any rate, as they seem so well entertained each with the other, we will not interrupt them. I will go to the Capitol, and you may amuse yourself in any way you choose."

"Then I will finish that novel Mr. Hathaway brought me from the library, so that he can return it to-morrow."

When Harry left, Maggie took up her novel, and soon became so much interested that she thought of nothing else till she had finished reading it. Hope and Frank Hathaway were thus left uninterrupted, and they noted not the lapse of time till a note

was put into Frank's hand by a page. He glanced over its contents, and said,—

"Go tell Mr. Marshall I will be there in a few minutes."

When the page had left, Frank looked at his watch and started to his feet, exclaiming,—

"I had no idea it was half-past one o'clock."

"Nor I," responded Hope.

"Oh, fleetly falls the foot of Time
When love makes bright the hours,"

hummed Frank Hathaway, looking upon Hope's beautiful face, with a world of love in his own dark eyes.

"But I must hasten," said he; "for this note from Harry says, 'We want to get up Mrs. Boyer's claim to-day, and we need your assistance. Come at once.'"

"Then do not delay one moment. In my new-found happiness I feel doubly for the sorrows of others."

"Ever the same generous sympathy for others. It was this beautiful trait in your character that first attracted me to you."

Hope had risen to her feet and was standing by his side. He took both of her hands into his, and bade her look into his face, that he might read the language of her truthful eyes. Her eyes were raised to his; but her glance fell beneath the look of devoted love with which he regarded her. He stooped and imprinted a kiss upon the beautiful brow, saying, as he did so,—

"Let this be the seal of our betrothal."

"'Pon my word, Miss Hope!" said the merry voice of Maggie, who entered the room just as this first kiss of pure love was given, "a beautiful example you are setting your young sister!"

They both started at the sound of her voice. Hope colored crimson, and Frank sprang toward the mischievous sprite, threw his arm around her, drew her to his side, and asked,—

"Wilt have me for a brother? This sister of yours has promised to give herself to me."

"Whilst I have been reading a love-tale, you have been telling one. So the devoted attention you have been paying me has

ended in your proposing to Hope. I am furiously indignant at your desertion."

"Indignation does not become your bright young face: so just drive it away."

"Drive it away, indeed? Not I. What, think you, will the whole gossiping world of Washington, who have declared you my adorer, say?"

"I do not know, nor do I care."

"But I do, though; for they will say you have jilted me. And those girls, who have been ready to expire with envy because I had secured so distinguished and elegant a gentleman for a lover, will exult over my desertion. Oh, you men! you men! What heartless wretches you are!"

"Not all of us. But Charley Grant is; for you have stolen his heart and will not give him one in return. I think you treat him shamefully to torment him as you do after having committed such a theft. If I were he, I would have you up before a clergyman for it."

Hope came to Maggie's relief by saying, "Mr. Hathaway, have you forgotten Harry's note?"

"I have not; but, as we adjourn to-morrow, it is likely we will remain in session all night, and I shall be sufficiently worn out before morning, even if I remain here an hour longer."

"But Mrs. Boyer's interest may suffer by your absence; and, oh, I do feel so anxious on her account!"

"I will go at once. May good angels guard you both!"

When he was gone, Maggie turned to Hope, saying,—

"So, sis, you were the attraction that drew Mr. Hathaway to the house, when every one said he was my admirer. He misled them all famously. He ought to be appointed a foreign minister, he is such a perfect diplomat."

"Nay, Maggie, there was no diplomacy in this matter: it was——"

"Well, never mind how it came about: I congratulate you on having the love of so noble a heart."

"Bless my soul, what's bin keepin' Mr. Hathaway here so long?" said Aunt Minta, coming into the room.

"He has been solving a problem," said Maggie, with a gay laugh.

"Did you keep him here, honey?"

"No; it was Hope."

"Aunt Minta," said Hope, placing her hands on the shoulders of the faithful old servant, "you sympathized with me in my sorrow, now rejoice with me in my joy. Mr. Hathaway and I will be married."

"Why, Miss Hope! You 'stonish me! I thought it was Miss Maggie what fotch him. Howsomever, he's a more suitable match for you; and I does rejoice with you."

With Aunt Minta's rejoicing there was a shade of disappointment, because she did not hear the declaration and acceptance. This is a privilege an old family-servant generally manages to avail herself of; but in this instance she failed, because she, like others, thought Maggie was the attraction that drew Frank to the house, and she kept a look-out upon the wrong party.

CHAPTER LIX.

LIFE'S TASK ENDED.

It is about an hour after the adjournment of Congress, and several gentlemen are dining with Harry Marshall. Hope presides with her usual grace; but her countenance wears a sad, thoughtful expression. Even Maggie's usually bright face wears a grieved look; and, instead of indulging in the usually gay sallies with which she amuses her brother's guests, she was perfectly silent.

"Hey, magpie," said one of them, turning to her, "what is the matter with your tongue, that we are not disturbed with your chattering?"

"Nothing is the matter with my tongue; but my heart aches with the thought of poor Mrs. Boyer's disappointment." And her lip quivered as she ceased speaking.

"It will be a painful task for me to communicate to her that her claim did not pass," said Hope.

"I regret exceedingly that you have to be the bearer of such news. Your brother, myself, and the other gentlemen whom you interested in her favor did all that we could for her. We got it through the House in time for it to have passed the Senate; but that body determined to touch no private bill during the last hours of its sitting. We will see that it receives immediate action upon the assembling of Congress next winter. There will be no delay then, because the investigation it has undergone has proven its justice so conclusively that no objection will be urged against it. You can tell her so when you communicate our ill luck."

"The good book says, 'Put not your trust in princes,' to which I will add, 'nor in Congress.' Consequently I fear to give her any such assurance, lest she be again disappointed. How-

ever, I need have no such fear; for, ere the time you designate shall have arrived, she will be where no disappointment can come. For my own part, I shall never again have confidence in the performance of any thing where it depends on the action of politicians. I was certain in my own mind that, now the members of the legislative branch of Government were paid a yearly salary, like the officers of the Executive Departments, they would remain in session till all the business requiring their attention was disposed of.

"But what is the fact? They adjourn much earlier than they did when paid only for the time they were in session. It is now the middle of June; and when, previous to this session, have they adjourned thus early in the season? In their haste to get away, even the bills reported by the committees, after having received the sanction of one House, are left unfinished. How they can reconcile such a course with the principles of honor and justice, I cannot conceive."

"Miss Marshall," said Mr. Milligan, "you are so earnest and excited that I presume you are not aware how hard you bear down upon your brother, Hathaway, and the rest of us, to whom your remarks apply."

"I am earnest and excited; and, gentlemen, I beg your pardon for being so discourteous. My sympathy for Mrs. Boyer must be my apology. If in my earnestness I have stated any thing untrue, point it out to me, and I will admit the warmth of my feelings has led me to be unjust as well."

"Egad, Marshall, I do not believe I can gainsay one word she has spoken. Oh, these vimmen! these vimmen!"

The last portion of Milligan's remark was uttered with a grimace so ludicrous that it called forth a burst of laughter.

When dinner was ended, Harry and the gentlemen who dined with him retired to the library, and Hope went at once to Mrs. Boyer. She thought it better she should hear from her of the failure of her bill, as she could encourage and comfort her at the same time. She had called very frequently upon Mrs. Boyer since their first meeting, and she was in the habit of proceeding to her room without being announced by a servant. To-day,

when she came in front of her door, which was open, she stood a moment, arrested by the touching picture that met her eye.

Mrs. Boyer was seated beside the desk where she usually wrote. Her hand was lying upon the page she had been transcribing, and the paper itself did not look more bloodless than that hand. Her head was resting upon the cushioned back of an invalid-chair which she on account of her weakness was obliged to use in writing, that she might, when overcome with fatigue, thus rest. As Hope looked upon her, she observed the eyes were closed, and she might have thought her sleeping; but there was a teardrop on the pale cheek and an almost imperceptible twitching of the muscles about the mouth. Although she lay seemingly so quiet, every nerve in her body was pulsating with the agony of suspense. During the day, up to the hour of adjournment she had written steadily, for the purpose of keeping her mind so much occupied that she could not worry herself with conjecture as to the fate of her claim. Now she was completely exhausted; and, save the indications of vitality we have mentioned, she looked as one dead. Hope stepped softly to her side and laid her hand gently upon her brow. The closed eyes were open in an instant, and, seeing the kind face bending over her, Mrs. Boyer said,—

"I knew you would come. What news do you bring?"

"Our friends passed it through the House, but failed to get action upon it in the Senate. However, they bade me say to you that without doubt your claim would be passed immediately upon the assembling of Congress next winter."

"Too late! too late!" in tones of heart-thrilling sadness, fell from the lips of Mrs. Boyer.

"I trust not."

"Yes, my kind friend, next winter will be too late. Ere that time arrives, the voice of poor Emma Boyer will be stilled in death. One by one my heart-strings have snapped asunder, worn away by anxiety and disappointment. But this is the last. Never again will an earthly hope arise in my heart to be blighted by disappointment."

"It was very painful to me to be the bearer of such tidings."

"I had a presentiment of the news you would bring. I wrote busily all day till about an hour since. All at once a feeling of utter prostration came over me. The pen fell from my grasp, and a sense of blank despair, such as I have not felt since I have known you, weighed upon my heart. After resting a short time, I thought to resume my work; but, when I attempted to pick up the pen, my hand fell nerveless upon the desk, and a voice seemed to whisper in my ear, 'Struggle no longer; for your last line is written.'"

"That seeming whisper was caused by your having overtaxed your strength to-day."

"No, no: it was an intimation that my life's task is ended. And, were it not for my children, how gladly would I welcome the messenger that will give rest to my weary spirit! God pity my children! Soon they will have no other friend."

"Nay, Mrs. Boyer, do not be so despondent; whilst I live, neither you nor they shall want a friend."

"Not long will I need the offices of friendship: but to my children may your promise be fulfilled!"

As Mrs. Boyer ceased speaking, she clasped her hands with a convulsive grasp, a spasm passed over her features, and a look, as if her life's task was indeed ended, settled upon her face. Hope called to the inmate of the adjoining room,—a gentle girl, who had been as a sister to Mrs. Boyer; and they two, by rubbing and the use of restoratives, soon roused her to consciousness. Hope proposed sending for a physician; but Mrs. Boyer said it was useless,—that lately she had such attacks whenever she overexerted herself. Annie White, the young girl whom Hope had called, proposed putting her in bed, as that was what she usually did for her when she had such attacks. This was soon done; but she was so utterly exhausted she could scarcely speak, and Hope insisted she should not attempt to do so.

We will leave the two gentle girls beside the heart-broken woman, and turn to the library where Harry and his friends are conversing. Hope's words at the dinner-table had evidently impressed them much, for the subject upon which they are

speaking is the claims of individuals and how they are to be disposed of.

"By the holy Moses, Marshall, but didn't your sister pour it on to us?" said Milligan, taking a cigar from his mouth and blowing a whiff of smoke from his lips.

"She did that thing. And I tell you, gents, for once in my life, I thanked my stars that I was not a member of Congress," remarked Mr. Ford, who had just returned from New York. "I really felt for you fellows."

"We deserve all she gave us: don't you think so, Harry?" said Frank Hathaway.

"There is too much truth in what she said. I, since Hope became interested in Mrs. Boyer, have given much time to the investigation of claims; and I am convinced it is our duty to take up and give an honest and impartial investigation to every claim before us, and, if we find them justly due, pay them."

"Why, good Lord, Harry Marshall, how long do you think it would take a fellow to investigate all these claims? Were we to attempt it, I guess we would not have time to attend one party a week during the session. It would make as complete drudges of us as if we were lawyers' clerks."

"Ah, Milligan, you are always thinking of parties. And I grant you it is much pleasanter to sun ourselves in the light of ladies' eyes, and move to the measure of merry music with their lily hands resting upon our shoulders, than to spend our evenings looking over old, musty papers to ascertain if a claim be just."

"That's so, even should the claimant be as lovely and interesting as your sister's protégée Mrs. Boyer; for the charm does not extend to the papers."

"But you misunderstand me, Milligan, if you suppose I meant that each individual member should examine every claim. That would indeed be a herculean task. All claims are referred to their appropriate committees, and the work is distributed among the members composing those committees. When the member to whom a case is referred has investigated and reports

in favor of its payment, that satisfies me; and I will at once vote for it."

"But this one member might by inducements be biassed to make a favorable report where a claim is not just."

"Shame, Milligan, to cast discredit on our honorable body by supposing one of its members would be guilty of such a thing!"

"Yet our honorable body itself has more than once within the last two or three years thought it necessary to get up investigating committees, to ascertain if some of its honorable members had not allowed personal advantage to influence their votes."

"True; such has been the case. And, if you have not confidence in the integrity and judgment of the members of these committees, you will have to go to work and investigate every claim yourself."

"Blast my skin if I do!"

"Then you will have to believe, as I do, in the integrity and judgment of our members, and, when a favorable report is made, accept it as conclusive evidence of the justice of a claim."

"I suppose I must. Yet it strikes me as a very curious fact that claims involving large amounts can be passed so readily, when smaller ones, like this poor widow's, where almost her life depends upon the relief its passage will afford her, cannot get through without sticking in one House or the other. For instance, the Frémont claim and the Reeside claim, each of them over a hundred thousand dollars, and they got through both Houses without much delay. Mind you, I'm not finding fault that these claims were paid, for I go in for doing everybody justice, no matter what the amount claimed. I only say it is decidedly curious that they passed so much more readily than the smaller claims."

What reply this remark would have called forth we cannot say, for the conversation was here broken in upon by the entrance of Mr. Harrington, who did not even say 'Good-afternoon, gentlemen,' but addressed Harry with,—

"Halloo, Marshall! you remember the rigmarole that fellow Lancaster, whom I met here the other evening, went over about

the frequent change of officers in the Executive Departments, and the evils arising therefrom?"

"Yes."

"Well, I then sat and laughed at the absurdity of the fellow's notions; but I guess those very changes will cause me to laugh on the other side of my mouth before I get my accounts settled."

"Why, what's the matter?"

"You know it is but a short time since I returned from South America, having resigned my situation as chargé d'affaires."

"Yes."

"Well, to-day I went to the Departments to have a final settlement with the Government; and I find my credits so curtailed that I shall be brought in debt and set down as a defaulter if they persist in settling my accounts as they now propose doing."

"Ah! how is that?"

"Why, you see, there is a new Comptroller; and he, to distinguish himself, is going to play h—— smash in the way of reform. He proposes discarding the mode of settling the accounts of our Representatives abroad which has been in use ever since the formation of the Government, and in its stead introduce some new-fangled notion of his own, which lessens our salary very materially."

"What is his new-fangled notion, as you term it?"

"That is what I do not exactly understand. But I was told Lancaster could explain it to me; and it was to ask where I could find him that I called here."

"During business-hours he is found at his office; but at this time of day I do not know—Ah, here he comes!"

"I was just going in search of you," said Mr. Harrington, grasping Mr. Lancaster's hand and shaking it heartily when he entered.

"Here I am at your command."

"Well, I have a little business I want you to unravel."

"I am always ready for business. Accompany me to my office; and, if you desire it, I will give it my immediate attention."

"No necessity for that: I can state it here, if it make no difference to you nor to these gentlemen."

"None to me."

"Nor to us. We will be rather interested to hear your cause for complaint, if cause you have," said Harry.

"Well, I rather imagine I have. You see, Mr. Lancaster, this new Comptroller—Medicinal, I have christened him, seeing he has gone to doctoring the mode of settling accounts which all his predecessors thought well enough,—well, this new Comptroller wants to whittle down my salary,—which the Lord knows was small enough before, considering the style we are obliged to keep up if we would be respected by the citizens of the Government to which we are accredited. Why, the whole salary of an American chargé d'affaires is not more than the rent of the house and furniture which the French and English Governments furnish their ministers, besides paying them a large salary. And yet this new Comptroller, by some kind of hocus-pocus in the settling of my account which I do not understand, wants to make even this small salary less! I was told you could make the matter plain to me; and it is for this I sought you."

"I presume I can explain it to you."

"I wish to gracious you would; for it is more than he can do."

"I will require calculations and explanations which I cannot very well go into here; but call at my office to-morrow, and it shall be done."

"But can you not give me some idea upon what grounds he makes this change from the former mode of settling our accounts?"

"The difference in the value of the different coinage of our money."

"I don't care where in the mischief he gets his notion, I am not going to submit to having my salary shaved down."

"How will you help yourself?"

"Take an appeal to Congress."

"Our late minister to Nicaragua has taken an appeal from the decision of the Comptroller; and I presume the question will

be settled at the next meeting of Congress. He was paid only eight dimes for a dollar."

"That would be only eighty cents. You must be mistaken."

"No, he has stated the fact," said Mr. Milligan: "I know it to be so, because I am on the committee to which the minister's memorial was referred. We called for copies of the papers on file in relation to his account; and, upon examination of these papers, we found the Nicaraguan Government had no mint of its own, and of the foreign coin in circulation in that country there was a large proportion of ten-cent pieces United States currency, and of this coin eight were received as a dollar. Accompanying these papers for the purpose of proving that he was justifiable in charging them to the minister at this rate, the Comptroller sent a private note, not on file in the Departments, giving a history of the minister's private business, and how his salary was used, as evidence the minister sustained no loss."

"Oh, hush! You don't expect me to believe he would stoop to ferret out a man's private transactions?"

"Not without proof, which you can have if you will take the trouble to read the papers in reference to his account, which were printed for the House."

"Well, well, the situation of Comptroller is more onerous than I supposed, if it is a part of his official duty to make himself acquainted with the private business-transactions of a man in office before he settles his account. I am afraid mine will give him considerable trouble."

"That is no part of his official duty; and if you read the report of the Senate-committee you will see it contains something like a rebuke."

"It is strange he should give himself so much unnecessary trouble."

"It is for the purpose of making the people at large believe he is so much more watchful of their interest than any officer who has preceded him. Those having business with his bureau say he takes far more trouble to find an excuse

for disallowing items in their accounts than in impartial investigation."

"Milligan," said Frank Hathaway, "you ought to be ashamed to make such an insinuation against an officer of the Government."

"I do not make the insinuation; I only repeat what others say."

"Some claimant or claim-agent whose accounts he has scrutinized too closely, I presume."

"As you refer to claim-agents," said Mr. Lancaster, "I must have a few words to say, as I belong to that fraternity. I do not know that this insinuation, as you term it, will apply to the Comptroller; but with your permission, gentlemen, I will give the history of an incident that occurred in the bureau to which I belonged whilst in office, and you may make your own inferences."

"Let us hear it," said Milligan: "my interest in this matter is just awakened up."

"Well, the business of my desk after I became a clerk in the Treasury Department was the settlement of the accounts of consuls and foreign ministers. I had been performing the duties of this desk for some time, and had become thoroughly acquainted with all its details, when a consul whose accounts had been adjusted by a predecessor claimed there was a balance due him, and asked its payment. The Auditor insisted his accounts had been properly adjusted and he wanted to cheat the Government. Finally I was ordered to re-examine all his accounts, for the purpose of detecting and exposing his knavery. I went to work and gave all the papers a most searching examination; but, instead of finding evidence to defeat his claim, it proved that he was entitled to what he claimed; and I so reported."

"Then he got his money?"

"No."

"Why, what did you do?"

"Nothing. I had done all that was required of me."

"But what did the Auditor do?"

"Gave the account to another clerk, who made a report that

coincided with his own notion; and, as a matter of course, the money was not paid."

"Well, if I ever!" exclaimed Milligan, throwing up his hands and eyes with astonishment. "I now understand how it is we have so many claims before Congress."

"Lancaster," said Frank Hathaway, "I *know* you to be a man of veracity; otherwise I would say such a thing could not have occurred. I am surprised that such a man is retained in office."

"You would not be, had you ever been behind the scenes and become acquainted with the working of the machinery. In the first place, who knows any thing of this matter but the Auditor and clerk? and the clerk, as a matter of course, can say nothing about it, or there would soon be some good reason found for making his place vacant. It is his duty to do the bidding of his chief, not report upon his actions, even if they do not square with his own notions of justice. At least, this is the opinion held by the heads of Departments; and in this instance the matter would have been passed over had it been known at head-quarters; for the Auditor is a perfect Alexander in supporting the interest of his party,—a qualification that more than compensates for his deficiencies and short-comings as an officer."

"The incident you have related convinces me we should not fill our Executive offices with political managers if we want our business well attended to. And it furthermore proves to me a man who has not thought upon and examined a subject should not pass judgment upon the opinions of one who has; for I now perceive your remarks of the other evening, which I then thought absurd, were founded in reason."

"There are many reasons to sustain the position I then took; yet I will adduce but one,—which is, that the business of the Departments, like any other profession or occupation, requires study and experience to fit a man to perform its duties correctly and well; and therefore, when thus fitted, he should never be removed whilst he is attentive to his desk. It is the interest of every man having business with the Departments that such a

system should be adopted. I know this from experience: I never have any difficulty in getting business transacted when it comes before an experienced and competent clerk."

The ringing of the tea-bell put a stop to the conversation, and each started with surprise to find the afternoon had slipped away.

CHAPTER LX.

THE LAST LIFE-CHORD IS BROKEN.

It is the morning after the adjournment of Congress. Mrs. Ford has just returned from Alexandria, where she has been spending a few days with a friend of her school-days. She, her husband, and Frank Hathaway are in the pleasant morning-room with Harry and his sisters. They are all talking merrily of their journey to the West. Mrs. Ford has arranged it all, and they have consented to be guided by her. They are to go to Elm-Wood and make her a visit, then she and her husband will accompany them, and the whole party will make the tour of the Northern lakes together. Maggie is wild with delight at the prospect of a visit to the dear old home. A ring of the door-bell takes Aunt Minta to the door, and in a moment after she enters and places a note in Hope's hand, saying, as she does so,—

"Better read it right away, chile. I spect it's somethin' 'portant, 'case the little boy what fotch it tole me to give it to you quick; and then he run right off, jist as fast as his legs could carry him."

Hope glanced her eye over it and read:—

"DEAR MISS MARSHALL:—

"As I promised you I would let you know if Mrs. Boyer grew worse, I now send this note to let you know she had a severe hemorrhage of the lungs about an hour since. The bleeding has ceased, but the doctor says it may return; and, should it do so, she cannot survive it.

"Yours, affectionately,

"ANNIE WHITE."

"Poor Mrs. Boyer!" said Hope, rising: "I must go to her. My friends, you will excuse me."

"Permit me to accompany you," said Frank Hathaway. When they arrived at Mrs. Boyer's boarding-house, they met Annie White at the door.

"I am so glad you have come!" exclaimed she to Hope. "Mrs. Boyer has just asked for you."

Hope presented Annie to Mr. Hathaway, requested her to show him into the parlor and she would proceed at once to Mrs. Boyer's room. She entered so quietly that the invalid, whose eyes were closed, was not aware of her presence. She stood for some time looking on the beautiful face, which was white as the snowy pillow upon which it rested. She stooped and kissed the pure brow, and the dark eyes unclosed. The troubled expression had left them, and one of those rare, beautiful smiles swept over her face when she observed by whom the caress was given.

"I am so glad you have come! My children I commit to your charge, knowing your promise will be sacredly kept. Earth's last pang is over."

"Dear Mrs. Boyer, you must not talk," said Annie White, coming into the room at this moment. "You know the exertion of talking, the doctor said, might cause a return of the hemorrhage, and in that case he could not answer for the consequences." Then, addressing Hope, she said, "Mr. Hathaway bade me ask you if he should wait to accompany you home."

"Is Mr. Hathaway in the house?" asked Mrs. Boyer, ere Hope could reply.

"He is," replied Annie.

"Ask him to come up. I should like to see him. I knew him in my happier days."

When Frank Hathaway entered the room and glanced upon the faded face before him, he exclaimed,—

"Why, Emma Carrolton, is it you I find thus? Could I have dreamed the Mrs. Boyer in whom Miss Marshall took so much interest was the dearest friend of my boyhood, I should have been the one to perform those offices of friendship which

have been so generously performed by her. Why did you not let me know you were in the city? You must have known of my being here."

"Yes, I knew you were here. But I feared to make myself known, lest you, like many others, friends of my prosperous days, might not care to know me in my misfortune."

"Emma, Emma, you ought to have known me better than to have entertained such a thought."

"The unfortunate who have received repulse from those whom they deemed true friends become shy of subjecting themselves to similar treatment from others. I have read a new page of life since my misfortunes. Some whom I deemed true-hearted as yourself——"

The sentence was suddenly broken off, and the bright-red blood issued from the speaker's lips. Hope wiped it away with a napkin, whilst Annie White sprang to the bedside and placed some salt upon Mrs. Boyer's tongue. She attempted to swallow it; but the blood flowed so rapidly that the attempt almost suffocated her. She could not speak, but raised her eyes to the face of her friends with a look that said, "The end is here." And it was truly so. Soon the blood ceased flowing, and the calm of death settled upon her beautiful features, without a struggle or a moan to indicate the precise moment that the spirit was released from the suffering clay.

"My God! how sudden her death!" exclaimed Frank Hathaway, perfectly overcome with the scene he had witnessed.

"Not sudden," said Hope. "She herself told me one by one her heart-strings had snapped, worn away by suspense and anxiety. We have beheld the severing of the last that bound her to life, and call her death sudden. Poor, weary, grief-crushed heart, its aching and agony are ended. Let us not grieve that it is so."

When Frank was sufficiently composed to think, he turned to Hope, saying,—

"The mournful task of paying her the last sad rite that friendship can perform belongs to me. You know not what a cherished friend she was. And when I last saw her she was sur-

rounded by all that makes life desirable. Now that you can no longer minister to her, let me accompany you home; then I will attend to the necessary arrangements for her burial."

"Not so. Annie and I will attend to having her properly robed for the grave, whilst you see the undertaker and give such orders as you desire to have carried out."

Frank Hathaway went saddened from the room, and the two girls sent for a mulatto-woman whose profession it was to prepare the dead for burial; and ere nightfall, under their superintendence and with their assistance, Mrs. Boyer was arrayed in her last robes of earth.

Whilst the two girls were busied about the beautiful dead, Annie had poured into Hope's ear much of her own life-history. She too, like Mrs. Boyer, had known great vicissitudes. From having been the cherished idol in a home of luxury, she was reduced to poverty and loneliness, for no member of her family was living; and now she supported herself by turning those branches of her education which she acquired as accomplishments to use. This had all been communicated in a low, steady tone of voice; but in concluding, with quivering lip and fast-falling tears, she said,—

"To you the death of Mrs. Boyer is a painful event, but to me it is as the falling of a dark shadow upon my life. She was to me as a tender elder sister, to counsel with her wisdom and encourage with her love. Now that she is gone, I have no one to whom I can turn for sympathy, and my heart will again become a prey to that isolation and sadness with which my life was darkened after the death of my mother, until I met Mrs. Boyer."

Hope soothed and comforted her with kind and sympathizing words, but said nothing of a proposition she designed making her ere she left the city.

The funeral of Mrs. Boyer took place the afternoon of the day after her death. Frank Hathaway, with Harry Marshall, his sisters, Annie White, and Mr. and Mrs. Ford, followed her to the grave. Beside these were all the inmates of the house in which she boarded, for Frank had ordered the undertaker to

furnish plenty of carriages, to accommodate all who would pay her this tribute of respect. But these were all, besides her own two children, who really felt an interest in her.

When they returned to the carriages after seeing her deposited in her last resting-place, Hope invited Annie White to return with her to her own home, instead of going to her boarding-house, where she would be so painfully reminded of the friend she had lost. Annie said she would have to become accustomed to it, and she might as well return at once. Finally she consented to accompany Hope, when she urged that Mrs. Boyer's two children, who were to stay with her, and who were much attached to Annie, would feel less sad and strange in their new home were she to stop with them.

The evening was passed in calm quietude, but not actual sadness; for none could grieve that a weary spirit had gone to its rest.

CHAPTER LXI.

A WEDDING AT THE OLD HOMESTEAD.

"I SAY, Hope, there is nothing to detain you any longer in the city," remarked Mrs. Ford the morning after the funeral, "so just shut up house and let us be off to Elm-Wood."

"I must decide what to do for these poor orphans committed to my charge by their dying mother. I cannot take them with me in our anticipated tour of this summer: it would worry the poor little things too much."

"I have decided what is to be done with them," said Mrs. Ford, with a tone that implied, "You need not object, for I'll have my own way."

"What is it?" asked Hope.

"Take them to Elm-Wood, and leave them there with Netta to look after them whilst we go jaunting round."

"I believe I could not do better for them."

"Nor as well. Where will they find another spot so delightful as Elm-Wood? Then it is so healthy."

"I will adopt your arrangement."

"Well, then, let us be off. There is nothing to keep you a day, unless it is this beau of yours; and, as he is going to accompany you, he can get ready at once, and say all his sweet nothings beneath the shade of your favorite old elm-tree, as well as here in the city. Is it true, as Mag declares it is, that he played the devoted admirer to her all winter and spring and proposed to you on the approach of summer?"

The entrance of Annie White, bonneted to take her leave, prevented a reply from Hope; for she turned to Annie, saying,—

"You are not going to leave us so soon?"

"I have a pupil to whom I must give a lesson at one o'clock. We who serve others cannot command our time."

"But you can give me a few moments in my own room before you leave?" and, upon Annie's saying she could, Hope led the way to her room.

"I wished to see you alone, to propose that you would accompany us in our proposed journey."

"I have not the means of doing so, even had I not pupils, whom I cannot give up, because from them I derive my support."

"Accompany me as my guest, and I will defray your expenses."

"I cannot do that: my pride will not permit it. Yet I feel grateful for your kind offer."

"Then will you give up the pupils you now have, and take charge of the education of Willie and Emma Boyer until they are old enough to be placed in school?"

"Oh, I will be too happy to do so! Their own good fortune could hardly reconcile me to the thought of being parted from them. I felt they were the only persons upon whose love I could rely."

"Then you will, instead of giving lessons to-day, call on your pupils and tell them you can instruct them no longer, as you have the offer of a permanent situation as governess. And how soon can you be ready to start?"

"As soon as I can pack my trunk after seeing my pupils. I have nothing to delay me."

"Then go home, see your pupils, pack your trunk, and to-morrow I will send a carriage for you; and then we can start when we choose."

As Annie went toward her boarding-house, her thoughts rose to God in thankfulness for the kind friend he had raised up to supply the place of the one he had taken to himself. When Hope returned to Mrs. Ford and told her of her proposition to Annie and of its acceptance, that lady was delighted; for if ever there was a human heart that derived happiness from seeing others happy, it was Mrs. Ford's.

We will pass over the shutting up of the house in the city and

the incidents of travel that occurred to our party, and transport our readers at once to Elm-Wood.

* * * * *

A warm July day has just passed. The last lingering sun-rays are giving their good-night kiss to the flowers, and Hope is sitting in her old room with a happy but thoughtful look. Annie White and Maggie are in a large chamber adjoining. Mag is humming snatches of song and dancing about the room in a perfect fever of excitement. At length she turns to Annie, saying,—

"I declare, it is time for Hope to commence her toilette; I would go and make her commence, but Mrs. Ford said I should not call her till she herself bade me; and she has such a positive, queenly way that I never can resist her authority. Why, even Hope is ruled by her. And her husband,—why, he worships her. I wish she would come along. Ah, here she comes: I hear her footfall on the stairs."

"You may call Hope now," said Mrs. Ford, stepping into the room; and Mag was off in a minute. Soon Netta was permitted to come and arrange Miss Hope's bridal toilette, whilst other sable handmaidens attended to the robing of Mag and Annie, who were to perform the office of bridesmaidens.

Yes, there is to be a wedding at Elm-Wood,—an old-fashioned country wedding, where all the friends and neighbors were called in to dance and make merry.

Mrs. Ford willed that Hope should be wed in the home of her girlhood; and, as Maggie said, even Hope could not resist her will, particularly when Frank Hathaway joined her in insisting that the marriage should be consummated in the mansion that sheltered her childhood. The clergyman who performed the marriage-ceremony for her parents soon after his ordination as a preacher, now a father in the church, pronounced the nuptial benediction over Hope. Aunt Minta was in an ecstasy of delight, declaring the heavenly Marster had filled her cup to overflowing with blessings.

Having seen Hope pass through adversity and trials of the heart, supported by that pure Christian faith taught her by her

mother, now that prosperity and happiness are hers, we will follow her fortunes no further, but say a few words in relation to some of our other characters.

Alvord is in Paris, spending the fortune his devoted wife endowed him with, in the extravagance of Parisian life. Mollie Bringham is still a distinguished celebrity in Washington society,—so much so that her journeyings hither and thither are frequently chronicled in the newspapers of the day; and it is whispered among the gossips that she has two devoted admirers, both well known in the world of Washington, but she cannot make up her mind whether to accept wealth or position. The Rev. Mrs. Totford never returned to her labor of love among the benighted heathen, and much of her glory has departed from her; for just after she left Washington her saintly husband died, and since that time she has resided in a New England village, supported by the church of which her husband was pastor before he became a missionary.

Before I close, I would say a few words to my readers. The incidents related in these pages are more truth than fiction, and the characters portrayed have their living representatives. Bringham is the type of a class, and Sprout a character naturally called into being by such managers as he. So, too, are there high-toned, honorable men, counterparts of Governor Prescott, Frank Hathaway, and Harry Marshall. The Hon. Howard Dimpling is not a myth; and the clerk who interfered with the salary of the laborer is still holding a responsible situation in one of the Departments.

In the weaving together of these incidents, I have endeavored to represent them truthfully; and, if I succeed in giving to persons at a distance from the Federal City some idea of how "Government and its offices" are managed, I will be content. I would also impress them with the importance of retaining the services of a faithful and honest representative in Congress when such a one is elected. This is quite as much to be desired as the retaining of competent officers in the Executive Departments. Experience is as much needed to fit a man for a judicious performance of the duties devolving upon him in the

Legislative as in the Executive branch of Government. And it is in this the South has the advantage over the North and West. They keep the same man in Congress year after year, each Congress adding something to his knowledge and experience, till he becomes thoroughly acquainted with all parliamentary rules and makes for himself a national reputation.

THE END.