

Anna B. Martell

SECOND LOVE.

BY

MARTHA MARTELL.

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"A great mistake has been made by many writers of both sexes, who confound *weakness* with tenderness, and *want of character* with gentleness. It is common to compare a woman to a clinging plant, which can live only by the support of a noble tree; but such should not be the relationship of the sexes. Weakness can never be beautiful, either morally or physically; and though the feminine type may possess greater softness and more feeling, it must be active, firm, and healthy, or it cannot be beautiful. The weak mind, distracted by alternations of feeling, and constant craving for help and sympathy from others, cannot at the same time possess that *tenderness* and *unselfish devotion*, which is the loveliest trait of the female character."

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SECOND LOVE;

OR,

THE WORLD'S OPINION.

CHAPTER I.

A SUDDEN DECISION.

"The bridal wreath in Sweden consists of roses and cypress."

RALPH WILLISON was seated at the window of his office. An open law-book reposed upon the window seat, and the sweet breath of early spring was playing among its dry leaves.

Peradventure, Ralph Willison is endeavoring to disentangle some provoking knurle in law. So thought his opposite neighbor, Mrs. Mayley; but the

peradventure was wide of the mark. Willison's whole heart had for years been devoted to his profession; it surely deserved a holiday. It was taking it, and curveting like an unbridled steed in a fresh green field.

The well-formed head of the lawyer, meanwhile, was pressed by a hand, which, whether at rest or in motion, was the most graceful of hands; one of Willison's legal friends had once affirmed that it was the most eloquent member of the Tatham County Bar.

After having remained in that musing attitude for uncounted minutes, Willison smoothed back the dark, wavy hair which had fallen over his high forehead, and, as he did so, his eyes rested for a moment upon a pretty little object which flitted by his window. It was Emily Munn, with her books under her arm, going to school.

The lawyer now seated himself at a large round table, upon which were heaped books and papers covered with the dust of weeks.

He nervously seized a volume of Kent's Commen-

taries. The style had lost its charm. His mind wandered. Upon the wide margin of the page before him, he scribbled mysterious notes, namely—"Em."—"Em."—"Emily"—Emily M."

Then he closed the book and his eyes, and having thus excluded the actualities around him, he summoned the vision which had lately flitted by. It came, fair, and young, and beautiful, the perfect realization of his *beau ideal* of a wife; such a wife as poets and novelists would, in general, highly approve.

Ralph Willison had hitherto thought and acted objectively. He knew very little of himself, having seldom scrutinized or closely questioned the "me." That inner kingdom was a moral Timbuctoo. What qualifications had he for a husband? Had he affections, true, deep, abiding? Had he chivalrous respect for woman? In trifling matters, could he yield his own inclination to give pleasure to another? Were his habits, as a gentleman, such as not to offend the refined taste of a delicate woman? These, and a thousand other questions, Ralph Willison, like

most other men, did not ask himself before marriage.

He had made the discovery, that, in spite of his devotion to law, there was an "aching void" in the centre of his heart, and nature abhorring the vacuum, had suddenly filled it with Emily Munn.

"I am six-and-thirty, and she is only sixteen," whispered sober Reason.

"What of that?" exclaimed Self-confidence, "I shall the more readily win *esteem*, which is the best foundation for happiness in married life, and perhaps as sincere affection as men ever do, now-a-days."

Ralph Willison rarely lost time between coming to a decision and commencing action. He had decided to marry—positively decided; and after having resolved the pros and cons for two hours, he furthermore decided to marry Emily Munn.

The vigor with which he applied the clothes-brush to his black coat, after the resolution was fixed, was an indication of the zeal with which it would be prosecuted. Beau Brummel himself could not have been more anxious about the tie of a cravat than was

Ralph Willison on this self-same eventful morning. And now, with a very business-like air, he took the direction which Emily Munn had taken in the morning, and soon met her returning from school.

The young girl was quite unprepared for the cordial salutation with which she was greeted:

"How are you to-day, Miss Munn? Allow me to carry those heavy books. You seem to be quite a scholar."

He took the books from her unresisting hand, while she gazed in his face, the dark lashes of her clear blue eyes laid back upon her brow, and her cheeks flushed with surprise.

Mrs. Mayley was not a busy-body, nor Mr. Willison a dandy, yet, for the nonce, they seemed transformed into these characters. "What in the name of wonder does this mean?" soliloquized Mrs. Mayley, "there goes Ralph Willison escorting that child, Emily Munn, with an air of *empressement*; with her books under his arm, too, and his tall person bending towards her, as though he were making a perennial bow."

CHAPTER II.

A DIGRESSION.

"We require four things for woman—that virtue dwell in her heart; that modesty play on her brow; that sweetness flow from her lips, and industry occupy her hands."—CHINESE MAXIM.

"Her spirit might commune with higher things
Than those which dwelt around her pathway."—J. G. WHITTIER.

FOR fifteen years Mrs. Mayley had been the opposite neighbor of Ralph Willison. She came to the village of Cranford in the fresh weeds of a widow—a widow of nineteen, who had passed two years in wedlock.

She had been established in the quiet village a twelvemonth, when the name of Ralph Willison,

Attorney at Law, suddenly appeared in bright golden letters over the door of a small office, on the other side of the wide street.

Those letters had lost their primitive glory; no matter; though they were faded and tarnished, every body in Tatham County knew where to find "Lawyer Willison."

Mrs. Mayley had seen the grass-grown path to the office untrodden by the foot of a client; she had seen it gradually worn bare by the hurrying steps of anxious applicants to the man of law—the only one in the village of Cranford.

Willison had passed honorably through his collegiate and legal studies, but when he commenced practice, there was a want of polish in the raw youth of one and twenty.

Mrs. Mayley had been his friend and counsellor. She had cheered him with ready sympathy, and encouraged him to perseverance when despairing of success; he would otherwise have thrown his law books in the face of Dame Fortune, and found some other road to wealth and fame. As sincerely did

she now rejoice in the success which had crowned his earnest endeavors.

She was his first client, and he won the suit. She was grateful, and so was he—and something more. He intimated the fact, but was met by so decided a rejoinder, that he never ventured upon a rebutter.

Mrs. Mayley's society any man might have found advantageous to his best interests. Her intellect was strong, yet delicately feminine. Willison had called it "a beautiful intellect," and well he might, for it had been to him a sun, warming into life every flower which graced his own mind, and giving raciness to its fruit.

The years passed in the society of Mrs. Mayley had been to him golden ones; now, in his rich, ripe manhood, he almost realized her beau ideal of manly excellence. During the long winter evenings, while Willison read aloud, or talked with Mrs. Mayley, her mother, dear old Mrs. Blane, sat in her rocking-chair, keeping time with her knitting-needles to its perpetual motion. When the pleasant summer

evenings beguiled the trio into the cool air for a walk, Mrs. Blane leaned on the arm of the best of daughters. Willison and Mrs. Mayley had read together the current literature of the day; together they had made themselves acquainted with the German language and its rich treasures. Their thoughts had so long flowed in the same channel, that when any topic was started, each could almost anticipate exactly how it would strike the other, and when any noble sentiment was expressed by the author they were reading, Willison would glance from the book into the large dark eyes of his friend,

"And find his own heart's answer there."

Mrs. Blane occasionally remonstrated:—

"Now, Esther dear, it is imprudent for a lady of your age, resolved upon widowhood for life, to pass so much time with an agreeable man, *your senior in years.*"

Mrs. Mayley smiled, for the seniority was not numbered by years, and replied,

"You know, mother, I have no other congenial

society, and you, too, enjoy Mr. Willison's reading and conversation."

"It *is* a comfort, Esther, for you cannot always read to your half-blind mother, and he is the best reader in the world—so clear, and even explanatory. I never understood Hamlet till I heard it from his eloquent lips."

Thus, year after after year had glided imperceptibly away, during which Mr. Willison had become a distinguished lawyer and a candidate for Congress. Mrs. Mayley, meantime, had hidden some peculiar emotions in the very centre of her heart, even from her own inspection.

CHAPTER III.

EXPECTATION.

"And does life offer us, in regard to our ideal hopes and purposes, any thing but a prosaic, unrhymed, unmetrical translation?"—JEAN PAUL.

EMILY MUNN rushed into her mother's room, whirling her new bonnet by one string, to the detriment of starch and smoothness.

"Who do you think waited upon me home to-day?" she demanded, laughing violently.

"Careless child!" exclaimed Mrs. Munn, rescuing the neat bonnet from threatened damage, "haven't I told you, over and over again, not to be *trapesing* through the street with them boys from Mr. Hansan's school? I suppose one of them *galivanted* you home. You'll be the *town talk*, Emily Munn."

"It was the old boy who *galivanted* me," replied the girl, with a saucy laugh.

"Goodness me! I should think you had been in his bad company!"

Again rang out the merry laugh of the school-girl; a lover might have called it a silvery laugh, but to the mother it was a brazen sound.

"Emily Munn, I have a great mind to box your ears. Tell me, this instant, who you mean by the old boy?"

"Lawyer Willison."

"Lawyer Willison! Oh! he's around among the folks 'lectioneering. He has a *despert* longing to be a Congress man, and is coaxing your father for his vote."

"He brought my books home very politely, and said he would call to *see* me this evening;—mind, it was to *see me*."

"What will folks say! What will folks say! Well, my dear, you must put on your best bib and tucker, and do your prettiest."

* * * * *

The evening came. The lights were burning brightly on the centre-table in Mrs. Mayley's cosy little parlor, and a cheerful wood fire blazed upon the hearth, for the evenings of spring yet retained the chilliness of winter. A German book was spread invitingly open upon the centre-table, and Mr. Willison's favorite arm-chair placed before it.

Mrs. Blane was plying the knitting, which, like Penelope's web, was often unravelled and never completed.

Mrs. Mayley sat with one hand shading her eyes from the light, and her elbow resting upon the table; from time to time she started, and listened nervously, as the sound of approaching footsteps met her ear, and then died away in the distance.

They all passed by, and when the clock struck ten, Mrs. Blane was nodding over her knitting, and Mrs. Mayley had not moved from the spot where she had seated herself early in the evening; both hands now concealed her face, and occasionally a large tear dropped upon the polished mahogany, unheeded.

The next evening and the next, the book was spread

and the arm-chair placed, but the one was unread and the other unoccupied.

The fourth evening came. A single light burned dimly in one corner of the room.

"Esther, sing my favorite, 'Bonnie Doon,'" said Mrs. Blane.

Mrs. Mayley opened the long neglected piano, and sang in a voice whose plaintive tones gave the deepest pathos to that touching air. Just as she breathed forth the words—

"Ye mind me o' departed joys,
Departed, never to return,"—

the door opened, and in walked Mr. Willison. Mrs. Blane was so soundly asleep that his entrance did not disturb her. Mrs. Mayley rose from the piano, and did the very thing that she would not have done for a million of gold; namely, greeted the visitor in a cold, stiff manner.

"You have the gift of song, Mrs. Mayley," he remarked, "you are too chary of it."

"I seldom sing, excepting to my mother."

Mrs. Mayley glanced at the table, and rejoiced that no signs of expectation were there.

Mr. Willison stood, hat and cane in hand. Mrs. Mayley motioned towards a chair.

"Thank you, Madam, I am in haste. Will you have the kindness to lend me Scott's Lady of the Lake? I want it for a young friend."

The voice was so constrained and artificial that it grated harshly on the ear of the sensitive listener. She hastened out of the room, and during five minutes' absence, shamed herself into perfect composure of manner.

"It is a sweet poem," said Mrs. Mayley, in a kindly, pleasant voice, as she handed him the book, "and no doubt your young friend will be delighted with it."

Willison had remained standing with an air of moody abstraction; he took the book, said "Good evening," and closed the door after him with a sudden jerk.

The hurrying footsteps of the departing lawyer died away in the distance. Mrs. Mayley seated herself before the flickering fire, and its light revealed upon

her countenance, displeasure and disappointment. But she was too noble and generous to bring an accusation against Willison, even before the secret tribunal where he was now brought for trial. She too well remembered the time when she had crushed in his heart the first tender bud of affection. Unconsciously, she had allowed it to expand in her own heart, and now had the extreme mortification of finding that it had not blossomed into friendship; her wounded pride told her, that it was a sentiment which must be nameless.

Her displeasure was against herself. Somewhat after the following manner she endeavored to bring about self-reconciliation.

"I married a man, from gratitude, thirty years older than myself. He was removed. I retired to this quiet place to pass the first years of widowhood. I had never loved any man. Unawares, this attachment has filled every nook and corner of my heart. I must tear it away, though the very life-blood gush."

As she reached this passionate climax she gave a

convulsive clutch at her left side, as though the act were a physical possibility.

This excessive indignation against herself, betrayed the naturally impulsive character of Mrs. Mayley, which was kept under habitual self-control. Her emotions were not like the fitful, flickering light which now played upon her agitated countenance; they were steady as the light of planets, and strong as gravitation.

Gradually, the flush of anger passed away; her hands were clasped in prayer.

"To worship idols, and to find them clay,
And to bewail that worship, therefore pray."

And what thought Willison, as he wended his way towards the home of his innamorata?

"What ailed my *friend*—(great mental emphasis upon the word)—what ailed my friend? She seemed in bad humor. She is becoming fitful. I have done her no wrong. She was *never* any thing to me but a friend."

The stars sparkled in the blue vault with mysterious

lustre, as he caught a glance of them, while hurrying along, and in their holy light he felt a slight twinge of conscience ; but soon his eyes were fixed upon the "beams" of "a little candle," shining, not "like a good deed in a naughty world," but like the sudden glare of passion, in a calm and quiet mind. Onward he hastened, muttering, "Mrs. Mayley is too intellectual, too strong-minded. A man needs recreation, repose, at home, not a perpetual encounter of wit, nor the continual gravity and sobriety of wisdom. No ; give me Emily ; bright, beautiful, sweet Emily Munn, for dear domestic life'

CHAPTER IV.

THE THORN DISTRIBUTOR.

"Would you touch a nettle without being stung by it? Take hold of it stoutly. Do the same by other annoyances, and few things will ever annoy you."

"He that can please nobody, is not so much to be pitied, as he that nobody can please."

Mrs. Goby was the gossip of gossips. Not a mouse was stirring, but her quick ear caught the sound, and forthwith it reverberated through the village of Cranston. One morning, this active lady dispatched in great haste the "washing up of the breakfast things," and immediately thereafter, threw on bonnet and shawl, and was seen making rapid progress through the principal street of the village.

With a flushed face and palpitating heart she

seated herself in the parlor of Mrs. Mayley. A brief interchange of conventional inquiries passed between the ladies, and then Mrs. Goby bolted out what she had with difficulty been holding in her mouth—"I have great news to tell, Mrs. Mayley."

No reply.

"Have you heard the startling fact? An engagement was announced last evening."

"Between Miss Munn and Mr. Willison," replied Mrs. Mayley, calmly.

"Yes; and you, of course, ought to know it first, for his particular attentions to a *certain person* have been the town talk for these *twenty* years. It is a wonder to me and to every body in town, that he should not have preferred a certain person to that milk-and-water, baby-faced Emily Munn. But men are just such fools, and until we take our rights into our own hands, and lead the creatures by the nose, every thing in creation will go wrong."

Mrs. Goby stopped for breath, and a momentary pause ensued, during which Mrs. Blane entered the room,

"Is it you, Mrs. Goby?" said the old lady, with her usual politeness. "How are you?"

"Mad as a March hare."

"Why, what is the matter now?"

"Matter enough! When a man pays particular attention to one lady for dozens of years; and then, when he gets to be famous, expecting to be a member of Congress, and perhaps President of the United States, leaves off his attentions, and goes and marries a little young fool."

"Is Mr. Willison married to Emily Munn?" exclaimed Mrs. Blane.

"I did not mention names, and I have only heard of an engagement," said Mrs. Goby, with the most provoking exultation. "Good morning, ladies. I am sorry to see you looking so dolefully. I advise you, as a friend, not to show that you feel hurt about this matter."

No tract-distributor ever went upon her benevolent mission with more zeal and alacrity than this thorn-distributor, upon her diabolical errands. Lest the news should be proclaimed by some other busy-body,

she now hastened from neighbor to neighbor, leaving thorns, wherever she went, to rankle and irritate for hours after her departure. The maiden in the fairy-tale, whose words were toads and vipers, was not as disgusting, nor as spiteful, as these same thorn-distributors, who infest every neighborhood.

Beware of them when they commence with the affectation of pitying kindness—"Poor Mrs. So-and-So," "Unfortunate Mr. Blank;" for as sure as sound follows the stroke of the hammer, so surely will slander follow their pity.

Sometimes they gild their thorns with flattery, as pills are honeyed over for children, and when the false disguise is dissolved, their victims are left to ruminate upon the nauseous remainder.

Mrs. Goby's pity was that day lavished upon Mrs. Mayley, "poor dear Mrs. Mayley." "She has actually grown thin and pale in consequence of her dreadful disappointment," said the spiteful gossip, "and Mr. Willison ought to be dropped, at once, as a candidate for Congress. I wish we women had more power; we would degrade a man for such faithless-

ness and folly. You have daughters, Mrs. Newbury," said she to the mother of two marriageable daughters, "sweet, pretty girls; I always wondered that Mr. Willison should prefer the society of that proud widow to theirs. Susan must be eight and twenty, a very suitable age for him. Men are such blind moles, they never discover true merit. I do not suppose Susan, worthy and excellent as she is, ever had an offer in her life. Good morning, Mrs. Newberry:—By the way; I lately saw in the paper a recipe to cure eruptions. I will send it to your youngest daughter Fanny, whose sweet face is so entirely ruined by that horrid red humor."

CHAPTER V.

THE BETROTHAL.

"Si le nez de Cléopâtre eût été plus court, toute la face de la terre aurait changé."—PASCAL.

"THE baby-faced Emily Munn," was generally called an amiable girl, a very amiable girl. As is usually the case, where this indefinite term is applied, her character had no salient points. This kind of amiability is like the dead calm of the sluggish pool, beside which grows no sweet blossom, rather than like the dancing rivulet which loves every little flower which peeps into its sparkling waters.

The "engagement" met with the rapturous consent of Mrs. Munn. Her husband, a plain sensible farmer, took a different view of the matter—said he,

"This is not a natural union; it is bringing spring-time and harvest together. Wife, depend upon it, it is flying in the face of Providence, and running an awful risk."

An ominous frown from his stronger-half led him to round off his speech with a "but"—"but you women folks will regulate these matters, any how—so I suppose I must give in."

Mr. Munn had been worsted in so many word-battles, that his "valor" had come at last to content itself with a genuine Burleigh shake of the head, which proved his "discretion."

Willison now passed all his evenings, spite of law and politics, with his fiancée. Occasionally he read to her passages from his favorite authors.

He was one evening reading a spirited poem, to which his rich voice and impassioned manner imparted the glowing enthusiasm of its author. At the close of a thrilling passage, he paused to glance at the countenance of the listener, there to find a response to his own emotions. Emily was, like little Bo Peep, fast asleep.

The lover for a moment was angry, nay more, something like contempt curled his lip ; but anger and contempt gave place to admiration, as he gazed at the youthful sleeper. The light curls fell over a face glowing with the bright, rosy hue of health. The fresh, dewy lips were slightly parted, and the delicate lids, with their long lashes, fell like a fringed curtain, over the eyes of the unconscious Emily.

"There is a sacredness in the sleep of innocence," thought Willison, almost holding his breath, lest he should disturb that beautiful repose ; "I never, never saw her look so truly lovely."

He had been thus lost in admiration for some moments, when she suddenly awoke, and exclaimed,

"Why do you not go on with the reading?"

"Because, dearest, I prefer looking at you while you are asleep."

"Asleep ! I have not been asleep."

"You are mistaken, my dear Emily."

"No, indeed, I am not ; I heard every word you were reading."

"Well, what was the last passage about?"

"Something about—about murmuring trees, or murmuring bees ; I never can repeat poetry."

"The murmuring trees were in your own sweet dreams, my Emily," said the enraptured lover, kissing her fair forehead—the first kiss of love.

"Now, Mr. Willison, you are really unkind," she said, shrinking from him with a look of extreme disgust. "I do assure you, positively, that I have not been asleep, and I wish in all conscience that you would go on with the reading."

The petulant, disagreeable tone of voice quite dispelled the enchantment her beauty had produced ;—Willison resumed the reading. The poem had lost its interest ; he read in a monotonous manner, and the low sound served as a lullaby. Emily was again in the land of dreams. This time he did not leave off suddenly ; gradually he dropped into a whisper, and after a while read to himself. Then laying down the book, with a deep sigh, he thought of the virtue of *truthfulness*.

This was the first dark cloud in that horizon which Love had enchantingly pictured, and Hope had glowingly colored for Ralph Willison.

CHAPTER VI.

A SURPRISING DISCOVERY.

"Off with the mask then!

Hey, the marriage hour!

Off with the mask!"

GOETHE.

It was decided that the marriage should take place on the day that Emily reached the age of seventeen. Meantime she continued at school.

"One of *them* boys from Mr. Hanson's," as Mrs. Munn designated them, frequently met Emily at a certain corner, and there they made a *detour* which very much lengthened the walk to school.

Edward Harlington! To a school girl, the very name was a whole volume of romance. Edward and

Emily! Two volumes more! Edward Harlington was a paragon; all the girls were "dead in love" with him.

He was a tall slender boy, not yet emancipated from a roundabout jacket, although he had mounted a standing collar and a man-ish hat. With this exceedingly fashionable hat perched upon one side of his handsome head, displaying a profusion of auburn ringlets, which the girls had devised all manner of schemes to purloin, Edward Harlington, one bright summer morning, met Emily at the trysting place.

He seized the troublesome books and carried them under his arm, while he walked proudly by her side.

Among other reasons why he was proud of thus walking with Emily was, that she was universally known as the fiancée of "Lawyer Willison." This gave *éclat* to the little school girl, whom he had never before deigned to notice. Suddenly he made the discovery that she was "excruciatingly pretty, too pretty entirely for that musty old fellow." He persuaded one of Emily's schoolmates to introduce him in the street, and this street acquaintance was vigorously cultivated until it had blossomed into a brilliant *flirtation*.

This particular summer morning he had uncommonly agreeable communications to make, it would seem, for instead of parting at the usual place, the truants continued their walk far into the country, and when they had thus wandered four or five miles from Cranford, they seated themselves beneath a spreading oak, by the roadside, and there passed the whole morning.

Edward, in the most romantic style, declared his love. Emily blushed and wept. Edward threatened to shoot himself or take laudanum, if she married that old fellow, Willison. Emily sobbed aloud. Edward comforted her with the assurance that she had only to give him the slightest hint that his love was returned, and all would then be well. She smiled through her tears, to save that beautiful head from being blown into atoms by shocking gunpowder. He would have seized the hand that lay temptingly near him and raised it to his lips, to express his thanks, but a certain chivalrous delicacy forbade. He thanked her in glowing language, and swore to be eternally devoted to her.

Thus passed away the summer morning, and the truants returned home in time for dinner,

Emily flew to her own room, and gave herself up to "a good crying spell."

"Come to dinner, Emily," called out Mrs. Munn, at the foot of the stairs.

After five or ten minutes, Mr. Munn called, "My child, why do you not come down to dinner?"

No answer.

Mrs. Munn went to ascertain the cause. Emily had thrown herself upon the bed, and was sobbing convulsively.

"Why! what on earth ails you?" demanded the mother.

"I do not want to marry that old fellow!" passionately exclaimed the weeping girl.

"Don't want to marry Lawyer Willison? The child is crazy as a loon."

"I am in my sober senses. I am going to break my engagement—I will; I will."

"You are a simpleton! Why do you talk of such a thing as breaking your engagement?"

"Because I do not love that man, and I cannot marry him."

"What will folks say! What will folks say! Don't for mercy's sake be such a fool. You will make yourself the town talk, and nobody in Cranford will speak to you, from our minister's wife down to old Poll Purdy."

Poor Emily was perfectly overwhelmed at such a concatenation of condemnation. She had all her life been governed by a mother, who was influenced in all her actions by what *folks* would say. Public opinion (the opinion of some fifty people in Cranford) was the idol before whom Mrs. Munn bowed, and taught her child to bow, with reverential awe.

"Oh dear! What shall I do! What can I do?" exclaimed Emily, going off into another fit of crying.

Mr. Munn now called out from the foot of the stairs, "Wife, what is the matter with our Emily?"

"Nothing at all but a fit of hysterics; she will soon be better. There, there," she continued soothingly, "be a good child, wipe away the naughty tears. Every body in Cranford will envy you when they see you riding in your own splendid carriage, dressed up in the richest silks and shawls and bracelets, with a gold watch at

your side. Then, too, you will go to Washington, and be introduced to the President, and your beauty will be admired by every body."

The vision of splendor thus presented, dispelled the tears, and the dread of being the "town talk," at length induced Emily to promise, that she would never again speak of breaking the engagement.

That vague, mysterious power, "folks," was to Emily, what the gree-gree is to the African and the medicine-man to the poor Indian,—dreadful and irresistible.

Fortunately for her peace, the charming Edward Harlington soon after left Mr. Hanson's school, and entered the sophomore class of Harvard University. During the first session he wrote her a romantic love-letter, which she did not answer; but it was carefully placed, as a precious treasure, with a ringlet of auburn hair, a faded rosebud and a broken watch-key. Was this "the first, the last, the only" love that ever glanced across the heart of Emily Munn? Will that heart warm into genial life, or will it for ever remain in frozen sterility? *Nous Verrons.*

CHAPTER VII.

SYMPATHY.

"When some beloved voice that was to you
 Both sound and sweetness, faileth suddenly,
 And silence against which you dare not cry,
 Aches round you, like a strong disease and new—
 What hope, what help, what music will undo
 That silence to your sense?"

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING.

THE summer had passed. The chilly evenings of September rendered a wood-fire pleasant, and, if not cheerful, soothing. The crackling, blazing fire of a wintry night is exhilarating, but the moderate fire of an autumn evening induces sober meditation.

Mrs. Blane sat in her accustomed crimson-covered arm-chair, in the cosiest corner by the fireside. The neatest of caps, with its finely crimped border, was

bound upon the head of the good lady with a broad black band. Her black dress was relieved by a neckerchief, white as snow, folded within the open waist, and fastened at the throat by a large diamond brooch. This precious brooch contained a braid of the hair of her deceased husband and children, and Mrs. Blane was never without it.

It was a pleasure to Mrs. Mayley thus neatly and tastefully to arrange the dress of her mother. She was equally careful with regard to the propriety and elegance of her own dress, from an innate love of the beautiful more than from personal vanity. Her dark hair, amid which no silvery monitor of passing years had yet displayed itself, was arranged in the simple Grecian style, so natural and picturesque, which better becomes a classical head than any other which fashion, in her freaks, has ever invented.

As mother and daughter sat there, Mrs. Mayley holding one of her mother's hands in both her own, they presented a *tableaux vivant*, which an artist might have copied, if he wished to give a presentment of "the best of daughters."

Mr. Willison had paid occasional visits to Mrs. Mayley during the summer, usually on business, for he continued to act as her financial agent.

A quick tap at the inner door announced his approach, and Mrs. Blane's cool "Come in" bade him enter.

"This looks like old times," said he, taking a seat before the fire, and spreading out the graceful hand, which now sported a splendid seal-ring. After general inquiries about health, and remarks upon the weather, Mr. Willison said, "I should like, if I had time, to commence our German reading, just where we left off."

There was a momentary pause, and then Mrs. Mayley remarked, "I finished that work long ago, and have since been enjoying Schiller and Goëthe."

This was said with a cheerful tone, like that of some old Scotch tune, in which there is an inevitable undertone of sadness.

A change in the manner of Mrs. Mayley towards her guest had taken place since that last reading, which would not have been perceived by an indif-

ferent person, but it piqued and wounded Willison. This particular evening he was excessively annoyed by it.

Again there was a long pause.

Was it that the lover had become more observant of personal appearance than formerly? He had never before so much admired the graceful symmetry of Mrs. Mayley's fine person, the noble contour of her head, the refined, intellectual cast of her expressive countenance.

It was a peculiar position for a lawyer; namely, to find nothing to say; yet, on this awkward horn of a dilemma was Willison gyrating for ten minutes. At length he muttered, half to himself, "I wish you would set to Stuart for your portraits, just as you now are. I want the picture for my drawing-room."

"Sir!" exclaimed Mrs. Blane.

"Sir!" echoed Mrs. Mayley.

"Excuse me," he quickly replied, "I was musing aloud I believe. It is unaccountably strange that I have never mentioned to friends, with whom I have been intimately acquainted—my—my intended marriage."

"When is that desirable event to take place?" inquired Mrs. Blane, who, feeling her daughter's hands tremble, was compelled to speak. There was an ironical expression in the simple words, which almost daunted the lawyer; yet he calmly replied:

"In about three weeks from this time. Mrs. Mayley, you are not acquainted with Miss Munn. I should like to have you become so. She is very young—almost young enough to be your daughter—and your friendship would be invaluable to her."

"If she is almost young enough to be Esther's daughter, she is quite young enough to be yours," said Mrs. Blane, in a petulant tone and rapid utterance, quite at variance with her usual dignity.

"If it would oblige you, Mr. Willison, I will make the acquaintance of Miss Munn," calmly replied Mrs. Mayley, "and if my age and experience can be of any service to her, I should be ungrateful to one who has bestowed so many favors upon my mother—"

"Favors!" exclaimed Mrs. Blane, "I do not know of any favors Mr. Willison has bestowed upon me. He has been amply remunerated for all his professional

services. Oh! you hurt me cruelly," exclaimed the old lady, with a slight shriek, drawing away the lame hand which Mrs. Mayley, in her eagerness to stop the unguarded speech, had pressed too strongly.

"Did I hurt that poor hand? Forgive me. My mother has been suffering with rheumatism in her hands, and has been obliged to lay aside her knitting entirely. To one of her industrious habits this is a great deprivation. When will it be agreeable for you to introduce me to Miss Munn? Or, do you prefer that I should call and introduce myself?"

"Noblest and best of women!" Willison did *not* say, but the thought sprang so near to his lips that it almost escaped. He did say: "I thank you earnestly, and if it be convenient, I will accompany you this evening."

"No, sir; she cannot go this evening; I am not well enough to be left alone," quickly replied Mrs. Blane.

"Then, be so kind as to take your own time, Mrs. Mayley. I will apprise Emily of the honor you intend her. Good evening."

Ralph Willison, instead of hastening directly to his betrothed, strolled off in a different direction. He wished to analyze his own emotions. Love is like an axiom in mathematics, or first truth in mental philosophy, beyond reasoning and analysis.

The lawyer was, in all matters, accustomed to study other cases more than his own; now, he peeped into his own heart, with "keeking, sly inspection." He there discovered profound respect for Mrs. Mayley. What more?—glowing admiration. That was nothing new; it had existed for fifteen years. Sympathy!—ay, there was the bond; such sympathy as every human heart yearns for; sympathy in taste and sentiment.

With Emily, he sought eagerly for something not yet discovered in her character. She was self-absorbed. Whatever the topic of conversation might be, she always brought it in some way to bear upon herself. This exorbitant, craving self-love, ruled her idiosyncrasy. She was not intellectual; that would not prevent Willison from loving her with his whole heart. Many a woman, even less intellectual, has been loved

with entire, unwavering devotion. Affectionate sympathy is the surest key to unlock every human heart.

Had Emily Munn been kind and genial, Willison would never have perpetrated the comparison which now occupied his thoughts. The contrast stood out glaringly between Mrs. Mayley and herself—the poor child making as insignificant an appearance as the cat that looks upon a king.

When Willison turned his unwilling steps towards the home of his betrothed, several uncomfortable suspicions were haunting his busy brain.

The jealousy of a weak woman is an exceedingly ridiculous and provoking passion, and yet flattering to the vanity of man. Emily was not in love, and yet she was inclined to jealousy.

"What has kept you so long away? I have been asleep a half-dozen times," said she, pettishly, as Willison entered.

"I have called on some old friends this evening. Mrs. Mayley will soon honor you with a visit."

"I do not desire the honor of her acquaintance," she replied, with a disdainful toss, shaking back the

ringlets from her pretty face. "I shall not see her if she does come."

"I am surprised and pained to hear you speak in this manner. How has Mrs. Mayley incurred your dislike? She is a noble-hearted woman."

"No doubt *you* think so. Folks say you pay her a great deal more attention than an engaged man ought to."

"On the contrary, Emily, I have been quite neglectful of so good a friend, in my entire devotion to you. Who has put such false notions into that pretty little head?"

"You need not flatter me, sir. I know you do not care a straw about me. Folks say you had been in love with that widow-woman, for ever so many years before you thought of me. I hate her!" vehemently exclaimed Emily, bursting into a passionate fit of crying.

Willison had for some time past been disturbed by doubts of Emily's love for him: her jealousy settled the point. So delightful was the certainty, that he quite forgot her petulancy and injustice. He wiped

the tears from her beautiful eyes, and soothed and caressed her into good humor. He even promised that Mrs. Mayley should not pay the intended visit, and that he would not again call upon her, until after the marriage.

Men *may* love wisely, but they seldom act wisely when in love. It is only when the object is noble and good, that

"Love refines the thoughts

And heart enlarges; hath its seat in reason,

And is judicious!"

CHAPTER VIII.

A DEPARTURE.

“ And now I see with eye serene
 The very pulse of the machine;
 A being breathing thoughtful breath,
 A traveller betwixt life and death.
 The reason firm, the temperate will;
 Endurance, foresight, strength and skill;
 A perfect woman, nobly planned
 To warn, to comfort, and command;
 And yet a spirit still, and bright,
 With something of an angel light.”

WORDSWORTH.

WILLISON, in his sober senses, the next morning, wondered at his weak acquiescence to Emily's capricious will. He found it an exceedingly disagreeable matter to decline the acquaintance he had so earnestly sought.

Seated at his office-table, with a delicate sheet of note-paper before him, he carefully mended his pen, and wrote as follows :

“ Miss Munn regrets that her engagements at this time are so numerous, that she must deny herself the pleasure of receiving a visit from Mrs. Mayley.”

“ That is not true,” said Willison, tearing the note to atoms.

Again he wrote—“ Circumstances over which I have no control, will prevent”—

“ Pshaw !” he exclaimed, tearing the second note.
 “ It is ungenerous to shift the blame from myself.”

After much deliberation, with an air of frankness and candor he wrote :

“ My dear Friend—Particular reasons, which your delicate tact may discover, render your acquaintance, however desirable in itself, peculiarly trying to Miss Munn”—

This chef-d'œuvre pleased no better than its humble predecessors, and shared their fate. The office floor looked as though a snow-flurry had passed over it.

“ What can I do ?” he exclaimed, “ Emily is a

perverse, spoiled child. But she loves me, and in time I can control her. I wish I had not given her a promise that involves so much difficulty in the fulfilment."

Just then, a letter was handed in from across the street. He tore off the envelope, and within were several closely-written pages, which had cost Mrs. Mayley a sleepless night.

Willison read the letter again and again. It was such a letter as no person fettered by conventional scruples would have written. It was a transcript from the heart of a noble woman who had loved, not wisely, but well.

Not wisely ; because she had sacrificed her highest earthly happiness to a morbid delicacy, which had led her to conceal the sentiment, discovered after the partial declaration of Willison had been repulsed.

The letter was a sad, final farewell. Tears in the eyes of the lawyer ! Unwonted visitants ! No similar tokens of emotion have moistened those gray eyes for many a year.

"And am I bound in honor to destroy this precious

letter?" thought he, unfolding and reading it for the last time. "She trusts implicitly to my honor, and it must be done ; but no matter, every word of it is written in letters of fire upon my heart."

Lighting a taper, he twisted the letter into an allumette, and held it in the flames until it was nearly consumed ; a fragment he threw upon the floor, and set his foot upon it to extinguish it. A scrap of paper remained with blackened edges, like a sheet of mourning note-paper. In the centre of the fragment appeared a clear beautiful autograph,—*"Esther Mayley."*

He carefully placed in his pocket memorandum-book, the rescued name.

At that moment he was startled by the sound of a stage-coach. It stopped on the other side of the street. Directly, Mrs. Mayley came out, with her mother leaning on her arm, followed by a maid-servant. They all entered the coach ; a quantity of luggage was speedily strapped on, and the coach rolled rapidly away.

Mrs. Mayley, by the death of a distant relative had come into possession of a furnished house in town, and

was going there to take up her residence. The resolution to leave Cranford had not been suddenly taken; the occurrences of the preceding evening had only expedited her departure.

"My life is all a mistake—an egregious mistake," thought the prosperous man of the law, as he pressed his throbbing forehead against the cool window pane, and watched the departing coach until it was out of sight.

Alas, why do we never know till too late, what is for our own good! Our wisdom is but a dim reflection from the light of the past, as cold and as useless as moonbeams upon snow-covered mountains. Too late! too late! the saddest words in human language.

CHAPTER IX.

EXULTATION.

"The bridegroom spake low, and led onward the bride,
And before the high altar they stood side by side:
The rite-book is opened, the rite is begun—
They have knelt down together to rise up as one—
Who laughed by the altar?"

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING.

It was one of Autumn's brightest, gayest holidays. Over woods and fields she flaunted her gorgeous robes in the mellow light, mocking the sober loveliness of her sweet sister, Spring. It was a hollow mockery, such as Fruition ever is, compared with Hope.

Willison, on that day, led his youthful bride to the altar. Beautifully gleamed that fair face from beneath the bridal veil. But even there, at the altar, better would it have been for the groom to have dropped

upon his knees, and confessed before God and man that conscience forbade the solemn vows he was about to take. Better would it have been for the bride, with heroic moral courage, to declare, that she could not "love, honor and obey," the man who stood beside her. Instead of thus acting according to the dictates of honor and conscience, with trembling hand he placed the ring on her finger, sealing irrevocable vows, while before his mind passed a vision of "departed joys, departed—never to return."

To many a girlish heart marriage is the earth-heaven, for which all her previous life has been a state of expectation, if not preparation. Yet the duties and cares, the trials and sorrows incident to the conjugal relation, have never shadowed her brilliant picture of wedlock. Romance and sentiment, the media through which she has viewed it, have rendered it *couleur de rose*. Elevated to this height of imaginary felicity, joined in eternal friendship with a perfect hero, she surely must experience a violent shock, when the realities of life are gradually revealed in all their sober earnestness. Alas! the shock is one from which she

may never recover. She will perhaps try the intoxication of society for relief, or mope away a dull existence in the seclusion of home. Is there no other alternative?

No such beautiful romance, however, had deluded Emily Munn into matrimony.

As the carriage—a bright new carriage—drawn by two "gallant grays," rolled away from the church-door, the bride with an exultant smile saw that it was followed by half the eyes in Cranford, and experienced a childish delight in being thus admired and envied.

"I am sorry, on one account," she remarked, "that I chose this for our wedding-day."

"What is it?" asked the groom, arousing himself from a fit of abstraction.

"Because I like celebrations of all kinds, and presents too; now my birth-day and wedding-day will always come together."

A bright color instantly flushed the face of Ralph Willison, and his lip had a slight tendency to curl with contempt; but he looked at his beautiful bride, and said with tender pity, "You are so very young, my dear

Emily, that I trust you will have a great many happy returns of this double celebration."

"Is it not another funny coincidence that I should be seventeen, and you thirty-seven?"

Mr. Willison did not reply.

"You wonder how I knew your age exactly; Mrs. Goby told mother. Say, Mr. Willison, when was your birth-day?"

"Last month, Emily; but I do not see any thing funny in this coincidence, as you please to term it, and I wish you would not call me Mr. Willison."

With a wondering look, Emily demanded, "Why, sir, what shall I call you?"

"Ralph, or Willison; just which you please; only drop that formal Mister."

"Ralph!" exclaimed Emily; "Ralph! I should kill myself with laughter. It is the most horrid name that ever was invented."

"It is your husband's name, and it was my father's," said Willison, gravely.

"My husband! That sounds too funny. But,

here we are at home, and I declare! there is my old admirer, Edward Harlington."

"Who?" inquired Willison; but before he could receive an answer, the carriage-door was opened, and he handed out the bride. Disengaging herself from his arm, she stepped aside, and gave a cordial shake of the hand to a young man who stood leaning against the fence near the gate.

Mr. Willison, with a stately air, stalked into the house alone.

"Gracious me!" exclaimed Mrs. Munn, as she sprang from the carriage which followed the bride and groom. Then, seizing Emily by the arm, she hurried her into the house, whispering in her ear, "Folks will think you are crazy. I never saw a bride act so, in all my life. You will be the town-talk."

Mrs. Munn had insisted upon giving a "reception," before the happy couple started on the wedding tour. It went off as receptions of the kind are wont to do. In spite of cake and confectionary enough to sweeten the whole community, there were sour looks from persons who had not been invited to see the ceremony,

and bitter remarks from those who had been ; envy at Emily Munn's good fortune, and spite at Willison for marrying beneath himself. In short, it was a facsimile, in "coarse style," of all wedding-receptions ; stiff and stupid ; unmeaning and unsatisfactory.

Mrs. Goby, when she offered her congratulations, remarked, that she was sorry Mr. Willison's most particular friend, Mrs. Mayley, could not be present on the joyful occasion ; and as Emily looked towards him with a triumphant smile, Mrs. Goby added, "I saw your old beau, Ned Harlington, at the door, and begged him to come in with me ; but with a doleful look he refused. He really is a splendid, handsome fellow."

The new carriage stood before Mrs. Munn's door, the admiration of the rabble of the town, who had never before seen so splendid a "turn out." Portmanteaus and boxes were strapped on, after the expiration of a couple of hours. Mr. Willison then handed in the bride, arrayed in a green travelling-dress, and they were soon out of sight.

CHAPTER X.

RESTLESSNESS.

"It is not once an age two hearts are set
So well in unison, that not a note
Jars in their music ; but a skilful hand
Slurs lightly over the discordant tones,
And wakens only the full power of those
That sound in concord.

Happy, happy those,

Who thus perform the grand concerto—Life."

MRS. SOUTHEY.

THE wedding tour was over. Mr. and Mrs. Willison took up their abode in a noble old mansion, which he had purchased and fitted up with every appliance which taste could devise and wealth procure.

The mansion, surrounded by venerable trees, stood upon Linden Hill, about a mile from the village. The aristocratic family to whom it once belonged were nearly

all at rest in the village church-yard. This family had been the pride of Cranford, and Linden Hill had been their favorite residence from generation to generation for nearly two centuries.

That Emily Munn should be installed there to do the honors of the mansion, was a mortifying circumstance to the Cranford people, and they grumbled at the degeneracy of modern times. The democracy entertain a profound respect for "old families," and have a sovereign contempt for what one of our authors calls "the gutter aristocracy."

Emily, in her splendid silks, rustled about the house with the unbecoming pride of a new-made lady. She pulled bells when she had no orders to give, and two or three times a day ordered the carriage, for no other purpose than for the pleasure of saying, "Have *my carriage* at the door precisely," at such an hour.

She entertained her guests with a minute description of the various dresses in which she had appeared at the hotels on her late journey, and boasted of the admiration she had excited, and the compliments she had received wherever she had displayed herself. She

seemed in her present exultation, as Mrs. Willison, to have quite forgotten that the good people who were making the wedding visits, had known Emily Munn ever since she was born.

* * * * *

Two months had passed, and the illusion was over. Ralph Willison was thoroughly convinced that, of all the mistakes he had hitherto made in life, his marriage was the greatest, and the most fatal to his happiness. Days of mournful musing followed this sad conviction.

In that same small office where he had toiled from year to year, he now sat late at night; the law-papers over which he had been drudging all day were scattered about, and wide-open law-books were staring him in the face.

Intense devotion to his profession had not dried up the wellspring of affection in the heart of Willison; it might have been drawn forth a warm and genial current, but by coming in contact with an iceberg, it had frozen to that heart's very core.

Sympathy, that soothing balm for the world-sick man, he had earnestly longed for; and he sought it,

where it should ever be found, in the wife of his choice. He might as well have sought it in "the last rose of summer," which was now falling to pieces, and scattering its delicate petals upon the table before him.

Willison, in the midst of absorbing pursuits, had cultivated a taste for the beautiful. He loved poetry and music ; and feminine as the taste might seem, he loved flowers. The rose, he had gathered that morning as he left home, and on reaching his office, had placed it upon his table in a small vase. Its beauty and delicate perfume had shed a softening influence over the "Digests" he had been studying ; just as though a sweet sonnet had now and then glided through his mind. The rose has been aptly called, "Nature's Sonnet." Yet Willison was no namby-pamby sentimentalist. Far from it ; he had only kept alive in his soul what God had implanted there, a sense of the beautiful. If some man had chanced to come in, whose life had been mainly devoted to chopping logic, Willison would instinctively have put the rose out of sight, for that man would have accused him

of affectation, or of weakness. He might have said as Coleridge did of a similar person, "Not willingly, in his presence, would I behold the sun setting behind our mountains, or listen to a tale of distress or virtue ; *I should be ashamed of the quiet tear on my own cheek.*"

Man of the world ! You might rather blush, were such a thing possible, at your own want of sensibility ; your eyes are blinded by the dust, and your ears deafened by the din, of worldly strife. No ; you cannot blush, you are a machine for money-making.

The hours which Willison passed that night in profound meditation, seemed but a brief moment, so intensely absorbing were the thoughts that galloped through his busy brain. He rose at length from his arm-chair, and giving it an impulsive shove, stood with his tall figure more erect than usual, and stern resolve upon his countenance. Had that resolve been uttered, it might have been in the language of Milton's Satan,

"Evil, henceforth be thou my good ;"

excepting, that Willison would have substituted Ambition, which is too frequently the synonyme of Evil.

The next morning at the breakfast table, Willison announced to Emily that he was going to the city, to make arrangements for residing there during a part of every year.

"To the city! Am I going to live in the city? Delightful!" exclaimed the young wife, clapping her hands with childlike glee.

"I intend to come to Linden Hill for some months in the summer, and to reside in town the remainder of the year. I need a wider sphere and the collision of superior minds, to bring out whatever talents I possess."

"And I want a wider sphere too;" said Emily. "I have been the wonder of wonders for one month in Cranford, and now nobody comes near me. I am utterly disgusted with this mean, detestable place. What will folks say, now? I cannot wait for *my carriage*; I will put on my bonnet, and run down to mother's, and tell her the news this instant."

Before Willison could add another word, Emily was off.

"Think of it, mother, only think of it! I am going to the city to live! Cranford is too narrow a sphere for me."

Mrs. Munn was not as well pleased with this news as her daughter. She would not be within hearing any longer of the gossip about Mrs. Willison, in which she took such exquisite delight.

"Let Mrs. Goby know it as soon as possible," said Emily, "and ask her to come up and take tea with me this evening. I long to hear all the remarks that will be made about my removal to the city."

Tea-time arrived, but no Mrs. Goby came to Linden Hill.

When Mrs. Munn gave her the information, followed by the invitation, she replied:

"Give my compliments to your daughter, and say that I beg to be excused. She has never invited me before, and I know well enough what she asks me for now. Tell her I do not act the part of news-collector for any body."

"I wonder when you gave up the business!" exclaimed Mrs. Munn, as she hastened from Mrs. Goby in a state of furious indignation.

When Mrs. Munn's displeasure had somewhat subsided, she concluded that it would be as well for her

to communicate the startling intelligence herself; so, in and out darted the good lady, from house to house, and was as well received as people ought to be, who go to their neighbors, puffed up with pride at some sudden access of good fortune.

As she passed the unoccupied house of Mrs. Mayley, she said to herself, "There now; I only wish that haughty widow and her mother were here. I would give more to know what they would say about this matter, than the rest of the people of Cranford all put together."

CHAPTER XI.

A FASHIONABLE FRIEND.

"STYLE consists in certain fashions or certain eccentricities, or certain manners of certain people, in certain situations, and possessed of a certain share of fashion or importance.

"Thus by dint of perseverance merely, they come to be considered as established denizens of the great world; as in some barbarous nations an oyster-shell is of sterling value, and a copper-washed counter will pass current for genuine gold!"—PAULDING.

It was a bright May-day; more than two years had passed since the marriage of Ralph Willison and Emily Munn.

* * * * *

Mrs. Willison is seated in an easy-chair, covered with French chintz. A dressing-gown of light-blue merino, lined with white silk, is wrapped about her delicate person. "A perfect love of a sitting-up cap," as she

calls it, is perched upon the back of her head, as though it had just flown from Paris and alighted there, and might without a moment's warning take its departure, blue bows and all.

The apartment is too splendid for Linden Hill; the ceilings too high; the windows look out upon a crowded street; it is the town-residence of the Hon. Ralph Willison. Mrs. Willison is ready to receive visits of congratulation.

"Indeed ma'am, it would do the baby a power of good to take a snuff of out-door air," said the wholesome-looking nurse, upon whose broad lap reposed a wee-wee baby.

"No, no; Mrs. Raisem, I shall not have my baby carried down stairs till I go down myself, just a week from to-day. Miss Posen says, that nobody in fashionable life in my circumstances, ever leaves the room in less than six weeks."

"Miss Posen is very much mistaken. It is as much as I can do to keep some ladies from the *hoppera*, when their babies are only three weeks old; and they beg and entreat, and bribe me, so that I am forced to give

my consent to let them go before the month is out. I have nursed scores of the most fashionable ladies in this city, and that is just exactly the way with every one of them."

As Mrs. Raisem said this in a very consequential manner, she fixed her keen black eyes on a countenance which to her was the epitome of feminine weakness. "That face," thought she, "has no more expression than a baby's foot."

Mrs. Willison was silent, for she actually was afraid of Mrs. Raisem.

"*Notamy* baby, all skin and bones, nurse knows, don't she?" continued Mrs. Raisem.

"Miss Posen is a leader of ton, *she* ought to know," ventured Mrs. Willison, timidly.

"A leader of ton! What for gracious sake is that? I have heard folks of her kind called leaders of apes, *somewhere*; perhaps that is what you mean, ma'am; if so, you have hit the nail on the head, for I never saw a more complete she-ape than that same Miss Posen."

"Nurse, you are insufferably rude," said Mrs. Wil-

lison, coloring deeply. "Miss Posen is a leader of fashion."

Without taking the least notice of this remark, Mrs. Raisem carried the baby to a window and whispered to it; "Poor—little—puny thing! Won't its naughty mamma let it have a breath of fresh air? When that blessed air, too, comes all the way from the country, where the posies are in blossom?"

"I hate the country, and every thing that grows there," said Mrs. Willison, passionately.

"Perhaps that is because mamma *grewed* there herself;" said the nurse.

"Come away from the window, Mrs. Raisem; you will spoil my daughter's beautiful eyes, by exposing them to so much light."

Mrs. Willison said this in a dignified manner, intended to be very imposing; but the nurse, a strong-minded, though uneducated woman, feeling the superiority conferred by strength of mind, and quite undaunted by high looks, replied:

"I verily believe your daughter will be either blind, or a fool."

"You frighten me out of my wits, nurse; how can you say such horrid things!"

"I can read the stars; I have consulted the almanac. I prophecy she will be either blind or a fool."

While Mrs. Raisem deliberately pronounced this oracular speech, Mrs. Willison's blue eyes were widely displayed, and a shudder of horror passed over her whole frame.

"Oh nurse! you are too cruel, you will drive me distracted."

"Well; she may possibly *shirk* these threatening calamities, and in that case, she will become something very great."

"I breathe again; something great! What can it be? I hope it may be a great beauty, and a great belle."

"I cannot foretell whether she may not be both, and a great saint; but this can come about afterwards, only in one way."

"What is that? Pray tell me."

"On one condition—that you never threaten her, whatever she may do, with 'What will folks say?'"

"Mrs. Raisem, you are unreasonable! How could I get along without it? I would not have my daughter brought up without caring for public opinion. I expect to consult public opinion throughout her whole education."

The conversation was interrupted by a loud ring at the street door.

"The cake, and the wine, and the candle—are they all ready?" demanded Mrs. Willison, with nervous anxiety.

"All ready, in the next room."

A tall, large-boned lady, with fierce, black eyes, and a sallow complexion, set off by a bright yellow bonnet, was shown in. It was the redoubtable leader of ton, Miss Posen. Mrs. Willison was arranged to receive her, in the most *nonchalant* manner. The small feet were crossed, to display unexceptionable slippers; the hands, too, were crossed, and an embroidered handkerchief was laid upon an arm of the easy-chair.

An interview with the Grand Sultan could not exceed in stiffness and formality this meeting between two intimate friends. After the first cool salutation,

neither declined a hair's breadth from the perpendicular, while Miss Posen's fierce, criticizing eyes, peered into every nook and apartment.

"Nurse, present the baby," said Miss Posen, in a decided tone, very like that of a militia captain—Present arms! Shoulder hoo!

Mrs. Raisem, according to previous orders, presented the baby upon a pillow covered with linen-cambrie, and trimmed with lace. Instead of noticing the baby, Miss Posen remarked, "That is not Mechlin lace; it is a gross imitation; never patronize again the shopkeeper who imposed it upon you."

"It was bought at the store of Shanklin and Milloway—the lace store which you said every body patronized," humbly replied Mrs. Willison.

"Pray do not say *store*, Mrs. Willison; it is a country vulgarism. I shall speak to those shopkeepers about it, and assure them of the loss of my custom, and that of my numerous friends, unless they explain this matter to my full satisfaction. What do you pay a dozen for those handkerchiefs?"

Mrs. Willison's face was crimson as she replied,

"I purchased only this one. It cost twenty dollars."

"There is something that strikes me as essentially vulgar in having one handkerchief entirely different, and immensely more costly than all the rest. I always purchase things by the set. It is ladylike to have all these little articles in full sets. You will learn these matters in time."

Poor Mrs. Willison looked nearly as much mortified as though she had been convicted of stealing the handkerchief.

Miss Posen now launched into the wide field of city gossip; who was going to Saratoga, and who to Newport; and who would not go because they could not afford it; and having touched at every point, from Mrs. A. to Mrs. Z., she sailed off out of the house, and went cruising about for two or three hours longer, leaving venomous thorns rankling in other minds, as she had done in that of Mrs. Willison.

Miss Posen belonged to the genus Goby, modified by cultivation. Nobody was the wiser, or the better, or the happier, for the dozen visits she made that

morning; thankful were they, for whom she left only a harmless piece of pasteboard.

Another ring at the street-door.

"Horrors!" exclaimed Mrs. Willison, "I cannot see any more company to-day."

"You have seen only one lady," remarked Mrs. Raisem, "and all this fixing will be just wasted. I thought you was a-sitting up for company."

Mrs. Willison trembled from head to foot: "I really cannot see any more company to-day; indeed, I cannot; I am so"—frightened, she was about to say, but substituted "fatigued."

The card of Mrs. Morningson was handed in by the waiter on a silver salver.

Mrs. Willison quickly gave the order, "Say not at home," and the waiter disappeared. "Oh, how relieved I am!" exclaimed poor little Mrs. Willison, drawing a long breath.

"Relieved by telling a whopper!" indignantly exclaimed Mrs. Raisem. "Do you suppose that any one will believe such a message?"

"No; but it is the custom, and I must do as other

people do. Mrs. Morningson is a lady whom Miss Posen particularly wishes me to visit ; but then she is cruelly critical, and ultra-fashionable."

Mrs. Willison was so painfully conscious of being country-bred and inexperienced, that society gave her no pleasure whatever. Day after day, for two weeks, she had been dressed in the same elegant style, and the wine, the cake, and the candle were all ready, the poor baby laid upon its rich pillow, and the nurse in her French cap and flounced apron ; and yet the lady had ventured to see no one but Miss Posen, and only four cards had been left at the door.

"What will Miss Posen say !" she now repeated to herself, again and again, as she looked at the card of Mrs. Morningson, and regretted that her courage, when brought to the test, had entirely failed. "But then Mrs. Morningson would inevitably have discovered that gross imitation of Mechlin lace, and perhaps a thousand other deficiencies, which I do not perceive. Oh, it is a very difficult matter to be a fashionable lady—a perfect bondage."

Poor Emily felt this through every trembling limb

that day, as she laid aside her sitting-up dress, and threw herself upon the bed, in an agony of tears.

"What distressed up-hill work it is for some people to be fine ladies," *thought* Mrs. Raisem ; and she muttered aloud, "Poor baby ! its mamma is a baby too, and ought still to be tied to *her* mother's apron-string."

"Nurse, you are an aggravating woman."

"I speak plain truths ; but, Mrs. Willison, I do really pity you. I have often thought that I would not change places with any of you fashionable ladies for all the gold of Solomon's Temple."

Towards evening, that same day, a note from Miss Posen, requiring an immediate answer, was handed to Mrs. Willison. It ran as follows :

"My dear Mrs. Willison :—We must have you one of our party to-night at the theatre. Call for me in your carriage, in season. You will meet an old friend. Repondez vite. Faithfully yours,

"ELOISE ANTOINETTE POSEN."

Strange, and contradictory to other advice, as this note was, Mrs. Willison's curiosity was so much ex-

cited by the suggestion with regard to an old friend, that she determined to give a favorable answer.

After it was dispatched, she was actually afraid to communicate her intention to the stern Mrs. Raisem. When she at last timidly ventured to do so, that sage person shook her head, in an ominous manner, but contented herself with remarking, "You might as well attempt to calculate the exact course dandelion-seeds will take, in a high wind, as to calculate for the vagaries that come into some people's heads."

CHAPTER XII.

PAULINE RANDOLPH.

"I know not how to give flattering titles."—BOOK OF JOB.

"Who feels his consolation in his mind,
And locked within his bosom bears about
A mental charm for every care without."

CHAPMAN.

RALPH WILLISON was doing honor to his constituents in Congress. Few men have made there a more successful debüt. So completely was he absorbed in public affairs, that he seldom found time to attend to private matters, and letters to his wife were among those private matters, which were sadly neglected. There was some excuse for this neglect. His letters were not answered; and it is difficult to keep up a correspondence

where, as the Hibernian said, "the *reciprocity* is all on one side."

Emily had written once, but having had the misfortune to make some egregious blunders in orthography, her husband kindly suggested the use of a dictionary; which her pride resented, to such a degree, that she did not commit herself again.

He frequently received letters, however, from his cousin, Pauline Randolph, who was passing the winter at his house in town.

Pauline was the first to catch the sound of Willison's footsteps on his return home. She ran from the drawing-room, where she was sitting, into the entry, and lifting both arms towards his neck, for she was too short to reach it, exclaimed, "Cousin Ralph!—Cousin Ralph, you glorious creature! You have knocked Patrick Henry from his niche, and taken his place in the temple of eloquence."

"Child! child! you are more enthusiastic than ever; let me go.—Where is my wife?" asked Willison, gently disengaging himself from the grasp of his young cousin.

"In her own room," replied Pauline in a grave tone, the sunshine of her first greeting giving place to murkiness.

Willison knocked at the door of his wife's apartment. It was opened by Mrs. Raisem, with the baby in her arms. He passed on to salute his wife.

"How do you do, Mr. Willison?" said that fashionable lady, extending her hand in the formal, stiff manner she had successfully acquired from Miss Posen.

The kind, affectionate emotion which had warmed his heart as he knocked at the door, was checked,—sent back with a revulsion so sudden, that he only took ceremoniously the offered hand, and bowed, without uttering a word.

"Are you not going to speak to your daughter, sir?" demanded the nurse, placing the baby before him.

"Poor little thing!" he exclaimed, looking at the feeble, emaciated infant.

A smile passed over the face of the child. He took it in his arms. The gush of feeling which had been so suddenly checked would have way. He car-

ried the infant to a window, and remained there for a brief space. When the baby was replaced in the arms of the nurse, there was a sparkling tear upon its cheek, which did not fall from those infant eyes.

"How old you have grown, Mr. Willison!" said *his lady*, in that odiously-affected manner, which she considered particularly elegant. "I think I never saw any one age so much in a single winter."

"Arduous duties, and intense application, frequently have that effect," said Willison, taking a seat by the easy chair of his wife.

"You do not remark any change in me. They say I look younger than I did two years ago."

"The contrast between us, Emily, is painfully striking," replied Willison, with his eyes fixed upon the fair, youthful face of his wife.

A momentary silence followed, in which you might almost have heard the throbbing of his sorrowful heart. At length Willison said, "I trust you have found Cousin Pauline a pleasant companion."

"*Your* cousin, Miss Randolph, I have not seen for three months past."

"Not seen for three months! Is it possible!"

"Very possible; I have not been out of my room but once during that time. To-morrow, I intend going down stairs. I am not disposed, sir, to have any more conversation at present."

Willison was inclined to laugh at the ridiculous formality of his wife, but checking the inclination, he arose, and making a bow, which Sir Charles Grandison himself might have envied, left the apartment.

The baby began crying. Mrs. Raisem was accustomed to express herself very openly to babies. "There now; don't you cry, 'poor little thing,' as nice papa calls it. There, there, a great papa it has got, and a kind papa, and a handsome papa—so it has, darling."

"Handsome! any thing but handsome, nurse! Did you see the gray hairs in his side-locks?" inquired Mrs. Willison.

"Baby don't wonder its papa is getting gray hairs among his beautiful, dark locks; no, it don't be surprised at all! When it gets to be a nice, big girl, it will comfort poor papa—so it will."

"Nurse, you are too provoking. I wish you would not mutter such nonsense to that child!" exclaimed Mrs. Willison, in a very natural manner, quite at variance with the ladylike repose which she was endeavoring to render habitual.

Mrs. Willison, in common with many other would-be elegant ladies, had adopted that precise, cut-and-dried manner, as a mark of high breeding; a manner denoting any thing but quietness and self-possession. The pasteboard mask of an actor is not more unlike the *spirituelle* countenance of a Siddons, than this imitation is unlike the graceful reality.

CHAPTER XIII.

A TETE-A-TETE DINNER.

"Some respect for social fictions

Hath been also lost by me;

And some generous genuflexions,

Which my spirit offered free

To the pleasant old conventions of our false Humanity."

THE LOST BOWER.

DINNER was announced. During his residence in Washington, Willison had been scrupulously elegant in his toilette. A few minutes after he had been summoned to the dining-room, he appeared in full dress. *

"There now, you lazy fellow; we have had to carve, as usual, for you are five minutes too late. We are very punctual," said Pauline Randolph, as she drew

the carving-fork from a boiled chicken, which she had neatly reduced to a helpable condition.

"We, Pauline! Do you adopt the style editorial, or the style despotic?"

"Neither; it is the style self-renouncing. Shall we send you a bit of boiled chicken, or will you help yourself to the roast. We do not soup to-day. You came a day sooner than we expected."

"Pshaw! Pauline, lay aside this *badinage*."

"Pray help yourself, Cousin Ralph, and in every way make yourself quite at home. Thomas," continued she, addressing the waiter, "attend to Mr. Willison. Place the bell at his right hand, and then you may leave the room."

"Pauline, you speak with authority. Who superintends the *ménage* of my house?"

"We do," was the prompt reply, the *nez retroussée* of Pauline assuming a more pugnacious air than usual.

"But, Emily says she has not seen you for three months past."

"She does not admire our ugly countenance. Hungry as a wolf—walked six miles this morning—city

people must not be shocked at unladylike appetites in country cousins."

"I am glad to see you eat with so much zest."

"Thank you for not saying *gusto*—it is a detestable word."

"No, Pauline, you do not deserve such severe condemnation. You dine with the keen appetite of health and good spirits—that peculiarly provocative appetite, nice and discriminating, which imparts to others a relish for the viands before them."

"What a speech for a gentleman to make to a refined young lady! Unpardonable! We shall present you with the last edition of 'Etiquette for Gentlemen.' Your dinner is before you, make the best of it. We have no dessert to-day."

"Who manages here?—you, Pauline?"

"Manages! The cook manages the chickens, the waiter the table, the nurse the nursery."

"Incorrigible creature! You are more saucy than ever. Have the kindness to inform me who has taken charge of the family during Emily's illness."

"We have. Please ring the bell for Thomas, to fill

your glass. We do not have wine on the table. You will not take wine, of course. It was very kind in you to send all those documents from Congress. Your own speeches were decidedly the best things among them. It is a glorious thing to be a patriot. To renounce self, and all narrow sectional prejudices, in order to devote heart and mind to the best interests of the whole country. Why, Ralph, it is one of the noblest and most ennobling of all philanthropic endeavors."

Pauline moved her chair from the table. The dinner was over, and Willison left the room, half-amused and half-angry with Pauline Randolph. Without appearing to superintend the management of the household, Pauline had, during the last three months, taken the entire charge of all the financial concerns; and besides, so ingeniously directed the movements of the servants, that they seemed perfectly voluntary. Her own scrupulous punctuality had brought the domestic machine to act with clocklike precision of movement, while her constant kindness and good nature were the delicate oil that kept it in order.

At tea-time, there was no one at table but Mr. Willison.

"Miss Randolph wished me to make her apology to you, sir," said Thomas; "she will not be at home again, till to-morrow evening."

CHAPTER XIV.

PHILANTHROPY.

"Is she not an extraordinary woman?" Every thing is comprised in these words: she is left to the strength of her own mind, to struggle as she can with her afflictions."—MADAME DE STAEL.

THE next day, at ten o'clock, Thomas was summoned to Mrs. Willison's apartment to receive her orders.

"Thomas, I am coming down to dinner to-day."

"Yes, madam," replied the waiter, with a respectful bow.

"I want you to provide the best of every thing, for I expect company to dinner."

"What will you please to order, madam?"

"I cannot enter into particulars; every thing in market that is uncommonly nice and good, and out of season. And Thomas, you must not call me Madam;

I do not like it at all; it makes me seem as old as the hills. Call me Mrs. Willison, but not Madam."

"Can Mrs. Willison name any meats or vegetables which she would like?"

"I do not know what they have in market. How should I? That is your business. Tell the cook to prepare every thing in the best style; as *Frenchy* as possible. Thomas, you may descend; you have my orders."

The respectful waiter bowed and withdrew. As he closed the door after him, a lurking smile evinced that the sentiment of respect for the lady of the house, had not been increased by this interview.

In due time the "company" arrived; Miss Posen, *solus*. She was dressed in her favorite color, a deep yellow, and as she spread out the ample folds of a rich silk, and seated herself upon an ottoman, she would have done admirably for a *fleur-tableau*; nothing better could have been designed for "The Pumpkin Blossom."

Mrs. Willison in full dress,—cold, distant and bashful,—was an object of pity which might have savored

somewhat of contempt, had she not been so exceedingly pretty.

At a late hour the dinner was upon the table ; an expensive, but ill assorted one, which might have served for ten Aldermen ; in fact, Thomas not wishing to ask more questions, had at a venture spread the table for twelve persons.

Miss Posen was an entire stranger to Mr. Willison, that lady having elected herself Mrs. Willison's chaperone, after his departure for Washington. She was a study to him, *rara avis*.

The dinner, with its five courses,

"Dragged its slow length along,"

and right glad were the trio, when relieved from its cheerless stupidity.

As Mr. Willison led the ladies into the drawing-room, Miss Posen said, "You go, sir, to Mrs. Norton's to-night, of course?"

"Mrs. Norton's? I have heard of no such engagement," replied Mr. Willison.

"Of course I go," said his pretty wife. "We re-

ceived Mrs. Norton's card a week ago. Only think, I have been to but seven balls and five soireés, all this season ; and last season, I scarcely knew any body in town. I have been such a recluse for three months past, that I shall hardly know how to behave myself."

"You cannot so soon have forgotten all the advice I have given you," said Miss Posen, spreading herself upon the favorite ottoman, and glancing at herself in a mirror. "I have no doubt that you will appear perfectly *comme il faut*."

Mrs. Willison laughed affectedly. Mr. Willison walked into the back drawing-room. Miss Posen whispered, "For pity's sake, do not giggle ; that simpering giggle will inevitably betray you as a country-josey. Well-bred people never laugh."

Willison detested large parties ; but go he must. It would be ungracious, just after his return home, to allow his wife to go alone. It must be confessed too, that he felt exceedingly proud of her appearance, and was gratified when he thought of the admiration she would excite.

As the carriage rolled forward on the way to Mrs.

Norton's, poor little Mrs. Willison was in a flutter of anxiety.

"Oh dear!" she exclaimed, "I hope I shall meet Miss Posen in the dressing-room. I am afraid I shall not know exactly what to do this evening."

"To do? there is nothing very wonderful to be done. Norton is a friend of mine; we have been of the same mess all winter. Mrs. Norton, too, has been at Washington a part of the winter, and we are well acquainted, so that your introduction need not appear formidable. But do, my dear Emily, throw aside this awkward formality of manner; it becomes you as little as a strait-jacket would, and must be equally uncomfortable."

"Mr Willison, you ought to know that it is the very tip-top of *haut ton*; I have taken great pains to acquire this coolness, and with it a touch of haughtiness, to keep the vulgar crowd at a distance."

This, by the way, was a quotation, *verbatim et literatim*, from her model, Miss Posen. Willison laughed heartily at the absurd notion. "Really, wife, you have, in losing your natural manner, adopted

one exceedingly unbecoming to your style; as much so, as though you were to put a scarlet flounce upon that pure white silk dress."

"I can see no absurdity in that, Mr. Willison, if scarlet flounces were fashionable. In these things we have to be governed entirely by other people."

"Who governs *other people*?"

"I do not know; but really, Mr. Willison, I wish you would not destroy my equanimity just as I am about to go into company. I have a special favor to ask. I beg you will not do so vulgar a thing as to pay me the least attention during the evening. Miss Posen says, that we shall inevitably be called Darby and Joan, if you stay by me, at a party."

"I fear, Emily, that this Miss Posen is not a suitable acquaintance for you."

"Not suitable! why, she knows every body in town worth knowing, and understands perfectly what is fashionable. I hope she will be waiting for us in the dressing-room, for I always feel more at ease when I have her to lean upon."

"Ah, Emily, the time is past then, when

‘The wife,
Safest, and seemliest by her husband stays.’”

They were now at Mr. Norton's door. As no Miss Posen appeared in the dressing-room, Mr. Willison introduced Emily to the hostess, and then left her for the evening; and as he did so, might have added to his quotation from Milton,

“Fair, unsupported flower,
From her best prop so far, and storm so nigh.”

It so happened, that Miss Posen was not on Mrs. Norton's visiting list; but so unwilling was she to own that fact to Emily, that she resorted to the mean, contemptible subterfuge, which has been mentioned, and promised to meet her at a house where she had not been invited. The party was not a fashionable one, and Mrs Norton would have considered it a questionable compliment, to be called either fashionable or genteel.

Guests were constantly arriving, and Mrs. Willison, separated from the hostess, found herself surrounded by a crowd of strangers. It was not then, and there

the custom to speak to persons in society without an introduction, and Emily, as she was shoved completely to the wall, leaned against it, feeling most uncomfortably awkward, and quite lonely. For the want of something better to do, she picked a splendid bouquet to pieces, and threw the fragments upon the floor.

“Who is that very pretty young girl, you brought in so gallantly to-night, Willison?” said Mr. Norton. “I must beg an introduction.”

Willison was for a second too much embarrassed to reply. Mr. Norton began :

“You need not be” —

Willison interrupted him: “That lady, was Mrs. Willison.”

“Your wife! Is it possible!” he exclaimed, and was about to add, that as he had never heard him speak of his wife, he had no suspicion of his being a married man; but politeness came to his aid in season, and he said, “Then, of course, I am still more anxious to make her acquaintance. But I suppose the ridiculous etiquette of society, requires that I should be presented by Mrs. Norton.”

Mr. Willison met a number of acquaintances ; lawyers, congressmen, and old college-friends, and they clustered together in one corner, discussing a variety of topics, as much at their ease, as though there had not been a single specimen of womankind in the apartments.

"Cousin Ralph, come this way," said Pauline Randolph, suddenly seizing his arm, "there is a lady here to whom I wish to introduce you." So saying, she hurried him into a small library, adjoining the drawing-room, and before he was aware of her intention, she stopped before a lady who was standing in a large bay-window, talking with Mrs. Norton.

"Mr. Ralph Willison, Mrs. Mayley, my very particular friend ; *you* ought to know Cousin Ralph," said Pauline, looking very proudly from one to the other.

"Mr. Willison is an old acquaintance of mine," replied Mrs. Mayley, extending her hand with perfect ease and cordiality ; the more so, doubtless, because she was aware that Pauline had gone to seek Mr. Willison. He colored deeply, but the composure of Mrs. Mayley recalled his self-possession, and as he took the

offered hand he said, with a voice only slightly tremulous, "I am very happy to meet you again, Mrs. Mayley."

"Here is Mr. Norton, too strong in argument for us, weak women, though we know we have the right side of the question ; and we want you, Cousin Ralph, to sustain us, ably, against him," said Pauline.

"Norton and myself are accustomed to act on the same side ; I hope therefore, Pauline, it is not a political question," said Willison.

"No, no ; I have no more taste for politics than I have for olives ; detestable, both. Mr. Norton does not approve of our school."

"Your school, Pauline ! I thought you left school a twelvemonth since."

"I did ; Mrs. Mayley's school and mine, we are defending : help us if you can."

"What does this madcap mean, Mrs. Mayley ?"

"Just what she says," replied Mrs. Mayley ; "Mr. Norton will state the case, though it is hardly fair to allow him such an advantage."

"These ladies, Willison," said Mr. Norton, "are il-

lustrating a favorite passage of mine, which, by the way, sounds like our old college favorite,—

‘Quadrupedante putrem sonitu, &c.’”

“What is it, pray?” demanded Pauline, impatiently.

“‘With the *cant of philanthropy*, go Quixotting for adventures on the fields of humanity;’ that is what they are doing;” was the reply.

“Now, Mr. Norton, that is neither a fair nor a lawyer-like way of stating the case.”

“I beg your pardon, Miss Randolph. I will try again. These humane ladies have scraped together some thirty or forty, dirty, young plebeians, anxious to throw aside caste, and are giving them a helping hand, by bestowing upon them a refined education.”

“Mrs. Mayley! How can you stand there, like a statue of Minerva, armed cap-a-pie, and let facts and motives be thus misrepresented,” exclaimed Pauline.

“I wished to hear the statement from the gentleman, and must confess that it is not a fair one,” replied Mrs. Mayley.

“Ladies, I have done. Miss Randolph, you have the floor.”

“With a philanthropy, without a particle of cant, or a shadow of Quixotism, my friend, Mrs. Mayley, is laboring successfully in the field of humanity. She has established a school, for forty girls in humble circumstances, and she does me the honor to allow me to assist her in teaching this school.”

“And a very excellent teacher you are,” said Mrs. Mayley, smiling at the warmth of her young friend and advocate.

“Ladies, the mystery is still unsolved,” said Willison. “Please explain more clearly.”

“The simple fact is, we are endeavoring to teach some thirty or forty young girls to be useful, and to be able to support themselves,” said Mrs. Mayley.

“But, Mrs. Mayley, you said it was a pay-school,” remarked Mr. Norton.

“It is a pay-school. You do not think we would degrade our humble friends by making them objects of charity? No, indeed! We wish them to cultivate self-respect, and to maintain a certain degree of independence.”

"And yet you, Mrs. Mayley, and Miss Randolph, teach the school!" said Willison, with a look of surprise.

"Yes; and receive a shilling a week from these poor girls," said Pauline, laughing.

"Now, I declare, that is positive extortion!" exclaimed Mr. Norton.

"You have been unintentionally deceived, sir. We have an excellent young woman, well qualified for the task, to whom the pay is given. *We*, as Pauline says, only superintend; assist, supply the books, and a few other things."

"And you ought to see how nicely our machine works," said Pauline. "Oh, it runs admirably!"

"My dear, wait till you have a small brazen-trumpet suspended to your watch-chain, before you again attempt such laudation," said Mrs. Mayley.

"Why am I so severely reprov'd? It is not my good work," exclaimed Pauline, with an expression of extreme mortification.

"I did not intend to be severe upon you, my dear child; but it is in part, your own good work; without

your efficient aid it would not have gone on so successfully," kindly replied Mrs. Mayley.

"Well, my good ladies, allow me to pay the salary of your teacher, and thus render the school gratuitous to the scholars," said Mr. Norton.

"On no account, whatever," replied Mrs. Mayley, decidedly. "I consider it a point of vital importance to the best interests of the school, that the scholars have a share in supporting it. Equally important is it to their parents, to exert themselves to obtain the benefit, if such it is. Many of them would not, I am happy to say, send their children to a charity-school."

"That might arise from foolish pride," said Mr. Norton. "Those noble institutions, the Boston Common Schools, are entirely free to high and low, rich and poor; and none of the distinguished men who now adorn our legislative assemblies, our halls of justice, and the pulpits of our land—none of them, I trust, would be ashamed to acknowledge that they received the first, and perhaps, the best part of their intellectual culture in a free-school."

"I beg your pardon, sir; that is an entirely different

matter. Those schools belong to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, or to the city of Boston; a provision made by the public for the benefit of the whole, and the citizens avail themselves of it, as freely as they walk upon their beautiful Mall and Common, or enjoy the fire-works provided by the Fathers of the City, on the day of our National Independence. And it is perfectly right and proper that they should. There is no sense of degradation. Our pupils bring their shilling a week; our school is not considered a charity; let it once be considered a private charity, and the sense of obligation becomes painful and degrading."

"But, supposing they cannot pay even that shilling," still urged Mr. Norton.

"But they can, and do!" replied Pauline; "and if they did not, it probably would have been spent by these parents for rum and tobacco. The mothers are anxious that their children should look as neat and clean as their neighbors, and take a great deal of pains to have them so."

Checking herself suddenly, she turned to Willison. "Cousin Ralph, I am ashamed of you. I brought you

here to aid us, and you stand there like a great *mum-chance*, without throwing in a word."

"I am listening to abler advocates," was the reply.

"Do you suppose the moral influence of this pride in dress is serviceable to these poor girls?" continued Mr. Norton, "and may it not be, that you are elevating them above their parents, and giving them taste and refinement, which will, in the end, render their homes and their domestic employments disgusting?"

"We endeavor to elevate the parents, as well as the children," replied Mrs. Mayley; "and have not hitherto been distrustful with regard to the moral influence of our school."

"Norton, I am disposed to agree with the ladies," said Willison.

"Bravo! Bravo! Cousin Ralph, you shall come and see for yourself, whether there is any thing Quixotic in our enterprise."

"And will you not allow me the same privilege?" demanded Mr. Norton.

Pauline appealed to Mrs. Mayley.

"Certainly," she replied, "if it would give you pleasure."

"Here, Cousin Ralph, hand me a card, and I will write our address;" Pauline wrote the name and number of the street, and gave back the card to Mr. Willison.

"When shall we make our appearance?" inquired he.

"Shall I say to-morrow morning at ten o'clock, Mrs. Mayley?" eagerly inquired Pauline.

"If you please."

"What! after a party, so early?" exclaimed Mr. Norton. "How can you be so unfashionable?"

"We intend to keep early hours, Mr. Norton. I very seldom go into society," said Mrs. Mayley, and a sad expression passed over her fine countenance.

"It was only to do me a special favor, that Mrs. Mayley came this evening," said Pauline. "Having never been admitted into the arcana of city society, I had some curiosity to see what a fashionable party was like, and kind Mrs. Mayley consented to break through her customary habits and chaperone me."

"But you did not find it a fashionable party. We

have no waltzing. I trust you find it so agreeable, Miss Randolph, that we may frequently meet in city society," remarked Mr. Norton.

"Yes, if we can have a library to ourselves, and a nice little coterie of our own; but excuse me from mingling in the crush and crowd of the drawing-rooms. I cannot yet understand what pleasure there can be in encountering the eyes of so many strange people."

"You are very frank. I am afraid we shall never make a fashionable lady of you," said Mr. Norton.

"Never; I am country-born and country-bred, and glory in my birthright."

Mr. Norton now left the library.

"I have been thinking, Mrs. Mayley, that it was very odd for you never to have mentioned that Cousin Ralph was an acquaintance of yours, when I read his speeches in Congress to you, and extolled them to the skies. You never praised them, by the way, half as warmly as I wished. Cousin Ralph, I say that, to take off the edge of my compliment."

"It was blunt enough before," replied Willison, not pleased with the turn conversation had taken,

The thought which had most frequently crossed his mind after any of his speeches were in print, had been, "I wonder what Mrs. Mayley will think of it?" He had checked the eager inquiry again and again, but still it would intrude, and many a fine sentiment had been uttered, and poetical quotations, familiar to both, had been made, not for "Buncome," but for Mrs. Mayley.

Pauline, seeing that something was wrong, went on. "Oh, she *did*, indeed, praise them, Cousin Ralph! You look as much disappointed and chagrined as a schoolboy would after writing his first poetical *Lines* to E. W., or P. G., and the inexorable fair one had cast them contemptuously into the fire."

"Pauline," said Mrs. Mayley, rising (for they had been quietly seated in the snug bay-window of the library), "Pauline, we shall not be at the post of duty to-morrow morning, unless we retire early. Good evening, Mr. Willison."

"Let me wait upon you to Mrs. Norton," said Mr. Willison, offering an arm to each lady.

"Thank you; we go so early, that I intend taking

French leave. And as we would effect our exit with as little disturbance as possible, Pauline and I will glide away together, quietly. Good night."

And did pretty Mrs. Willison remain a neglected wall-flower the whole evening? By no means. When Mr. Norton went to seek an introduction, he found Mrs. Willison engrossed by the son of the Rector of St. ———'s Church, a young man who had just left college. There was no dancing at the party, and the tête-à-tête continued without interruption during the whole evening, both relinquishing supper for that purpose. To repeat the conversation would be like bottling moonshine.

Mrs. Harlington, the mother of the young man, was compelled to interrupt the long and apparently delightful interview, by sending a servant to say, that she wished to take leave of the lady of the house.

"Now, Emily, you will be sure to meet me to-morrow, in * * * *, near the corner of — street, at half-past ten," whispered Edward Harlington, as he made his parting bow.

"Without fail," was the prompt reply.

CHAPTER XV.

THE SCHOOL.

"The means of improvement consist not in projects, or any violent designs, for these cool, and cool very soon, but in patient practising for whole long days."—JEAN PAUL.

"And so to good children bringeth

Blessed Angel help in need."

GOETHE.

At the appointed hour, Willison called for his friend Norton, and arm in arm, they walked towards the street which Pauline had named upon the card.

"It seems Mrs. Mayley is an old acquaintance of yours, Willison," remarked Mr. Norton.

"She is; I had not met her for two or three years past."

"She is a remarkably fine-looking woman. Has she changed much since you saw her last?"

"Only for the better, I think."

"That is not common at her age. If one may be pardoned for guessing a lady's age, she must be approaching forty; for all that, I thought her the finest woman at my house last evening—decidedly the most elegant and graceful—saving and excepting Mrs. Willison and Mrs. Norton. By the way, I did not get an introduction to your pretty wife, Willison. That young scamp, Ned Harlington, had blocked up all access to the corner where she was standing. I afterwards went to lead her out to the supper-table, intending to introduce myself, but she declined going, very decidedly, to Ned, who was just then crooking his elbow, and smirking his invitation to the same effect."

"Ned Harlington! Who is he?"

"The son of our worthy Rector, Dr. Harlington, a graceless scion of a goodly stock, I fear. The Doctor and his amiable wife are severely blamed for being too indulgent to this harum-scarum boy. I have never heard that he was, in common parlance, *dissipated*, but his wildness has occasioned much trouble to them. He is a handsome dog. Have you never seen him?"

"Once only, and I had forgotten it when you first named him."

Willison recalled the meeting between his bride and the handsome harum-scarum student, on the wedding day. Norton had planted a thorn as effectually as a Goby or a Posen could have done; and what is more, he intended so to do.

They were now at the school. One of the pupils was waiting at the door to show the gentlemen in. At one end of the school-room, upon a platform, and behind a mahogany desk, sat Mrs. Scoten, a neat, tidy woman, the mistress of the school. At the right, and the left of the platform, were long tables, covered with green-baize. At the right-hand table sat Mrs. Mayley; at the left, Pauline Randolph.

As the gentlemen entered, they bowed to the mistress, who returned the salutation. The children then all arose, turned around and made their courtesies, turned and took their seats again, with such exact military precision, that Norton smiled, and Willison whispered, "Order is Heaven's first law."

Mrs. Scoten then invited the gentlemen to come

forward, and take the chairs placed for them upon the platform.

Meantime Mrs. Mayley and Pauline took no notice whatever of the visitors. They were each occupied with a class, seated in front of the long tables. Excepting these two classes, the girls were all employed in needlework, and after the gentlemen were seated, not an eye was turned from their employments.

The mistress said, "You may sing the School Song No. 6." She then led the tune, in a sweet, clear voice, and nearly all present joined in singing the following song, while the deep flush on the face of Pauline betrayed that she was probably the first who had ever seen that song:—

Up, up, with the sun,

The day is begun;

As busy as bees

On blossoming trees,

We work and we sing, we work and we sing.

The birds are in quest

Of straw for the nest,

They build it all neat,

Their labor is sweet,

They work and they sing, they work and they sing.

We run to the school,
 And break not the rule,
 By stopping to play,
 Or stare on the way ;
 We work and we sing, we work and we sing.

The idle and bad
 In rags will be clad ;
 We earn our own food,
 And learn to be good ;
 We work and we sing, we work and we sing.

On, on, with the sun,
 The day will be done ;
 Our Father in Heaven
 His blessing has given :
 We work and we sing, we work and we sing.

When they had done singing, a class of four was called up to read, in front of the platform. The remainder continued busily occupied, while the four, in turn, read the first nine verses of the sixth chapter of the Epistle of St. Paul to the Ephesians :—

“Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right,” &c.

When the reading was ended, Mrs. Mayley arose from her seat, and immediately the work of

various kinds was laid upon the desks, the children stood up, and every eye was fixed upon her.

“Children, *whom* are you commanded to obey ?” asked Mrs. Mayley, in a mild, kind manner, a slight tremulousness in her voice alone betraying that she felt the presence of unusual auditors.

“Our parents,” was the reply from every child present.

“Which is the commandment with a promise annexed to it ?”

“The fifth. Honor thy father and thy mother.”

Thus Mrs. Mayley went on to the end of the lesson, giving such explanations as were needed. When she was done, the children again seated themselves and resumed their employments. Another class of four was then called up. They read in a simple History of the United States, an account of the settlement of the colony of Jamestown. The slow, clear manner in which the pupils read, enabled all to hear distinctly. When they had read a chapter, the mistress sent them to their seats, and they all resumed work. She then questioned them in turn about the History.

"Betsey Wilson."

The girl thus called up, promptly arose.

"What was the subject of the reading lesson?"

"The settlement of the colony of Jamestown."

"Mary Gill."

"Where did the colonists come from?"

"Across the great ocean, from a place called England."

Thus Mrs. Scoten went on, calling up each girl by name, until she had asked all the questions. Thus they all received the benefit of the reading while the work continued, and each day different classes of four were called up, that all might learn to read well. The younger children who were not able to read for the benefit of all, were taught separately, to save time and prevent the restlessness and fatigue that must be the consequence, when children stand in a class waiting for their turn. A spelling lesson was then given out, by one of the scholars, standing upon the platform. This was an honor she had obtained by being perfect in all her lessons the previous week. Proud of this honor, the little flaxen-haired, rosy-cheeked girl,

stepped upon the platform, and spelled over the lesson distinctly, twice. No sound was uttered in response, but the lips of all moved in unison with hers. She then commenced at any place she chose in the column, and gave out the words to the girls in the order in which they were seated. Their eyes were all the time fixed upon their work; yet so thoroughly had they been drilled, that not one hesitated a moment when it came to her turn, although no names were called.

"We will excuse the gentlemen now, unless they choose to ask some questions in Mental Arithmetic," said Mrs. Mayley.

Mr. Norton, who had become much interested, chose to do so. Having asked the method, which was simply to begin at one particular place, and keep on from scholar to scholar in order, he commenced; and so simple were his questions compared with those to which the children had been accustomed, that they seemed to him to answer, before the questions had scarcely parted from his lips. When this exercise was over, Mr. Willison, whose curiosity had been much

excited to know what Pauline was about, stepped up to her table and said,

"Are you giving drawing-lessons?"

"Hush!" whispered Pauline, "you will disturb our school. I am teaching them to paint maps and pictures. I will explain more fully at home."

At the same time, Mr. Norton went to Mrs. Mayley's long table, which was covered with printed sheets of paper.

"What are you teaching here, madam?" he asked, "Book-binding," replied Mrs. Mayley, with a quiet smile.

The printed sheets were, in fact, toy-books, which the girls were folding and stitching into covers.

The gentlemen now took leave.

"What do you think now?" said Willison, when they were once more in the street. "Is this Quixotic philanthropy?"

"The neatness, order and promptness of the school have delighted me. Let us see what this paper contains, which the tidy, wholesome-looking Mrs. Scoten, put into my hand just as we were about to leave,"

He read as follows:—

"The girls are all allowed a fair price for the work done in the school. When it is plain sewing, they frequently bring their work from home, and then they are not paid for it;—otherwise, each one is paid at the end of the quarter for all she has accomplished. The coloring of maps and pictures, and binding of books, are done by those who have taste and skill, it being one object of the institution to increase the means for girls to obtain a livelihood. Some of our pupils already gain enough, from week to week, to pay their parents for their board. No other studies are taught in the school excepting spelling, reading, writing and arithmetic, with the exception of the history of their own country, Natural History, and some few other things, which they acquire by hearing books read after the manner practised to-day. SUSAN SCOTEN."

"It is an admirable institution!" exclaimed Willison; "worthy of the mind which planned it."

"With the exception of the paltry shilling a week," said Mr. Norton.

"I do not agree with you. The parents, and the

children too, value more highly the instruction they pay for, just as they would a trade where they had to pay the apprentice fee, instead of sending their sons to a work-house to acquire it gratuitously. Norton, *entre nous*, I am no philanthropist—I have been ministering to my own pride and ambition for many years: in truth I may say, all my life. Men are selfish beings,—intolerably, hatefully selfish.”

“That is no new discovery; you announce the trite truth, with as grave and imposing a manner as though you had started an original idea in political economy.”

“It was rather as a confession, Norton; forced from me by the self-denying labors of those excellent women, for the good of the poor girls. Those two ladies are really doing more for the best interests of our country, than some dozens of blustering congressmen, who speak mainly for self-glorification.”

As Willison said this, Mrs. Willison passed, with Edward Harlington walking by her side. So engrossed were this couple in each other, that they did not notice the approach of the two friends, Norton and Willison, who were walking arm in arm. The words which fell

upon the ear of Willison, were not the most agreeable that could have greeted them.

“Ah Emily! you are a thousand times too pretty for a married woman.”

“Silly boy! he ought to wear a *slobbering bib*, and be tied to his mother's apron-string, till he knows how to behave himself,” said Norton, who had only noticed his flirtatious manner, but happening to be on the other side of Willison, did not hear the impertinent speech.

Willison made no reply. Turning the first corner they reached, he bade Norton “Good morning,” and walked rapidly home.

CHAPTER XVI.

COMMON SENSE.

"What numbers here would into fame advance,
 Conscious of merit in the coxcomb's dance;
 The tavern, park, assembly, mask and play,
 Those dear destroyers of the tedious day!
 That wheel of fops! that saunter of the town!
 Call it *diversion* and the pill goes down."

YOUNG.

As Willison entered his house, he met Mrs. Raisem, the nurse, in the vestibule, just taking her departure.

"Do you leave us to-day, nurse?" said he.

"Yes, sir. My time was up day before yesterday; I stayed just to give some directions to the young girl who takes my place. I am sorry for the poor baby. It is a puny, sickly little thing."

"What ought to be done for the child?"

"Try country air at once," replied the nurse, ear-

nestly; "it will be the best thing on earth, for both mother and child."

"Thank you, nurse," said Willison, dropping into her hand a gold piece.

"No, sir; I do not wish for any thing but my wages," she replied, offering to return the money; "and I should like to have them as soon as convenient. It is customary to pay me what is due when I leave."

"Of course!" Mr. Willison replied, and was about to express surprise, for he had handed his wife money for the purpose the day before, but checking himself he continued: "You shall receive the full amount to-day; keep this little piece of money as a fee for your good advice."

As Willison was about closing the door after Mrs. Raisem, Pauline ran up the steps saying, "Do not shut me out, though I have been a runaway."

"By no means. When you are so fond of children, Pauline, it is marvellous to me, that you have never seen your baby cousin. Suppose we take a peep at her now."

"With all my heart," replied Pauline. "I shall be delighted to see the little stranger."

"I am glad to hear that you have restored that respectable individual, the first person singular, to its legitimate place. What induced the degradation?"

"I had my reasons, Cousin Ralph.—Please don't press too closely to know them, for Mrs. Mayley says I was not perfectly kind in this matter and some others, and she is my walking conscience."

After inquiring the way to the new nursery, they found themselves in the third story, in a low, close, cheerless room.

A girl, apparently about sixteen years old, sat there rocking the crying baby, with a violence which threatened to rack its delicate limbs out of place, and stop its faint breath.

"For pity's sake, give me the child!" exclaimed Pauline, throwing off bonnet and gloves, and snatching the infant from the nursery-maid. "Poor little object! What ails it?"

"I do not know; it moans and frets all the while," said the girl, timidly.

"Dear little thing! What is her name, Cousin Ralph?"

"I have not happened to inquire. What is it, girl; and what is your own name?"

"My name is Perseverance Tibbets. At home, they shorten it, and call me Vera. I believe the baby has no name."

"Then I shall call her Lily; poor, drooping, delicate creature," said Pauline, soothing it with tender pity.

"Country air is strongly recommended for the child. Will you be ready to start to-morrow morning for Cranford? I intend taking my family there."

"Cranford!" Pauline hesitated.

"It is a healthy, pleasant place, where I passed many happy years. Why do you object?"

"It may not be agreeable to Mrs. Willison."

"Come with me, and we will discuss this matter more at large."

The baby had fallen asleep, and Pauline laying it carefully in its little bed, left the room with Mr. Willison.

He spent some time in removing the first objection Pauline had started, and then she raised another.

"But our school"—

"That will be well cared for by Mrs. Mayley. Surely, that poor baby has some claims upon your Christian charity."

"And we have a vacation after a few weeks. I will go; but indeed, Cousin Ralph, you have no idea what a sacrifice of pride I am making. Had I not taken 'Be good and do good,' for my motto, and resolved at all hazards to stand by my colors, I should now become a deserter."

"I have now a few questions to ask," said Willison, with an air so gloomy and constrained, that Pauline was quite alarmed.

"Not pleasant ones, I perceive," she replied:

"True. How is it that you have for three whole months, or more, kept yourself entirely out of Mrs. Willison's sight?"

"Not so; she has kept herself out of my way, because she did not wish to see me."

"How are you sure of that?"

"Simply, because she told me, she preferred that we should have no personal intercourse."

"Why?"

"Mainly, she said, because I am too independent, and have no regard for public opinion."

"A great fault in a young lady."

"Do you think so! I wish to do what is right, and cannot believe that public opinion is always a correct standard."

"But is there not such a thing as being right in a wrong way?"

"There may be:—I thought it my duty to expostulate with Mrs. Willison, about some things in her conduct which appeared to me wrong; she consulted her friend, Miss Posen, who said I was a person entirely destitute of common sense, and who knew no more about quality and fashion than a lamp-post, and therefore a very unsuitable person to advise a fashionable lady. When Mrs. Willison told me this, I replied, by quoting a passage from Hazlitt's Table Talk: 'Gentility is only a more select and artificial kind of vulgarity; it judges the worth of every thing

by name, fashion, opinion.' Mrs. Willison was displeased, and on retiring to her own room, sent me word that she wished to see no one until further orders, excepting her particular friend, Miss Posen. Of course, I have never since intruded myself into her presence. Finding I was left with the charge of the house and servants, out of respect to the *claims* of the mistress, I adopted the first person plural, to which you objected, and retained it, partly from habit, and partly out of spite."

Mr. Willison walked the room, with arms folded, à la Napoleon. Occasionally he went to a window, and looked anxiously into the street.

Pauline was sure that Willison was displeased with her; but having frankly confessed all that she believed to have been wrong in her conduct, she sat quite erect, her lips closed very tightly, and her color heightened, like one who had made the *amende honorable*, without receiving a generous acquittal in return,—a very difficult thing for a proud person to endure.

After a pause of some moments, Willison remarked somewhat dryly, "You have then been playing *la belle*

solitaire. You must have been at times sad and lonely."

"On the contrary, I found so much to do that I have not thought of being lonely. I have been at the school an hour or two, every day in the week but one; on that day, I have had a Bible-class in the Sunday School. Many whole days I have passed with Mrs. Mayley, although I have never been absent at night. I have endeavored, for your sake, to keep the servants and house in order, and with Mrs. Mayley's excellent advice to aid me, have succeeded. I am sorry you are dissatisfied with us."

"With you! With Mrs. Mayley! Oh, no; far from it. You know not the cause of my disquietude;" and then evidently to change the current of thought, he abruptly added, "Really, Cousin Pauline, have you never suspected yourself to be wanting in that somewhat indefinite quality termed common sense?"

"Indeed, sir, perhaps I have a very vague notion of the true definition of that term; if, by it, you mean, thinking and doing just as every body else does, I confess to my deficiency."

"I shall urge a plea of limitation. Your definition is altogether too comprehensive."

"Please give me a better."

"Common sense is—is the faculty which perceives exactly what is due to others, and renders it unhesitatingly."

"No, sir; that is politeness, true politeness; not the counterfeit politeness which pays great deference to the self-love of equals, expecting the same in return; while to inferiors, it exhibits only proud condescension."

"Wiseacre of eighteen, please then give another definition of common sense, rather more precise than the first."

"Not possessing it, how can I define it? However, let me try again. I like good sense, but it seems to me common sense only apprehends the artificial, the conventional. It goes very securely along the beaten highway, but in the wide prairie, or the wider forest, it is without guide or compass. It may be a very safe dependence for all who live much in the world, for it possesses the power of adapting itself to all modes

and forms,—all times and occasions; it out-chameleons the chameleon."

"And yet a consistent character cannot be maintained without it," remarked Willison. "The aberrations and eccentricities of genius are to be carefully avoided by a woman."

"Mrs. Mayley is a woman of genius," replied Pauline, warmly, "and yet she has more sterling good sense than any other woman in the wide world. You would be surprised to see how prudently she conducts her financial concerns, that she may devote a large proportion of her income to benevolent purposes. How kind and considerate she is towards her servants; how faithful and affectionate to her friends; and how charitable in her thoughts and feelings towards all the world."

"Why, Pauline, you are out of breath with this enthusiastic rhapsody. You ought to have added, that Mrs. Mayley is the best of daughters."

"Alas, no! Mrs. Blane, her mother, died nearly two years since, and that is one reason why Mrs. Mayley has so much leisure to devote to objects of

benevolence. You seem to be well acquainted with my friend, and yet I never heard her mention you. Allow that she is not distinguished for plain common sense, and I will give up the argument."

"I can allow no such thing, believing, as I do, that it is an indispensable quality for a woman."

"*Can* one acquire it? I think it as impossible for me to acquire it, as it would be to change my nasal pug into a beautiful Grecian nose."

"Now, that is sheer nonsense. Close and accurate observation will enable you to acquire a share of common sense, and let me advise you to begin."

"A close and accurate observation of what *folks* do, and say, and think; and then doing, saying, thinking, just like them. From the free, living, natural being, to *doughify* yourself into the precise, stupid, and artificial."

"Doughify! what new-coined word is that? You seem as independent in your language as your actions, Pauline."

"Well, *puttyfy* then; make yourself *dough* or *putty*, in order to take shape according to the caprices of

conventional usage, for the sake of pleasing that mysterious, intangible monster, Every-body. Cousin Ralph, I have a higher standard, and regret, most sincerely, that I cannot come nearer to it. It still looms up at infinite distance."

"What is it?"

"Perfection."

"And do you think you can reach it without common sense?"

"There it is again! I hope I may not hear that odious name mentioned another time for ten years to come. Do you think the faculty was remarkably developed in St. John?"

"I think it was in St. Paul, who became, if I remember rightly, 'all things to all men.'"

"That he might by any means save some. That means, I think, that he was truly polite and courteous to all; but he did not change one iota of his principles, or turn out of his course one inch, where he knew himself to be right. Let us drop this discussion, now and for ever. Common Sense will never fail to have advocates enough to keep her in countenance,

and I may be excused from an allegiance which, to me, would be worse than Algerine captivity."

Mrs. Willison now came in with her inseparable friend, Miss Posen. They seemed, for once, to have thawed into something like warmth; but at the sight of Pauline, they stiffened into their usual iciness.

It required a violent effort for Pauline to come forward and address Mrs. Willison, but for Cousin Ralph's sake she swallowed down the rising of pride and passion, and advancing, with extended hand, said, "I hope you are well, Mrs. Willison."

The lady addressed, grudgingly touched the tips of the fingers of the offered hand, and bowed, without uttering a word.

Mr. Willison's salutation to Miss Posen was equally frigid, but that fashionable lady, taking it for a mark of high-breeding, was perfectly satisfied.

Pauline immediately went to her own room. The other ladies, seated by one of the front windows, made observations on the passers-by, while Mr. Willison paced to and fro the length of the apartments,

now and then catching a few tinklings from the clatter of their tongues.

"Mrs. Morningson passed you this morning without the slightest bow," said Miss Posen. "It was a decided cut."

"I sent word 'not at home,' when she paid me a visit, and I suppose that is the reason."

"How could you do such a thing! You know her word and will are law and gospel in the fashionable world. That gentleman walking with her was the celebrated Italian, Count Albrozzi. She gives a ball, specially for him, next week, and your doom will be sealed in the beau monde, if you are not invited."

"Oh dear, I am wretchedly sorry, but what can be done? I was so much afraid that every thing was not in order, the day she called, that I could not have the courage to admit her."

"But, my dear Mrs. Willison, if you have not pluck enough to stand up with the best of us, it is a pity. You have beauty and wealth, and all you want is fashionable *position*. That, you must acquire through

the help of others, and stand up to, with real spirit, when you reach it."

"I am willing to make any exertion in my power, to be a fashionable leader, but I do so fear the great, prying eyes of such an elegant lady as Mrs. Morningson."

"Stare back again—pry into others' affairs, and in that way know how to act and do, as others do. You could not have a better model than Mrs. Morningson. She came to the city without a single acquaintance in fashionable life. She had not half your advantages, and she is now where you see her. She has had masters of all kinds; she knows enough of French and Italian to use all the fashionable phrases,—of music to criticise and admire in suitable terms, and in dancing she is perfect—the gentlemen are bewitched to waltz with her, and enchanted with her polkas and redowas."

"She does dance divinely;—I am more and more sorry that I cannot dance. Is it not provoking?" exclaimed Mrs. Willison.

"It is your own fault; you can, by taking four or five lessons a week in private, soon become superior to

Mrs. Morningson. I advise you to commence immediately."

"Who would you recommend for a dancing-master?" humbly asked Mrs. Willison.

"Somnanski, by all means; Count Somnanski for the polka, and Monsieur Dubret for waltzes."

"But it is late in the season to commence; I suppose we shall go to Newport or Saratoga by the first of July," said Mrs. Willison.

"Do not lose the weeks that intervene on any account whatever. There goes young Formantle; is he not a wretch?—So handsome, so *distingué*! One of the very best partners in a ball-room, provided he does not come from a dinner-party; then, you know, he is rather *égaré*."

"And I declare, there is Mrs. Morningson tripping along behind Formantle. Now she lays her hand on his arm and joins him," said Mrs. Willison.

"I understand; she wants to secure him and some of his friends, before she fixes the day for her ball. Mrs. Morningson is really in excellent preservation for a woman of her age; nobody would suspect her of

being old enough for the mother of her gallant attendant, yet so it is."

"It cannot be! She does not look more than twenty-five. I had not a suspicion of her being older than that."

"Rouge, powder, and dress can do wonders for a woman of forty;" *thought* Miss Posen, but she *said*—"there are mysteries in her toilette, which have not been revealed to any but her dressing-maid. Her Fanchette is a treasure such as few possess."

The first bell now rang for dinner. The ladies went to prepare themselves, and Willison still practised upon the peripatetic philosophy, at the risk of making a beaten path across the imperial carpets.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE FAMILY DINNER.

"I, at last,
Who yesterday was helpmate and delight
Unto mine Adam, am to-day the grief
And curse-meet for him!" DRAMA OF EXILE.

THE second dinner bell rang. Willison waited for the reappearance of the ladies in the drawing-room. It was some time before they came. Mrs. Willison was in full dinner-dress—Miss Posen as much so as circumstances would admit. Pauline was already in the dining-room.

Great was the surprise of the lady of the house as she looked at the dinner-table.

"Cold victuals!" she exclaimed, lifting up hands

and eyes, in utter astonishment; "broken victuals! What does this mean?"

"The cook left this morning, madam—Mrs. Willison, I beg pardon," replied the waiter.

"Left this morning? What impertinence!"

"We will try and make the best of an extempore dinner; so please ladies, be seated," said Willison, suit-ing the action to the word, in his own case.

"Why did you not send to some hotel for a hot dinner?" continued Mrs. Willison, angrily.

"Mrs. Willison, please take your seat," said her lord and master, with more of the tone of command than becomes a gentleman before company.

"That is *my* seat, Miss Randolph!" exclaimed the wife in a passionate manner, quite foreign to ladylike equanimity.

"Excuse me; I have so long had the misfortune to be deprived of company, as quite to forget that there might be a choice of seats, even at a round-table," said Pauline, taking another chair with perfect good humor.

In spite of her good humor, and Mr. Willison's en-

deavor, on her account, to make the dinner pass pleasantly, never was a party *quarrée* more constrained and *géné*, than the one thus obliged to discuss "broken victuals."

There was a luxurious abundance upon the table, and Thomas had so skilfully and tastefully arranged it, that with cheerfulness and good manners on the part of the lady of the house, the dinner would have passed off perfectly well. But her severe reproof had irritated the waiter, and he obeyed her orders in a sullen, disrespectful manner.

Miss Posen looked unutterable things, but contrived notwithstanding, to dispose of a goodly quantity of cold ham and chicken, lobster salad and pickled oysters.

"I wish to speak to you, sir, in private," said Mrs. Willison to her husband, with the air of an offended sultana, as they rose from the table.

"I am at your service," he replied, offering his arm with mock gallantry, and leading her into a library adjoining the dining-room.

"I wish you to dismiss that impertinent, insufferable waiter, immediately," said the offended lady.

"Why so?"

"I wonder that you should ask, after seeing his behavior to-day."

"You were very provoking, Mrs. Willison; the man had exerted himself to the utmost in your behalf, and instead of giving him his due, you severely blamed him. There will be no need of dismissing him to-day, for we go into the country to-morrow, and shall at present have no farther need of his services."

"Into the country! Where?"

"To Cranford."

"I shall not go to Cranford. Cranford! No, indeed."

"Excuse me, Mrs. Willison; my arrangements are made beyond the possibility of alteration."

"Then I shall disarrange them, for I am not going into the country till the first of July."

"Indeed you are!" exclaimed Mr. Willison, reddening with anger.

Mrs. Willison put her handkerchief to her eyes and sobbed aloud.

"The poor baby needs country air; that ought to be a sufficient inducement for a mother."

"I abhor the country," drawled out Emily hysterically, "and I think it is cruel in you to take me away from the city, just when I have begun to enjoy it."

"It is decided, Mrs. Willison. We go to-morrow at eleven o'clock. Have every thing in readiness for our departure. I have persuaded Cousin Pauline to accompany us."

"Worse and worse. I never would have married you, if I had thought it possible for you to degrade me and yourself, by hiring a spy to watch over my actions."

"You do Pauline great injustice; she is a noble-hearted, independent girl, who would no more act the part of a spy, than she would of a thief. Mrs. Willison, you are absolutely beside yourself."

Mrs. Willison now sobbed and choked more violently and more hysterically than ever; her husband, considering a private apartment better suited for such an exhibition, took her by the arm and led her somewhat forcibly and rapidly to her own room, and seating her not very gently in her favorite easy-chair, he

placed in her hand a vinaigrette, went out, shut the door, and locked it on the outside.

On entering the drawing-room he said, "I beg you to excuse Mrs. Willison's absence, Miss Posen. She is quite unwell, and is not able to come down stairs again this evening. The carriage will be at the door soon, and the coachman will set you down wherever you please to order."

Miss Posen rose from the ottoman (where, as usual, she had spread out her full-flounced skirt), with a jerk very like a Chinese witch from a box, and stood bolt upright, with her thin lips compressed, and her gray eye glowing with spite.

"Allow me to ring for a servant to bring your bonnet and shawl," said Willison.

Without replying, Miss Posen darted out of the parlor, and up the stairs, to the door of Mrs. Willison's room, which she found locked. Without a moment's hesitation, she turned the key, and entered.

"Poor Mrs. Willison! Your tyrant had actually locked you in. The world shall know of this abominable proceeding. Gracious me! The whole town

will be in an uproar about it. I should not wonder if the whole affair appeared in the 'Fashion's Mirror,' to-morrow morning."

"Oh, horrid, horrid man!" shrieked Mrs. Willison. "He dragged me up stairs, and bounced me down into this chair with such fury as almost to drive the breath out of me; then, stuffing salts of ammonia under my nose, till it tingled again, he departed. But that is not the worst of it; he says I must go to Cranford, hateful Cranford, to-morrow."

"The wretch! The monster! What will you do about the appointment you have made for to-morrow evening? Poor Ned!"

At this moment, there was a loud knock at the bedroom door, and the voice of Thomas proclaimed—"The carriage is waiting for Miss Posen."

"That brute," exclaimed the offended damsel, "that shocking brute is hurrying me out of his house. This affair will be the town talk. Don't go to the country. Feign yourself sick—any thing; but don't submit to this high-handed authority. Resist now, and you will not have to be trampled upon hereafter. But I warn

you, if you yield, you will all your life be a poor, down-trodden, mean-spirited woman."

So saying, Miss Posen flung on bonnet and shawl, and bolted out of the room.

The air of the entry had wonderful efficacy in subduing violent emotion ; for Miss Posen walked into the drawing-room, made a formal courtesy to Pauline, and allowed Mr. Willison to hand her to the carriage, without shrinking from "the monster."

CHAPTER XVIII.

DISCOVERIES.

"She starteth from slumber, she sitteth upright,

And her breath comes in sobs while she stares through the night."

THE LAY OF THE BROWN ROSALIE.

"PAULINE," said Mr. Willison, after returning from handing Miss Posen to the carriage, "will you have the kindness to direct the chambermaid and the nurse to make the necessary preparations for going into the country to-morrow?"

There was a deep sadness in the voice and manner of Willison that touched the kind heart of his auditor ; but she hesitated to reply.

"I am aware of the trouble I give you ; but, Pauline, I am an unhappy man. You desire to do good ; you have now the opportunity."

"I hesitate," she replied, "because Mrs. Willison has resumed the charge of her family, and I do not like to interfere."

"It is absolutely necessary that these arrangements should be made; as Mrs. Willison is not well, you will exceedingly oblige me by complying with my request."

Thomas now came to the door of the drawing-room, with his hat in his hand, and an old carpet-bag on his arm.

"I am sorry to leave so suddenly, sir; but I must look for another situation. I should be glad to be paid my wages before I go. They have not been paid for more than three months past."

"Thomas, we leave for the country to-morrow, at eleven o'clock; at that time I will discharge you, and pay you, of course."

"Thank you, sir," said the man, with a bow, and retraced his steps to the kitchen. On his way, he met the chambermaid, bonneted and shawled for departure, and whispered to her that the family would leave next day.

"As for staying another night with that unraisable woman, I cannot, as true as my name is Bridget. She is enough to thrive the seven senses out of my body. She has no more sense nor a four-footed baste of a jackass."

"Hush, hush, Bridget! Come and listen to reason. Stay for the master's sake."

And Bridget followed Thomas into the kitchen.

Willison was exceedingly troubled. Delicacy towards his wife led him to silence, but yet he must make one inquiry.

"Pauline," said he, after a pause of five or six minutes, "did you keep an account of the expenses of the family in the house-book?"

"I did, but never received any money whatever to defray them. So far as I know, the whole expenses of the establishment for three months past are due. When ready money was absolutely necessary for articles where you had no account, I furnished it; and as I supposed you would wish me to do so, I made a memorandum of my payments. You will find it on the last page of the house-book. Here it is," said

she, giving him the book, in which the accounts were kept in the neatest order.

Mr. Willison was amazed. He had sent checks upon his banker to Mrs. Willison, from month to month, more than sufficient for the ordinary expenses of the house, and on looking into the book, no credit was given for the receipt of any money whatever.

"I am greatly obliged to you, Pauline. I am afraid I have subjected you to inconvenience, for I find you have paid out seventy-five dollars of your own money."

"Not in the least, Cousin Ralph. You know I have an income of three hundred dollars per annum, which renders me perfectly independent. Pray do not let my immense wealth be known to the public, lest I become game for fortune-hunters!"

"If you can manage so well with this income as to have money to loan, you are an able financier, and I will never again accuse you of being wanting in"—

"Uncommon sense!" interrupted Pauline. "To make assurance doubly sure, that I am in the way of duty, I must go and tell Mrs. Mayley my intention—

not ask advice, Cousin Ralph, but approbation. Please send Thomas with me; it is only a few doors around the corner. He may leave me there, and come back for me an hour hence."

Pauline tripped out of the room hastily, and in a few minutes Willison heard the closing of the front door.

Again Willison strode through the parlors. An interview with his wife! At the thought of it he trembled like one in an ague fit. Through the whole of that trying day, he had not given utterance to a word which could cast a shadow of suspicion upon her. He had a high, chivalric respect for woman, and the delicacy of his nature revolted from a disclosure of the faults or follies of the sex in general, much more those which darkened the character of his own wife. Often and often had he said, "My wife, like Cæsar's, should be without suspicion." He no longer loved her, even with the semblance of affection which had cheated him into marriage; but her youth, her inexperience and her beauty, rendered her an object of deep, compassionate interest. When he reflected

that she had no guiding principles, no correct motives of action, except that shifting, "baseless fabric," public opinion, and that he had left her to take care of herself, his condemnation of her became even less severe than she merited; he threw the blame upon that ridiculous Miss Posen, who had been so dangerous a guide.

With these generous sentiments stifling the indignation which had throbbed at his heart, he slowly ascended the staircase. The meekness of his air might have induced the belief that he was himself a penitent, going to the confessional.

The door of Mrs. Willison's room was open. A light was burning upon a table, where writing materials seemed recently to have been used, but the apartment was vacant. Willison, exceedingly agitated, stood by the table, upon which was spread the open writing-desk. Upon it there lay a parcel of letters, tied with a blue ribbon. He did not examine them, but turned in haste, and with rapid strides made his way to the nursery. He tapped gently at the door; the hope of finding Emily there, with her babe, softening his feelings towards her even to kindness.

The nursery-maid opened the door, with a book in her hand. The baby was asleep. Willison entered, inquired for the child, and bent over its cradle. One little wrinkled arm lay upon the outside of the white cradle-quilt. The thin, pale hand, looked like a bird's claw. He lifted it tenderly, and laid it under the quilt, saying,

"Poor babe!—Vera, you must be all ready to start to-morrow morning, at eleven. I see you can amuse yourself in your solitude, while the baby sleeps."

"I am afraid my father and mother would not approve of these books," said the girl, blushing deeply. "Mrs. Willison left them here, and not having any thing else to do, I took to reading them."

A number of yellow-covered books, worn and soiled, lay about the nursery. Mr. Willison saw, with extreme astonishment, that they were novels of the most dangerous character, translated from the French. On the outside of several was written, "Eloise Antoinette Posen;" and on one page another name appeared,— "Edward Harlington."

Willison threw down that book, as though he had been bitten by a rattlesnake, and turning to the girl, said, with apparent composure,

"You are right, girl; these are not suitable books for you. Mrs. Willison, probably, has never read them herself."

"Oh, yes, sir, she has, for she told me they were charming! I can't believe that I fully take the sense of them; for I am sure, if I do, they are awfully wicked books."

"Put them all in a wrapping-paper, my good girl, and I will have them sent home to the owner, Miss Posen, to-morrow morning."

"Thus then, have *they* been perverting the morals of my poor, weak Emily," thought Willison, as he hurried rapidly back to his wife's apartment, still hoping to find her there. But neither there, nor in any part of the house, could she be found. That she had gone out with Pauline was very improbable, yet he snatched his hat, and rushed out of the house on that forlorn hope. Mrs. Mayley lived in the neighborhood, "around the corner," Pauline said; but the house he

did not know. He turned the first corner, and by the light of the lamps read the names on the first and second doors; the third was without a name. He flew up the steps and rang the bell violently. A servant came.

"Is Mrs. Mayley at home?"

"She is engaged."

"Mr. Willison wishes to know if Miss Randolph is here, and if so, to speak with her."

Mr. Willison stepped into the vestibule and closed the outer door. The servant opened the parlor door, and without entering, said, "Mr. Willison's compliments; he wants to speak to the stranger lady."

"Oh don't let him come in—don't, for mercy's sake!"

The door was immediately closed from within, but Willison had recognized the voice of his wife, and sinking into a chair, lifted his hat before his face to conceal the intense emotion with which he was agitated.

In a few moments Pauline came out, and approaching him, said in a gentle, subdued voice, "Come into

the dining-room, Cousin Ralph, I have something unpleasant to tell you."

She led the way to a distant apartment.

"Sit down, Cousin Ralph. Poor Mrs. Willison has met with an accident."

"How?—when?—where!" demanded he.

"Be calm, and I will tell you. Just as I arrived at Mrs. Mayley's, with Thomas walking behind me, I saw some one coming very rapidly down the street, and I ran up the steps and pulled the bell. Just as I had done so, the person, who proved to be a lady, turned suddenly to cross the street; as she did so, she stumbled and fell upon the curb-stone. Thomas ran to her first, and lifted her up; I followed, and by the light of the lamp saw that it was Mrs. Willison. Quick as thought I said, 'Carry her home, Thomas.' 'No, no,' she shrieked, 'not there; not there.' 'Are you badly hurt?' said I. 'Dreadfully,' she replied; 'the blood is streaming down my face.' And indeed it was. 'Bring her in here immediately, Thomas,' said I, 'and go for the nearest physician.' He brought her in, and in a moment after, Dr. Nutting arrived."

"And was she severely hurt?" demanded Willison.

"Oh, no; she had cut her forehead and one hand; the wounds bled profusely, but the physician said that no harm would follow, if the lady were kept perfectly quiet. He did not know who she was, and supposed her to be equally a stranger to Mrs. Mayley."

Neither Pauline nor Mr. Willison exchanged a word of inquiry, as to where she had been; but the agitated husband said, "I will go for the carriage immediately, and take her home."

"By no means; Mrs. Mayley insists that we shall remain here to-night; and perhaps it would be best for you not to see her, as she seems to be under some slight aberration of mind. She sent Thomas, after he brought the doctor, to see if she had not dropped *something* when she fell; she ordered him to look all the way up and down the street, and not come back until he had found it. What it is she did not say; it may possibly be her watch. He has not returned; that is the reason why you did not hear of the accident immediately. Mrs. Mayley and I will watch by her all night, and you must go home and compose yourself."

The tone in which Willison replied was so mournful, as to bring a gush of tears to the eyes of Pauline, though he said nothing but, "Poor Emily! she could not be in better hands. Good night."

CHAPTER XIX.

SELF-EXAMINATION.

"Fame is the spur that the clear spirit doth raise,

(That last infirmity of noble minds,)

To scorn delights and live laborious days.

Fame is no plant that grows on mortal soil,

Nor in the glittering foil,

Set off to the world, nor in broad rumor lies." MILTON.

In the deserted streets, where so lately the deafening rattle of wheels, the tramp of many feet and the hum of thousands of voices were mingled together, no sounds were heard, excepting clear and loud the watchman's cry, of "all's well," and the deep solemn tones of bells answering each other from every part of the city, proclaiming that another hour was numbered with the irrevocable past.

Willison started from a long reverie, the burden of

which had been, "If I had not"—that brother-traitor to—

"But if."—

Who has ever lived long in this sorrowful world without having called up both these traitors, for anguishing self-torment? We conjure the past, as though we possessed a potent spell to force it to give back a false move here, and the loss of a palpable advantage there; but the spell is more powerless than that of Glendower, and the game of life must be played out, with all these irretrievable errors staring us in the face, until death gives us the check-mate.

"*If I had not married Emily Munn.*" Then followed a train of consequences as ingeniously and as slightly connected, as is the floating web of the spider from tree to tree.

While Willison was thus distilling bitter drops in the alembic of imagination, he was seated by the table on which lay the writing-desk and papers of his absent wife. The file of letters tied with the blue ribbon, lay temptingly near his hand; two or three times he had nervously clutched it, and then relaxed his grasp.

"But I have a perfect right to examine the papers of my wife."

"Honor — honor!" whispered a better angel.

"But these may be my own letters."

This hopeful suggestion induced him to look at the superscriptions. They were all in the same handwriting. He recognized it at a glance. The books in the nursery, all had this peculiar writing upon their covers. It might be Miss Posen's.

Desperate to satisfy himself of this fact, with trembling hands he unfolded a closely written sheet; it was dated at "Cambridge," and signed "Edward." Another, and another—all bore the same signature. He devoured the contents. They were the wild, enthusiastic ravings of a romantic young man. Sometimes, the tone of the letters was lively and witty; the author describing persons and scenes in the neighboring city; then again the epistles were as melancholy and as misanthropic as if the writer had devoted his days and nights to Byron. Occasionally, they were replies to letters from Emily; more frequently, they accused her of forgetfulness and neglect. With

scarcely an exception, they might have been written by a brother to a sister. The simple "Dear Emily" with which they commenced and the "faithful friend," or "devoted Edward," with which they closed, were the only expressions of affection. In one was the following paragraph:—

"I am afraid our friend and confidante, is not a suitable one for you, dear Emily. *You* understand our *Platonic* friendship; I sometimes fear that she does not. She is world-worn, and has imbibed French principles with her French fashions; I would not on any account have your innocent mind corrupted by the false notions with regard to religion, which she entertains. There is something revolting to any man, however free may be his own principles, in a female-infidel."

This paragraph was in the letter, which, from the date, must have been the most recent.

"She shall never know that I have seen these letters. Would that I could be sure hers were equally innocent," thought Willison, as he tied the blue ribbon, and replaced the packet in the precise spot where he had found it.

"What shall I do to bring back the Lares and Penates to my threshold and hearth-stone?" was the essence of the next reflection which occupied his mind.

Well might he ponder thus. What had *he* done to detain them there? What were the principles which guided his own conduct? Were they infinitely more noble, just and true, than those which influenced his wife? What were his motives? Self-aggrandizement, self-gratification; to appear well in the eyes of the world; and to prove to Mrs. Mayley that he was even greater, intellectually, than she had imagined. This last motive, singular as it was, had mighty influence with him. He wanted the world at large to acknowledge his talents; he wanted Mrs. Mayley, in particular, to reverence them. The supreme idol before whom he bowed, the Jupiter Tonans, was Ambition—there was another shrine, where he bowed to the goddess of Wisdom, whose earthly impersonation was Mrs. Mayley. Would these motives bear the test of conscience to which they were now subjected in the stillness and solitude of that deserted apartment? Dross! dross! was the residuum.

And was this result satisfactory to a man convinced

of the immortality of the soul, and of that other fearful truth, that this very life is the soul's probation for eternity ?

The gas-lights in the apartment paled before the sunbeams which glinted through the half-turned shutters ; and yet Willison had not closed his eyes, nor left the seat by the table. That sleepless night of agitating thought, might have been a crisis in the life of Ralph Willison.

CHAPTER XX.

THE DEAD LILY.

"In that great cloister's stillness and seclusion
By guardian angels led,
Safe from temptation, safe from sin's pollution,
She lives, whom we call dead."

LONGFELLOW.

MR. WILLISON was startled by a succession of quick raps upon the door of the apartment. He opened it, and there stood Perseverance Tibbets.

"The baby ! the baby ! Where is Mrs. Willison ?" exclaimed the terrified girl, and then ran back to the nursery.

"What is the matter ? tell me quickly !" exclaimed Willison, rapidly following her.

"Its mother ! call its mother ;" was all the reply the girl could make.

When they reached the nursery, there lay the poor baby in violent convulsions.

Mr. Willison immediately sent for a physician. Thomas called the same person whom he had summoned for Mrs. Willison the preceding evening.

Dr. Nutting, as soon as he had looked at the babe, said, "The child will soon be released from all suffering."

Willison dispatched Thomas with a hasty note, and soon Mrs. Willison came in, supported by Mrs. Mayley and Pauline; a linen bandage was around her forehead, which the face below rivalled in whiteness.

Mr. Willison was holding the child in his arms. One convulsive sob came from its livid lips, and all was over.

The mother,—the true natural feelings of the mother, for the first time, throbbed tumultuously in the heart of Emily Willison.

She seized the lifeless body, pressed it to her bosom, kissed it again and again, while her tears mingled with the dew of death upon the cold forehead.

It was some time before the entreaties of her hus-

band and his friends could induce her to release the precious remains. They at last almost forced the poor baby from her embrace, and then she was carried to her own room in a violent fit of hysterics.

It was more than an hour before the physician succeeded in restoring her to a condition that would justify him in leaving the house. When about to take his departure, he beckoned to Mrs. Mayley, and when they were in the entry, handed her a sealed letter, saying, "This, probably, fell out of the patient's hand, when she met with the accident last evening. I was called out very early this morning, and just by the lamp-post near where she fell, I picked up this letter. Remembering that she dispatched the servant for *something*, I presumed this might possibly be the object of his fruitless search."

Mrs. Mayley took the letter, and after having looked at the superscription, ("Mr. Edward Harlington," &c.,) thanked the doctor, and quietly put it in her pocket.

When she returned to the bedside, Mrs. Willison begged her to stoop down, and then whispered, so as

not to be overheard by Pauline, "Please put that packet on the table, into my writing-desk,—lock it, and hand me the key."

Mrs. Mayley did as she was requested, and placed the letter Dr. Nutting had just handed her in the same safe receptacle.

Death! death! Mysterious, awful change!

So lightly had the poor babe "drawn its breath," that it could scarcely be said to "feel its life in every limb." Yet that hidden, spiritual essence was there,—a thousand things proclaimed it, and now it is gone,—gone for ever in this world, the life of that delicate flower, in which for a brief space was tabernacled the never-dying soul.

Like marble, calm and cold, pure and beautiful, lay that little child, one shadowy hand grasping a lily of the valley, the other laid upon its breathless bosom in meek repose.

Willison, in the full vigor of manhood,—life throbbing tumultuously at his heart, and sending out the warm blood in rapid flow;—the busy brain with its lightning action,—volition strong and almost irre-

sistible;—what a contrast to the little lifeless organism over which he bent in deep meditation!

The funeral of the nameless infant was without ostentatious ceremony. Some months after, a simple monument of white marble, placed by a small grassy mound, bore no inscription, but upon it was sculptured a single broken "Lily."

CHAPTER XXI.

SELF-DISSATISFACTION.

"At morn we look, and nought is there;
 Sad dawn of cheerless day!
 Who then from pining and despair
 The sickening heart can stay?"

KEBLE.

WILLISON kept the deep wound which had been inflicted by Emily's misconduct, carefully concealed. Yet a full, free disclosure was imperatively demanded; nothing else could effect a reconciliation. Cold and harsh was their intercourse. The growing chasm between them widened from day to day.

* * * * *

It was midsummer. Cranford was rejoicing in luxuriant verdure; graceful elms, dense lindens and stately

sycamores, adorned the one long street of the village, rendering it cool and delightful.

At Linden Hill were two ladies, who remained in a state of perfect seclusion from visitors. One of these ladies might frequently be seen sauntering along, in melancholy mood, under the sheltering trees. She was a small, delicate, exceedingly pretty woman, in deep mourning. Apparently she wished to address no one, for she was invariably alone, and seldom returned the glance of any person, although acquainted with many, and recognized by all in the village as Mrs. Willison.

Mr. Willison had gone on a long journey to the Far West, with the intention of finding a place to which he would in time remove.

"Is Mrs. Willison in?" inquired Mrs. Munn of the waiter.

"She is at home only to Mrs. Munn. I will show you the way to the parlor."

Mrs. Willison, in full-dress, received Mrs. Munn with stately ceremony.

"Please take a seat, madam," she said, waving her hand towards a chair.

"How are you to-day, ma'am?" inquired the mother, with an awkward attempt at the same ceremoniousness.

"A trifle better."

"I am glad to hear it. Your father says he would like to see you."

"Tell Mr. Munn I am not yet able to see him."

"He will be so grieved! Pray don't send such a cruel message. What will folks say if you will not see your own father?"

"What will folks say! That same everlasting 'what will folks say!' " muttered Mrs. Willison. "Had I not been brought up on that miserable saying, I should have been a different being."

"Do not reproach me, Emily," entreated the mother, bursting into tears. "I was brought up in the same way myself, and I am sure I do not know any better way."

Pauline now entered the parlor.

"Miss Randolph—Mrs. Munn."

The names were pronounced by Mrs. Willison, with-

out the slightest relaxation from that affected gravity which she habitually assumed.

"Mrs. Munn, I am very glad to see you; I was out the first time you called," said Pauline, cordially taking the hand of the visitor. "I have already made the acquaintance of your excellent husband."

Mrs. Munn's countenance brightened; the tears that stood in her eyes, ready to dash over her cheeks, were brushed away, and she replied,

"Then you are the young lady that goes to see *them* poor folks that *lives* down at the foot of our lane. Husband was struck with your kindness to that 'are sick woman.'"

The color deepened upon the fair brow of Mrs. Willison; it was the blush of shame—false shame; for to speak ungrammatically is not sinful, nor degrading. It is not like speaking profanely, or unkindly, or falsely; yet how many would blush at the one, and pass over the others without the least emotion of shame.

Pauline blushed, but hers was the coloring of ingenuous modesty at this unexpected announcement of her good deeds. She turned the conversation by re-

marking that Mr. Munn had so much knowledge about all the interesting localities in the neighborhood, and had so kindly pointed them out to her, that she was now able to extend her walks in every direction, and enjoy the beautiful scenery of the country.

Mrs. Willison was evidently painfully uneasy, and yet she was striving to maintain perfect *nonchalance*.

Mrs. Munn found herself in a position so exceedingly awkward, that she was glad to extricate herself from it as soon as possible.

"I should be pleased to see you at our house, Miss Randolph," she said, as she rose to go.

"I will do myself the pleasure to call very soon," replied Pauline, in a kind, cheerful tone, which caused the disappointed mother to feel a warm glow of gratitude.

Mrs. Willison was a specimen of humanity that Pauline could not weigh in the scales of her philosophy. Her conduct, too, was utterly incomprehensible to a simple, unsophisticated girl, governed by right principles.

Poor Mrs. Willison was dissatisfied with that world

for which she had so ardently longed—the world of the city. The world of Cranford she totally despised, and it was torture, almost martyrdom, to return to it. For a week after her arrival she had secluded herself in her own apartment, seeing no one but Perseverance Tibbets. At the end of that time she emerged from retirement, walked out frequently, but always alone. Towards Pauline she had assumed a friendly manner, which rendered their interviews quite tolerable. They seldom met, however, excepting at table.

The magnates of the village had paid their compliments, by leaving cards, for Mrs. Willison was never "at home."

Could it be possible, that a few years had produced such a change in the light-hearted school-girl?

What had so unsettled her mind?—What was she aiming at? She did not know, herself. Vague, floating notions, as fantastic as a Neapolitan carnival, and unreal as a dream, had taken full possession of her mind. These notions were mostly derived from the French and other novels which she had devoured during the seclusion of the past winter. The realities of life

were to her an intolerable burden. Placing herself in an antagonistic position with regard to that world whose good opinion she had once so fervently desired, her morbid imagination represented it in hostile array against her single self. She had, for many weeks, been gloomy rather than sad, and remorseful but not penitent. Suddenly she became more cheerful and animated, but Pauline could not conjecture a reason for this change, and therefore it occasioned anxiety; for every change in the mind of a capricious woman shows that there is no fixed principle of action, and that she may be whirled, like a balloon, into a wrong course as readily as a right one.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE PRECIPICE.

"Ah, Fear! ah, frantic Fear!

I see, I see thee near.

I know thy hurried step, thy haggard eye;

Like thee I start, like thee disordered fly.

For, lo, what monsters in thy train appear!

Danger, whose limbs of giant mould

What mortal eye can fix'd behold?

Who stalks his round a hideous form,

Howling amid the midnight storm,

Or throws him on the ridgy steep

Of some loose hanging rock to sleep."

COLLINS.

CRANFORD was situated in a retired little valley, behind a ridge of mountains piled up precipitously along a wide river. The scenery among the rocks and ravines was wild and picturesque, and the view from the heights grand and romantic enough to satisfy the

poet, and so beautiful as to make the painter almost desperate.

Pauline, on one of her rambles, had discovered a narrow path leading to one of the loftiest pinnacles of the rocky ridge. One bright afternoon she hurried along this path, brushing as she passed the flexible evergreens, which sprang back as from the flight of a bird, until she came to the foot of a pile of rocks which seemed to have been thrown together in sport by the Titans of old. Up these rocks she scrambled, and then, seating herself on the topmost, laid open her drawing-book.

After gazing about for a while, for some object within the compass of her artistic skill, she commenced drawing a beautiful hemlock tree which grew near the edge of a neighboring rock, and spread out its branches over the precipice. Occasionally her eyes were attracted by the dark shadows on the river, or by the dancing waves on the other side, sparkling in sunlight. Small boats with their one white wing were flitting hither and thither, while ponderous steamers ploughed their steady course right onward. These

were the only tokens of human life and human invention, that met the eye; all else was as wild as when the yell of the savage startled

"The bird from her nest and the beast from his lair."

The discords of earth had died away. Here all was harmony,—the harmony of God's visible creation. The spirit of Pauline was attuned to reverential worship—not the worship of Nature,—but the worship of the Creator. The pencil dropped from her hand,—her lips moved not, for her prayer was voiceless.

"Her dark and lifted eye had caught
Its lustre from the spirit's gem,
And round her brow the light of thought
Was like an angel's diadem."

Suddenly her attention was arrested by the rattling of rocks, which seemed to have been displaced by some presumptuous foot attempting to climb the precipice. This became in a moment evident, for a man appeared standing upon a jutting rock, scarcely large enough for the foothold of a bird. In an instant he caught hold of a slight cedar bush, which had wound

its wiry roots among the rocks, and swinging himself to another point of rock a little higher up, stood there, gazing upward at the branches of the very hemlock tree which Pauline had commenced sketching.

Pauline held her breath, while witnessing the daring recklessness of the adventurer, who was now so near that she could distinguish the handsome features of a young man, and that he wore a hunting-dress, and carried in his hand a light fowling-piece.

His position was painfully perilous. Below him was a precipice of hundreds of feet, with the deep river at its base ; above, the flat face of the rock, without a crevice in which he could place a foot, or a single shrub to which he could cling. The tantalizing boughs of hemlock hung over his head, far above his reach. He gazed eagerly upon those spreading branches, and then turned his eyes downward to the fearful descent. Despair pronounced the descent impossible. Again he looked around for means of ascending ;—as he did so, he met a pair of human eyes intently fixed upon him.

Pauline, during the period of breathless anxiety,

while watching the young man's movements, had remained as motionless as a statue. Now, she said in a clear but gentle voice, "Sir, can I aid you?"

"You can, if you have courage enough," he replied in a cheerful voice. "The rock before me is solid to the very edge ; if you can hold on firmly to the trunk of that hemlock, and bend down one of the long branches, I can raise myself by it to the top of the rock."

Pauline descended cautiously but rapidly from the high rock upon which she had been seated, and made her way to the tree. She stood upon one of the lower branches, the end of which hung over the precipice, and clasped both arms firmly about the trunk. It bent beneath her weight. In a moment she felt it bend still farther, but she fearlessly held on to the trunk.

The hunter then attempted to throw his fowling-piece upon the rock ; it glanced, discharged its contents, and rebounding, rattled down into the river, while he sprang safely upon the top of the rock.

"There ! I might better have lost a friend than

that gun!" was his first exclamation. His second was, "Good heavens! what have I done!"

There stood Pauline, clinging to the hemlock with one arm, the other hanging useless by her side, the blood streaming from it, over her white dress.

"Thank God, my life is spared," said Pauline, in a subdued voice, while the young man assisted her in leaving her perilous position.

"I will sit down here," said she, as soon as they were at a short distance from the edge of the precipice. She leaned against a rock, nearly fainting from exertion and loss of blood.

"Allow me to bind up the wound until you can have surgical aid," said the young man, taking a handkerchief from his pocket, and binding it about the bleeding arm with trembling hands. Outside, he added another bandage by taking off his black cravat.

"I do not think I am badly hurt, for I did not feel the shot at the time, and only became aware that the arm was wounded, by losing command over it," said Pauline, quite calmly.

"You have saved my life, and I have endangered

yours. The bullet passed through your arm within half an inch of your side. How fearful to think of such a narrow escape! And now, what is to be done? Must I leave you alone, while I go for assistance and a carriage to take you home?"

"I want no assistance but a strong arm to lean upon," said Pauline, attempting to rise.

As soon as she began to move, the wounded arm became extremely painful; but uttering no complaint, she walked on, supported by the young man. The path was narrow and rough, and in some places, steep and difficult. The sun had dropped below the horizon, before they began their descent, and when they reached the thick woods near the base, they groped their way in almost utter darkness.

Pauline possessed the confidence of innocence, and the moral courage which religion alone can give. Her physical strength was nearly exhausted, but the emotion of fear did not for a moment enter her mind. The stranger was respectful even to timidity, and so delicate and considerate, as to convince her that he was a gentleman; moreover, he entered into conversa-

tion on several topics with readiness and good taste, whenever the difficulties of the way were not such as to occupy all their attention.

Pauline was at last about to yield to extreme fatigue, and sink down upon a fallen tree; but just then the lights from Linden Hill twinkled cheerily through the woods, and gave her new strength to proceed.

"And where must I leave you?" said he.

"We are very near the house—Mr. Willison's, at Linden Hill."

"Linden Hill!" Not a word was spoken after this exclamation of surprise, till they reached the door, and the stranger then led Pauline into the hall, and saying, "I will send a surgeon," rapidly made his exit.

Pauline, with difficulty, reached Mrs. Willison's parlor alone.

"Merciful patience! What is the matter?" exclaimed that lady, in an agony of terror.

"Let me rest awhile, and I will tell you," she replied, sinking upon a sofa.

"You frighten me to death. Vera, Vera, come and

see what ails Miss Randolph; I am faint at the sight of blood."

"Do not be alarmed; I have been slightly wounded in the arm by the accidental discharge of a fowling-piece."

"A gun! horrible! This comes of young ladies' prowling about after romantic scenery."

Vera now came in with the surgeon, whom she met on the staircase.

"Very skilfully bandaged," said he, as he removed the cravat and the handkerchief.

It was a flesh-wound, the ball having past through the arm just above the elbow.

Mrs. Willison became faint, and was obliged to leave the room.

"The wound will be healed in a few weeks. It was a fortunate circumstance that some one was at hand to bind it up immediately, or you might have suffered much from loss of blood. As it is, you have had a narrow escape from death," said the surgeon.

"God be thanked!" devoutly replied Pauline, thinking of the misery this result might have caused the

stranger. She wished much to ask the surgeon who sent him to her, but forbore. He, however, gave all the information he could, gratuitously.

"The young man who called me was almost wild with affright, saying that he had accidentally wounded a stranger lady at Linden Hill, and begged me to hasten hither with all speed. He was an entire stranger to me."

The surgeon evidently expected further information from his patient, but she made no reply. He took leave, recommending quietness and a gentle opiate.

CHAPTER XXIII.

M O R A L C O U R A G E .

" Her eye hath lost
The beam which laughed upon th' awakening heart,
E'en as morn breaks o'er the earth. But far within
Its full dark orb a light hath sprung, whose source
Lies deeper in the soul."

MRS. HEMANS.

PAULINE passed a night of intolerable agony. The opiate partially lulled pain, but excited the nervous system, and the events of the preceding day were acted over and over in her busy mind. Again and again she saw the young man standing on the dizzy verge of the precipice; then she herself would seem in that same awfully perilous position, and falling, falling, awake to momentary consciousness.

In the morning she felt unable to rise, but no one came to inquire after her, and fearing Mrs. Willison

might be ill, she threw on her dressing-gown, and stepped to the door of the next room. She knocked, and the door was opened by Perseverance Tibbets.

"Mrs. Willison has gone out. You look as pale as a ghost, Miss Pauline. Please be seated."

"No, Vera, I will go to my own room," said Pauline, stepping back into her apartment.

Vera followed, saying, "I wanted to come and inquire after you, but Mrs. Willison has kept me busy as a bee all the morning. Now let me run and get you a cup of tea, and toast. Why, it's eleven o'clock, and you have not so much as wet your lips to-day."

"No, my good girl; I do not wish for any thing!"

"I wish I was a good girl," replied Vera, with a deep sigh. A momentary pause followed, during which she assisted Pauline in taking off her dressing-gown, then she arranged the pillows, saying with a mysterious air, and her honest face flushed with a deep scarlet, "There are some things that folks do, that folks ought not to. I wish to ask your advice, Miss Pauline."

"If it is any thing concerning yourself, Vera, I will

give you the best advice in my power, when I am better able than at present."

"It is not exactly about myself, and I do not know how to act, for being young and ignorant, I have always asked father and mother what to do; and they are good people, and go to the Bible and to church to learn what they ought to do."

"I trust you are grateful for such parents; you could not have safer guides."

"I wish I was with them," continued Vera, bursting into tears, "for Mrs. Willison has some queer ways of acting and thinking, which I do not understand."

"Hush! hush! Vera; it would be dishonorable for me to inquire into Mrs. Willison's affairs. I am here as her companion and friend, not as a spy."

"She says you are just exactly that. Merciful me! how red your cheeks are, Miss Pauline; a minute ago they were as pale as the pillow."

"Vera, you had better leave me now. I must be quiet, and see no one but the physician to-day."

"Oh, here he comes! I will just stay to take his orders," said Vera.

The physician found Pauline much worse than he expected. He prescribed for her, and then enjoined perfect rest and quietness. The anodyne which he left proved efficacious. She slept for several hours, and awoke refreshed and calm.

Vera was ready with her favorite "cup of tea and toast," which she now did not offer in vain.

The tea was refreshing. Vera was delighted.

"Is Mrs. Willison at home?" inquired Pauline, surprised that the lady had not inquired after her.

"She is 'not at home ;' but she is in her own room writing a letter. She came home about an hour ago. I am so troubled Miss Pauline, about Mrs. Willison ; and as I told you this morning, not having father and mother to go to, I do not know what to do. I have said my prayers, and asked God to guide me, and then I opened my Bible, and this passage came first before my eyes : 'As a jewel of gold in a swine's snout, so is a fair woman without discretion.' Then I pondered upon that, and I knew it did not mean *me*. Then I looked farther and found *this* text : 'Hear counsel, and receive instruction, that thou mayest be wise in thy latter end.'

And I thought, I will go to Mrs. Munn and hear counsel. But I considered, as how, she was not like a natural mother ; Mrs. Willison being so uppish and scornful towards her."

"Mrs. Willison is my cousin's wife," interrupted Pauline.

"That is the very reason you should save her from harm. It is not like you, Miss Pauline, to stand off from doing a good action. It is a plain point of duty, as father and mother used to say."

"What is it that you wish me to do?" inquired Pauline, raising her head and leaning upon her elbow. "You are so mysterious, Vera."

"Because you will not let me tell you the whole truth, so far as I know it. There is something to be done, and soon too, or Mr. Willison, when he comes home, will go raving distracted. He is a nice gentleman, and I would walk from here to Jericho to do him a kindness."

Pauline was now thoroughly aroused. She allowed Vera to assist her in making a hasty toilette, for her right arm was so lame that she could not use it. While

Vera was thus engaged, she continued, "Ought I to carry letters to the post-office for Mrs. Willison, directed to any man but her own husband?"

"They may be letters of business."

"The answers are very long ones; two or three sheets sometimes."

"Vera, I do not like to listen to this."

"But you *must* listen. She got another letter this morning, and her clothes are all packed up, and I think she is going off."

"Going off!—Where?"

"I do not know where; but not to her husband."

Pauline now needed no urgency to hasten her movements. But just as she had completed her hasty toilette a card was handed in:—

"The person who was so unfortunate as accidentally to wound Miss Randolph yesterday, begs to inquire after her health, and, if possible, to see her a few moments."

Pauline was exceedingly agitated, not knowing whether to go first to Mrs. Willison, or to see the stranger. At length she said,

"I must go down stairs for a moment, and then I will try to think what my duty is with regard to Mrs. Willison."

"For mercy's sake, don't stay long!" urged Vera, as she left the room.

When Pauline entered the parlor, "the person," dressed in a full suit of black, was walking the room in a state of extreme agitation. As he advanced towards her, his large dark eyes were so wild and melancholy, that Pauline drew back, believing she was in the presence of a madman. Seeing her arm suspended by a broad ribbon, he said, in a voice whose sorrowful tones reached her innermost soul,

"Far better would it have been for me to have lost my worthless life, than that you should have suffered that injury."

"The injury is more slight than you imagine. The arm will be well in a few weeks."

Thus saying, Pauline, being no longer able to support herself, sank down upon a sofa, faint and trembling.

"Miss Randolph, save me!" he exclaimed wildly.
"For Heaven's sake, save me!"

"Save you, sir! From what?—from whom?"

"From destruction—from myself! You saved my life yesterday at the risk of your own; to-day I call upon you to save what is dearer than life—honor, reputation, hope of happiness here and hereafter!"

Pauline looked anxiously towards the door, now quite convinced that the stranger was fearfully insane.

Perceiving that she was alarmed, he said more calmly, "Do you not know me, Miss Randolph?"

"I do not," she replied, with a violent effort to regain self-possession.

"Would that you might never hear the name, which I have rendered infamous! But another is involved, and I call upon you to save *her* from ruin!"

A blindness came before the eyes of Pauline, and for a moment she lost consciousness; but rallying, she motioned him to proceed.

"I have become involved in an affair which commenced as a romantic adventure, but which threatens to terminate in a terrible manner. A silly, fantastic correspondence has for a long time been kept up, clandestinely, between a married lady and myself. It has

led to the most fearful consequences. She is yet guiltless of every thing but extreme imprudence. A false sense of honor towards her led me to Cranford, but the providential escape of yesterday has induced a thorough examination of this matter, and deep repentance. Tell *her* so. Tell her the man whom she has promised 'to love, honor and obey,' is as much superior to me as the sun is to a dull clod of earth. Tell her I would save her from destruction."

"Would it not be far better for you, sir, to tell her this yourself;" suggested Pauline, timidly.

"No—no; I cannot do it!" exclaimed the young man, again pacing the room with rapid strides.

"Then, sir, leave Cranford at once, without seeing her, and when you reach your own home, write to her a final farewell."

"My own home, Miss Randolph! I am unworthy to come under that roof. I have always, when from home, been permitted to draw upon my father's banker; I have now done so to a large amount, to provide means for going to Europe."

Pauline gasped for breath. "Go then instantly to

your father, and confess the whole fearful truth. I will do all that is needful here."

"I have no time to lose, for the carriage in which we were to leave this place will soon be at the door," he exclaimed wildly.

"Hasten then, without an instant's delay."

"Oh, Miss Randolph! The keenest suffering that I endure at this moment comes from the conviction that *you* must despise such a villain as I am."

"Make haste!—make haste! I hear the rattling of wheels. Repent!—reform!"

"Permit me to say that I abhor dissipation. I have been wild, romantic, skeptical, but never dissipated. Farewell!"

The carriage was at the door. Pauline waved her hand impatiently. He bowed low, and rushed out of the room.

Pauline made her way to the window. The shades of evening were already gathering around, but by the dim light she saw him spring into the carriage alone. The coachman closed the door, jumped upon the box, and drove rapidly away.

Pauline, with trembling steps ascended the staircase on her return to her own room. On the first landing Mrs. Willison glided rapidly by her, bonneted and shawled, but not in a mourning dress.

In the upper entry, at the door of Mrs. Willison's bedroom, were two large trunks marked "E. M. W."

Pauline rushed into her own room, closed the door, fell upon her knees, and wept aloud. Her sobs were echoed by some one in the opposite corner.

She started up: "Vera, is that you?"

"He is off! He is off alone!" exclaimed the girl, wildly clapping her hands, "and you are the angel sent to save them from destruction."

"I am no angel, Vera, but a weak, sinful mortal."

"You are, you are,—the nicest little angel on this blessed earth; father would say so, and mother would say so. You come up to your duty like Samson to the gates of Gaza."

"But, Vera, I am ill, very ill," said Pauline, throwing herself upon the bed. "My lips are parched, and my head throbbing with fever. What shall I do?"

"Send for your mother, immediately. When I am sick, nobody can nurse me but my own good mother."

"Oh, Vera! I have no mother."

"Poor Miss Pauline! I did not mean to hurt your feelings. You do look very sick,—dreadfully sick. I will go and tell Mrs. Willison."

Vera hastened to the apartment in which she had left Mrs. Willison. The trunks were removed from before the door, the room unoccupied.

It was now quite dark. Vera hastened down stairs and went from room to room. In vain she called for her and implored her to answer. The spacious apartments resounded with her voice. She inquired of the other servants if they had seen their mistress; no information could be obtained of them.

The whole household, cook, waiter, chambermaid and gardener, were dispatched in different directions.

After a prolonged and useless search Vera returned to Pauline.

"He will fall! He will fall!" shrieked the now delirious girl. "Save him! Save him!"

Vera immediately sent for the physician. He came, and found that a violent fever had full possession of its victim.

CHAPTER XXIV.

F O R G I V E N E S S .

"The absolver saw the mighty grief,
 And hastened with relief:—
 'The Lord forgives: thou shalt not die:—'
 Was gently spoke, yet heard on high,
 And all the band of angels, used to sing
 In Heaven, accordant to his raptured string,
 Who many a month had turned away
 With veiled eyes, nor owned his lay,
 Now spread their wings, and throng around
 To the glad mournful sound,
 And welcome with bright open face,
 The broken heart to love's embrace."

KEBLE.

It was late at night. A sweet breeze from the ocean
 was cooling the air of the city, which, during the day,
 had been like the stifling heat of a furnace. Pestilence
 walked about the streets of that city, striking down

the decrepit and the beautiful—the miser in the midst
 of his money, and the child at play.

All who could leave their homes had fled. Physi-
 cians had deserted their posts. The very sextons had
 left "the dead to bury the dead." Even among the
 sacred ministers of consolation, few remained to stand
 by the bedside of the dying, or to perform the holy
 office for the dead. Among the noble few who
 courageously remained, was the Reverend Dr. Har-
 lington.

This good man was enjoying the cool breeze of the
 night, as it came in through the open windows of a
 large parlor. The room seemed clothed in an appro-
 priate garb of sackcloth and ashes, for every article of
 furniture was covered with dark cloth, upon which had
 settled the undisturbed dust of many weeks. One
 small lamp shed its sepulchral, ineffectual light from
 a corner of the large apartment. The usual garb of
 the clergyman was thrown aside for a brown silk
 dressing-gown. His snowy hair was laid entirely back
 from a face which benevolence had marked as its own,
 and the loose curls fell about his shoulders with a

graceful ease that Raffaele or Milton might have envied or emulated. The intellectual fire of the dark eyes was unquenched—still glowing brightly, under brows and lashes of jetty blackness. The tall figure of the clergyman seemed even more than usually lofty and commanding, as he slowly walked to and fro in the dimly lighted apartment.

Suddenly a carriage drove up rapidly, and stopped before the door. In an instant a man rushed wildly into the room, and approached Dr. Harlington, who, supposing him to be a messenger from the dying, exclaimed,

“Who?—Where?”

“Father!”

The voice was that of his youngest son, who was standing a few steps from him with folded arms and downcast eyes.

“Edward, my son; is it you?”

“Your most unworthy son.”

“You alarm me, Edward; what is the meaning of all this?”

“Father—forgive!”

“What am I to forgive?”

“My misconduct,—my crime.”

“I know you have been wild and wayward, and that has caused me anxiety; but your mysterious manner terrifies me. What have you done? Come and sit by me,” continued he, gently leading Edward to a sofa, and taking a seat beside him.

The light of the lamp fell upon a countenance wild and haggard, which did not serve to allay the alarm of the good man.

“Father, I have been on the very brink of destruction.”

“Thank God that your steps were arrested! Tell me all.”

“It is a long story. Have patience.” And Edward told of his boyish fancy for Emily Munn—her marriage—his continuing an epistolary correspondence, the consequence of which, on her part, aided by other circumstances, had been entire alienation from her husband, and attachment to himself. There had been a bewitching excitement in this clandestine correspondence. The interest he had excited in the heart of a beautiful

woman flattered his vanity, and he had gone on step by step until he had become completely entangled, and seeing no other way of escape, had resolved upon an elopement.

"And, my father, owing to your extreme confidence and generosity, I was able to draw upon you for the means to accomplish this wicked purpose. Here are the funds destined for a voyage to Europe." He drew forth a heavily laden purse, and placing it in his father's hands, fell upon his knees, and covering his face, exclaimed, "Now, that you know all, *can* you forgive me?"

"Forgive you!—Entirely, as I hope to be forgiven by my Father in Heaven. My poor boy! I have been much to blame. My weak indulgence had nearly ruined you;" and the large tears glittered as they fell upon the bowed head of his son,—a holy baptism of charity.

"Rise, my son, and explain what means God employed, in infinite mercy, to bring you to repentance and change of purpose."

"I cannot tell you, now."

"Well, my son, let us kneel together, thank God for his never failing kindness, and implore future aid and guidance."

And they humbled themselves, the venerable father and the erring son, and the prayer which burst from the lips of the Christian man, was more earnest and fervent than any which he had ever before offered at the family altar; and the response from the heart of the son was a pledge of that repentance over which angels might rejoice.

CHAPTER XXV.

NEW RESOLUTIONS.

"O flames that glowed! O hearts that yearned!

They were indeed too much akin,

The drift-wood fire without that burned,

The thoughts that burned and glowed within."

LONGFELLOW.

WILLISON had "large desires," and the "issues" had proved worthless and vapid. He had turned to ambition as a soul-satisfying passion;—as well might he have attempted to satisfy hunger with the perfume of a rose, or waft a mighty vessel to its destined port with the wing of a butterfly.

The death of his first-born child, and the evidence of his wife's imprudence, had deeply affected his mind. With the moral courage of a strong and resolute spirit,

he resolved to make an entire change in his outer and inner life.

He would remove his wife from the temptations which beset her in the midst of artificial, conventional life; he would conscientiously devote himself to the improvement of her mind and heart, and the cultivation of her happiness. These objects he had sinfully neglected while pursuing the all-absorbing chase for political distinction. Why should he blame her—weak, yielding, and ignorant of the world, left to find her own way amid its bewildering mazes, with no guide but the ignis fatuus, public opinion? Why should he blame her aberrance from the right path? She was yet young, and he was not too old to hope for many years of comfort, if he might by any means win to his domicile the sweet spirits of Love and Contentment.

He had travelled to the West, and *near* a large, enterprising village, but not *within* it, he had found the unoccupied house of tenants who had departed to "the better land." The neat and tasteful cottage, surrounded by venerable trees, stood upon a hill which

gently declined towards one of those beautiful lakes, whose clear, bright waters impart life to the landscape as the eye does to the human countenance. Here Willison sought his future habitation, and having made all needful arrangements, was making his way towards Cranford, the place of all others which had been to him the abode of hope and joy—disappointment and sorrow.

He had performed the journey in primitive style,—on horseback.

The reins fell upon the neck of the animal, who walked leisurely along the well-trodden high-road, through a dense forest.

Willison took a small, ancient-looking memorandum book from his pocket, and drew from it a slip of paper burnt at the edges. He held it before his eyes and read aloud, as though it were the first time his lips had ever uttered the name, "Esther Mayley."

"Esther Mayley," he repeated after a pause of some minutes, "the talisman, which, unknown to myself, developed all that was in my character of good and evil; the good, directly; the evil, indirectly. She

was too pure and intellectual for my gross, earthly love. That love shut her out from my heart for awhile, as boys for the sake of a few moments of wild enjoyment bar out the master, or as the fog from yonder swamp shuts out the glorious sun."

He looked long and lovingly at that treasured name; he raised it towards his lips, but resisted the impulse to press them upon it, and instead, slowly and deliberately tore the paper to atoms, and as they floated away, he exclaimed:

"Thus perish every memorial of a love which might have made the happiness of the present life, and won me to a higher life, beyond this transitory world."

Then grasping the reins, he spurred his horse to the utmost speed, and dashed onward as though he were fleeing from his former self, and going back to old familiar scenes—a new man.

CHAPTER XXVI.

F E V E R D R E A M S .

"Is all changed around me?

Or is it only I? I find myself

As among strangers. Not a trait is left

Of all my former wishes, former joys."

SCHILLER'S WALLENSTEIN.

THE next morning, as soon as day dawned, Vera wrote a note in a large round copy-hand, to Mrs. Mayley, as follows:—

"I now sit down to write to you to inform you that Miss Pauline is dreadfully sick, and Mrs. Willison has gone to parts unknown. Miss Pauline needs a friend desperately, who knows more than

"PERSEVERANCE TIBBETS."

Prompt in all her movements, Vera dispatched a

messenger to a neighboring village, where Mrs. Mayley was passing the summer. With tearful eyes the good girl again watched by the bedside of the sufferer.

Pauline took the medicines prescribed by the physician, although she no longer knew the hand that administered them. She imagined herself on the brink of a precipice, clinging to a loosened root, just ready to roll from its resting-place. In agony, she would shriek, "Save me! save me!"

Towards evening, Mrs. Mayley arrived. As she stepped out of a light wagon, a gentleman dismounted from his horse. In her haste, the fringe of her shawl caught upon the step of the wagon, and while endeavoring to extricate it, the gentleman came to her assistance.

"Mrs. Mayley!"

"Mr. Willison!"

Not another word was uttered as they ascended the steps together. Vera was waiting in the entry to receive them.

"Oh! you are as welcome as a shower of rain after a long *drought*, as father used to say," exclaimed she, dropping a courtesy to Mrs. Mayley.

"Miss Pauline?" inquired Mrs. Mayley.

"Worse, worse;" said Vera, shaking her head and leading the way up stairs with nervous rapidity, while Mr. Willison called after her, "And Mrs. Willison,—where is she?"

After seeing Mrs. Mayley at the bedside of Pauline, Vera went to communicate the dreadful tidings of Mrs. Willison's strange departure, to her husband.

He was in his wife's own apartment, and when Vera entered, was leaning against the mantel-piece, reading a letter, so much engrossed that he did not perceive her entrance. She waited a few moments in silence. Mr. Willison folded the letter, dropped upon his knees, and murmured, "God! forgive her!"

Vera quietly withdrew.

Strange it was that no inquiries were made about the absent one, by her husband. Silent and gloomy, he passed most of the time, for several weeks, in the seclusion of his own apartment, and excepting the single interview with Mrs. Mayley, when they entered the house together, they had not met.

During these weeks, Pauline remained dangerously

ill, and Mrs. Mayley, with the exception of the time spent in paying frequent visits to Annington, nursed the sufferer night and day, with the tenderest care. In this duty she was assisted by the faithful Vera.

During this time Mr. Willison received a packet of letters, accompanied by a penitential epistle from Edward Harlington. The latter he carefully folded and placed among his valuable papers. The packet, which contained all the letters Emily had written to Harlington, he threw in the fire, without having read a syllable of the contents.

CHAPTER XXVII.

TAKING UP A DROPPED STITCH.

"Loyalty is still the same

Whether it win or lose the game;

True as the dial to the sun,

Although it be not shined upon."

BUTLER.

It was the night of Mrs. Willison's intended elopement. Mrs. Mayley sat late in her lonely apartment. Her head rested upon her hand, and her mind wandered back to other years. The night wind moaned among the trees. An owl from time to time sent forth its boding cry. Hark! That is not the wind.

Mrs. Mayley stepped to an open window and listened. A low, mournful wail, such as could come only from a human voice, fell fearfully upon her ear. The night was curtained with black clouds, and no objects visible but ghostly trees waving like funereal plumes.

Mrs. Mayley shuddered as she heard again the mysterious sound. But suffering humanity never appealed to her in vain. Taking a light, she hastily descended to the outer door, and on opening it, perceived a woman dressed in white, seated upon the door-steps.

"Have pity on me, Mrs. Mayley, and give me shelter for the night!" exclaimed the stranger, in a voice almost inarticulate from violent weeping.

"Who is it? And what misfortune has happened to you?" inquired Mrs. Mayley, stepping towards the speaker, who remained motionless as the foam of ocean left far upon a desolate coast by a retreating wave.

"I have not a friend in the world. Where can I go?—What can I do?"

"Come in, and then I shall be better able to assist you if you need advice."

"You are too good and kind."

"Surely, that is the voice of Mrs. Willison! What mysterious Providence has led you here at this hour of night? Come in, I entreat you."

Aiding the wretched woman to rise, she led her to her own apartment.

It had been arranged between Mrs. Willison and Edward Harlington, that in case any unforeseen circumstances should prevent their departure together from Linden Hill, they would meet at the Annington Hotel, and from thence proceed immediately to the city. Supposing that Pauline would immediately inform Mrs. Willison of his change of purpose, he drove rapidly through the village and continued his way to the city.

Mrs. Willison's carriage was in readiness, and waiting at a back entrance. As soon as she saw Harlington depart alone, she flew to her carriage, ordered the coachman to take her luggage, and was off, without being noticed by any one in the house.

On alighting at the hotel, she was shown into a parlor, and there awaited a meeting with Harlington. The coachman meantime placed the trunks in the hall, and according to previous orders, drove immediately back to Linden Hall.

One hour passed, and another dragged on, and Mrs. Willison sat motionless as a statue and alone. The landlord then came in, and asked if the lady would please give her name,

No reply.

"Do you wish for lodgings, ma'am?"

Still no reply.

"Do you know any body in this place, ma'am?"

A sudden resolution was formed, and she replied, "I know Mrs. Mayley, and I wish you would direct me to her house."

"There is a lady of that name boarding over the way, but she is not up so late as this. You had better stay where you are."

"No—no; I must go to Mrs. Mayley!" she exclaimed, starting up. "Show me the way."

The light from Mrs. Mayley's room streamed through the muslin curtains at the windows. Mrs. Willison rushed across the street; but there her courage failed her. She sat down and wept aloud. Wrecked!—wrecked!—deserted!

To Mrs. Mayley she made a full and free confession. Exhausted by all she had suffered, the wretched woman at length fell asleep, and Mrs. Mayley watched by her bedside.

"How inextricably the web of my life is entangled

with *his!*" thought she. "God give me wisdom to know my duty, and strength to do it!"

The next morning a messenger arrived with the note from Vera, informing her of Pauline's illness. She did not leave Mrs. Willison till she had induced her to write to her husband, make a full confession, and ask forgiveness. That letter Mrs. Mayley handed him as they walked up the steps together at Linden Hill; and that letter it was that he was reading when Vera went to inform him of Mrs. Willison's departure. His reply was as follows:

"Mrs. Willison, I forgive you, as I hope to be forgiven, but never wish to see you more. You can draw upon my banker for \$600 per annum.

"RALPH WILLISON."

Mrs. Mayley left Pauline occasionally, to drive over to Annington, and attend to Mrs. Willison, whom she left to occupy her own apartment. Husband and lover had deserted her; but she had found a faithful friend.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE INFECTED CITY.

"O hateful spell of Sin! When friends are nigh
To make stern Memory tell her tale unsought;
And raise accusing shades of hours gone by
To come between us and all kindly thought!

"The averted cheek in loneliest dell
Is conscious of a gaze it cannot bear,
The leaves that rustle near us seem to tell
Our heart's sad secret to the silent air."

KEBLE.

A FEARFUL change had passed over that lately brilliant, gay city, in which life, to thoughtless thousands, was a gilded pageant—a carnival where, in magnificent attire, they "played fantastic tricks" before Fashions shrine, for the poor reward of grudging admiration.

In the immediate neighborhood of Dr. Harlington's

house the inhabitants had all deserted their homes; the good clergyman remained in the midst of danger, to perform the duties of his holy office to the sick and the dying. A faithful man-servant alone remained with him.

Edward, after his sudden return, insisted upon sharing the dangers and trials of his father's present position, and, if possible, alleviating the sufferings of others. In company with the venerable servant of God, the young man stood by the bedside of the once bold blasphemer, and saw his agonizing terror at the prospect of meeting the Almighty Judge whom he had contemned and defied.

He saw others in blank unconsciousness passing to their final account, without one penitential sigh,—one prayer for pardon.

He heard the eager cry of one departing soul, "God be merciful to me a sinner." He saw the peaceful death of another whose hope had long been anchored on the Rock of Ages; whose life in a humble sphere, had been chronicled by good deeds. That hope did not fail in the dying hour, when the faint voice re-

peated the words of the blessed martyr, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit."

For each the good clergyman prayed, and spoke words of solemn advice, or sweet consolation to the departing spirit.

So earnest and all-absorbing had become the interest in this holy work, that neither father nor son felt the slightest emotion of fear, and, like the holy men of old, they passed unscathed through dangers the most imminent and terrific.

The father beheld with astonishment, mingled with fervent thanksgiving, the energy and resolution with which his beloved child pursued, from day to day, duties from which the long-accustomed nurse and physician shrunk in dismay. Yet, the natural, strong affection of a parent led him at times to say:

"Edward, your life may be the forfeit; and then your poor mother,—what will become of her?"

"The life you speak of is of little value to any one," he would reply; "it has only been a source of anxiety and trouble to all who love me."

"God grant that it may become a life of great use-

fulness !" fervently exclaimed the father, brushing from his eyes the obtrusive tears.

* * * *

The pestilence abated. Dr. Harlington, worn in health and spirits, had, with Edward, joined his family in the country.

Edward Harlington had commenced a new life with action ; he had now leisure for reflection.

"He prayeth well, who loveth well,
Both man, and bird, and beast."

The *consciousness* of a deeper love for every living thing might not have been in the mind of Harlington, but as he walked beneath the glorious sky of an October day, that love was nestling in his heart, like the dove in the bosom of some pictured saint.

The task of introspection is not an easy one to jubilant youth, exulting in the outer world, and so mingled with it, as scarcely to be cognizant of individual existence.

Edward Harlington had floated on with the current without resistance, and apparently without volition ;

he had passed on to the present period of life, without giving to his character and capabilities more than a passing thought. He was a graduate of — College ; but he had only studied sufficiently to enable him to win the parchment scroll, without receiving any other honor. He had said that he was not *dissipated* ; that word has a very limited signification as thus applied. He had not become habitually intemperate, and yet he indulged so freely in wine, as at times to lose entire command of himself. He was not so devoted to gambling, that he could not live without its feverish excitement ; but he played cards for money. He was not a disgusting sensualist. He had dissipated his time, and wasted the opportunity afforded him for laying a good foundation for future career in life. He had dissipated the moral principles, which had been carefully instilled into his mind in childhood. He had dissipated his intellect, by careless, irregular application to study, and being contented with superficial acquirements. He had dissipated his taste, by reading silly books, and blunted his moral perceptions by reading bad books.

Edward Harlington had, notwithstanding, been considered the most elegant *man* in college. He did not aim to be a leader, even in college fashionable life, because it cost him too much effort. So, as we have said, he took the current, and was no whit behind any of his class in extravagance and gayety. The current had carried him to the very verge of ruin. Now, as he looked back upon his life, a period of twenty-one years, it seemed vague, chaotic, aimless, useless. He could not yet command sufficient clearness of mental vision to discern, amid the chaos, the elements that were to be elaborated into a strong, manly character.

As he looked around him, every object in creation bore the impress of the Creator, and demonstrated means proportioned to the end designed. He had no definite purposes, no fitness for any path in life, no preparation for a spiritual existence, apart from this bounded, material durance. He endeavored to separate the phantasma which had bewitched his imagination, from the fixed, stern realities of life. It was impossible. The warp had been filled with a gorgeous, fantastic, complicated woof, without design and without

harmony. Despair might have paralyzed all effort and driven him to self-destruction, had he not, in the merciful providence of God, been arrested and brought to the humiliating sense of his condition, and an earnest faith in an Almighty Saviour.

As Edward Harlington pursued his solitary walk, on that same October day, he had in his hand a small Bible, the gift of his father. On the fly-leaf was his name and the date—the memorable day on which he had last returned to the city. Beside this customary superscription, was written, “Luke xv. 11—32.”

The imprudent indulgence for which Dr. Harlington now severely condemned himself, had arisen partly from the kindliness of his disposition, and partly from being too much absorbed in professional duties to pay attention to his own family. Alas, too frequently, they who should, by ruling well their own house, set bright examples, are pointed at as warnings by men who, in other respects, are infinitely below them. These good men are not the only persons who take better care of every body's business than they do of their own. So deep was Edward's self-condemnation, that not one

glance of blame was directed by him towards that indulgent father.

He read over and over again the beautiful parable to which his attention was directed in the Bible, and it seemed to have been written expressly for himself. He read other passages, and light from Heaven seemed to have fallen upon them, so clear and bright had they become. The immortality, of which the Gospel gives the blessed assurance, dawned upon his awakened reason, and Hope beckoned him onward towards the "perfect day."

Thus, reading and meditating, Edward Harlington leisurely lingered by the wayside, near the village where his father's family were enjoying a healthful retreat from the doomed city.

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE PONY RIDE.

"I know by the hills," she resumed calm and clear,
 'By the beauty upon them, that he is anear!
 Did they ever look so since he bade me adieu?
 Oh, love in the waking, sweet brother, is true!"

LAY OF THE BROWN ROSARIE.

"PAULINE, do you think you could manage my pony?" said Mrs. Mayley.

"I will try," she replied languidly.

Pauline had slowly recovered from the violent attack of fever. As soon as her strength would allow of the removal, that kind friend, Mrs. Mayley, had insisted upon taking the convalescent to her temporary home at Annington.

The pony was brought to the door, and Pauline mounted upon him. Her left arm was supported by

a broad black ribbon, passed about the neck and around the wrist.

"I am afraid you will not be able to guide him with one hand," remarked Mrs. Mayley, as she placed the silken reins in the hand of the rider.

"I can guide him with a single finger," replied Pauline with a touch of her former spirit, as she felt herself again about to enjoy what had been a favorite amusement. She pulled the reins, and the obedient pony started off at a gentle pace. Of late she had taken frequent drives with Mrs. Mayley, and consequently, knew every pleasant road and green lane about Annington.

It was one of those gala days of Autumn, the carnival of the year, when the gay and the grotesque mingle with the beautiful in nature's unrivalled panorama. The crimson of the maple-tree, the scarlet of the ash, and the gold of the oak, flaunted in the warm light, and dark, tapering evergreens lifted their aspiring heads, whispering to their neighbors,

"The friends who in your sunshine live,
When winter comes are flown."

Pauline wended her solitary way through a wide path in the woods, where the leaves were descending to the green earth with a soft, gentle flight; not yet giving forth beneath the tread of the traveller, that thrilling rustle which tells of decay and death.

The bland atmosphere fanned the pale cheek of the rider, bringing back only a faint delicate tinge, where the roses of health had once glowed so brightly. Pensive thought gave a serious expression, and a shadow of sadness, to a countenance that was formerly gay, and always *spirituelle*. What those thoughts were, her best friend, Mrs. Mayley, could not have divined, and Pauline might have blushed, with ingenuous modesty, had she been compelled to communicate them.

The pony's step was so light upon the soft green turf, as to give no warning of approach to a person who was leisurely treading the same path through the woods, a short distance in advance.

Pauline checked the speed of the animal. He fell into a lazy walk; still he went faster than the young man, who was absorbed in reading, and Pauline was obliged to guide the pony to one side of the lane, and

pass closely by the reader. As she did so, he raised his eyes from the book, and for one second they met hers. Without a sign of recognition she passed on. Should *she* look back? Oh, no! Should *he* call to Miss Randolph? No; no! But *was* it Miss Randolph? Where was the health and animation with which that face had sparkled? The wounded arm;—that was enough to force painful conviction upon his mind, and for a moment he resolved hastily to follow, and make such inquiries as mere politeness would dictate. But he checked his advancing footsteps, when he recollected that he had no claim to an acquaintance with Miss Randolph.

Pauline had never even heard the name of Edward Harlington. She made no inquiries of Perseverance Tibbets, the only one who could have informed her after the accident, and subsequent events had rendered it impossible for her to gain any further knowledge respecting the stranger.

A brighter hue than that of health overspread her countenance, when she discovered that the lane, terminating at the house of a farmer, had no outlet, and

that, of necessity, she must turn back and again meet the young man. With trembling anxiety, and not daring to lift her eyes, she rode along the lane, but no one either obstructed the way, or turned aside for her to pass. With delicate thoughtfulness, Harlington had left the path and struck off into the woods, where unseen, he watched the retreating figure of Pauline Randolph, until it was hidden by a turn in the lane.

Although she dreaded the expected meeting, and trembled in every limb, as with downcast eyes she pursued the path upon which she supposed they must meet, disappointment and chagrin were the emotions rising paramount when she found that he had avoided the meeting.

She took herself to task something as follows: "What a fool am I! Why should I feel such intense interest in this reckless young man? He called himself a villain. Surely, I should only be anxious for his reformation."

She urged forward the pony, and casting anxious glances around from time to time, in which Hope

greatly predominated above Fear, continued her mental soliloquy:—

“And yet villains have not that gentle, subdued expression. The book in his hand was a Bible! He was reading it with intense earnestness. All this I saw with one glance as I passed him on the road. I will pray for his repentance and reformation.”

Thus reasoned Pauline. Odious to her would have been the pernicious sentiment expressed by Moore,—

“I know not, I ask not if guilt's in that heart,
I know that I love thee, whatever thou art;”—

a sentiment which has fallen from the lips of beauty, a thousand times, in tones of melting sweetness, without the least consideration of its fearful import.

CHAPTER XXX.

A PROPOSAL.

“Occupy as large a portion of your time as you can in acting for others, and especially for those who have no helper! Study Benevolence, in reference to your equals, as well as your inferiors.”—MRS. JEWsbury.

Mrs. MAYLEY came out to aid Pauline in dismounting. “I began to be alarmed at your long absence,” said she, “but I see the ride has been of service to you. You look like a new being, or rather, like your former self.”

“And have I not looked like my former self?” demanded Pauline, coloring deeply as she thought—
“Then, he might not have known me.”

Without waiting for aid she sprang from the pony, and throwing her long riding-dress over her arm, hastened into the house.

"You vault from my gallant Pizarro with wonderful agility. The lame arm has extricated itself 'from durance vile,' too. Your ride has had a marvellous effect."

For some unaccountable reason, Pauline had continued to pet the wounded arm, and after it was perfectly well, had worn it suspended in the broad black ribbon.

"Stay a moment, Pauline; a friend is here to see you," said Mrs. Mayley, as they stepped upon the porch before the door.

"A friend!" exclaimed Pauline, deeply agitated, and not daring to look in the face of her companion.

Her hand was suddenly grasped; she looked up into the face of Ralph Willison, and throwing her arms around his neck, laid her head upon his bosom, and wept like an infant. He led her in, and gently seating her, said in a voice which seemed to come from the lowest depths of a broken spirit, "Calm yourself, my child; I fear you have not yet recovered your usual health."

"Cousin Ralph—my own dear cousin!" sobbed out Pauline.

Willison, unable to control his emotions, left the room.

Saddened, subdued, crushed;—his face pale and emaciated, his tall manly person bowed like a bulrush before the blast;—this astonishing change a few weeks had as effectually wrought, as though long years of desolating sorrow had swept over him.

He had, however, rallied after the first tremendous shock. He had exerted energy, and freed himself from encumbrances which might detain him in the city, and was now ready to return to the West, there to take up his solitary abode.

His heart was "empty, swept," but not "garnished;" the grace and beauty of life had passed away, and what was now to soften and sweeten its stern realities? Hope, ever blessed Hope—who lifts the veil of immortality, and anchors on the Rock of Ages.

* * * *

"Pauline," said Willison, "My friend Norton is obliged to go to Cuba, this winter; Mrs. Norton's

health requires a more genial climate. I am the bearer of an earnest petition from them. Will you accompany Mrs. Norton as her friend and companion? They sail a few weeks hence."

Pauline was thoughtful and agitated for a few minutes—she then replied firmly, "I will go, Cousin Ralph."

"Thank you, Pauline; that is like you; generous and decided. The coming season I go to Washington, and devote myself to my constituents, or rather, to my country, with new zeal. To-morrow I leave for my home at the West;—no, Pauline, not a home, but a tabernacle in the wilderness of life. Ready am I to strike my tent, when my Master calls me home."

Little did he suspect that one was within the sound of his voice, whose heart was thrilling with a new emotion, while she listened to its mournful tones, without distinguishing an articulate word. How could she ever have been indifferent, even to the most careless word that fell from those lips? Now, she would have given worlds for the love she had despised and forfeited.

When our loved ones leave us, the deepest sorrow is when the voice dies away in the distance with a mournful farewell, and the familiar form is hidden from our sight.—Then, sorrow has no utterance, no tears,

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE VILLAGE CHURCH.

"What passion hangs these weights upon my tongue?"

I cannot speak to her?"

SHAKESPEARE.

It was the Sunday subsequent to the events mentioned in the last chapter. The pretty little village church was not far distant, and thither Mrs. Mayley walked with Pauline leaning on her arm. They had been seated awhile, and the service had commenced, when the sexton showed two gentlemen, a venerable elderly man and a younger one, into Mrs. Mayley's pew.

Pauline did not turn her eyes towards the strangers, but the well-remembered voice of the one next to her, thrilled through every trembling nerve. It was some time before she became sufficiently calm to attend to

the service without wandering thoughts, and the good clergyman would not have been much flattered by the attention she and her right-hand neighbor, that day, gave to his excellent sermon. Memory presented too vivid a picture before their minds for the time and place. On coming out of church, Mrs. Mayley stopped in the vestibule to speak to the strangers.

"Dr. Harlington, I am most happy to see you."

The extended hand of Mrs. Mayley was cordially grasped by the good clergyman, who exclaimed:

"This is an unexpected pleasure. My son Edward, Mrs. Mayley."

"Whom I have not seen since he was a school-boy. You are so changed that I should not have known you. Miss Randolph, Dr. Harlington: Mr. Edward Harlington, Miss Randolph. Come and take a Sunday dinner with us, gentlemen."

"I cannot resist so kind an invitation," replied Dr. Harlington, offering his arm to Mrs. Mayley.

"Thank you, sir; and you, Pauline, take Mr. Edward Harlington's arm. My friend has been ill for some time, and must be fatigued," said Mrs. Mayley.

Pauline and Edward were thus left to make the best of their way to Mrs. Mayley's. He hesitated whether to address her as a stranger, or to claim acquaintance on a more intimate footing; and she was scarcely able to move from extreme agitation. Thus they walked on, and soon they were at Mrs. Mayley's door without having spoken a word.

Pauline pleaded fatigue, and did not come down to dinner.

"I am sorry not to see that excellent young lady," said Dr. Harlington; "I wished to express my gratitude. Express! did I say? I could not express a tithe of the gratitude I feel. Give her the blessing of a father, whose son she rescued from ruin."

Mrs. Mayley looked the surprise and astonishment which she felt. Both father and son concluded that she was entirely ignorant of the circumstances to which the former referred. He continued:

"Blessed indeed, are those women of noble purpose, whose religion is without cant and without hypocrisy. By their holy lives, they give us assurance of the reality and efficacy of Christian principles. We

are sorrowful and despairing when we witness the sins and sufferings of poor humanity; but we turn hopefully to woman, as the mariner does to the single star which gleams out in a dark, tempestuous night, and confidence revives in our saddened hearts."

"You are complimentary, Dr. Harlington," remarked Mrs. Mayley.

"No, my dear madam; I speak from the depth of a thankful heart. I acknowledge the immense power of your sex for good and for evil. They inherit their primal mother's unbounded influence, and we inherit poor Adam's blind love and weak indulgence."

"Poor Adam! Your sympathy is with him, I perceive. Poor Eve! subjected to the mighty influence of an archangel's intellect, was it strange that she should fall?" demanded Mrs. Mayley.

"Man is not ruled by woman through the intellect, but through the passions and affections. That is the reason why so many strong-minded men are led captive by silly women."

"You are no longer complimentary, sir."

"Excuse me, Mrs. Mayley; we will change the

topic. I like your clergyman; he has a remarkably felicitous way of presenting truth. He scatters flowers, but not with a lavish hand; his main object is to bring men to a deep sense of truth and duty."

"Exactly so; he never rants; he never makes passes in the air. He has one definite object in view in each sermon, and follows it out. He is a man of remarkable singleness of heart and of purpose. His life is a beautiful exemplification of the truth he preaches. He never feeds us with the cloudy, unsubstantial *ologies* and *oxies* and *isms*, of this speculative age, but with the bread of life."

"And that is the true end of all pulpit instruction. Edward, I hope you will profit by these remarks."

Mrs. Mayley looked with surprise at the young man, who evinced the same emotion by coloring deeply, and uttering an inquiring, "Sir?"

"I mean by this, my son, that I trust you will become a more able and efficient messenger of 'glad tidings,' than your father has ever been. It is not worldly ambition which prompts this wish, far from it. With the talents you possess, you might become emi-

nent at the bar; but I have a higher and a nobler aim for you, and I trust you will not disappoint my expectations."

"I am grieved to give you pain, my father, but I shall never be a clergyman; never!"

"And why not?"

"Because I am not worthy to hold that sacred office."

"You know who it is, that loves much;—he to whom much is forgiven."

"But, my father, under the Jewish law, the priests were required to be without physical blemish; under the Christian dispensation, they should be men of uncorrupt lives from childhood, that the world may not have ground for reproach against them."

"Who is without reproach, Edward?"

"Men who, like you, my father, have never been scathed by the fires of passion; not men who must carry in their own memories deep marks of guilt. Such are not worthy to minister at God's holy altar."

"I will reason with you at length about this matter, on some other and more suitable occasion," replied Dr. Harlington.

CHAPTER XXXII.

FALLING IN LOVE.

"Why will you my passion reprove?

Why term it a folly to grieve?

Ere I show you the charms of my love,

She's fairer than you can believe.

With her mien she enamors the brave,

With her wit she engages the free,

With her modesty pleases the grave!

She is every way pleasing to me." SHENSTONE.

EDWARD HARLINGTON was in that most uncomfortable state of mind, in which a man pronounces himself "a fool;—the greatest fool in existence."

In the first place, he was a *fool*, because he had wasted so large a portion of his life. In the second, because he did not know what use to make of his pre-

sent capabilities; and lastly, that which dwelt just at this time, most provokingly in his mind, was his position with regard to Pauline Randolph.

"Fool, dolt, am I, not to have opened my lips when I had so tempting an opportunity! What must she think of me!"

The plain matter of fact was, that the young man had *fallen in love*. Why this term should be used, might puzzle both the transcendentalist and the utilitarian. *To fall in love*. Of the sixty-three definitions of this verb, to fall, given by Johnson, not one is applicable to the case in point. "To drop from a higher place." Not that, surely:

"For love is heaven, and heaven is love."

"To grow shallow." That may do better; for, as in the case of Harlington, men in love often find themselves growing wonderfully deficient in brains.

"Fool!" he continued his bitter musings;—"the child, who cried for the moon, was a Solomon, compared to Ned Harlington:—Miss Randolph is as much above me as the moon was above the spoiled cry-baby."

Then loving her, surely was not falling in love; it was quite a high flight. The lady herself did not suspect him of such daring aspirations.

"But I will be worthy of her love; I will win it by deserving it!"

Noble purpose! Is the *will* strong enough to carry out the purpose? The inner man finds in outward life, circumstances which he can render exponents of his character. These circumstances he seizes, and moulds according to the strength of his will and his understanding, into engines of power. When Edward Harlington said, "she *shall* be mine, for better, for worse," he did not know the means by which this could be accomplished, but a spell was upon him as potent as that which brought Cæsar to the Rubicon; like him, he crossed it too. That is, before the week was past, he wrote Pauline Randolph a letter, making a "proposal," for the final answer to which, he would wait two years! He acknowledged himself unworthy of even this favor, but hoped before the end of that period to convince her of his sincere repentance and entire reformation. In the mean time, he would deny

himself the pleasure of her society, and leave her perfect freedom with regard to the disposal of her affections.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

SHAKING OFF AN ACQUAINTANCE.

"But who is this
That so bedecked, ornate and gay,
Comes this way sailing
With all her bravery on?"

MILTON.

LITTLE more than a month had elapsed since the events recorded in the last chapter. Pauline was far away from the village of Annington. Mr. Willison was at Washington, and Mrs. Mayley established in her own house in town, with Mrs. Willison her guest for the winter. Yes, with Mrs. Willison, her guest.

They had been thus established but a few days, when Miss Posen's card was sent up to Mrs. Willison.

"What shall I do, my dear Mrs. Mayley?" she exclaimed, throwing down the book she was reading aloud;—"I cannot see that fearful woman."

"Go, by all means; receive her civilly, but manifest by a dignified deportment, and distant coolness, that you no longer consider her an intimate friend."

Mrs. Willison went, with a quailing heart, into the presence of the formidable Miss Posen; dreading those dark, peering eyes, and that cold, severe manner.

"Oh, my dear Emily, how are you?" exclaimed the lady, throwing her long, bony arms around the neck of Mrs. Willison, and kissing her, first on one cheek and then on the other.

This salutation was so unexpected that Mrs. Willison was entirely discomposed, and the reserve and formality which followed were by no means assumed.

"My dear, sweet Emily, you are looking more lovely than ever," continued Miss Posen; "but do not put on this precise manner; I assure you it is now *mauvais ton*, *bien mauvais ton*. I met, at Newport, some exceedingly fashionable ladies during *the season*, and they were complete hoydens. Yet, you never saw any thing more effective than their style of manners; the beaux were delighted, fascinated; they called it the

sans souci style ; and I declare, it would become you marvellously."

During this rhodomontade, which was poured out with wonderful volubility, Mrs. Willison sat motionless, excepting a slight quiver of the under lip, which might have betrayed the mingled emotion of fear and contempt.

"You are not well, my dear," continued Miss Posen ; "I must get you out to walk and to ride. You must spend half the day in the street, either on horseback, or shopping or visiting. You are going to throw off mourning, of course. *They* wear mourning for an infant, now, about six months ; so you are fairly entitled to lay aside yours. Have you arranged your winter dresses ?"

"I make no change, at present ;" Emily ventured to say, in a tremulous voice.

"That is preposterous, downright preposterous.—For the sake of all the loves and graces, do not disfigure yourself in this manner. Gay colors become your style of beauty. They are just opening splendid goods at Faraway and Smoltax's. Run and put on

your bonnet and mantilla, and we will spend an hour or so in pulling over their shawls and silks. Then we will go to Libberly's and look at some magnificent furs, fit for a Russian princess."

"Excuse me ; I cannot go out this morning."

"Nonsense, *petit chiffon* ; come with me and dissipate the dolorous expression of that fair face. The season has not fairly commenced ; but you will have no time to lose, for you know milliners and dress-makers are incorrigibly provoking wretches."

"I am not going into society at all this winter ;" replied Emily, quite pale with terror, and actually faint with the effort she had made to bring out this bold announcement.

"Not going into society !—That is too absurd for belief. Not going into society ! What are you going to do with yourself ?—Who has forbidden it ? It is evident to me that you are kept in terrible bondage ; your countenance betrays it. Poor child ! the slave of the Harem is free compared with you, poor crest-fallen, crushed, Emily Willison ! I pity you."

With no firmness of character, and with principles

not yet crystallized into form and fixedness, it was exceedingly difficult for Emily to resist this torrent of pity and invective. Unbidden tears beaded the drooped eyelashes like pearls on the fringe of a Sultana's robe, and the cheeks, which had been snowlike, flushed like Monta Rosa at the glance of Aurora.

Ce n'est que le premier pas qui coute. Courage, young wife.

"Folks say that your husband broke up his establishment for economy's sake; and placed you here under the methodistical, overmuch-righteous Mrs. Mayley,—a former flame of his; by the way, your duenna now. They say, too, that he is as cruel and jealous as a Spanish Hidalgo."

Emily, now thoroughly aroused, replied, "I cannot longer be frightened by what *folks* say; it is a bugbear that has been held before me too long. Let them say what they will. Good morning, Miss Posen."

And Mrs. Willison hurried out of the room, as one might flee from a torrent of lava which was rolling its lurid mass so near that the intense heat was already scorching.

Miss Posen, thus prevented from uttering the angry words which were already at the tip of her unbridled tongue, took out a blank card, and upon it wrote :—

"I know too many of your secrets, not to be a dangerous enemy. War or peace? Tell me which you choose before two hours are past."

She then rang for a servant, handed him the card for Mrs. Willison, and departed in a furious rage.

Mrs. Willison rushed to Mrs. Mayley, and throwing herself upon an ottoman at that lady's feet, laid her throbbing head in her lap and sobbed violently.

"I need not tell you to be calm, Emily, for I perceive at present it is impossible. When you are so, if it will be any relief, tell me what has happened."

Emily could not speak. The card was handed in. She read it, and exclaimed :

"What can be done! What can be done!"

"Do not be alarmed, my poor Emily. Our enemies can hurt us much less than we imagine. Keep perfectly quiet. Miss Posen is well known; her slander can do but little harm."

"But, my dear Mrs. Mayley, you know how much that is really true, she can tell to *do me* harm."

"Truth, instead of coming 'mended' from her tongue, will lose half its weight."

"Ah! but others will have to suffer through my fault. I feel like one who has just recovered a lost treasure, that is every moment in danger of being lost again. Oh! I would not lose the hope I have of regaining *his* esteem for worlds on worlds."

"Do not attach so much importance to Miss Posen's dastardly threat. You have, I trust, sincerely repented, and been forgiven. Yet, repentance towards God and man, does not always bring exemption from punishment in this life. The consequences of sin are inevitable. You will doubtless have to suffer some of these consequences. Strange it is, that man, sinful man, himself needing forgiveness, should be so harsh upon his fellow-sinners, when a pure and holy God loves and forgives! Bear the punishment humbly and meekly, and you will in time find, that though a severe discipline, it was a needful one."

"There is yet another besides, whose name will be

mingled with mine, and go from mouth to mouth, through the city. Oh, it is dreadful! I should think you would hate me;" said Emily, bursting into a fresh paroxysm of grief.

"No indeed, Emily, I begin to love you sincerely. You have taken a decided stand with Miss Posen. Let the approbation of your conscience be a sufficient reward and encouragement."

"Oh, that I had never done wrong! I cannot wipe out the past."

"So might we all exclaim. But let us act as though there were no past, only so far as it aids and cheers the present; and no future, excepting such as we make it by the best use of the present. You are going to be too much occupied to have time for nursing morbid melancholy. I have never found, after sincere repentance and confession, that any thing was gained by bewailing past errors, excepting deadening discouragement. You need all your energy for action. Come, let us resume our reading. The course of history will occupy us two hours a day; miscellaneous reading at least one hour more; then we have our school to look

after; then the lectures we are to attend will occupy two or three hours every week; then we shall occasionally attend church during the week, and always on Sunday. I have some excellent friends who visit me socially, and whose conversation will be, I trust, agreeable and improving. The studios of artists, and the galleries of art, will afford us amusement and cultivate taste. You have promised to aid me in procuring employment for those aged women who wish to support themselves in our widows' asylum.—There, Emily, have I not enumerated objects enough to occupy your attention, so that time will neither hang heavily nor uselessly upon your hands?"

"But you know how much Miss Posen can say that is true;" replied the heart-stricken Emily.

"Truth comes from her tongue so disguised, that nobody knows what to believe. Besides, you have, I trust, a higher standard of action, now, than public opinion."

"I yet fear and tremble before the world. And how can I help it, since I deserve its censure."

"That is a part of your punishment, Emily. We

cannot break God's holy laws without bringing upon ourselves punishment and self-condemnation, even in this life. But strive to

'Let the dead past bury its dead,'

and to

'Act, act in the living present,

Heart within and God o'er head.'"

"But you find it so easy to be good, Mrs. Mayley, that you cannot understand how hard it is for me."

"There you mistake. The Christian life is a constant warfare against evil from without and from within. As our blessed Master bore the cross, and ascended the hill of suffering, so we mount upward through much tribulation."

"But you are so cheerful and active; no one could suspect that you were not perfectly happy."

"Occupation, constant occupation, together with the sweet influences of Faith and Hope, render me calm and contented, and to my fellow-beings I ever wish to appear cheerful. Self-abasement and penitence are for the closet, when the door is shut."

There was a pause of some moments, and Mrs. Mayley resumed:—

“You will have constant occupation the coming winter, Emily. A course of History and Classic Literature we are to read together. Then you take Pauline’s place in the school, which will probably employ one or two hours every day—then those poor widows whom we are to look after, and keep supplied with work. The Bible class of *two*, which you and I shall enjoy together,—the lectures we shall attend,—the Sunday and week-day services of the church;—why, we shall be as busy as the sun.”

“And do you believe, Mrs. Mayley, that I can ever make a good and useful woman?”

“Most assuredly I do, if you sincerely wish it. God’s grace is ever ready to aid our endeavors. He will be your guide and Saviour.”

Mrs. Willison whispered, with tears in her eyes,—
“Pray for me constantly.” After a long pause Emily said, “Is it not strange that I should have been so long in discovering *his* superiority to other men?”

Mrs. Mayley colored deeply, and a faint smile passed over her face, but she replied calmly, “The more excellent, intelligent, and amiable you are, the more highly you will appreciate worth in others.”

“And can I ever render myself worthy of *his* respect and love?”

“No endeavors on my part shall be wanting to aid you in this worthy effort,” replied the noble-hearted Mrs. Mayley.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

LA JOLIE VEUVELETTE.

"He that like the wife of Caesar, is above suspicion, he alone, is the fittest person to undertake the noble and adventurous task of diverting the shafts of calumny from him who has fallen without pity, and cannot stand without help."—COLTON.

THE revenge of Miss Posen was even more malignant than Mrs. Willison had feared. The very day after her visit, an article appeared in "The On-dit," a scurrilous half-penny paper, entitled "La Jolie Veuvelette." Mrs. Willison, under the half-veiled name of Mrs. Wellington, was held up to public ridicule and censure—the story of her intended elopement with "E. H." was given, with many aggravating circumstances which were entirely false; and the character of Mr. Willison ("Mr. Wellington,") was delineated as

strikingly as the most glaring caricature that Cruikshank ever perpetrated. It had that provoking resemblance which establishes identity, and thus renders caricature so ludicrous and so repulsive.

Mrs. Mayley, under the sobriquet of Mrs. Novemberly, figured largely as a bigoted old duenna.

There was no description given of "E. H.," and not the slightest blame attached to his conduct; on the contrary, it was represented as a bold, spirited affair for a dashing young man; establishing his reputation as a formidable, fashionable *roué*. As if to consummate his audacity, he appeared to be the author of the disgraceful article; for it was signed with his initials,—
"E. H."

Two of the vile papers, containing "La Jolie Veuvelette," were left at Mrs. Mayley's door, in an envelope directed to Mrs. Willison.

She, thinking the parcel a document from Washington, opened it, and unfolded the paper. The infamous attack upon her husband and herself, was read with as much eagerness as a criminal might exhibit, while listening to his sentence from the mouth of the judge

on the bench. After she had finished, she did not faint; she laughed until the tears streamed down her cheeks;—a loud, horrid, hysterical laugh.

Mrs. Mayley heard it, and hastened to her room, alarmed at the unearthly sound. She knocked, and Emily bade her come in.

“What is the matter?”

Emily could not answer, but pointing to the paper, laughed more loudly than before.

Mrs. Mayley took it from her hand, and read “*La Jolie Veuvelette*.”

After perusing it, she looked at Mrs. Willison with blank astonishment, for still she laughed violently; so violently that she had thrown herself upon the bed and rolled from side to side, convulsed with laughter.

Mrs. Mayley feared that the envenomed shaft had destroyed the reason of the victim at whom it was aimed.

“Emily,” said she gently, and affectionately,—
“Emily, my child, try to calm yourself.”

“Can you speak so kindly to me after all this?” said she, looking wildly at her friend, and falling into

another fit of laughter, mingled with deep sobs, the tears meantime streaming over her face, while her great blue eyes were wide open.

“Yes, Emily, you are the same to me, and to yourself, that you were an hour ago. This does not alter you at all in my estimation; neither will it in the heart of the person whom you are most anxious to please. I told you that punishment followed transgression; the scars remain after the wound is healed. But this public censure is not among the natural consequences of your misconduct; it is an act of vindictive cruelty, worthy of Djizza Pacha.”

“Oh how you relieve me! But I shall never dare to go out of the house, for fear of meeting people who have read that shocking thing.”

“Yes you will; bathe your eyes, and prepare yourself to go with me to Professor B.’s lecture this evening.”

“What! this evening!—This very evening?”

“Yes; fewer persons will have read this paper than you suppose; perhaps none whom you will meet there; for they are persons who do not patronize such trash,

It will be easier for you to go at once, than to wait longer."

Thus urged, Mrs. Willison consented to go, at the risk of facing "the world's dread laugh."

CHAPTER XXXV.

THE SCIENTIFIC LECTURE.

"In rainbow groups, our bright-eyed maids and matrons,
On science bent, assemble ; to prepare
Themselves for acting well, in life, their part
As wives and mothers."

HALLECK.

AMONG the whims of the season, was a passion for hearing scientific lectures. It was fashionable, not only so, it was *the fashion* to talk of hydrogen, and all the other gases ; carbonates, and all the other *ates* ; monocotyledons and dicotyledons ; psychology, and all other *ologies*, theology not excepted. This *furor* had broken out suddenly, in a fashionable street up town, and had spread to every part of the city, where *any body* lived.

The whole world of the city was to be cured of

ignorance, by homœopathic doses, repeated three times a week during the season. Small, indeed, but bitter were these pills, consisting mostly of nomenclature and technology, sugared over with poetry and compliment.

Mrs. Mayley in her endeavor to promote Mrs. Willison's intellectual culture, had decided upon attending Professor B's course of lectures, knowing that he was not an empiric, and that a thorough investigation of the science, and great powers of analysis, had enabled him to condense into a small compass all that could be learned from long, elaborate treatises. She intended, however, to read extensively on the same science, during the progress of the lectures. What was her astonishment on entering the large lecture-room, with Mrs. Willison timidly hanging on her arm, to find it already crammed with a fashionable audience!

After an ineffectual stir among the ladies, who had *spread themselves*, with the benevolent purpose of occupying as much space as possible, and gentlemen, who were intently looking into the crowns of their hats for something that was not there; the two ladies at length made their way to an unoccupied bench,

directly below the desk of the lecturer, and in front of the *new* yellow bonnet of Miss Posen, and a host of its gay competitors. The lecturer had not commenced.

"La Jolie Veuvelette!" passed from mouth to mouth, along the neighboring benches like a *feu-de-joie*, followed by a half-suppressed titter.

Fashionable people can be exceedingly rude. On that occasion some of them arose and stood on tiptoe to see "La Jolie Veuvelette," as they would have done to see Tom Thumb, or any other monster.

Trembling from head to foot, Mrs. Willison was obliged to hold on to Mrs. Mayley, to keep herself from falling from the bench, which rendered no support to the back, and was high and narrow.

"Courage, my dear Emily," whispered Mrs. Mayley, softly.

"Mrs. Novemberly, the duenna;" distinctly met her ear, followed by another titter.

The Professor now arose, and made his bow to the audience.

"Ladies and ——" he commenced, but catching a glimpse of the deathly-pale and beautiful face before

him, he paused a moment, with his eyes intently fixed upon Emily; at which she *was* so much terrified, that she burst into that fearful laugh, and immediately fell off the bench in a hysterical fit.

The lecturer flew to her assistance, and took off her bonnet. A scene of dire confusion ensued; in the midst of which Emily was dragged out, her beautiful hair trailing on the floor, and her face exposed to the gaze of the eager spectators.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

MANLINESS.

"It is easy in the world to live after the world's opinion; it is easy in solitude to live after our own; but the great man is he, who in the midst of the crowd, keeps with perfect sweetness the independence of solitude."—CAROLINE BOWLES.

"Stinging companions, suggestions sad,
Of what I *am*, and what I might have been."

SOUTHEY.

MORE than a week wore wearily away, before Mrs. Willison could be again induced to leave her room. All the arguments and persuasions of Mrs. Mayley were ineffectual. At length, however, she ventured to walk out alone with her veil drawn closely over her face; but on seeing a crowd of gayly-dressed ladies approaching, attended by two or three gentlemen, she slipped into a small fancy-store to avoid them.

On the counter lay a pile of small pamphlets, in pink covers, illustrated by a striking caricature of herself. The article from "The City On-dit," had been printed in pamphlet form, and even the newsboys were bawling about the streets "La Jolie Veuvelette."

She had become the *town-talk* "with a witness."

Emily timidly inquired for tape and needles. While she was looking at them, two moustached dandies came in and stared rudely in her face. The modest blush which beautified that fair face, and the frightened air with which she dropped her veil, had such an immediate effect, that they slightly bowed and hastily left the shop. She asked the woman behind the counter to send a boy for a carriage. The woman did so; and while she waited for it, handed her one of the pink-covered pamphlets, saying that it was "all the go." Mrs. Willison refused it in such a manner as to make the shop-woman stare; she drew her black-veil closely over her face, and when the carriage arrived, hastily sprung in, pulled up the blinds, and arrived at Mrs. Mayley's half dead with fright and mortification.

Tom Goby, an under officer at the custom-house,

was one of the leading contributors to "The City On-dit." He wrote "La Jolie Veuvelette," urged to it by Miss Posen; yet he wrote *can amore*, or rather with the still stronger incentive, hatred; not alone because he was a hereditary thorn-distributor; he had been a schoolmate of Emily Munn's in his boyhood, and when she became a young lady and went to another school, she "cut him dead," and he swore revenge.

Tom Goby boasted that he had made a hundred dollars by the pink pamphlet, "La Jolie Veuvelette:" a practical comment which spoke volumes upon the scandal-loving propensities of the people of that city.

Dread of being the town-talk, had not kept Mrs. Willison in the path of duty. She had acted with as much inconsistency as persons are apt to do, who, with neither chart nor compass, attempt to sail with the breath of popular favor. That same world which she had courted and dreaded, had turned bitterly against her,—an old trick of that same world; now and then to victimize some individual, and to raise a mighty war-whoop when that individual carries out their own principles into action. Nothing could more effectually

have snapped the cords which bound Mrs. Willison to that once idolized world. Emily's nature was like that of a pensile plant, which because it cannot support itself, sends out its tendrils to cling to the strong and self-supporting. Fortunate was it for her, as it is for every woman of a like character, to possess a friend resembling the sturdy oak. Mrs. Mayley was more; she pointed out and led the way to higher and more enduring support and consolation.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

THE BARQUE SALLY ANN.

"He prayed by quantity,
And with his repetitions long and loud,
All knees were weary.
His virtues being overdone, his face
Too grave, his prayers too long, and his speech
Larded too frequently, and out of time
With serious phraseology." POLLOCK.

THE vessel in which Mr. and Mrs. Norton took passage for Cuba, was the barque Sally Ann of Baltimore, Captain Goodman.

When the passengers met in the cabin, they naturally took a survey of each other. They were ten in number; namely, Mrs. Barton Treak, Mr. Barton Treak, his son, and a servant; the Rev. Dr. Harlington and

his son Edward, and Mr. and Mrs. Norton ; Miss Pauline Randolph, and Perseverance Tibbets. The first named lady and gentleman were strangers to the rest of the party. Dr. Harlington's health had been impaired by his arduous labors during the summer, and he was going to try the climate of Cuba, in common with his fellow-passengers, for restoration.

Awkward and unexpected was the meeting between Edward Harlington and Pauline Randolph. When his letter with the singular "proposal," reached Annington, she had left the place, consequently did not receive it ; but he, not knowing the circumstances, had expected an acknowledgment, and was chagrined and grieved at the neglect.

The pilot had left the vessel, and under full sail she was making rapid progress over the bounding waves of the busy Atlantic.

"Captain Goodman," said Mr. Treak, "I prognosticate from your cognomen, that you will deem it an inestimable privilege to have matutinal and vesperical services on board this vessel."

The Captain, a blunt, honest seamen, stared wildly

at the speaker, whose sanctimonious face elongated, while his wide mouth uttered the unintelligible words.

"Explain, sir," said the Captain, who possessed a very limited vocabulary.

"You are not surely so *paganistic* as never to have sanctified your floating domicile with morning and evening worship," said Mr. Treak.

The watery blue eyes of the Captain dilated, his under-jaw fell, and he muttered : "A queer fish."

Mrs. Treak, a delicate little woman in deep mourning, said in a gentle voice, "Captain, my son proposes to have morning and evening prayers in the cabin, if you and our fellow-passengers have no objections."

"Oh ! he may pray as much as he pleases, for all me," said the Captain.

"As there is a clergyman on board, we can avail ourselves of his services," remarked Mr. Norton.

Mr. Treak turned his gray eyes full upon Dr. Harlington, who replied :

"My present state of health will prevent my officiating here as a clergyman."

"I presume, sir, you cannot excogitate any reason why I should not become the vocal organ of this company's social devotions, while we hospitate together."

"Certainly not, sir."

"Then it is considered as settled. Let us pray."

So saying, Mr. Treak fell on his knees, and in the same style as the foregoing, offered a long prayer.

Meantime, his mother had withdrawn to her state-room, the motion of the vessel having produced the effect that it usually does on novices at sea.

"Go and attend to your mistress instantly," said Mr. Treak, as he rose from his knees, to unfortunate Kitty, the waiting woman, who was herself in no better condition than her mistress.

"I cannot:—I must go on deck," she replied, staggering towards the companion-way.

"But you must. What did you come for, if you were not able to perform the required services?"

By this time Kitty had dragged herself up the stairs by the aid of the brass rail, and disappeared.

"They are all a complete ingannation; these compensated specimens of feminality," said Mr. Treak,

taking out of his carpet bag a set of chess-men and a board, into which they screwed, so that the tossing of the vessel could not disturb them.

A feeble voice came from the state-room,—"Kitty, Kitty."

"Mother, just make yourself as easy as you can; valetudinarians who venture upon the briny deep must learn to bear exacerbation;" said Mr. Treak loudly, as he coolly arranged his chess-men.

Meantime the passengers had betaken themselves to their respective state-rooms, leaving Mr. Treak to work out a problem in chess by himself.

When the summons for dinner was given, nobody appeared but Mr. Norton, Pauline, and Mr. Treak.

Dr. Harlington was ill, and Edward remained with him.

There was one place where Mr. Treak could find no time for large words, or words of any kind, namely, at table. He was an enormous eater, and devoured his food with a gusto only equalled by Giant Fee-Faw-Fum.

The cessation of hostilities occasioned by the remo-

val of the dishes, before the dessert, gave a brief space which Mr. Treak *improved* as follows :

"Miss Randolph, for that is your name if my auricular organs have not deceived me, are you cognate with him of Roanoke?"

Pauline looked exceedingly surprised, but politely replied,

"I have not that honor."

"I dubitate whether that should be considered an honor, inasmuch as there is not an iota of probability that he was a Christian."

"I do not know who has been able to weigh probabilities with such accuracy as to come to this decision," quickly replied Mr. Norton.

"A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid ;—I never heard of his making a prayer in my life," replied Mr. Treak, driven by anger into a simple, direct phraseology.

"It is not every one's duty to pray in public," remarked Mr. Norton.

"But I did not say public devotion. I mean the heart's sincere desire uttered or unexpressed. I do not believe John Randolph of Roanoke was a man of prayer."

"Excuse me from any farther discussion of this matter ; it neither suits my taste nor my principles," replied Mr. Norton sternly.

The dessert now being ready for discussion, Mr. Treak was willing to forego the other, and betake himself with the same zeal to that which was in hand ; but in a short time he began again :

"There is your clergyman, Dr. Harlington ; I presume he expects to be saved by his good works."

"He does not expect to be saved without them," replied Mr. Norton, dryly.

"He is afflicted with a mental ophthalmia. I know not what collyrium could be found to purify and heal his tenebrosity," said Mr. Treak.

"He is a good man, passing through a bad world, and endeavoring to make all around him wiser and better. He serves his Divine Master, and is guided by his perfect example."

"He appears to me to possess no grand diffusive system of Theology."

"He does good as he has opportunity, and wastes not his time in sitting upon a mountain, waiting for the

tide that shall carry him off to a distant land," said Mr. Norton, warmly.

"His charity is of that specious kind which commences within his own habitation, and there exhausts itself, I fear," said Mr. Treak.

"It begins where every man's does who is not worse than an infidel;" exclaimed Mr. Norton, becoming quite angry. "Knowing that Dr. Harlington is my pastor, and my friend, the charity that doth not behave itself unseemly, should have taught one who professes so much piety as you, sir, to refrain from abusing him in my presence."

"Unawed by man, I speak what concerns the eternal salvation of my fellow-men. I perceive that you have been blinded and deafened by the tenebriose teaching of that prelatical priest, till truth falls upon your ears like gold-dust upon the ocean."

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

THE DEVOTED SON.

"Oh! might we all our lineage prove,
Give and forgive, do good and love,
By soft endearments in kind strife
Lightening the load of daily life!"

KEBLE.

PAULINE was troubled at the silence and reserve of Edward Harlington. "Why should his distant civility annoy me?" she questioned herself:—"He ought never to be any thing more to me than a mere acquaintance. I will not suffer myself to be piqued by him."

They had been two days on board, and he had not made the slightest advance towards conversation. Meantime Mr. Treak had selected her from all the rest, to be honored with his attentions. His invalid mother

he entirely neglected, or snubbed her with as little ceremony as he would have shown towards an obnoxious cat.

Mrs. Norton required the constant attention of her husband, and Perseverance Tibbets was on the sick list.

The Captain recommended that all who were able should remain on deck as much as possible, and Pauline followed this recommendation. The sea air had already given the usual vigor to her health, and vivacity to her spirits.

As she was seated upon the deck, watching a magnificent sunset with intense pleasure, Mr. Treack came and seated himself beside her, and abruptly demanded,

"Miss Randolph, have you ever read 'Baxter's Call to the Unconverted?' "

"Never."

"Here is the volume:—it is just such an arousing requisition as you need." So saying, he took from his pocket an old, dirty copy of that famous book, and offered it to her.

She declined the offer, saying, "Thank you, sir;

I have more books with me than I can possibly read."

"You seem not to be occupied just at present."

"I was enjoying this beautiful, gorgeous sunset."

"I imagined you were in that state of horrible calliginousness, in which nature is worshipped as a deity."

"Sir, you are quite beyond my comprehension. How is your mother this evening?"

"She is still in a state of cubation. Miss Randolph, I have your everlasting welfare near my heart," and here he attempted to take her hand. Drawing it away, she was about to rise;—he detained her, saying, "You mistake my intention; in the fervency of my zeal for your conversion, to which I have pledged myself, I but extended my hand in gesticulation."

"This conversation does not suit my taste, sir."

"It is not to be expected that sinners, when the denouncing spirit of the gospel is brought to bear upon them presentifically, will receive the truth with spontaneity. It is very possible that you already belong to that church whose members expect to be saved entirely by their good works. I am preparing myself for the

ministry, and therefore feel it incumbent upon me to denounce the errors that are rife in your legal church, and to come out with solifidianism whenever and wherever I have an opportunity."

"To what church, sir, do you belong?"

"Not to any church. I have not found any men, or set of men, correct enough in theology to unite myself with them, nor any theological writings with which I perfectly agree. There are but few books in the world that I think safe to recommend. I intend writing one soon, that will make my opinions widely known."

"The dictionary you should add to your limited list, sir; for I should find it impossible to understand you without that as a constant book of reference. I must bid you good evening."

Pauline made her way to the cabin. There was Edward Harlington reading aloud, to his venerable father, one of Wordsworth's beautiful poems. He read with feeling and expression, and Pauline listened with delight. When he had laid the book aside Dr. Harlington said, "I am sorry, my son, to monopolize all your time:—Go now, and enjoy the twilight upon

deck;" then, perceiving Pauline, he added, "And Miss Randolph, will you give him your company, to oblige me? It is not right that he should devote himself so exclusively to his old father."

Harlington offered his arm with great politeness, and Pauline felt compelled to take it, *to oblige his excellent father.*

As they passed along the upper deck, they heard some one sobbing violently. A woman sat crouched up, with her apron over her head. It was Kitty, Mrs. Treack's servant.

"What ails you, my good woman?" asked Harlington in a kind voice.

"Oh, sir, Mr. Treack has been scolding me powerfully, because I have not been to prayers. He says he was all alone in the cabin this morning, and had to perform social worship by himself. He said I would certainly go to the bad place, and as there is some danger of a storm, that I shall be launched into eternity to-night. He talked frightfully. But that is not all; he has now gone to exhort his poor mother on the same subject, when she is not able to crawl

out of her berth. She is one of the best of women, and I am trying to follow her example." Here the woman again began weeping vehemently.

"Is there any thing I can do for you?" asked Pauline.

"You can do nothing for me, but you might for Mrs. Treak." The woman lowered her voice and said in a mysterious whisper, "He is killing her."

"Killing her ~~by~~ How?"

"By his unkindness. Killing her inch by inch, hour by hour."

"But I am a stranger; she might think it an intrusion."

"Oh no! she would not; she is a sweet, kind-hearted lady."

"You are accustomed to do good to strangers, Miss Randolph," said Harlington in a low tone. They were the first words he had addressed directly to her since the memorable evening at Cranford.

She did not reply, but said to Kitty, "When I go below, I will call on Mrs. Treak, and inquire if I can be of any service to her."

"Do, my good young lady, and I will bless you as long as I live. The moment I go below I am too sick to hold up my head."

"And my poor Vera is too sick to leave my state-room," remarked Pauline.

This name recalled the past so vividly to the mind of Harlington, that as they paced the deck it was some minutes before he could command himself sufficiently to resume conversation.

At length with some hesitation he said, "I know I deserved no more consideration from you than I have received, and yet I cannot deny myself the poor satisfaction of inquiring why you did not answer my letter."

"Your letter! I never received a letter from you in my life."

A long explanation followed. Then a still longer conversation, which Pauline ended by saying in a cheerful voice, "This is a matter which concerns no one so intimately as myself. I shall not ask advice; I comply with your request, although I think it unreasonable that you should bind yourself, and leave me perfectly free."

"Not at all ; I only feel that it would have been right for you to have required a longer probation than two years. I had intended to punish myself by absence during that period ; but since Providence has placed me in your way, you must do me all the good in your power."

"I am not an angel, Mr. Harlington, but an impulsive mortal, with mirthfulness so strongly developed, that I am constantly in danger of saying and doing things which are imprudent. Your grave face will act as a check upon my exuberant spirit."

"I would not on any account check your mirthfulness ; indulge your charming spirits. The recollections of the past are too saddening for me to be otherwise than grave. *I have cast a shadow over my whole life.*"

When Pauline went below, she found Mr. Treak nodding over his chess-board, apparently dreaming out the problem which he was too stupid to solve when awake. She tapped gently at the door of Mrs. Treak's state-room, and a feeble voice bade her come in.

Pauline apologized for the intrusion, and asked if she could be of any service.

"I thank you for your kindness, but shall not long need the service of any one. My physician recommended this voyage as a dernier resort. I am going rapidly." Here a violent fit of coughing interrupted the poor lady.

Pauline raised her head, and by the dim light which found its way from the cabin, saw that the invalid was frightfully pale.

"Can I give you any thing?"

"A teaspoonful of anodyne from that phial, if you please. It has been beyond my reach for some time. My woman is too sick to be of any service."

"I am very fortunate in escaping sea-sickness, so that I can attend to you," said Pauline, pouring the medicine and presenting it to the sufferer.

While still holding it near her lips she said :

"My kind young friend, I think it probable, that I may pass away to-night. My dear Barton does not seem aware of my situation, and it would be cruel to alarm him."

"Your son might consider it more cruel not to be allowed to minister to you in this hour of need," replied Pauline.

Mrs. Treak was silent for some moments; a deep sigh then broke from her troubled bosom, and tears found their way to her eyes. She then swallowed the anodyne, and her head dropped heavily upon the pillow.

Pauline seated herself in the only chair in the small state-room, saying, "I will stay by you to-night if you will allow me."

"I cannot express my thanks," replied Mrs. Treak; "it was dreadful to me to think of dying alone. And yet I am not alone; there is ONE who comforts and sustains me, and when I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, HE will be with me.

The anodyne now began to take effect, and Mrs. Treak fell into a troubled sleep.

As Pauline sat in silence, her attention was arrested by the sound of hurrying feet upon deck, and the loud voice of the Captain giving orders; then the rattling of the rigging as the sails were hastily taken in; then she heard the roar of thunder, and vivid flashes of

lightning penetrated even into the state-room. Suddenly came a tremendous gust under which the vessel reeled; then another fearful shock, and she was thrown upon one side, and the water came rushing into the cabin. Pauline found herself clinging to the side of Mrs. Treak's berth. That good lady, awakened by the shock, exclaimed, "My final hour is come at last! My son—my son!"

The lights had all been extinguished, and thus in total darkness amid the deafening roar of the elements, Pauline awaited the issue, her hand in that of the dying woman.

"Miss Randolph! Pauline!" she heard the agonized call of Edward Harlington. The stranger lady grasped her hand tightly, and would not withdraw it. "Where is my son?—This is not his hand.—I see no light.—Can this be death!"

Pauline could, with difficulty, understand Mrs. Treak's exclamations, amid the roar of the elements and the stunning noises on the deck, where the sailors were cutting away the masts. This was at length accomplished, and the vessel righted.

Mrs. Treak had relaxed her hold upon Pauline, and fallen into a state of insensibility. Again Pauline heard the cry,—“Miss Randolph, where are you? For Heaven’s sake, answer me!”

“My life-preserver!—My life-preserver!” yelled Mr. Treak.

Pauline endeavored to open the door of the state-room, but so many obstructions had been thrown against it in the cabin that it was impossible.

“My father, my father!” again was heard the voice of Harlington, in accents of fearful agony.

Pauline endeavored to make herself heard.—“Mr. Harlington!—Mr. Norton!—My poor Vera!” In vain; no one came to her assistance.

Captain Goodman, who had not been able for many hours to come into the cabin, now came below. “I must tell the passengers the truth; the Sally Ann is filling fast, and we stand a small chance of ever seeing land again; but I will do my best.” So saying, he struck a light.

“Haul away that lumber from the state-room doors;” he continued, and suiting the action to the

word, assisted by Edward Harlington, the obstructions were removed, and Mr. Norton appeared with his wife fainting in his arms. Then Pauline opened the door and stepped into the cabin.

“But where is my father!” exclaimed Edward.

“Here, my son,—I am safe; for a while I was stunned by a fall from my berth at the first shock of the vessel. We may have but a few moments together in this world. Say to your mother, if God should spare your life and take mine, that you will be her protector as long as you live. May He enable you to fulfil the sacred trust. Let us unite in prayer.”

“My life-preserver! I cannot find my life-preserver!” roared out Mr. Treak.

“Hold your tongue, landlubber, and listen to that good man,” said the Captain. “I will go on deck and see what can be done. Be ready for any thing that may happen.”

“I will go with you.—I will! I will!” insisted Mr. Treak, clinging to the Captain, who struggled to shake him off, exclaiming,

“Let me go, you fool, your life depends upon it.

Shame! shame! Where is your poor mother? Her woman servant was washed overboard. Hands off, I say!"

With Herculean strength the Captain threw off the dastardly Treak, and then sprang upon deck and closed the cabin door. Meantime Pauline had knelt beside Dr. Harlington, who calmly offered a brief petition for deliverance from shipwreck, and for mercy and forgiveness through the blessed Redeemer.

"And now, my son, see if you can do any thing for the poor sick lady in the state-room yonder," said Dr. Harlington.

"I will go to her, Mr. Harlington; your father needs your care. Stay by him, I entreat you," said Pauline; springing towards the state-room of Mrs. Treak.

"By Jupiter! I have found my life-preserver," exclaimed Mr. Treak, buckling it about his waist, and blowing it up. "Now I am safe."

"Barton, my dear son; one word before I die!" in touching tones came from his mother.

Regardless of the earnest request, the son was searching his trunk for a heavy purse, which, on find-

ing, he thrust into his pocket, and then sprang up the companion-way. The cabin door was fastened from without, and the infuriated man stamped, and raved, and swore in vain. The cloak of hypocrisy had fallen, and revealed him to his fellow-men as he had long appeared to the All-seeing.

"Miss Pauline, if I should be drowned, and you should escape and get home, here is my Bible, with a lock of my hair in it; will you carry it to my father and mother, and tell them what became of Vera?" said the girl, taking from her pocket a well-worn Bible and handing it to Pauline.

"Keep it, my dear, good Vera. I trust we may both be saved. Come with me to the assistance of the lady who is unable to help herself," said Pauline, entering again the state-room of Mrs. Treak.

"In a twinkling," said Vera, who, with that presence of mind which is peculiarly the gift of woman, was gathering such things from Pauline's wardrobe as she thought might be needed in this emergency.

"Let me assist you to rise immediately," said Pauline to Mrs. Treak.

"It is of no use," was the mournful reply.—"My life is near its close."

"While there is life there is hope," said Vera in a cheerful voice, as she came beside the berth, with one of Mrs. Treak's white dresses in her hand. "Put it on, ma'am—never give up the ship—father always says so."

While Pauline assisted Mrs. Treak to put on the dress, Vera gathered some other articles of clothing which lay about, saying, partly to herself, "Honor thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long *in the land*,—yes; on *the land*,—which I believe I shall yet see."

The water was now gaining rapidly in the cabin, and when Mrs. Treak stepped out upon the floor it was knee-deep.

"There is no hope! We shall all perish!" she exclaimed.—"Oh, for one last word with my dear son!"

The cabin door was now thrown open, and a rush of water followed.

"Hulloa!" cried the Captain, "the boats are ready; let every one be as calm and collected as possible."

Not heeding this precaution, Mr. Treak sprang wildly upon deck, his inflated life-preserver about his waist, and, without further orders from the Captain, jumped over the side of the vessel. Instead of reaching the boat, which was held by a line to the sinking vessel, he went beyond it; and in the darkness and confusion, was seen and heard no more.

"Steady, boys!—steady as a clock," said the Captain, as, with perfect self-command, he assisted the sailors in lowering the passengers into the long-boat. When they were all safely there, he ordered four sailors to take to the small boat, already alongside, while he, with the three other sailors, took their places with the passengers.

"Cut her loose!" he ordered, and the order was instantly obeyed.

"Now, pull away!"

The oars (they had saved but two) made but little resistance against the tossing waves; but the sailors plied them with all their might, and soon they were out of the reach of the swell of the sinking vessel.

The Captain kept his eye upon the dark mass,

while it still rolled helpless among the tumbling waters.

He then drew a long breath and whispered, "Gone! Gone, for ever!"

The moon now appeared, pure and beautiful, sailing among dark, ragged clouds, the shattered remnants of the storm, and now and then casting a line of silvery light upon the troubled ocean. This light revealed the occupants of the boat to each other.

There was Mrs. Norton supported by her husband. There was Dr. Harlington, his venerable head uncovered, the white hair streaming to the wind, as he leaned upon the shoulder of his son.

There were Pauline and her faithful Vera, with the unfortunate mother, between them.

"Is that my dear Barton?" demanded she, pointing to one of the sailors.

Pauline could scarcely articulate, "It is not."

"Where is he? My son, my only, my beloved son! where are you?"

Who could have the heart to answer? There was a dead silence.

"Tell me, I entreat you, tell me that he is safe!" cried the agonized mother.

"I would, my dear lady, if I could," said the Captain, the tears upon his bronzed cheeks glittering in the moonlight. "He was in too much haste, and jumped overboard."

There was a pause of some moments; Dr. Harlington then said:

"May God, our heavenly Father, sustain and comfort this bereaved mother."

The heart-stricken woman responded a voiceless "Amen."

CHAPTER XXXIX.

THE LONG BOAT.

"At first it seemed a little speck,

And then it seemed a mist:

It moved and moved, and took at last

A certain shape, I wist."

COLERIDGE.

THE provident Captain, in the brief space allowed him, had caused water and provisions to be thrown into the boat.

Before the day dawned the sailors had rigged a mast and spread a sail. One of their oars had been broken in the strife to escape from the sinking vessel, and the rudder of the boat was injured. Yet the small craft was bounding over the waves cheerily, and the sun, bright and glorious, mirrored himself in the unconscious ocean, which during that night had whelmed thousands in its destructive depths.

"No land yet ; but keep up good hearts, my friends, we are not fifty miles from the coast. Some stray sail will soon heave in sight, if all have not gone with the poor Sally Ann to Davy's locker. Come, you must eat, and keep your courage well screwed up," continued the Captain, distributing sea-biscuit, and water. "I wish I had something better than this tin cup, to hand you, Dr. Harlington, but thirsty folks are not very particular about what they drink out of, as you may know from that song about 'The Old Oaken Bucket, that hung in the Well,' just like my grandmother's."

Mrs. Norton, who had been sea-sick from the first hour that the vessel had moved from the wharf, till the terror and excitement of the previous night, now ate with an appetite which quite astonished her husband, who could not taste a morsel of food.

"That is right," said the Captain, as Pauline and Vera followed Mrs. Norton's example : "Women are strange creatures ; timid as squirrels when there is no danger, but strong and courageous when we men are ready to give up and lie down in despair. There is

that Miss Pauline now, looking as bright as a button, and her tidy little maid, as trig and as trim as if she had not been dowsed in salt-water. That *gal* has real Yankee grit, just like my old woman. They are surprising creatures, these women. Come, Doctor, cheer up."

"If I might be so bold," said Vera, "I would ask the good man to put my shawl over his head, to protect him from the sun."

"Thank you, my kind friend," said Dr. Harlington, accepting the offered shawl and binding it about his head.

"You look like a very respectable Turk," continued the Captain; "but we do not mind fashions at sea. Now I advise you all to keep up conversation."

This well-meant advice was of course an effectual damper. No one uttered a word. The Captain commenced again:

"I never was much of a talker in my life, but being as it is, a part of my duty now, I must keep my tongue wagging. Dr. Harlington, what do you suppose most people go to church for?"

"To worship God, and learn their duty, I trust;" was the reply.

"Suppose that for once, we speak out our minds and tell the whole truth. I will set the example; when I am at home, I go to church entirely to please my old woman, who is a regular go-to-meetiner, God bless her. Now ladies, we will begin with you. Mrs. Norton."

Mrs. Norton hesitated a moment, and then answered frankly: "I go to the most fashionable church in the city, because other fashionable people go there."

"There, now; I call that coming up to the mark. Miss Pauline, give your reasons; do you go because it is your duty? I think you do."

"I fear that I do not. I go because I enjoy the services and the sermon; that is, when we have a good preacher."

"A capital good reason. I have always noticed that the best sailors are the fellows who enjoy their work; who really take genuine comfort even in going to the mast head in a nor'-easter. Mrs. Treak, I suppose I ought to excuse you."

"My motives will not bear a strict scrutiny, they

were so mingled ;—to see and be seen, early in life ; since then, partly to gain good, and—must I confess it—partly to *seem* religious ; God forgive me.”

“He will, He will,” said the Captain kindly. “I shall not pass you by, you nice little craft with the odd name,” he continued, turning to Vera. “You look as if you had trotted miles and miles to meetin’ on a Sabba-day, when the snow was a foot deep.”

“So I have,” said Vera, with the tears starting to her eyes,—“so I have ; behind father and mother, leading my little brother. I went because they did.”

“You could hardly have given a better reason, could she, Doctor?”

“No, indeed ; until a child is old enough to act for herself, the precepts and examples of parents are the true guides,” was the reply.

“I only wish I had followed them more strictly,” said Vera, sobbing. “I once spoke an unkind word to my mother, and now I cannot help thinking of it. If I should never get home to ask her forgiveness, Miss Pauline, you must do it for me.”

“I knew there was some reason why I took such a

fancy to that honest face : books may lie, but faces never do,” said the Captain. “Come, Doctor, with all needful respect, I must pass the question to you.”

“As God’s messenger, I go to church because it is my duty ; but I fear I have often sought there, the applause of men.”

“Enough said. Mr. Norton, it is your turn.”

“In the first place, I must give the same reason that the Captain gave ; I go to wait upon Mrs. Norton. In the second, it is setting a good example ; and in the third place, I have found it a good, quiet place to enjoy my own thoughts.”

“Mr. Edward Harlington.”

“I went to see the ladies and to hear the music, till very recently. Of late I have been, I trust, to learn how to keep God’s laws, and to seek forgiveness for my sins.”

“There now ; I believe you have all told the exact truth, a thing we seldom hear in this world.”

“Very seldom,” replied Dr. Harlington. “If we were to give the true reasons for most of our conduct, in this world of seeming, they would be equally unsat-

isfactory to ourselves, and wrong in the sight of God."

"I often have thought, when walking my quarter-deck, how pleasant it was to be free from all those shackles that lands-people fasten upon their own legs. 'Here I am, walking free and independent,' I said to myself."

"Yes, as independent as a tiger in his cage, with about as much space to walk in," replied Mr. Norton. "It is easy enough, Captain, to be independent where you are monarch of all you survey. Robinson Crusoe was the most independent of men. It requires more moral courage than most of us possess, to run off the track and go upon a bold career of our own."

"And it might be injurious to the best interests of the community, if men did start off in this erratic manner. The good order and stability of governments and society, depend on this tendency to keep upon the track," replied Dr. Harlington.

The conversation was interrupted by the exclamation of the Captain:

"A sail! A sail!"

With agonizing eagerness they watched its approach. It came nearer, nearer; grew larger and larger, until the whole gallant ship under full sail, appeared to be painted on the horizon. Gradually, it seemed to lessen; it did lessen to their wondering despairing eyes, until rescue from that source was entirely beyond possibility.

"Even this is encouraging:—one is the sign of more;" said the Captain. "We will now take our dinner."

The smoked beef and biscuit which he now distributed, were acceptable to all. The water was doled out in small quantities.

Towards night the Captain and sailors were observed in consultation, and many anxious glances were cast towards the east, where, low along the horizon, lay dark masses of fantastic clouds, piled up like ruinous castles. While light remained, their straining eyes sought in every direction for the chance sail, which Hope had promised.

With fearful presentiments they saw the sun sink behind those dark clouds, burnishing their edges with

gold, and then leaving them intensely dark and wild.

Dr. Harlington whispered to Edward his suspicions, with regard to the dangers by which they were surrounded. This was followed by a still longer consultation between the father and son. Dr. Harlington then spoke out:

"Before the light of day has departed, I have a proposition to make which I trust will meet with ready acquiescence. Pauline Randolph, will you consent to become the wife of my son, Edward?"

"I have promised him to become so, two years hence; Providence permitting," replied Pauline, with less embarrassment than might have been expected, considering the nature of the proposition, thus abruptly announced.

"I wish the union to be immediately consummated. You saved his life at the peril of your own, by your physical courage; your higher moral courage saved him from ruin in this world, and misery in the world to come. Be still his better angel. Edward considers it too great a favor to ask, but I implore it as the only

boon I shall probably ever crave from a human being. Say you will not refuse our united petition."

"I will not refuse it," was the reply, in a solemn, decided tone.

"Then, Edward, change places for a few moments with Mr. Norton, and place yourself beside Pauline. I will then unite these two persons in the holy bonds of matrimony."

"Sir!" exclaimed Mr. Norton, "I am utterly astonished; Miss Randolph is under my charge. I shall not consent to this, especially after"—here his voice fell to a low tone, which only reached the ear of Dr. Harlington.

"Deep, sincere repentance, and entire reformation have blotted out the offence," replied the father aloud.

"No; never! the dark stigma remains;" vehemently replied Mr. Norton.

"Strange that man, sinful man, should be less merciful than God! Crime was *not* committed. Who among us has not had equal wickedness in his heart, known only to the Divine Being, and been kept from it through His good Providence? Pauline knows that,

at this awful hour, on the very brink of eternity, I would not urge her to take upon herself vows which she might afterwards repent. I do solemnly believe that the good work which she has been the blessed means of beginning, she ought to carry on ; and that, hand in hand, Pauline and Edward would walk through this world to 'the better land.'"

"My dear!" exclaimed Mrs. Norton, "I cannot understand why you object to the union of two persons who are devotedly attached to each other."

"Because my friend, Ralph Willison, entrusted Pauline Randolph to my care ; and I am bound in honor to render her back, as I received her from him."

"He is not my guardian ; I have no guardian but God," said Pauline.

"Mr. Norton is right," replied Edward ; "I admire his faithfulness to the trust reposed in him. I cannot take advantage of this sad, solemn hour, to consummate the dearest wish of my heart. Never will I claim Miss Randolph as my wife, till I have the full consent of the gentleman whom you have named."

"That is right noble, my good fellow," said Mr.

Norton ; "I hope the time will come when you may honorably claim her from him," cordially grasping the hand of Edward across the boat.

"He deserves her now!" exclaimed the Captain. "A good son will make a good husband all the world over, and I never saw a better son. Doctor, why do you not go on with the ceremony? This boat, which has lain so quiet on the lazy waves for so many hours, will not be a fit place long for such an occasion."

"I have told you that I forbid the bans," said Mr. Norton. "The ceremony shall not go on. I am as much bound to restore Miss Randolph to Mr. Willison, as you ever were to restore the ship you sailed to its rightful owners."

"The dickens!—Circumstances alter cases;" exclaimed the Captain. "Could I grapple with old Neptune, and snatch the Sally Ann out of his grasp, to restore her to the rightful owners? No, no ; her time had come. She was named after my wife, and I have sailed her for *nigh* twenty years.—Can I now carry her back to the owners safe and sound?" The Captain brushed the tears from his eyes with his rough hand.

"That is a very different case, my good friend," said Mr. Norton.

"Well, here is a case that does not belong to a lawyer nor to a professed gentleman to decide. I take it to be a plain matter of common sense, with which law, and what you call honor, have nothing to do. Here is a man of full age wishes to marry the girl he loves; she consents; here is the father, who gives his consent, and is ready to tie the knot. Doctor, proceed to business."

"There are occasions which compel us to act promptly. Death is staring us in the face; the mere formality which Mr. Norton urges looks very small; yet, since he insists upon it, I yield. But, my dear Edward, although you have no legal right to claim Pauline as your wife, such she is, in the sight of Heaven; and should we drive ashore, and our lives be in danger, save her if possible. I am an old man; I have not been all to you that a father might have been,—God forgive me. Promise me that you will save your wife—I will trust to the aid that God sends me."

"No indeed, Edward; make no such rash promise!"

exclaimed Pauline. "Do not demand it, Dr. Harlington! Remember how precious your life is to others."

"There is not a sailor here that would see you perish, my noble girl. Would you, my lads? Hurrah for Miss Randolph," cried the Captain.

"Hurrah! Hurrah for Miss Randolph!" echoed the sailors, swinging their tarpaulins.

"I must attend to the poor lady myself; I will save her if possible," said the Captain.

"Mrs. Treak, are you faint?" tenderly inquired Vera, upon whom she was leaning. "Her head hangs heavily;—her hands drop, and I feel a cold perspiration upon her forehead;" continued Vera, in accents of pity and alarm.

"My son! my poor son!" murmured the dying woman.

Dr. Harlington endeavored, in vain, to offer a word of consolation.

"He was a dear, bright child, and loved his mother then."

Another pause followed.

"Did they say he was drowned? I am alone—"

alone!—Do not say he was unkind.—I forgive him.”

Dr. Harlington lifted the lifeless hand; the pulse had ceased to beat.

Life flickered,—one brief moment,—and then that mysterious principle had left the frail tenement. The spirit which it bound to the clay was released from the thralldom of time and sense.

CHAPTER XL.

BURIAL AT SEA.

“By Silence, Death's peculiar attribute—
By Night, and all of awful Night presents.” YOUNG.

“The promise of the morrow
Is glorious on that eve;
Dear as the holy sorrow
When good men cease to live.” KEBLE.

OVER that little boat, where lay the dead body, night spread her black pall, glittering with stars. Phosphoric light flashed as funereal torches along the dark waters.

Sailors are fearfully superstitious in the presence of the dead. The threatening storm, which had for hours been gathering, increased their awe and terror; they entreated the Captain to have the corpse committed to its resting-place.

"Can we not carry the poor lady's remains home to her friends?" whispered Pauline to the Captain.

"No, my dear child, it is impossible; we shall have more than we can do to save the living." Then, turning to Dr. Harlington, he said, "We are ready for the funeral service."

The deep voice of the clergyman then broke upon the silence of the solemn night, repeating parts of the Service for the Dead.

He paused:—Mr. Norton and Edward Harlington lifted the slender form to the side of the boat.

Again was heard that thrilling voice:—"We therefore commit her body to the deep, looking for the resurrection of the Body, when the Sea shall give up its dead, and the life of the world to come, through our Lord Jesus Christ; who, at His coming, shall change our vile body, that it may be like His glorious Body, according to His mighty working, whereby He is able to subdue all things to himself."

The "sullen plunge" was heard, and the dark waters closed over the frail body.

After the awful ceremony was over, there was a breathless pause for some moments.

It was broken by the Captain. "There is the coast looming up ahead. The storm is coming on. We cannot be more than five or six miles distant from land, and the current is carrying us towards it rapidly. In a few hours, at most, we sink or swim, live or die."

"Then let us commend ourselves to the protection of our Heavenly Father, and calmly await the event," said Dr. Harlington. "Once more, I appeal to you, Mr. Norton. The strength and excellence of Pauline Randolph's character, and the extraordinary circumstances which have brought her into a peculiar relation with my son, render me exceedingly anxious, that, if their lives are spared, she should be his companion and earthly guide. God has given her heavenly wisdom and a large heart, lifted in a measure above the temptations of the world. I should die with more contentment could I be allowed to ratify this union by the holy rites of our Church."

"I can no longer urge any impediments to this union," replied Mr. Norton.

Not a solitary star now gleamed among the clouds. Again sounded over the tossing billows in the fearful darkness, the voice of the appointed minister of God :

"Dearly Beloved, we are gathered together here, *in the sight of God*, and in the face of this company, to join together this man and woman in holy matrimony:"—A tremendous gust interrupted the ceremony.

The tempest which had been gathering, now broke fearfully upon them. Lightning, accompanied by deafening thunder, flashed into the rising waves. The boat was tossed to and fro and carried rapidly towards the coast.

"Keep up good courage !" loudly spoke out the Captain. "We may go ashore on a beach ; if so, we can be saved. Let every one obey orders. I shall take charge of Pauline ; Mr. Norton of his wife ; Edward Harlington of his father ; Ben Doggett is a strong swimmer, he may take charge of Vera. As soon as the boat strikes, take to the water and make for a firm standing place."

The rain now poured down like a second deluge, and

the lightning blazed over the mad ocean as though the final conflagration had come.

For a space of time, the length of which none could tell, not a word was spoken ; every heart was lifted up in prayer. Then was heard the voice of Dr. Harlington, saying, "What God hath joined together let not man put asunder."

"We are near the shore ;—mind what you are all about ;" cried the Captain, grasping Pauline around the waist.

The words had scarcely escaped his lips, when crash went the boat upon a sunken rock, and all were plunged into the dashing waves.

Edward, supporting his father, was the first to reach a place of safety on the shore. Just as he had done so, he heard a piercing cry of "Help ! Help !" from the Captain.

A flash of lightning revealed a dark form not far distant from him. Harlington plunged in, grasped the floating garment, and dragged the wearer on shore. It was his bride, motionless and apparently lifeless.

The Captain was soon by his side ; seizing an arm

of Pauline he exclaimed, "On, on! the waves are coming in furiously."

As they bore the lifeless burden onward, Edward cried, "Father! father! where are you?"

No answer came.

"He is safe,—I saw him;" said the Captain. "Tom Mason caught hold of my leg and dragged me under, when I cried for help just now. I was near losing this dear girl."

"Father, father!" again cried Edward, in a piercing voice, as he laid Pauline in a safe place, beyond the reach of the waves.

The good man had lost his footing; a retreating wave had engulfed him in its remorseless bosom: the next sent him again far upon the shore.

Mr. Norton, with the aid of one of the sailors, after severe buffetings had reached a place of safety.

Ben Doggett brought the faithful Vera to the side of her mistress.

The only persons missing were Tom Mason, the sailor, and Dr. Harlington.

CHAPTER XLI.

GOODNESS NEVER DIES.

"So thou, with sails how swift, hast reached the shore,
Where tempests never beat, nor billows roar." COWPER.

WHEN Pauline opened her eyes, she was in the deserted hut of a fisherman, lying upon the bare ground; Mr. Harlington and Vera were bending over her, warming her cold hands in their own. The storm had passed; the dawning day came through the open door and fell upon the lifeless corpse of Dr. Harlington, which the Captain had found upon the shore and brought into the hut. In vain had they used all the means that ingenuity and love could devise for his restoration.

"Pauline," gently whispered her betrothed lover.

She cast one glance more at the breathless corpse, and closed her eyes, to shut out the painful sight.

"My own, my beloved Pauline, speak to me!" he continued, in agonizing fear, as he gazed upon her pale countenance and livid lips.

"She is dying! she is dying!" exclaimed Vera.

A slight pressure of the hand, and a feeble lifting of the heavy eyelids, were the only manifestations Pauline could give that death had not claimed another victim.

The Captain had gone farther on shore with Mr. Norton and his wife; the two sailors were dispatched to seek assistance.

Again Pauline opened her eyes, and fixing them upon the marble countenance near her, beautiful in its calm repose, she murmured, "My father."

"She breathes! she speaks!" exclaimed the delighted Vera; while Edward raised the hand which he held to his lips. A faint flush of color passed over the face of Pauline, and again she murmured, "Is it my husband?"

"It is!" was the reply.

"Safe! safe! The little boat rode out the gale last night, and has just put in below;" exclaimed Ben

Doggett, putting his head into the hut and immediately withdrawing it.

About an hour from the time of their departure, the Captain and Mr. Norton arrived with two large wagons. In one was placed the body of Dr. Harlington, attended by the Captain, and in the other, Pauline, Vera, and Edward.

At a small village about two miles distant, they found a hospitable farmer, who willingly aided them, and now received them into his house. That same day as the sun went down, the body of the departed clergyman was placed in a vault beneath the village church; to be removed at a future day, to rest among his ancestors in the city church-yard.

* * * *

"The good man never dies." He lives on earth, and is the minister of good to thousands, after the tenement in which awhile he dwelt has mingled with the common dust. He lives in Memory's hallowed shrine, which Love has wreathed with amaranthine flowers, and Gratitude bends low before it.

He lives, within those halls where mild Benevolence

beneath her ample roof, gathers in the deaf, the insane, the blind, the poor.

He lives, in cottage lone, where he has placed "the big ha' Bible," to cheer the aged widow.

He lives and breathes and acts in all who caught from him the electric spark of Christian Love, and all who send it onward though the golden chain which binds this earth to Heaven.

CHAPTER XLII.

THE RETURN.

"By your truth she shall be true—

Ever true, as wives of yore;

And her *yes* once said to you,

SHALL be *yes* for evermore." E. B. BROWNING.

"It is very strange that we have not yet heard from Pauline," remarked Mrs. Mayley. "I look over the marine list every day, hoping to find the arrival of the Sally Ann at Matanzas, reported."

Mrs. Willison raised her eyes from the book she was reading and said, "How selfish I am! I have not thought of her for days and days."

Just at the moment she was speaking, the very person spoken of,—as if to add to the number of coincidences which we call *extraordinary*, and yet, which

happen every day,—the very person was handed by Mr. Norton from a carriage, and running up the steps, gave the bell a quick, nervous pull.

Mrs. Mayley was startled, and what a more superstitious person would have called a presentiment, flitted across her mind.

In a moment more, Pauline had thrown her arms around Mrs. Mayley's neck and was weeping violently.

"Safe and sound I have brought her home through perils by sea and by land," exclaimed Mr. Norton, as he held open the parlor-door. "Good night; my wife is waiting in the carriage."

Pauline was dressed in deep mourning. Mrs. Mayley durst not ask a question.

"You look fatigued, my dear; spare yourself all explanation till to-morrow."

Another ring at the door.

"That must be Vera; she preferred walking from the wharf where we landed," said Pauline.

And so it proved.

"My own good Vera!" exclaimed Mrs. Willison, who had been till this moment dumb with surprise,—

kissing the girl, first on one cheek and then on the other; "You blessed soul, where did you come from?"

"Out of the great ocean," replied Vera, with a smile upon her honest face.

"Shipwrecked?" exclaimed Mrs. Willison.

"We will ask no more questions to-night," said Mrs. Mayley, taking a tall candle from the table, and leading the way to a bedroom adjoining her own.

"Good night, Emily; you shall know all to-morrow;" said Pauline, affectionately embracing Mrs. Willison, as she left the parlor.

The next day the promised explanation took place between Pauline and Mrs. Mayley. After relating all the painful circumstances of the shipwreck, and the burial of Dr. Harlington, she continued:

"Vera had saved my purse; all our clothing was gone, however, and when new was to be purchased, I preferred the mourning which you see, as a tribute to the excellent father whom we have lost."

"Pauline, you surprise me. Do you consider yourself the wife of Edward Harlington?"

"I do; but Mr. Norton denies that it was a legal

marriage, and insists that he returns me as Pauline Randolph."

"And what does Mr. Harlington say to this?"

"He had before promised not to claim me for a wife for two years to come. Since the death of his father, I have not seen him a moment alone. Mr. Norton had a long conversation with him the evening after the good man was interred, and since, though he has been exceedingly anxious to promote my comfort, he has been very distant and reserved. We left him last night at the house of his widowed mother, to whom it was his painful duty to announce the sad tidings."

There was a pause of some moments; Pauline then resumed the conversation. "I leave it with you, Mrs. Mayley, to relate to Mrs. Willison all that has passed."

"No, Pauline; I shall not relate *all*; her mind has just become quieted, and there is one name that I shall never mention to her."

Pauline colored deeply. "There is no more worthy name than the one to which you refer. My humble prayer is that I may be worthy to bear it."

In a few hours after, Mr. Norton was announced. He came with *the pink pamphlet* in his pocket. After the inquiries with regard to health, which politeness dictated, he said, "Miss Randolph, in the absence of my friend, Mr. Willison, and in consideration of the intimacy we have providentially formed, I take the liberty to assume the character of an adviser. Let the events which have transpired on board *the boat*, remain a profound secret. You are not bound by the partial ceremony, to which you attach so much consequence, and fortunate it is for you that you are not. You will agree with me when you have read this pamphlet. I am in haste, and must bid you good morning."

Pauline remained seated for some moments, looking mechanically at "*La Jolie Veuvelette*." She then went to her own room, and there remained for two hours alone; at the end of that time she dispatched the following note to Mr. Norton.

"Sir, *he* never wrote that vile pamphlet; *never*. I would stake my life upon it. Public censure cannot alter opinions formed from private observation. In

your desire for my good, for which I thank you, let me beseech you, not to do injustice to another.

"Truly yours,

"PAULINE HARLINGTON."

After the reception of this note, Mr. Norton wisely decided that the best course for him to pursue was to keep quiet, until he heard from Mr. Willison. Meantime he consulted high authority with regard to the legality of the marriage, and his scruples vanished into thin air.

A week of painful suspense elapsed, during which time Pauline remained mostly in the seclusion of her own apartment. Every day a letter was brought in from her absent husband, and every day it was answered. Meantime, Mr. Harlington had also written to Mr. Willison, and received the following reply.

"To Mr. Edward Harlington.

"Dear Sir,—Your noble, manly and Christian acknowledgment, has called forth more than forgiveness ;—henceforth we are friends.

'Let the dead past bury its dead.'

"Pauline is decidedly your wife.—You held her by the hand and pledged yourself to her while the *first* and *last* part of the sacred ceremony were performed. The solemn injunction uttered by your deceased father, 'Those whom God hath joined together let not man put asunder,' received by you with a hearty 'Amen,' puts it beyond my power, even had such been my wish, and beyond the power of every other human being, to dissolve this connection.

"Yet, under the circumstances, I respect the delicacy which leads you to delay claiming your wife till two years have passed away. The remembrance of wrong actions, which now haunts your mind, will then be partially dispelled. Habits of correct thinking and acting will have been fixed. The assurance which Pauline now has in your excellence will become 'doubly sure.'

"I say nothing of the influence this delay will have on the public mind, for you do not appeal to that tribunal.

"Thanks be to God, that He, in mercy, overruled events so that our hearts alone are the tribunal before

which this matter must come; excepting, always, that Almighty unerring tribunal, where we may obtain forgiveness through our Blessed Saviour, Jesus Christ.

"Respectfully and truly yours,

"RALPH WILLISON."

CHAPTER XLIII.

V O W S R E N E W E D .

"MAN must become a little tailor-bird, which not amid the crashing boughs of the storm-tost, roaring, immeasurable tree of Life, but on one of its leaves, sews itself a nest together, and there lies snug."

JEAN PAUL.

"Who would have thought my shrivelled heart,
Could have recovered greenness. It was gone,
Quite under ground, as flowers depart
To see their mother-root, when they have flown."

HERBERT.

EDWARD HARLINGTON had now to be the staff and stay of his widowed mother. A kind and influential friend of his father offered him a partnership in a large mercantile house, one branch of which was in Liverpool.

In less than two months after his melancholy return

home, he sailed for England. There, his irreproachable conduct, firm undeviating rectitude, and his industrious application to business, won the confidence of all who knew him, and laid the foundation of the character which he afterwards sustained, of the merchant, "*sans peur et sans reproche*."

During his absence abroad, Pauline remained with his mother as a daughter; tenderly ministering to her, and shedding the light of love and consolation over the darkened abode of sorrow. It was understood that Pauline was affianced to the son, and many remarks were made by Miss Posen and her coterie, purporting that it was not *exactly proper*, under the circumstances, that Miss Randolph should reside with her *future* mother-in-law.

But in the retirement which they sought, "folks" soon forgot them; and while the fashionable world swept rustling and flaunting by, they were living as unsullied by its follies and sins, as the snow on the mountain-top by the dust of the distant highway.

Two years employed in the performance of duty

and the improvement of character, glided away; at the end of that period, Edward Harlington returned to his native city.

He led his bride to the altar, and there they renewed the solemn vows of love and obedience, by which they had been indissolubly joined in that hour of peril upon the tossing waves.

* * * * *

The course of discipline through which Mrs. Willison passed, during the two years of her residence with Mrs. Mayley, was severe. Many, who would once have been proud to claim her acquaintance, passed her with a look of contempt, or a supercilious nod.

But she had the blessed consolation of knowing that she was now more worthy of respect, than when that selfish world eagerly sought her smile:—

"Happy, if full of days—but happier far,
If, ere we yet discern life's evening star,
Sick of the service of a world, that feeds
Its patient drudges with dry chaff and weeds,
We can escape from Custom's idiot sway,
To serve the sovereign we were born to obey."

Improvement in character is astonishingly rapid, when right motives become the basis of conduct. Thus it was with Mrs. Willison. For years her character had had no internal principle of growth. She was not "a noble endogenous plant" which grows like the palm, from within, outward ; but a hard, rigid incrustation had been forming from without, which was now to be broken through and cast off.

Firmly fixed religious principles, enabled her to accomplish this task. The grace of God had implanted them in her heart, and Mrs. Mayley, by precept and example, aided their development and growth. She taught Emily during her novitiate, to act from these principles. "Do not follow *me* as a guide," said that judicious friend. "Principles are surer, safer guides than human example. There is but one perfect example given for our imitation, and HE was governed by Divine Law."

Mrs. Mayley asked no reward in this world for her self-denying labors of love ; that same Christian love sweetened all her labors, and was "its own exceeding great reward."

Her potent influence, moreover, called forth taste for

literature and art, in the mind where it had lain as dormant as seeds in an Egyptian pyramid, till they are brought to the light of the sun and the genial moisture of the atmosphere.

That some nameless charm was wanting in her moral and intellectual nature, had been painfully evident in the beautiful but inexpressive countenance of Mrs. Willison ; now, a holy light shone from within. Wonderful, mysterious, yet true exponent of character !

The question, "How shall I bring about a reconciliation between this divided pair ?" had long agitated the mind of Mrs. Mayley. The benevolent purpose to which she had devoted herself for two years, was now accomplished ; through the blessing of God on her persevering efforts, Emily was fitted for a suitable companion for Ralph Willison.

She had, from time to time, communicated to him the progress Emily was making. His replies were cold and formal ; he persisted in his resolution never to see her again.

Mrs. Mayley had frankly told Emily of this resolution, but had encouraged her to hope that she might

yet win back the love of her husband. This consummation, held up before the mind of Emily, as the greatest earthly reward, had the effect which Mrs. Mayley anticipated.

The absent husband seemed to the awakened perception of Emily to possess all that was noble and excellent in human character, and this sentiment of love, blended with profound respect, gave a softness and gentleness to her manners and a charm to her countenance which it had never before possessed.

Providence oftentimes accomplishes its designs without our apparent aid.

After two years' absence from the city, Willison was compelled to visit it on important law business.

As he walked through a familiar street, memory summoned the past vividly before him, and conscience accused him of coldness and harshness towards one whom he had vowed to love, honor and cherish.

In this mood he pursued his way. Turning from the streets where Luxury and Comfort reign, he sought a narrow lane, there to find an old woman whose deposition he wished to take for a client. He stood

last before a miserable old house, ready to tumble down before the first gale of wind.

The door was sunken below the pavement, and had neither bell nor knocker. It was, however, half open, and Willison, after rapping a while with his fist without receiving any attention, entered.

The house seemed utterly deserted, the lower apartments being filled with old barrels, and a quantity of other useless lumber. The tottering staircase, covered with dust, showed the marks of recent footsteps.

"Poor old creature! They told me she lived alone," thought he, as he ascended the stairs.

The second floor, like the first, seemed only used for storage. He caught the sound of a voice from above, and pursued his way up the second staircase.

The voice he had heard below still continued—a low, sweet voice.

Apparently no warning of his approach had reached the occupants of the room, for he stood before the open door unnoticed.

Upon the bed lay an aged, emaciated woman. Her

eyes were closed as she listened with earnest attention while the reader continued:—

“Wherefore, I say unto thee, her sins, which are many, are forgiven;”—

The voice grew tremulous, but continued: “For she loved much; but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little. And He said unto her, thy sins are forgiven.”

The old woman opened her eyes, and fixing them upon the reader exclaimed, “Blessed words of consolation. Can I apply them to myself?”

“If you believe in that same Almighty Saviour with all your heart,” replied the sweet voice of the lady who sat beside her, “you may hope for forgiveness. He says to you, as He said to the woman who washed his feet with tears, ‘Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace.’”

“Peace! would that I could find peace! You, my dear lady, know nothing of the hauntings of conscience. You, good and kind as you are, cannot understand the remorse of a sinner like the one before you. But do not cry, my dear lady.”

The sobs of the lady were audible.

“I am sorry to distress you, madam;—you who have been my only consolation for weeks and months, excepting your saintlike friend. Ladies, kept as you have been, from crime, know not what it is to sorrow for sin.”

“We are all sinners, Mrs. Prady, and it is only the mercy of God that has kept me from crime. In every human being there is deep sinfulness; dark clouds of sorrow frequently pass over the hearts where sunshine seems to rest. God alone knows our temptations, and He alone knows the depth and sincerity of our repentance.”

“Oh! pray with me once more, for I feel that my end is rapidly approaching.”

The lady took off her bonnet and shawl, knelt beside the bed, and prayed:

“O most merciful God, who according to the multitude of thy mercies, dost so put away the sins of those who truly repent, that thou rememberest them no more, open thine eye of mercy upon this thy servant, who most earnestly desireth pardon and forgiveness. Strengthen her with thy blessed Spirit; and when thou

art pleased to take her hence, take her unto thy favor, through the merits of thy most dearly beloved Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. O Saviour of the world, who by thy cross and precious blood hast redeemed us, save us and help us, we humbly beseech thee, O Lord."

Willison leaned his head against the door-post and wept; gladly would he have dropped upon his knees beside the speaker. His proud heart was melted—subdued. The lady rose, and as she did so, she saw the outstretched hand of the dying woman pointing with her skinny finger to the door. She turned her eyes in that direction as Willison entered the room.

"Pardon this intrusion," said he. "Is this Mrs. Prady?"

"It is," somewhat sternly replied the woman.

"I come to take your deposition, Mrs. Prady: your testimony is of great importance to a client of mine, in a lawsuit. I knocked at the lower door, and no one bade me enter; you must excuse me for finding my way to you in this unceremonious manner."

"You have no time to lose," said Mrs. Prady, with

a faltering voice.—"Dear lady, do not leave me;" she continued, observing that the lady was making preparations for departure.—"Please give me some of my medicine, and then I will attend to the gentleman."

With a trembling hand the medicine was poured from the vial, and Emily gently raised the pillows for the poor woman, then tenderly supported the drooping head upon her bosom. Strange contrast, between the ghastly palor of death and the fresh glow of health and life! Excitement had added a richer flush to the healthful cheek, and unwonted brilliancy to the eyes of the agitated Emily; yet there was a softness and refinement, a delicacy and tenderness in her countenance and demeanor, surprising and delightful to the unexpected beholder. So intent was she in rendering assistance to the poor sufferer, and so earnest in her sympathy, that the glance of admiration was not observed, nor the awakened emotion suspected.

"I am ready; proceed sir, for my time is short," said the dying woman.

As briefly as possible Willison explained the matter, and then took the deposition. It was soon completed.

"I am glad to have a witness at hand. Madam,

have the kindness to put your name to this paper," said Willison, offering the pen to Emily.

She carefully withdrew her supporting arm from the sufferer; then, trembling with agitation, wrote "Emily"—then hesitated, stopped, and threw down the pen.

"Emily Willison," whispered he, kindly.

She did not resume the pen. He continued:

"You are my own,—my wedded wife; united before God and man. Write the name, I implore you."

Emily seized the pen and completed the signature, while scalding tears gushed from her eyes and fell upon the paper.

The modest dignity of the beautiful woman before him, her sweet, subdued voice, her kindliness and graciousness to the miserable sufferer, her pious contrition and simple sincerity, had touched the heart of Willison, and accomplished what the letters of Mrs. Mayley in her behalf, had entirely failed to effect.

She now rose to depart, saying, "I will send a better nurse to you, Mrs. Prady, than I am."

"Dear child! there is no better nurse than you. I may never see you again on earth," she continued,

holding out her emaciated hand. "May God reward you for what you have done for the miserable wretch all others had forsaken."

Emily's shawl was carefully wrapt about her by one who, not an hour before, had supposed himself for the remainder of life indifferent to all of womankind.

"God bless you, Mrs. Prady," said Willison. "He has made you the instrument of great good to me." So saying, he took her hand and left in it some gold pieces.

"For my burial," she said calmly.—"Farewell."

"Stay, Emily; allow me to accompany you," exclaimed Willison, following her rapid footsteps down the tottering staircase.

"Mr. Willison, this accidental meeting should not induce you to make any sacrifices which you will afterwards regret."

"Call it providential, Emily: will you take my arm?"

"No, sir; I am much obliged to you."

Willison walked silently by her side, looking sadly and anxiously at Emily.

There was not a particle of coquetry in her manner; it was unaffected and delicate. After a thoughtful pause of many minutes, Willison said,—

"Emily, I have a confession to make to you ; will you not listen to me ?"

"Not here, sir."

"You torture me ; how coldly you answer me ! I acknowledge this is not the time and place ; but when and where can I see you ?"

"At Mrs. Mayley's."

"But when ? I am impatient for a full explanation."

They had now arrived at Mrs. Mayley's door. Emily ascended the steps ; Willison followed.

"You cannot refuse to listen to me. Will you forgive my long neglect ?"

There were tears in those beautiful eyes, but a smile shone through them,—a bow of promise,—and Willison joyfully hailed the auspicious omen.

* * * * *

The powerful influence and earnest endeavors of Mrs. Mayley, aided by the blessing of God, had wrought a wonderful change in the character of Emily Willison. To this noble purpose the self-sacrificing woman had devoted herself with untiring zeal. With a gentle hand she had eradicated the weeds which long had choked the growth of better things ; flowers

she had planted and nurtured. Affections, long dormant, she had called forth and warmed into life. Intellectual gifts, which the owner had never discovered, were brought to light. More than all, right principles, derived from the only true source, the Bible, were constantly placed before the young wife, until she learned habitually to act from them, even when they were opposed to the world's opinion.

Like the mother-bird, Mrs. Mayley had nurtured the forsaken Emily with her heart's best blood, to render her worthy of the love of Ralph Willison.

Gratitude is a feeble word to express the sentiment Willison felt for his generous benefactress. No mean jealousy now lurked in Emily's heart ; she placed Mrs. Mayley far above the rest of her sex, and bowed before her superior excellence, as at a consecrated shrine.

In the course of one short month Willison was established with Emily in his home at the West. He now recognized the duty that devolved upon him to make that home happy. He assiduously cultivated all that was "lovely and of good report" in his wife, by letting the light of Christian example shine upon her daily path. The sympathy, for which he had formerly

yearned, now gushed spontaneously from her loving heart. His approbation was now dearer to her than the admiration of the whole world; his praises sweet as the song of a seraph.

In his devotion to new domestic duties Willison did not retire altogether from public life. His aspirations for distinction were chastened by religion, and thus Ambition became true Patriotism.

He sought his purest earthly enjoyment in the bosom of his own family; and in his *second love* found as fair a translation of his "ideal hopes and purposes," as fruition in this life ever affords.

For a far more beautiful and perfect translation of Hope, Mrs. Mayley cheerfully waited for that world where there is "neither marrying nor giving in marriage;" realizing that, even in this life, to *be good and do good* is "its own exceeding great reward."

FINIS.