

H. B. Burdick

GLENELVAN;

OR,

THE MORNING DRAWETH NIGH.

BY

ANNIE MARIA MINSTER.

Stand still, my soul, in the silent dark
I would question thee,
Alone in the shadow drear and stark
With God and me!

What, my soul, was thy errand here?
Was it mirth or ease,
Or heaping up dust from year to year?
"Nay, none of these!"

Speak, soul, aright in His holy sight
Whose eye looks still
And steadily on thee through the night:
"To do His will!"

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Amer. Stud.

to
SAMUEL LONGFELLOW,
THE FRIEND OF GENIUS,
The Inspired Thinker,
THE SAINT IN THE MAN,
This Work is most Affectionately
Dedicated.

GLENELVAN.

'Oh! at this hour when half the sky
Is glorious with its evening light,
And fair broad fields of summer lie
Hung o'er with greenness in my sight;

While through these elm boughs wet with rain
The sunset's golden walls are seen—
With clover bloom and yellow grain,
And wood-draped hill, and stream between;

I long to know if scenes like this
Are hidden from an angel's eyes;
If earth's familiar loveliness
Haunts not thy heaven's serener skies."

Among those upward-reaching hills that form the eastern bank of the noble Hudson, on a southern slope, lies Glenelvan. Set like a picture in this grand frame-work of towering cliff and primeval forest, it has, in the foreground, a massive heap of buildings of dark, gray stone, which, with all their uniqueness, have a genuine home-look about them.

There, blending their shadows and softening the sun-rays, stand trees of primeval growth. The sturdy oak, the shadowy evergreen, the magnolia, with bright glossy leaves and pale-lipped flowers, the maple with silvery foliage, and the regal pine, standing apart in solemn grandeur listening to the balmiest breezes, holding in their great arms all the

gentlest murmurs, in the peaceful security of household gods ; as if conscious that no woodman's axe would ever invade their charmed circle.

At the northern gable were two majestic firs—there were many more half a century ago—and farther onward, shading an almost hidden pathway to the cliffs, alone, in gloomy silence, like a sentinel at an outpost, stands the patriarch of his tribe, with many a dark bough scathed by the lightning's breath—seared and broken—but the twain are full of life and vigor. On the east, a cluster of oaks catch the sun's first gleam ; on the west, tall, grand, graceful, swaying in the storms of winter, or dancing in the summer winds, are the elms, now in silvery lightness pictured against the sunset sky. On the south are the gardens, and below these the shrubbery of boxwood, with its early-coming, pale, waxen flowers ; the ironwood tree glowing in its bright, pink buds and blossoms ; the white-thorn, spice-wood, and many other varieties of blossoming shrub found along the borders of the American forests.

From below the shrubbery, and winding along beneath the elms, is the carriage-way, leading up to the great arched entrance of the Glenelvanhausen, the ancestral home of the Minsters, whose record showed them to have been a family of rank before their emigration from "Fatherland."

Hermann Emil Minster, the founder and builder of Glenelvanhausen, having, early in life, determined to create for himself a "local habitation and a name," in his peregrinations penetrated into the depths of these wilds—found, and was charmed with this glen. Reclining upon the mossy rocks which shut it in, and looking with dreamy eyes upon the glint of sunshine and rosy light breaking through the interstices of the mingled foliage, throwing the quivering, tremulous shadows upon the tender grass ; or, as the glossy leaves were lifted by the lightest breath of the summer wind, came down the swiftly-gliding rays, flashing, dancing, trembling, amid the velvet fringe of moss-grown rocks ; and

little brown birds flitted on downy wing, or sang among the leafy bushes. This day-dreamer murmured to himself, that these little, wandering harmonies must be the elves, enjoying their noonday gambols in their own wild glen, and was mightily pleased with this conceit.

Following out his own unsuspected poetic fancy, when his massive house (or hausen) was built, with its many gables, its detached kitchens and offices for his retainers and domestics, he christened it Glenelvanhausen. But from this great, unwieldy name of the family mansion has long since been dropt all the superfluous, as also the plural sense, and is now simply, Glenelvan. And this, like many another ancient house, has its story—wild, sad, interwoven with golden threads of sweet and fanciful memories, and all in the rich, warm coloring of real life.

However pleasant it might be to revel in the myths and silvery memories of the olden time, a present purpose has to do with the events, deeds, and bright dreams of the later occupants of this storied house.

The soft fleecy clouds of evening were tinged with the sun's last rays, light summer breezes played in the luxuriant foliage or swept down as if to steal a kiss from the bright flowers blossoming all along the garden paths.

Out from the wide-spreading shadows of those giant oaks came two young girls hand in hand, and light almost as the playful zephyrs glided along through an opening in the hawthorn hedge into the flower garden. Tripping along the gravel walks, peeping in among the fragrant shades of the shrubbery where the wee birdies had built their nests, pulling a flower or stooping to caress an opening bud, flitting airily as a thought, at times laughing merrily, in everything the entire impersonation of innocent childhood, went the gay little maidens.

Twilight was deepening in all those garden bowers, the bright-winged butterfly had ceased his airy gambols, and the hum of the bee had long since sank into silence.

"Come away, Minnie—let us hide here under the lilacs, and wait until we see a little elfe come out," said the slightest of the maidens to her companion. And they quickly withdrew into the shadow of a white lilac. They had not long to wait, for a large—a very giant of a moth or miller came flashing from flower to flower, creeping into the cup of one, then out and whirring into another, and ever keeping up that monotonous, droning sound.

"There is one—there is a little *elfe*"—let us run and catch it. Come, Minnie."

"No, no, wait—there is another! Oh what pretty wings!"

"Are these little elvs Monica tells us about?"

"I think they must be, for I have never seen any others—and these like hers, only come out in the twilight."

"Oh—pray see that pretty one going down into that trumpet flower!"

"And that large one just humming around those lovely evening primroses!"

Presto—and each little maiden pounced upon a little "elfe." This could only be done when the unsuspecting creatures were "deep in their cups," or in other words, far down in the recesses of some trumpet-shaped flower—but these were abundant.

"Oh, Minnie, hear mine beg to get out, and cry as if he thought I would hurt him."

"And see, Albertine, mine is as large as a humming bird. There is his tongue that he sips honey with—long as my two fingers—see—how he coils it up under his chin! There, go, little grey-coat, I've torn the flower to pieces to get a peep at you. Now, Albertine, I do not believe they are elvs at all—they are not drest in green but in modest gray—so I mean to call them little 'quakers.'"

"But my mother does not like me to use that name—so I must call them 'friends,' if you please!"

"Which we, like the 'world's people' generally—pounce upon with every good occasion."

"But we never hurt them?"

"Oh, no, we only snatch them up in our relentless little paws—out of mere curiosity."

A tall, graceful figure now appeared at the window that looked into the gardens. It was a young lady in the full rich bloom of youth, with large blue eyes, hair of soft brown and very abundant—with the brightest bloom mantling her cheeks, and lips like ripe pomegranites. She stood in a mute and easy attitude, looking down upon the young girls, and smiled at their eager play. A moment passed—and then with a slight gesture of her beautiful hand beckoned them in.

"My sister Mildred is calling us, Albertine," said the taller one, and they at once went tripping up the gravel walk and in at the side door opening upon the parterre.

In a large old fashioned drawing-room, finished with rich, dark wood, the choicest of the surrounding forests, in an elaborate style, with its superb but antique furniture, with all the appliances of wealth and the evidence of thriving industry, sat the lady of the mansion—a most lovely looking woman, who seemed scarcely to have reached the full maturity of matronly perfection.

But the soft light in which she sat, the mellow tints of the rich drapery of the room, and the sweet, kind expression of her fair face, the stateliness of her manners, lent her a charm, greater even than the freshness of youth. The two young girls entered from the garden and were greeted with many caresses. The lady said—

"My little robins, I want you to sing for me."

"Ah, dear mamma, robins do not sing at this hour, unless it be after a bright summer rain."

"Would you not like to sing then, pet?"

"Oh, certainly, my mamma. And I would love to sing as the robin sings at your window in the morning; one can feel that his soul goes out in his song."

"Well, why cannot you, Minnie?"

"I guess my soul is not so well trained to harmony, or, else is not as large."

The mother laughed brightly, then added, "You must sing oftener with Mildred, my pet."

"Albertine," Minnie said in a half whisper to her friend, "now as my sister Mildred plays, we will try to believe ourselves the veriest larks in the meadows, singing and soaring."

The young lady who at the window had drawn those bright young creatures from the garden, now took her seat at the grand piano, played a prelude and then commenced a sweet but simple ballad, Albertine and Minnie joining with their voices. Half an hour elapsed, and there was a pause in the singing—the mother said—

"Mildred, I marvel much if Rose has not yet returned from the cottages!"

At that moment there was the flutter of snowy drapery at the door, and a young lady of some sixteen summers came tripping into the room, bringing a lovely nosegay of scented leaves and roses of many varieties and colors, but the beautiful blush-rose predominated.

"I lingered to bind up these roses for you, dearest mamma," she said, presenting them with a graceful courtesy.

Meantime in the large hall leading through the house, and from which the drawing-room opened—the entire domestic corps had been gradually gathering. It was a goodly sight to see this robust, cheerful and intelligent group—an entire family in itself, yet in one way the dependents of the landholder. Their fathers had come from the "Faderland," but they belonged to the peasantry, and this family was now most warmly attached to the family of their protector.

Ranged along beneath the broad stair-case which led up the great hall, or thoroughfare of the house to the spacious chambers, was a row of seats and lounges, where the do-

mestic group habitually gathered at evening to hear the young ladies sing and play on the grand piano, or at times listen to the master as he read for an hour, and in earlier days to hear the mistress play on the harp, accompanying it with her sweet voice in many a familiar song.

There sat good Monica, who had been the handmaiden of the mistress of this house, and only a few years her senior, and by her side her good man Hans Kronk, and on either side of them their children, Katrine and Meta, excellent girls, with such a look of hearty content, and John, the sturdy counterpart of his father, and Yoppa, already falling asleep upon his fat and ruddy hands.

The music had been resumed, Rose joining with Minnie and Albertine in singing, but as the clock in the hall told off the hour of nine, Meta was summoned to the parlor by the mistress—it was the hour for the little ladies, Minnie and Albertine, to retire.

The young handmaiden returned to the hall, took up a small silver candlestick with its wax taper, lighted it at the candelabra in the hall, and then waited at the foot of the stairs. Meantime the young girls had said good night to the mother and sisters in a formal but elegant manner; then came out into the hall, and to each and every one paid the same tribute of respect, and followed Meta up the broad staircase and disappeared within their own room.

The master of Glenelvan had not yet returned; but Monica and Hans, as was their wont, saluted the mistress and went to the apartments long since appropriated to their use. Rose took her seat at the piano to practice under her mother's eye.

It was their habit to wait for the father and brother to return from the city, and John sat in the hall to attend them on their arrival. So closed the day, and like it in all its main features, every day in the year, in this happy and well-ordered house.

CHAPTER II.

I HAVE written the foregoing as an initiatory chapter, going back to the dim past, and speaking of such things only as could be grasped by a child's understanding. And now, before proceeding farther, I will explain the relationship existing between Albertine and myself. She had recently been made an orphan by the death of her father, which had been sudden, and also attended with many painful circumstances. Previous to this date, I think we knew little of the history of the family; but papa having for a long time been in the practice of law, and a country magistrate was selected to administer upon and settle the Gunnison estate. But, greatly to his surprise and vexation, he found many things in and connected with the estate involved in mystery.

Mr. Gunnison, little Albertine's father, had been regarded as a man of wealth, his wife had had a fair marriage portion, but no papers, deeds or records could be found, or item giving a clue to any means by which either or any of this could be recovered. It had also been rumored that the deceased had made an extensive purchase of land and had paid for it, in full. Now no evidence could be discovered that any such purchase had ever been made. If there were witnesses to this, they were persons for whose pecuniary interest it was, at least for the present, to keep silence.

So, little Albertine, a slight, delicate child of some thirteen years, and her brave brother Fred, a year older, were left penniless. But they were not utterly destitute, nor quite thrown upon the wild world, for the excellent parents of the mother gave these bereaved ones a home.

But dark hints of an evil life, of wasted means, of dissim-

ulation reached her even there, and the pale young mother faded slowly, uttering no word in any ear; for her grief, whatever it might have been, was locked fast within her guileless bosom. Even though this was all untrue, utterly and foully false, young Mrs. Gunnison had no means to disprove it. No word of her husband's during his life had assured her of what he suffered her to believe, that his means were abundant, and no account had been given, or taken of her individual property, or the use to which it had been applied. And now she had nothing.

It was not thought to be the loss of supposed affluence, for she was still far above want, her father, old Mr. Bartell, had now no child but her, and was a good farmer upon his own lands, but some hidden sorrow, not the death of her husband only or the loss of his companionship, and this to her was great; but that his fair name had perished with him, this broke her heart.

So, when my papa saw all this, he took me over with him to make friends with the gentle girl who had been so greatly bereaved, and to bring her home with me to spend the entire summer, and go with me down to the village school. But the brother, Freddy, remained with his mother—she could not be parted from both her children.

Albertine was an apt scholar, and quite a favorite with our teacher; a young lady of rare merit for a country school-mistress. Mamma showed her all kindness, and my sister, Mildred, taught her many graceful accomplishments, and Rose, my beautiful sister Rose, found many ways to please the lonely, little orphan girl. Edgar, my second brother, was at West Point, pursuing his studies; but, on his occasional visits home, some token of regard for the young stranger, which he never failed to bring, showed his amiable nature.

But when the summer had faded, and the storms of winter beat upon the hills, the lone mother felt the bleak winds

striking in upon her desolate bosom. She needed the soul-warmth of her child to comfort her, and keep her from perishing. My little Albertine went from us, bearing on her pretty lips our many caresses—enriched by the memory of our tender regard; and many beautiful gifts wherewith to cheer her weary little heart. We wrote, sometimes, but could not hope to meet again for many long months.

Our new governess, Miss Edith Standish, had arrived, and commenced on her duties. Mamma would gladly have retained my sister Mildred's governess for Rose and myself, but Miss Mitchell had already deferred her marriage for more than a year for her beloved pupil's sake, and was now settled in her own beautiful home. We rejoiced in her good fortune, believing her worth to be even greater than this. It was during this interim that I had, with Albertine, attended the village school—papa thinking it wise to give his aid and influence to this valuable institution—it was also a novelty for me, and a pleasant walk during the summer and autumn months.

We had rarely heard from my eldest brother—my tall, dark, handsome brother, Hermann, who had now been absent more than six months. He had completed a commercial education and gone South, but each letter he wrote came from a different post-office, as if he were still traveling and undecided where to locate. It was papa's will that my eldest brother should enter into business abroad, for various and for obvious reasons. He was the heir of Glenelvan, and as papa, *being a just man*, would divide his whole property, equally, between his sons and daughters, it was of prime importance that Hermann should accumulate individual property, so that, as the proprietor and resident of Glenelvan, this venerable homestead should not apparently, or in fact, suffer loss or diminution.

Glenelvan had great and varied resources within itself, fully equal to the yearly expenditure of any of its successive heirs and incumbents, and they always provided against a

drain of them by the rightful marriage dowers, or patrimony, by requiring the heir to accumulate—by saving from his allowance, or by commerce, or by a learned profession—sufficient substance, that when he became the proprietor of this grand old place, it should neither be degraded in position nor impoverished in means. Papa chose that Hermann should engage in business abroad, believing he would thereby widen his sphere of experience, and general information, and sympathies; and would, in consequence of these, bring new ideas, and develop to a greater extent the natural capacities of his inherited estate.

Papa had a sister living south, on a princely estate, belonging to her husband; but of this aunt, Hermann never spoke in any of his letters. I think he had not seen her.

But the winter, with its duties and its joys, its studies and amusements wore away, and the glad spring came unlocking her thousand crystal caskets, scattering her priceless jewels through many a fairy dell.

One lovely morning, when the sun was just glancing down into the green valleys, and the dews were trembling on many a silvery leaf and opening flower, while song-birds were pouring forth their merriest lays, and along the hedges and beneath old jutting eaves, the fantastic beginnings of many a bright little home might be seen, we went forth—Rose and I, with Miss Standish, on our first holiday, to visit the home of our dead.

On a beautiful western slope, defended on the north by jutting crags, and a stunted growth of black cedars, my ancestors were gathered. I shall not speak at length of these. Of all the green mounds there, two, only, were heaped within the scope of my memory.

And there our steps were staid. We came, bringing the earliest flowers, to plant upon a small green mound, with its tiny marble slab of dazzling whiteness standing at its head.

A weeping-willow, bending gracefully, swaying to and

fro, swept the long grass with its shining hair. Miss Standish stooped and read :

GERTRUDE EVANGELINE MINSTER.

May 12, 1835. Aged 3 years and 12 days.

"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."

"This is the grave of your angel-sister," she said to Rose, who turned away to wipe a tear from her tender blue eyes.

I remember her, our pretty Gertrude, with all the freshness of a morning dream. Her blue eyes, tender like Rosa's, the soft rings of her golden hair, the pale, fair brow, traced by its blue veins, deepening almost violet upon the temples, so transparent was the alabaster whiteness of her skin, and her mouth—angels only have a mouth so pure—soft, sweet, at times sad, oh, far too sad for childhood. The silken thread of thought was at that moment running on in harmony, for Rose softly said :

"Sad as the faces of friends that die, and beautiful as their memory."

And our baby-sister, with her angel beauty, her sweet, lisping mouth, her heaven-revealing eyes, and bright gleaming hair, was a prophecy, now fulfilled.

We sat down by the little green mound, and talked of the days when she played among the flowers, herself lovelier than any there. I had not then learned to look beyond the scope of visible things, and this early death was to me a dark and unlovely mystery.

The other was a larger grave—a dark cypress overshadowing the massive marble at the head, and here, many costly and exquisitely fair and lovely offerings had been brought ; thus cherishing the beautiful memory of the dead.

We read on that marble page :

SOPHIE ENGELBORG MINSTER.

Date and inscription had little interest for us ; we remembered only the "home-gone."

This lady was my father's eldest sister, though younger than himself, and her home had always been at Glenelvan,

the place of her birth. I remembered her fair, sweet face, her gentle demeanor, her low, kind voice, which was full of melody. She was often sad, always grave and retiring. She often caressed me, but always in her peculiarly gentle manner, whilst I studied her curiously but all unquestioning. So was I held in awe by the presence of an intangible mystery.

Once, when walking in the shrubbery, alone with mamma, I said, "Dearest mamma, why does aunt Engel never laugh, or sing at the harp, as you do?"

The bright smile faded all out of mamma's face, and presently she softly said, "Do you think the angels up in heaven ever laugh, my child?"

"Oh, they are too happy to laugh, but surely they play on golden harps, mamma!"

Receiving no response to this, I said—"Is my aunt Engel so happy then? She is good and kind—but one lovely night, just on the border of the gloaming, I was searching for primroses out by the little water-fall, then I saw dear aunt Engel kneeling on the damp and cold rock, crying bitterly, with a low soft cry as angels alone might listen to hear. What does this mean, dearest mamma?"

I saw a tear gathering in mamma's eyes, and saw also that I had brought a pang to her heart, and I hastened to beg her forgiveness. I felt that I deserved punishment for my perversity, knowing that our aunt Engel's moods or ways, were held too sacred to allow question or remark. I could not measure the degree of my offence, but when I saw the pain I had occasioned, I felt that my punishment was great.

From this momentary abstraction, while memory had gone back to the dim past, lingering over a mystery that might never be revealed to me, I was aroused by the murmured words of my companions. There was a pause, and then Miss Standish repeated in a soft undertone—

"Here scattered, oft the *earliest* of the year,
By hands unseen, are showers of violets found;
The red-breast loves to build and warble here,
And little footsteps lightly print the ground."

"How beautiful!" Rosa said. "May I ask who is the author of those lines, Miss Standish?"

"They are from 'Grey's Elegy,' or rather left out, for what cause, I cannot tell, since they are so full of beauty.

We sat by these graves and talked of our sister, of her pretty ways; but of aunt Engel, we spoke no word, her memory was to us as something holy. She was a saint enshrined, over whom a veil had fallen which no sacrilegious hand might ever dare to lift.

We spent that sunny spring morning with the angels of our house.

On the eve of that same day a warm glow of happiness was felt at Glenelvan, spreading through the entire domestic circle, for that, letters had arrived from Hermann. He was in good health. He had located in Mobile, Alabama, had opened a fine business, which promised well, and was soon to be married to a most lovely woman, a charming young widow, Mrs. Lena Hays, whose father was a Southern man, and herself of Southern birth and education.

He would bring his bride, for a visit, to Glenelvan—would doubtless arrive in mid-summer.

Rose and I went to pay our evening visit to our cottagers, and to carry them this pleasant news concerning the son of their protector. Each and every of these expressed great pleasure at this intelligence, and an affectionate interest in the subject generally. They rejoiced in the well-being of the heir of Glenelvan, for in him they saw their future master and friend.

Of these cottages, I should have spoken at an earlier date. There were three of them, neat and convenient, each with its garden in front, with a plat of ground where trees or vines might be nurtured, at the will of the incumbent, or

have whatever little indulgence of display or taste their whim or fancy might suggest.

Papa had built them for the comfort of the families of laboring men whom he might require to work the land belonging to Glenelvan. And as with his scientific knowledge and judicious management, these were found not only more than sufficient to sustain them and meet the annual expenses of the family of the proprietor, but also to give an abundant support to the families of the tenantry and retainers, those who dwelt within his house.

A passing notice of the cottagers would undoubtedly have an interest for the lovers of detail, as also to them who are willing to give a few fragments of thought to the humbler walks of life.

In the first cottage lives James Dunn, with his wife, a worthy and industrious woman, and three robust and fine looking children: the eldest, Susan, a rosy-cheeked girl of sixteen. The father was the gardener of Glenelvan, but went duly to the river each morning, at an early hour, for fish for the great breakfast table, as also for all the cottagers. He was assisted in his matutinal purvey by his little Jimmy—his youngest—a boy of ten years. Susan helped her father often at the lighter garden-work—Jimmy being far too heedless a little chap for any of these finer employments, and was kept a greater part of the time at a school for small children, down in the village. Then, at the close of each week, mamma had the little fellow up at the house, to pass under a thorough review, when he always received a reward according to the progress he had made. And not this little boy alone, but all the children of our people were taught to feel that they were under her immediate and guardian care.

We liked Susan; she was a good, careful girl, and Rose and I, in our evening calls at the cottages, carried her a pretty book, or some pieces for her patchwork, of which she was very fond. Next to this, and standing apart by itself

—as did all these pretty dwellings—lived Kitty Malone, and her husband, the willing but stupid Patrick : there we stopt to play with her fat baby, and read to her for half and hour. The last house I had nearly forgotten, though we failed not in duty or courtesy there, I could not possibly feel the same degree of interest as at the others. First, the twain living there seemed unsocial. They were not as intelligent, or endowed with capacity to be : next, they had no fat baby rolling on the floor, and no rosy-cheeked, patchwork-loving Susan, or laughing, romping Polly, younger than Susan, and her only sister, whom I had quite forgotten, for we saw less of her than of Susan, for she helped her mother in all the cares and labors of the household. Rose discovered that she had a fondness for pets, and, therefore, carried her a pretty white rabbit, the remembrance of which will, probably, fill Polly's good little heart with gratitude to her dying day.

Susan was my senior by two years ; yet I had pleasure in teaching her many things, and there was evidently a feeling of sincere attachment between us. Once, upon a certain occasion, I said to her, "Susan, dear, I am going to have you for my little handmaiden, my pet and companion ; for Meta, you know, is to go with Rose."

"Oh, then I will finish my patchwork quilt, directly, to give to mother," she said, her face brightening.

"Well, you need be in no hurry ; you shall piece one for Polly, and have time to piece another for yourself, for I mean that you shall have quite a little establishment of your own."

"Indeed ! and live with you as good Monica does with the Madam ?"

"Precisely, Susan dear. This being the case, you are to infer, that papa is to look about for a husband for you, who is to be as loving, kind, and faithful to his wife, as Hans to his."

"Your papa ! dear Miss Minnie ? I thought this duty

was to come in with the next generation," Susan said, with a deeper blush.

"Ah ! I see." It was now my turn to blush. "Ah, Susan, you little rogue ! but I think I should choose to leave this affair to papa, after all."

There was silence for some little time, and then I resumed—

"And who knows but what papa may build me a nice cottage, somewhere between here and Umberhurst ; then we shall not be far from mamma—can come over to tea, nearly every evening, and sing with Mildred."

"But, dear, could you possibly live in a cottage ?"

"Oh, I would have it the dearest little paradise in the world."

"It must be, if you were the mistress."

To a maturer mind this might have been an occasion for much amusement. The little bride-in-prospect, going over to mamma, every evening, to tea, and lingering to sing with the elder sister. It must not be forgotten, that I had not then passed out from under the caressing care of dear mamma, though, for the moment, looking toward a maturer state of the future.

CHAPTER III.

It was midsummer, and my brother Hermann had arrived, bringing with him his beautiful wife, and her pretty Lena Illeota, a little girl of some four summers, who seemed equally attached to her mamma and her nurse Chloe. My brother had espoused an interesting widow, whose husband had died a few months previous to the birth of this her only child. I think our parents were as much pleased with their daughter as we with our sister-in-law. Great attention was shown her—we had frequent guests, invitations were constantly received, and parties made. But of these, Rose and I knew little, we were kept close to our studies, and rarely had a holiday.

The first of these I should have forgotten, but for a few sentences that fell from unguarded lips—giving me a lightening glance into a mystery about which I had never dared to question. This was an entering-wedge which no after prudence, no future precaution, could ever withdraw—there it remained intact—so neither could any amount of hammering or delving of mind advance it a hair's breadth.

That day our house had been filled with guests. All the rooms had been opened and the family pictures uncovered.

Now all the guests were gone, and a grateful hush had fallen upon the whole house. I sat alone in the embrasure of a window—a circumstance for which I could in no way account—the heavy drapery had fallen, concealing me from the inner view, and I was looking with a half sad but all-loving soul upon the quiet garden, the great trees silvered with the moon's pale light, listening to the soft murmuring of a fountain, and to the far-off liquid note of the night-bird which clove the odorous air.

I had, for some moments, been aware of gently spoken words within the room, but not of their import. A *name* spoken gave me a startling consciousness.

"I am all too sad, mother, looking upon that beautiful picture—so lovely, so life-like, so like aunt Engel—for I cannot hide from myself the remembrance of her happiness blighted, her wealth wasted for any good purpose it ever served her or us."

"Nay, not wasted, my son, since her wealth secured the happiness or comfort, at least, of suffering innocence."

"True, my mother, but I must believe she died for one who was not worthy to touch the dust beneath her feet."

"If so, she has exchanged a crown of thorns for a crown of glory."

"Still must we lament her loss. Beautiful, gentle, gifted, and with such a wealth of love in that great and noble heart, which broke——"

"Cease, cease, my son. You must think of Engel as she was in the days of her brightest happiness on earth, or as she is now, in heaven. As I now look on that sweet face, which seems to smile down upon us with her own still, serene smile, I can almost believe it is our own Engel come back to us in all her glorious beauty. Thus, oh thus our Engel looked on that fatal morning of her bridal——"

The drapery rustled; for in my eagerness, I had thrust it aside, and my face, white as my dress, was distinctly brought to view. My mother turned with a frightened look, exclaiming—

"Bless me, child, how is it possible you are thus lingering here alone?"

But my brother whispered, "Give yourself no unrest, dear mother, Minnie was, doubtless, wrapt in one of her poetic reveries, and has heard nothing."

My mother's fears were not so easily quieted, her face still wore signs of emotion, as she took up the small silver bell and rang to summon our attendant. Meta came quickly.

"Go up with Miss Minnie to her chamber. I think it is past her usual bed-time. Enquire if Miss Standish wishes for anything, and then, Meta, as you must be tired, you need not wait up longer."

Then with a kiss for one and a good night for the other, both Meta and I were dismissed, neither of us receiving a reproof, and perhaps neither deserved one, though we had unwittingly brought a pang to the heart that loved us.

But with me present thoughts and awakened memories were all too busy for sleep. I had a vague and fleeting remembrance of the time when aunt Engel looked as there in her picture, beautiful in her heart-born happiness, with a queenly glory falling about her statue-like person. When our elders called her Sophie and our people Miss Sophie or Miss Engelborg, and not unfrequently, the lady Engelborga; and then I could but dimly remember that a change came, I knew not how or why, when all her glowing happiness was gone, she was tranquil, serene and loving still; and, ah, I remembered from this, she was always called Engel, and our Engel.

And truly, for the aura of her angelic spirit pervaded my father's house.

Could it be that Monica had it in her power to reveal to me any part of this mystery? Of which the longing to know fevered my day-dreams, and oftentimes, banished sleep; but if so, how should I dare to ask of Monica what my mother had thought wiser to withhold? Then I rose, and dipping a napkin into the basin of water, cooled my hands and brow, and fell asleep.

The rapidly succeeding events in which I was allowed slightly to participate, added to the steady pressure of my studies, drove for the time this harassing thought from my mind. * * * And so we were all going to spend the day at Umberhurst! Aunt Frances had been explicit in her note of invitation that Rose and Minnie should come, to visit with Fan and Belle. This aunt was my mamma's only

sister, and living at Umberhurst, her husband's paternal estate, lying some half-dozen miles from Glenelvan.

Greatly to the joy of some portion of our household, a Mr. Sterling, a warm friend of my brother Hermann, and also of sister Mildred, arrived by boat from the city. I could not but hazard a guess, mentally be it understood, that Mr. James Geoffrey Sterling had some previous intimation of the anticipated visit on that particular day.

Immediately after breakfast, then, our whole party were ready to set out. Edgar was at home now, and as mamma proposed to take Miss Standish with us, the family carriage would be full, my brother Hermann, his wife and her little Lena Illeota, drove over in the open curricule, well pleased to have an entire carriage to themselves.

Mr. Stirling and sister Mildred, galloped past us, splendidly mounted, for my father's saddle-horses, the "greys," were scarcely equaled, certainly not surpassed, in all the country side.

Mildred was smiling brightly, as with her companion they dashed past us; her rich riding-habit, the skirt of which nearly swept the ground, was of sober green cloth, and buttoned from the waist to the throat with studs of jet, set in pure gold, a standing collar over which fell a neat frill of Mecklin lace, a few soft ringlets of her abundant hair flowed down from beneath her glossy beaver, whose sable plumes nearly kissed the overarching boughs as they, with prancing steeds wound round the smooth slopes of this woodland road. I had never seen our Mildred looking lovelier.

The morning was of surpassing loveliness. The heavy dews of the previous night lay in countless diamonds on the thick, rustling foliage, shaded here and there by towering evergreens, through which the sunshine broke in patches of golden sheen.

The broad and massive gate, opening from the highroad to the Umberhurst avenues, was held back by a young and sable servitor and as we swept around the noble carriage-

drive—its overarching trees, its “dim religious light,” its cool and fragrant atmosphere, seemed, to the wrapt fancy, but an immense cathedral aisle, and the plaintive note of the coy wood-bird, the choral symphonies.

With something of awe mingled with her transport, Miss Standish exclaimed—

“Oh! how very like this is to some of our lovely English parks at home. Only the mansion, of which I have just a glimpse, has a more cheerful aspect.”

The first view was of a very large, substantial-looking house, of a soft cream color, gleaming through the noble trees, most like a fairy palace. A nearer view showed this to be real, and, also, that the mansion was very tastefully finished, with a high verandah from the second floor, out upon which those elegant chambers opened; a handsome piazza in front, around the massive white columns of which some choice vines were clinging; then, on either side, and receding, were the wings of the house, and of the same color and finished with bright green venetian blinds.

It had a look of freshness, of new young life, abounding with evidences of feminine taste. Indeed, it was well known that aunt Frances had suggested and designed all the ornamental architecture, the house at Umberhurst having been originally a well built, substantial, but plain one, suited to the simple tastes, and supplying all the comforts known to its early builders. With these later improvements it was an elegant and very desirable dwelling.

Just as Miss Standish had ceased speaking, a pair of white kids left their dam and scrambled upon the rocks, uttering their querrilous plaint of ma-a-a-a. Rose, laughing, said, these were hints to a Greek mythology.

Papa made a playful rejoinder—something about the goat Jove sucked—of sympathies and associations, of majesty and power, descending through such a long line of ancestors; but so eager was I peeping through the flowering shrubs, to catch the first glimpse of Fan and Belle, that I could not

have answered for it, whether he said that my uncle, Rapelje, the proprietor of Umberhurst, was a direct descendant and representative of Jove; or the dam of these pretty kids, the remote descendant of his alma mater.

I knew mamma was pleased with papa's playful mood, though it was not an infrequent one, and Edgar laughed outright. After a slight pause, Miss Standish said—

“What a soft, mellow-sounding name, Umberhurst! Its appropriateness must ever possess a charm for the lover of harmonies. I marvel somewhat, however, that its present mistress, with her English associations, did not baptize it with the grand patronymic of Northumberland, which, for this estate, would have equal significance.”

“The Rapelje's would, doubtless, have objected to a change of name,” papa said.

“Indeed! Well, with either name attached thereto, I should be inexpressibly happy to ramble, for hours, in these deep and winding avenues.”

The rumbling sound of our carriage wheels at length subsided at the foot of the broad steps, and aunt Frances came out upon the piazza, with Fan and Belle on either side of her, like two blush-roses. They were drest alike, in simple gowns of white muslin, with blue waist-ribbons; but their exuberant joy gave them a brighter color than damenature designed them to wear on every-day occasions; and Belle's pale, golden curls danced about her neck, in very sympathy with her laughing blue eyes and wave-like motions. There were many tender greetings, and many kind enquiries for the absent. My cousin, Claude, aunt Frances' eldest son, had just sailed in a vessel, belonging to his father, for the West Indies—to the Island of Hayti—where he was intending to spend the winter, and my cousin, Leonora, was still at a far-famed seminary in Troy.

Rose went with Fannie up stairs, and Belle and I begged the little Lena Illeota of her mother, and then hastened at once to the kitchen and dining-room to exhibit her to Phillis

and Dinah, as being the most beautiful child extant; and when this mission was performed, we proceeded directly to show Belle's pretty white rabbits to the little lady, by way of preserving the equilibrium of her character, checking her budding vanity; then, each of us, carrying one of the snowy pets—Lena Illeota with the smallest one gathered in the folds of her little dress—we took an airing about the lawn, for the benefit of the whole.

Presently I saw Mildred, now attired in a beautiful India muslin, her lovely brown hair wooing the sunbeams within its classic folds, and many a waving ringlet playing about her swan-like neck—my beautiful sister, Mildred, I saw coming out upon the piazza and down the steps, attended by Mr. Sterling.

How was it possible my Mildred could walk by his side, could talk to him with such graceful self-possession! Mr. Sterling!—of whom I was actually afraid—with his elegant manners, yet to her always deferential, his grave deportment, figure and mien so *a plomb*, and his almost womanly diffidence, which often brought the rich blood mantling his uncommonly handsome face.

I did not dislike Mr. Sterling, on the contrary, when he conversed with papa, I admired him greatly; but if he addressed me, his serious manner and his marked diffidence put to flight every living idea in my witless little head.

Mildred and Mr. Sterling were immediately followed by Miss Standish, Edgar, Fan, and Rose, who tripped lightly across the gravel-walk and turned into one of the many avenues, where Miss Standish had expressed a wish to walk. They all soon disappeared from our sight, and we saw them no more until we met at dinner.

Late in the afternoon, Mildred and Miss Standish played and sang, Mr. Sterling and Edgar accompanying them. My sister-in-law, Mrs. Lena Minster, was prevailed upon to take her seat at the piano, when the wild sweetness of her voice, the brilliancy of her touch and execution, charmed every one present.

In conclusion, Mildred begged the little Lena Illeota to sing a little song, which she did, all the while lisping so prettily; and the manner of her singing was a surprise to nearly all of us, and we knew not which to admire most, the studied accomplishments of the mother, or the native grace of the child. *** Aunt Frances and mamma at length withdrew to a pretty boudoir on the opposite side of the house, and thither I soon found my way. Sitting on a low ottoman at their feet, I listened eagerly, as they talked of my uncle, Stanly Hastings, of whom they had had recent intelligence. He was their elder, and now only brother, but had returned to England when aunt Frances was but a school-girl, and they had not since met. He was still unmarried, as they supposed; had expressed much kindly interest in all of us, both at UMBERHURST and at GLENELVAN, and yearned for a reunion with his beloved sisters; for in his last letter he had said, that if they could not be induced to cross the water to him, he must; he should and would come to them.

I had heard that my uncle Hastings had been abroad; indeed, had spent many years in India; and during this time little correspondence was kept up. Since then, my mamma and aunt Frances occasionally received a package of India shawls and muslins. Mamma, I knew, had from this uncle received, among other beautiful things, a pearl necklace, with her bridal gifts.

Well, indeed, and would he come? should we like him? How would he look after his long sojourn beneath those Indian skies? Was he indeed never married, really? Upon this point my mamma and aunt held different opinions. Here was food for my inquisitiveness.

"Think as you will, dearest sister," said my aunt. "Our brother will settle this question directly he comes, and if neither of us choose to ask it, I have one in my mind, who I think will." Then laughing, gave me a little pat upon my cheek.

But now papa and uncle Rapelje, of UMBERHURST, came

seeking us. Papa was about to send John for our carriage, but would first be advised if mamma's visit was completed. Aunt would hear not a word of her leaving before tea, "there would be a lovely moon, our horses were strong and sure-footed, John was a careful driver, would take us home in an hour." "And twenty minutes," papa added. We staid. There was no hurrying—but never was mistress of a larger house blest with cook and housemaid more prompt than Phillis and Dinah. Scipio (abbreviated to Scip), Dinah's sable offspring, who always let us through the gates into the Umberhurst grounds, seemed to have the capacity of being everywhere all in one moment, and of doing the right thing just at the right time—was of incomparable value in the way of forwarding and expediting the lighter household duties.

And on rare occasions, Cato, Dinah's husband, served in the drawing-room with a grace and facility equaled by few of his class. Cato was serving-man in general, and gentleman at large, and head servant at Umberhurst.

Tea was over, and then after a few "more last words," we entered our carriage and drove homeward. I know not which was pleasantest, this quiet drive beneath the harvest moon, or that in the flush and glow of morning. The first was full of hope and expectation, the last of pleasing memories.

CHAPTER IV.

I commence this chapter with the registry of two events, which had a bearing upon all our after lives; the first, was the betrothal of my sister Mildred to Mr. Sterling; the second, the departure of my brother Hermann with his family to their southern home.

After this date, no incident occurred to interrupt the smooth current of daily life at Glenelvan, until the last days of autumn, and just as winter was setting in.

Our mamma decided to have Rose and I spend it in Philadelphia. Miss Standish was to go to Umberhurst, as aunt Frances most cheerfully acted upon mamma's suggestion to engage her as a governess for Fannie and Bell. And this arrangement was one of mutual satisfaction, or rather I should say of delight.

No hindrances or interruptions arose to impede the execution of mamma's well-formed plans, and almost before I had well considered whether I should enjoy another winter's absence from my dear happy home, we, Rose and I, were well settled, with our friends in that distant city.

The family with whom we were domiciled, were distant relations of mamma's, English Friends—by the fashionable world termed quakers. We were quite at home, and very happy with Madam Cadwallader and her numerous family of sons and daughters, and I soon forgot my shyness, which their grave though gentle manners and rigid adherence to the plain language induced, or more correctly speaking, renewed, for beneath all this precision, I found warm and true hearts. And soon I learned to love that simplicity of manner more than the most elaborate politeness of fashionable life.

This excellent woman cheered and encouraged us, smooth-

ed away difficulties or aided us in surmounting them, so that our progress at Don Pico's far-famed school was rapid and unremitting. She was a large-hearted woman, I know, else she could never have aided us so cheerfully and with such a sweet spontaniety in the attainment of accomplishments which she regarded but as a vain show.

The winter was wearing toward spring. Every possible care had been taken of my health, I was comfortably content, yet I began to suffer greatly from a nervous depression. At times I could vividly remember being possessed of this feeling once before, and then it faded away beyond recall. Long ago, I had spent a season in Boston, with aunt Engelborg, who took me with her for a little pet and companion. Then one night, I awoke believing that I heard mamma and baby Gertrude talking to me, and at the same moment felt a sickening longing for home. Aunt Engelborg would have returned to Glenelvan at once, but on the following day I had entirely recovered from this little attack of supposed homesickness, and though we remained a month longer in Boston and vicinity, there was no recurrence of it. Now, I was often conscious of the same feeling, only intensified, and not unfrequently awoke to find dear Rose wiping the heavy tears from my face and soothing me with kindest caresses.

Happily, just at this period, an unusual circumstance transpired, which brought a new element into my mental arena.

Leaving Rose to her studies in our quiet room up stairs, and going down to the parlor, I found there, sitting with Madam Cadwallader, a large grim looking man, whom I liked not at first and whom I chose to avoid ever after.

The lady called me to her side, and folding one arm gently around my waist, informed me that the gentleman was her brother, who had recently returned from a long sojourn in Europe. Then quickly added—

“My brother, thee should know this little girl, she is a niece of our relation, Stanly Hastings, whom doubtless thee remembers.”

“I remember the Stanly Hastings of forty years ago, sufficiently well—I wish I could remember no other.”

“Sure, thee knew him from a boy ; but, brother, what does thee mean ?”

“Our cousin Hastings went out to India, where he spent the better—ha—I should say the *greater* part of his life ; but has now returned to England.”

“Ah, sure ! But is he greatly changed ?”

“Hum ! He looks like a native, his talk is a jargon of “naval dialect” and Hindostinee, and the dear knows what. But Hastings is evidently in possession of great wealth. After he had been in the country some ten years or so, he married a rich Begum, who endowed him with vast estates, and he brings with him his little girl, by whom he will draw a vast revenue. But, ha, hum, indeed, there is no fault to be found with that, sure ; he is not the first English gentleman, or, if weihear rightly, American either, who has gone to India and enriched himself by marrying a native lady of rank.”

“Surely not ; for, brother, thee cannot have forgotten neighbor Weedon, who sent home to this country his two little girls, himself following a few years afterwards, and thenceforth, during his whole lifetime, drawing a revenue, which, heaven forgive him, he appropriated to his carnal pleasure, defrauding his own flesh and blood of their natural rights.”

“Ha, Weedon was worse than a highwayman ; he took from his own their property and their name.”

I could hear no more. Indignant that my uncle should be spoken of with such cool contempt, and in such connexion, and overjoyed at the thought of some day seeing him, and this little girl of tropical birth, I forgot the impropriety, the rudeness of speaking without permission, to my elders, and suddenly exclaimed—

“Oh, then I hope to see my uncle whom my mother loves so well, and my little cousin will be dear to us all, and most welcome to my father's house.”

This man turned toward me with a kind of sardonic smile, and said, "No doubt of it, thy uncle brings his welcome with him."

"He could not fail to do so," I said, the hot blood rushing to my head. And then I sat down, determined to sustain my own courage with thoughts of my mother's joy, when she should hear this news. Then I built up my pride to overtop the front of this man's insolence. Was not my uncle, as also my mother, descended from an old and noble family—their father having been the younger son of a younger son, changed only the matter of title and wealth, not of blood. And now my uncle had married an eastern princess, his child would inherit her mother's rank, and with it more wealth than it had required to sustain my ancestors in positions equal to that of their elder brothers. And this child, my little cousin, how could I possibly wait a day to see her! Leaving my seat, I went directly to Madam Cadwallader for her accustomed kiss. I said, "Good night, I must talk with Rose."

The gentleman lifted his cold grey eyes, saying—

"I see somewhat of Stanly Hasting's spirit here. Lydia, I am not clear in my mind but that this new relation may have a taste of the same when the difference of complexion is fully discovered!"

"Your insinuation does not escape me, sir," I said, in a low, quiet voice. "But were this India cousin of mine as dark of skin as a native of the Guinea coast, she is still the daughter of Captain Stanly Hastings, and niece to Madam Minster of Glenelvan, and Madam Rapelje of Umberhurst, and will be received by her relatives with affection and honor."

Then with a slight courtesy to the grim monster, I escaped from the room and fled up stairs to Rose, to her recounted what I had just learned—expressing a fond hope of soon seeing mamma's relatives—indulging in many speculations about the looks, manners, age, temper, and endowments,

mental and moral, of this India cousin of ours, and concluding with a brilliant romance full of Utopian suggestions and schemes of which my mind was quite prolific.

"My Rose, I believe our good friend Madam Cadwallader wished to secure my good will toward this polar-bear brother of hers; but his first growl put me on the defensive, a position from which I do not mean to retire."

"I hope she may not suffer any disquiet from this slight passage-at-arms, between her brother and this spirited sister of mine. I think, however, her own good sense will set her right."

"Indeed, she was never out of the way; but I shall speak to her myself about it; and farther, I will crave of her the history of those 'two little girls she alluded to.'"

"It will have much of interest *for you*, doubtless."

"Why for me, dear?"

"Oh, because, Minnie, you are such an infantile humanitarian, or at least Madam Cadwallader thinks you will be the founder of some such society."

"I hope I may. I did not come into this world to leave it no better than I found it. There will be a work for me to do."

Nothing more was said then, but a chord was struck which had often vibrated before.

Now I thought much on what Mr. Chalkley had communicated. What was my eagerness to learn something more definite of the personel, of manners and customs of the household, and intellectual culture of the Begum my uncle had espoused—but for all this I would not deign to propound the slightest question to the personage from whom I had gained so casually my first hints of all this matter.

But with dear Rose, lovely as an angel, warm-hearted, condescending, genial, unexalting, how easy it was to accomplish, without an apparent effort, what I might have given my life to do, and fail; not in this alone, but in many, very many other things.

Well, Mr. Chalkley and I did not suit. He was to me a huge bear, and as ever he stretched out his great paws to caress me, I became the veriest little porcupine, clewed up and impervious at all points, while Rose, Martha and Lydia Cadwallader, played with the monster, like harmless little kittens.

And this event, though savoring somewhat of the disagreeable, was a means of permanent good to me. All my nervous depression was gone at once. I recovered physical strength, and my habit of mirth radiated through our little circle. I did not fail to write to mamma and aunt Frances, and quite triumphantly, of the indulgence my propensity to "inquisitiveness" had had.

Then I wrote to my uncle, expressing an affectionate interest in his welfare, telling him this had been transmitted to me through mamma and aunt Frances, who still fondly cherished his memory, and earnestly invited him to my father's house, and to bring his dear little girl whom we were prepared to love, and hoped to win her to love us. I submitted my letter to Rose for the approbation and benefit of her superior judgment, directed and sent it at once.

I secretly, yet most fondly hoped my letter might receive an answer, yet reason steadily and roughly combatted all these vain thoughts. The bare idea that Captain Stanly Hastings, a naval officer of the British service, would think it worth while to reply to a letter from a little girl whom he had never seen, was preposterous. But these conflicting thoughts were not without their uses!

CHAPTER V.

AND the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily, I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. ST. MATTH. XXV: 40.

FULLY believing that Madam Cadwallader would indulge me with the full history of those strange little girls, the hint of which had so much impressed me, I had waited a suitable moment to ask her.

We were just at this time invited to spend a certain evening at the house of Mrs. Clement Porson's—two of her daughters being pupils at Don Pico's school, had taken pains to show us, Rose and me, great attention. The company was to be small and very select.

Mrs. Clement Porson lived in a fine house, just opposite Madam Cadwallader's, and as in their calls of ceremony, Miss Porson and Miss Ella Porson had met Martha and Lydia Cadwallader, they also had received a note of invitation to the "Porson Soiree," and, oh, joy, her mother had abated a moiety of her precision, and they too were going!

We had been taught to make all preparations in due season. I had decided to wear, it being now mid-February, and very cold, my rose colored merino dress, beautifully made and trimmed—startling contrast! with black velvet ribbon. I had also a necklace of jet, very pretty, and moreover very rare, that I designed should be my only attempt at any especial ornament.

Sally, the housemaid, came with a message from her mistress—"would Miss Minnie please come down to her room for a few minutes?"

I complied at once. As I entered, Madam said to me, looking up with one of her kindest smiles—

"Dear, I have thought as thee intends to wear that pink dress, if it suits thee, I will change the ribbons, and while out this morning, I found this lavender colored plush, which I think is in better taste. Thy French mantua-maker is fond of strong contrasts."

"Ah! thank you, this is very lovely! I do really like it, better than my black velvet."

"I am glad it pleases thee. Now run and bring the dress, and we will put the plush right on—but the girls will be quite surprised."

I brought it instantly, and we were soon engaged in ripping off the bows and knots of black, and making ready to substitute the lavender color. My friend said—

"That French-woman should have known better than to have chosen black to put upon this lovely rose color: in perfect mimicry of the little rose on thy cheeks, and thy dark, curling hair. Altogether making but a wax dolly of thee."

"Do you not like my little winter roses then?"

"On the contrary, I am only too glad to see that they do not fade, with thy studious habits."

"Thank you. Mamma has had a brilliant color; and then, I walk a good deal."

"Thee means to keep thy pretty inheritance! But as thee has a lovely natural bloom, and thy hair is profuse and very nice, a sober dress becomes thee best. I will choose, rather that thy looks shall set off thy dress, than the reverse. And this pretty gown, as it was before, seemed to me but a *parody* upon the work of the Great Artist."

"Oh, how pretty this is going to be! Now, while running this row upon the skirt, will you not tell me all about those little girls who were sent here from India?"

"Ah! sure thee does not yet remember that mere allusion to them?"

"Dear friend, I fully comprehended the allusion, and know that thereon hangs a tale."

"It is very little I can tell thee. I knew neighbor Weedon before he went abroad; have seen him a few times since his return. But he is very close, no satisfactory intelligence could ever be gleaned from him or his. But since thee asks, Minnie, I will tell what I know. Does thee know my youngest brother Penquite Chalkley, and his excellent wife?"

"I have met them here and elsewhere."

"Thee knows then that he married out of our Society, but a very nice person; she was from the State of Connecticut, and what I am about to tell thee I learned from Martha Chalkley, and it must be to thee as if I said it happened under my own eyes. Martha, when young and single, lived with her parents in the small country town of M——, in the backward State of Connecticut. This Weedon family lived there too: vain and worldly people, but latterly much reduced in substance. They were getting into debt—too cowardly to withdraw from a life of fashionable appearances, and not possessing capital or capacity enough to succeed in honest business, they were sliding down into a whirlpool of vexatious cares. This oldest brother left the place and went to sea. He had a fair face, a smooth tongue, and a happy faculty of praising—himself. I think the family hoped great things from these gifts: they were not disappointed. He became great." My friend paused, and I eagerly asked—

"Is it possible for a man, with no larger outfit than this, to win greatness?"

"I should have said, became greatly notorious."

"Ah! that may be, I grant. Pray tell me what followed the voyage to sea?"

"I cannot say what followed it; but sure I know what came back."

"True."

"In the course of a few years, there came to his father's house, from the far Indies, two little girls; I should say four

years old, and twins. They were nice, bright looking little ones, very different from the children there, unless it might be the children of the aborigines who were remotely connected with the families of the whites. They were spoken of as being colored children; they were a pale olive, with large black eyes, black hair, and with such a shy, sad look, as if they were afraid, or maybe homesick. They were drest very nicely when they came; or rather, I should say, their clothing was all of the richest material, and made in the most gorgeous fashion; and with them came toys and trinkets such as never before found their way into the house of the Weedons, trifling and gay as they were. They came with the captain of a great trading vessel who knew, or pretended that he knew, nothing of them but their destination. But directly after these poor forsaken babies came, the Weedon's began to flaunt in gaiety, and seemed no longer pressed for means to live, and also with great show of wealth. There was an annual income, but from whence none could tell; it came regularly, and was spent without hesitation."

"Meantime, how fared these little strangers?"

"They grew up without education, without affection—servants without wages—toiling ceaselessly, hopeless of any change, yielding their labor to unremitted exactions, never rewarded, never cheered by the gratitude of those they served. They were never permitted to feel that they had any interests in common with the family, yet they were powerless to leave it. Sometimes together in their loneliness, these two girls wondered who and what they were, and whence they came. They could dimly remember that it was not always thus with them; they had at one time lived in a widely different way—but no one knew and no one dared to suggest the whole truth. Ah, well! poor, poor children."

"But this is not all?"

"Not quite, but nearly all I can tell thee. Now thread the other needle with lavender-colored silk, if thee pleases,

and have the scissors ready at hand. Well, to resume, a few years after the coming of these foreign children, Weedon himself returned to his native village, and soon after married a gay, frivolous girl, whose extravagance kept pace with his income, whatever that might be. Young Mrs. Weedon had quite a large family of children, who were each and successively nursed and tended by these timid, down-cast daughters of India."

"Pray what were their names or what their color?"

"Names that sounded strange enough—Pia and Tsinnay. There was money and much fine goods sent yearly to this man, which his wife quickly appropriated to her own use. I hope she may be forgiven this sin; but peradventure, she did not fully understand that she was doing this great robbery. So it went on year in and year out. I do not know of any material change for better or worse—and this is all I can say."

"Now, I can guess a great deal, but I had much rather some one would tell me."

"Content thee with guessing, then, for I doubt not thee will hit the truth."

"It is evident. I thank you, my friend, for this little story—I shall never forget it. The poor mother defrauded of her children, cheated into a belief that they were in a happier land, more beloved and honored than they would be in that which gave them birth; and they, cut off from all home ties, from mother or friends, robbed of their rightful inheritance, and made to serve those who rioted in the very luxuries of which they were defrauded, are things to be long remembered, and will surely not be hidden from retributive justice."

"Nay, verily. Once I questioned neighbor Weedon right closely upon this subject, and though he winced like a galled ox, he gave no information. Ay, but he that covereth his iniquity shall not prosper. I am persuaded fully, that unless he repents him of the wrong done to his own flesh and blood, he will never see the face of the Lord in peace."

"I am but a child, have no worldly experience, but I mean to study out the great, divine plan. Of this, and other great wrongs like unto it, I will take account. I will watch, and wait and see the work of the Lord. I will keep my heart clean, my life pure, full of deeds of love and mercy. I will never commit a sin, then I shall see the spirit of the Lord. And though I walk through darkness and dangers, I shall not fail, for I will breathe one never-ceasing, ever-ascending prayer to my Father above, to keep me always."

"Dear child, thee should have been one of us, then thee would sit high in Meeting!"

"And that means that I should preach! I am well assured that never will be my calling. I shall never preach, but I shall practice. I shall never be conspicuous in any way, for the work I shall do will lie deep down, below the surface, beginning with the sources. I will have nothing to do with high-sounding words, arrogant claims, or vague assertions—meaningless all, or but traps to catch the unwary; my only aim shall be to work, work, work, on and on, ever on, always for the Right. There, I have nothing more to say—I did not think to have said so much."

There was a light tap-a-tap at the door, and being bidden, Rose and Lydia came tripping in to "see what conspiracy was hatching." My dress was just done, and all thought it sweetly pretty. After all our commendations were given, I took my dress upon my arm, and ran up to my room, it being time now to begin our evening toilette. Lydia coming up a moment after, brought word from her mother, saying, that my jet necklace would not be objectionable, but quite proper, so the whole matter was settled at once.

Lydia and Martha Cadwallader looked very lovely in their fawn-colored dresses, and for this occasion, set off with rich ribbons of mazarine blue, their soft brown hair, satin-smooth, needed no adorning. Rose, dearest and best, was lovelier than the queen of fairies, Titania's self. Her dress was of pea-green chally, worked with sprigs of gold-colored

silk, with a delicate vine of myrtle binding her lovely hair. Madam Cadwallader was satisfied with us, and we were happy. Miss Porson's first soiree was as brilliant as any thing of the kind could be. There was some fine singing, agreeable conversation, graceful dancing, and an elegant little supper, the whole very much like many that came before and after it, without any particular distinction, and without disaster.

* * * Spring had opened with unusual promise, and in merry bands we had gathered to pay our homage to the smiling Goddess. This past, and our thoughts were turned homeward.

A few days were given to visits and calls of ceremony and friendship. A suitable escort had been provided, we took leave of the kind family and lastly of Madam Cadwallader, with many pleasant memories to soften our regret.

Rose and I were in extacies of delight, when, on our arrival in New York, we found papa awaiting us, and protesting against the smallest delay, took the evening boat and went gliding swiftly and silently up the noble river, and came to our landing just as the moon rose above the towering crags beyond Glenelvan.

John was ready with the carriage, and his broad and ruddy face was a goodly sight to see. Our people were at their cottage doors to give a smiling welcome to us as we passed. Indeed, our return home, after an absence of more than half a year, was little likely to be passed over without some demonstration of unusual joy. But I cannot stop for these, I must hasten on to the more interesting events to be related in the following chapter.

CHAPTER VI.

"Coming events cast their shadows before."

WE had been at home something over a week, and the joy of our return was just subsiding into a calm and healthful home-happiness, when mamma received a letter from our uncle, Stanly Hastings, bidding her to look for his speedy arrival.

How all the varied and nice preparations for this arrival were brought to perfection; how papa's agent in the city was to be on the alert; how large bed-rooms were put in condition to have a fire quickly lighted; for, although it was summer time, our uncle had for many years lived, and his daughter was born, in a southern clime: how all these various evidences of a tender regard were wrought out, passes my power of delineation; in fact, I do not believe I ever half comprehended. But, on the evening that our sturdy coachman was dispatched with the family coach to meet them at the steamboat landing, I could fully appreciate every tone, look, word, color, or shade of expression and of feeling.

I caught the sound of wheels, and the next moment the carriage came sweeping up the graveled way, beneath the kingly elms, and stopt in front of the arched entrance.

Yoppa was instantly at the horses' heads; our worthy Hans stood in waiting beside John, as he let down the steps, and papa advanced quickly to the door of the carriage, to welcome our guests. I looked at mamma—she was a shade paler than her wont—at Mildred, who stood beside her in all the glorious beauty of her early womanhood—and Rose—my Rose—the loveliest of Eve's daughters; then, suddenly

recalling my wandering regards, I saw, stepping out of the carriage door, a tall, rather thin, dark, sallow looking man, of a grave but not unpleasing demeanor. There was an expression of frankness in his pale face, a sweet serenity dwelling in his deep eyes, which at once gave my eager and questioning soul an assurance of truest worth; that there I might rest my hope—there I should find greatness—there I might put my trust. He seemed greatly fatigued, and murmured something which I could not understand.

He came to us, as we stood in the great vestibule, and embraced mamma with much apparent affection. Mildred and Rose were first presented, then looking round with some eagerness, he said—

"Where is the dear girl, who wrote me that kind letter; it was that which has brought me here?"

Now, I was not in the least shy, but behaved toward my uncle just as if he had been an old friend, greatly to the surprise and satisfaction of dear mamma, who had hardly dared to hope so much from me. Next, I saw that John was lifting the little lady down the steps, and handed her over with the utmost respect. Her father presented the little Haidee to mamma, and so she stood there, quietly and silently, receiving those gentle caresses. I used my eyes, so long defrauded of this lovely picture.

Haidee—that was my cousin's name—must have been about twelve, with an oval face—and even more of a brunette than I—a bright olive complexion, large lustrous eyes of midnight darkness, and waving hair, black and glossy as raven's wing. Her traveling-dress was of richest Thibet cloth, of tyrian purple, faced up to the throat and around the sleeves with black velvet. A magnificent scarf, from Eastern looms, was folded about her shoulders, and the "cunningest" little hat of English straw, tied with a white satin ribbon, checked the wild flow of her raven curls.

She was evidently weary, and perhaps our manners were strange to her, yet I felt my heart warm toward her the

moment our eyes met, and I believed I might find a way to win her to love me.

Haidee's English governess and maid were brought from the carriage and duly installed in their separate rooms, the former with, the latter in one adjoining that appropriated to their young charge.

As soon as we were seated in the parlor, our uncle Hastings said to mamma—

"Annie, after all these years of absence, of searching and delaying, I can bring you only this one lone flower of all that remains to me of family and home."

"The one drop of fragrance from thousands of roses," mamma said, very kindly. Then added—"I thank you very much, my brother, for bringing us this dear child; we shall love her most tenderly for her own sake, and for that she is to you the one precious flower blooming amid life's desert waste."

My uncle attempted a playful rejoinder, but his manner changed quickly, and a heavy shade rested on his fine face, and in an altered tone, he added—

"I would not encumber your household with my people, and have brought only such as were indispensable to our comfort. Haidee's intellectual and physical Priestesses, and my valet, who will (I hope) soon arrive with our boxes."

John was at once commissioned to superintend their safe deposit in the luggage-room, from whence Captain Hastings would have brought to his own apartment as the occasion might suggest.

The conversation immediately turned upon the deeds of other days, upon places and people whose names were strange to me, so I gave little heed.

Meantime, Haidee sat in a low cushioned chair, mute, motionless—the occasional restless turn and sudden flashing of her dark eyes, contrasting with the profound quiet of her outward manner. I thought of her as a wild bird of the tropics, caught, but all untamed, watching warily for the

moment of escape. It grew to seem so to me, somehow, that when our cares for her should be sufficiently lulled, I was expecting to see her rise and flash out of one of the large open windows, and speed on glittering wing back to sunnier lands and brighter skies. With this feeling, I put out my hand and let fall the heavy drapery of the window.

"That is well," mamma said, turning toward me—"avoid a draught—your cousin is not accustomed to our air."

My weird fancy was quickly put to *flight*, the only presence there endowed with unseen wings.

On the following afternoon, aunt Frances, her husband, Fan and Belle came over from Umberhurst and staid until a late hour in the evening.

I grew to like my cousin daily, marvellous as it may seem, for that Haidee was to me a perfect mystery. I could not understand her entire docility and demureness with her governess, for when alone with me and Belle in the woods of the Glen, I had seen flashes of spirit, a buoyancy, a wildness of delight, which she suddenly checked, and for a moment seemed held in breathless terror. I began to have misgivings that her governess, the elegant and polished Miss Browne, pinched or otherwise punished this poor little Indian maid, and kept her in mortal fear to secure such docility. Added to this, I was strangely puzzled in another way. Haidee had received all our kind attentions and expressions of regard, with a manner so placid as to seem almost apathetic, never by look or tone, revealing a thought of reciprocation. I had believed or supposed that beneath this cold surface there might be volcanic fire—now I began to fear there was a sea of ice.

One day we made a family party to Umberhurst, (except Mildred, who had some engagement or occupation at home, and Edgar, who was still at school,) and as the carriage was entering through the gate, Haidee caught a sight of young Scipio, and clapping her hands almost screamed with delight. We had taken neither governess or maid, and our bird seem-

ed to feel a freer life. She looked very lovely, was drest very nicely to-day, as indeed she was always, for Miss Browne would not have it supposed she could neglect so important a part of a young lady's education, and Haidee's dress was a plaid silk, crimson barred with grey and deep blue, with frills of the richest lace. She wore few ornaments, these, however, were of great value. She was prettier now, for her still face was rippled with expression.

Something of an exploring mood must have seized her—this was her first visit to the place, and she went fitting through all the chambers, then down through parlors and hall, pausing a moment in the large dining-room, and finally darting away to the kitchen, into Phillis's and Dinah's department. I was just in sight. With a cry and a bounce, Haidee threw her arms around Phillis's neck, covering her face with kisses, speaking to her in a rapid flow of gibberish, which I suppose was Hindostanee; then she flew to Dinah, kissing her handsome, albeit, sable face, patted her cheeks, squeezed her neck and arms, and made every demonstration of unbounded joy.

I was not long puzzled by this scene—a new light dawned upon me. I would not interrupt her in this unusual manifestation of delight. After a little time, however, she came to me with a beaming face, uttered some words in an unknown tongue, or at least unknown to me. Anticipating her wish, I went directly to the neatly drest, bright, laughing Phillis, paid my respects to her and to Dinah, told them this young lady was Miss Hastings, my little cousin, who had just come with her father from the East Indies. That she had no mother, and though we loved her very much, I feared her little heart felt a-cold. Haidee, who was watching my face, suddenly lifted her head and kissed me.

"Indeed—I can well believe you all love my little lady, Miss Minnie." Dinah responded, "She is a nice child for certain."

I think Haidee had never opened her heart to me until

then—she evidently had thought us cold and insincere, or was by some secret authority withheld from giving her feelings their warm and natural flow. Phillis brought each of us a cream cake just cooled from the oven, and laid on beautiful china plates. Haidee thanked her and said—

"You are very kind, Miss Phillis."

This was her first approach toward adopting our manners. We were soon joined by Fannie, Rose and Bell, who came to claim some portion of their cousin's regard, as also to devise some pleasant little entertainment for her.

The day was filled with varied delights. Miss Standish was looking well and happy, and expressed great pleasure in us. When Haidee was informed that this lady was at one time our governess, as Miss Browne now was hers, she opened her eyes wide as if in exceeding astonishment, then shut them quickly, as if guarding some secret. I immediately took my part as sentinel, determined that my unremitting vigilance should discover the prime cause that produced such effect.

As we returned to Glenelvan that evening, it was not lost upon me that Haidee suddenly fell back upon her quiet, undemonstrative habit—her face, beautiful when lit up with feeling, became impassive, and she returned Miss Browne's graceful and elegant greeting, in polite phrase and even tone, out of which every vestige of life had been wrung.

On the following morning, I preferred my request to this priestess of the soul, to be allowed to share my cousin Haidee's studies.

"Oh, no indeed, Miss Minnie—I cannot grant the favor you ask. Miss Hastings has not been accustomed to a companion in her hours of study."

Her manner was as elegant as study and refinement could make it; but beneath the surface of *gold*, I felt the *iron* which added, "Do not presume to ask this again."

In the great families in England, I well knew that nothing could be done, no measures taken, without a *precedent*; in fact, each family, in daily life, strictly observed "Parliamen-

tary Rules ;" but I,—with half my blood English, the remainder from the sturdy German stock—of American birth and education, could not be set aside or refused without a satisfactory reason. To my parents, it is true, I often yielded my preferences, out of courtesy, but never a principle ; when understood, it was never required.

I let Miss Browne's refusal pass that day, for reasons of my own, and then, when alone with my uncle, I told him what I wished.

"Most certainly," he said, at once. "My dear, you have but to speak to Miss Browne about it."

"I have, dear uncle. She positively refused me. But I love my cousin too much to be away from her so many hours in the day."

"Thank you, my pretty niece. I will speak to Haidee about it directly."

And by a strange coincidence, Haidee immediately joined us. Her father lifted her upon his lap, folded his arm about her, spoke to her ; but what he said was even more than Greek to me. Her replies were in the same unknown tongue. Presently, she turned her large, lustrous eyes upon me with a fond, questioning look.

"Pray, assure Haidee, my dear uncle, that I love her very much ; that I wish to know her better, and to win her to love me more."

Her father spoke to her in a low, earnest tone, not a word of which I could understand ; then she slipped from her father's knee, came, laid her arm softly about my neck, searched my eyes with her eager, piercing glance, then kissed me with great fondness. From that moment we were trusting friends.

On the same evening, we were surprised by Edgar's early arrival home, for his summer vacation. The moment he was released from school, he had flown as if on wings. I was glad ; the surprise was better than wearying expectation. He pleased my uncle greatly. I heard him saying to mamma—

"I have no son, Annie, whilst you have two ! I think I shall find some way to make this brave boy my heir."

Return we to Miss Georgina Browne. All in good time my project ripened. On the morning succeeding the day in which I had spoken with my uncle, he walked leisurely into the pleasant room appropriated to Haidee, wherein to pursue her morning studies ; and, after some kind enquiries respecting her progress, said—

"My dear Miss Browne, I would suggest that my daughter be not alway a solitary student ; that somewhat of social intercourse, a kind of division of labor be allowed. She has always been accustomed to numerous companions, or attendants, at least."

Miss Browne made no objection ; looked perfectly complacent, fully understanding this suggestion to be a command, which she was too wise to disregard.

It so occurred that Mildred and Edgar had gone out on horseback, Rose was working among her roses, and I, being invited, went with the most placid demeanor into the study. Miss Browne's manner was not distinguished for suavity, but for a uniform politeness and an easy elegance. We talked a little, chiefly of the lessons, of which, for the present time, only the outline was given. I was not to suppose this little maid of India was far advanced in her English studies—if, indeed, in any. I felt that Haidee was happier for my presence ; but if there was a "skeleton," it was carefully hid away from sight. No matter now—I can wait !

It did not enter into my plans to spend my entire mornings in the little lady's study, but I had secured a "passport"—could go there when I would. And thus I obtained a daily programme, so that as I walked in the garden, sat in the shrubbery or roamed about the woods with Haidee, I drew her little by little into giving abstracts of lessons, helped her to memorize, simplifying and explaining, so that Miss Browne was aware of a more rapid progress in her pupil.

So much of my labor was genuine benevolence, farther than this, I wished to learn all that were possible for me to know of her people, her country and her home.

But this knowledge was not gained speedily—no, not until a close intimacy was established through the medium of our frequent and lonely drives in the country.

My uncle had taken Edgar away with him at one time upon a mission in which was hidden a wonderful secret; the former came back with John, and some hours later, Edgar, driving the dearest, handsomest, plumpest pair of ponies my eyes ever saw. They were spotted bay and white, with a few patches of iron grey, and the carriage was small and low—a perfect little gem. This establishment was a gift for Haidee, and Edgar drove out with her every evening. I was duly informed that this was to be my privilege as soon as Haidee had outgrown her timidity, which, by the way, I began to feel required an unreasonable length of time to do.

Meantime, I was, then as now and ever, not idle. I was determined to fill the post assigned me, with honor, and to this end, I gained permission to drive daily, some one or more of papa's horses. But during the time of my probation, quite a warm attachment grew up between Edgar and Haidee, which gave me many a pang, least her love should be lost to me, but my uncle, who soon became aware of it, was, I thought, sincerely and profoundly pleased.

Haidee was four years younger than I. She was twelve, I sixteen, yet as her education advanced and she acquired a facility of conversation, one could see that her development was equal to mine. This was, I suppose, in a measure attributable to her tropical birth, including habit and association, being always with her elders, and clime, as well as transmitted organism.

But the country, family ties, habits and associations, to me, still remain an unexplored region. In our little drives, far away into the country, we talked at last of all these.

"Your people are very different from ours," she said, one

day, to me. "You can trust them, confide in their faithfulness and honesty, and they believe and trust you entirely."

"We study their happiness, their respectability, and their permanent good. And this forms a stronger bond than that which implies force on one side and dependence on the other. Does it not, my cousin?"

"It must. But I had thought that our people loved us, at least, as far as I had thought at all, but now I see it was the mere accident of being our people, and aside from the condition of servitude, they could bring us no essential good. They are, in a certain way, evidences of wealth; but the peacocks spreading their gorgeous plumage in our gardens, the nightingales singing amid the luxuriant foliage of our trees, even the donkeys drawing our light carriages, are I sometimes think, as capable of moral and intellectual elevation as they. Dear Minnie, do you know, I think our people have no *souls*! They have cunning, have dissimulation, selfishness—our parrots and monkeys chattering about our verandahs have all these characteristics!"

"In some people, my dearest Haidee, it requires *education* to bring out evidences of soul! Could not your mamma have directed or superintended, or at least, have procured teachers for her people, and thus prove that they have souls, and by lifting them up out of their ignorance, remove the main obstacle to their elevation?"

A sudden gloom overspread her pensive face, as she slowly made answer to my suggestion.

"Neither. This were impossible. Such an idea has never yet dawned in India. A lady of rank would contemn the idea or the proposal of having her people instructed, and no others would have the power. Besides, the priests, and the usages of the country forbid women to be educated."

"How very shocking! Is it not most important that women should be taught well and thoroughly, since they have the first training of the children?"

"I have learned that it is. And since I have gained a lit-

tle light I can now see the darkness. In my country it was not believed, or it was not conceded, that *women* had souls."

"What profanity! what an awful accusation to bring against the Lord our Creator! That He could be the Author of such a beautiful creation as woman, and leave her without a soul!"

"I feel that this is so, now that I have been taught what are the higher attributes of God. It is but recently that I have thought or felt upon this subject at all."

"Well," I said, musing upon what had gone before, "the first contribution I make to the missionary cause, will be to send these heathen, both priests and people, a few volumes of Ancient History, and have them learn how in the past ages, women were educated, were Doctors of Law and Divinity, Judges, Professors in Colleges, Artists, Sculptors, Sovereigns, ruling wisely, builders of cities, defenders of their people (and, I am very sorry to say, intriguers, politicians, and sometimes, like their brothers, bad and selfish), in fact, every position that has been filled by man has also been filled by woman. I do not mean to advance any particular set of ideas by this, I only mean to say, that our Creator has not endowed MAN alone with intellect."

"I cannot tell if this be the true reason, but in our country it was said, that women were not *taught*, because they might make a bad use of their knowledge."

"A very sage conclusion, truly. I must suppose this idea originated with that class who style themselves *enlightened*!"

"With me it was somewhat different, papa being a foreigner; he taught me a little, for he would never suffer me to be taught by a priest."

"Are you fond of study, my cousin?"

"Not of the labor, or the confinement. It sometimes seems to me that Miss Browne has too great knowledge to teach one that has none. She takes upon trust that I know many things well, that I do not know at all. It is not with me as if I had always lived in England, or even here, and with you, dear, dearest Minnie."

"Well, Miss Georgina Browne shall not shame you because you are not learned, dearest pet—for I will teach you myself. And I will teach her something, too—and that is, that we Americans are not ignorant or unlearned! I will shame her with her own ignorance and limited information, for, at this day, believing that we, free-born Americans, are savages and barbarians."

"Do, dearest Minnie. For I love my relatives, and I find them gentle and good."

"And you did not expect to find them so?"

"No. For Miss Browne was amazed when she found we were coming here. And now I hear much about spirit and soul, and I feel that somehow I have a soul growing within me, as I have seen in our humming-birds' nests, the shell break, and the bright, beautiful head glancing out. I think, too, my governess has some such thought, and she fears, perhaps, that my soul may stretch out its tiny wings, and flash out from beneath her hand."

I laughed at this strange conceit, and then replied—

"You have a soul, Haidee, and I doubt not it will some time flash out upon Miss Browne to her utter and very great amazement."

"Oh, that is fine!" she said, clapping her hands. After a while I asked, "Would you prefer to live in India or here?"

"There are many things to please me in that far-off country. The luxurious vegetation, the beautiful flowers, the richness of the fruits, the glory of its palms, lifting their heads up to the blue skies above, such as I may never hope to see in this land. But mamma is not there now. When I am wiser I think I shall entirely prefer to live here, or in England—papa wishes it, he would not return—and I must have no thought or wish conflicting with his."

"You are a very dear little girl, Haidee. I wish you had left India sooner, and that your mamma had come with you."

"Papa most earnestly wished this to have been; but the Rajah was not well pleased with the thought of his sister,

who was my mamma, leaving the country. And while he still opposed it, mamma was taken ill; and there people are not ill very long, for, before I had thought to feel alarmed—one night, I had been long asleep in my room, nurse Bibea came to take me up—mamma was dying. She kissed me, and said I was to go with papa. I was greatly terrified. Nurse, and all our attendants, expressed a frantic grief. My uncle, the Rajah, and my aunt Yarricoe, made great lamentations, deep and loud, while poor papa held me in his arms, and soothed my fear and my sorrow. He told me I should find my mamma again, and that she would love me. Then I thought I should find her in England, so I was glad to go there. And, dear Minnie, this was only a child's thought of what has since been revealed to me. I feel that I am nearer to mamma now, than at that time and there—for Dinah has told me, in her simple way, how to understand the many beautiful things papa tried to teach me."

"Dinah has a wonderful knowledge of spiritual things; of their harmonies with nature, and a child-like simplicity in her expressions. She is very good."

"Now this is lovely to have your assurance, I have been so drawn to her. First, because she is like my people. When my eyes fell upon her and Phillis, I was thrown into a transport of delight, as a child when suddenly recovering, or finding a toy that had charmed his every sense, or catching one bright gleam of dearly loved and familiar things. My aunt Yarricoe is darker than Phillis, and not any handsomer, for Phillis is very handsome; so was my mamma, though not fair, like aunt Frances."

"Well!" I said, by way of leading her on to talk.

"I thought I used to love my cousins Jugurtha and Zinnaga: I know I wept bitterly at parting from them. Jugurtha was brave and handsome; he was a splendid horseman, threw the lance and javelin with wonderful skill and power. But he often deceived me; he often frightened Zinnaga and me, just in play, and laughed at our fears. I did not know

then how bad it was for any one to tell an untruth. I should not like him now, he is very different from Edgar." Haidee paused suddenly, a bright blush suffused her lovely face, making her beautiful with an unexpressed happiness.

Our little ponies were gliding rapidly along, whilst other two ponies, whose shape and movement were sharply cut in shadow, glided along beside us, on the smooth sward at the road-side, followed by a rather nondescript vehicle, and a pair of indefinite figures seated thereon. Our shadow at length caught my cousin's eye, and she cried—

"These, I must suppose, are the symbols of our other selves, ever with us, or *following after*, rewarding our good deeds, by making us happier, and punishing our bad—by forever reminding us of them."

I smiled at this novel idea, which I had little reason to expect from Haidee's lips, and asked if it emanated from her governess.

"Miss Browne has little respect for ideas not found in her text-books—of course, always excepting her Prayer-book. If she were more playful, if she had more imagination, I should be less afraid of her."

"Ah, now I understand. Miss Browne's rigid adherence to learned theories does not allow your fertile imagination much scope. You could not understand her. You do not suit. Well, now, I confess to a suspicion long ago existing, that, however gracious Miss Browne might be when in company, shut up alone with my little cousin, she was something of an Ogress." I laughed when I said this, and Haidee laughed too, with all her heart.

CHAPTER VII.

"Ring, joyous bells! ring out again."

IN a course of study and progress, not rapid but unremitting, in a pleasant interchange of visits with the families of the country gentlemen neighboring near Glenelvan, the summer glided softly and silently by; and now all other interests and aims seemed merged in a great event which was approaching—my sister Mildred's marriage.

The day had been named for the middle of September. Our uncle Hastings, upon this announcement, opened one of those mysterious looking boxes, to find, as he said, some trifle for the bride presumptive. Which trifle, however, was nothing less than a piece of pearl-colored satin for the dress, a dozen pairs of silk stockings of various patterns, India ribbons and a rich bridal veil. He presented the parcels to Mildred with some playful hint about a little ornament he intended to add on the wedding day.

Katrine was quickly immersed in the business of arranging folds of satin with frills of lace and bows of ribbon. There had been left little else to do, besides choosing and making the bridal robe.

But now an elegant lilac silk was found in the same mysterious box, for mamma, and very like in shade to the one she had worn at her own bridal, twenty-five years before.

All lessons and studies were now suspended. Miss Browne at Glenelvan, and Miss Standish at UMBERHURST, set at liberty—privileged to do, to be, or to suffer—as might suit their peculiar and individual tastes.

It was no slight disappointment to Mildred, when, on receiving a letter from our eldest brother Hermann, we learned that it was no longer to be thought of, his being present

at the first marriage among my father's children, taking place at Glenelvan. He stated that it would be quite impossible for him to leave home the present year. But added that he and Lena would be prepared and most happy to receive the bride with her husband and retinue, at his house, as had already been hinted to him by Mr. Sterling.

So it was at once settled that this should be. Hermann had now fixed his residence in the city of Mobile, Alabama, and was now becoming a successful merchant, and, in this, his chosen profession, he would doubtless continue, until by the natural course of events, he should succeed to the proprietorship of Glenelvan.

Our cousin Leonora Rapelje was at home, having recently graduated at a far-famed seminary in Troy, and was to be a bridesmaid. There was neither hurry or confusion; full time was given to every department, so that the daily comfort of our household was in no way sacrificed.

But there was no obstacle whatever to prevent my mother's house being well ordered. With abundant means to provide every comfort and convenience, with taste to combine and invent, with a full supply of faithful, well qualified and warmly-attached servants, who were part and parcel of her household, and her own life entirely devoted to the happiness and honor of her husband, and the education and moral training of her children.

And she in return was loved and honored by her whole household and people. No shadow of neglect, no slighting remark, no premeditated stab, no licentious sneer at home-relations or marriage, ever found place beneath my father's roof.

The usual routine of our daily life flowed sweetly on. So to the last hour Mildred's stay with us was filled with a calm, long-enduring pleasure. I am more glad of this, more grateful that this pleasant remembrance abides with me, than for those hours of brighter happiness given me at an earlier date.

Our Mildred's bridal day at length dawned. There was

no packing of trunks and boxes, for the bride was to remain at home some days, to see her friends, previous to entering upon the wedding tour.

The Sterlings came up by the afternoon boat. The guests were all arrived—and of these there were a goodly number.

The picture of aunt Engel had been unveiled, and baby Gertrude smiled upon us from out her golden curls, and Hermann was also present, but only in a gilded frame. I suddenly glanced back to the shadowy recollection of another bridal morn, but that any marriage had ever taken place, I could not remember, and could never learn.

To shake off these dreary thoughts, I quickly looked toward Mildred. Pen of mine could never portray her perfect loveliness. The richness of her dress enhanced her beauty: she was a pure gem in the costliest setting. Her eyes were of heaven's own blue, and deep and calm; her bright, wavy hair, with its falling ringlets, gleamed soft beneath the folds of her bridal veil, and about her queenly neck her uncle Hastings had fastened a splendid necklace of pearls; the trifle which he hinted was to be added to the bridal toilette on this most happy day.

And mamma wore the new lilac silk, and her pearl necklace, which has been alluded to previously as having been among her bridal gifts, from the same munificent hand.

The evening was soft as summer; the harvest moon shone in her most resplendent beauty. There was not much mirth, but evidently a great deal of pleasure. Cousin Leonora—as bridesmaid, was looking very sweetly—was assisted in her graceful duties by a brother of Mr. Sterling. A whole flock of gay butterflies, in the persons of some dozen laughing girls just escaped from boarding schools, trembled and fluttered about the spacious rooms. The elders held grave converse, grouped about, or seated on divans and sofas, or gracefully reclining in the luxuriant arm-chairs. The scene was suggestive of pleasantest thoughts.

Wax candles were burning brightly in the halls and in all

the festive chambers. The scene within doors was very brilliant, and out in the gardens it was like fairy-land.

Our good minister, from the village, was present to officiate, and the marriage proceeded in the usual form; for in minds so noble, and so true, no distant thought of the perverted sense, the tortured uses to which this simple form can be applied, to take from woman her identity, her personal liberty, and her inherited property, or rightful income, could ever find a home. Just and equal in all their ways, they had no thoughts to give to minds of different mould.

After that little episode of solemn joy, the younger guests were loosed from restraint, and went flitting over the house, and about the gardens, Rose and cousin Fan being at the head of the gay troupe. Haidee was very happy; she had never seen us so gay. She mostly attached herself to me or Belle, and though seemingly well pleased with the gay young ladies who sought her friendship, it cost her an effort to take up a new interest. We had a sprightly dance at the close of the evening, in the old hall, with various little "side issues," sallies of wit and gay repartee. Then came the breaking up: kindest wishes expressed, and adieus made; and our guests went on their homeward way, startling the lone night-bird from his pensive song, poured forth amid the tremulous shadows, and echoed across the green meadows, lying low beneath the holy light of the harvest-moon. * * *

A few days after Mildred's marriage, it was announced to our people and friends, that Haidee was betrothed to my brother Edgar. At first this was objected to by my parents, on the plea that the relationship was too near, the young people being full cousins; but it was eventually settled that Haidee had so largely inherited her mother's organism as to make the intermarriage safe—more than this—it was even desirable. My uncle was very solicitous to secure his beloved child's happiness, and was willing that Haidee should look forward to Edgar as her future husband; such a cus-

tom, an early betrothal, having prevailed among her relatives at home. But, in this case, the marriage was not to take place for some years to come.

One evening, it was the last on which dear Mildred was to be with us, our whole family were gathered in the south parlor, some of our relatives and a few guests were there. Miss Standish was with us for a short time, not having returned to Umberhurst after my sister's wedding.

Mamma was looking pleased and very lovely. She was not to part immediately from Mildred, as with Rose and Edgar, she was to go with the newly wedded on their bridal tour.

Miss Standish sang, and her rich and highly cultivated voice was a fine accompaniment to Miss Browne's splendid playing. Both were fine, but my eyes turned from all others to Haidee. It might have been in some degree the new interest which invested the little lady, her own dawning happiness, and a consciousness of her father's pleasure, but this night she was beautiful exceedingly.

The satin dress of pale rose color, edged at the sleeves and round the neck with a rich lace, over which fell in loops and chains a necklace of emeralds, sparkling in the pale, lucid light, her dark wavy hair partially confined by a slender chain of gold, and fastened on her forehead by a ruby clasp, became her well. No one could possibly have mistaken her foreign birth. The brilliant olive complexion, the dark, almond-shaped and lustrous eyes, the silken gloss of her raven hair with its peculiar wave, the coral lips, and over all the soft harmony of voice, told of warmer blood than ours. She sat—in seeming, the youthful queen of the East.

Her mother must have been very handsome, yes, but darker and heavier.

Edgar sat near and sometimes addressed her by a gentle look or word, but for all this, an expression of sadness, soft, fond, bewitching, was stealing over that dear face.

I guessed the cause, but believed Haidee to be unconscious that any feeling was betrayed, so gentle was her demeanor. In the morning, Edgar was to leave us, for some months, at least. She had so few to love, Edgar I knew was very dear to her, and this was her first parting, save that one sad and last parting with her mother some years before.

With this thought, I went softly to her, and slid my arm tenderly around her. She looked up quickly and a tear fell from her lovely eyes. I shall never forget that tear. It was the first, but not the last I saw her shed—this was but a gentle regret, others I have seen raining from those passionate eyes.

Captain Stanly Hastings had at first intended to join the bridal tourists. Haidee had wished to go, and Miss Browne was pleased with the idea of seeing something more of this barbarous land. Edgar was eloquent in argument and persuasion to that effect—but to this plan, aunt Frances objected. She had, as yet, seen little of her brother, she would have him at Umberhurst. She wished to be more acquainted with his daughter, her house was large enough to entertain them all, indeed they would be very happy.

Seldom were aunt Frances' arguments resisted, her determined will, never. Her children were well taught and obedient, her husband always found her plans and reasons too wise to be slighted. So in this case, the simple though earnest wishes of the many, yielded to the compound wish of one, and uncle Hastings decided to spend the period of mamma's absence at Umberhurst, making, in the meantime, various excursions into the country.

There was as little leave-taking as consistent with the affectionate regard in which we lived, and each strove to render the parting as cheerful as possible.

Many of us walked down to the boat-landing, where Mildred and her husband, mamma, Edgar, Rose, and Katrine were to embark. Hans and Monica had said good-bye to Katrine up at the house; they were both too staid of habit

to manifest any feeling. "The girl was only going with her mistress for a little jouruey," said they.

But John went down to take mamma and uncle Hastings, Yoppa followed with the trunks and boxes. Meta carried Rose's little satchel, and Susan had a magnificent boquet to present to her at the last moment. * * The boat came sweeping down the noble river—last kind wishes, words of fondest affection were expressed, and the parting was over, and we returned to the now desolate seeming house. Desolate! How that word burnt into my brain.

I would not give one moment to vague imaginings. Haidee was very sad, I must comfort her—was it not for that I had remained in Glenelvan? As also to cheer poor papa's loneliness? I would be faithful to my trust.

CHAPTER VIII.

"We are spirits, clad in veils,
Which no human eye can pierce."

A FEW days sufficed for Stanly Hastings and his daughter to become quietly settled at Umberhurst. With this accession to the family, aunt Frances thought it advisable to procure an additional servant, one fitted to be a parlor maid, to accompany Belle and Haidee in their long rambles in the wood, and also when required, to give a willing hand to household duties.

The choice fell upon Phillis's young sister Sarah, who proved to be a person exactly suited to fill this post. She had agreeable manners, was respectful, though she was very proud and very handsome. She would certainly have been a very uncomfortable domestic, if she had met with a mistress who was supercilious or overbearing. But aunt Frances had no faith in the system of "*putting down*," neither would she for a moment tolerate "*stuck-up-ways*," but her aim was for the real elevation of her servants.

So, aunt Frances and the handsome Sarah were well-suited to each other. Sarah's home-relations were of the most peculiar order. She, with Phillis and their three brothers, elder than themselves, being the illegitimate children of the late Major Peter Williams, who had shown some considerable degree of courage in action in the war of 1812. Her mother, Renee, was a brown woman, who had been in the Major's family from her infancy. Renee's mother was probably of African birth, as she belonged in the elder Williams' family, but that cannot now be ascertained with any certainty. Major Williams had been a man of wealth, of fine education and polished manners. He had lived a life—not of ease, but

of *idleness*, and had spent wholly the fine estate he inherited from his father.

With his paternal estate, he inherited a fondness for the social glass, and in his gay moods, he was often heard to boast of the varied gifts of his two high-spirited, handsome girls—Phillis and Sarah

But the Major had other family relations, less remarkable. He had married his cousin, Miss Polly Williams, a pretty, pink-faced, lady-like woman, who put on her white silk gloves to go out into the kitchen, and who once cried when, at the dinner, the pastry was found to be overdone. Miss Polly had been quite an heiress, and this accident, instigated her silly mother to deny her any useful occupation. So she grew up a mere plaything, as pretty as a wax doll, and of as little value.

“Other family relations?” Oh, yes, the Major had besides his pretty baby-faced wife, a large family of children, in no way remarkable for beauty or sprightliness. But these have all gone to heaven, I trust, for they are all dead.

At length, Sarah’s mother, Renee, became pious, and then besought the Major to allow her to go away from his house. He finally consented, and she went out to service, and soon united herself to a church and became an eminent christian. Renee chose the sheltering care of the Baptist Church—that being in that region the only one in which women had full liberty to pray and “exhort” in public, and she being a lively christian, could not “hold her peace,” so it became a well-conceded fact that Renee’s prayers and exhortations on the Sabbath day were a source of never-failing interest to the strangers within those gates.

But her children all remained with Major Williams, and she eventually married a colored man, with whom she lived in great harmony, in her daily prayers remembering her “dear ’panion,” pleading fervently for him, that he might become a servant of her Heavenly Master.

Major Peters’ days of idleness drew near their close.

From the social glass, he grew to be a drunkard—but soft, I meant not to use so harsh a term—he never quarreled with his neighbors, and was uniformly kind to his wife. Sarah still remained with them, waiting on and toiling for her mistress, now taking in any kind of work to eke out a living, for they were very poor. But Phillis had gone out to service, sharing her wages with her former mistress, who, although she might have been most indulgent, had never been very judicious. In her house these girls had grown to womanhood, and learned—never a thing but to work, and for this even, they were indebted to Renee, their mother.

It was winter. Major Peter, now with neither carriage or horse, or means to hire or pay for a conveyance, walked daily to the little village for his “dram,” often returning late in the evening, with feeble and tottering steps. One evening he had not returned—it was growing late, the fire was low, and Sarah put her mistress to bed, for she was now an imbecile old woman—and went herself, and was in a moment fast asleep.

A part of their large house had been rented to an old man and his wife. The man was temperate, hale, and an early riser, and in the morning the Major was found by this old man, just beyond the garden, half way across the little lawn, dead—frozen!

He was lying in the little footpath leading across the lawn to the garden gate, within sight, within call of the house. He was enfeebled by intemperance, stupefied, and fell to rise no more.

There were two sincere mourners for this poor man—Sarah, and his little grand-daughter Agnes, a little girl whose mother, (their oldest child) dying, left her helpless babe to the old people. Agnes was a sweet tempered, fair, intelligent and active little girl, and had grown up with Sarah, who had taught her all her own household ways, and their united effort had kept their aged parents in a measure of comfort.

But Mistress Polly had wealthy relatives, who might have

given her some aid—instead, however, they very scrupulously avoided all inquiries into her domestic affairs. Time sped on, nor waited for their liberality; at last the feeble old lady was gathered to her ancestors, and Sarah was told that she could “leave,” the relatives would look after the “effects,” and send Agnes to school, “at their own cost.”

So, pretty Agnes went—but to a “free school,” and paid her own board by her active, industrious little ways.

And aunt Frances was only too glad to take Sarah into her house—she was exactly the person desired at dear, genial and much loved Umberhurst.

Belle and Haidee were in ecstasies. And Sarah soon loved these “delightful little ladies,” as she called them, for she felt that they regarded her with sincere good will.

“Dearest aunt Frances,” Haidee said, “you should have been a queen, for you evince royal tastes. You have such handsome people about you, and this is an infallible sign of high birth.”

“This is truly most agreeable, my dear,” aunt Frances answered, “and we must also strive to have good people about us, and people must be made and *kept* good, by watchful care, and judicious treatment. Do you not think so, little dear?”

“I could not fail to think so, after what I have seen here and at Glenelvan. When I am older and wiser, I hope I shall be like you and aunt Annie.”

“Thank you, pet. I feel that you will be good, even though you should not be like either Annie or me.”

Belle and Haidee wrote a line, or rode over to Glenelvan every day, sometimes taking Sarah with them. I was glad to see the latter now looking so happy, as I had previously seen her, on her brief visits to Phillis, looking worn and anxious. Now her cheeks were bright with blushes, and her lips with grateful smiles. She had been kind and faithful to her old mistress, and now she had found good and true friends.

I had duties and occupations of varied interest to me, yet, amid them all, came mournfully the memory of an early friend and playmate, the young, orphaned Albertine. My father was pleased that I had taken a fancy to drive out to the wild old place, as offering another and newer object to me for amusement. He much feared I should be growing dull.

Haidee had kindly persisted in leaving her ponies for my use; these were harnessed to the pretty carriage, and Miss Standish and I set out, on—papa said—“love’s pilgrimage.” It was a serene, autumnal afternoon, the route familiar to me, and I boasted of being a good, and upon an occasion, a rapid driver.

We found Albertine very lonely, looking pale, and very sad. Her mother had died a month before. Fred was away. I sat with her, in her grandfather’s small garden, and she told me of her mother’s gradual decay; of her peaceful death; of her own weariness and useless pining for companionship and family ties; and then, my own affluent resources—of friends—family—home association, and tidal flow of spirits, rose up in contrast to this dear girl’s great desolation.

I wiped my face of the gathering moisture, and bade her look on a more cheerful picture. Then I spread out before her, as in a bright panorama, our Mildred’s marriage, and a brief history of my charming cousin Haidee. Albertine listened—was greatly pleased, and for the time forgot her own saddened life. I assured my poor, dear little friend, that I should drive over, with those handsome little ponies, at a very early day, and take her back with me to Glenelvan, to spend a week with me, and kind Miss Standish.

“It must be that you are my good genius, Minnie. I can be, and am, grateful for your kindness to me, but I can in no way return it,” Albertine said, with a brighter look than had yet dawned upon her pale face.

“You will return it to me a thousand fold, my darling Albertine, by being happier,” I said. And then her grandma came to the garden-door and called us to tea.

Miss Standish had remained within to visit with grandma, as she said; and also, in her kind and pretty way, helped her to bring out the table and lay the cloth. It was doubtless her intention to cheer the old people, and her success was very evident. Old Mr. Bartell, Albertine's grandpapa, had grown quite cheerful; said many kind things, and referred with much feeling to the time my own dearest papa took Albertine home with him, to spend the summer at school. Then he said, he should call me "a little rose, only that he could never discover a *thorn* about me."

"Ha, ha!" I said, laughing, "that, sir, is because you see me so little."

"Never a rose without a thorn," grandma said, smilingly, "and the prettier, the more hath it need of this natural protection."

"And that is true, too," Miss Standish said, "and should any one doubt the fact of Miss Minnie's being amply provided with this 'natural protection,' or provision of nature, I have only to say, they had best try a pluck at her."

This remark was received with much gaiety.

"My quondam governess should know," I said, smiling; "for though she did not exactly pluck the rose, she was very successful in plucking up the weeds."

"Ah, that is too kind; I meant it in mere playfulness."

"Pray do not apologize, the occasion was too good to be lost."

At this moment, Mrs. Bartell passed my friend a plate of most charming apple-jelly, and the conversation turned upon fruits and preserves.

When our tea-table chat was ended, we rose and made ready to leave; we dared not linger, for it was more than six miles from hence to Glenelvan.

I was happier as we drove home in that soft twilight. I felt that we had carried sunshine beneath a roof all too shaded for a life so young and so frail.

And I softly repeated, as guiding my little ponies gently along—

"We are spirits clad in veils,
Which no human eye can pierce."

Did I deem that my poor, pale, drooping Albertine would ever come to me, and lift me up—I drooping hopelessly! I, crowned with rosy health—guided—guarded on every side, and affluent beyond my capacity to show? How should I? No. Such thoughts as these rose not upon my horizon. The skies of my early morning still beamed blue, unflecked by fleecy cloud or passing shadow.

All praise for this! Praise for the inexpressible happiness of my childhood.

CHAPTER IX.

PAPA and Miss Standish seemed to think it a Christian duty to sustain a cheerful spirit throughout the household. Susan was now with us to assist Meta, and also to take the initiatory steps, essential to her, if she were ever to fill Katrina's place.

Hark ! The storm that had for three days been slowly gathering, broke at nightfall in unprecedented fury. I sat with papa in the west sitting-room, and gazed out upon the driving rain, the dark, ominous clouds rolling up into mountains against the sky. The winds howled in the forest, then came sweeping down, wrestling with our great elms, who tost their ponderous arms toward heaven, and shrieked and moaned, and the thick foliage was scattered afar, like chaff. Flashes of lurid lightning quivered along the wall ; then crash upon crash came the deafening thunder, beneath which was heard the sharp click of hailstones, as they cut and shivered upon the thick panes of glass.

I was no egoist then, (or ever) but was almost unconscious of my own existence. I felt as if swept and hurled away by the spirit of the storm. I started with a shriek, as I felt myself gathered up by a strong arm. It was papa, lifting me from an unconscious attitude—leading me into the centre of the room, saying very kindly—

"You are safer here, Minnie. But do not show any alarm—our people are already nearly frantic ; we must calm their fears."

"I do not think I am much alarmed, dear papa ; but a scene of such terrific grandeur carries me away."

"This love of the sublime will be misinterpreted, child—

taken for mortal fear, or, perhaps, idiocy (smiling,) by all here, except your papa, upon whom," he added, in an undertone, "rests at this moment many an agonizing thought."

At that instant, the whole room was one lurid glare of ghastly light, the garden, the walk, and the great trees stood out in fearful distinctness, then came a fearful crash, and Lion the great house-dog howled a mournful, death-like wail.

Meta opening the door paused and stood still, in speechless terror. Miss Standish had, an hour before, begged permission to remain alone in her chamber.

Papa prest my hand, saying—"My child, you are the mistress now in your father's house, show yourself a worthy daughter of your mother."

I felt that he said this to encourage me, so I went to Meta, took her hand, saying—

"My good girl, we shall soon be in worse than Egyptian darkness. Please hasten to put a light in the hall, I am coming out with papa to talk with you all, and to see if this is really such a dreadful storm."

"Oh, Miss Minnie, I would scarcely for my life touch my hand to a match !"

"Then I will go with you to the kitchen fire, and we will procure a light, without increasing your fears."

We went, procured lights and placed them in the hall, where we found a trembling and affrighted group. Hans and Monica were upon their pale faces an unusually troubled look, and Susan, who was henceforth to remain at the house, to supply Katrine's place, sat holding on sturdy little Yoppa's hand. John, who took an occasional turn to see that all the doors and windows were safe, had just returned from one of these visits, and was standing by the side of Biddy Malone and her Patrick, who was holding their fat baby. These, driven by their superstitious fears, had fled up to "The House," softly. Then there was an old sea-faring man, ill and far from home, who had, in the morning, come to Glenelvan to ask aid of papa to enable him to return to his

family. This had been given with something over for the young ones at home. But papa, fearing lest this poor man should be overtaken by the gathering storm, had given him a cordial welcome to his house, to remain with Hans and Monica until there should be fine weather. Baxter, so he gave his name, weary and disheartened, gratefully accepted this unlooked for kindness. He was not alarmed apparently by this fearful storm, yet his look was a troubled one. His thoughts might have been with his helpless family, or with his tried companions, now far away upon the stormy-swept ocean.

John brought a large arm-chair for papa and placed it in the centre of the hall, and a smaller one for me, beside it. Then in a voice far from steady, said—

“Please to speak a kind word to them, if you can, sir—they fear for those who may be on the sea.”

A sudden pallor passed across papa's face. He went over quickly and spoke to Monica. A deafening roar filled all the house with its many voices. Papa returned, sat down by me and took one of my hands in his—“Minnie, we must talk to each other, even though our thoughts be far away from our subject.”

“I will try. Perhaps you will tell me how uncle Hastings came to be so deeply interested in Edgar!”

“Ah, I see you mean that I shall do double duty—but I fear I shall be rather rambling and disconnected, so please to commence catechising.”

“When Edgar has finished his collegiate course and mastered a profession, he is to marry Haidee and become uncle Hastings' heir!”

“Yes. That is the present wish of the parties concerned.”

“But, papa, I have always thought you had an insuperable objection to the intermarriage of full cousins?”

“What! and if I have!—” papa said, with a quick start.

“Oh,” I said, somewhat alarmed—“Indeed I thought Edgar would yield to your wishes, sir, or at least not cross them.”

“This is a very different case,” papa said slowly—but to what other “case” he alluded, I was unaware.

After a silence of some few minutes, he calmly added—“Stanly Hastings has no son. He has great wealth, and means that this shall never be sought through the medium of his daughter's hand—though the mere thought of such a thing can but excite a smile—for the young lady is very beautiful, and gives promise of great personal worth. Then he has some reasons of his own for wishing his family to be connected with his sisters, as they will then reside a part of the time in England. But then, Haidee is not like any other cousin of Edgar's. She is of a different nation, of different blood, and, though her mother, a Hindoo Princess, had little learning, and Haidee herself be at this time but imperfectly educated, the marriage is one greatly to be desired.”

“Haidee is richly gifted, I know, and there is no fear but that Miss Browne will render her a thoroughly educated and highly accomplished young lady. The rudiments——” the remaining part of the sentence died on my lips. The whole house seemed one blaze of lurid light, whilst the maddening roar of heaven's artillery thundered and crashed through those spacious halls. We sat motionless—awe-stricken.

This passed—a breathless silence reigned, save the far-off muttering and warring of this elemental strife. A door was suddenly thrown open, and John entered from the vestibule of the north gable.

“It has struck, sir, struck and burning.”

“What is burning, John?”

“The fir-tree, sir, old Noah, that has stood since the flood.” Hastening to the north vestibule, we saw the old fir-tree uprooted by the storm, some of the dead branches crackling in the blaze. It was a fearful thought, the winds were blowing the flames directly toward the house. Another crash! And the rain poured in torrents, extinguishing the fire—and the whole visible world seemed in a moment deluged in storm and darkness.

I felt conscious that papa uttered prayer and thanksgiving. I could scarcely note any abatement of the storm, and the night were away. But I bethought me of my duties. I would be a considerate and judicious mistress over my father's house, so at a very late hour I persuaded our people to get to their beds, and gave directions to have the strangers all comfortably lodged in that department appropriated to Hans and Monica.

The fury of the storm had by this time, evidently passed far beyond Glenelvan, and little was now heard above the moaning and sobbing of the winds and driving rain. I will not say I passed the night—but I fell asleep listening to those wailing voices, with a wearying pain at my heart, which left me not when the morning broke.

Days passed, serenely now, for the storm was over, though evidences of its wrath were abundant. Days passed—three—four—and news came of heavy shipwrecks and widespread desolation. Where were our dear ones? how fared it with them?

The elder Mr. Sterling, my new brother's father, had sent papa information respecting the ship in which our family had embarked. We began to look eagerly and fearfully for news of this. It came. Watching with trembling eagerness, which almost amounted to frenzy, the elder Sterling had gained sure and unmistakable evidence of the truth. The facts, briefly stated, he immediately forwarded by a swift messenger. Papa took the letter, tore it open, read.—I watched with breathless anxiety—his face grew deathly pale. The letter fell from his hands—he rose to his feet exclaiming—

“Great God! my wife, my children, dead!”

Hans and Monica—their usually calm faces distorted with fear, forgot their wonted reserve, and came in and seized papa's hands, crying—

“And Katrine—where is our Katrine! tell us of her!”

A kind of wild despair overspread the whole group. Sobs,

muttered words, and agony of heart and mind passing all expression! Papa broke from them, and summoned John.

“My horse! Bring Fleet—I go to the city.”

Fleet was brought, neighing and prancing, to the marble mounting-block, at the edge of the gravel walk. Papa was leaving the room, when his eyes fell on Miss Standish, who sat there, calm and still, with the large tears rolling silently down her pale cheeks.

“Young lady,” he said hurriedly, “have a care for these wretched people!” and sprang upon his horse and dashed away.

I was helpless, mad and dumb with grief and terror. All those wailing voices, the deafening roar, the lurid glare, the drenching, the terror and dismay of the late fearful storm, seemed repeated in tenfold fury. I seemed in the midst of it, living it over again, it was so mixed and mingled with my present woe. I saw nothing clearly—I cannot well remember how the time sped. It was a weary time I know—but at last I heard a voice of prayer, of pleading—it seemed a dark cloud parted and an angel's face looked out. It was the face of my mother. Then I dropped silently out of pain, and was in heaven with *her*.

After many days papa returned; but so utterly unlike himself, that a great cry rose up in my soul, which I suddenly hushed down into a quivering sob. I dared not add my grief to his, it was already too great for him to bear. To me he said little; to others nothing, saving the brief replies made to unavoidable questions. I did not attempt to console, I offered no caress, fearing that I should only give pain. Yet ever and always I could feel my mother's whispered prayer that I should comfort him.

How was this great and sorrowful event borne at Umberhurst? My uncle's fond and proud hopes laid low! Haidee's warm, young life forever chilled, clouded by the mournful death of her betrothed! Alas, who would make amends to him for this last, great disappointment—who should comfort her? Oh, not papa, and not I. Separately, but most

cruelly, were we paralyzed in action, intellect and love, by this stunning blow.

This was terrible ! lost in amazement ! in blank despair ! we were sinking into a state of stagnation, dying slowly down to the root ! John brought an ominous looking letter from the post-office. Papa opened and read—his pale lips grew paler and quivered, as a tear slid slowly down and dropt upon his hand. Beckoning me to a seat near him, and putting the letter into my hands, he bade me read.

There was a note of a few lines from Lena, a heavier letter from my brother Hermann's physician. He stated that my brother had not been well when he had written the letter informing Mildred that he could not be present at her wedding. He had grown rapidly ill, of one of those terrible southern fevers. As the day drew near on which he hoped for the arrival of his mamma and sisters, he rallied somewhat, only to sink again—and died on the 21st. of September, the very night on which the Valpraiso went down, and with it all the fond hopes, the glory of my father's house. * * *

The days and weeks that followed, are covered with a pall—no hand so daring as to lift it, to look beneath. * * *

Miss Standish had kindly offered to go to Umberhurst, to bear our words of sympathy, then return to us. It was long since that sad day—many weeks had elapsed—winter was drawing near. Aunt Frances had been with her family to see us at different times : she was good and kind, and very tender in her attempted consolations ; but oh, how vain were all these—word nor deed could cure such wounds—only the Great Healer could ever bind them up.

The quiet autumn was slowly passing : winter was drawing near. The Hastings were soon to depart, making a short tarry at some of the West India islands, on their way to England. I must—I would see Haidee once before I parted from her forever. She would go to England ; then to some far country. I must remain with papa. Oh ! no—no, we should never—never meet again !

There would be few to love us ; we were two desolate and motherless little maidens ! * * *

I went to Umberhurst. Fan and Belle met me, looking sad, but kissed me many times, from pure sympathy and grief. Haidee had grown calmer, they said ; but I saw that her great sorrow had made terrible ravages in her young face. In the first hours of her agony, she would not allow Miss Browne in her room, or near her.

So young, and all unschooled by sorrow, her impassioned nature burst forth in wild and frantic lamentations. She could ill brook those elegant and polished condolences. Bettine, her maid, attended her faithfully—attempting nothing, she served best with her mute kindness. Haidee, exhausted with her bitter crying, at night laid her poor aching head in Phillis's lap, and gathered in those tender arms, hushed upon that loving bosom, she sobbed herself to sleep.

Of late, too, she had learned greatly to confide in her cousin Leonora. It was a worthy trust. Beside a well-formed mind, Leonora had a good heart, pleasing manners, and a lovely face. Since Haidee's manifest aversion to her governess, her father and aunt Frances had seen the necessity of having her placed in the immediate care of a lady qualified to be her guardian and friend.

There was no one more fitted for this position than Leonora. So it was decided at once, and Miss Rapelje promptly made ready for a journey, that might extend over half the globe. And in these preparations Miss Georgina Browne gave efficient aid, and Sarah, the new parlor-maid, proved herself of inestimable value. She was a beautiful seamstress, could cut and fit a lady's dress with taste and elegance, and was in ecstasies amid velvets and merinos.

But Sarah, light-hearted as she now was, and generous as she had always been, was scarcely prepared for the blow she was about to receive through her affections. Haidee had set her heart upon taking Phillis away with her, to keep her always. She could not be denied ; indeed, the Rapelje's

thought this a wise measure, and Phillis was unspeakably happy with her prospect of being with, and watching, and tending the loving and most fondly-loved Haidee. But Sarah, with the work going on rapidly beneath her nimble fingers, would suddenly drop it, and go from the room for a few minutes, and then return, her eyes dried, but looking somewhat red. Yet withal putting forth her utmost skill in completing her sister's ward-robe, as this also required some considerable attention, and continually striving to congratulate her on her unlooked-for good fortune.

One alone, in that varied group, was in possession of most excellent spirits,—this was Miss Georgina Browne; for in lieu of having the education of the Indian Princess to carry slowly forward, she was to remain at Umberhurst, for a finishing process with the Misses Rapelje—Fannie and Belle. As previously stated, I went to Umberhurst.

My sad visit was made—I was soon to leave—was just saying a few last words to Haidee; she was holding my hands, looking fondly and mournfully up into my face.

“Dearest Haidee, I thank you for loving me so well. When I can see you no more, and amid all my suffering, I shall remember your dear little face. I shall think of our many and pleasant drives together. And, to-morrow, I will send over the dear little ponies.” My poor cousin cried out, suddenly—

“Stop. No more. The ponies are yours. I will never see them again. Do you know, the first time my eyes ever saw them—he—my Edgar—stood holding the reins, caressing their glossy necks,—and, dear Minnie, driving over that smooth, shaded way, he told me he loved me. Oh, my lost Edgar!” And thus, in a passionate burst of grief, ended our parting words.

I was helpless to comfort her; but dear, good Phillis came—laid her arms tenderly about that quivering form—bore her to a seat in the piazza, and sat down.

Then the good creature turned that little, weeping face

upon her bosom, striving all the while to soothe this exceeding sorrow, with fondest words and gentlest ways, as a tender mother warms and comforts her weary child.

My blessing I left with the good, true-hearted Phillis, for her tender care of this sweet, but broken flower.

Thus I parted from my cousin, and saw her no more. Uncle Hastings was grave, though affectionate in manner—said many kind things—promised to write, and wished me to write to him; yet our parting was sad. But it was over. They went down to the city the next day, and immediately embarked for Hayti, where they proposed spending the greater part of the winter.

CHAPTER X.

"As if a door in heaven should be
Opened, and then closed suddenly,
The vision came and went."

LONGFELLOW.

Poor, desolate heart ! Dark, desolate house ! How shall the sunshine of joy ever again enter within these chambers ? And the voices answered—Never again.

Dimly and sluggishly came the memory of Albertine. She had neither father or mother or sister. Few were the friends she had ever known, brief the joys of her lonely life. Happiness, I felt I could never know again ; but I would go and comfort her, the lone orphan.

I bade Yoppa go and send John to me. When he came, I said—"I wish to have the poney-carriage got out. I intend to drive over to old Mr. Bartell's, and perhaps I shall bring Miss Albertine home with me."

"Are you strong enough to drive so far, Miss Minnie, do you think ?" John asked, with some anxiety.

"Oh, I am quite strong, good John, so please let me have the ponies directly." * * *

Arrived there, it did not escape me, that though Albertine had grown tall, she was slender and pale.

I could not remain long, and the grandmamma eagerly accepted my earnest invitation for Albertine to return with me, and I saw in this, as in some guarding cares, that both her grand parents were overshadowed by the fear that their frail, slender girl was hastening to join her dead mother.

The Bartells had heard of papa's great loss—they also remembered mine, but little was said with a direct bearing upon the subject—these were wounds which shrank from

the touch. But, as I parted from the old lady, she held my hand a moment, to say—

"The Lord keep you in the midst of his holy angels."

We drove slowly back, lengthening out for Albertine this rare pleasure. * * *

Far down the carriage-way, we found John awaiting us, and his good face brightened, as he saw me driving safely up, and he laid his broad hand on the pretty, dappled heads of the ponies, petted and praised them for bringing the little mistress safely home. And then he took a sugared cake from his pocket and gave to each, at which they whinnied ; laying back their smooth ears, champed the delicious morsel with evident pleasure.

Albertine and I suited well, neither of us requiring anything of the other. But I desired Miss Standish to commence a course of study with her, if agreeable to them both, for I wished her to be wholly content, and to stay with me as long as possible.

The study commenced, and from this time I seemed to fall into a kind of apathy, giving up an interest which I could no longer sustain. Papa spent nearly all his time remote from home, going away to the wild and rocky corners of his estate ; was unusually active ; was punctual in returning to dinner and tea, dividing out his time with such exactitude that not a moment could be lost, as if he had more claims upon his time than he could fill, or, perchance, was practicing some rigid self-discipline from which he could not, or dared not deviate.

He began to look frightfully worn, and I had many fears, for I knew him to be a man of deep feelings, and slow to give them expression. He seemed to have forgotten my existence. No tender word, no kind anxiety for me.

I would not let him see my tears, lest these should be the added drop to his bitter cup. I strove to assume little duties, to take or rather to contrive in my position as the mistress of Glenelvan, to move about, and if not cheerful, yet calm.

Often my steps faltered and failed. I could not caress, but prayed that I might comfort him. My own life was full of great and bitter sorrow which reached down to death. Sometimes this dark and swelling tide rose up in my throat to burst forth in endless sobs. I hushed them down, chained them within my soul's great deeps, with a *will*, with a purpose whose strength I had never known before. My poor papa, I must live for him, comfort him. When this great grief has passed, when it is less keen and bitter, he will have need of me. * * *

It was now in the depth of winter. I often suffered from a dizzy faintness. Lying upon a lounge, too weak or weary to sit up. If I heard papa's step, I would rise instantly, and join myself to some little occupation, or with a few simple questions, elicit answers, simple though not unkind. He was never unkind; but now he was frozen in his sorrow. Once, it was evening, I drew an ottoman and sat down close by his side. My head fell upon his lap—I could not lift it up—I was half asleep. Suddenly papa raising my head, looked into my face.

"Minnie, my child, are you ill?"

"No, papa; but tired—very tired."

I remember nothing more, distinctly, only of seeming to be in my own room. A shaded lamp, with a soft, still light, and a shadowy form, like Miss Standish, or Albertine, bending over me, and cooling my lips. Then all this was forgotten. When I awoke again, the lamp was gone; a soft, mild light pervaded the chamber.

Our old friend, Dr. Jackson, sat by my bed-side, holding my hand. He spoke. I heard a low murmuring sound, but could not comprehend the meaning of his words. Then he seemed to melt out of sight. It seemed to me but a few minutes, when the room was again darkened; the shaded lamp again there, and Miss Standish, or Albertine, or something that was neither, was sitting there with me, like a dim shadow, motionless—breathless—dumb.

My chamber grew, to me, a cave of silences. No breath, or sound, or whispered voice broke in upon its quietude. Its floor, and walls, the heavy drapery of the windows, all its appointments—those long cherished *bijouterie*, and gifts, the links in loved memories—these, and I amid them all had grown to marble.

But at last my thin fingers were held tightly; a cool draught prest my lips. My eyes seemed to open of their own volition, and the good doctor was seated close beside me. His lips moved—he spoke, but I heard not, and turned wearily away, forgetting all earthly things. * * * The sense of a purer atmosphere swept over me; a diviner harmony filled my ears, and I opened my eyes upon a garden full of flowers, lovelier than my mortal eyes had ever beheld. My mother! Yes, I saw her coming, with beaming face and outstretched arms, to welcome me to that glorious world. And there, folded within her snowy robe, was baby-Gertrude; her rosy fingers dropping the fairest flowers, and sweetest leaves, her blue eyes filled with a new delight, as if Heaven was now perfected for her. My mother! Her white robe fanned my cheek—she would gather me within her guileless bosom!

But an agonized cry fell on my ear; the shadow of my poor papa came between me and that bright world. I heard his pleading cry, "Oh, my God! Spare me, oh, spare me this one child!"

I turned my face, as if speaking to one afar off, and thought I whispered—"I am coming back, dearest papa—I will not leave you."

And then I sank down upon a soft and yielding bed, with sweetest flowers for my pillow; the air of the meadows blowing above me, and kindest, gentlest creatures soothed me, and wiped away my tears.

There I leave the weary spirit and wasted body, to a long repose.

* * * * *

"She sleeps! but not the free and sunny sleep
 That lightly on the lids of childhood lies;
 Though happy be her rest, and calm and deep,
 Yet ere it sank upon her shadowed eyes,
 Thoughts of past scenes, and kindred graves o'erswept
 Her soul's meek stillness—she had prayed and wept."

CHAPTER XI.

Spring has come.

GLENELVAN lay bathed in the rosiest light of morning, April showers and bright flashing sunbeams swept the broad landscape, and far over the beetling cliffs, and along the blue rim of the horizon, or in silvery arches above the giant evergreens, hung light fleecy clouds, touched and tinted with heaven's divinest hues.

A few early flowers were peeping over the brown earth in the garden, and the shrubbery seemed one vast casket of gems, opened to the astonished gaze, each graceful bough and tiny stem was strung as with diamonds—young April's tears. White hyacinths, and a few stock-gilly flowers of tyrian purple and an oxalis, were unfolding their varied beauties in the welcome sunbeams that lay broadcast over my chamber floor.

I held a book in my hand, I could read now, and my eyes again sought the page.

"Thanks for the sympathies that ye have shown!
 Thanks for each kindly word, each silent token,
 That teaches me, when seeming most alone,
 Friends are around us—though no word be spoken.

Kind messages, that pass from land to land;
 Kind letters, that betray the heart's deep history,
 In which we feel the pressure of a hand,—
 One touch of fire—and all the rest mystery!

The pleasant books, that silently among
 Our household treasures take familiar places,
 And are to us as if a living tongue
 Speke from the printed leaves or pictured faces!

Perhaps on earth I never shall behold,
 With eye of sense, your outward form and semblance;
 Therefore to me ye never will grow old,
 But live forever young in my remembrance."

I closed the volume. The other verses of the poem were as fine, and Mr. Longfellow is a splendid poet; but I could not pursue any one train of thought to any considerable length of time without weariness. And now I thought of Haidee, and of the brief though kind letter which had been put into my hand during my late convalescence. And by this time they may have left the island, yet it is rather early. * * *

The lowing of cattle, the tramp and whinner of horses, the call of the driver to his team, the sharp and harsh cry of the peacocks, the pleasanter and more varied notes of the guinea and domestic fowls, came like old familiar voices from the busy outer world.

But amid all these evidences of stirring life, the low cooing of the doves beneath my windows, and the twittering of the swallows up under the eaves, came like parting words murmured in ears already filled with the deeper sound of the heavy-rolling drum and the spirit-stirring fife.

All the protecting influences which had hitherto upheld me, seemed swept away—it was as if the strong hand of Destiny had shaken me rudely, and planted my feet upon the battle-field of life, to conquer or to fall—alone. I had never thought to live without the sheltering care and influence of home. My mamma's fond smiles, my sister's companionship, my noble brothers to guard and guide me in all our youthful sports and interests—these I could have no more.

My father—yes, since I have ceased to be merely a pet and plaything and mean to assume grave duties; I will say my *father*, though not old, and still in vigorous health, cannot be wholly associated with me in all the subtle influences which must surround my expanding life.

Glenelvan was to have descended by direct succession to my eldest brother Hermann Emil Minster and his heirs—

now all that was left of these fond and proud hopes, was one young girl—who, it was well remembered, had for a time trembled on the brink of another world.

The door of my chamber was opened, and Miss Standish came in, bringing me a sprig of the trailing arbutus. A drop of rain still trembled in its tiny lips. There was the cluster of pink flowers, breathing an ethereal fragrance and nestling under their sheltering leaf of glossy green.

"Dear Minnie, you are very fond of symbols and poetic associations. I think you will find something very sweet in this."

I held the delicate branch in my hand. "To my mind, it conveys two distinct figures, yet closely allied to each other. But I am slow at putting my thoughts into words."

"Perhaps you see first, the solitary leaf with these sweetest of all flowers, at its root—the parent encircled and sustained by tenderest ties?"

"Yes, indeed, Miss Standish, that was my first thought."

"And the other—you must not forget. The sweet flower smiling beneath its leaf of green, that spreads out and so lovingly covers the little rosy head."

"Thank you, dear Miss Standish, for the lesson and the flower—both are sweet."

"Well, now do not call me *Miss Standish*, any more, my dearest Minnie. We are now, simply friends, dear friends; so please call me Edith."

"Certainly, *dear* Edith. But you are too sad because I am going away?"

"I should be, only that I know it is best for you. But John has come around with the carriage, so we will don our 'bonnet and shawl,' and for the little time yet remaining to us, we will live only in the present. Meta—ah, I was just going to call you—fold Miss Minnie's shawl, and then tell me if you can think of anything that I am forgetting."

"Oh, no, Miss, you have such perfect order. But if you find anything lacking, that you may want, send me word,

for I shall forward it down to the city. And will you please write me now and then, we will all want to hear from you and dear Miss Minnie."

"Oh, certainly. I will write almost every day, my good girl."

"Anything more? Now let me take your reticule, Miss Minnie—I'll give it you when you are seated in the carriage."

Another turn at the mirror—another pin—and we were quite ready. "All ready"—and went tripping down stairs. My father lifted me directly into the carriage; then speaking to Monica, Meta, Susan, and numberless others, said—

"I will say good bye, at the present time, for all. Drive on, John."

Our visit to the great Metropolis at this time was a preliminary leave-taking of Glenelvan. Added to this, my father had some business transactions which it were better to attend to in person. There was much he wished me to see, to hear and to know of my own country, that I might wisely compare it with those we were soon to see. We visited the halls of learning, Schools of Design, Studios of distinguished Artists, Public Schools, Benevolent Institutions, (how gladly I would say Reformatory Institutions too)—we had friends to see—our adieu to make, and this brought us into May—to the ever glorious Conventions. Here were gathered from far and wide all the great and earnest souls who give their strength to the cause of humanity. Here are marshaled all the forces of the great Reformers—here pass in review all the measures, deeds, aims and progressive ideas of the earnest workers and visionary enthusiasts of the New World.

My father, with his quick-kindling zeal, was loth to have us fail to mingle in this moving multitude, which, indeed, was a sight to see.

And there, not far away, but across such a sea of faces, I saw!—and squeezing Miss Standish's arm, I said—

"Dear Edith, if it is not without the pale of possibilities, you must pass me along to that little group of 'Quaker bonnets'—there is Madam Cadwallader and Martha and Lydia."

"Oh! That will be in no wise difficult—follow close in my wake, and see, how cordially every one gives way!"

The next moment we were there, and "How is thee? and how does thee do, Minnie? and dear child, thee is looking better than I had thought to see thee," broke from all three simultaneously, in the sweetest, most kindly modulated tones that ever were breathed from human lips.

Madam was looking as lovely and benign as ever, and for Martha and Lydia I felt a glow of delight, as I gazed on these prim little faces, so like twin roses, beneath their dear little Quaker bonnets. I was so glad to see them, so glad to take this pleasant memory away with me to distant lands. * *

Our sojourn in the city was over—we had accomplished, as far as might be, the purpose for which we went. We were at home again, striving to feel calm, to spend the remaining days in the quiet routine of our daily life, until we should launch upon the greater journey of which the previous one had been merely a preface.

But my heart fluttered, I was feverish and could scarcely sleep at all. Both my father and Miss Standish were disquieted by this, and strove to keep all demonstration of feeling, all excitement away from me.

Susan, I had chosen for my personal attendant. I would not so tax the love and self-denial of Hans and Monica, by taking Meta, and moreover, she had been associated with Rose, was her especial maid, I would leave her there with all the buried affections of my saddened home. And, furthermore, Susan had been my protégé, and was a good trustworthy girl. Miss Standish was to remain at Glenelvan, to have the care of the house, and to be, during my absence, its mistress.

One afternoon, we, that is, my father, Miss Standish and I, taking Meta and Susan with us, drove over to UMBERHURST, as if making our weekly visit. Albertine had made a kind of parting call, though no parting words were said, and, ah, then indeed, we were away. * *

We did not go to Niagara. My father, who had of late studied me more closely, suspected me of having some sentimental proclivities, or rather, to be just to both, I should say, of having quick intellectual feeling, and he knew that my physical condition was, at that time, unequal to the demand, or was deficient in the sustaining forces which the spiritual would have required, in contemplating a work of Nature so grand, so vast and so overpowering. He thought, as I now believe, I should be amazed, wrapt, lost, frantic, in the presence of such sublimity. He was right. With my then ethereal condition, and my love of Nature, its divine lights and shades, its soft features, its vast conception of power, of awful grandeur, Niagara would have been a madness!

At Montreal we spent several days quite pleasantly, attended *service* in the great Cathedral, where a confusion of forms, an abundance of dismal-looking paintings, prayers in a foreign tongue, which it is to be hoped the dense crowd received the spirit of, since they could know nothing of the *letter*, the complicated and overburdened music, amused and interested the feelings, even though they gave no food to the intellect.

The Mountain, this dear old city of Montreal, being on the island of the mountain, the gardens below and the haunted house on the opposite side, had more interest for me. Elois, the young half-breed, who drove our caleché and who spoke very good English, gave us many little scraps of history as well as gossip, belonging to many a well-remembered spot.

And then, on board the Oregon, a handsome steamer, we plough the heavy-rolling waves of the St. Lawrence; and for those who have been borne along these waters, all adjectives added, of noble, grand, magnificent, and so forth, will mean little. The St. Lawrence! it is enough. We were bound for Quebec, and having friends in that city, who, being apprised of our coming, met us at the wharf, and with them we went up into the city-proper.

I had need of rest; so, for several succeeding days, was limited to an early walk to places of interest; to the Governor's garden, the Citadel, and in the evening, to the ramparts.

It was now in the month of June. One glorious morning I went with a friend to the "Falls of Montmorenci," a pleasant drive of nine miles or so. We stood upon the verge of the rock overhanging the Falls. I looked across to the grim shore opposite—down upon the foaming cataract—up to the shadowy cedars—over the swiftly gliding river.

I was conscious of a heavy weight pressing me upon every side, a feeling of suffocation, a feeling of delirious joy—wild—maddening! Could I have shouted back a choral song to these rushing waters—sent my voice ringing up that rocky defile, clapping my hands in the maddening pulsation of blood and brain! Oh! but the presence of my friend was a torture—and I sat down and wept.

A little time passed, and my friend walked along the verge of the chasm, stooped and gathered a pale lily, and brought it to me, saying, low and gently—

"The hand which wrought this great work, also made this little flower."

"Thank you," I said, almost with a sob, and taking the flower.

"I know I should see the Divine Builder, in small as well as great things. This shall hereafter remind me."

CHAPTER XII.

It is not my purpose to write my travels, being unambitious of traveled fame, and choosing rather to live amid the world's glories than to write of them. I leave both the fame and the occupation to those who were to the "manor born."

It would have been pleasant to have remained longer in Quebec; and the primitive habits of the people in the country—the Canadian peasantry—had a charm for me; but it was thought wiser for us to leave that rock-ribbed eyrie before the heat became insufferable. But I left it with deep regret—and we embarked for Liverpool, where, after a pleasant passage, and few disasters, we arrived in safety. Here my father made many enquiries for Capt. Stanly Hastings, but for a long time could gain no intelligence of him; at last, we learned, that with his family, he was away somewhere in Switzerland. So, with a little disappointment shading our almost too keen delight, we went down into the country, to see something of rural life in my mother's native land. * * *

A little past midsummer we went to Scotland—to the Highlands, back to Edinburgh and Glasgow, and after seeing some smaller towns, and a good deal of the peasantry, my father yielded to my often expressed and most earnest wish, to make a voyage to some of those wild and rocky islands lying on the Scottish coast.

He presently found a small trading-vessel, bound for one of the Hebrides, and in this we sailed away up to the Isle of Skye. We landed at Dunvegan, a small town on the coast, said to be the first *town* built in Scotland. I was told, also, that it was built by the Scandanavians or the Danes. The

inhabitants of Dunvegan were mostly fishermen and tradespeople. I wished to see the cultivators of the soil, if such there were, and in doing this, I wished also to go to Portrea, the capital of the Isle. We rejected the Royal Mail, and took a private conveyance—certainly such an one as I had never seen in America. This enabled us to stop where we chose. At last, then, my feet did press the soil of this dreamy land, the misty Skye—a fancy which had long possessed me. We halted in our journey, and passed some days among the peasants. Their simple and industrious habits, and truthful ways, pleased me more than I can tell.

When I tried to learn to spin, the pure-eyed lasses laughed merrily at my awkwardness. I could not, at first, remember to turn the wheel as I pulled out the wool. I laughed too, and then sang one of their own sweet songs—"I cannot mind my wheel," which I had found easier to learn than their spinning.

Two families, living near each other, and joining lands, had each a family of lads and lasses. From their surnames I suspected they were each the offshoots or remnants of the clans once so powerful in Scotland. The first and larger family bore the surname of Douglas—the other, that forgotten name, or title of McGregor.

Between the elder bairns of the two families—Jessie Douglas and Hamish McGregor—bairns they were still termed by their fond mothers, though Hamish was nearing the upper verge of his "teens," and Jessie only two years younger—between these pure and simple hearted children, I saw developing and ripening a warm attachment which probably began longer ago than either could remember.

With each, separately, I had much cozy talk, and unknown to them, was drawing and designing a plan for the future—mine and theirs. Both these families were Protestants, and to my great comfort I learned that there was but *one* Roman Chapel on the island. For that, Romanism might have served, in those earlier ages, when the nations were just

emerging from barbarism—but with the advance of Civilization, enlightened Christians should surely choose a freer and more liberal form of Christianity. Among the more enterprising, there was a movement favoring immigration—some choosing Canada as their future home, others Australia. I showed my views and my wishes to papa, whereupon he talked with the elder McGregor, and the conclusion was, that when his son should desire to immigrate, he should come to Glenelvan.

I chose a favorable occasion to describe to Jessie my home associations, habits, wishes, wants and aspirations—lastly, my wealth.

The innocent, simple, loving Jessie asked lingering questions of that substantial cottage with its spacious garden and pretty bridle-path leading to the hills, crossed by a weevil that found its devious way to the river.

For some years this cottage had been occupied by people in whom I could find little to interest me. This I must change.

Jessie I should love, and could enrich. She should be a companion, friend, coadjutor, a kind of half-sister, and though dependent in fact, for a time, never so in seeming, nor for long. What might I not do for her, were she at Glenelvan, the wife of Hamish McGregor! So much was decided upon—that the young people, Hamish and Jessie, were to have the best advantages for obtaining useful knowledge that their island afforded—they were to be in a course of preparation for their future position, for the space of four years, and in the meantime to aid their parents diligently, and to trust to Providence and to my father for the rest.

We parted with words of cheer, arranging to exchange letters with each family once annually. And this we have failed not to do.

Returning to London, we found letters from uncle Hastings, from Haidee, and from Leonora. They were not decided about their winter quarters; the choice lay between Florence

and Naples. My father desired to spend a large portion of time in Germany. So, escaping from the London fog, we went on our route to Fatherland.

In study, in travel, in observation and kindly offices, a year sped. It was now eighteen months since our arrival in Europe. In the early part of the January ensuing, I should join Leonora and Haidee at Rome. * * All intermediate and passing events drop into oblivion—my carriage stops at a grand entrance—with flying feet I mount the marble staircase—and was clasped in Haidee's encircling arms.

We scarcely spoke, and my cousin seated me on a divan opposite herself. It was more than two years since we had parted at Umberhurst; and, doubtless, each was conscious of a change in the other. Haidee no longer wore her hair in flowing ringlets, but bound in many glossy braids around her beautiful head. She was attired in a morning dress of white silk, with a broad facing of ermine down the front, a collar of the same, rolling back at the throat, displayed a gracefully turned neck, around which was clasped a set of red and white corals, whose warm tints seemed glowing within the rim of that costly fur. Her large, lustrous eyes now shone in all their wondrous beauty—her voice was melody.

Haidee was no longer a child. Her early grief had developed her soul, softened the bright radiance of her beauty and deepened her sympathies—she was lovelier now to look upon for that she had known sorrow.

Haidee was very lovely! Now as I gazed upon her maturing beauty, I thought one would have taken her for my senior. And Leonora had grown tall, very elegant, very queenly-looking. She had been well and thoroughly educated at home, she had improved by her advantages abroad. She had been an invaluable friend to Haidee, and though but eight years her senior, had exercised over her the guardian care of a mother.

With all the masters employed for her, Haidee would still

have made small progress without Leonora, for she had little applicative power, little taste for study. She would never have submitted to the drudging, the drilling and reviewing that is unavoidable, to attain an eminent proficiency. Those children of the tropics cannot dig and delve as we with our colder blood, and less impulsive nature and calculating perseverance. They are differently endowed, and their proficiency must be attained through a different channel. This, Leonora quickly saw, and presently studied out and matured a *plan*, and then acted upon it. While this was going forward, a new thought dawned upon Haidee. Thus it was—

“Pray, allow me to interrupt a pleasant train of ideas, my cousin Minnie, to say, I have a pleasant surprise for you.”

“Indeed! Then the golden cup already at my lips, must overflow.”

“Ah! When I left UMBERHURST, I took the kind-hearted Phillis as a sort of pillow for my aching head, for her motherly arms to sustain me when sinking. After a time, I began to make greater demands upon her. I needed a companion, to toil with me up the difficult steeps of learning. The estimable lady, Leonora, was too far in advance, she stood upon the heights, and with her fair hand, small in the distance, indicated the way. Clearly and plainly, it is true, I could not mistake it, but, oh, it was such a weariness to look from the meadows where I stood, up, far up to the dizzy heights my Leonora had reached! I needed some one with me, who loved me, whom I loved, to whom every advancing step would be as *new* as it was to me. Then it came to me that Phillis had the same thoughts. Then I must go and bring my companion in study up to my point of progress. This occupation, joined to my pupil's eagerness to learn, the novelty of teaching, or perhaps some better feeling, was the first respiration of the new life, ah, after that night of sorrow. * * *

Next to this, now listen, dearest Minnie, during our sojourn

on those islands of the sea, my then pupil, became an object of great interest to—but this by and by. In intelligence, spirit, and therefore beauty, she was greatly superior to the native ladies, and a certain planter took her for Madam Hastings. No! Ah, then, she was my half-sister? No. Not a relation, but a companion and friend. Then this planter took occasion to visit us frequently, and became greatly enamored of my good Phillis, came to papa, and asked her in marriage! He was a widower for the second or third time, very wealthy, very wicked, and waxing old. Papa promptly refused to listen to his suit.

“You refuse me because the lady has greater expectations,” said Mons. Dwanee, “but I am very rich, I can settle—”

“Not at all. She has no expectations whatever. She is the illegitimate daughter of one Major Williams, deceased, of the United States, and my daughter's humble companion.”

“You make this the cause of your refusal?”

“No!”

“Ha, ha—I see. But I have heard that in the United States, the ladies there sometimes decide this question for themselves. Allow me, sir, to bring my suit before Mademoiselle Williams in person.”

Papa paused, not quite knowing what to say; but at last consented, as in fact he could not avoid doing, but stipulated that the visit should be made on the following morning. So papa was for a time relieved from a troublesome annoyance. But in the interim several exquisite boxes of the veriest gems of art and most costly bijouterie were sent in, directed to “Mademoiselle Williams”—and to “Le Phillise,” and “La Philegra,” that she was compelled to accept, for that it was impossible to return them.

The morning came, and with it in equal splendor, Mons. Dwanee. His jewels, he doubtless thought, outshone the sun. “La Philegra” was looking very sweetly, though her blushes deepened manifestly. I really did not know what

the event would be, and was in a state of some considerable perturbation. Oh, for Miss Georgina Browne to have been there present—she, who still cherishes the idiotic idea, that a person must ever remain in *the position* wherein they were born—and to have seen this rich planter, laying his title, wealth, name, homage, and a wedding ring at the feet of the handsome housemaid of Umberhurst!

Very graciously my Phillis received Mons. Dwane's marriage proposals, and very delicately but very firmly declined their acceptance. She could not for any cause leave her young friend and companion, the Princess de Hastings.

"Not now, indeed; well, would she not take time to consider—two months, four, five, six, and then accept?"

She would consider—yes, but the time could not be less than one year. Yes, at the close of one year from the present date she would give her unprejudiced answer.

And then nothing could move her from her decision or her womanly grace. When Mons. Dwane had made his elaborate adieu, I flew to my Phillis, threw my arms around her neck in the very excess of grateful joy, and quite smothered her with my caresses. Papa was very grateful to her, so was dearest Leonora, who has found an able coadjutor in the beautiful La Philegra.

I was greatly interested in this little incident, but most in that Haidee had determined upon a thorough education of her dear friend; for from this great good must accrue. It was now two years since it was commenced upon, and lively as had been my expectations, my surprise, as Haidee had predicted, was very great when I met the quondam Phillis, of Umberhurst—now the elegant and very handsome Miss Williams. The good done was two-fold; for every advancing step made by Phillis, also advanced Haidee.

Leonora believed her cousin to be capable of high attainments, if she could only be won to feel an interest in each lesson, as separately given. She had most competent masters, and when their task for the hour was done, then would

Leonora divide the lesson up into poetic parcels, paint in glowing colors, or sing or explain it in most pleasing language, and so draw upon every point of interest until Haidee had mastered the whole.

This done, the little lady seemed lost in a storm of delight—springing upon Leonora's neck, covering her face with kisses, squeezing her round and dimpled arms, sometimes concluding her ecstasies by a gay frolic with Bettine, her maid.

Miss Georgina Browne would never have made of Haidee the progressive pupil, as did her fond and judicious cousin Leonora. Of this fact, our uncle Hastings was in time fully aware. It was not her *English* habit—not one of her high-born pupils ever had such vagaries—she could not depart from popular measures, that had hitherto been the rule of her life—no, no! Simply—Miss Browne had never struck the key note.

Captain Stanly Hastings had no definite plan for Haidee's future, was content that she should slowly progress in her studies and accomplishments, enjoy her daily life with its allotted measure of happiness, and be his constant companion and friend.

Early in the summer, my father and uncle removed with us to the city of Munich, leaving us there to extract and receive whatever good we might from its literary institutions, its paintings and sculpture, its palaces and churches, by sailing upon the Isar and the Danube, to live and enjoy all the good we could possibly receive into our souls, while they, papa and uncle, went away off to Norway and Sweden, to see the copper mines of Fahlun, and to catch a passing glimpse of those twilight countries, where there is a low civilization—few virtues and few vices. * * * It did not enter into my plan at the beginning, to write my "Travels,"—I have not done it. It only remains to be said, that they ended one year after our arrival at Munich, by our return to our own country, and our arrival at eventide at Glenelvan.

CHAPTER XIII.

"The dearest spot on earth to me,
Is home, sweet home."

Now, indeed, we were at home, at home amid all its great joys, its duties and its interests.

I had brought letters from Leonora to her mother, Fan and Belle, to an almost incredible amount, a few from uncle Hastings and Haidee and "La Philegra."

Miss Standish was still at our house and most happy to receive us, but all in a calm orderly way. I gave Susan one whole week to stay with her mother to relate the wonders she had seen across the water, meantime having Polly up with me occasionally, to learn her ways and character.

We had been absent, my father and I, three full years. I would make no premature efforts to show what I had seen and learned, I could not. These must be *lived* out in the deeds and suggestions of my future life. There was little change in my own home. Hans and Monica appeared precisely as they did three years before. John was somewhat sturdier. Yoppa, a good natured lad of nineteen, bashful and ruddy. Meta, an inch and a half taller, obliging and good natured, the keenness of the sorrow for her sister's death having slowly faded from out her fair face, and leaving in it an expression which was gentle and subdued, a kind of summer twilight air, which pleased and satisfied me entirely.

Fan and Belle came over from Umberhurst in a twinkling. They had certainly made good improvement under the auspices of their most competent teacher. But Miss Georgina Browne was now married to a Mr. Felix Morceou, a wealthy widower, the father of several young children, and now liv-

ing in Fifth Avenue, New York city. He, Morceou, had met Miss Browne about a year before, when she was on a visit to the Metropolis, whither she had gone in company with aunt Frances, Fan and Belle.

The Morceou was perfectly enamored of these many charms. She was certainly in many ways an estimable lady, and aunt Frances bestowed upon her high praise.

Miss Browne would not consent to have a wedding, nothing above an elegant breakfast—not a single guest. Plain Mr. Shaw, the village minister, was called to pronounce the marriage ceremony, with only the family present, and the now sublime Mrs. Felix Morceou stepped into her husband's elegant carriage, and left Umberhurst upon a fashionable wedding tour. It was evident that when this young lady received her last quarter's salary from aunt Frances, their relations to each other ceased.

The parting was perfectly elegant, on aunt Frances's side, it was kind, on that of the bride, very graceful—her manner said—"Good morning, friends. If our acquaintance is ever renewed, do not forget that I am Mrs. F. Morceou, No. 0000 Fifth Avenue, N. Y."

And that was the end. Another marriage had more interest for me! When dear Edith told me this, I lingered over a slip of paper, and found I had written abstractedly—"Married, during my absence abroad, and to a stranger, Albertine Gunnison, aged 18. Lovely in life—Pshaw! What nonsense! John, send round the ponies; I am going to take Miss Standish out for a drive—I think she is getting rather gloomy."

"I would have chosen, rather, that we leap into our saddles and take the bridle-path among the hills, but that—I have yet farther communications to make, which are better suited to a quiet drive."

We were soon seated in the light carriage, and bowling along the green lanes of Glenelvan, choosing at this time to avoid the high-road. Those farther communications being

made, joined to much pleasant talk, there ensued a pause, which I ended by saying—

“Dear Edith, I am quite sure you have something of more interest than all this, yet to tell me !”

“Your conjecture is not groundless. A few weeks before your return, a friend, whom I think you have not forgotten, called with her husband to ascertain when you were to be expected home, and also left a request, to be informed of your arrival.”

“That was kind. Pray who was the lady ?”

“Her name was Maria Grant, but she is now married to—ah, guess, for I think the gentleman is a friend of yours !”

“Impossible ! Maria was receiving some attention from a Mr. Andrews, a young and very handsome man, but surely no friend of mine.”

“That is not the name of the gentleman who is now her husband ; but a very plain man—a Mr. Edward Marvin Noyes.”

“Marvin Noyes ! my old playmate. Now, indeed, this is a very great surprise.”

“Your playmate—yes—for he said, that you taught him to read, afterwards to write, and gave him his first lesson in elocution—he repeating as instructed—‘ You’d scarce expect one of my age,’ &c.”

“Ha, ha ! how well I remember it. Marvin’s father was a tenant of papa’s, and lived in the third cottage, next to Patrick ; was poor and improvident, somewhat intemperate too. There was a large number of children, but none of them were sent to school. Marvin, then an eccentric little fellow, was often up at the house—for he often amused mamma, and was exceedingly fond of her—was always looking into books, and asking what they talked about. This led me to read to him, and then the idea struck me of teaching him to read ; and, although he was several years older than I was, as my pupil, he was docile, and my task was light.”

“Just so. He said they lived here—were very poor, but had received great kindness—that when the children were grown larger, they removed to Millvillage, where they all found employment, and thenceforward their means of living was less precarious than when wholly dependent upon the father.”

“That is good ! What is he doing now ?”

“He has won himself ‘ a local habitation and a name ;’ is a settled minister, in the remote little village of——, down among the hills.”

“Marvin a minister of the Gospel—married to Maria Grant—how strange ! Do not delay the announcement of my return, and give them, in my name, a pressing invitation to pay an early visit to Glenelvan.”

After our drive, and without a moment’s delay, Miss Standish sent the promised missive. My father manifested great pleasure in the intelligence which had been previously communicated to me,—said, if the distance did not preclude the possibility of such an exploit, he would drive down to ——, of a Sabbath morning, and hear his former favorite preach.

Maria Grant had been an occasional visitor to us—was one of the young guests at Mildred’s wedding, and though most intimate with Rose, yet were we most excellent friends. Her early home had been anything but a happy one, and I could but admire the moral courage she brought to the conflict, to meet and endure trials and wrongs that she could neither remove or overcome.

Others may have had trials as great, and sank beneath them, or living, arraigned Providence for its seeming injustice. Maria did neither—her motto was—“endure and prevail.” Miss Standish had told me she was looking extremely well, and serenely happy, and now I felt an irrepressible longing to commune with this tried and true spirit, to gain for myself unimpeachable evidence of the genuineness of her wedded happiness, to see and to know if the wailing voices

of her early wrongs and early trials were lost in this new harmony.

I had feared that the time would seem long before I could hear from her in return, but a letter came by the earliest mail. She wrote, thanked me for my note, but declined my invitation to Glenelvan, preferring to receive me in her own, her new home. And, moreover, her occupations were so varied and so continuous, that it were impracticable to leave them for a day. She was learning how to appreciate the new happiness which had so risen upon the waters of her life, that the cares and duties of her married-life had given her a higher vocation, and in this she might forget what it were wrong for her to remember. * * Her "marriage, with its duties, cares, pleasures, and forbearances was forming in her a second, if not a more beautiful nature—it was adorning her life and doing for her what the graceful woodbine does for a ruinous tenement, *clinging* to all the *sharp* corners and with its leafy mantle, covering many a frightful chasm. Differing in *this*, it began with the *repairs*. You, my dear friend, may not believe all this. Come and see."

Maria had now been married nearly a year. She was, I would believe, happy at last, she had aims and occupations congenial to her—I must see her at once. I found my father, and gave him the letter, saying—

"In the morning, I must have some sort of conveyance to Blank, (the Hudson River Railroad was not then built,) and then get into the lumbering stage coach which will set me down at Maria's door."

"By no means, dear! The distance is some twenty miles, and the way rough. I will send Yoppa for once, he is a good driver, and lighter than John; he will take the low curricles, leave you there and then return in the evening. This is the better plan."

"True, my father, and thank you."

We started at an *agreeable hour* in the morning, and the journey had, for me, few fatigues and many pleasures, the

country through which we passed, strange and wild. Arrived there, I found Maria living in an old-fashioned house, high and brown, situated a little out of the village, at the head of a ravine, which led away up among the hills. There was a pretty flower-garden on one side, and some fine old trees clustering around.

Both Maria and her husband met me at the door—my coming at so early a day, was to them a pleasant surprise.

Marvin, for I did not attempt to say Mr. Noyes, was now a gentlemanly, but plain-looking man, pleasing in his manners, though somewhat grave for one of his years. He was a most interesting conversationalist, and his descriptions of the various scenes of his life amused me, though he often led me back to the days of his then hopeless poverty. He still remembered distinctly the feeling that possessed him when he for the first time scrawled his name on a piece of paper—also, his feeling of pride, when at my suggestion, he began his miniature attempts at public speaking in the well-known—"You'd scarce expect one of my age." When we had all then done laughing over this, he said more gravely, "Dear friend, this was the initiatory step to my present position."

Maria had great force of will, had pride and deep feeling. She could cover up a pang with a smile, a quivering heart-wound with a lovely serenity as one might cover a scar with a rose. This was for society. But with me—ah, dearest Maria, I could look beneath all these.

She always called her husband by his first name, Edward, and in her manner towards him there was a softness and a gentle grace as new to her as it was beautiful to see. Her younger sister Elizabeth, came duly at evening to recite her lessons in Latin, and from Maria I learned that this brave girl had taken a school in their vicinity, teaching by day and reciting at night to Edward. She had some high aim—none knew what—but a thorough education was of the first import, indeed, after her capacity, which none doubted; and

in this way alone could she secure it. Not that her parents were unable to aid her in this ; by no means. The Grants were people of substance, but they had other views about the sphere of women.

One evening Elizabeth had gone, and we sat together in that large, old-fashioned room, and listened to the now happy husband as he talked of the days of the long ago. He told us, Maria and I, sitting together in the low window, of the trials of his childhood, its vicissitudes, of his father's improvidence, of his mother's sufferings, her laborious life and frequent illness, of cold and hunger, and every kind of destitution, of his brothers and himself slowly rising above all these, and at last providing for their mother a degree of comfort she had never thought to see ; and for their father, more than he could well enjoy. At last he paused—then said—“Ladies, I have entertained you with sad tales—you may wonder why I have done so, or why I cherish these painful memories. I can only say, that what I have once suffered or enjoyed, I never wish to forget.”

I wiped a lingering tear from my cheek, and at last found a few words of cheer. And he, taking his hat, walked away up the dim and shady ravine. And Maria, her dark eyes following him, said half abstractedly—

“Dear Edward, he has had many and sad experiences, yet he shrinks from the memory of none. He is wiser than I am. It is better to conquer suffering than to strive to forget it.”

“And will not you, dear friend ?” I asked—“For now you ought to be happy.”

“I will. And I am happy, tranquilly happy, as you are now willing to believe.”

“Seeing is believing, Maria. I see that your heart has found rest. If it were not so, do not think you could hide it from me.”

“Happy, dearest Minnie—yes, more, my soul is overflowing with gratitude. For Edward took me for his wife while

all my great wrongs were yet rankling in my bosom, and my soul undisciplined to its sorrow. My ambition was great, but all undefined—neither could I discover a path or a means to reach the heights to which my eyes were lifted. He saw all this. He believed in me, he trusted me. This, and his gentle kindness, won my regard. He knew all my disappointments and crosses and privations. I told him. Like a good Christian, he took me as I was. I yielded up to him the remnant of my affections, my withering hopes and my dauntless aspirations, knowing that he could not betray me. He has been my teacher and counsellor, and now with joy I see my way upward through a patient and steady progression.”

When I went up to my chamber, Maria ran tripping up the wide staircase before me, bearing a wax candle in a silver candlestick ; her pink muslin dress floating about her graceful person like a rosy cloud, her dark wavy hair parted on her pale forehead, made her a sweet picture to contemplate.

Arrived within the chamber, I said—

“Maria, you have grown prettier since I last saw you, and your air is perfect.”

“Thank you. My husband says the same—but, I thought he did it by way of encouragement.”

“He believes it too. And believes, also, as do I, that you have great capacities which you will yet develop.”

“I will never cheat the hopes of those who have loved me best—and these desire and aid my mental culture. I cannot yet see the good that is to arise from my early suffering and my great wrong ; but I shall know in the time that is coming. That he whom I first loved, and who loved me, was untrue, shall never shake my faith in love's perfectness. I loved him so entirely, that I would have died rather than witness his falsity. I would not listen to a breath that could stain his honor, his plighted vows to me—and so the thunderbolt fell from a sky where never a cloud had gathered.”

"Dearest Maria, did not Andrews tell you of his changed affections?"

"Not a word. We parted in the utmost harmony. To my father and mother he made his adieux in his most affable and courtly manner, at an early hour in the evening—and that night he was married. We heard of it in the morning."

"Ha! He was vacillating between his better choice and a fascination, in which there was neither love or respect, but an inexplicable influence against which he was impotent to contend. He had entangled himself with another—and all the while you knew it not."

"How should I? He did not tell me."

"Ah, true! and you believed in him so implicitly that none dared to tell you he was unworthy of your regard."

"Hush! he is dead. His violent and awful death has made full atonement for all his errors. I think of him only as one I have loved."

"Do you not think he bitterly repented the step he had taken?"

"I do. One evening, Elizabeth and I were out walking on the highroad—we heard the sound of wheels—a glance told me who was coming. He passed us, bowed and smiled. His look was sad, a lingering bitterness in his smile, as if he could not wholly forget the misery he had caused."

"Andrews must be very happy with his siren," Elizabeth said. "I wonder if he doubts the power of your pride to sustain you?"

"I do not think him eminently happy," I said in return. "But if I relied upon my pride alone to sustain me, I should most surely fail." Then we walked on in silence.

"Andrews had descended a short, steep hill and was out of sight. I heard a startling sound—it took away my breath—then we hastened forward—presently we saw that horse we knew so well, speeding up the opposite hill, with wheels and fragments of harness flying in the air. I felt as if borne on wings along that rugged way and down the sharp de-

clivity. There—bruised—broken, prone upon the flinty rocks, I found him—dying. I attempted to lift his head upon my lap; but to move him would have resulted in instant death. I spoke his name, but he was only conscious of his terrible suffering. No look of remembered love shone forth from those dear eyes—no word of kindness from those lips—nothing but groans of agony, which rent my soul to hear. He could not live; but each breath he drew was more terrible than death itself. Elizabeth ran to the nearest house, and brought some neighbors; among these came my father—but they found one sufferer only—the other had been released.—

"The sight was more than my father could bear to see, so he hurried me away, to wash from my face, hands, and bosom those frightful stains. This I did. But my dress,—on it, his blood remains, folded in with the wild-roses I gathered there. It lies, a mournful relic, which no eyes but mine will ever see."

"So tender, so believing, as were you, Maria, my friend, you should at once have been removed from a place where both faith and love had been stricken down."

"I had no true or judicious friend near—for the smallest consideration for my future weal would have suggested this. I only felt my present misery. Then I was fettered with unceasing toil—and I hated, I abhorred the daily round of that soulless drudgery. The largest scope of my possible attainments, seemed closing round me like prison walls. I began to weigh the possibilities of an escape from all my dismal surroundings. I had a quenchless longing for books, for literary fame, for a high social position where my influence would be felt—all of which means, I suppose, love of power.

"I was denied all these, and had not even the control of my own actions. * *

"In one of my gloomiest moods I went to an old burial-ground, and there beneath the darkling evergreens and the

listening cypress wept out my woes with a despairing cry. * * A kind voice greeted me—gentle words wooed me back to hope for better things. We walked, Edward and I, among those ancient graves, and talked of the world which lies beyond—then, of the fairer side of *this*. So, day by day he won upon my regard, for he has a noble nature. Very soon he asked me in marriage—greatly to the amazement of all my father's house—and the consent was wonderingly given. We needed, both of us, for a little time, a haven of rest from the rude buffetings of the world. Where could we find it but in a home with each other?

"We had no misgivings—he nor I. It were impossible for either of us to betray the other. There, my friend, dearest Minnie, I have detained you longer than I had thought to—good night."

"Good night, dearest, best Maria."

CHAPTER XIV.

A FEW weeks subsequent to my very pleasant visit to these friends of my earlier years, Miss Standish received letters from England, desiring her early return home. Her parents had recently succeeded to a small property in Ireland, whither they had determined to remove at the beginning of the year ensuing. Her young brothers and sisters also plead for her return. They loved her dearly, and then, who could carry forward their education as well as dear Edith! In their improved condition it was no longer needful for her to toil for herself or them, in a foreign land. And she was going. I should never see my Edith again. In my weariness, in my loneliness, I should have her no more to sustain and comfort me. If I were *ill*—ah, but I never would be—for then who would cheer and comfort my father! That which others have done for me when it was needful, I must now do for myself and them.

Go, then, dearest Edith, go and be happy. She has accumulated a handsome little fortune here, which she will enjoy with those for whom she has toiled. Her purse is filled with clean gold, for that it has been honestly and honorably earned. She is pleasing and good. She will marry some young Irish lord, or officer, and bring honor to his house and name.

She went. With countless promises to write frequent and long letters, amid fast-coming tears and unnumbered kisses, we parted—she to return to the maternal bosom—and I, oh, was I not still upheld by maternal arms? I know not. * * *

* * Albertine is living in the city, and Fan going to Troy, to that far-famed Seminary, for six months, to finish what her eminent governess may have left undone. And of all

who once were here, I have left me only poor dear Belle—who, for all practical purposes or abilities in keeping the soul alive, she might have been so much moonshine.

Heigh ho—I'll turn Poet! No—I'll be a Painter! No, no—I'll set myself to the actual duties of life. I will see to it, that my people have food for immortal growth—not failing to see in the meantime, that that for the mortal is just and proper—and while tending my fruits and flowers, will work betimes in the garden of the Lord. * *

In these earnest labors, three years, years of seed-time, years of promise, years of hope, slip silently by.

CHAPTER XV.

THREE years, three busy years have glided stilly and smoothly onward into the ocean of the Past, since I laid down my pen. Slowly, almost reluctantly I take it up.

My little Jesse and her husband, Hamish McGreggor, had been up to tea with me, but have now returned to their pretty cottage. A year ago, at my desire, and with their glad consent, they came to America, and proceeded at once to Glenelvan, having been united in the holy bonds of marriage a few weeks previous to their embarkation.

Both being young, and a country strange to them, the winter approaching, I would not let them feel alone, or *pining* for mother or home, or dim the new brightness of their wedded life. I made their home for the time with me in my father's house, giving them those apartments which would have been appropriated to Katrine if she had married and remained at Glenelvan. They sat with me at my father's board, were my honored guests.

Meantime, the cottage was being renewed and made beautiful for their permanent home. The little mountain stream was brought into that "cunningest" of all little kitchens; the garden reset, the grape arbor, which had fallen into disrepute, put in prime order, (and by the way, was now hung all over, with rich purple clusters,) and in the rear had been constructed a miniature poultry yard, with its slight lattice-work fence, fringed on the upper side, that gradually rose up toward the hills, with a younger growth of evergreens, the spruce, the red cedar with its pleasant fragrance, the kalmia, in early summer covered with its rosy blossoms, thus combining beauty with utility—this was all done for dear Jesse, who had a most affluent imagination and gave promise of being a model house-wife.

And farther above these, higher up the slope, grew the mountain ash, and the wild service tree, blending with it the darker foliage of the hill-side, and anon, pecking at the bright clustering berries, the thrush and the black-bird sang the live-long day.

I took care not to fail in kindness at my cottagers, the Dunns and the light-hearted Biddy Malones, for I did not choose that they should conceive a feeling of jealousy towards my skyean protegés. Biddy at once took up the idea that the McGreggor's were distant relatives of my mother's, whom we had sought out, in our long absence, and no one being at the pains to refute it, settled into a conviction. And really, I know not but that it may be so. I should be most glad to think it was. I know of no people on the face of the earth with whom I should more gladly learn that I was connected with by the ties of blood.

My Jesse, young Mrs. McGreggor, charmed me with her house-keeping. She had her little maid, Dian, a niece of my aunt Frances's Dinah, who promised to prove as faithful and as fond as that invaluable household fixture, her estimable aunt.

The twain made a pretty picture in their neat cottage, Mistress Jesse with her fair hair, clear northern complexion, and light ringing tones, and Dian, dark and glossy, hair no. crisp but wavy and black as a raven's wing, and her voice, low, mellow, flexible, in feeling, a genuine child of the South, sensitive, shy, impulsive, her heart warmed at the sources of life.

My father so arranged his business connections with my skyean cousins, that they should never know any dependence, for having been born landholders, such a state of feeling would have been irksome.

Hamish was our shepherd, taking scrupulous care of our flocks and herds. He improved the sheep-walk, built rustic sheds for the flocks on the sunny hill-sides, looked through the wood-lands, cutting out decaying or unsightly timber,

grubbing up the dense under-brush, laying out a winding path into some charming ravine, so he was our landscape artist too, ever finding out some new and lovely picture. The various families of the feathered tribe, also, came under his practiced eye. He knew where many a shy partridge built her nest, where the wild duck hid among the rushes, where the beautiful wood-pecker made his house high up in some hollow tree, and the smaller wood birds hung their moss-lined homes far out on the swaying branches. The lithe squirrel, leaping from tree to tree, the timid rabbit with ears erect and hurrying away on flectest foot, might be met at almost every turn, for wild game had ever been most abundant in the woodlands of Glenelvan. And now in the severest winter, when the deep snow lay unmeasured and unbroken, Hamish had a wise care for these aboriginal tenants of those broad forest lands, providing against any accidental failure in the supplies it was the province of dame nature to produce unasked—by feeding with cereals and hominy.

He seemed for the time well satisfied with his occupation, indeed, he was like one of my father's house. His table had its matutinal supply of fish, as taken by James Dunn from the river, and from John, an abundant supply of beef and mutton. And beside these, he had with all our other people, a yearly salary, apportioned according to capacity and mutual agreement.

So these young householders were good, industrious and happy. Mistress Jesse had her house, her little maid, her garden and poultry, and added to these, a small, but well selected library and a few pictures, mostly Scottish in character and sentiment.

They had remained my guests through the entire winter, but took possession of the house in early spring. We visited often, taking tea with each other on alternate Saturdays, for now that Miss Standish was gone, I felt the need of some fixed and fast friend, and this was my pretty Jessie to me.

Young McGreggor and Yoppa were excellent friends ; the latter having finished his school education with credit to himself in the village, was now devoting his leisure hours to a course of valuable reading. * * *

I was recalled from my moonlight walk through the shrubbery by Meta, bringing me a letter that came up from the post-office with a few others. I returned to the house, and seeing papa engrossed with the contents of his letters, quietly sat down to mine.

“NEW YORK CITY, OCT. —, 185 .

My Dearest Minnie :

Your kind letter of the 1st instant, bringing with it the air of the hills and the meadows, as also a cordial invitation to me to come up and spend these lovely autumn days with you, was most welcome. The first I inhale, the second I must decline. And this is both a loss and a cross to me. For I had greatly counted on my sojourn at old Glenelvanhausen, which, by the way, has become a kind of Great Britain, in miniature, by its national representation, with a slight infusion of the tropical element.

I had so counted on our little visits with lovely Jesse, our rambles amid the autumnal woods and dusky ravines, and could I now be with you, dear friend, and freed from all harassing thoughts, I should be *wild* with happiness.

Happiness indeed, that must henceforth be a stranger to me.

I am in utter despair. Pray excuse me, dearest Minnie, if I talk a little wild. I have been very ill. I am still weak, and my head aches always and unceasingly. I cannot come to you. That is a settled impossibility. So come you to me. “Circumstances,” as Mr. Guppy would say, “over which I have no control,” compel me to reverse the order of our arrangements. I cannot now give you an explanation, neither must you require any, now, or ever. But if you are not domiciled with me by next Wednesday eve, cheerfully and cordially of your own will, I *will* never call you Minnie Minster again, but ignoring all your much prized and delightful English as-

sociations, I will call you, downright Yankee, Mary Church, and that's the whole of it.

My little boy is well, and asleep in his crib. Fred pursuing the even tenor of his ways, of which you know something, leaving his cap in the parlor, his boots in the kitchen, the very pest of my life, yet is he too proud and noble a brother for such as I am. But “vale,” as one says.

With much regard for all those who may bear me a kind remembrance. As ever, yours,

ALBERTINE BOVIE.

P. S.—Do not fail to gain your father's consent to your remaining with me, at least three weeks, and oblige your ever grateful

HAL.

Miss Minster, Glenelvan.”

I read this letter to the end, not without many misgivings. Was my dearest “Hal,” then, unhappy, and from what cause? Was Fred in trouble? No: her letter stated the reverse. My friend had been ill, and was now evidently far from well. She had begged me to come to her, and added to this a petulant threat. This was unlike my friend.

I went to papa with the letter. He read it slowly and thoughtfully, and then said, there was evidently more meaning in it than the words expressed. I had better go to Mrs. Bovie on the next day, and remain with her, if it should prove agreeable, the space of time for which she had stipulated.

“I will do so,” I said.

But I was ill at ease. Moreover, I was reluctant to go from scenes of such glorious beauty as were every where spread out over the country—to leave my forest aisles and velvet paths, for the brick, or even marble walls and crowded pave of the city. I was loth to be so long away from sweet Jessie. I should pine for papa. I began to feel how dear to me was this grand old Glenelvanhausen.

Something of this my father must have read in my face.

“My child, the love for this early friend is not declining?”

"No—oh no, papa! I am sad. Something like a vague presentiment of coming grief oppresses me."

"Evidently you need a change of air, child. You have been too long quiet in this old place, pursuing your multitudinous fancies, whims, and duties. The bracing air of that ocean-bound city will renew your spirits."

"Ah! and Albertine has been ill, and may only need a little tender care—a little affectionate cheering. Well, I shall go very dutifully, and with cordial good will."

I strove to be very brave, but, nevertheless, I could have chosen that my visit with this friend, should have been otherwise.

I was never as happy with "Hal" in *her* home, as with her in *mine*. With me, at Glenelvan, we had so many congenial occupations, varied amusements,—my own especial duties, in which she, too, took great interest—walks amid fallen leaves, or springing flowers—along the travel-worn highway, or by the side of the stilly-flowing water.

With me, she was dear, gentle, praised, petted, and petulant "Hal." But with her, in her house! she was Mrs. Bovie—with all her cares and duties, and something beside, which I could not well define. I was never kindly disposed toward mysteries!!

CHAPTER XVI.

PUNCTUALLY then, on the appointed day, at half-past four, I ascended the stone steps of No.—45th street, and rang the bell.

A nut-brown maid slowly responded to my call by opening the door, and to my question, with—

"Yes, ma-am, Mrs. Bovie *is* at home—please to walk in."

I was but just seated on the sofa when "Hal" came in. She greeted me as she sank down by my side, and said—

"Oh! I have been so disappointed in not being able to spend these lovely autumn days with you in the country. All the dear people I have ever spoken to, have been, or are visiting at our house. I have been very sick, and when convalescent, I had not a moment I could call my own; and I am so tired—tired to death!"

The tears had been standing in her mellow brown eyes, and now suffused her thin and waxen cheeks. So taking her pale forehead between my hands, I said—

"Now, 'Hal,' my dear, this will never do. Your poor little head is aching already; the blood around your temples at boiling heat. I have come to stay a long time; we'll talk over our troubles more at our leisure, and to our hearts' content."

"But these fourteenth cousins, Minnie, I have six of them here now. They will bore *you* to death, and I shall not see you a minute; and my girl is a mere clod, for Bridget has sprained her ankle, and is gone to her sister's."

"Oh, then she will be soon back again. Take heart, my pet. I'll help you do the honors of the house, and play the agreeable—quite a novelty for me. And while you get a

little 'forenoon nap,' I'll step into the kitchen, and—Oh, never fear for me. And then, my dear, next week—"

"Oh, yes—if we can live until then!" she broke in, with a faint smile, but quickly added—

"Oh, I am so glad you are here. I just begin to feel conscious of the delightful fact. Now give me your hat and cloak."

"Not a bit of it—you shall be no lady's maid to me. But if it won't tire you, come up into your own room with me, and show me what you have been about this long, long, long time (going up stairs). And this lovely room I am to share with you? Nice, isn't it? but I shall lock the door at night, for I am afraid of ghosts!"

"You have none to fear—the ghost of this house has been laid since you were here last."

"Was that the occasion of your illness, or your recovery?"

"Of one, certainly," she said with sudden palor—and turning away quickly, crushed her handkerchief upon her mouth. What mischief I had done, I could not guess—neither the cause of the heart-spasm which she vainly strove to hide.

I advanced to the opposite window, and threw open the sash.

"Come hither, Hal, dearest, and inhale this warm live air, as it comes flooding in; it will renew your faded roses, and give your brown hair a beautiful gloss."

"Oh, you are the greatest humbug, Minnie, that I ever met; for you compel me to laugh at all your vagaries."

"Then, pet, we resemble in one way, a most delicious fruit."

"Aha, I see. If you laugh, I laugh—and then we are a pair."

"Finely rendered, dear. But how much better you are looking than I thought to find you, from your letter. And better now, than when I first came in."

"Do you? Well, I think I feel better. Indeed, I think I am quite well."

"Oh, I am a Great Medicine. I have even cured myself."

"Is it possible? were you ever so weak, sick, sad and foolish as I am? You have always been as merry as a lark in the meadows, with me."

"I'll be anything, to humor your whims, if you will only laugh and put away that ghastly look, which don't become you. You ought just now to see some of Dr. Jewett's comic faces.—And as I live! here for a mantel ornament, you have a family tomb—beautiful, certainly, done in mosaic—mother-of-pearl door, creeping moss and flowers growing beneath the water—here a statuette, Rachel weeping—could you possibly find a Niobe somewhere? a charming trio they would make. Beautiful, these are, certainly—but what associations for a sick room—or rather, I should say, for a sympathetic little lady's boudoir. But you have the sun here all day in these windows—no wonder your plants are so healthy: nearly all in flower too. May I bespeak this tea-rose? I am going somewhere one evening."

"My brother does not know you are here. Ah, Fred, I did not tell him you were coming."

"That is good; I shall find him falling into his old ways, and dawn upon him like the Judgment Day."

"Delightful! But, Minnie, what a pattern of expedition you are—dresses and cloak hung up, bonnet and satchel put away, thimble and scissors in hand. What interminable lengths of embroidery you must accomplish in these flying visits!"

"Lengthening as I go. But 'broidered bands are at a discount now. I have at present a vision of a half dozen pinafores, cut and rolled up, ready to be made for Master Sammy."

"What a dear household angel you are, Minnie."

"Always was. Now let us run down stairs."

CHAPTER XVII.

A MAIDEN lady "of no particular age," and a tired mother with a great heavy baby, cross from being continually tumbled into strange places, greeted by strange voices and stranger faces, three or four other people of indifferent manners and mediocre intellect—were not the most desirable surroundings for poor dear Hal, with her nervous temperament, her aching head and feeble frame.

We had just settled into a cozy chat, when aunt Sally, the above-mentioned maiden, called out in a shrill voice—

"Now, *Albertine*, have you seen anything of that ere collar and them are gloves?"

"I have not," Hal replied quietly; but a shadow of annoyance crossed her pale face.

"What about those articles, Miss Sally?" I asked.

"Why I'd ben out one day to buy me a pair o' shuze, and when I c'min, laid 'em on the fire-shelf, in the parlow, and I never seen 'em sence."

"I am very sorry they should have gone out of the way, but I will look for them. Mrs. Bovie has so much headache that it would not be kind to tax her with looking for any thing mislaid."

"Wal, now if yeoule find um, I shall be ra-al glad, for that ere collar cost me nine an sixpence, and them gloves, ni-as-much more."

Aunt Sally was not ill-natured, so neither was she sufficiently intelligent to amuse or interest poor Hal, or in any way gifted with a housekeeper's tact to lighten her cares.

Once when we happened to be alone, I said—

"Dear *Albertine*, why do you tolerate the visits of this ancient maiden, in your present state of health, at least?"

"Hush! dear: she is a full cousin to Mr. Bovie."

"Well, you didn't marry Mr. Bovie with the encumbrance of all his family connections, did you, dear?"

"No! I did not marry him knowing——" she sank back in her chair, and gasped for breath. I hastened to her with a tumbler of ice-water.

"No, no," she murmured; "let me go—let me for one brief moment forget."

I took her hand, it was icy-cold—her lips were bloodless—her eyes vacant. What mischief was there in my thoughtless words! What in them, thus to afflict my poor little lamb!

I stood mutely gazing upon her pale face, and was startled to perceive how thin it was; the blue veins coursing her pure brow, shaded by the darkest brown hair, she looked so deathlike, yet so inexpressibly lovely.

With a long, quivering sob, consciousness returned. I stove to soothe her with gentlest caresses.

"Forgive me, dear, kind Minnie. My varying moods are a sore trial to your sisterly affection. Your kindness and love may comfort me for a little while; but I am dying of a wound you cannot heal."

"Oh, say not this, my *Albertine*. You are really ill, suffering from nervous depression. I will write for our physician, who will cure you right away. Then you shall go with me to Philadelphia, to visit cousin Nell, and then we will go to Baltimore—see my widowed sister-in-law, and her fairy-like daughter, Lena Illeota, now seventeen, and the most beautiful, bewitching creature eyes ever beheld,—thence to Carolina, to make aunt Guilder a long visit."

"I should love to go far away, if it were only to forget, and to be forgotten."

The door opened, and a wedge-like head, with a false front of reddish hair, was barely visible; but a cracked voice, only too distinct, was heard.

"Wal, *now Albertine*, have you found that ere collar and

Hal hid her face amid the cushions of the lounge, and groaned, not only in spirit, but audibly. I went out into the hall, confronted the false hair and cracked voice, taking care to close the door behind me.

"Now, Miss Sally, I have looked sufficiently for the afore-said articles. I have not found them. Now, if I ever hear you asking Albertine for them again, I will burn them in the fire—that is, if I ever find them."

"Yeour in fun, now !"

"Not in the least. It is not a trifling matter to worry her life out for your Ark-wrought rags, which, I dare be sworn, are at the bottom of your traveling-box."

"There now ! I'll go straight and see."

And so it proved.

Change sweepeth over all, sometimes bettering, sometimes worsening our condition, other some, exteriorly doing neither. One of these, and coming events, must decide which was now at hand.

So, day of grace, soon or late cometh to all. Aunt Sally had a beau, in the person of Mr. Jeremiah Clearweather, widower. I gave up the back parlor, and even my cozy little seat in the boudoir beyond, the moment he came in, made myself disagreeable generally, (no difficult matter for me,) by which I earned aunt Sally's everlasting gratitude.

Thus much, Fred and I conceded to this ancient wooer, but all beyond, was "fair field and no quarter."

How his overshoes got down behind the basement door, his cane up stairs, his shining stove-pipe hat in the hall closet, some might have marveled, but no questions were asked.

But our great want was answered. Bridget was back again, and the "clod" gone, Albertine and I down in the kitchen, lending the brightness of our presences to that much neglected region.

"He has come," aunt Sally gasped out, as she came flapping down stairs, a great wan smile spreading from her

watery eyes to her loose lips, "now, Miss Minnie, you may go with *us* to that ere 'World's Fair.'"

"Fie, fie, you fledgling of generosity," Hal made answer, "go and make the most of your time. Fred will go with Minnie, but should he catch you decoying her away, presto ! umbrellas, over-shoes, thimbles, night-caps, and all other appliances of femininity would come to a perpetual end."

Thus admonished, aunt Sally returned to the parlor, went out with her sage admirer, and no draft made upon her dawning generosity.

Next to inducting and intimidating this ancient maiden into some show of courtesy toward our hostess, my dearest pleasure was in quizzing Fred.

I was one afternoon going up stairs for my hat and cloak, when looking down, I saw Clearweather going into the back parlor. The next moment, aunt Sally came bustling up after me, and went into her own room. I stood before my mirror, leisurely tying some knot, when my door was flung open. Fred in the greatest consternation asked—

"Is Sally going with *us* ?"

"Why not !"

"Fiddlesticks !"

"Be polite to her, now, or *I* won't go."

He disappeared down stairs at the same gait he came up, but when I went down into the hall, he was just emerging from the back parlor.

"Clearweather is in there !" he said, gleefully. "I shook hands with him. I could have kissed him, I'm such a good Christian."

"Indeed, you are not, Mister Fred, but a very great hypocrite ! you are only hugging the good luck that took off from your hands an undesired companion. I knew all the time that she was going with him. Take care there—and not splash mud."

"Well, there ! it *don't* rain—now I can't use this new umbrella !"

"Whose is it!"

"Jeremiah's. I mean to hide it until he goes back to Pine Plains, and then I'll give it to you."

"Not a bit of it. I read in the little book once, about the receiver's being as bad as the thief."

"Partaker, you mean. Good! I'll keep it, and when you go out in the rain, I'll carry it for you."

The river of youthful life, flowing stilly on, showed but the golden sands, a passing shadow scarcely varying the brightness of its placid bosom, yet, withal, is it flowing on, on, on toward the deep turbulent sea!

"There, thanks to my perseverance, that last button is sewed on, the last stocking mended for that 'glass of fashion' and 'world of fun,' Mr. Fred Gunnison. Now for a thorough clearing up and putting away, for I would not for the world have him know that I would do him such service, so he may set it all to Hal's account, for small is her meed of praise for good deeds manifold."

The clearing up and the monologue ended simultaneously—then, there was a quick, impatient jerk at the door bell.

Oh, where is Mrs. Browning's "Cassa Guido Windows"—ah, here, and I at once subsided into—a luxurious arm-chair.

"Fol lol la-a-a, fiddlesticks! oh, this horrid dunning!" was Fred's first exclamation as he burst into the room, throwing his cap into a corner, his collection book on the table

"How are you, Miss Minnie?"

"Please to pick up your cap, put your book in your overcoat pocket, and hang them up in the hall."

"Nay now; I'm tired to death. Do you this for me, Minnie, an you love me."

"Well, I don't love you; I am amazed at the idea! but—I'll do it to save Hal the trouble of scolding you."

"Well, now if you have done with your housewifely ways, come and sit down on the sofa, and say your catechism."

"The Shorter Catechism, then, if you please."

"Certainly; um—ready?"

"I wait your pleasure."

Q. What subject has engrossed your attention to-day?

Ans. Seven "moral pocket handkerchiefs," which I have hemmed very nicely for master Sammy."

Q. Were you ever in love?

Ans. Several times. Let me see—one, two, three, four—"

"Pshaw! enough, enough."

"I thought so, too."

Q. Were you ever asked in marriage?

Ans. Yes. Once, by a tobacco-chewing, cigar-smoking old bachelor. Once by a spruce widower with ten small children.

"Faugh—these are not all?"

"No—n—once—ah—that is my secret."

"You hesitate—and as I live there's a—"

"Not a tear in my eye; no, no, *no*."

"A quivering of the lids—"

"Nonsense!"

"Well, I'll put a mark in here, and turn to it some other time."

"Fold down the leaf, and stranger things you'll see—old poem."

Catechism resumed.

Q. How old are you?

Ans. Guess.

"The shorter catechism—to the point if you please."

Ans. Well, say twenty-seven.

"St. Georg—e's Hotel! You don't suppose I am going to believe this! Just as soon as I'd believe your old school-marm, Miss Lina Flutterbudget is only thirty-nine—when at a glance one can see that she knocks off at least ten years; and vice versa, you have added about—say half that number."

"To be frank, now, I always add a few years to my age when people ask it."

"A moral phenomenon!"

"See now—to the curious and the envious it is such comfort—to the one it gives room to marvel; to the other, such joy that I am growing old—a mere whim of mine!"

"It is a rare one!"

"Possibly. *How old are you?* is a question that has rung in my ears as long as I can remember. Cui bono, or what use either? People are just as old as they seem. I am 'to all intents and purposes whatsoever,' to every individual friend of mine, just as old as I seem to him or her, and no more. So is Miss Lina Flutterbudget, my quondan school-marm."

"Yes, Minnie—so one would be easily led to believe you were *young!*" added Fred, with a roguish smile.

"And fond of toys!"

"Good! I accept the gentle insinuation. Holloa! there's Ben with the horses! Up, Miss Minnie, and don your plume, cap, and flowing skirt, and we'll off, off, off and away."

Singing as he tossed his own cap up to the ceiling.

And most cheerfully would I, at any time, exchange the quill for the riding-whip, and bid the sombre spirits, doomed to their ghost-walk within any four walls, a joyful adieu. I may never hope to curb in Pegasus by his golden bit; so I give a flowing rein to my beautiful "Silver Grey," and as we speed on, I send back, to aforesaid "good people," a distant, faint adieu, adieu, adieu!

CHAPTER XVIII.

HIGH-BRIDGE, with all its fair proportions, burst upon my "enraptured sight." A faint speck of mist seemed floating below one of those majestic arches. Nearer, a familiar face looked upon me from amid the folds of a gauze-like veil; the mellow brown eyes, heavy with grief, and the lips quivering. Then a dark stream of blood dashed over the snowy lace of the heaving bosom. It was gone!

"Oh!" Then so suddenly I reined in my steed that he settled back upon his haunches.

"What is it—what is the matter?" cried Fred, drawing up beside me. I took breath, and then explained the cause of my sudden outcry.

"Oh, ho, ho! ha ha!" and again his wild laugh rang out. "Ha, ha, ha-a! but how you frightened that noble animal; who, by the way, is the more sensible of the two. Well, after this *revelation*, I may expect to see you careering through the air upon a broomstick."

"I can do very well without one," I said, lashing my horse into a fury. He sprang from the turf, and sped along as if he snuffed the free air of his native plains.

Vainly was Fred's wild and terrified shout sent after me, upon the rushing winds.—

"Hold up. Oh, Minnie, for heaven's sake, hold him in!" I heeded not. The jeering laugh of my young friend could not have moved me thus. A sad and fearful presentiment drove me near to madness. * * *

In a green avenue, where the still trees stood up against the sky, and the wild vines overran a dying oak, both horse and rider slackened speed.

I could not outride fate. * * *

It was just on the edge of the gloaming as I loosened my skirt from the saddlebow, and accepting Fred's hand, sprang to the pavement, and ran into the house.

A chilling breath smote me as I entered. No living thing was visible—nor voice nor sound was there! With miraculous haste I changed my apparel, and descended to the dining-room.

Little Sammy sat upon the carpet, crying bitterly, but in that low, frightened way, too sad to see. I lifted him upon my lap, and strove to comfort him. Smoothing his hair, and wiping the tears from his face, I said—

"What is the dear boy crying for?"

He lifted the corner of his apron and covered his eyes.

"Where is his dear mamma?" At this, he burst out anew.

"She daun—leave me—leave ittal Sammy."

All my efforts to soothe the little fellow, barely kept his tiny cup of woe from overflowing. The door opened, and aunt Sally came pimping in.

"How long has this poor child been left in this way?" I asked, not without a degree of sternness.

"Wal, ni-upon tu hours, I should say."

"Where is Bridget?"

"Why, ye see, she's gone eout, an I spects Albertine feels purty bad, tu—an 'taint no wonder, nuther."

I looked fixedly at the speaker. A kind of vague terror overspread her wan face. Then she came toward me, as if to confide to me some family secret. This I would not allow.

"No," I said—and my eyes met Fred's, for he was standing in the doorway.

"Where is my sister?" And I thought I detected a slight quivering in his voice.

"Wal, she is up in that ere spare room," Sally replied, and he was out of sight.

I began humming a low tune and rocking to and fro with

the young heir of the house in my arms—rocking to and fro with a desperation that one would have argued, the fate of the universe depended upon the number of oscillations we made.

I know nothing more of how the time sped, until Fred came tramping down stairs, as if the whole battalion of dragoons was at his heels. He rushed into the room, wrung my hand and hoarsely whispered—

"Good bye," and was out of the door and away.

"There!" croaked Sally, "I bet that's the last youle ever see of *him* in this ere house. He's as *proud* as Lucifer."

The mystery was growing fearful! What could there be connected with *this house* to wound the *pride* or self-respect of any of its inmates!

My useless speculations were suddenly interrupted by the quick entrance of Mr. Bovie. He looked unusually grave, but went directly to his desk and began to fumble among his papers, which I thought was a mere feint to conceal his perplexity. I had never been attracted toward him, even in my happiest days with Albertine. He never mingled in any of our pursuits or amusements, but left us to our own ways, or maintained a quiet indifference when at home. He consented to Albertine's visits to me at my father's, but she always came alone, when unattended by her brother Fred, and her little boy.

True, Mr. Bovie was older, much older than either of us, and the man was older than his years.

I could sometimes believe he had suffered from an early sorrow, for the shadow of some deep regret had manifestly fallen across his way.

"Go to her, go to your suffering friend!"

It was the voice of my affection.

"Wait until you are asked for," whispered pride.

"Go," another said, and this voice I dared not disobey.

It was the voice of duty.

Quick and noiselessly, I slipt Master Sammy into his chair,

and a handful of toys found their way into his little pink apron, and I stood waiting for admission to the room where Albertine had imprisoned herself.

"No, no," she said, in a voice hoarse and broken, "I cannot see you. I do not wish to—go down—go and leave me."

"Albertine, I must see you."

"No."

"Not now then, but I can wait. Albertine, my friend—my dear Albertine, I will wait at this door until you can open it. I will never leave it until you do."

In a moment her quick and nervous steps were stayed, her sobs were hushed. She grasped the key with the force of a giant, and the door stood open. I entered, and closed it. But her looks appalled me. So wild, so haggard, so ghastly pale.

"My dearest Albertine," I said, laying my arms about her neck, "you are very unhappy. This burden is too heavy for you—it would be lighter with two to carry it."

No answer, but a fearful spasm passed across her face, and distorted her beautiful mouth. I took her to the couch and persuaded her to lie down, but I saw that she would suffocate. I flew to the window, threw it open. She wrung her hands and burst into a flood of passionate tears.

"Thank God I can weep, now I feel that He will let me die."

I was at her side in a moment—weeping with her.

"You have never had cause to doubt my love, Albertine, and we have known each other from childhood, doubt it not now. Throw this great burden of grief on me, I am strong, I am brave. I can bear a weight of sorrow that would crush you to atoms."

"You, you! Have you not had grief and sorrow enough already?"

"I can bear more, if need be."

"Oh, woe is me, that this sorrow, this *shame* must fall upon those only, who love me. Fred—yes, he has gone."

Her quivering lip became rigid. She was—not calm, but still as death.

"Dear Albertine, let me comfort you, let me counsel you. If you have foes without, you have friends within. Tell me your grief, tell me your *fear*. I will guide, shelter, save you. I will cover your head until the storm passes by."

"And let the thunderbolt fall upon your own?"

"That may be easily averted. In my father's house, no one will, for any cause, dare to molest us."

"Your father! Your father would shut his door against *me!* and *you* too, were I to bear you company."

"Oh, Albertine, this is very, very bitter. I shall hate the wretch who has thus turned your loving soul to gall."

"Hate him, then—with might and main! for he has blighted my life, and brought me to an early, to a *dishonored grave!*"

Now she is going mad! my heart burst out with a wild, sad cry, and I could not but mark the rapid strides of the demon of Insanity. I took her hands within my own, and whispered—

"Then let us fly! I can hide you—I will never leave you. I can comfort, protect you. I go this moment to your husband to demand his consent."

"My husband!" she shrieked—"my husband! *I have no husband!* I have lived with that man down below there, but—I am not his wife! Come here—look! look! look! there is his wife."

With strained eyes I gazed into the window on a level with us, in the opposite house—and there, swaying leisurely to and fro in a large arm-chair, sat a middle-aged, but still fine looking woman. She saw us, and leaned forward, evidently to scrutinize us more closely.

"Yes, look at me—your first and last look. You may soon join hands with *him* over another coffin—and this one closes the breach, which the last one only widened. Oh, thou fairest angel, Death, hasten to set *me* free!"

Oh, now she must be mad.

A choking sob, a cough, and a stream of dark blood oozed from between her palid lips, and stained the folds of snowy lace that covered her heaving bosom. I took her in my arms, bore her back and laid her gently upon the couch. It must have been more than human strength or power which came to my aid in that terrible moment.

After wiping the blood from her mouth, I took a napkin and bathed her face and cold thin hands. Her eyes were closed, her breathing low and uneven.

I dared to leave her—for I must. Swiftly, noiselessly as a ghost, I flew down the long, winding stairs, and at the dining room door, confronted the man, at that moment so abhorred.

"Albertine is dying! bring Dr. Smith, or the nearest physician."

"Dying! How!"

"Of a wound received from a murderous hand." And I fled back up the stairs, closing my eyes to shut out that look of horror.

I shall never describe the vigil kept beside that poor dying lamb. * * At last the doctor came, followed Mr. Bovie. It seemed something more than a professional visit—for after the lapse of half an hour, the doctor wrote a line upon a card, gave it to Mr. Bovie, who immediately left the room. The opiate which the doctor administered the moment he came, was kindly in its effects. Albertine lay in a quiet sleep.

Dr. Smith, the kind gentlemanly doctor, beckoned me to the window, on the opposite side of the room.

"Miss Minster, I address myself to your good sense, and shall in the fewest words explain to you why I must send you away. First—our poor friend must have no one near her, who has any knowledge of her family secret. Then your interest in her unfits you for the office of nurse. Your agitation and grief will extend to her, and her life now hangs upon a slender thread, which will be severed, and the hour

is not far distant. I have sent for old Mrs. Boulster, a careful nice body, and one who knows only what I wish to have her."

"And thus I part from my early friend forever on this earth?"

"I think so."

"Tell me if I, by any imprudent act, have hastened this stroke?"

"No. It was inevitable. She wishes to die."

"Dr. Smith, you have a soul. Tell me what was the first cause of this?"

"A great sorrow, for which she was all unprepared."

"And the wretch who——"

"Hush."

My hands were taken and held so kindly, yet so firmly, that every gathering tear, every rebellious heart-throb, subsided away into the deep caves of the soul, and gave no sign.

With much courtesy he attended me down stairs, for he saw that I wished to go at once. I could not remain in that house, when Albertine was no longer its mistress.

"We shall send for you, Miss Minster," he said. "You will see your friend again—but the interview will be short."

Folding my shawl, he wrapped it around me, fastening it at the throat, then added—

"The air will be damp as you approach the river. Engrossed with the sufferings of another, you forget yourself. I must call up a name which will restore your self-consciousness. *Your father.*"

That was true. With the thought of my dear and noble father, all the bright dreams, the love, the hopes which were centred in me, came to me, each demanding my regard. My noble father! while a thought of him was left me, I should never dare to trifle with my life or my happiness.

The doctor might say whatever he chose of my exodus. I would see no one! So he opened the door for me, and

stept down to the pavement. Slight were our adieus. With quickening steps, I hastened along the street with as light a foot as if my heart were gay.

To the Eighth Avenue, spedire ! accelerate ! there was a car just in sight. I gave no thought to the few persons who were waiting at the curbstone, but passed them and went into the car. Coming in after me, one of them laughing gaily, cried out—

“Well ! I declare, Miss Minster, I never was so surprised in all my life as I was a few days ago, to see you visiting a lady in Forty-Fifth street. La me ! so high-headed, I did not think you would allow your skirts to brush against common people.”

I turned my back towards her.

“But I declare,” she continued, “wonders will never cease.”

“Why, Kate Slocum ! what upon earth possesses you ?” one of her companions said.

“Oh, it’s only fun. But you know I am just visiting in the house opposite, have made the acquaintance of the original Mrs. —, mum’s the word, you know, and heard the whole story. And true as I live, I did not think Miss Minster, who was always so terrible nice, and awful particular, would associate with a lady who pretends to be married, and yet cannot show a marriage certificate,” and she rustled her rich silk dress, and turned the heavy gold bracelet upon her arm.

This was the drop too much. I had never liked Kate. She was a dashing, showy girl, whom I often saw at church, and at every “Public” I ever attended—and now, I hated her.

I rose. The conductor stopt the car, and I immediately left it. As I was stepping out, she added in the same light tone—

“Remember the fate of poor Tray, who was most cruelly treated, only for being found in bad company.”

“I shall try to escape a similar result in the present in-

stance, by a hasty retreat.” But I deigned not to look the scorn I felt for her, and her mean insinuations.—Now I must walk,—and with fleetest foot, I had barely time to reach the Hudson River cars.

Hark ! the whistle !—Down 32d street—under the very necks of the horses—past the heavily-rolling carriages—with flying feet, I just escape being run over,—there ! I am just in time.

Hme—uffe ! I am seated in the cars—we are off.
“It is the evening train—goes no farther than Peekskill.”

Just the train for me : I wish to go no farther. Lending a gracious ear to a chatty little Miss in the seat with me ; and attending to the frivolous questions and complaints of an old lady in the seat opposite, and the hurried coming and going of way-passengers, beguiled the distance.

A carriage was in waiting.

“To Mr. N——’s, Main street.”

“The minister’s ?”

“The same.”

It was nine o’clock, and yet, on my arrival at “the minister’s,” the tea-table was waiting ; the silver tea-urn sending out a grateful odor ; for by some unaccountable instinct they were expectant of my coming. Strange—for one half hour before I left the city, I had no thought of seeing my dear and excellent Maria, (the Rev. Mrs. E. M. Noyes) for weeks to come. These excellent friends of mine were now living at Peekskill. Mr. N. had been called from his obscure parish, a year before, and was now better qualified to enter upon a wider field of labor, than when first entering there. He had chosen at first to settle in that remote place, in order to have more time for study and meditation ; and Maria, too, required a long season for repose. She needed it to restore her health to some degree of firmness ; to arrange her thoughts, to pursue her new studies, and to order her life on a wiser plan than had hitherto been her privilege to do. And she had grown so good—so noble—so wise !

I was glad to be with one who would not question me; who would leave my troubled spirit unvexed until it could find repose—who would let me weep unrestrainedly, and give no heed—I was glad to be again in the lovely little guest-chamber—to look upon the dainty carpet on the floor, the exquisite pictures upon the walls. I was glad to be alone!

All my surroundings here were familiar to me. Then I said—"In this house there is no ghost of a buried happiness, to walk by night."

For this I offer up thanksgiving!

CHAPTER XIX.

REPOSE—sleep—change! each, in its kindly ministration, helped to restore me to my wonted state.

I had received a shock; I knew not how great, until I began to recover. In the early beauty of the sunniest mornings, Maria went with me out upon the hills overhanging the deep vallies, and we could see the noble river gliding between. I would not analyze or compare—I only felt the power of their great beauty.

Artists have painted, poets have sung, tourists have described the beautiful "scenery" and "views" on the Hudson—but I shall do neither.

In the hush of the moonlight, I walked in quiet paths with Mr. N., or wound down the steep declivities, or over jagged and rough ways. It has been previously said, that we had been early friends—playmates; had together conned the difficult page. We talked of these, and went home to Maria—to prayers, and to sleep.

How beautiful is wedded life in this house, I said. No disparity of age or tastes! No spectre upon the walls! No conflicting interests! No—no—no—hme—phyffe—and sleep, with downy fingers, closed the sentence. Those lovely autumn days faded away, like "dissolving views," each lovelier than the last.

A ring at the door-bell!

"Telegraphic dispatch." For me—oh, certainly, for me! Two words—"come soon," and dated an hour before.

"I must go, now—though I could have wished this announcement to have been delayed a few days longer."

"Whatever it may be that calls you away, dear friend, be sure of our warmest sympathy—and send to us at once, if

we, Maria and I, can be the smallest shadow of comfort to you. And now (rising), the 'down train' is due in half an hour—I will have the carriage at the door by the time you can get your bonnet and shawl gracefully adjusted."

The door closed behind him.

"Oh, now, I have courage to meet whatever may befall, for I shall feel that you, and that most perfect man, are with me, every moment of my stay."

"You will be so upheld, that you cannot be dismayed."

That was like sweet Maria—strong in a whole life of rectitude.

I took little note of my journey, until I was at the end.

Dr. Smith sat by the bedside holding one of Albertine's thin hands, noting the failing pulse.

"Pale as a white rose withering, she lay," her delicate limbs straightened beneath the snowy counterpane. Her little cap of lace had slipped off, and loosened from band or comb, her wealth of dark brown hair swept in silken softness over the luxuriant pillows, whose daintily crimped frills had been the work of those small taper fingers, now still and cold as marble. A low fire was burning in the grate, and Mr. Bovie sat near it, striving to soothe his little son, who was restless and frightened at a scene so strange.

The room, the same I had shared with Albertine for the few weeks past, and now—away!

Mrs. Boulster sat in a corner by one of the windows, poring over some religious looking volume. I noted all these material things—but they were as stocks and stones.

The spirit which had once moved among them, endowing each object with grace and beauty, and an individual life, or value, was there no longer!

Sinking slowly into a seat, in an almost breathless whisper, I questioned the doctor of our friend.

"You can speak to her," he said—"I think she is still conscious. She has taken leave of her husband and child."

I leaned over her pillow and spoke to her, calling her by most endearing names, as of old. She unclosed her eyes and murmured—

"Minnie—you have been away along, long time. So many years."

"Well, my dearest, I shall stay with you now, always."

"Oh—" and she smiled—but it was not her smile of old, it was different—it was as if her soul smiled.

"Minnie, what is it—'not a sparrow falleth—falleth,'—tell me about that."

"We, you and I, dearest Albertine, found a dead bird beneath the rose-bushes, and we said—'Not a sparrow falleth to the ground without His knowledge.'"

"You said so, Minnie, I remember. But I am going—tell me more."

"You faint and fail, dearest, my love—but our Heavenly Father will lift you up."

"You believe it."

"I believe it. The little lamb is carried in the arms of the Good Shepherd."

"There! I am near the shore. Lilies, white lilies. Give me your hand—I go. Oh, how fair is this lovely water! Speak again—your voice is with me, even here."

"Albertine, I lose you; but you are going to your Heavenly Father."

She smiled again, a far off, distant smile, as if she looked on other and fairer worlds than this. Said—

"Farewell."

"We part but for a brief while—you only go before."

She made a faint sign, and I repeated her name.

"Albertine, I bear you company, even unto the pearly gates. I am with you, my Albertine."

We heard the faintest murmur,—“My mother—I come.” The small, white finger, whose slightest quiver I had noted, was still, forever!!

She was at home.

Silently, tenderly we crossed her hands upon her bosom.

"Sleep, gentle friend," the doctor murmured, as he smoothed the pillow beneath that beautiful head. "The heart that throbbed with its great agony, broke at last. A tender lamb strayed unwittingly, and the howling wolves have frightened it to death."

Half an hour afterward, he came to me, as I sat in the parlor, took my hands, and strove to comfort me.—

"You are weeping for the loved and lost one, with a sorrow that has no mitigation."

"None. A little wave on the great ocean—past away, and no trace of it is left behind."

"She beautified one little spot."

"Which to do, seems to have been the right of another."

"Hush!"

"Dear Heaven, forgive me—but my soul is dark as night!"

"To bud, to blossom, and pass away! Who shall say her mission was unaccomplished? We see as in a glass, darkly."

"Leave me now. Oh, my friend, let me make my moan."

"Angels comfort you, Minnie, for be assured they comfort her."

Alone, in that silent parlor, with the twilight shadows timidly playing upon the walls! Mr. Bovie opened the door and came in. Then I ceased the low, sad hymn, by which I sought to comfort my despair. He had, soon after the doctor left, sent me a note by the hand of Mrs. Boulster, in which he had expressed an earnest wish that I would remain, for a few days, at least. And now, as he stood on the opposite side of the fire—erect—cold—distant, I could see that he had suffered deeply.

Then, also, I saw how I had hardened my heart against him; that I withheld even common sympathy, such as I might have bestowed upon a beggar. But I had much to learn.

He now spoke in a low, measured tone, evidently with

strong self-constraint. He thanked me for the kind attention I had shown throughout the day to his little son; also, for my courtesy in consenting to remain in his house, under circumstances so peculiar.

I sat mute—dumb. I could not find a word to say in answer. Then he added—

"Miss Minster, there is something I must tell you, for it deeply concerns one who is gone, and it should have been told you at an earlier date."

"Oh, not now—pray, not now. Leave me this day sacred to grief. Let me think of her only, as the angel she is."

"So be it, then, if you will it," he said—and nothing more.

"But I have a favor to ask: I could wish you to telegraph to Mr. and Mrs. N., at Peekskill; they should be with me while I remain here."

"I will do so at once."

"And Fred—does he know——?"

"I have sent to him already."

I was alone, with the twilight shadows creeping tremulously upon the walls.

Kind-hearted, eventempered, silent man, what great wrong had placed him in such a fearful position!

CHAPTER XX.

WE went through the hushed rooms—Maria and I. Master Sammy held by my finger, sometimes by my dress, as we talked of the earlier and happier days of the one who was gone.

“A vague rumor has reached me, Minnie, which has caused me some unhappiness. Make it clear to me, *if* you have the right to.”

“I have not the power, I do not know, it was during my absence from this country that this—this marriage took place,” I answered with a gasp.

“You have had intimations then, that there was something wrong?”

“True, and Mr. Bovie would have told me last evening, but then I was not equal to it. I had need of rest. I will look at this wrong in the clear light of a full knowledge—I will turn it upon every side, and be sure, dear, that I shall show the perpetrators that they cannot escape just retribution.”

“And if these should prove to be——”

“No matter whom—do not think to turn me aside from this.”

“Ah, who would ever think of our grave, yet loving—clever, yet brilliantly beautiful Minnie, as a Nemesis!”

The low cry of the child startled us both with its painful pleadings.

“Come, waken dear mamma, Sammy wants her?”

“Poor baby,” Maria said, herself ready to cry, “who shall soothe the hopeless longings of this bereaved little one! Minnie, have you not taught him in the least degree how to understand this change?”

“Alas me! I have but soothed him with vague promises.”

“But I would not have him forget his mother—he is a bright little fellow—through his intellect and his affections, he may retain her image forever.”

“Be this your task, oh Priestess Maria. I go to tend her birds and flowers.”

Maria took the little boy to the room where his beautiful mother lay in her last and dreamless sleep. What her process of teaching was, none knew, but that she established a certain sympathy between the departed and the pure soul here, was evident, for that child never lost the clear and beautiful memory of his mother.

Ghosts of the last night's shadows were playing upon the walls, as we were drawn by some new sympathy around the parlor fire.

“Be seated, Madam,” Mr. Bovie said to dear Maria, “be seated. It is my wish that you, too, hear this story from me. It will reach you some time, and it were better that you should know the truth.”

A shudder as for coming evil—a feeling nearly akin to dismay was creeping over me as we sat together—Mr. Bovie opposite us, waiting, waiting to begin.

Why did not Maria speak? why did not I? and so lift up the curtain of blank despair! I could not utter a word.

“My friends—if I may not address you two ladies thus, I know not where I may apply the title.”

We bowed silently. He resumed.

“My friends, my task is difficult, and I will take it up as I would a bitter draught which must be swallowed at once.

Eighteen years ago I was married to a young girl whom I loved. I too, was young then. For some years we lived in as much happiness as I could wish. Our means were ample, and I had nothing to vex me. We had two little boys, and these were the pride and joy of my life. My mother I do not remember, her early death deprived me of her virtuous counsels, and the enemy came by night and sowed tares.

My father died while I was still young, leaving my brother and myself equal heirs to a large fortune, and our young sister, a marriage portion, or gift, from us, of only a few hundred dollars. My brother went abroad and remained many years. I too, being some time married, left the place of my birth, went *West*, to Michigan, and my sister, having left school, very naturally made my house her home. But she never harmonized with us, and often made us very unhappy. I think she continually felt the injustice of our father's 'will.' She was left dependent upon me, and like many others, unqualified for business. But I did not think of this then. Women were not supposed to understand the management of property. Nor was it thought decorous for them to learn. Made simply and wholly for the convenience and comfort of *man*, why should they ever learn to live independent of him?

Let that pass. She grew to dislike my wife—and my pretty little boys, I believe she hated. I was displeased with this state of things. I thought she and my wife might have had some woman-like differences—and the children perhaps annoyed her. For you see men do not like the trouble of searching out the wrong.

Oh, if I could have known! Pray excuse me, ladies—I go on.

I had been gay and volatile, would have led a reckless kind of life, but my wife was pious and even tempered; she persuaded me to the meeting with herself and the children, and I was content. This angered my sister, who said I went in 'leading strings'—then there was increased discord. The little boys took part with their mother, whom they passionately loved, and said—

'Aunty might go away.' The storm burst.

I often went to a bar-room or the corner grocery, to escape the din at home, and left my young wife to bear a double burden. I was absent whole evenings—ben whole days. My love for a wild, free life returned, and I joined a jolly set

for a hunting and camping excursion, and we were absent for months together.

My wife was grieved, and reproached me with a heartless desertion. But I had a taste of the free, wild life of the woods, and this grew to a passion.

My sister aided and abetted me in this—so I threw off the gentle love of home and its innocent delights. Then my sister married—was always coaxing me to her house—for I gave her game, and furs, and many pretty things that I collected in my travels.

My sister's husband, to whom I had loaned a large sum of money, lost his place with the improvements he had made on it, through 'spurious title deeds.'

She came to me—cried, plead and scolded. I gave her my promise that I would not press my claim. Next, she demanded the papers to keep. I gave them up—and when she returned home she burnt them.

During my absences from home, I had learned the use of *cards*—and having quarrelled with my brother-in-law, and out of love with my wife and home generally, I was drawn to the gaming table by a force which I did not try to resist. I never drank deeply, but was as worthless for any good to my family, as fog is for food.

Well, one night I played deep—and lost all! even pledging the cottage-home where my wife and children were sleeping their unquiet sleep.

For a few moments I felt my utter ruin! then, I threw off all care, and resolved to drop down to the level of a reckless vagabond—the thing that nature had, perhaps, intended me for.—I returned home before day, entered the house stealthily—just to procure what few articles I might need, and all the ready money I should find, then be off. The money and a few valuables, I rightly guessed were in my wife's room; thither I went with stealthy step. She was sleeping—the heavy sleep of exhaustion: and oh, how pale she looked. My youngest, little Neddie, seemed unwell; for just as I had

feloniously secured the pelf, he turned in his feverish sleep, and cried—'Papa, come home !'

I rushed from the room and the house. * * * Then, indeed, I became well versed in all the world's crooked ways—the veriest vagabond. So, I would not stand here, before you, two pure women, were it not to show you how entirely I owe my regeneration to the dear one I have destroyed, of whom you may have thought unkindly !

I wandered, always restless, often wretched. I roamed until months grew to years. * * * I returned to the borders of civilization—came at length to this Babel city—I began to do anything to obtain money.

I went to the politicians—did their bidding—they paid me large sums. I never applied for a public office—I never wanted one—I could not afford the acceptance of one, for I learned that a man would pay one thousand dollars to secure an office under Government—nominally worth but two thousand per annum, and was expected to live in a style that would cost fifteen hundred dollars, at least, annually. So I grew rich faster by working for others to obtain offices, than I could by the office itself.

I became one of a certain set ; hurraed for 'our side' at public meetings ; wrote newspaper articles, lauding our party and our MAN, (and he was always the man who would show us most favor, and coin,) and did many things which you ladies know nothing of, but which is termed, by the initiated, Button-hole-ing.

But, I never set foot in a dance-house. I knew not an individual in ———street. No, thank God—no such low vices are set down in the Great Book of the *Eternal* against me !

Somewhere I had met an old comrade—he must have acquainted my sister with my location, for she wrote me a long, palavering letter, and at the close, in a postscript, announced the death of my youngest boy, my Neddie. I know not how it was, but I found myself tearing the letter into atoms.

Then I delved deeper for gain.

Another letter came from my 'affectionate sister.' Harry, my oldest, she said, was a wild, graceless boy ; but as his mother was soon to be married to a Methodist minister of the place, no doubt all his faults would be speedily corrected.

I gathered up a number of large bank bills, and enclosed, with an order to my sister, to send the boy to me, at once.

It was long before he came ; and when he did come, I was too angry and too proud to ask about his mother. He began to speak of her once, but I forbade him, with so much sternness, that he never again made the attempt.

The lad was not happy with me, so I placed him in a school, and saw him but little. Time past on. I had much *excitement*, but no real pleasure. I thought of those eight years I had lived with my wife and little boys, in our dear home far away. Oh, my pretty baby-boy—! gone with the returnless years.

A heavy letter came from my 'faithful and affectionate sister.' She wrote of losses and crosses, of hard times coming ; of the many expenses incurred, over and above the receipts, in fitting out and sending Harry to me, (heaven only knows what the fitting out could have been.) Finally, that I had no one to care for *now*, but herself and the boy, for that my wife was dead. She would also send me a paper containing the obituary notice. But the paper never came.

Ah ! then she whom I had once loved—my wife—was dead. Had she forgiven me !

I could not tell this to my boy. I had not the courage to look upon his grief. So I sent a letter, and with it, permission to go, or a request for Harry to go up to a nice place, he had once visited, and enjoy a short vacation.

A few weeks passed, and my heart smote me for the neglect of my sorrowing orphan child, then, too, I thought of his little playmate brother, gone before.

Regret for all the sad past, and the dreariness of my present life, made me a thoughtful and less selfish man. I purchased what I believed would please the lad and sought him out.

In the secluded farm-house where he had gone, was one who had amused the lonely boy, who soothed his sorrows, and had been to him a kind and pleasant friend—this was, yes, it was Albertine.

She was lovely—she was good—she was an orphan. I loved her for all these. She was nearly as old now as the young girl I had wedded in the days of my early manhood, and I thought to begin life anew. * * *

Harry went not back to school, but remained there with her grand-parents, with Albertine and her brother Fred.

I went up there some half dozen times, and the day was fixed. I would not embarrass Albertine with the cares of a wedding, nor immediately after, with those of a house. We would board in some quiet place. Harry would go to school, and when at home, Albertine might with him renew her school-girl days with books and pencils.

I was now in reputable business, and Fred would find a place with me.

On the day appointed, a lovely morning, I rode out to the home of my bride. Harry and Fred were sent by a home conveyance to the nearest landing, whence they took the boat and went down to the city.

I waited with the old people a couple of hours, then took Albertine, and to avoid comment or spiteful remark, (for this was near the place where I had resided with my first wife,) and drove with her to the nearest village, to a lawyer's office, and when I returned to my home in the city, I fully believed the young girl by my side was my lawfully wedded wife.

Some friends had been invited to meet the young bride. One pleasant lady brought some orange flowers and sweet-scented leaves, and put them in my Albertine's hair. She

looked very nice and pretty in her white muslin dress. Our arrangements had all been simple, free from noise and show. For us, this was well, it was excellent, and Albertine was content."

Mr. Bovie paused so long, it was evident he had forgotten us. Maria said at last—

"Pray go on, sir, we are listening."

"Oh," he said, with a start. "Yes, you are very kind. Well, we lived happily the few years allotted us. I sought to do whatever I thought would please Albertine. Another might have deemed her very exacting, but with me, what she did was best, she made us all very happy. What the sun is to the world we live in she was to me. Her head to plan, her taste and judgment to direct, her love to warm and vivify all. But, oh, she had no subtle antagonist, no heart of envy within her house.

It pleased her that Harry was so fond of his little baby brother, for she said, he, our wee Sammy, would be to him what little Neddie would have been. Here I would like to stop, and make an end of speaking, but a power beyond my own will drives me on.

Five years of a calm and quiet life had been mine, when a vague rumor from an uncertain quarter reached me, and gave me much disquiet. Just at this time Harry returned from school one night, very ill. The next day he was worse, and for two weeks Albertine watched over him tenderly, but her care and all medical advice, were alike fruitless. He moaned and plead for something which our dull senses could not comprehend. I saw a change in the boy, when he looked up and said—

"I have seen my mother, my own mother. She came to me, as I believe—came to me last night. She told me about little Neddie, and the other one, but I promised her never to reveal this *until death*, and now I am going hence, to come not back, and must keep my word with her, who loved me so well. Let me, oh, let me see my mother, for she is near, very near me, now.' Albertine weeping, said—

'Dear boy, you are very ill—try to rest.'

'I am going to my everlasting rest,' he said. 'I cannot wait—for see! they beckon me. When I have fallen asleep—when death has healed my unspoken griefs—will you let my mother see me?'

Albertine could not speak. He looked at me with a fixedness which compelled my reply.

'Promise me.'

'If she wishes it; yes, my son.'

He murmured 'father,' with a fondness which he had never ventured to express in life and health.

Albertine leaned over him, and gently laid her hand on his forehead. He whispered—

'You were kind, good—I loved you always! but, my mother—*mother*—oh, be good to her.'

His eyes closed. Albertine strove to hush her sobs—a deep silence pervaded the room—my first-born, my brave boy had gone from those who loved him, to those who knew and loved him best.

I sat with my head upon my clenched hands, brooding over the long past. It seemed that I heard a foot-fall, then a tall shadow fell across the curtains of the bed whereon lay my eldest, my beloved, his wrongs and his sufferings ended, his tender and loving bosom forever hushed in death.

I raised my head—there was no sign of motion there. Hark! a wild, shrill, agonized cry broke upon the air. Ha! it was the voice, the heart-cry of my long lost, my poor, deserted—aye, murdered wife.

It was night—darkness within and without. Next morning I received a note, left by private hand. Thus—and taking from his vest pocket a paper—

'My son, my loved and loving child is dead. By right of motherhood I make one request. That his father accompany the remains for interment near the graves of his ancestors. Whatever may be necessary, will be in readiness at such time as may seem fitting to his later guardians.

LAURA BOVIE.

It was true, then. The mother of my brave Harry—the tender wife I had cruelly deserted, and robbed of her child—had returned from the West, and was now with her relatives—by whom I knew her to be greatly beloved! How could I break these fearful tidings to Albertine! There was no need. My cousin Sally came, and before I had prepared myself for the task, she let out the whole story, in just the way that a coarse, uneducated mind would suggest. Certainly her words were not well chosen, nor the time.

Albertine sank at the first blow.

At one glance she grasped the whole. She was nearly mad with agony. She would have fled—but for her child. To leave him, would be to destroy herself—to take him, would make him worse than orphaned—and me! yes, even in that terrible hour, she thought of me—childless.

My Albertine lost to me! Harry dead! I think I too, was mad.—I had a loaded pistol in my hand—raised it with deliberate aim. She sprang from her couch, and tore it from me! 'Shame!' she cried—'coward! would you die! would you desert your helpless boy? Live—and be to him both father and mother!' and sank, fainting on the floor, before I could stretch out my arms to receive her."

CHAPTER XXI.

"I felt it to be my duty to inform Laura of the day and hour fixed upon for the funeral. I did so, for the same messenger who had brought me Laura's note, waited, grave and silent, for some communication from me. On the day fixed upon we proceeded to the appointed place.

For Albertine to accompany us, was impossible—and I bade her brother Fred remain by her during my absence.

At the church, I was met by many of my old friends, and at the altar stood the same minister, under whose preaching I had sat with my poor Harry's mother, and by his side, covered with a mourning veil was—Laura, waiting to receive her dead.

I would have fallen at her feet and cried aloud for her forgiveness for my early desertion and this later and more cruel wrong—but she saw me not, and the place seemed dark as death.

Some one laid back the coffin-lid, I heard the tears fall like rain, then the smothered sobs, the heart-cries—'My child, my child!'

How dark, how terrible was that hour! Laura, my early wedded, my true, fond wife, bathing with tears of agony the cold still face of her last, her only child, and I, impotent to console her! How should I dare to offer words of consolation! My soul was in sack-cloth, cowering amid dust and ashes.

Then my last marriage rose up to curse me. The rashness of the deed was but too glaring! I had no proof of Laura's death, save the bare assertion of it in a letter from my sister, and she, though she be my sister, is, I say it before high heaven, the greatest *liar* I ever knew.

I was too willing, it suited my purpose to believe it. All this passed through me with lightning-speed. My head swam round. Some one beside me said—

'Out of the chaos of Error shall arise the Perfection of Truth.' I leaned forward, spoke *her* name, Laura, took her hand, and we were seated in our appropriate places.

The services proceeded—during these I had time to grow calmer. When they were ended, I walked with Laura leaning on my arm, to the grave.

The last tribute the living owe to the dead was paid, and I returned with Laura to her mother's house, amid a large circle of friends, gathered there from various motives.

In the best room, being the most spacious, a large table was set out, for Laura's people were generous and hospitable. I took Laura and her mother aside, and explained to them our relative positions, adding that it was impossible for me to remain there a moment longer.

And if we never meet again, Laura, these are my parting words—You have been a true, but most cruelly injured wife. Good bye, and may God in heaven bless you evermore.

When I reached home, Albertine was fearfully ill. Fred had summoned Dr. Smith, who pronounced her attack to be brain fever. The days and nights that we watched her grew into weeks, and while slowly convalescing, the tide of autumnal visitors set city-ward, and our house was full of guests.

It is true this changed the current of her thoughts, but she was not strong enough to bear this continued excitement and increase of cares. Previous to all these swiftly succeeding events, Albertine had made an appointment to visit you, Miss Minster, but now she shrank from fulfilling it. I did not like to have her left alone, and the company at our house was not congenial to her taste. I counseled her to send to you, Miss Minnie, to come to her, which she did. And if this visit has caused you fruitless pain, or deep mortification, I pray you to forgive *me*. I do not ask you to forgive Albertine, for she never intended to wound you."

"Pray do not talk so," I said. "I think I should have come, had I known all."

"Thank you, Miss Minster, I am greatly your debtor. Ladies, I thank you for listening to my story—it is ended."

Maria rose—passed in front of the fire, and offered her hand, saying—"Mr. Bovie, I have to thank you for the generous confidence you have shown. Count on me for any services, or any sympathy you may require. Count on me in your hour of need, for a friend who faileth not."

I had little to say. I felt that Maria had spoken for us both. A brief pause intervened. Then I said—"Let us talk of the future. Is the line of duty clearly defined to you, sir?"

"I believe it is," he said.

"And your sister—have you the courage to mete out justice equal to her deserts?"

"You will see. The first deed that I do, after I return to active life, will be to renounce *her*. All relationship, all communication, all friendly feeling with a woman, whose covetousness and envy has brought a blight upon my manhood, and laid low in death one of the loveliest beings God ever made. And see," he said—rising up, cold and stern—"see me—a man past middle life—my hearth desolate—shunned by honest men, and childless—save one poor little babe—and he—oh, God! is illegitimate!"

Maria said many kind words. He thanked her. It was very late—long past midnight—for various reasons, pauses had occurred in this recital, that I have not noted. Then she and I went up to that upper room, where I had first witnessed Albertine's agony.

In the house opposite, in a room on a level with ours, a light was still burning. Did that lone woman keep, like us, a painful vigil? However deeply she might sympathize with him, who had once been the joy of her young life; she might not now cross his threshold to offer one little word of consolation.

I put down the gas to a low, flickering flame, and thinking

of all that deserted wife must have suffered, fell asleep, and dreamed of Albertine. Ah, she was nearer to me than was that unhappy woman over the way.

It was the morning of the funeral.

Maria, with her quiet, housewifely ways, moved about, the very spirit of order. Her gentleness and frankness had so won upon Mr. Bovie, that he conferred with her about all arrangements necessary to be made.

For me, I could do nothing, but feel, and that too, that I was good for nothing, or even worse. I said, or looked something to this effect. Maria made answer in her smiling, silvery tone—"We are content when angels are near us, if we hear only the rustling of their wings."

And Mr. Bovie, more prosily.

"Your presence here, Miss Minster, is something I could ask of few persons of your rank. You will to-day meet the people who assemble here, as the friend and guest of Albertine. Had you been less noble or less pure, you might have refused me this. Good as great! I now see that the malice of petty worldlings cannot reach the heights on which you stand."

The morning passes—it is time to dress.

For that day Maria and I put on mourning. One wore it as the outward sign of bereavement, the other, from sympathy with the bereaved.

Dr. Smith came up stairs to attend us down into the parlor, to look for the last time on a face we should see no more. Very beautiful she looked.

No orange flowers now gleamed amid her silken tresses, as at that other bridal: no tender light beamed from out her soft brown eyes: no timid smile parted those sweet lips: but a few pale flowers, wreathed with leaves of rose-geranium, lay upon her cold bosom, the long silken lashes drooping upon her cheek, white as the robe she wears—for she is now the bride of Death.

I had taken a lovely rosebud, like the one she gave me to

wear, one evening—I now laid it within her hand, and hoped by this token, she might still remember me.—Some friends came. Mr. N—— came early ; and a few minutes before the services commenced, Fred came : but oh, how changed ! So pale, so still !

How he resembled his sister as she stood up in her hour of agony, and compelled that terrible calm !

With the slightest sign of recognition to me, and none to any other, he passed to the seat appointed him.

I had previously listened to Mr. N——, and wondered from whence he derived that sympathy with those about him. Now he evidently knew our thoughts, the despondent, the sombre, the repining, and gathered them up, so mingled with hope, with trust, with love divine, and proofs of eternal justice, that one felt the darkness fade away before the glorious light of morning.

Well ! it was all over.

In Greenwood's quiet shade we left the friend of my early days, the tenderly loved, the sister, the mother—wrapt in her dreamless sleep, calm and unbroken be her rest. It was well.

So we returned to that desolate house—I was sitting by the parlor window, silent, sad. Fred came to me, and for the first time spoke, but so low—

“ I wish to express the deep gratitude I owe you for your kindness in remaining here, but I have not words to tell you what I feel.”

“ You need not, dear friend, I am very glad to have been here.”

“ You will not remain longer !”

“ No. I go with Mr. and Mrs. N. to Peekskill to-night.”

“ Good bye. I go at once.”

“ Not until you have spoken to Mrs. N.”

“ And not until you have promised to visit me at my own home,” said Maria, taking the hand he had offered as he turned to her, “ you will be very lonely now. I must beg you

will allow me to supply, as far as I can, the place of your kind sister.”

He gave a start, flushed, then turned ashy pale.

“ You must not exact a promise, madam, which upon mature consideration, neither of us would wish to fulfill.”

“ I will not seem to misunderstand you, sir. I am fully aware of all the painful events, which, perhaps, your pride or sensitiveness would set up as a barrier to your enjoyment of the friendship and hospitality of my house. Shrink not from *us*, or I shall believe you question my sincerity.”

“ Oh, pray do not think that—looking in your face, I could not believe you untrue.”

“ Come then, I have something to say to you, which will make you think better of humanity, and that will comfort you.”

“ I will,” and bowing to her and me, he hastily left the house, never more to enter there.

CHAPTER XXII.

A MONTH slipt softly away.

How lovely seemed the quiet of my father's house. Home ! 'tis a theme for worship, 'tis a word to thrill through the inner temple of the soul, 'tis the key to the fastnesses of aristocratic and artificial life, the one bright taper gleaming athwart the midnight storm and darkness, lighting up the pathway of the lost and dim-eyed wanderer. Home ! it is a world of beauty and glory, known only to those who enter there ; a heaven of delicious repose ! Here I found both repose and happiness.

My books and flowers had reconciled me to many losses. I rode or walked with my father, as suited us best, and for his sake my household duties were reckoned among my pleasures. I had sorted and prepared my knitting for the long winter evenings, so that I might read or listen to my father with undivided attention. For all the little ones at Glenelvan had learned to look to me for their winter supply of stockings.

And then, after Christmas, cousin Belle was coming to spend a month with me.

No more going down to the city of Gotham ; but an entire winter at home. An occasional ball, or an assembly—frequent sleigh-rides—and once, my father and I would go up to Albany, to see how the Laws were *made* and mended. (Much need of the *latter*, is there, especially respecting the childless widows.) Well, I cannot say I thought my winter prospect an unpleasing one.

I have spent several winters abroad, but that was when my father's household numbered many more than now—this I would spend at home.

Not aimless—not selfishly wrapt in the luxurions dream

of the poet—for a poet's soul have I, though I oftentimes mend stockings, even blue ones, make bread, and teach and tend ragged and untidy children.

But this winter should be one of thoughts and deeds. Seated by our evening fire, the wind howling without, and the rain and sleet driving against the closed shutters ; I had paused in my reading to listen to one peculiar wail, which had thrice risen above the elemental strife. Nay, nay ; it was nothing but the moaning of the wild winds, and the bitter weeping of the horizontal boughs, lashed by the crystal sleet.

Yet, why should this external warring oppress me so ? Through thy sympathies, O soul ! On such a night, poor Biddy Malone's baby died, and none but me to sit with her beside the little bed.

A well-known rap at our evening parlor door. I quickly laid down my book, for John came in, bringing letters. My father took his and leisurely broke the seal, mine was torn open and read at once. It was from Maria. What a beautiful letter Maria writes ! so gracefully penned, so choice in diction, so—so—kind. And, oh ! she loves me so dearly. Well, it is something to know, and a great deal to be loved by a lovely, and large-minded woman. I always have strong misgivings about the *woman* whom other women love not.

Well—and Fred—how glad I was he had been there, and Maria had told him his sister's story. The darkness was lifted from his soul—her memory was now to him as something holy.

I held the letter still in my hand. My father said—

“ I have a letter from your aunt Guilder. Her physician has advised that she should spend a winter at the North, to invigorate her health, which, it appears, has been for some time declining. This news does not give me unmixed pleasure, certainly.

“ But now, *my precious*, listen to her demands, for, from my only sister, a simple hint of her wishes, is all that to me.—

She is to spend the winter in New York city; and being a stranger, and, in some degree, an invalid, wishes my daughter to come and spend a large portion of the time at her house. Now, what answer can I make, my pussy?"

"Oh!" I said, and my heart gave a great leap. "Tell her, I would be most happy to accept her kind invitation, but I cannot possibly leave my dear papa, alone."

"You are a born Diplomatist, my little Miss, you know very well how to manage your fond and foolish papa," he replied, with a gay and cheerful laugh.

"As you please, dearest papa."

"Well, I shall only be too glad to see my sister; so I think,—ah!—if you do not object, we will go down to Gotham, spend a few days, and then I may consent to leave you there some little time longer."

"And pray, what will you do at home alone?"

"Oh, to be sure—Why we will take your cousin, Belle, down with us, and when she is tired of seeing the Lions, she can return with me—and see the Bears."

"These, I suppose, I am to understand to be the country beaux, which her beauty and wit must attract to this place?"

"If you please, but my vision extended not so far."

"Well, indeed, I hope there is no hurry, I had rather wait awhile—and pray how are we to find my aunt?"

"I will answer your last question, first. She is now at the St. Nicholas Hotel, but will in a few days be in her own house—we will go next week, for I already begin to be impatient to see my beloved sister."

So it was all settled, and in the morning a note was despatched to cousin Belle. A few more quiet days passed, and then what slight preparations were deemed necessary were soon completed.

For various reasons my father chose to have us go by our own conveyance, a comfortable family carriage.

It was a cold, but calm and pleasant day.

We arrived in the city early in the afternoon, stopt for a

brief while at the St. Nicholas. My aunt had been gone from thence some days. My father procured her address, and we proceeded to her residence.

How great was my surprise when John checked the horses in Forty-Fifth street, in front of the house adjoining that one where I had spent such pleasant hours, and also, hours of such fierce anger, followed by hours of deepest sorrow! It was a surprise not unmixed with pain. I did not wish to recall memories fruitless of any good, the darkest and most painful I had known, since my own great sorrow. And this was of a different character.

"We wait for you, my pet."

It was the voice of my father, and instantly recalled me to the present. Cousin Belle was already upon the steps. I cared not to note any of her surroundings. I would have my aunt the first object on which my eyes should rest, the lovely figure in the foreground of the picture my imagination had painted. And so it was.

And oh, what a vision of perfect loveliness, of full, rich, ripe, mature beauty and feminine grace dawned upon me! My girlhood's dream of this peerless lady, my aunt Guilder, was then fulfilled.

Eolia was summoned, a bright, sylph-like creature, to show the young ladies to their room and assist in the divestiture of their traveling gear.

As we entered our room, Belle glided past me, sank into a chair, and with a half sigh, as if not fully assured of the impression she had made, said—

"My dear, we got through the presentation with most remarkable ability."

"Certainly we did—had you any previous doubts on that head, my little Belle?"

"Oh, but *our* aunt is a very splendid woman."

"Yes, and sweet tempered, for see the bright warm fire she has ordered in the grate."

"Heaven send her *heart* be as warm!"

Eolia drew two luxurious chairs near the fire and intimated that there would be no company to tea—the young ladies would have two hours for dressing, she would leave for awhile, and then return and assist them if desired.

We thanked her, but said, we northern *young* ladies, in robust health, needed little aid in making our toilette.

Exit Eolia, courtesying.

“Isn't she pretty?”

“Yes, very. Spanish, with a slight cross of the African.”

“Evidently, but, Minnie, why did you not lead her on to talk more? her voice is music.”

“Eolia—wind-harp. Dear, I intend she shall be to me what her musical name implies—wind-harp, which is heard only when the free airs of heaven breathe upon its strings. Give me one Eolian strain, but take thou, dearest Belle, and keep all the pretty Polls thou canst hang up in a tin cage.”

“How kind! Allow me also a few oranges from that silver basket, which no doubt Eolian Strain has left here for our use.”

“You shall have but one, you saucy thing—for it is near time to begin to dress.”

“Excuse me, dear—but what are we to wear?”

“Our brown silks, ma belle! they are very sweet in effect, and with black velvet bows, not too dressy for the present occasion.”

“Brown, with black velvet—ah, what little doves we shall be. And so we are to sit gracefully, and coo—like two little ring-doves.”

“'Tis the bridal ring—the brida-al ring.” I sang the refrain of an old Swiss song.

“Is it, Minnie? Bridal ring! aha, an omen.”

“In what, pet?”

“Oh, I'll not tell you, until I see it fulfilled.”

“The usual way with omen-venders, I believe.”

“A fig for your sarcasm.”

We proceeded quite leisurely with the pleasant toil of

dressing, much to Belle's comfort, who had somewhat of the lymphatic temperament. She was a pure blonde, and it required no little study to combine appropriate colors and give a pleasing effect to this “neutral tint,” which Belle often playfully termed herself.

Our delightful task was just completed—a light tap at the door—it was Eolia, come to show us down to tea.

We found my father and aunt in almost Paradisical happiness; and her son, our cousin Henry, to whom we had previously been introduced, an attentive and pleased listener. The journey from the South, here the brief sojourn in the city, or seeing her brother—some one or all of these incidents had done much toward renewing my aunt's health—for she was now the picture of mature loveliness. It was not alone her beauty of person, her gracefulness of manner, or her rare intelligence, which charmed. Not these alone—there was a moral grandeur about my aunt Guilder, more fascinating, more entrancing, than all these.

Belle was in ecstasies. After we returned from the tea-room, our cousin Henry devoted himself to Belle and me. He talked with us—we played and sang, and so the evening passed, like many that followed, full of interest, full of pleasure, full of real, enduring, home-happiness. Each succeeding day seemed brighter and fairer than the one gone before it—we rode out, visited many places of interest, which the real Manhattaner knows so well how to enjoy.

One day a letter to Madam Guilder came, containing the intelligence that she was soon to be joined by her son, whom we had never seen, and of whom we knew little, as he had completed his education abroad—had traveled for some years on the Continent of Europe—but would now remain with his mother—at least, as long as it suited him to do so. My father was content to stay another week.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE days flew past like a weaver's shuttle.

"And so our 'grand reception' is to be this evening! Pray, dearest Minnie, lend me a few ideas. I do really wish to be quite brilliant—never mind about the borrowed light, so that I shine with it. For it would be a sore mortification to see the glory of 'our house' pale in the full radiance of all the Guilders."

"There is no lack of ideas in that little head of yours, sweet Belle, if only you would have the grace to sort them."

"Sort ideas! I could never even make up a nosegay that would hold together—all the flowers that should form the centre *would* keep bursting upon the outside. No—give me my beautiful adornments—be they intellectual or floral, ready-made to order."

"You will never get 'excused' on this pretence, my pet, for sooner or later, you must combine and arrange, if you do not originate. So you may as well begin this evening! and so keep on for the seven ensuing days."

"Oh, then, what a vicissitudinous week this will be!"

"Each little event traced back to the evening, in which my cousin Belle was satisfied to shine with her own clear light."

"Oh, never set me to 'investigating' first causes."

"And so, ma belle, we are really to see our new cousin this evening! aunt Guilder expects him at eight."

"And it is now five minutes to six," she said, taking out her watch. At this moment the door opened, and Eolia came gliding up the parlor-vista towards us, courtesied—

"If you please, ladies, tea is ready—shall I show you?"

We followed the pretty sylph, and found the family wait-

ing to sit down to tea. It was a round table: my aunt sat by the silver tea-urn, and poured the aromatic beverage into the most delicate china cups, which Eolia passed to us. Sitting opposite my aunt, the seat she always assigned me, I could not but notice the lovely bloom that tinged her cheeks. I served out the jellies and preserved strawberries, and passing a plate to her, I said—

"Dearest aunt, you are looking very happy to-night."

"Ah, my little niece, one who is very dear to me, who has been long absent, returns to-night. All through the day I have counted the hours that part me from my beloved son; and now there remains only——" she smiled, and looked at the beautiful French clock on the mantel.

And I noticed that she ate nothing, only took a morsel of jelly. When our repast was over, aunt arose, and said—

"Now, my dears, I will send Eolia with you to your rooms. I give you full time to dress, without haste; let me see you both looking as lovely as possible, and when I am ready, I will send for you. I shall receive my son alone—have a little supper ready for him here—that over, I will present my nieces, and there will still be time to make a little acquaintance before the guests assemble. Does this please you, my sweet Minnie?"

"Perfectly. I only hope we may be able to bear well our part."

"Oh, fear not, and fail not."

And we—Belle and I, courtesied out of the room.

Seated within the sanctity of our own, we began to speculate upon the supposed merits of that august presence, into which we were so soon to be ushered.

But as the walls of our room had no ears, what was said went not beyond them. We still persisted in dispensing with all assistance from Eolia. While her mistress, from long habit, continually needed the fairy creature about her person—and then, what folly in us, with our robust, agile, full-toned life, to accept of aid which we did not require!

Belle—"Look as lovely as possible, my dears," said our aunt. I shall give infinite attention to my toilette, and a placid smile, which I intend to get up—for these, alas! may be all I shall have to rely upon, since you, cruel maid, refuse me even the least valued gem, from your intellectual storehouse.

Min.—You shall not annoy me, you pretty vixen, for I intend to be perfectly beautiful this eve; not only to please my aunt, (the saints in Heaven bless her), Madam Guildler, I should say, but also for my own sake. For I, too, wish to sustain the glory of *our house*. There, Belle, have not I borrowed an idea from you, and as I pay promptly, take this in return—quite as original, and perhaps of equal value.

Belle.—Oh, now I am to hear the profundity of mightiest thought.

Min.—Beyond your depths, perhaps.

Belle.—I expect nothing less.

Min.—Listen! Ahem! In your conversation, do not hesitate, do not hurry, have in your mind what you mean to say, then utter it with clearness and elegance.

Belle.—Thank you, my oracle.

Min.—Now to our occupation, the highest we richly-dowered maidens may dare aspire to, dressing to look beautiful, thereby to get a husband! But frankly, Belle, dear, I do not wish just yet for a husband, be he the paragon which our new cousin is believed to be, for, I have myself to love, honor and obey—these duties, believe me, are quite commensurate with my capacities.

Belle.—Well, when I take a husband, we shall both promise one and the same thing—to love, honor and cherish until death, this, and nothing more. And if he be the one I now think of, he will promise and fulfill all this.

Min.—Ha, ha, Belle, have you made the nomination?

Belle.—Oh, bah! Pray forget it, Minnie, I was merely thinking aloud—no, no, I wasn't thinking at all!

Min.—Never fear. I shall forget it before the evening

passes, and now for a moment I will think aloud, and own it too. I have a presentiment that I am to be very happy this evening, one of the first requisites to being beautiful, (which I aim to be,) then I have been reading up to a certain point, and practicing from the most approved composers—oh, ma belle, I have so many resources, I cannot fail.

Belle.—And what do you wear? I see our Eolian Strain has most artistically arranged your rich maroon-colored velvet, on that Bishop's chair, to invite attention.

Min.—She is right—this is the identical dress I intended to wear. The color, a rich maroon, is perfectly suited to my complexion and style of person, not so fairy-like and ethereal as you, my snowflake, but rather Hebe-al, and a delicate brunette, with "glossy ringlets and dark, Spanish eyes," as the poet hath it. And look, my fairy Belle! What lovely Japonicas! the *white* one I shall hide amid the recesses of my darkly flowing hair, the others, the pink and scarlet ones shall peep from amid your laughing, flaxen curls.

Belle.—Oh, beautiful, exquisite! heavenly! I never saw anything half so sweet in life.

Min.—Save "Love's young dream!"

Belle.—Pray tell me what I shall wear—beside!

Min.—Your green and black bayadere. Those tiny rose-buds, pink and white, running round between the satin bars, will seem to emulate the flowers in your hair. Lovely! My dear, you cannot fail to impress one with your *freshness*, and those grave and reverend fathers we are to meet, will be wafled in thought to the *verdant* fields from which we came!

Belle.—Have done! I never half know whether you are caressing or mocking me.

During all this silvery patter of small talk, the toilette-making had steadily progressed.

There were only a few more turns to make, necklaces to link about those swan-like throats, bracelets to fasten around arms of such dazzling fairness, for even Hebe herself could not boast of more resplendent beauty, and of this, it seems my young heroines were fully aware.

Kind mother Nature had endowed them with great personal beauty—this they religiously strove to preserve, by correct habits of life and an equable temper.

A well-known tap at the door, and being bidden, Eolia entered. Her delight amounted to extasy.

“Oh, Miss Minnie, you are a perfect rose, the queen of love and beauty. And Miss Belle is a pearl, a lily, oh, a lily-of-the-valley. How delicious, how sweet, how perfectly lovely! I do affirm, I never saw any young ladies in New Orleans half so pretty.”

We were amused and pleased with Eolia's boundless admiration, it augured well for our success.

“Now, will the young ladies come down—for oh, I forgot to tell you that Master George has come, and they are waiting for you in the boudoir.”

I do believe Belle turned a shade nearer the hue of a snowflake at this announcement; but I gave her dimpled arm a vicious little pinch (under protest), as we left the room, which brought a smile to her lips, and a tinge of life-color to her waxen cheeks.

Madam Guilder received us in her sweet little boudoir, beyond the parlors. She smiled—was evidently much pleased when she saw us, but at once, and very ceremoniously, introduced us to her son. He met us very graciously—passed all the elegant compliments due to the time and occasion—then led his mother back to her accustomed seat—drew a small, luxurious chair near her, for Belle, then, with a graceful air, placed me in one of the recesses of the tête-à-tête, himself sinking quietly into the other.

And so our acquaintance began.

I had full leisure to sketch his portrait, for an unusual repose came stealing over me, like a summer twilight.

He was just so tall, that a lady would lift her eyelids when addressing him—the proper stature for a gentleman—had a graceful figure, an air which was at once cheerful and manly, fair complexion, dark brown, abundant hair, clear

grey eyes, a forehead not high nor broad, but of excellent proportions, and a mouth! oh, that most exquisite mouth, with that unmistakable expression of purity—delicate, close-shutting, the lower lip pressing against the upper—and his laugh, it was like a clear rill, running along a meadow—low—musical—sometimes gay! and then he laughed so easily. And this laugh seemed a language in itself; the expression of sympathy, of encouragement, or pleasure, the spontaneous language of a soul in blissful repose.

An hour passed, though we could scarcely believe it so long, and our guests began to assemble.

Madam Guilder had given to Belle and me, a few blank cards of invitation to fill with such names as we chose, with one restriction,—no inconsiderable one either—no young ladies were to be named—her first “reception” would be of gentlemen only, among the invited guests.

Belle had filled hers with the names of two eminent men, friends of her father, Dr. P——, and Dr. Q——,—I mine, with those once dear to me, Dr. Smith, and Fred Gunnison.

My father had been some time seated in the parlor, and it was a source of comfort to me it should so even, some two or three of his friends, of the long ago, should be the first arrivals. Next came Drs. P. and Q., whom Belle received with a lovely grace, and presented to her aunt, who then presented her son. Then came a few of my aunt's friends, and this was well. Lastly, and to my entire satisfaction, came Dr. Smith, and Fred Gunnison.

Whilst wit and wisdom, and brilliant pleasantries—the bright rich wine of life was quaffed by our elders—Henry, my younger cousin, myself and Belle, formed a neat trio by the pier-table. But when Fred came, it quickly changed into a quartette. I was glad of this, for Fred had once before seen cousin Belle, on a time he came to visit me, with his sister Albertine.

We sat there with our own little talk, amid a pleasant

murmur of deeper tones. I thought how like we were—*us* little people—to a tiny bunch of wood-violets, growing beneath the dim shades of a forest of pines. A sky-lark, soaring up to heaven, sings in a higher, purer atmosphere than these grand heads will ever be lifted to.

But the wee flowers were found by a stern hunter, and parceled out to eager claimants. Dr. Smith came to ask me for a song, and led me at once to the piano. Dr. Q. took Henry away, and so Belle was left alone with Fred. A few of those grand old harmonies seemed to exalt the quiet doctor to the third Heaven.

Then I played that dirge-like song Eulalie, and actually, a mist, like unshed tears, stood in his kind eyes.

I summoned Belle to my side, and we played duets.

"Now it is your turn, my cousin Henry;" and his good, generous heart would not let him refuse me.

He took the seat—played a brilliant little air. Then he played and sang, and Belle and I sang too—"The Landing of the Pilgrims."

This seemed to possess an interest for all present—for in oratorical parlance, it brought down the house.

Nearly all the guests stood in groups around the piano.

There were pauses in that storm of music, when you heard the rain of its silvery strains.

Then a rushing up the dizzy heights, and hanging, trembling, fluttering over the fearful chasm—then, leaping away, away, away, sinking, falling, down upon the crested billows—then rolling onward, and lost amid the moaning waves.

Oh, what a soul hath music!

There was silence—soft, kind, gentle as a mother's kiss.

Madam Guilder came forward, and by a certain signal, which, by the way, I could never detect—the doors of her boudoir slid back, and there, in the centre of the room stood a table, laden with fruits and blushing with flowers, whose rich, ripe grandeur and beauty, no mortal pen can describe.

There were silver baskets filled with tropical fruits, mixed

and interspersed with almost every kind of fruit our northern climate affords. Crystal vases of rare flowers were scattered about between baskets of fruits, like angels among saints: and fresh moss baskets resplendent with the most gorgeous flowers and sweet-scented leaves, over which, a humming-bird was poised—were snugly lodged in every possible niche and corner. Symbols of thought—these airy messengers!

This must have been the work of an artist! for the soul and eye of an artist was manifest everywhere.

One of Madam Guilder's friends led her out. My hand was taken so gently by our cousin George, and his look was as if he would say—"Will you lead me, or I you?"

At the table opposite us, stood Belle and Fred Gunnison. He was handing her a plate of grapes, out of whose purple recesses shone some scarlet pomegranates, edged on the other side with a ripe banana of the glossiest green. Henry stood at her left hand, and with exquisite grace, added a small, bright orange to her plate, and bowing, said—

"Purple and green and gold, flanked by those sanguinary hues."

My arm was gently pressed, and cousin George was waiting my acceptance of a dessert on which was a pyramid of clear transparent figs, full-veined and juicy, pink grapes, bananas, white grapes, purple grapes and a peach. It was hastily piled—but at a glance one could see it was to represent an ancient temple in ruins. Not so gorgeous as Belle's. I had no need—but in this there was a symbol.

How should I read it? I looked at him musingly, and said—

"Yes—if you will give me time."

He smiled, and said—"Thank you, my cousin."

At length I became conscious that there were other persons present who were not so rapt as I—for Dr. Smith said in his comic way, half playful, half sad—

"Well, if I ever feast on fruits of immortal growth, sur-

passing these—my I—be satisfied—and fully grateful—is all I have to say.”

There was a general returning to the parlors—adieux, grave and gay, and we were alone.

Yes, it was over—the guests all gone! Was it a dream, or a waking reality? Silent all, save the ticking of that sleepless clock upon the mantel. We are alone.

CHAPTER XXIV.

PRAY, Belle, close the sweet heaven of those eyes of yours, and leave me to my waywardness. No, I shall not take cold, wrapped in the fleecy folds of my zephyr shawl, and my fur cloak over all, warm as the genial kindness of a beloved friend! There, there, sleep, sweetest soul, angels guard thy slumbers.”

Seated on a low ottoman, behind the massive folds of the damask curtains, I looked forth into the night.

There was a faint gleam of a light in the window nearly opposite, and too well I guessed who sat watching there. I had been for a long time wrapt in a blissful reverie, a kind of half-sleeping, half waking, beatific state—had even forgotten the low and gentle breathing of sleeping innocence just within my room.

Heavy footsteps, quick and unsteady, sounded upon the pavement beneath my window, then rushed up the stone steps of the next house, struggled a moment, and sank down.

A door in the opposite house was opened, a tall figure enveloped in a dark shawl glided swiftly across the street and up the stone steps.

Now what can all this mean? Quick and noiselessly I opened the casement and leaned out. Two dark figures were barely discernible in the dim light, one stooping over the fallen. A sharp and sudden sound, as if it had been a signal, the clapping of hands, once only, then a broad dark figure came swiftly up the street and joined the two, the door was opened, and the mysterious trio disappeared within the house.

Oh, night, dark and silent night! what strange and fearful dramas are enacted beneath thy sombre curtain! The light in the opposite window had been extinguished, the door in the adjoining house closed silently, no footfall in the deserted streets. The clue to this dark mystery was in my hand. * * The delicious reverie encircling my whole being had been suddenly thrust aside, its golden net-work sundered. Away, let me forget it.

Ha, ha, ha! laughed a gay little sprite at my elbow. Ha, ha, ha! and Mirth, shaking her golden pinions laughed gaily at my futile resolves. Then clapping her tiny hands she summoned Hope, and Memory and Vanity and Patience too, came slowly, and with artist fingers began their work.

And then, I too laughed dreamily, murmuring—Ah, work away, most gifted artists, weave me a silken robe, bordered with rarest jewels, and with hushed and downy movements, fold it about—whomsoever you please—for I am fast asleep.

Each succeeding day was full of its events, its pleasures, or its hours of dream-like repose. Once that strange occurrence came vividly before me, and then passed away.

I had books to read with my newly found cousin, and there were adventures to be related, tales told of many and distant lands.

Five, six, seven days glided away, and my father still deferred his return home, and my aunt seemed happier and more lovely each day.

Then one morning at breakfast, my cousin George announced his intention to leave us for a short time, a day or two at farthest. I could scarcely smile, it seemed such a rude waking from my poet-dream. He arose, and in a moment was equipped for the journey, and I only whispered my adieu.

Two hours after I sat reclining within the encircling arm of a crimson velvet tête-a-tête, the soft atmosphere of the room laden with the perfume of many flowers, and holding

in my hand a book, and half believing that I read. I paused upon these lines and remembered nothing more.

“Ye weep with those who weep, she said—
Oh, fools—I bid you pass them by;
Go weep with those whose hearts have bled,
What time their tears were dry.”

I remembered this and nothing more.

“How amazingly stupid we have grown, now that *they* are gone!”

“Who, Belle, my dear?”

“Oh, nobody in particular,” said the sly witch—then added—“And now that this week of marvels is concluded, pray tell me if you have noticed any particular event as traceable to a certain evening?”

A sudden recollection dashed across my brain.

“Yes, one remarkable one! but no matter now, dear,”—and quickly summoning Eolia, I sent for my portfolio, and wrote—

“If Mr. Bovie, or the lady presiding, will permit a friend to call in for a few minutes, they will greatly oblige

ME. MINSTER.”

I folded, sealed, and gave it to Eolia, with directions to deliver it, and wait for an answer. And whilst waiting, I felt as I had at various times a yearning to see and to know how fared the orphan child of my poor lost Albertine. Eolia returned, bringing a note, written in a clear, feminine hand.

“Miss Minster will oblige her friends by calling at once.

LAURI BOVIE.”

I almost gave a shout. I had somehow expected something of the kind—and yet, it was a great surprise. Quickly dropping the note into Belle’s hand, I closed my portfolio and laid it aside—wrapped a heavy shawl about me, tied a Rigolette over my ears, and with a heart beating high, slipped out of our house, and into the one adjoining. Bridget opened the door, and showed me directly into the back parlor.

There, on a large sofa, in a recumbent position, was Mr. Bovie—a pillow beneath his head—and I saw he looked pale, as from recent illness. The lady sitting beside him rose on my entrance, and Mr. Bovie announced me, *propria persona*, and her as Mrs. Lauriè Bovie. She met me, took my hand, thanked me for remembering them, and led me to a seat.

Then I knew I should like her, for she was good.

* *

Mi meu! Have done with preliminaries! divorce thyself from tiresome detail! No, no, *no!* Hah, dost thou hold the lash? still hold the lash?—Here, then, is my neck, fasten thy hated collar, but take thou the consequences. My work shall be done as Miss Caliope discourses music, in terrific notes, jerked from her burning bosom. * *

Well, I made a long call, was pressed, and stayed, until lunch was over. I knew Belle would wonder, perhaps feel lonely—but then she must learn to do without me. But she would have the grace to show the note I left in her hand, to Madam Guilder, which would account to her for my absence. So I stayed.

I wished to see poor Albertine's lone heart-flower, the little Master Sammy—and was glad to find he still remembered *me*. The little one came in, led by a fine manly boy of ten years, bright and rosy.

Whose child is this? what mother has been so richly dowered? Ah, I see—it is "that other one," of whom Harry, dying, spoke.

Blessings on every hair of his beautiful head! on every flash of his bonny blue eye, upon every smile which parts his rosy lips—blessings numberless and continual—for that, he kept his mother's heart from breaking. Child of many sorrows, child of deep, unutterable joys! for, with the budding promise of thy little life, the rosy morning of hope dawned upon a wasted life. I give thee my blessing. So I listened to my friends—and here is the summary of their story.

On that fearful night, once before referred to, Laura woke

suddenly from a hideous dream—heard departing footsteps—she suspected it to be her husband, for no one else knew of the hidden way to enter the house. She rose at once. Yes, her money and valuables were gone. Then she knew he had parted from her finally and forever! She would have swooned—she would have died, as this thought went like flashing steel through her heart; but another affliction, a greater terror followed close upon its heels.

Little Neddie, moaning with pain, rolled from side to side. All the mother's soul, all her energies were brought to bear upon this fearful calamity. All her skill, all the power that in her lay, was taxed to save his life, till the morning's dawn, when she would procure medical aid.

She succeeded; and when the morning was yet purple in the east, she sent Harry to the nearest neighbor's, to ask some one to go for a doctor, for poor Laura, her only reliance, her well trained saddle-horse, had disappeared in the night.

Some neighbors came quickly—the doctor—after a lifetime of waiting. They did as well as they knew! but in their ignorance, and worse than this, their false theory, some *gibberish* about "crossing nature," a fatal mistake was made. The fever raged through his veins, burning up the fluids, for through his parched lips he begged for "water—cold—cold water;" and this was, as far as could be, denied him.

Oh, God! had we a little more of Thy love, thy pity in our hearts, how much of human suffering might be spared! And if we would follow closer upon the steps of Nature, we should sooner unfold Thy mysteries.

The doctor aimed at depletion—and fever and vitality succumbed to his perseverance. Enough.

There could be no Heaven without children—and little Neddie is there. His little green grave is beautified by blossoming flowers; the small birds sing there, amid the waving boughs of an over-hanging willow, and there the soft south wind sighs out its vesper hymn.

But Laura rose up and strove to hide her great grief—to comfort her eldest-born—for Harry was very lonely, and his child-heart pined for companionship.

A change was awaiting them, of which they little dreamed. Not many days after they were left in their loneliness, two persons, of the gang to whom Mr. Bovie had staked his cottage-home, and lost it, came to take possession of the premises. The news of this spread rapidly abroad, and the neighbors gathered there quickly, to see if anything could be done.

The gamblers showed a written document, proving their ownership to the property, *according to their code*.

They were also connected with reputable families there, so that neither public opinion, or law, could avail, to wrest from their ruffian hands, and give to this sorrow-stricken woman, her home.

But the cowards told her she might remain there, for a short time, until she could look out for some other place, as they were only entering upon preliminaries.

She told them at once, coldly and sternly, that she should not accept from them as a boon, what was hers, both in law and equity. She should remain there as long as she chose to, and they would find that they could not dispossess her of her rightful home.

Then she cried aloud—"Witness, ye living men—witness, beholding Heaven! my curse falls upon these vipers who would drain my life blood!" Then lifting up her arms, she cried louder—

"Oh, my God! you who have my youngest-born in your holy keeping—send down the thunderbolts of your wrath to scathe and blast the wretched lives of these devils in human shape, who drove my husband from my bosom, if they shall dare to drive me and my fatherless child—all that is left me—from our rightful home!"

And the women there assembled shrieked "Amen!"

A fair young girl, with dark and heavy tresses, and large, troubled eyes, sang in a clear voice—

"Through tribulations deep,
The way to glory is,
This stormy course I keep
On these tempestuous seas.
By waves and winds I'm tost and driven,
Freighted with grace, and bound to Heaven.

Sometimes temptations blow
A dreadful hurricane,
And high the waters flow,
And o'er the sides break in;
But still my little ship outbraves
The blustering winds and surging waves."

And every man and woman there (save those ruffian gamblers) joined in the closing strain.

Wonderful—most wonderful was the effect these two women, dissimilar in gifts, passion and experience, wrought in that previously clamorous throng. One of the gamblers drew the other outside the door, and muttered—

"I say, Newcombe, I'll cave in—I'll heave up the job—give these prating women folks their pelf."

"Never! I'll burn it over their heads first—blow it to atoms with gunpowder. Begone—out of my sight, Jenkins—out with you, ye sneaking coward—look out for a rope, will ye?"

But the less hardened coward, shamed by the people, scoffed by his companions, had still one resort—flight.

Newcombe stood alone nursing his wrath, which was ready at a moment to belch forth upon the first object which should cross his track.

His wife—for even the most cruel and depraved men have wives—a natural instinct among this class of men, for self-preservation; a bond to connect them with their kind; a thread upon which to hang, so to keep out of utter perdition; a means of salvation in the day of final retribution—his wife—*mi meu!* went to him, slid her arm through his, and whispered—

"Come away, Newcombe; come home with me, and we'll talk this over on our road."

Sullen and silent, he went at her bidding. And the neighbors dropt away one by one, each, in some simple way, giving Laura a word of encouragement.—Deacon Warner solemnly bade her "Trust in the Lord."

When the curtains of night were drawn around her cottage-home, this heroic woman made fast and sure every entrance to her stronghold; then, with her only boy clasped in her arms, she lay upon her couch, hallowed by many prayers, and slept the sleep of the just.

A few days of quiet past, and then evidences that her old enemy was at work, fell thick and fast. Harry's beautiful water-spaniel was found, without wound or blemish, dead beside the door. His pretty bantams and shy guineas died, apparently without cause; also, the well of pure, fair water was troubled at its fountains. But as this storm of poisoned arrows came hurtling down, this lone woman had cause for joy unutterable. A light—a welcome truth dawned upon her; and she lifted up her great soul in thanksgiving to the Good Father, who had given her a new consolation.

Meantime Mrs. Anthony, Laura's husband's sister, had not been idle. She came—made great lamentation that her poor brother could not have a happy home. He might have stayed with her, she said; she would have done *her best* to make him comfortable. "But, Laura, do not think, when you are sent from this place, to come to *me*; I have always been quite popular in the neighborhood, and trouble and ill-luck are not respectable. A woman who has been *left* by her husband, must not expect other people are a-going to hold her up, or look upon her as very *reputable!* and I would not harbor such a woman; so, *Laury*, do not come to me—I should feel it my religious duty to shut the door in your face—my duty!" She was going—

"Call again," Laura said, "when you have other blows to inflict; for, my sister, your dealings with me make my hold on Heaven sure."

During her hours of darkness, Laura had written to a

maternal uncle, Mr. Waltermire, living a long distance from thence, far into the interior country—had written of her loss, and her varied distresses. But the mails were a slow and uncertain medium of communication. Laura, sustained, upheld by a mysterious power, kept her soul in repose.

One night in a dream luminous with bright remembrances, a dear friend, long since departed to the spirit-land, came and said—"Laura, get up out of this place, to a far country, to a greener and quieter land. And thou shalt go quickly, else some evil, of which thou knowest not, shall befall thee."

Laura waking, said—"Now are my days numbered, I am going to die, so let me secure my children from the prowling wolves." So darkly do we read the messages of love sent us from the clearer spheres.

The uncle receiving the letter written in pain and sorrow, waited not to write an answer—he came. They conferred not with any friend or neighbor, for Laura wished to hide out of sight. Her uncle said—"Take what you wish of housen stuff, my wagon is capacious, and the sight of familiar things may content ye. My house is large, and there are many in it—we are strong, so strong, that neither law or lawless men can molest my sister's child."

And Laura said—"Whatever I find too heavy or cumbersome to remove, I leave here, with a good 'Insurance,' and this property I secure and bequeath to my children."

"I dare say it will hold good in law—women, to serve their children, can compass anything. Let me hear."

"My uncle," Laura said—"I have no husband, this property has never been *legally* conveyed away. I have the title deeds given at our purchase, from the original owner. These I shall keep until my son is of age. And to secure my property generally and this house in particular from injury—I have a little plan to invest it with a kind of ghostly influence, a mystery which few will seek to unveil. And I have learned that evil-doers are always cowardly and superstitious."

Then Laura proceeded at once to explain her plan, which she called her "Insurance." It matters not now what it was—only that it proved an effectual security.

The unavoidable preparations for their journey were made over night. At an early hour in the morning, before it was yet day, Laura arose and prepared breakfast. They ate it with cheerfulness, for both Laura and her son were glad to go, for a time at least, from their desolate house.

The packing of the wagon was completed, all the doors, save the large outer one, securely fastened, then Laura extinguished the fire upon the hearth, turned the last key in the lock, and left the spot, the brightest and darkest known to her brief existence—left it probably for years—perhaps forever.

But her spirit, her power remained. No one dared to molest—none to destroy. A strange, weird, cautiously uttered tale, got abroad, of a pale woman robed in white, sitting upon the cold hearth-stone, at midnight, sometimes holding a dead child in her icy-arms—and many a sensible person, who believed not in ghosts, still kept at a comfortable distance from the house.

There were also those who had some grounds for their fears. Then the house stood in a lonely place, no road lay past it, and it could be easily shunned. But the Methodist deacon!—he was not a timid man—these strange things were to frighten reprobates, and then at this time the *house* lay just in his track. Musingly he neared the—"Ha, what's that?"

Again a strange, low moaning sound—sad, sweet, low—one could almost hear the tears falling—then a wilder tone, deep, mournful, a heart-throb, full of agony—again sinking, falling, dying—it's gone.—And there! there *it* is—a figure veiled in white! The deacon turned his back—and thought how glad his wife, Mrs. Deacon Warner, would be, to have him come earlier than his wont. Deacon Warner had, naturally, a somewhat springing step, and now feeling a little chilly,

he even quickened his pace. It is, certainly, very fatiguing to walk hurriedly, it is easier to *run*—and it warms one—so the deacon thought; and, by the time he reached his garden fence, he had got up a good degree of caloric! so he threw down his hat, and waited awhile to cool off before entering into the presence of Mrs. Deacon W.

From that day, or that night, rather, the fate of Laura's house was sealed. Her curse, then, had fallen, said they. She left it mysteriously—and sh—hush! it had strange occupants.

CHAPTER XXV.

WHEN the weary sojourners reached their destination, the hearty welcome given them, banished for a time all thought of fatigue, care or sorrow. Laura's aunt was a good, kind, cheerful woman, with a large family of her own, and most gladly received Laura into her motherly arms. She had grown up children, sons and daughters, and little ones toddling about the house, or basking all day in the sun.

This was just the home for Laura and her poor, lonely boy, to forget their own desolate condition, and aunt Mercy was as kind a mother as one might hope to find on this earth. She had some fine womanly instincts too, for she quickly had a large chamber partitioned off in the upper part of their wide, airy house, and with the aid of her girls, helped Laura to fit it up with the things she had brought with her—and these made it seem like a little home of her own. And there, a portion of each day was spent teaching her Harry. In a little time, one and another of his young cousins would come up there to be taught too, which pleased Laura, and helped Harry forward. So, in this way, Laura's teaching the young ones, grew to be an authorized school, and her grown up cousins playfully called her the little "schoolmarm"—and they, too, after awhile, were glad to avail themselves of her aid to renew their slight acquaintance with books and pens.

And so a year slid quietly away.

Laura had regained her health—Harry was bright and gay—for his little baby brother, a lovely, rosy-cheeked child of five months, was a living joy to him, the laughing, little blue eyed angel of the house.

Her uncle had now secured an excellent tenant—she was beyond the reach of Mrs. Anthony's annoyances—she filled

her time with active duties, and gave no wasting thoughts to the early trials which had so fearfully menaced her earthly happiness.

She had her children, was beloved and honored wherever she was known. Two, three, four years, each had been marked by the slow but steady march of civilization. A better meeting-house was built, and a new school-house—and here Laura taught the school during the summer months. So her pretty boys were always with her.

Now, as the public roads were improved, there was more frequent communication between this place where Laura now resided, and the town she had left four years since.

Mrs. Anthony availed herself of these to make a close investigation of Laura's circumstances. The result was such as to kindle up her envy to an uncomfortable heat.

Few women have the ingenuity to plan and work out the discomfort of others, in the degree possessed by Mrs. Anthony. It was about this time (comparing dates) that she discovered the residence, or rather learned the address, of her brother. She also obtained some clue to his receiving large sums of money: that it was known that he had to do with rich men, influential men, and conceived the idea, that he also was a *great* man, even where great men were not a wonder.

Mrs. Anthony, it is to be supposed, had not the happiest organization. She had great acquisitiveness, large firmness, combativeness plus—benevolence small, mirth small, amateness small. She knew nothing of suavity, or of condescension, but had an inordinate love of power, and was so ill-assorted, that she imagined that this last could be obtained without the aid of the former. She would occasionally try her hand at flattery, *to gain a point*, but it was so clumsily and coarsely done, that the largest thing gained was a great laugh against herself. She could simper, and this won for her generally a vast amount of—ridicule!

But she was a *great* house-keeper, (mind, I don't say good).

She could accomplish more hard work in a given time, than any three sweet-tempered women the town could produce, and in the same ratio, would shed more briny tears than would suffice aforesaid women for a twelve-month. She cared little for good looks—it would not have served her much if she had! But she delved early and late.

She had the earliest garden, the fattest calves, the most numerous broods of chickens. None of her young ducks ever got their downy heads crushed beneath the heels of a vicious colt, said colt never ran upon a leaning gateway and broke one of those slender legs, said gateway never *leaned*!

No thieving cat ever lapped her cream, no mischievous mouse ever nibbled her newest cheese, for cat and mouse were like queen Elizabeth's favorites, equally balanced against each other. But—and a world of power lies in a *but*! She had no children! What were children made for? to march over her clean floor with their muddy feet, to scatter their *broken* toys all over her house, to cut paper into horses and flying dragons to litter her tables and chairs, or failing these, to tumble down stairs and yell till they were black in the face? She had no love for children! None! Then, madam, that little space which would have been labelled—"Love for the little earth-born angels," is worse than a blank—it is an ink-spot of selfishness.

Well, her brother was a great man, and rich! What if he should be seized with a sudden spasm of home-sickness—and come to seek his long deserted wife and boy?

This must never be. If she could only possess herself of an order to send Harry to his father, she could then safely commence her work of poisoning both against Laura. Then, suppose Laura, deprived of her child, should go mad! or better still, should "shuffle off this mortal coil," what harm? She was no profit to any one, (meaning herself, Mrs. A., of course). We are not certain that Mrs. Anthony knew of the existence of Laura's youngest child. If she did she gave no intimation of it. She was a woman of rare pol-

icy! She might have thought that to strike for *both* the children, would but ensure a total defeat, for all the *woman*, all the mother, would rise in self-defense, for these children were but parts of her living soul. And then that brave old man, Laura's uncle, his five powerful sons, and house full of women-folk would make it a nearly impossible thing to drag these little ones from his protection. No, no, steal a woman's treasures or her rights from her, little by little, if you would secure the whole.

We refrain from speaking more fully of the motives of one so utterly unlovely. So, pass on, pass on, Mrs. Anthony.

Meanwhile, time lingered kindly with Laura, her brow was placid, her lips often wore a quiet smile. You might believe that at sometime she had suffered deeply, but you could not fail to see, also, that grace had conquered suffering.

Her school was closed for the day, the large family—their early supper over—were gathered about the front door, the younger children playing upon the grass.

Two strangers drove up and halted. They seemed much travel-worn, and Mr. Waltermire hastened to invite them to rest awhile. They were willing enough to do so, and when one of the larger boys had secured the beasts, the four-footed—the bipeds took the offered seats within doors. Aunt Mercy quickly learned that they had had no supper, and cheerfully despatched two of her girls to prepare the table for them.

Theirs was no hurried repast—for the news of the day, passing events, and Mr. Waltermire's social relations, drawn out by adroit suggestions, were then and there discussed along with it. When it was over, and they had pushed back their chairs and returned to the front door—they were ready for action.

One, the foremost of the two, with a show of taking Harry kindly by the hand, drew him closer, and said—

"My fine little fellow, can you tell me how long it is since you saw your father?"

"No, sir. I do not justly remember"

"Very likely, but you would like to see him, he is a very rich man, I'm told!"

"Yes, sir, I should very much. I wish he would come here. You'll tell him so, won't you, sir?"

"Oh, he could hardly leave his business, sonny, or mabby he'd come, but I've got a letter from him for you, or your mother, which is the same thing," he concluded, handing a paper to Laura. She unfolded and read.

It was an order as one might say, authorizing the bearers, John Reed and Richard Weed to take into their custody, and bring to him his son Harry, and signed with his father's name, written in his well-known hand.

This time there were no preliminaries.

The poor mother's heart rose up for one great outburst, but she shut her mouth resolutely, gazing steadfastly upon the paper. Who can trace the lightning-speed of thought in such a moment? It was her husband's hand-writing, he was living then—in comfort, in affluence, at least—he had sent for his boy. They had *two*, though perhaps he might not know of the existence of the younger, yet it was but right the father should have one. And, oh, heaven, this one might be the silken clue by which he would find his way back to *her*!

And so he *was*, great-hearted mother! not by his life and love, but by his death and suffering.

But this, through the loving kindness of the Everlasting Father, she could not foresee.

Folding the paper within her hand, she rose up, and went silently to her own room. There she made her heart ready to do the bidding of her reason, her affectional nature to serve her intellectual. The boy would exercise an healthful influence over his father, would in various ways remind him of *her*, would doubtless be placed in a high school, would unquestionably enjoy greater advantages for mental culture than could be reached, if he, (here was heart-spasm,) if he remained with her. She prayed for strength. She prayed

to the God of the good Methodist, for He hears and answers prayer.

Then she came forth from her chamber. She was paler, and her voice, always mild, was lower still, but she sat down between her uncle and aunt and made them acquainted with her husband's wishes.

"But can you let the child go away off to York?" asked aunt Mercy, with a frightened look.

"You have but to say the word, niece," the uncle said, with a strange twinkle in his eye, "and I will send this Reed and Weed clique, back, lighter and faster than they came."

"You have been a father to me, my uncle, so pray think well of what I am going to say. My husband sends for one child, he has legal power to take both, though peradventure he knows not of this little one. I shall have one still to keep my heart from starving."

Then, a man without a home, or wife, or children, cannot be a happy one. From my hoarded riches, I will comfort his poverty. The child may lead the father sometimes to think of *me*. I wait the result.

"If, after a few years patient waiting, I hear nothing from husband or son, I shall go to seek them. I can go to seek, to find, and claim my son, and no one shall attribute to me the indelicacy of following on after the man who has willfully deserted me. In this parting from my child, to let him go to his father, I strive to be just and equal."

"Laura, you mean to be just—are you sure you are not something more—you are the mother?"

"True. Bovie asserts the only claim with which the Great Creator has endowed him. It is his all. He is the father. And though my son give him love and obedience, yet will his unperverted soul turn to his mother, though she be countless miles distant."

"Well, let the boy decide. State all these circumstances to him, as you have to me, and then let him decide. Meantime, I will go and talk to these men."

Mr. Waltermire sent Harry to his mother—then went his way, to talk to the Messrs. Reed and Weed, if possible, to interest them in behalf of the mother and son; for it was self-evident that others, beside the father, were interested in this separation.

So Laura, with Christian meekness, shut down in the recesses of her heart all remembered unkindness, and strove to prepare the boy to love his father. Harry had but a dim and dreamy recollection of him; but he had a boy's yearning to see something of the world, and a fond hope that he should, at last, bring that father back to love and cherish the mother who had made his earthly heaven.

Yes, he would go—but it would be only for awhile—he should send for his mother to come to him, or he should persuade his father back to her.

Then, lastly,—he must never reveal, to father or aunt, the fact of little Hubert's existence. They might want *him*. The Law was a power that sometimes helped people to do wrong, and by this they could take him from his mother. And even should her death intervene, he was already given to aunt Mercy—given to her even before his birth. He was to live with aunt Mercy, who would love and nourish him up to manhood as her own child, or until Harry himself should be old enough to protect and counsel him.

Therefore, Harry was never to give the slightest hint, that this little human flower blossomed away there in the wildwood.

"I never will, to my dying day, my mother."

Then her heart was at rest, for Harry had never been false.

"It was the last night she might watch over her little ones, as they lay wrapt in rosy slumber. It should not be a night of sorrow. They were still within reach of her motherly arms. So, with a prayer upon her lips, she lay down upon her couch, close beside their bed, with a hand of each within hers, and fell asleep.

What guardian spirit kept watch during the allotted hours of sleep, we know not, but voice or sound disturbed them not until the rosy peep of dawn.

Strong with a holy purpose, Laura performed her many duties that morning. She arranged his little traveling-box—not forgetting many a little toy or keepsake, which should remind him of little Hubert, or of her. Lastly, providing a goodly basket of dainty provision for the day, for their journey was thirty miles of rough riding. No prolonged leave-taking—the men, Reed and Weed, were urgent to be upon the road. Aunt Mercy came up to the larger one and said, with a tear yet standing in her eye—

"Now you mind me of the story of the babes in the wood, taking the child off so. Now, mark my words, don't you go and fall out by the way, and leave the child to starve alone in the woods. Guide the child safely to his father, and so the Lord deal with you."

Both seemed a little struck by the figure she had used, and firmly and respectfully assured her that she had nothing to fear from them, that the boy should be speedily sent to his father. They both mounted into the wagon, and Laura, kissing her boy, lifted him into a nice seat prepared for him, and they drove away.

In this brief visit, had these convenient tools discovered that there was another child to come for by and by! Aunt Mercy had always called the little Hubert her boy and her baby! had rocked him in her old arm-chair, had sung to, and petted him as if he really were her youngest born. No one, whose attention had not been drawn to the fact, would ever have doubted that she was the true mother. But it would be cruel as the grave to take him from her now—for when her own children were growing away from her, this dimpled, rosy little angel had been dropt from Paradise into her empty arms.

CHAPTER XXVI.

FOLLOW we the young pilgrim in his tortuous course, to a more dubious shrine than that of Mecca.

At the close of the day they reached the designated place, and found Mrs. Anthony waiting to take him to her house. He was too much fatigued to notice a particular gleam of triumph in her glittering eyes; too tired to eat of the frugal supper prepared for him, with very great show of attention.

He expressed a wish, and was allowed to go to bed, where, in a moment, he sank into a long sleep of exhaustion.

The next day, feeling refreshed, and believing that he had but a few days to remain there, he sought and found little Neddie's grave. He pulled up the weeds that were choking the few flowers, and piled a heap of stones at the foot.

Then, as Mrs. Anthony with specious reasons delayed his departure, he went to the place which was once his cottage-home, and spent a day with its tenant.

He grew to be acquainted with the family, and told them about his mother. He remained still longer, and his tenant's family became much attached to the boy.

Harry listened with pleased attention to the many anecdotes told him about this "haunted house," and the good service this reputation had done the visible occupant, viz., his melon beds were never plundered, or any other depredation committed on the premises; for he was regarded as having to do with the mysterious cause of that wailing midnight music, which had never wholly ceased.

A month wore away, and Harry's patience was exhausted. Beside this, Mrs. Anthony's feline caresses and whining professions of love were growing intolerable; for the boy, with his clear intellect, had long ago detected a want of sincerity in them all. No one probably knew what high words passed

between this scheming, artful woman, and her young, but high-spirited charge. But it was told that if she did not soon forward him with a safe escort to his father—a man would be found to carry him back to his mother.

There was no more delay.

But the father had waited so long, and had brooded darkly over his sister's letter announcing to him in most aggravated terms, the approaching marriage of Laura—that, when Harry came, he was not received with as much kindness as the boy had been led to expect. He was chilled, and so withdrew away within himself. We have seen before, how the offended father would hear nothing from the boy of his mother. And he, poor boy! knowing nothing of the wicked letter that had reached his father, telling him that the mother was about to enter again into the bonds of wedlock—knowing nothing of all this, supposed only that his father did not love him, and knowing nothing of this heart-wound, he brought no remedy. Mrs. Anthony had written to her brother, fabricating the entire story of Laura's proposed marriage. She had no pretext or sign of authority for it. She succeeded to her heart's content in that, and again she wrote, of her great expense incurred for the boy, her "pretty nephew," and in return secured a larger sum of money.

There was one thing more to be done, and for her fortunately, "York" was a great way off. It was nearly a year since she began her heavy work. One bold stroke more, and it was done. She wrote of Laura's death, she wrote boldly, and promised to send the paper containing her "obituary," and also a strict account from the doctor of her illness. But as she could do neither, she concluded to let her correspondence drop for awhile, and as the events following have been related elsewhere, we most gladly drop her, would it were forever.

Years passed, and Laura, poor soul, prayed and waited. It was long since she had heard from her absent ones, not a line since the first year after Harry went from her. She de-

laid from time to time her own writing—she could not obtrude herself upon the notice of the husband who had been, ah, at least, not everything she could wish, for it was hard for her even then to attribute blame to him. No, she would leave all to the influence of her child. Her day was dark now, but it would, it must brighten up at last. So praying, Laura waited. Three, four years, and now the mother's soul cried, "I thirst."

With marvelous expedition, Laura closed her business, collected all her dues, and made ready for a journey. Her rent also had been paid, and out of pure good-will the tenant paid half a year in advance.

Then a most desirable way was opened. Her uncle's oldest son, James Waltermire, had married, and with his wife had determined to visit the "East," so termed by western pioneers. They would make the journey by their own conveyance, a large wagon and a pair of stout horses, and most cordially invited Laura and her little Hubert to seats with them. Oh, but how should aunt Mercy part with her baby, her darling boy, now a brave lad full of life and spirit.

More than nine years she had petted him and looked upon him as her own child. This was the most difficult part of the expedition. But in this, also, Laura was wise. She gave a written promise that Hubert should some day return to his foster-mother, and in case of her own death, for who should know what might befall—aunt Mercy should have the boy as her own. This assurance took off the keen edge of her grief—so with prayers and tears, and last exhortations, not forgetting baskets full of every thing her motherly soul could invent for them to eat, the dear people started on their way.

James was a careful, and not a rapid driver. It was his plan to have his horses in as good condition at his journey's end as at the beginning. He wished to see the country, it was new to him, and to look into all the improvements adopted among the older farmers—thus they made various acquaintances by the way, and their journey was one of

much pleasure. And from the day it was commenced, to the day it was ended, when Laura with her youngest child was set down at her mother's door—one month had intervened.

When the first embracing and rejoicings were over, Laura questioned of her husband and child. Her mother could give her no intelligence of either. What if they were gone from the country, and so beyond her reach? Laura confessed to a little dismay. Well, what next? She had a cousin, a Mr. Best, with whom her family had once been on terms of warmest friendship. He had, some twenty years ago, been connected with the New York Police Detectives, and though he had long since changed his vocation for that of mercantile, his early experience might be of great use in the present case.

To Mr. Best then she wrote, stating her present position, as far as she knew it, and her object in visiting him.

In a week, or it might have been ten days, the answer came, and while sitting with her mother, was put into her hand by her cousin, James Waltermire.

Dear Cousin—I have fulfilled your commission as speedily as possible. I have found out the residence of the persons you seek. But, cousin Laura, your husband is married again, and the boy lives with him and the new wife. Now, we have a cousin, who is also a friend to us, living in a house opposite to Mr. Bovie. To this house you are to come—and there we will bring the boy. It will save trouble for yourself and for that other one who, I am certain, does not know of your existence.

Believe me, if we don't fetch things to pass to meet your mind, then I'll prove a worse *'financier'* than I have ever been accounted. Yours,
Best."

Her husband married—her son—lost! the paper dropt from her hand—a long swoon followed this announcement. The swoon was followed by terrible spasms—a choking as for breath, and every one thought she would die.

Young Mrs. Waltermire wrung her hands, and cried—

“Oh, if she would only call on heaven or earth to help her, or pour out her trouble in floods of tears, she might find relief.”

No, no! her eyes were bright and dry, a suffocating heat took away her breath, for she was scorched with agony. Her grief was so terrible that she sank beneath its weight. Little Hubert threw his arms about her neck, and wept and cried—“Oh, my mother! don’t die and leave me! You promised if you died to give me to mammy away off there! but oh, I want you, my mother!”

There was a magnetism in this heart-cry of the child, that spread to every one present. Old women wept. Laura’s soul dissolved in tears—and so her life was saved.

A few days sufficed to gain composure—then Laura decided to go to the city. James Waltermire was only too glad of an occasion to visit the place which to him contained more wonders than Babylon of old. So, at an early hour the two set forth—James taking a light team on the barge, and descended the river. Arrived in the city, James succeeded in finding Best, who took them to his own house for a little resuscitation, and to favor them with an introduction to his wife, upon whom he doated with a silent, self-sustaining kind of idolatry. Amid the world’s rough ways, he might have been termed a rough man; but his fond love for his wife won him at times into gentlest moods—for, in this fond devotion, there was something holy. But Elia Anna Best should not be dismissed with so slight regards: her beauty, her magnificence of person, and many excellencies of mind and heart, might woo us to tarry with her longer—but it must be at another time. Poor Laura gave but one admiring glance to all these charming developments. Her solicitude was too great to be wholly concealed, and our friend Best perceiving this, rose, and went directly with them to their “cousin’s house, up-town, who was also a friend.”

Laura could scarcely speak, so varied were her emotions. She was afraid to begin to weep, fearing that she could never leave off. She wished to be calm and self-possessed, that they, these strange relations, might not think her quite a Hottentot! They were kind and considerate.

But she longed for a peep at the house across the way. She obtained it at last. What! so dark, so closely shut up! No moving shape! no living thing seen or heard. Still as death. Death! what word is that to come haunting her still bleeding bosom. She would send over.

No servant could gain admittance—no person in the house would be seen. It was evening. Tea was over—the family had evidently done their utmost to cheer and give poor Laura courage. Nine o’clock—ten—her cousin came up to make a friendly call. Laura rose, and met him at the parlor door.

“Cousin Best,” she said, “I cannot live till morning unless I hear from my Harry. Something grips me here, like death,” she added, striking her hand upon her heart. “Go over—find your way to my child, and bring me word—I shall die—or go mad.”

“Take heart, my cousin. I will go over—I came up for that very purpose—so be content, for I’ll not be long gone.”

He went. It was not his intention to delay his return, but to come quickly, and bring the poor mother a good word. Still he lingered—long—oh! tortured soul,—how long! She had not now her little Hubert to clasp her neck—to still the wild heart-throbs in her troubled bosom. She had left him in safe seclusion. No legal Moloch should stretch out his ensanguined claws and tear this only little lamb from her sheltering arms.

“What! lingering still! What keeps him? I must go.” She rushed to the door—out upon the pavement—there she was met by her friend.

“What word—what of my child—speak?”

“Yes, Laura.”

“Where is he?”

"Ah!"

"Gone?"

"Yes, Laura. Gone to God."

One wild, fierce shriek rent the blue heaven above, and the stricken woman fell.

"Quick—a physician. Oh, she is dead."

Strong arms bore her pallid form into the house. All the restoratives that could be snatched up were applied, but to no purpose. With hurried words the fearful tale was told, and hearts, newly opened to receive her, bled for this innocent sufferer.

The skill of the physician, and the care of attendant friends at last restored her to consciousness.

A slight opiate had been given; and when the physician would have added another, she gently put it away.

"No—let me think. I was cast down—dismayed; but leave my mind unbiased by drugs. Let me feel out in this darkness for the hand of my God, for surely He will bear me up."

The physician—he is to us no stranger—it was Dr. Smith—soothed her with kindest care; and when, at a late hour of the night, he left her bedside, the bereaved mother was falling into a gentle slumber.

How fared it with the stricken father, in the opposite house? Harry's dying words, "I have seen my mother," brought back the pure image of the early loved and fair young wife. He thought of his cruelty and of her gentle patience. He thought of her death, as it had been reported to him; and—oh, dreadful thought—was it not by his final act, taking from her her child, that broke her heart? Ah! were they not now united in a world where all hearts are read! What would be their testimony against him? All the sins of his past life rose up around him, like howling fiends, in the hours of that darkest night.

He were a strong man to grapple with these!

In a death-like pallor Laura lay, and at times moaned in her sleep. Of the two, she was the happier, I think!

Flow backward, thou Time, and show cause for such untold misery. And Time held up the unlovely portrait of a woman, whose selfishness and sterile nature had made her to grow devilish.

There are causes for these, too—back—back we will look farther. An old man had the charge of souls, to apportion to each its wants and its dues. To those who gave promise of sturdy strength, he gave great substance and space to grow in; to the finer and less palpable, he gave mist and fogs, and a circumscribed sphere.

Flow back farther—why dealt this old man thus?

He had so been taught. And all who had gone before him, had done likewise. An innovation were high treason.

Enough—we deal with results.

At an early hour in the morning Laura awoke, and soon determined upon her course. Then, with a steady hand she wrote that letter to her husband which informed him of her vicinity, and then he knew she still *lived*.

The pain, the mortification, the vain repentance, which this knowledge brought, can never be told. But as much that followed has been related in the foregoing papers, we pause here. We know that Laura must have departed immediately to her mother's house, to prepare for the burial of her eldest son—after that, we meet her but once again until the present time.

CHAPTER XXVII.

"Oh, let there be a something on this visible earth, that may have leave to love me—something I may love."

In a lonely chamber, brooding darkly, sat a solitary man. The damps of death seemed gathered about his house. No beaming face or sweet cooing voice of wife or child was near, no bounding steps or gay and laughing tone rang through his halls. Silent all and cold. Human love and sympathy and gentle kindnesses came not near to lift up the pall of his despair.

Once—oh, the bitterness of that *once*, wife, children, genial friends, bound him in rosy garlands—had he broken from these, had he been faithless to his plighted love! Oh, death, thou hast been a stern avenger!

He had been weak, but not in heart the wicked man the world adjudged him. He had in earlier life assumed duties cheerfully and voluntarily, and failed in their fulfillment. He thence became the miserable tool of another—of that sister who had wrought his ruin.

"Oh, Laura," he exclaimed, clenching his hands, "how fearfully are your wrongs avenged—now while you are revered by loving friends, I am an outcast, a desolate and a desperate man."

He snatched up his close cap, and muffling himself in a heavy cloak, rushed from the house, and the banging of the door awoke fearful echoes through that sorrow-haunted abode.

He went forth to plunge down deep into those dens of darkness, to bury his overmastering sorrow in the torturing excitement of the gaming-table. So night after night he went forth and amid storm and darkness a muffled figure

was seen near the morning hours, stealing up the steps and entering that dismal house. But wherever he went in those midnight hours, there were footsteps following close on his, waiting where he waited, cautiously approaching and keeping watch where he had entered in. Months passed, and the angel who guarded his fearful way wearied not.

One night—how strange it should so even—the same night, in the very house adjoining, a fond, proud mother received home her noble son; this wretched man, cut off as it seemed from all ties of blood, went out to find the depths of those dens, where hard, ill-favored men did mostly congregate.

For the last few months his gains and losses by these were nearly balanced. This day, he had from a successful business speculation and from regular sales, received a large sum of money. He went, for the bonds of iniquity were tightening fast, he went, he drank not deep, but he played with a desperate hand, and for the second time, lost all.

With a curse withering his soul, he leapt from his seat, overturning the table and extinguishing many lights, but a stunning blow sent him reeling to the opposite side of the room. He knew not how, but a firm hand was laid hold of him, a small door flew open, and he was hurried into the street, upheld and guided a long way on. When he recovered in a measure from partial insensibility, he made the fortunate discovery that he was near home. He could scarcely walk—he shuffled, staggered, then tried to run, at last he reached the steps of his own house, made a desperate effort to gain the ascent, and fell to rise no more, but that he was lifted up and ministered unto by an angel of Mercy.

There was one who had listened, watched and waited for his coming, who from her dimly lighted chamber beheld his tottering steps—his fall.

Swiftly and silently descending to the street door, opening it noiselessly, she flew across the way. With a preconcerted signal she summoned requisite aid. But there were other

eyes which looked upon this scene so strange, looked, until the three dark figures disappeared within the house.

And now, bruised and broken and sinking into unconsciousness, this poor man was taken up tenderly, laid upon his bed, a physician brought, and carefully and kindly nursed by those whom he had in the hours of his madness held aloof from him.

As day was dawning another party arrived. They seemed to have been expected, and were taken at once into a remote apartment.

The lady raised the gas, till the room was flooded with a brilliant light, then advancing to the table stood, and for a moment scanned the faces of the trio.

That they were well satisfied with themselves, was evident at a glance. Strongly built were they, firm in feature and lithe in limb—perilous adventures with them was but pastime. Danger! Speak but the word—it was their battle-cry. Loosening the buttons of the breast for a freer respiration, they showed to be fully armed.

"Well, my cousin Laura, how fares the patient?" said the tallest of the three.

"He sleeps, but oh, cousin Best, I can never liquidate the debt I owe you, for this night's service, but I shall never forget it."

"A fig for your thanks, Laura, we had a capital time—a regular 'hand to hand' of it. We had first-rate luck, too, and have come to disburse, hand over, dump down, so, here it is," saying which, Mr. Best threw upon the table a large roll of bank bills, wrapt in a coarse paper, and by the side of it, a bag of glittering coin.

"There!" he added, "twenty thousand dollars, I dare say, full told, which we freely bestow upon, give and relinquish to the rightful owner."

"And when he recovers from this present shock, the knowledge that he was saved from ruin and disgrace will doubtless go far to ensure his recovery. But I have something

which I wish to bestow upon you, my friends, in token of my unspeakable gratitude. These parcels—one, two and three, are for you," she said, handing to each a parcel as called off.

Best opened his, exclaiming—"Three fifties make a hundred and fifty, a pretty good night's work for us. *No, ma-am*, we can't accept, 'twarn't for this we have dodged round corners, hid in cellar-ways, followed on through storm and darkness, *no*, it was to serve a lone woman who come nigh to a thousand miles to find her boy, who, God help her, had just gone to heaven, and to find a husband who had plainly set his face in an opposite direction. No, no, Laura, put up your gold—we'll none of it."

"Oh, but you shall not wholly deny me the bestowal of some mark of my—"

"Well, well, I'll divide one of these fifties, for we must make some amends to half-a-dozen poor devils who got a few pretty solid thumps in helping us. So, put up the remainder, and try and get a wink of sleep now the battle is over. Good bye. Come, we're off," turning to the men.

With grave obeisance the trio took their leave, and this heroic woman closed and secured the doors. She had previously sought out the chamber where Albertine's boy lay sleeping; thither she bent her steps, laid her weary head upon his pillow, and took the little orphan to her bosom.

"So may God deal with me, as I deal with this poor motherless babe," she said, and fell asleep.

It were scarcely just to his merits to pass over our excellent friend Best, with so casual a glance. His *personel*, too, is worthy a moment's regard. It has been said, in the foregoing pages, that amid the world's rough ways, he might have been esteemed, by the superficial observer, a rough man. It was only in seeming. His vocation, it is true, in early life, led him along the roughest paths of these terrestrial haunts, so he took up the air and manner suited to these when he put on his "star," and dropt the assumed panoply when he

returned within the influence of his happy fireside at home. He wore no outward sign or symbol of his office, his star was buttoned up beneath a surcoat, the same as any quiet business man would wear.

Of kingly stature—not after the style of that dumpy little fellow, William Guelph, the last king of England—but in keeping with Saul, king of the chosen people, who stood a head and shoulders above common men.

His voice was deep and sonorous, his presence commanding, his physical proportions on the grandest scale—like that most regal of Scottish chieftains, William Wallace, as he moved amid his assembled clansmen. His brow was broad and white, shaded with an abundance of bright brown hair; eyes of the mildest blue lighting up his whole face, which usually wore a placid expression, or beamed with kindness and the gentlest affection of the soul; his mouth was large, and showed a generous nature. The scenes of wretchedness, misery and vice, which were revealed to him through his vocation, seemed to have softened his heart towards all mankind, and led him to pity and to aid the sufferers, whether they were the victims of misfortune or of vice. And there will be many who will yet bear testimony before the Great White Throne, of the goodness and kindness of the heart which beat in that broad bosom.

There was yet another influence, a mighty power, which kept his heart *young* and *warm*, his brow smooth and fair,—this was his deep, unchanging love for his wife and his home. For his beloved Elia Anna, he early resigned his office as a “detective,” though from his ardent love of adventure, it had many charms for him; for her, he saved and accumulated property, he bought and built houses. And the house finished and adorned for her, was a perfect paradise of elegance and beauty. He had been prospered in worldly wealth, even beyond his most ardent desires, and was now a well known merchant of the city.

Let no man fear trouble or misfortune, who is faithful and

It was morning. Laura had risen, and was arranging her hair at the small mirror, when the door opened, and Bridget came in quest of the yet sleeping boy. She stopt on seeing a stranger in the room. Laura turned, and kindly bade her good morning. Then proceeded to say, that the master, Mr. Bovie, had been taken ill, away from home, in the night—that herself and some other friends had been called to take care of him. Then added—“And what shall I call you, my good girl?”

“Bridget, if you please, mam.”

“Well, Bridget, as I am to stay until the master is better, I hope you will assist me in taking care of him. I fear he is very ill. I am an old friend of his, and bearing a yet nearer relationship to him, makes me very solicitous for his recovery.”

“Oh, please, mam, then you’re his cousin. Blessed be the day that brought ye to the house. Sorry has been the days and the weeks I’ve spint here, a lone woman in the place, with the poor babby askin’ afther his blessed mammy, now a saint in heaven.”

The sound of voices woke the young sleeper, and Bridget, running to his bed, almost smothered him with caresses. Sammy threw his arms about her neck in evident joy, and then Laura was satisfied that this good girl had been faithful to her trust.

If he sleep, he shall do well—in this is a well-spring of wisdom. There were hours of physical suffering, hours of mental agony, hours of partial unconsciousness, for this unhappy man—seemingly the victim of a most wayward destiny. But through them all there was a soothing presence, the dim outline of a figure moving quietly about, smoothing his pillow, bathing the parched lips, or duly administering the prescribed potion—at all times keeping holy watch.

The fever gradually subsided, and health slowly returned. Unclosing his eyes from a light, but refreshing sleep, he gazed with wonder upon what for the moment he supposed

to be a beautiful illusion, presented to his view. His gentle nurse, sitting beside his bed, a rosy boy of some three years in her lap, with his little curly head resting against her bosom. With a little start, he opened his eyes wider, then extending his hand, said only—

“Laura!”

She laid her hand kindly in his, still pressing the chubby fingers of the pretty boy in her other.

“Ah—when a long time ago, I lay on a bed like this—it was Albertine and Harry who watched beside me—they have been called to a happier home—and you, you—my long lost Laura, and *her* poor babe fill their places. What have I done to deserve kindness from any of these! I, who have destroyed all who have given me their love!”

“When you are somewhat stronger I will tell you—I am myself not strong, as I have had little rest of late.”

This was evidently said to divert his attention from himself.

“Well, be it so. Laura, you are an angel of goodness.”

After a time, little by little, she told him all. At last, bringing him the roll of bank bills wrapt in the same coarse paper in which they had been gathered up in that fearful den of infamy—and then her work was nearly done—but not quite!

The two had been sitting together—their low voices had lapsed into silence—a sweet repose pervaded the room. A thought seemed suddenly to strike Mr. Bovie. He looked up, and said—

“What were you saying, Laura, sometime since, that there was yet a richer blessing in store for me?”

“Excuse me for half an hour, and I will show you.” And rising, she left the room. Mr. Bovie waited, and still waited. No small degree of expectation and perplexity, mingled with an undefined dread of the coming event, agitated him. He grew restless—he rose and walked the room—then paused, and tried to solve the mystery. “This was impossi-

ble. He returned to the sofa, sank down—Hark! footsteps approach! the door opens.

Laura came in, leading a bright, brave boy of perhaps ten years. Mr. Bovie looked upon the child in utter amazement.

“What is your name, my little fellow?” he asked, in a low tone.

“Ralph Hubert Bovie, sir!” the boy replied, making a pretty bow.

“How is this, Laura! is this our boy?”

“He is our boy.”

“Come to my arms, my son! my darling son! My house is no longer desolate. My once honored name shall not be cast out as evil, for the harshest and most uncharitable cannot reproach thee with thy birth. My son!”

The surprise, the joy, the ultimate consummation of his aspirations carried this quiet, undemonstrative man beyond himself. Then he held the child at a little distance, and gazed upon his sweet face, stooped and kissed his forehead, and Hubert murmured—“My father.”

“Come here, sit close to me, Laura, and tell me how you have preserved this last, best treasure from your persecutors. How have you kept him to bless my later days?”

“God willed it should be so.”

“Amen. Let me add a few words more. You and our boy must remain with me in my house, never to leave it again, and all the favor I shall claim, is to be permitted to watch over and administer to your comfort.”

CHAPTER XXVIII.

It was but the day following this, as they sat with their children in a home-like quietude of the back parlor, that my note was handed in, and my visit made, and the foregoing events related to me. It was a long story, and I had to wipe away the fast coming tears, many times, during the recital. But this was not all told me at once, many little details which I learned at a subsequent date, I have put in their place as they occurred.

It was wearing toward our tea-hour, and I was just rising to take leave of my friends, when Mrs. Bovie, for it is proper I should so designate this lady, arrested my design by saying—

"Miss Minster, I have thought you wise beyond your years. I wish to have your mind upon one point, if you please. For various reasons, I wish my son to grow up to manhood in the love and protection of his father, and as a brother to his other son, and this dear motherless babe should have a mother's bosom to lean on, to multiply his joys and to soothe his little sorrows, for be sure the sorrows of childhood are equal to the day. Give me your idea of the best way to secure this good. Have I stated the case as you would wish?" she said, looking to Mr. Bovie.

"Much better than I should have done. I have thought of this to-day, as you and Miss Minster sat talking, and should be very glad if she will make some suggestion upon this point.

"This very point was the first that presented itself to me. I am a woman, and therefore qualified to judge in this matter—made of finest fibre, can appreciate that sentiment of

gossamer-like delicacy, have nice discrimination of the propriety of acts so slight as to be almost ethereal. I will tell you, my friends. Mr. Bovie, when you married Albertine, you believed you had made her your legal wife, she believed it too, until within a few months of her death. But when she learned that she was *not*, she separated herself from you at once and forever. Let her virtues be respected, her love which broke her heart, be remembered. Do nothing which shall make *void* your marriage with my early friend—but legalize it, and legitimize her child by your second marriage with this lady present, who has continued, throughout all changes, true to her early affection—to her holy trust."

Bovie rose up quickly from the sofa, and taking my hand, said—

"They never had a wiser judge in Israel. You have expressed my mind to the letter, though I do not think I have made it all so clear. Are you of the same mind, Laura?" he said, turning to her with a pleasant smile.

"I am," she said tenderly and kindly.

"Well, go on," he continued smiling more brightly than before, "name the day and the hour, and the person who shall officiate. But pray, excuse me, ladies, I wait for you."

Laura looked to me as if she would have me speak.

"Ah! I bethink me, my father is a civil magistrate—I will prepare his mind this evening, then to-morrow morning, if you like, we will come in to the wedding; and you can take a trip into the country, or elsewhere. Meantime, Belle and I will take master Sammy home with us, and we two can almost be a mother to him. And prithee, don't hurry, we can keep the child a week at least. Be satisfied, good friends, you asked me to name a day, and I have overran the surface of a week throwing in my suggestions at random."

"I thank you very much, Miss Minster; your suggestions please me, only I fear you are too generous in taxing yourself."

"Well, I have no one else to tax, of whom I am so sure; so, now it is all settled, I must make my adieux—I wish you a very pleasant evening. Good bye—good bye!"

I gave my aunt a hasty account of the affair in hand—succeeded to my heart's content with my father.

Our cousin George returned about ten, and he and Belle and Henry received the announcement of the approaching wedding with great glee. So this completed the day.

The morning sun rose clear and fair. No clearer, fairer, brighter day had dawned upon the gay and beautiful Island of Manhattan, since old king Sol had entered upon his winter solstice. Bright, though cold, no thawing ice upon the housetops came splashing upon the pavement—no street-crossings clogged up with mud—no discolored water spirting from carriage wheels upon unoffending pedestrians—no incertitude respecting what this day would be,—no, no! The whole outer world was cleared up and burnished, as for a royal festival.

Winter has its charms, and among them we were reckoning upon a remarkable wedding, on this brisk and brief morning. Belle and I came down to breakfast attired in our aforementioned brown silks, with white satin bows, making our toilette neither too grave or gay, for a morning bridal.

"Ah! here are the doves at last," exclaimed my cousin George, as Belle and I entered the breakfast parlor, and found the family just sitting down. "I have long been listening to hear the rustle of their wings."

"My son is unusually gay this morning. Are we indebted to the sunny sky, or a pleasant and, in its way, very wonderful event in prospect?"

"Oh, the sunny sky, my mother—but a moral one, if you please."

"A cup of coffee, Minnie?—Ah, pass the cream, Eolia."

"Our young people are so full of this morning's romance, they forget they have a lovely day before them, for any out-of-door pleasure beside."

"Certainly not, papa—you may order the carriage, and we will have a nice ride out into the country."

"Eolia, the muffins to Miss Belle—pass your cup, Henry, no—an apple, dear Minnie—this one, it has such a lovely blush."

"It is well you remind me, dear aunt. I fear I am quite absent this morning."

"Remind you of the blush—or that you have only sipped a trifle of nectar?"

"Of the blush on the apple, certainly, my brilliant cousin George."

Our repast being concluded, we went directly into the adjoining house. Madam Guilder leaning fondly upon the arm of her oldest son, a few friends, and the cousins from over the way, were entering at the same time.

Conspicuous among these, was Laura's cousin Best, and his beloved Elia Anna. Not more elegant than usual was this lady's costume, for it was always faultless in its style. She was evidently pleased at the turn events had taken; this shone forth in her brilliantly flashing, black, laughing eyes, and the rosy blush tinging her downy cheek. Her beautiful dark hair, and glossy as a raven's wing, fell in graceful ringlets down upon her shoulders in Circassian abundance.

Her dress was an indigo satin, with flounces of black lace, a rich velvet basque of the same color of the skirt of the dress, and trimmed with black lace and black bugles. Some kindly greetings had passed during the time that my regards had been almost wholly absorbed in contemplating this resplendently beautiful woman! and now, as there seemed to be a pause, I hastened to place my aunt in a graceful position by the side of Laura, who had for a moment seemed a little flurried. But she looked really more interesting for this, her color came flooding into her too pallid cheeks, and her eyes were moist, evidently with the thoughts of all that had gone before. But she did not cry, no tear dropt from her mild eyes. I was glad she could command herself in

this. There had been a pleasant hum of voices all the time, continued interchange of little acts of courtesy, and Belle and Henry really behaved beautifully.

Just at the right moment, as one might say, my father rose. Mr. Bovie took Laura's hand, and they stood up, and we all simultaneously rose up, and listened to the formula of the marriage ceremony, then the conclusion, "pronounce you husband and wife. And whatsoever God hath joined together, let not man put asunder."

Then there were words of affection for the bride—yes, I will call her a bride, though she was a wife already—tokens of earnest goodwill. The company were somewhat gayer now that the portentous ceremony was over.

In the midst of these pleasantries, my father speaking to Mr. Bovie, said, smiling—

"In the whole course of my official services, I never before had the honor of marrying the same couple twice—in other words—marrying one man to the same woman the second time."

"Ha, ha! now I remember—Squire Minster, as then termed," and quickly turning to his wife, he said—"You remember, my dear, your good minister had been thrown from his horse that morning, and we had to send to the next town for a magistrate."

"I do remember—but we have never met since, until now."

This unusual incident called forth many brilliant remarks—then last words were hastily said—for it was time for the "twice-wedded" to depart. Belle and I went into the boudoir, beyond the back parlor, to assist Mrs. Bovie in getting on her traveling gear, bonnet, shawl and moccasins, impervious to cold. This took but a moment's time, for every article was in perfect order and in the right place. But amid our kind wishes we mingled assurances of our devotion to Master Sammy, and that we would amuse and keep him perfectly well.

We saw that she neither doubted our ability or good will to do all we promised.

Emerging from our brief retreat, we saw that the carriage had drawn up to the door. Then my father said—

"My carriage is at our door—pet, run home, you and Belle, and wrap up quickly. George and Henry will get in too, and go also to escort the newly married to the cars."

"And, meantime, Bridget, envelop Master Sammy in his cloak and cap, for we shall take him with us"—and this faithful household appendage went flying up stairs, as Belle and I vanished through the outer door.

Hubert was just taken in between his father and mother, as Bridget brought the younger son in her plump and ruddy arms, to our carriage door, and yielded him to Belle's gentle caresses. We drove rapidly to the "Camden and Amboy Railroad depot," and had full time to see our friends take their seats in the cars—and they were whirled away. We took a few turns about the city, and then drove home and found my father preparing for a long drive.

"Ah, my father, where go you?"

"Home, pet."

"Nay now, papa."

"No more nay nows, dear, I really must go, it is a fine day, would you rather I should wait for a storm?" he said, kissing me, most affectionately.

"But you did not tell me."

"I did not wish to throw a damper upon this pleasure of the morning. I have said good bye to your aunt, I leave Belle with you. Ready now, John?"

"Ready, sir."

And they were off—my father, a bright hale old man, and his sturdy and faithful body-guard.

CHAPTER XXIX.

FRED GUNNISON and my cousin Henry Clay Guildler, as Belle delighted in calling the last named young gentleman, discovered a great fondness for each other. So, one evening when Fred had been up to pass an hour with us, we planned a visit to Peekskill on the following day, if it should prove fair.

I would scarcely have singled out and recorded this event, had it not proved a day of marked renown among the many in our individual histories. Happily the day proved fair, almost as that bridal morning. Cousin George was to be of the party. Oh, we were a merry set.

Master Sammy was in so great glee, for neither Belle or I would have thought of leaving him behind, that Eolia could scarcely induct him into all his wrappers and mufflers. When seated in the cars, Belle and Fred seemed to divide the boy between them, or perhaps it might have been that they were united in him, for they had never a word for any one else, however many they might have had for each other. Henry was immediately monopolized by Dr. Q., who was going up to Albany, and who had taken a huge fancy to the lad on the night of his mother's reception. So cousin George and I made the most of what was left of the party. Ah, who shall solve this mystery of events. This kaleidoscope of circumstance, another turn, another shake of the curious instrument, and *presto!* a new and brilliant picture springs to life. At Peekskill we found the snow deep and of a uniform surface, the sleighs, gay, splendid or fantastic, dashing and gliding about; the occupants, with their tossing plumes and variegated robes, and the constant jingling of merry bells, seemed more like fairy revellers than the cumbersome and sombre inhabitants of this lower sphere.

My friends, Mr. N——, and dear Maria, were surprised and made glad beyond expression as our *gay cortege* burst upon their view. Oh, how we talked, laughed, threw out pleasant bits of news, spread ourselves through the sweet little cottage, then Belle and Fred tried to persuade wee Katie to make friends with master Sammy. Then Belle gave *our boy* a handful of gum-drops wherewith to win the confidence of the coy little maiden of three years, and these succeeded.

The little ones were soon at home with each other. Cousin George and Henry wanted, of all things, to get a few winter views of the Highlands, and Mr. N—— at once ordered a plain strong sleigh, immensely democratic, and drove to all accessible points, then we dismounted and walked. But I shall never do justice to it if I attempt to write a history of that tramp over those snow-clad hills and beneath the solemn darkling evergreens. We paused amid those mountain gorges, my cousin George and I; the views before us were sublime, ah, more, of a wild and savage grandeur. It was with a resistless impulse that I drew out my pencil and small sketch-book, then with a kind of despairing sigh, I said—

“Oh, but this is too vast!”—and my pencil dropt upon the snow.

“Too vast, too grand to be set in a lesser frame than the glorious vault of heaven. But, Minnie, it is good to look upon this picture, fashioned by the Great Artist's hand. Gaze upon it—drink of its glory—bathe your soul in its matchless beauty; and, in coming years, if wearied with tameness, if oppressed by disharmonies, if time and space seem one vast blank, a vacuum, (a thing of nature most abhorred,) you have but to close your eyes, and this immense panorama before you again stands revealed.”

He took my hand—looked earnestly into my face, and with a smile, sad, sweet, surpassing all other smiles on this earth, said—

“Is this the Minnie who came with me from the world be-

low? I had thought, a moment since, that we had passed the bounds of earth, and were standing upon the outer rim of some higher sphere."

"I might believe so too, but that through those distant vallies I hear the reverberations of the neighing of that far-famed Iron Horse"—

"Whose neck is clothed with thunder, and whose nostrils send forth flame," my companion added gaily.

"And who tarries not in his flying course for mountain rhapsodies."

"Have a care to your footing—we are off now, like a *parachute*."

After a goodly amount of scrambling and winding about, our party, a little while before dispersed among the hills, was re-united, and walking rapidly to our friendly vehicle, took our seats, and returned to the house—but not until some time after the kingly monster of locomotion had sped his regal course through that lovely village.

I verily believe Fred and Belle were glad we had missed the train. We should now stay to tea with Maria, who took an affectionate interest in them—petted and caressed them, as if they were really lovers whom nobody suspected of being in that pleasing and definite position. Master Sammy and little Miss Katie were in high glee, and perhaps there were others less demonstrative, yet as childishly happy—but I don't know.

We returned by the evening train—found aunt Guilder more beautiful than ever, rapt in some new dream of bliss. A dream from which she will only wake when others weep!

Wait—cease these wild upheavings! The walk over the hills—the journey home—that last hour's talk in the parlor, alone with him—then alone in my chamber, for Belle was wrapt in sleep—alone, pronouncing my own doom. That delicious dream, from which I wakened only too soon, has passed away forever! Dare I weep? Yes, yes, for I will not let my poor heart break—I will not die of this grief, and

so leave my father's house desolate! Weep! The fairest day I ever knew, closed in a night of rain. So I, the brightest, sweetest, gladdest dream of my whole life, ends in tears, bitterer, more uncomfoting than any I had ever thought to shed. Weep! For tears alone can calm the wild agony of my despair! Dearest aunt, how little you know the mischief you have done. Oh, why did we ever meet—your son—your noble son and I,—or met, why were we not simply friends—good friends—dear friends, and nothing more!

Why did he choose me to build that glorious temple! therein to set up his household gods! Me, who could be his friend, and nothing more! Oh! nothing more. Enough,—I waste the night in silent anguish, or bitter repining, neither of these will give me strength to meet the morn!

There! I will be calm—quietly happy. But I must fly to my father; he whose sole hope and joy I am; he will comfort me—and I—I will strive to forget that I love one, whose love is my crown of glory—who has asked my hand in marriage. But, between me and him, there is a gulf fixed which cannot be bridged over by love strong as death!—
* * Sleep! balmy, blissful sleep, come thou in my utmost need!

We met at breakfast—an outward calm I could command, and this served me, for I had some secret intimation that cousin George skilfully diverted any marked attention being bestowed upon me. We rose to leave the table, I to go to my room, under pretence of writing letters, when he, my cousin George, captured my hand, saying—

"A moment—I will detain you no longer," and led me to a seat in the parlor. I could not refuse to listen.

"Minnie, I am not a man given to making long speeches. I will express in a few words what I wish to say. I had thought that you were not indifferent to me, or at least to my happiness—so, believing this, and having a regard for you, the extent of which it is needless now to enter upon, I last night asked you to become my wife—you refused, and

gave me no reason. This is what I now require—a reason, your reason, and let me see if I deem it sufficient.”

“You are my father’s sister’s son.”

“Have you no other reason, no other objection than this?”

“None—*this is sufficient.*”

He made no reply—rose and left the room. When he returned he held in his hand a large, heavy and quite ancient volume. He resumed his seat by my side, opened the book, and there, written in a quaint, old-fashioned hand—but I did not transcribe the record.

“How is this—then you are not my cousin, yet my aunt announced you as her son. I think she regards you as such.”

“True. You see by this record, that my father was the elder brother of Madam Guilder’s husband. My mother went to her eternal rest when I was a boy of five years, though I now remember her with a pleasing distinctness. Your aunt, (and she is mine also,) lost her eldest boy a few months later. My father yielded me to her earnest entreaties, for a few months, as she stipulated, then he decided to go abroad. He was absent some years, returned, looked through his estate thoroughly, and it might have been from some presentiment, spoke to my uncle of the course of study and of the life he wished me to pursue. We lived quietly, happy for a few years, but going to New Orleans, he was taken with the fever, was brought home, and died. Sad, ah, yes, for at eleven years of age, I, a lonely boy, looked upon the broad world before me, which held for me neither father or mother.”

“Ah, and my aunt?”

“Became as nearly my mother as it was possible for any than the *true* one to be. And since it is forgotten by others that I am *not*, she wishes to cheat herself into the belief that I am really her own son. Then, Henry’s father dying a few years since, has strengthened this one wish of her great and earnest soul. But, Minnie, you must never reveal your knowledge of this fact to your aunt—I should not have made

it known to you, but for your scruples, on a certain point, which, allow me to say, I think are just.”

“Pray, do not think me capable of trifling with your happiness or my own. Time and events glided so softly past, so like a fairy dream, that I took no note of either, until last night—do not think I would mislead—.”

“No, no. I do not think it. If you had been my full cousin, I should never have sought you as a wife, however dear you might have been as a friend. But your kind, though firm and irrevocable rejection of my suit puzzled me beyond measure. I had seen that your nature was too noble, your soul too pure and high to act the coquette—that stigma upon the character of woman, that *moral fungus* whose outgrowth shows a diseased heart or intellect.

I began to regard you as a mystery—for I had not thought to find a young girl who would think clearly and act wisely upon these points. I have thought—ay, seen, that heart, taste, impulse, or sometimes *interest*, was the ruling influence, even with those who were esteemed to be highly educated. It is with supreme pleasure that I reflect that in this, as in many other things, my choice has fallen on one who searches out great truths, and *lives* them.”

“Do you think such ones are rare, my friend? If your researches at the North extend far, you will find many, very many women great and noble, whose mental culture is of the highest, and whose intellect is on the grandest scale.”

“I believe it. I have felt this abroad. I am more glad to find it at home in my own country—gladder still to feel that this upward movement will reach my own fireside, will cheer and bless my life henceforth. I have watched and waited. I would have a wife who would aid me in thinking, who would share my intellectual pursuits, who, by her divine gifts, would urge me up to serenest heights, than I, alone, might ever hope to attain. Who would love me—whom I should love, watch and guard as my other self, as my life, which God gave me. I find her in you, dear Minnie.”

"Then you are not afraid of a 'blue-stocking'! or of a woman who has marked *individuality*, and a pretty strong will of her own!"

"Not in the least. I was not formed by nature for a tyrant—neither left so *unformed* as to be incapable of appreciating true merit."

"I am glad of this: for I intend some day to write a poem, of a thousand lines."

"Do! and pray, dear, commence it soon, that I may live to read, perhaps revise it."

"Be not in haste. I shall not commence *my poem* until after I am thirty; up to that time I shall read and think; so you see I have as many years to *serve*, as Jacob had for Rachel."

"And at the end of all these years of patient serving, found only Leah."

"Undaunted by this defeat, he served seven other years; so I will serve twice, ay, three times seven years, but I will at last attain this Rachel of my love and my ambition."

"Minnie, you not only amuse but interest me with your half playful, half serious way of gliding through your suggestive style of conversation. And often in those little sarcasms upon your own pursuits and aspirations, I guess at the larger truth. Now I will speak in all soberness, recurring to what we have thought before. I, as a man, rejoice greatly in this dawning era. The dark ages in which woman has been regarded and has held the position of an household servant—has passed away *forever!* It can never return! Day by day the light advances—and woman is assuming her true position as companion, teacher, artist and creator."

I said no more—but was listening to the soft, harmonious strains melting from those golden harp-strings. To me it was like the dawning of a day in heaven—the fleecy folds of the veil which parts this from the upper sphere seemed partially withdrawn.

We sat alone, mutely happy—the golden beams of the

morning sun falling aslant the encircling arm of the crimson velvet sofa, falling, flickering amidst the gorgeous flowers of the carpet, filled the room as with a flood of glory.—And so day after day swept silently by—and the glory never faded, and never shall—for we will be true in heart—never for the smallest infinitesimal portion of time shall we ever turn aside from our plighted vows, and nothing false shall ever approach our heaven."

The week for the bridal tour was ended. Mr. Bovie and his wife, always noble and good, now truly loved wife, were quietly settled at home; and, of a bright morning, one might see Hubert playing and running about upon the sunny pavement with his little brother.

My friends next door had been absent for some days, when, on their return, Belle and I went in the evening to spend an hour with them. They had been to visit Laura's mother, then to look after the old homestead of the Bovies.

"Allow me, dear friend, to ask how you came by this name, *Bovie*—your husband is not a Frenchman, or the son of a Frenchman?"

"Neither, it is true." Then speaking to her husband, she said—"Shall I make Miss Minster acquainted with the way in which we acquired this name?"

"Certainly, my dear," he said; "and if Miss Minnie is as fond of antiquarian researches as you are, it will give her no little pleasure." Then Laura resumed—

"The name, as it came over from the 'mother country,' was Bibbins; coming in contact with the Dutch, here in this, it fell, naturally enough, to Bivens. An ancestor of my husband's, named Ralph, was owner of immense herds of cattle—sold fat beeves in the market at New Amsterdam. He was a gallant old gentleman, sat his horse in kingly style; and some of the youths of his day, sent him a pair of silver spurs, and dubbed him Sir Ralph *Bovine*. To humor the joke, he had a coat of arms painted and placed over the large door, at the entrance to his house. It was a pair of

fat beeves, and underneath was written small, 'Who drives fat oxen should himself be fat.' Every one laughed, not *at*, but with him, and he soon gained the title of 'The Knight of the Herds,' and Sir Ralph, or 'Sir R. Bovine.' His eldest son, my husband's great grandfather, went for a time to England, then over to France. There he dropt the *n*, so his son and his son's sons were born to the rural-sounding surname of Bovie."

"Thank you, Mrs. Bovie. I have an insatiable thirst for this searching into the dim and hidden past. I have often remarked how greatly surnames change with time and the course of events. My own beautiful and poetic name, leads one imperceptibly down the dim cathedral aisles—almost to fancy the deep undertone of the organ is heard. I sometimes think, it may, by the 'march of improvement,' be pruned down to simple 'Church.'"

"Or Meeting-house," added Belle, gaily. "Why not? We have Whitehouse, Woodhouse, and Steinhaus. I remember a friend of yours, sometimes playfully called you 'Mary Church,'—hast forgotten?"

Mr. Bovine gave a sudden start, and a flood of crimson suffused Belle's pearly cheeks.

"My little son is named Ralph Hubert," Laura continued, not noting, because ignorant of the allusion—"and may, in time, win the title of his renowned ancestor, for never was a boy more fond of flocks and herds than he. Is it not so, my son?"

"Yes, mother, and of my pony and rabbits."

"I had not forgotten that these were your especial pets, my dear," the mother replied, with a fond smile.

Mr. Bovie told us then of his recent visit to the homestead. Some part of the house—the identical one which Sir Ralph had built—was still extant; he said he was going to put it in thorough repair, add to it whatever they might require for an elegant and comfortable country residence, and then remove to it, and remain in it, until they were ready to take possession of their mansion in the "City of the Heavens."

"That is well. That is good. My love for my father's house, or I might say, the house of my fathers—for not only has my father and grandfather, but great-grandfather lived in this same house, which was built by the elder—my love for this sombre old house amounts to, I had almost said, veneration."

"It is a very good house, if I remember rightly, and the views are the finest," Mr. Bovie said. After a pause, he continued to say—"that at an early date in the spring, he would accompany his wife and little boys to the West, to redeem Laura's promise to aunt Mercy, with whom they would spend the summer. Meantime he would be building and repairing, and have everything snug and cozy at their return. They would bring aunt Mercy with them to spend some months, and to her this journey by railroad would be as great an event, as to us, a voyage in the flying-ship, which is yet to be!"

CHAPTER XXX.

THE snow had been steadily falling for two days, but the storm had now subsided, the sun shone out from a steel-blue sky. It was cold, oh, so bitterly cold. Cards of invitation had been sent up to us from Mrs. Elia Anna Best. She would see her friends at her own house, in Hudson street, on Thursday evening.

We readily guessed that this reception was to be given as a compliment to Mr. and Mrs. Bovie. We therefore would not fail to be present, so entirely had we all entered into the spirit of this "romance in real life." Late in the afternoon, aunt Guilder decided not to go—the cold was too intense and piercing to admit of her being exposed to it. To me, there was a kind of delirious joy, of exultation in the consciousness of possessing the power to meet and to brave this elemental potentate.

George had ordered the sleigh to be at our door at eight o'clock—Juan was instructed to inform us the moment our brilliant equipage entered our street.

Aunt Guilder had, herself, superintended the muffling up, and had it been within the bounds of possibility to have added another particle of flannel or fur, it would have been added at once. At last, turning to Henry, she said—

"My dear boy, let me see that there is not even the merest soupçon of your precious throat for the cold to get at."

"Not a whit, mother dearest—but *there*, I hear the jingling of the 'merry, merry bells.'"

At the same moment, Juan opened the parlor door to say that the sleigh was waiting. Henry and Belle were in the gayest mood, and with fleetest steps ran to get their seats. George, whom I still remembered to call "cousin George,"

placed me beside Belle, and then took the seat opposite me, beside Henry—and almost buried in furs, we dashed up the street, then down Sixth Avenue to Broadway, then on through this great thoroughfare, gliding on amid the merry chorus of many bells, the clashing of steel-clad hoofs, the shouts of gay revelers, the whole seeming a joyous cavalcade of the old vikings—gliding onward, we took our devious way to Hudson street. The hour of nine was just pealing from a church steeple near by us, as we drew up in front of the house, and our excellent host himself received us within the vestibule.

A maid in attendance, took us up stairs to lay off our wrappers, mufflers, and moccasins. We were ushered into a most luxurious chamber, the richness and gorgeousness of its appointments reminding one of the fabled magnificence of the East. There was a bright coal fire burning in the grate, and this repeated in the large mirrors that reached from the floor to the ceiling, shone upon the dark, rich wood of the doors, and laid like sunbeams amid the brilliant flowers in the carpet. The windows were draped with satin damask of the richest patterns brought from foreign looms. The walls were adorned with paintings, some of them by old masters, all of them exquisite in effect. On the mantel were several exquisite statuettes, and the most beautiful vases filled with fragrant flowers.

A door opening into an adjoining room, showed another chamber of equal magnificence. Belle had been rapturously surveying the varied articles of *vertu*, for her love of the beautiful, the antique and mystical, gave her a refined appreciation of this rare collection, as also of these manifold evidences of taste and affluence, when the door opened and quickly entering in, was Fred Gunnison.

"I am sent here by our hostess to draw your attention to some flowers which she feared you might overlook," and taking from the vases two of the most lovely bouquets ever made by mortal hands, he presented one to each of us.

Belle thanked him, then playfully added—

"Master Fred, you seem to be quite at home here—pray tell me if you are to act as master of ceremonies?"

"In part, and to commence, I am to take you down stairs and present you."

A moment more, and we entered the parlors and were presented to Mrs. Elia Ann Best, who received us gracefully and also with great cordiality. I do not think her toilette was unusual, yet nothing could have been more elegant or becoming. Her dress was a heavy peach colored silk, worn low, giving one a delicious view of her queenly shoulders which were partially veiled by the black lace *berthé*, her neck and arms were blazing with jewels. She looked a perfect Juno. But brighter than all the gems she wore, were her dark flashing eyes, now sparkling with wit, or beaming with harmless mirth, and rippling down her swan-like neck, fell the long wavy ringlets of her raven hair.

The room was filled with guests, yet not crowded. We tendered our aunt's apologies, then after listening to a few brilliant remarks and graceful nothings, for the time and place would allow of little else, leaving Belle in merry chat with Fred, I made my way to where Mrs. Bovie was sitting in quiet happiness. She could not so far depart from long habit as to make a toilette as rich or brilliant as most others present, but was looking very nice in a purple silk and a neat Methodist cap with white ribbons. She gave my hand a warm pressure and said—

"I have been looking for you, Miss Minster, a long time, and Miss Belle, too. How fairy-like and lovely she looks to-night. And pray, pardon me if I commit an error, for I am not used to the etiquette of city-life, but I must tell you that I thought you more beautiful than ever to-night, as you entered the room with Mr. Gunnison. I could scarcely believe it real, you seemed to me more a dream of beauty."

I could scarce suppress a smile.

"Thank you. Oh, these pretty sayings are allowable from one lady to another, anywhere, with the *élite*, passing as pleasant compliments."

"No, no. I did not mean to compliment—"

"Well, then, if it be a sincerely expressed opinion, allowable certainly."

"Do you know those two young ladies opposite us, Miss Greenleaf and her sister?"

"I have met them in society."

"I think Miss Greenleaf very queenly looking, yet for me, there is a charm about Miss Arabella which I cannot define. Pray, Miss Minster, solve this for me."

"In one word, dear Mrs. Bovie. It is Genius?"

I sat looking at the twain, yet one only fixed my regard, Arabella. She was not as beautiful as her sister, or at least, one would not think her so at first, but more intellectual looking. Her complexion was fair almost to paleness, her hair dark and waving, and her eyes—oh, those starry eyes! what a wealth of power and glory lay deep down in those dark orbs! She stood beside her sister, in a mute but graceful attitude. Her dress was of white marino, the sleeves open and wide, showing a rich lining of most delicate pink silk. Her swan-like neck was encircled by a chain of coral, terminating in a cross of gold, and rich coral bracelets adorned her beautiful arms. She turned her exquisite head, our eyes met, and she came gliding across the room to a place beside me. With a slight but graceful recognition to Mrs. Bovie, as they had spoken to each other before, then to me

"I am very happy to meet you, Miss Minster."

"Thank you—the pleasure is reciprocal. I have much wished to see you, to thank you for that song you sang and played so exquisitely the last time we met."

"Oh, at Mrs. Childs', in Lexington Avenue?"

"It was. I never listened to anything which pleased me more."

"Ah, but pray, what was it?"

"This. 'What shall be my angel name?'"

"Oh, that is one of the few things that I love beyond expression."

"It is beautiful beyond expression."

"Oh, and I have something of great interest respecting yourself, from Ermina Childs. I would not believe it and called for proofs."

"How then—what was it, my dear?"

"Ermina told me, that you, Miss Minster, were a Blue-stocking and a Poet."

"Well!"

"I disbelieved, and she showed me the prettiest little song—and written for her."

"Well—and what is the penalty?"

"Why, I charge you with inconsistency—more, with sailing under false colors."

"How?"

"How? why, you dress with most exquisite taste, act, speak and *think*, perhaps, like the most unpretending young lady, when you should have your eyes in 'a fine frenzy rolling' your speech peculiar, and your dress should exceed eccentricity itself—first, it should be most *unbecoming* in color,—let me see, you are a shade of a brunette, it should be green and russet—high in the neck, up to the ears, and down to the wrists."

"Away with your old fogyism."

"Old fogyism, indeed! Isn't it law and gospel?"

"It may be law, but not gospel."

"Terms which *should* be synonymous, but are *not*."

"My dear Arabella, in the very item of dress, I commit a higher offense against the laws of fashionable life than I should against that of taste, if I followed your sage suggestions."

"Impossible!"

"No—it is true."

"How then?"

"Thus. A fashionable young lady of the proverbially gay and fashionable city of New York, would scarcely appear at three consecutive balls or parties, wearing the same dress. And do I not know that those lovely young Quakeresses of

Philadelphia, would not wear the most lovely dress even the second time to 'Friend's wedding?' No—each and every sweet spirituelle must have a new dress of some ethereal fabric, in which I confess they seem to me visitants from fairy-land, just flown hither to preside at the marriage of the mortals."

"Beg your pardon, but I cannot discover your especial offense?"

"Ah! well, I make but one grand toilette for the winter."

"This is not possible!"

"Can you disprove it?"

"No—but then nothing can be richer or more becoming to your style, than this maroon velvet."

"Thank you."

"But if your were going to a wedding?"

"I would have a dress of white tarleton, or some of those fine illusions which give a young lady an air of exceeding loveliness, set off by one's 'family jewels'—and this would occasion but little expense."

"Expense! Now I am utterly lost! I can never extricate myself from this labarinth of mystery!"

"Give me your clue, and I can aid you."

"Expense! the word must have changed from its primal meaning, when it is thus weighed by a young lady who is an heiress in her own right, and whose father is the possessor of boundless wealth."

"May I not do what I will with mine own? May I not refrain from wasting this mighty power and *use* it for purposes of good?"

"True, true! Now I am wide awake. There is a palpable object."

"But I do not act alone in this. My cousins, Fan and Belle, unite with me, and our fund is appropriated to the physical comfort and moral elevation of those who would never attain to the same degree of either, without it."

"You send a missionary to the heathen!"

"No, Arabella, we have greater need at home!"

"Indeed, that is true. I have thought often of our most ill-advised benevolence, sending missionaries to the heathen abroad, when our heathen at home are far more wicked and degraded. For do we not have drunkards, murderers, assassins, and even worse criminals than these, stalking about at midday, unrebuked?"

"Certainly, we do. The destroyers of domestic happiness, the invaders of home and hearth, be they men or women—and to the victims it matters not whether these wretches are driven on by their own ill-regulated passions, or are maddened by the intoxicating glass."

"But, my friends, you would not set at naught all missionary labor?" Laura asked, with great earnestness.

"Indeed no!" Arabella said, very gently—"and if I ever pray devoutly, it is that this labor may be more judiciously directed than it has been hitherto—that our Pagan brothers and sisters may be taught the arts of civilization rather than creeds and dogmas—of which we ourselves were the gainers, could we be rid of them forever."

"And along with this 'civilization' let men learn that they are the recipients of the mechanical talent—to develop the earth's resources and plough the heavens, and woman, of the moral sense, to guide and guard the soul and form the mind of all her offspring, and Christianity follows as naturally as fruits grow and ripen beneath the sun."

Laura smiled and said—"I agree with you both—though I confess at first I thought you a little heretical."

"What can you two be talking about," said a young lady, in a crimson brocade trimmed with blue velvet, her short, yellow curls bobbing at every word. "I can guess! It is how sweetly pretty Mrs. Sinclair looked last night in the Lady of Lyons."

"You are wide of the mark, Miss Dings," Arabella said, with a half smile. "The subject at present engrossing our attention has not the smallest particle of interest for you, it tends toward the amelioration of the condition of the 'common classes.'"

"Oh, mi!" and the yellow curls bobbed again.

"There, go away, for a good girl," coaxingly.

And the crimson brocade trimmed with blue, and the short curls moved away, and onward.

"Now let us return to the main point. If it be not too great a liberty, I beg to ask what special object has thus enlisted your sympathies?"

"A District School, remote from us, in a cold section of country, and in a rather poor neighborhood."

"I listen!"

"First, then, the school-house was greatly dilapidated, and the fathers were only able to procure the cheapest teachers, which we well know are *dearest* in the end."

"Most true!"

"Three winters ago we had the building put in excellent repair, and then secured a competent teacher. This last item, however, drained our treasury, and would have brought us into debt. We had to fall back upon our reserved force for this, which we did, and at once liquidated our debt. We visited the school frequently, persuaded our parents and other influential persons to do the same—so, encouraging the teacher and the pupils—and kindly suggesting to the latter that no mischievous knife be employed to deface desk or bench. We also left with the teacher, both books and pictures, as prizes to be awarded for scholarship and behavior. The second winter we employed the same teacher—this winter we have enlarged the house, added a new and convenient vestibule, an entire supply of new text books, and by way of giving a new idea, we have each of us presented the school with a lively picture from our own portfolios, in pretty frames, which now adorn the walls."

"And the teacher?"

"Is the same. We are well satisfied with him."

"I see, dear Minnie, you are fond of permanencies."

"I am."

At this moment our host approached and joined us, thus

interrupting our farther conversation. This was well, it had been too long carried on in the presence of a third party, where no question or point of interest had been referred thereto.

"Fond of permanencies, Miss Minster—I hope I may be included in the list," he said, smiling, "since I have two claims to prefer; the first, a pardon for my intrusion; the second, the honor of leading you and Miss Arabella to the piano?"

After a moment of pleasant talk to, and with Mrs. Bovie, and some other ladies having taken our vacant places, we proceeded to the piano—a grand instrument, exceeding rich in tone, fully answering the anticipations which the splendor of its style had suggested. Arabella was induced to take precedence of me, and played in her peculiarly brilliant style. I listened with great pleasure; but, presently, becoming aware that two or three young ladies were standing by, to whom it would afford exquisite pleasure to play, I slipped quietly away, and found myself in the genial presence of our splendid hostess. My cousin George was there, and in his happiest mood, and one could see at a glance that he had won that lady's regard, by his attentions to her little girl—a beautiful, gay and laughing creature, numbering some four summers, sole daughter of the house. A perfect gem was the tiny Julie—her sweet oval face and bright blue eyes, at times, almost hidden beneath her long flaxen curls, which swept down to her waist, or waving about disclosed a pair of plumpest little shoulders, barely enclosed by the rim of her dress, which was of the richest cherry-colored velvet. Taking her all in at a glance—eyes, lips, waving curls, all set off, or rather subduing the brilliancy of her rich dress—she seemed a little star just dropped from heaven. And then, her sweet childish voice was music—it had not yet lost the intonation it had learned from the angels. She was sweet-tempered, and very loving.

A friend, an excellent lady, standing by, said to Elia Anna—

"Be watchful, dear Mrs. Best, that this child does not grow to be the idol of your affections."

"I do not know how that may be, but I think Heaven has been nearer to me since she came, as if somewhere she had left an open door."

"And that is true." At this moment master Best, Elia Anna's only son—quite a young gentleman—came, as deputed by my cousin Belle, to take me to the farther side of the other parlor, to join in some amusements just beginning. These continued until supper was announced.

Cousin George gave his arm to our elegant hostess—her husband gave his to Miss Greenleaf—Fred waited on Miss Arabella Greenleaf—a promising young student took care of Belle, the remaining guests were ranged according to their tastes and proximity.

I will not attempt a description of the elegant supper laid out, being sure of a failure. But my gentlemanly escort—the elder brother of the Misses Greenleaf, the proud representative of the masculine graces and artistic elegance—pronounced it faultless.

And as cousin George helped the little Julie to a plate of jelly, and other such delicacies as her mother permitted—the latter informed me that the entire entertainment of edibles had been of her own preparation, the viands, jellies, ices, cakes and cake, and preserves, had been, or were, the result of her own provident care and immediate supervision.

I felt that I was a competent judge of the delicious preserved strawberries, also of a cup of fragrant coffee.

Wine there was, somewhere, but of this I know nothing, as I never partake of wine of any kind, in this country, on any occasion.

We returned to the parlors. We had spent a very pleasant evening, and now it was time for Belle and I to think of taking leave.

We had been for a few minutes conversing with Mrs. Best. Presently she asked me how I first made the acquaintance of the younger Mrs. Bovie—Albertine.

I told her, that when Albertine's father died, it was found that his affairs were in a most perplexed condition, her mother had had some property, this too was much involved, and my father was called to settle or administer upon the entire estate.

Being frequently at the house, he became interested in the young orphans, Albertine and her brother Fred, and feeling a kindly sympathy for the lonely girl, he took me over with him one day, and permitted me to bring her back with me, to remain as my little playmate and friend. And she went to school with me all through that pleasant summer. There were some important papers missing, the absence of which caused great anxiety to the grand-parents, as also, great delay in settling the estate. But my father worked slowly and cautiously, thereby saving something to the orphans. And Albertine never knew the cause, or the amount of the loss sustained by herself and brother, for by right, they should have been heirs to a pretty large landed property.

"Has Fred any knowledge of those missing papers?"

"He has evidence that some valuable papers were once in his father's possession—but, farther than this, I am not informed."

"Ah! Now tell me about Albertine as a little girl."

"As a little girl, she was lively and gay, yet never rude; slow to resent, and almost incapable of committing a wrong. She had great forbearance of spirit, and knew not how to encroach upon the rights of others. But please excuse me if I cannot say more—this subject makes me all too sad."

"It was not to pain you, dear Miss Minster, that I have renewed these thoughts, but to thank you for your early love and your later kindness to dear Albertine; she was more to me than you ever suspected—she was my full cousin."

"Indeed! That explains Fred's home-like ways in your house."

"I wished to thank you, to show my esteem for you,—my gratitude for your unchanging goodness to one who was laid

low in the pride of her young innocence and beauty—be pleased to accept this"—and unclasping a pretty bracelet from her arm, she transferred it to mine, sealing the clasp with a kiss.

So we made our adieux with the one and the many, and, half an hour after, wrapt in furs and pleasant reminiscences, we were dashing up Hudson street.

CHAPTER XXXI.

PASS we swiftly over the terrific storms of Feb. 185—, over the few days in March, when the wind *did not blow*, to a mild day in April. Mr. Bovie had gone up to his ancestral home to lay out the grounds, and the farm-work and building-plans, to be carried on during his short absence to the West. But they will not leave the city until May, and then they leave it for "good," as little Hubert says.

My father has only received flying visits from me, from time to time, now I too am going home for *good*.

Belle goes with me, of course, and Fred Gunnison, more of course. Cousin Henry stays now with his mother—but George will go with us, "which will be nearly as pleasant," Belle says.

A grand panorama is stretching out before me—I go home to set my father's house in order, for aunt Guilder, and her immediate family, are purposing to spend the summer with me and my father, in our ancient domicile.

My hopes by day and my dreams by night, are brighter, fairer than they have been since that night of storm and darkness, which left me only of all my father's house. But I am left to him—dear, noble old man. Oh, praise for this! And life for me still wears the softly-gleaming robes of the *colour de rose*.

One slight, yet sufficiently ludicrous, incident I had nearly forgotten. I mention it now as being one of those amusing occurrences, at which we can but laugh.

I had a call one day—but I must date farther back. One bright, cold, but splendid day, I was out in a light, open sleigh, with cousin George, and driving up Fifth Avenue, my regards fell upon a young lady, at a crossing, resplendent in

silks, velvet, jewels, flowers, feathers, rosy cheeks and sparkling eyes. She drew my attention by a flutter of her lace handkerchief, conspicuous in her jeweled hand, then favored me with a sweeping courtesy, whereat each and every one of her tossing plumes danced again. I acknowledged her salutation good naturedly, and nothing more.

Now, I think it was the very next day, as I sat with my aunt up stairs in her own room, reading to her, and gliding over various subjects, but not toiling at any, Eolia came up to tell me I was asked for by a lady who waited in the parlor, at the same time giving me her card. I read:

MISS KATE SLOCUM, TARRYTOWN.

I gave the "card" back to Eolia, bidding her return it to the young lady, and say to her, "Miss Minster bids me to tell you she is engaged."

When Eolia had left the room, my aunt said—

"Minnie, dearest, is this the usual way to decline a call, here at the North, with a return of the card?"

"By no means, dearest aunt. I could not accept Miss Slocum's card, as I do not recognize her as one of my friends. Of this I wish to acquaint her."

"Ah! very proper."

The conclusion. When Eolia delivered *my* excuse and *her* card, Miss Kate Slocum, Tarrytown, rose from her graceful attitude in some haste, snapping out—

"Oh! very proud of her Southern *aristock*—her *beau* mabby she thinks—likely she'll catch him—and you may tell her I say so!"

"Oh, no—I would not be so rude," answered Eolia.

"Well, you're a saucy minx, and she's another."

A courtesy from Eolia acknowledged the compliment. Miss Kate Slocum, Tarrytown, stood indignantly fumbling at the latch—Eolia glided to her assistance.

"Allow me—or please wait, Miss, and I will call Juan."

"Don't call any more of your niggers. I was half fright-

ened to death by one when I came in. *There*, you will never catch *me* in such a house as that again! Never, never, never!" going down the steps.

I was amused, spite of my vexation, that the above-mentioned young person should have presumed to call and send up her card. Feeling at the same moment that an incident of this nature should not have stirred the minutest pulsation, but I am impulsive, I am young, I have not yet attained those calm heights to which my mental regards are ever lifted.

There, pass on, pass on, Miss Kate Slocum, your part is done. Pass on—give place to higher thoughts.

The sunshine and showers and bright varied skies of April had broken the bonds of stern winter. My father's youthful moods came oftener now that he was surrounded by gay and genial young people. Belle and I had plenty to do, ordering and arranging our large old-fashioned house, in planting our flower-beds with long-loved and familiar flowers, interspersed with bulbs and exotics brought from the city. George and Fred gave us cheerful aid in this, taking an occasional lesson from James Dunn in the kitchen garden.

We were happy enough in the present, so happy that we scarcely needed the shadowy happiness which Hope promised should be ours, when these slender stems springing from precious roots, now so carefully placed in the earth, and the wee bit of seed now hid out of sight, would spring to a new life, a vision of beauty and of glory.

Then we had long rambles over the hills and by the brawling brooks, along the sunny slopes where peeped the snow-drops, and the tender-eyed violet, here and there gathering rare and delicate wild flowers wherewith to beautify our garden paths, we had our rapid drives about the country, and alway and ever that dear home-happiness by the quiet fire-side at night. "How softly falls the foot of Time."

Fred had at the end of a fortnight, returned to the city, refreshed with the vigorous life of Glenelvan.

Somehow I became aware that Belle had repeatedly essayed to tell me something which cost her too great an effort, then subsiding into a dreamy silence.

"Minnie, dear—I—I—ah, dear—"

"There, pray don't, Belle. Fred has begged you to intercede for him—you are his friend—he would come to me a-wooing. But I must disappoint you both. I cannot, *cannot* marry him."

"You—you?"

"No, I cannot marry Fred, *no way*, for when I stand up and promise 'to love, honor' (and obey when it suits me,) and look to see the man marvelous who is to receive these sacred vows, and see only—dear, pretty Fred Gunnison, ah, I feel I should laugh indecorously."

"Have done, you provoking thing. It is well for *him* he don't want you."

"Well for *you*, you should I say. There, forgive me, dear Belle—I more than half suspected Fred had 'told his love,' and that *probably* you were engaged."

"That is true, Minnie, but we shall not be married for some years yet, at least, not until after Fan is married, for she is older than I am."

"And Fan, by the way, is to be married within the year."

"True. But we shall wait until Fred is settled in business."

"Meantime, giving space for the little bride presumptive to acquire a good degree of wisdom."

"Also, some of my cousin Minnie's housewifely ways which Fred is never done extolling."

"Thank you, little puss."

CHAPTER XXXII.

MAY-DAY, with its garlands, its troops of gay children, its floral processions, was long past, and naught remained to remind one of this vernal festival, save the lone May-pole upon the deserted green.

Mr. and Mrs. Bovie, with their little ones, came up to their house, stayed a few weeks, and, in accordance with their earlier plans, had now gone West.

How beautiful is early summer! June, with its roses and thousand floral emblems, seemed a palpable divinity—a softer breath filled the immensity of space, and valley, lane, and bleak hillside, was radiant with bursting buds and fragrant flowers.

The sun-set sky had long been assuming its deeper dyes, and gentlest zephyrs yet lingered amid the snowy lilacs blossoming beneath the darkling furs which stood at our north gable. Those old and solemn trees had long been numbered among our household divinities, and, in earlier years, as I had looked up to their outspread arms lifted to heaven, they had seemed to me the protecting spirit of my beloved home.

Mrs. Elia Anna Best, with her little girl, the beautiful, laughing, fairy-like Julia, had been up to spend the day with us. She had taken Belle into her carriage, having persuaded that pleasure-loving little lady home with her for a short visit. They had been gone an hour. There was a murmur in those solemn trees, a soft breath in the flowers, a purple glow on the hills. It was very quiet, very like the heaven to which I hope to go.

George had driven out in a low curricule with Madam Guilder, to give her a sunset view of the Highlands—Henry, to some eagle's nest far away. We were alone, my father and I.

He was absorbed in some formidable looking volume, ensconced in his old arm-chair—whilst I, half hidden within the recess of the deep window—my white dress undistinguishable amid the ample folds of snowy drapery, which hung from the ceiling—pondered on the possible existence of a fairer world than this.

A foot-fall—a wary step, broke in upon our repose. My father looked up. There, before him, in the middle of the room, stood a man of uncertain demeanor but confirmed ugliness, apparently not unused to the society of *men*, yet not of them—evidently this individual was a failure. After a moment's scrutiny, my father said—

“Good friend, what can I do for you?”

“You could ask me to sit down.”

“Ah, pardon me—be seated.”

“Um.”

“Allow me to ask you the object of this visit?”

“Business.”

“Ah, certainly. As a preliminary, then, by what name shall I address you?”

“Coppersmith—if you like.”

“Well, Mr. Coppersmith, what is your business with me?”

“‘Quick and easy,’ as the hangman says. Here it is. May be you will find some odd trumpery in that old pocket-book, of interest to somebody—a panacea to some, and poison to others.”

And, suited to the words, the strange individual laid, or rather jerked, a very old and greatly soiled, rusty black, pocket-book on to the table, near which my father sat.

“John.”

“Here, sir.”

“Undo that bundle and lay the contents carefully upon the table.”

“Yes, sir.”

John proceeded to untie the various and difficult knots of wrapping-twine which secured it—this done, some old yel-

low, time-worn and dilapidated papers were spread out for my father's inspection. Some minutes elapsed, and being near, though partially concealed, I had a clear view of his face. Then I saw an unusual gleam in his eyes and a nervous twitching around his mouth.

But these outward signs of emotion were quickly dispelled, and settling back in his chair, he looked fixedly at his uncouth visitor. The uncouth visitor fumbled about as if he essayed to find a word to advance—failing in this, he ended his researches in his stereotyped—

"Um."

"Mr. Coppersmith, what do you intend to do with these old papers?"

"Nothing."

"You must have traveled some distance for a gratuitous exhibition of them!"

"Um. Yes, I shall *do* nothing with them, for, and because I have *done* doing with them."

"Permit me to ask how they came into your possession?"

"Certainly. Oh, certainly, ask away, there is no law against asking questions."

I thought it was well for this ill-visaged individual that this scene was occurring in a private sitting-room, or he might have been "committed" for "contempt." Doubtless my father saw that this strange person was burthened with some secret which he wished to be rid of, and so resolved to "bide his time."

"Well, now I ask. I want a clear, emphatic, decided answer."

"Yes, yes. Now the dates are there, so these will tell how many years ago it was, and the *man*—ha, no need of calling names—had set his heart and soul—faugh! on what these papers represent—it was the breath of his nostrils, the light of his eyes, so while his wits were out visiting, these bits of trumpery were transferred to my pocket, and went with me quietly enough across the water."

Mr. Coppersmith, you could not have been ignorant of the consequences that must follow the loss of these papers?"

"Ha, I am not a donkey."

"Your motive for abstracting them?"

"The prime motive which governs the actions of all mankind—REVENGE!"

"I deny the charge. Brought against the better part of the whole world—it falls to the ground."

"The *better* it may be—but not the *greater* part."

"To return to the point—in what way has this *revenge* served you, Mr. Coppersmith?"

"Me! served me—ha, that is not for me to tell—but how it served *another*. You were there, sir—saw the hopeless entanglement, the vain repining, the bitter reproaches of the dead—ha, ha, that is what I worked for, to bring poverty, suffering, shame if possible. That man—ha, I see his name written as with a live coal, in the darkest night—it spreads, it burns—ha, ha! Gunnison, F. W. Gunnison! how grand it looks, how live, like a reptile. Do you see? Why did I do it—now I am going to tell you. He won from me all I ever cared for on the face of God's earth, the blighting coward! There was a little girl who often crossed my path on her way to a distant school, or playing in the meadows. She grew older and learned to shun me. I was rich, and thought to win her for my wife. She might have been handsome, I cannot tell, I only know I never thought of another. The little frolicking Emmy, or the tall proud girl, was the one only of all womankind I would have lifted a finger to save from perdition. I had a mother and sisters, they were mere rubbish to me. But it irked me to hear *her* name on another's lips. I called her 'my Emmy,' and breathed my wild hopes to the savage woods, thus peopling the darkest caverns with beings who floated aloft on silver wings, and touching their golden harps trilled back my Emmy's name. Did she know of this wild, this boundless worship? How should she? I rarely went to merry-makings, and there they always wanted *her*,

Among hedges, in forest places, on the sea-beaten shore, I held talk with those who understood me well, and answered back in kingly style—but, faugh, among men I knew not rightly what to say—I had a thought, I strove to utter it, stammered, then they would say—‘Oh, yes, we know,’ waving me off, and the women—ha, fie, called me a boor! Did she know it? No, she did not know how I counted her as mine, or she would not have married him, for she would not crush a fly. I met her gliding along those meadow paths, leaning on his arm, he, looking into *her* face, into *her* eyes, talked to *her*. The air grew hot, scorched me, then chilled and froze my blood—I stood still and gazed on them like one in a trance—I spoke. ‘My Emmy.’ He, Gunnison, lifted his hand. ‘Do you insult, do you dare speak thus to my wife?’ I could have torn him to atoms, but for every drop of his blood, she would have given thousands of her pearly tears. Ha, I knew a better way. The sun saw me not by day, or the stars by night in all those paths trod by her little feet, until years, and hate and the familiar look of evil things had seamed my face into something of its present ugliness. * * *

I came back. I had money, I had lands—I went where I would. I passed her house. She was the mother of a bright boy, and a little girl, the image of the one I used to watch playing in the meadows. If I loved the first, this last seemed but a mocking dream. Ay, if I loved the mother—I *hated her child*. And then I met *him*. I could speak to him now. We met—we drank rich wines. He communicated little of his business affairs to his family—his wife knew as little of his ways or means as I know of heaven. But I searched, I delved, I learned it all. He was acquisitive, he was ambitious. He bought a valuable tract of land, and the purchase and payment absorbed all his available means, and all the money his wife had brought him. He was high, he was proud—he would build his house and adorn his chambers. He thought of these things, and little else. Could

have seen the faintest shadow of unhappiness in *her* gentle face, it would have given me a fierce joy. Yet, for his little slights and small neglects of her—I *hated him*. She loved and trusted him—I, ay—I, the *contemned*, would destroy both love and trust. He was just the victim I wanted—*still* and *deep*. In many ways he was my counterpart; in him I saw my “double.” I had visited huge vengeance upon myself for my one great misfortune! what business had I to be the detested thing *I was!* and now, oh, now to beat and bruise and break my twin-soul, were but a change of torture, a delirious agony. I have done it! ha, ha! I triumphed at last. Who palters with the petty details of ways and means? He died, untouched by hand of man—*too blest*,—for, tended by her, his pillow smoothed by her white hand, her blue eyes looking their pity upon his pain, her rosy lips wiping the damp from his brow. Ye gods! and he could *die, die!* and leave her. *Sah!* but I would have throttled that grim old Death!

Men believed him rich. She believed he had left an abundance for herself and children: and lo! there was nothing. Then, her spirit yielded up its treasure, and she thought—no, no, none knew what she thought—she only cried softly to herself, (and if there be any angels they came and cried too) but wiser ones shook their hard heads and said—He—Gunnison, the gentlemanly F. W. Gunnison, was an impostor! a knave! a hypocrite!! and some harder names. And so it came about, that the name she had borne, had loved and honored, was cast under foot, spit upon. And this reached me across the salt sea—uncured by the voyage. Then was I repaid for all I had lost; (or, I tried to feel so.) But she waited for some revelation, waited for the darkness to clear up. She waited in vain, and finally went to her rest. A few years after, her little girl, her second-self, married, and died, not happily as I surmise.

I had done. There was nothing more for me to do, or be. There was a boy, but he was naught to me. I care not

whether he be living or dead. If living, those old Hunkses who retained possession, will be ousted; of that I shall be glad. But that is trash!

There are the old papers—hunted, searched, delved for, and all in vain. I should be a genius—for I have given years to one absorbing idea. My life has been divided into two distinct sections. The first, was filled with a mocking dream. The second, with—REVENGE!

He ceased speaking, rose up suddenly, and stood for a moment as if rooted to the floor; then, turning on his heel with swift and noiseless steps, fled from the house. A strange, dull sound seemed booming on the air. My head ached, so terrible had been that dire presence.

I rose, and leaning over my father's shoulder, said, almost sobbing—

"My father, can you do that man any good?—he must be very wretched."

"Not by mere words alone, my daughter—can you not see that he must be redeemed from the power of these evil passions by suffering—and the knowledge of the good and the true must enter thereby?"

"Yes, my father; and that must be long and deep."

"He has a low nature, it may be a thousand years before he rises to the plane of your excellent friend, Mr. N., of Peekskill. Now, my little puss, give me your attention for a moment to things of less import. These heaps of yellow paper are the true title deeds of the Hunks' farm-lands, showing the same to be the rightful possessions of the father, thence descending to his son, and only heir—Fred Gunnison."

"Is it indeed possible?"

"It proves to be, though I had quite given up the idea of ever finding them, if even such papers ever existed."

"I am very glad for dear Fred. The darkness and doubt which have so long hung over his father's house, may, at last, be dispelled, and his day have the happiest meridian."

Hearing the near approach of wheels, I ran to the piazza to meet my aunt, and tell her and George the good news.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

EARLY on the ensuing day, cousin Henry was preparing to go down to the city, to accompany Belle home. My father drew me to him, and said, smiling—

"My daughter, for once in my life, I must avail myself of a 'woman's wit.'"

"As if you had not all your life, dearest papa!"

"Yes, yes, you saucy little puss—but listen to me. I must see Fred Gunnison. I do not wish to send for him, it will give the thing such a business-like air—you never want for resources—manage it for me."

"I have it. We will have a little excursion to Eagle Rock. I will send him, by Henry, a note of invitation. I will appoint it for the day after to-morrow—will that be as soon as you wish?"

"Quite. And let it be, the note, written on rose-colored paper—entirely a lady's affair."

Henry and Belle came up in the evening, but nothing was said to the little lady about the strangely recovered papers. We were arranging some necessary preliminaries for the excursion, and Fred was to be one of the party.

At an early hour in the morning, therefore, cousin Fan and her beloved, and his sister, Miss Amelia Hoffman, came as pre-arranged, to go with us to Eagle Rock.

We had hoped that Fred might, by some great good luck, be the first to arrive, but this was hardly possible. Belle was looking very sweetly in her pink muslin dress, as she stood arranging the flowers in the vases, when a sudden exclamation from my fairy-like cousin arrested my attention, and there was Mr. Fred Gunnison just entering in at the gate. He seemed in an unusually quiet mood, but none the

less happy. Our greetings over, my father said, as if in a casual way—

“As our young people are not quite ready, master Fred, I suppose they will allow you a few moments’ rest,”—and led the way to the library, and they shut the door. Half an hour elapsed—three-quarters, and they were closeted still. Then their conference must have been concluded, for Fred asked—

“Does your niece, Miss Belle, know anything of this?”

“Certainly not. No one has told her.”

“Thank you, sir, for leaving this pleasure to me. Permit me to seek her for a moment’s conversation.”

“Nay, remain here. I am just going out, and will send her here.”

“Thank you, my dear sir.”

Belle’s sweet little face assumed the hue of the delicate sea-shell’s inner folds as she went into the library.

I was wholly absorbed with my guests, and Miss Hoffman was not one to be slighted, (the only unamiable trait in the character of this otherwise very lovely young lady). Henry came immediately to my aid, and thus the time sped all unnoted until reminded by Mr. Hoffman saying—

“Fannie, dearest, the morning passes—will not you and Miss Minster choose to be up on its wings?”

“Certainly, Charles. My cousin Minnie, will you inform those young dreamers that we wait?”

I rose, left the parlor and proceeded to the library. I opened the door—there sat the young dreamers talking quietly to each other, as if nothing unusual had evened to either, and with this difference only—Fred had taken Belle’s hand, as he was speaking, and she did not withdraw it.

Subsequently Belle informed me that Fred had at once decided to dispose of this newly recovered property for its utmost value—for what had been a cause of reproach to his father, and a heart-grief to his mother, could never be loved by him. He would avoid the place ever and always. And

further—he would remain in the long-established commercial house where he had already won a “name and a place”—ultimately becoming one of the partners. But they would not be married a day sooner than they had at first designed—not until a full year had transpired after Fan’s marriage, for Belle said her father and mother must acquire the habit of doing without their eldest, now at home, before they should be required to yield up another daughter.

Dear, good, loving Belle! She shall receive in kind, for all she has given!

And Fred, the affianced husband, loves and reverences her—these shall last as long as life!

Well, our choice little party were at length abroad. Fred seemed at once to obliterate all thought of the future, and to enter fully upon the enjoyment of the present.

Miss Hoffman, or “Dear Amelia,” as Fan usually called her, was entirely pleased with Henry’s attentions, and was most delightful company the whole day through. This elegant young lady had great capacity, and could be any thing she would. But I can say no more of her at this time.

My impromptu excursion was an entire success, if the fulfillment of our anticipations ever can be one, and we returned to my father’s to tea. Our arrival was later than I had thought, and so we found John and Susan a little way down the carriage drive waiting to receive their young mistress. Then followed this most delightful “family affair,” sitting down to tea. Oh, but it is something more than an “affair,” it has become a family institution. This sitting down to tea, in our own ancestral home, or even in (and which is most common,) a temporary home.

A sigh, a quivering sob, and our moan is made for these degenerate Americans whose gipsy-like habits or tastes are an actual malady, ever and forever on the “move,” flitting and flitting.

At last Fred rose to take his departure.

“I go,” said he, “to acquaint my grandpapa and ’ma with what has at last been proved—my father’s honor. I could

not have delayed this act for an hour, but that I would not disturb the enjoyment of others. Then, as my invitation to this pleasant little *fête* was from Minnie, I could sooner make even a greater sacrifice, than occasion her a moment's annoyance. Good friends, I wish you all a very pleasant evening."

I went with him outside the portico, and then said—

"Dear Fred, how do you propose to make this ugly jaunt across the country—on foot?"

"Ah, I had not given a thought to this. Perhaps you will order John to provide me a horse?"

"Most certainly, I will; and apropos to the case in hand, here comes that valuable fixture with 'Bona' ready saddled to go to the post-office."

"John, my man," cried Fred, "have the goodness to transfer your hundred and seventy-four avoirdupois to the back of 'Star,' at the same time making 'Bona' over to me."

"All right, sir."

"Or, as you complain, John," I added, "that 'Star' is rather frisky, you can take one of the donkeys from the 'draft' team."

"On my faith I will, Miss Minnie," the good natured dykeman said, laughing—"an I'll saddle Peepy—an if I speed not so airily, she'll return me safe."

A moment after, Fred Gunnison was dashing down toward the broad highroad, on his joyous errand.

Henry and Belle had gone with Amelia to walk in the garden, and to see my flowers, and thence to the woodbine arbor overhanging the creek.

Fan and I had some plans to mature. Then Belle and I were making and preparing numberless little articles for Fan's *trosseau*. Some of these would be deferred a little time, as we—that means those of my father's house, including Belle—were going, in little more than a week's time, to Niagara and the Lakes.

So it was all settled, and my sweet cousin Fan would be married in a few weeks after our return.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE interview between Fred and his grand-parents was very touching. When it was over, at a late hour of the night, he went up to that old chamber, which years ago had been his, and dreamed over the scenes of his boyhood.

At an early hour in the morning, while the velvet hills were yet robed in purple, he went forth from beneath that roof that had sheltered his mother in her deepest sorrow, and sought her grave.

Vain were his regrets—vain were his tears—worse than vain the perishable testimony he had gained of his father's purity of life. Useless, all!

She knows it all now, dearest mother, a blessed saint in heaven. It may be that, looking out from the window of that fairest Mansion, she saw and felt the great love which clasped her still—the sorrowful regrets—the heart-throbs—the holy purpose which faltered not, but waiting, aspired to a re-union with her at last.

And so the son held communion with the mother, even at her grave.

Years since, a plain and simple stone have been set up in memory of the father, at a later date, one for the mother. Now, as Fred gazed upon these, something unusual, at last, arrested his attention.

At the foot of the grave, set with great care, was an evening-primrose, and at this early hour the pale yellow flowers were still open, and looking like purest stars in that lonely spot—and, at the head, bending gracefully over the white marble, was a wild woodbine—both had been recently set, and kindly cared for.

What mysterious hand had placed them there? No foot print or mark of living thing was visible.

It may have been an inspiration of that wild and wolfish man, whose unhappy love for his lost "Emmy" had ennobled him at last; and loving her as an angel up in Heaven, he came to deck her early grave.

If it were so—if it were thus he loved, those were meet offerings he brought for one like her.

Loving the human, yet reaching up to her divine abode, the angels shall take account of it, and bearing him up on their wings, he shall look upon the face of the Lord in peace.

And these were the thoughts which stirred the bosom of Emma Gunnison's only and orphaned son.

For a brief time his visits were not infrequent to this sacred spot—but neither sight or sound of living thing ever met him there—then the chilly autumn winds, the storms of winter, and springtime cares with an increasing business, combine to delay their repetition, until after the lapse of many months. Ah, then, indeed, what an amazingly great surprise awaited him.

"Farewell, we meet again, in heaven,
To tread together o'er its diamond floor;
Where every sin and trespass is forgiven,
And God's high justice punishes no more!"

CHAPTER XXXV.

"COUSIN Henry may it please you to walk into the library, and await my coming? I have a *few* more words for these dear people, and I have *many* more for your private ear."

The young gentleman bowed, and as bidden, left the breakfast room, and I shortly after joined him.

"Your look is so grave, cousin Minnie, that—that I fear I deserve a scolding," he said, as I entered the library.

"On the contrary, I am well pleased with you, and have much praise to bestow, and shall tax your patience not a little to listen to it in detail. You were always, at least since I have *known* you, my much esteemed cousin Henry—but during our journey to the Lakes and to Niagara, your fond, considerate, polite, and most kind and unceasing attentions to your mother, who is also my father's sister, has won my entire esteem and high admiration. And I must thank you for this new pleasure."

"Thank you, dear Minnie, I scarcely deserve such high commendation for fulfilling a duty, which was also a dictate of my heart."

"I must also praise you for your excellent temper under many petty trials—and we have been so busied with cousin Fanny's wedding, that until now I have found no fitting time to speak of it."

"You are more than kind, my fair cousin—but my *temper* is not my own."

"Not yours to create, perhaps, but yours to control."

"Very true."

"Now I have a word farther. You were paired off with Miss Hoffman at cousin Fan's wedding, as also now in this bridal tour. This is all very well, I do not object to it. But

amid the soul-stirring grandeur of the White Mountains—their sunset views and their ‘rosy peeps of dawn,’ you will doubtless be the recipient of many great and poetic inspirations—do not mistake them for other than what they are. Do not, as some young converts do in a revival, mistake a transient feeling, and believe themselves deeply in love with some one of the dear sisters. Do not allow yourself, or any one else to believe that you can possibly fall in love with this engaging young lady—Miss Amelia Hoffman.”

“Miss Minster—let me assure you that no such thought has ever entered the brain of your too volatile cousin.”

“You are heart-whole at this moment?”

“I assure you that I am.”

“Remain so. Miss Hoffman is not adapted to you, nor to your local or political position. When we go South, you will be my dearest brother—our estates join—we shall have one common interest, the welfare of our people. Your wife must be one with whom I can labor harmoniously, else there will be heavier tasks for *me*, futile efforts and discord, and failure and mortification for you.”

“Well, my fair and sage counsellor?”

“This, Miss Hoffman is not wanting in delicacy, but is very impulsive. You are not to make her believe that you regard her in any other light than a very nice young lady—which she certainly is, and the friend of cousin Fan, which she ought to be.”

“Shall I tell her so?”

“No—simple soul! But I have a talisman for you. Put this ring of mine on your finger, and say *frankly* that it was given by a young lady who loves you, and whom you love, (I hope) and with it, you received her commands to love no one better than herself.”

“There! It looks splendid! Shall I also say, *frankly*, that the same young lady is—my cousin Minnie?”

“Vexatious Harry! Do you promise to give heed to all I have said?”

“I do, upon my ‘most sacred honor,’—but let me count up the items. First, I am a very nice boy: second, I am not to fall in love with a charming—third, I am not to allow a charming young lady to fall in love with me—”

“Have done with nonsense. And pray excuse me—it was a great liberty, I know, but I could not let you hazard the risk of an engagement, with even the pretty and gifted Amelia—, for I have other views for you.”

“Ah! Pray in what direction do they lie?”

“Nay—not now—I cannot tell you. But be very careful of my ring, it is of great value, and of your promise, which it seals.”

“Ay, now—I shall be eternally thinking of this invisible girl. Pray, what shall I bring you, from the most remote corner of this jaunt, by way of having a palpable object in view?”

“A pint of sand from the top of Mount Washington, to make rough surface for my card-baskets.”

“Will you lend me the basket to bring it in?”

“The basket—it is not made yet.”

“Right! I’ll bring it in my hat.”

“Hum—you’d better, than to have a ‘brick’ in it. But I hope I don’t intrude?”—and Fred Gunnison paused in the open door. “My young friend,” he continued, with a flourish of his cane, “it’s getting mighty near the time for us to set our faces toward ‘Shady-wood,’ if we are to be a party to those elegant tourists. Up now, my boy—let’s cut cable, and away.”

In the hall, Madam Guilder took a lingering and fond farewell of her only son, and the gay tourists sprang into the light vehicle, which was to convey them to Umberhurst—and I took up my duties as hostess.

After a time, a moment came when I could not be missed, then I caught up my sun-hat, and ran down to Skye Cottage for a pleasant chat with Mistress Jessie about the wedding, and to see if she were much fatigued with its pleasures and

its toils, for it cannot be forgotten, that as my friend and protégé, she, with her excellent husband, must be honored guests wherever I went. And, moreover, my Jessie's real merit—her childish beauty—the fresh new life which floated about her like a rosy cloud, would have secured her position with the great and the good. The *good*, surely, and none others, shall ever come near my darling.

It was pleasant to be again going my household ways, after the exhilaration of recent travel, and the bustle and excitement of cousin Fannie's wedding.

I must allow myself a few days of repose, and then look up an interesting personage, of whom I have nearly lost sight.

The grapes were ripening in the arbors, the fruits upon the trees, rare and choice vegetables in the garden—now were our busy days—packing, pickling, and preserving for winter use. Monica had ransacked every cupboard and closet, and brought out countless jars of every variety of pattern, from the antique Dutch to the latest innovation of self-sealers, both glass and tin, and all of them scrupulously clean and sweet. Susan, Meta, and Eolia were as busy as bees amid all these luscious fruits, paring and preparing them for Monica's finishing touch—then, in filling and labeling said jars, and arranging them in their respective places. Dear Jessie gave most cheerful and efficient aid, for this provident care, for the bleak and barren season, being one of her dear delights. And farther, we found it better to prepare Jessie's winter stores along with those for my household, it was both economical and labor-saving. When this was all done, Susan was duly sent down with a goodly share for her mother and Biddy Malone. * * *

Then in the softest of twilight hours, when the sad-voiced whippowil dropped out his liquid notes to the listening air, or the harvest moon in her silver car, ploughed the blue ether—we, George and I, with Hemish and his beloved Jessie, walked in the upland boscage, heard the long winding trumpet-call of the veery, the chirping of the katy-dids, and the

quick, startling cry of the screech-owl amid the boughs, and the great horned owl hooting from the treetops—heard the clink of silver water dropping from its rocky ledge, and beneath these many voices, differing, yet not inharmonious, we heard the distant foot fall of those fairy hours wearing on into the purple silences of night—heard the falling of the fragrant dews upon the waving grass and trembling leaves—heard the fine, inarticulate whisperings, ethereal, running along the electric wires connecting this sphere to the brighter ones beyond, and felt that one Creative, controlling Mind spoke to us through them all.

A letter from Mrs. Bovie informed me that she was now with her family at the old homestead, whither she desired me to come and pay her an early visit. This visit I had no wish to delay. I should go over and spend a day, and cousin George proposed to accompany me. It was a drive of some eight or ten miles, and therefore out of the question to attempt—with such a burthen—its accomplishment with my ponies, so Yoppa was directed to harness "Star" to a light open carriage, and after sending a request for Mrs. McGreggor to come up and keep my aunt company, we set forth.

George drove as rapidly as consistent with our safety through this picturesque and wildly beautiful country, scanning with almost an artist's eye the various grades of grandeur—the effect of light and shade falling over the bold front of rugged rocks, or hiding away in little gem-like valleys, then the small twinkling waterfall, dropping like strings of pearls out of those rocky fastnesses and gliding away down to those green and silent meadows—then broke upon the fragrant air the plaintive notes of the shy wood-bird, or the sharp cry of the hawk, or the scream of the eagles in their lofty eyrie—listening to these, glancing at various subjects of interest to us both, and *one* engrossing one—those ten miles fled by, all uncounted, and we halted in front of the antique, yet not displeasing abode of my excellent friend, Mrs. Laura Bovie.

Hubert and Sammy were playing in the court, which had once been a kind of cul-du-sac, but the side buildings which were lumbering and inconvenient, had been set back, and the ground on which they stood, planted with young trees and choice shrubs. This was a great improvement among many lesser ones, for it opened a fine view from the house-room windows; yet of all that had been done, no single item had been allowed to take the patriarchal air from this old homestead of the Bovies.

The little boys espying us, came running to the gate, which had been newly painted along with the neat fence enclosing the green plat in front, and Sammy, clapping his little hands, cried—

“*Me* so glad to see aunt Minnie!”

Hubert taking off his *leghorn* for a modest bow, told us his mother was at home and he *guessed* had *reckoned* on seeing us to-day. We now stood upon the broad “door-stone,” and George unwittingly brought down the ponderous Dutch knocker with a tremendous clang, and the heavy door was directly opened by Biddy, who greeted us with a courtesy and a brightly smiling face, and a—

“Plaze God, and I’m glad to see you. Miss Minnie, you’re more like a rose in the sunshine than ort I know of. If you’ll plaze to sit down on the *sofy* an wait a bit, I’ll bring the mistress directly.”

We had scarcely a minute to wait ere Laura came in and gave us a warm greeting. Mrs. Bovie was serene in her recovered home-happiness, and assisted me to lay off my bonnet and shawl with the easy affability of a heart at rest. She told me she had returned from her western journey over a week since, and had, as she proposed, brought Hubert’s foster-mother, her good aunt Mercy, back with her.

And now Hubert re-entered the room, bringing the aforementioned lady, and said—

“This is my other mother, Mrs. Waltermire; if you please, Miss Minnie.”

The warm affection, the bright, glad spirit of the boy carried him through this introduction with such a pretty, childish grace, as made his fond mother’s face bright with a grateful smile—and me, when I had finished my greeting—made me take the brave boy’s hand within my own for a merry little talk.

Aunt Mercy at once seemed to me like an old and familiar friend—her broad and ruddy face smiling beneath her towering cap of snowy muslin with its flowing border, and sober-colored ribbons, was a goodly sight to see.

Mr. Bovie, always shy and undemonstrative, came quietly in, however, looking a cheerful welcome—talked with us of the incidents of our drive, the country through which it lay, and when we were rested from its fatigue, invited cousin George out to look at his farming, his cattle, horses, and the face of the country around.

Aunt Mercy told me of her home in the West, her labors and occupations, the wild state of the country when she went with her husband out there—they were but newly married then—and lastly, of the time when Laura had lived with her. Meantime Mrs. Bovie had left us to ourselves, and just as aunt Mercy had finished some of her little family histories—Hubert came to take us out to dinner. Our gentlemen could not have gone far, as they were already in the dining-room, and one could not but notice how much more social and *at home* Mr. Bovie now seemed than at any other previous time in which I had known him. There were, doubtless, various reasons for this. The shadow which had hitherto overswept his daily life, since coming within my sphere, was now less observable, if not gone entirely. Now he avoided neither the questioning of my words or my eyes—a trait most agreeable for me to note. He spoke of his ancestors and their sober habits—of his sons and their future—of his own present occupations, and happiness—and, looking toward his wife, met her smile, full of the grave sweetness of confident hope.

When our repast was concluded, which occupied something more than an hour's time, Laura took me to her antique boudoir, and, seating me in a time-faded but still luxurious chair by the open window, which was shaded by a scarlet eglantine—herself opposite me, and with her familiar knitting-work in her hands, we took up the thread of our talk. Her journey, its purposes and its attainments, were the subjects of our discourse.

“Indeed! And Mrs. Anthony, your sister-in-law, she has traced the dark lines through the fairest portion of your life—you saw her?”

“Yes—and at the time but little changed.”

“Dear Laura, I am so fond of detail—just begin with ‘we met—’twas at, &c. &c.’”

“Oh, certainly, anything to please—though I have not a bit of romance. Well, we met, ’twas at the haunted cottage, the house where I once lived, now, the house of our tenant. My husband, children and *self*, were spending some days there. The old neighbors had all been to see us—when, one afternoon Mrs. Anthony—”

“Wait. How were you dressed—how was she? for I suspect these items would have a weighty influence with this lady.”

“Ah, you guess rightly, it does, this matter of dress. Well, I wore for that afternoon, that lovely organdie muslin, you helped me select at Stewart’s, with a pretty cap to match. A rather expensive collar, *for me*, fastened with a becoming ‘bosom-pin’—and husband insisted on my wearing that neat gold chain with the handsome watch he bought me—*every day*. Yes, actually wearing it *every day*—so that you will be satisfied that I was looking *extremely nice*.”

“That was well. Now give me a portrait of Mrs. Anthony. I know her characteristics—I want the dress, features, and complexion, and present sayings and doings.”

“I am but poorly gifted in this kind of sketching, can only state plainest facts. Well, Jane Ann, a most awkward

name, has pale red hair, florid, or rather mottled complexion and light eyes—but far enough from ‘eyes of light’—her upper lip is thin, lower one loose, and, when talking, forms into a rigid curve, within which a line of saliva is continuously running—a sharp, nasal-twanging laugh, not pleasant to hear. She has wit, but it is more like the sting of a nettle than the pleasant and momentary prick we often get in pulling a rose. That she is not richly endowed with the spirit or the love of truthfulness, is evident in every feature, but of this trait, I believe husband has informed you.”

“Yes, he told me, after the death of poor, dear Albertine, that his sister was the greatest liar he ever knew, a fault of the most frightful character. Go on.”

“Well, as I was saying—Jane Ann came to pay us a visit. I had only a moment’s warning of her approach, and my husband, poor man, rose to go away. ‘Will you not stay and see her?’ I asked. He came close to my chair, looking as white as a sheet, and said, ‘Laura, I took an awful oath, by the side of my dead Albertine, never, never to speak to that woman again. Say whatever you will for me, I go.’ And he had only escaped from the room, when his sister entered by another door. She accosted me in very homely phrase, then, at our hostess’ earnest invitation, laid off her equally homely bonnet and shawl—pushed the proffered chair a bit farther off from mine—sat down, and took from her capacious pocket her *serviceable* knitting, and began to rattle off at a tremendous rate, for Jane Ann was always a thrifty woman. They sat and talked together, my sister-in-law and our hostess, upon the various measures of domestic economy and household thrift, for half an hour or more, when the latter rose and left the room, to commence her arrangements for the supper. So, I was left alone with Jane Ann. But she was not at all abashed, but turned to me at once with—

“‘Well, Laury, how did you like New York? My brother must have made heaps of money to keep you drest so finely!

I never aspired to a gold watch and chain, or a five dollar collar to suit the same—but—hum! some people grow mighty extravagant upon an occasion.'

"Leaving both questions and hints unanswered, I went directly to a little business I had in my mind, and said—

"My sister, I have something to say to you, and will begin by going back to—'

"But where is my brother? I came to see him—I did not come here to have you talk to me.'

"He is not in just now, but may be before I have done talking. I was about to say—'

"Some of your *wise saws*, no doubt. Well, hurry.'

"That I have long thought, the will your father made, or the distribution of property, was far from being just. You, being a girl, should have had a share equal with your brothers; if any difference had been made, it should have been in your favor, since women have more to strive with in obtaining a livelihood. You know, Jane Ann, that I always believed in the 'New Dispensation,' and the brothers should have made an early restitution to the defrauded sister.'

"Hah! mighty fine! You always seemed willing enough to enjoy what you got by my brother.'

"That statement, sister, will bear an investigation, but hear me. You enjoy a good measure of health—'

"I never pretended to be sickly and delicate?'

"You have an active and energetic temperament which is scarcely allowed its full scope. You have great ambition, and this is cramped by circumstances. You would be happier and would accomplish more good in a wider field, where you could avail yourself of your great capacities.'

"What do you mean—am I to go about the country as a female lecturer?'

"By no means. I do not think you quite fitted for that field of labor.'

"Ho, ho—I'm to take in some dirty little brats to *teach!*''

"Not that, indeed! But your industrial pursuits should

have a wider range and move upon a more cheerful plan. You are a fine gardner—you take delight in raising poultry, and have an open eye to the crops—and, as you have no children—'

"And thank the Lord I *hain't!*'

"By the same token, I thank Him that I *have*. You have no children to love or to tend, so your executive forces have never been toned down to the fire-side harmonies. You love better the clangor of the anvil, the marshal music of the battle-field of life, stirring scenes, the struggle and strife for the acquisition of property, place and position. This is well, for it is your organization. So we have given you this farm and cottage with all pertaining to it, to have and to hold, to use and to enjoy during your natural life, as also that of your husband. If you had children, we should have given this property to you and your heirs forever.' And then I went to my trunk and took out that document your father drew up, which you must remember, and put into her hands. She read it carefully and said—

"So we are to come into possession on the first of April next?'

"Yes, and the rent for the present year is to be paid to *you*, for as I know you would be a thrifty farmer, you may wish to increase your stock.' My children now came running in, playfully entreating me to go out to the garden with them. I said—'Wait, my children, and first speak to your aunt—this lady is your father's sister. They paused, somewhat abashed, while Jane Ann scanned them with a look no way calculated to inspire childish confidence.'

"Are these *your* children, Laury?'

"They are both your brother's children—this little one's mother, dear, sweet Albertine, died nearly a year ago.' Sammy put his tiny finger to his eyes and I drew him quickly to my bosom and said—'He is my little boy now, and mother's darling.' He nestled closer in my arms, and the unloving aunt continued—

"And this other boy?"

"Is mine, my Hubert, my only child, my consolation?"

"*Humph*, I heard as much!"

"I gave Hubert a look of encouragement, at which he advanced toward his unpropitious aunt, and said—

"Are you my father's sister, then?"

"I guess so."

"Ah, how do you do, my aunt?" proffering his plump hand in good earnest. She took it and answered with great precision—"I'm very well, and thank you."

"I now released the children from this restraint by sending them out, told them I could not go with them just now. When they were gone, Mrs. Anthony seemed to breathe freer, and looking at me with a keen glance of triumph in her pale eyes, began—"Well, Laury, *my* brother seems disposed to do very well by me—I hope you don't oppose it!"

"Not in the least. I am truly glad he is disposed to be just, and hope you will be very cheerful and happy."

"But I have supposed him to be very rich!"

"Then you are mistaken. He has sold out his business in New York, and is having the old place put in order, where we mean to spend the remainder of our days in frugal ease and the careful training of our children."

"Well, now, wouldn't you like the city better? you could show off your fine clothes and shining trinkets, more."

"Oh, no. It would take me along time to acquire city habits, for I was country bred."

"Well, Laury, I *must say* I think you a lucky woman, and a heap better off than *whiles past*, when you lived with your uncle Waltermire, and your husband had another wife down in New York there!"

"Do not speak of those days, Mrs. Anthony. I hope I am Christian enough to forgive my worst enemy—I wish, also, to forget." I said this, and turned round toward the kitchen door, hoping that our hostess would come in—for I saw that this heartless woman would not be deterred by shame or

guilt from using any weapon that she thought would sting me—for that her envious soul could not endure my apparent prosperity.

"Well, now, Laury, I want you to tell me—now speak the truth. Did you ever go to the house where the other wife lived—and *did* you see your oldest boy?"

"Woman, forbear!" I answered. "Dare not to question me of those days when I stood face to face with God's judgments—but make haste to cleanse your own ways that you may escape just condemnation."

"Something in my manner gave a timely check to her audacity, for she shrank back into her chair, and rattled her knitting-needles with unprecedented violence. I cannot say but some of this conversation had been overheard—for our hostess came in directly, and drawing her chair close, began to talk to my sister-in-law.

"Well, now, indeed! *Miss* Anthony, we have got really to liking the place—but I suppose we must leave it, now as it is agoing to be yourn after this year."

"Yes, it will be mine. I used to live here before I was married—and I think my brother does no more than his duty to give it over to me."

"Your brother, eh! My goodness! He told me at the outset that he had nothing to do with the business. That his wife here gained his consent to it, and then had the papers all drawn up by a magistrate, an old friend of hers, helped and advised in it all by a splendid young lady, the only daughter of this man."

"Ho—that's it, is it? Queer, though, for women to bother their heads about such business."

"You never said a truer word—and I reckon by what *Miss* Bovie tells me, there are some women at the East who write and talk upon things that would bother you and *I* to come at. She's told me about a most beautiful creature, a *Miss* Minster—"

"There, there, *Mistress* Laura, please to skip over to the next page—what comes next?"

"When our hostess had finished these remarks, she rose up, clapping the wristband she had been stitching, into her pocket, and said—'Come, now, ladies, lay by your *work*, and we'll walk out to tea. It was all ready, but I had to have a little talk with *Miss Anthony*, for I thought she was going on rather too hard; but lor, that's her way, so it don't signify. *Miss Bovie*, you set there. I've sot that chair for your husband, for maabe he'll be in. And, *Miss Anthony*, you set here by me.'

"So we sat down to tea, my husband having sent word that he should not return until a late hour. Assembled at the table, the conversation became general, much to my relief. * * An hour or so before Jane Ann left, she took me aside, to say—'Laury, I suppose you have other clothes as fine as those you have on. I should like to see them.'

"I proceeded at once to my trunk, opened it, and laid out the contents before her greedy eyes. She looked over the lighter articles, then held up my purple silk that I had new to wear to Mrs. Elia Ann Best's large party, then my green and black Turk-satin that you know I wore to your aunt's, and met that splendid *Miss Greenleaf* and the beautiful *Arabella*. I had had it a year or so, but it was as fresh as ever. Then she said: 'Have you any others?' Yes, I told her; here is a plain black silk hanging in my closet, that I wear more than I do the colored one.

"Jane Ann looked at this, and, can you believe it, began whimpering about her scanty store of dress.

"'Now, true as I live, this faded gingham I have on is the best dress I have in the world, and you have three silks—and ribbons and caps, and *my brother* bought them all for you—but I've nobody to give me anything—and you with a gold watch—I declare it's wicked an' abominable—that's all the justice there is in this world. I declare if I don't wish I was dead.' And the tears began to pour down, and the saliva to run round in the circle of her loose mouth.

"'Pray do not fret yourself, Jane Ann, I am going to give

you one of my silks, and you may have your choice of the three.'

"'Now *really*, Laura—do you mean so?'

"'Certainly I do.'

"She snatched up the purple, saying—'What, this even?'

"'Yes, or any other you may choose.'

"She turned it round and round—said—'I darsay the purple will *spot*, and as for black silks, they are as common as *hops*. This green *Turkish* satin looks well enough, but I'll bet you a cookie it's as old as both the others put together.'

"'I have had it the longest—but I wore it to a select party in Lexington Avenue, one evening, with that sweet, pretty collar and pink neck-ribbon, and my friend, the lovely *Miss Minster*, thought it looked beautiful.'

"'Do you like it?' Jane Ann quickly asked.

"'I like it much—it is very becoming to me.'

"'Why, yes, it's a *handsome* color, and thick as a board—there is none round here like it—well, I choose *this*.'

"'You are welcome to the dress, and to this nice collar and pink neck-ribbon to wear with it; and here, in this wee box, is a nice bosom-pin I bought in New York, to bring to you for a present.'

"'Why, dear me, Laury, you are real good. I don't think I have a better friend in the world. I shan't forget how good you are to me, in a hurry, no. Just to think of your giving me this house and farm, and these nice things—and that mean-spirited brother of mine, sneaking off to get *shut* of seeing me. Oh, Laury, I hope you will come out every year and make me a visit. I don't believe I have a better friend—'

"'Oh, pray say no more—I cannot tell what may befall—now, let me fold up the dress—there, I'll wrap it in this handkerchief.'

"'No, no, don't wrinkle that nice linen-cambric handkerchief—lay it in carefully and I'll get a newspaper of *my* tenant's wife.'

"This was assuming the proprietorship at an early day, to be sure, but the paper was brought, the bundle done up, and some maudlin words of affected affection told off—and Mrs. Anthony took leave, and then I could not suppress a sob of relief. Thanks to my good husband, I did not meet her again, for the next day we went away to my uncle Waltermire's."

"Dear Mrs. Bovie, what a trial you must have had—and Mrs. Anthony's fawning hypocrisy was worse to endure than her spite and envy! was it not?"

"It was truly."

"Well, and those mysterious little agents which helped your cottage to its reputation of being haunted?"

"The simplest things. Small wedges of hard wood driven into various cracks and crevices, in the darkest places, with a horse-hair drawn tightly between; this catches every vibration of air, and moans on as if drawing sad tones from the passing wind."

"How wildly sweet! I will put some up in my sheep-cote among the hills, at Glenelvan.—Well!"

"I gave orders to have them all removed,—for, as the property is a free gift to Jane Ann—and justly her due—I wish her to have the peaceful enjoyment of it as long as she lives."

"My dearest friend, I do believe you are one of the truest-hearted women in the world."

"Ah, thank you, dear, I have not been tried in adversity to prove a reprobate."

"I know your creed—whom the Lord loveth, he chasteneth, this is also your consolation."

Just as we had ceased speaking, the door opened, and aunt Mercy came hurrying in to say that an elegant and showy young lady had called and was seated in the best room.

"Who is it—did she give her name?"

"Why, no, you dear creature, I did not ask her, I guess she'd think me pretty queer!"

"Ah, no matter. We will now return to the house-room, and come, aunt Mercy, I want to introduce you, whoever it may be." We went forthwith, and there amid a cloud of lace and rustling silk, and glittering jewels, and flowers and flowing ribbons, and shining jetty curls, and great black eyes, sat Miss Kate Slocum of Tarrytown. She rose with a majestic air to return Laura's greeting.

"Dear me, yes, very happy to see your aunt. I heard you had brought back an old lady with you from the West, and thought what a treat it must be to her to see a little *civilization*. I am visiting with *me* friends here in your neighborhood—the Verplanks, very grand folks, these Verplanks, and thought I'd make you a call. I should have *come* earlier, but I was out walking with Charley, splendid fellow, that Mr. Charles Verplank, tho' I don't often *walk*, I generally order the carriage, when I'm at home, and that hateful creature would not let me come a minute sooner. And then I told him he should come with me, and do you think I could get him to come! not a step, and what do you think he said, that he should be bored to death, sitting up in the house a whole afternoon to talk to the ladies. Oh, mi—his impertinence. But he is the cleverest of young *gents*, is Charley. And Miss Minster, too, what a surprise! I am really, yes, a fortunate to meet so many of *me* friends."

We replied as best we could, and the young lady began to untie her hat and lay off her shawl. Laura came to the rescue.

"Miss Katie, I am glad to have seen you, glad that you called, but as I have company, to-day, with whom I am about to part for a long time, oblige me by deferring your visit until to-morrow, when I will wait on you with great pleasure, for I am expecting we shall yet be famous friends."

"Oh, just as you like," Miss Kate replied, not wholly concealing her chagrin, "but I used to like to pick berries where they were the thickest. Going away, indeed! Now, Miss Minster, I guess you are going to get married—do you

own to the 'soft impeachment,' " she said, turning to me with a light giggle.

"That is my present expectation, certainly," I answered in the same tone as if I had said—"I am going home to-night."

"Well, now, if I ever *seen* any body own up so clear."

"And what *I* lose, will be another's gain," Laura said, smiling, "so I must be reconciled"

"*That's so!* Now, to come right to the point, I passed a couple of *gents* crossing the meadows, and the handsome one I guess was *your* Southern beau."

Then Laura spoke very kindly and said—

"The younger was Mr. Guildler of North Carolina. But, pray, Miss Katie, do drop that rude designation. Never say *gents*, it is the broadest vulgarism—indeed, rather than use such a term, I would, like St. Paul, say men and brethren."

"Oh, thank you, but during *me* recent visit to Filadelfy, I went with the genteelest folks, so I ort to know what is polite. I took nothing but *me* very best clothes there and drest in silk every day. *They* never say *my* as you do, except they say 'Oh, mi,' but always *me*, *meself*, *me* things, *me* bed or *me* *clawsets*. But 'praps Mrs. Bovie has taken her cue from her friend and crony, Miss Minster, who I hear has spent a whole year in England, and 'praps learnt *her* manners there. You see I speak my mind."

"My dear young lady," I then rejoined, "do not be offended with what was done from real kindness. Mrs. Bovie surely proves herself a friend by her attempt to mend a fault. And for myself, for the formation of my own manners, I am indebted to my estimable mother and the later companionship of my father."

"Ha, ha! I should like to see mommy teaching me! Then, bless your heart, she has no time—when she ain't fixing for parties, she is *drove* to death with her dressmaker and plain seamster. And poppy, it's rare I see him out of the brewery. Heigh-ho! ladies, I cannot possibly stay another minute." And after turning her costly bracelets, so as to

bring the cluster of brilliants into full view, she snatched out her watch and counted off the time.

"To-morrow, then, about three, I shall expect you, Miss Katie."

"Yes-mam, if I can possibly get away from those Verplanks, they do hang onto me so—and really, my good Mrs. Bovie,—now you must not be offended with me if I take on a fashionable air—I really am going about with the very genteelest people all the time. And so good afternoon, ladies—good afternoon!"

Then the cloud of silk, flowers, lace, ribbons, curls, black eyes, cologne, and affectation, passed away.

"I should like to know where that young woman was raised," aunt Mercy said, with a good natured laugh, as soon as the outer door closed upon our dashing visitor. "Now, Laura, any attempts of yours to improve that individual will be like pouring water on a gander's back."

"She is so entirely oil'd over with self-conceit, you think," Laura added, seeing that aunt Mercy was heartily amused.

"We need some patience and much grace in our unavoidable intercourse with some people. I once met this young person in the cars, and have ever since regretted the unlovely and resentful spirit which, at the time, possessed me, and which I manifested in return for her over-forwardness in addressing me. But, oh, a great grief had overswept me, and its shadow lay darkly upon my soul. But, Miss Kate Slocum has doubtless some excellent traits of character, which you, dear Mrs. Bovie, will find time and occasion to develop."

"I shall seek both time and occasion if she becomes a neighbor of mine, an event not unlikely to happen—since, however aristocratic and old-familyish the Verplanck's may be, they will need the large fortune of the rich brewer's daughter to build up theirs, which has long since showed signs of decay."

"And the rich brewer will think Charles Verplanck, Esq.,

a great match for his only daughter. And with all this wealth and young Verplanck for a coadjutor, who shall estimate the good you may accomplish. As his wife, she will naturally be ambitious to attain to more mental cultivation, and it is plain she will take you at once for a model in most things, and, I doubt not, she may at length become as agreeable in manner, as she is really good at heart. We must not always love people for what they are, but for what they may become. There are certain fruits which, in a state of unripeness, no one could praise."

"Persimmons, for one!" ejaculated aunt Mercy, with a mischievous wink at Laura, and then yielded herself up to her foster-son and loving little Sammy, who had entered the room within the last few minutes. Laura and I soon followed the merry trio to the new bee-palace, and after a minute inspection of the little workers, diverged off into the gardens, the grounds—then out of these, along the hillside to a clear brawling brook, and by the side of this, reclining beneath a wide-spreading hemlock, we found the gentlemen—Bovie and Guilder—listlessly enjoying the lovely Italian afternoon.

Listless and dreamy, I had supposed, but I was mistaken, it had been spent by them in earnest discourse on the business of every day life—the momentousness of the present, with the promise of the future.

The future! with me a word of power. The past is within my hand, to mend or gauge my ways withal. The future! The untrodden path o'er which I go. And there may be many a small, glistening serpent hidden beneath flowers, waiting to sting me. But let their envenomed fangs but touch me, and I grind that starry head beneath an iron heel. The future! in it I have a life to live, and a work to do. I may faint, but I shall never fail—I may be weary, but never weak—I may forbear, but I shall never succumb; and though I may defy, I will never aggress.

He, who said, "I do my Father's work," gave me also a work to do. Ignorance, slothfulness, sin, and all manner of

evil and wrong doing, is but *violence* done to our human nature. These I will repel and drive from out the land, these all being the allies of our mortal foe, having encroached upon our fair domain. These shall be driven forth from among my people, and I will command the wilderness and waste places to blossom as the rose.

In this work, I am aided by a unity of powers whose strength has never yet been computed—stronger than life, as enduring as eternity. In my earlier years, was granted to me the perception of love, the Divine element—and justice, retribution or eternal justice. And it is my creed that these govern, control, and harmonize the world.

I had talked much with my friend, my bien aime, on these things, and had my hopes of great success strengthened in finding him not adverse to my aims and beliefs.

So I was glad to know that this most beautiful, most glorious day had not been wasted in idle dreaming—but had been harvested in noble schemes and profitable talk.

Having gained permission to enter within their charmed circle, we sat down upon the ridgy greensward, and listened to the babbling of the brook. * * I shall not now tell you what the brook said—but its musical murmur, then a wilder wail, and then again and again repeated, gave golden glimpses of the spirit of a wildly-sad song that I would some day clothe in words—but not now.

When the shadows lay like giants prostrate and motionless upon the earth, we together retraced our steps, the children running on before us, then lagging behind, now and then dashing off to pluck a bright flower, or to capture a mammoth grasshopper, and ever returning to us to exhibit their trophies. Entering the house, Mrs. Bovie left us in the parlor, and went out to make the tea—while I escaped up to a guest-chamber to repair the havoc made by those frolicksome zephyrs who had hidden among my frills, and tost my truant curls about my face in perfect madness.

The views from these windows were fine—passing my

powers of description—grand—lofty—sublime—as they are ever and alway among these Highlands of the Hudson. I was glad for Laura that she was at last sheltered from her great sorrow in such a noble home—for the children to grow up amid scenes of such beauty and sublimity—I was glad for more things than I could express.

At last I was roused from my reverie by a little tap at the door—the darling Hubert had come to take me down to tea. * * *

We sat long at this graceful and delicious repast—winding up the various little threads of talk of what had gone before and what was yet to come, for it was long, very long, ere we might hope to meet them again.

Well, and indeed we must go. There were good words to be said to the faithful and warm-hearted Bidy—words of kindness and promises of an affectionate remembrance to aunt Mercy, words of cheer and of reciprocal regard with dear Laura, numberless kisses for the children, then a cordial grasp of the father's hand—and we were away! flying along the well-worn highroad, for the shadows of evening were gathering fast. The moon rose high over many a rugged peak, parted the darkling boughs and showed us her beaming face as she smiled down into the silent vallies, we meantime keeping on our rapid course over hill and dale, and down through many a wild ravine—sometimes holding grave converse, oftener listening to the many voices of night—fair Luna still beaming, still swelling and rising higher in the blue ether—till we seemed lapped in her glorious aura as we at last entered within the now silent gates of Glenelvan.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

“Leaves have their time to fall—and flowers to wither.—”

AUTUMN was slowly passing—the tinted leaves, like the hectic bloom on beauty's cheek, growing brighter as its close drew near. The bridal tour had been made, and Fannie was spending the intervening time at home with her mother, before going down to the metropolis for the winter, the great commercial metropolis, whither her husband had already gone to resume his business there.

Belle glanced in upon us like a sunbeam—but she would not leave UMBERHURST while they yet had Fan to enjoy. And now I received a package of letters from Haidee and Leonora, many and brilliant—oh, joy! Haidee hoped, almost promised to be with me at Glenelvan before winter set in. I had written to her, to Leonora, and to my uncle, inviting, entreating, at last commanding their presence at my marriage, which would take place in the first month of winter.

Haidee, I knew, ardently desired to be with me, to see me, to be present at an event of so much interest to all connected with my father's house—and, again, there were many and strong reasons for her wishing to decline a visit to Glenelvan altogether. Some of these I knew, others I guessed. But, I would take no denial; my wish, my *will*, was stronger than her prejudices or her objections. Then, my uncle would not cross me in this, for he loved me most sincerely.

My friend and betrothed had now been absent many weeks, having left us on the day after my visit to Mrs. Bovie—left us for a northern journey to the Canadas, with a view to visiting Provincial cities and going away up the darkly flowing Saguaney, the cold grim-coasted, rock-beetled Saguaney. He had gone in quest of science, a science all too little studied

or understood—that of Government. He had studied various *theories*, had noted the results of various cliques and cammarillas, and the longer established national governments.

He was from henceforth to be a ruler in a wide house, the head of a large family. In his own land, in the sunny South, in the house his fathers had builded, he would not peril his happiness by an unskillful, unjust or otherwise bad government, thus incurring the merited censure of his chosen *life-companion*, who, he learned, had wisely ruled and ordered her father's house since the close of her sixteenth summer.

I had a definite idea of his household management, as also of his estate, for he had told me of the waste and indolence, of undeveloped resources, and habitual improvidences. All this must be changed. But alone, he was impotent to work out the great good he could foresee might accrue from our united efforts. A woman's, ay, a wife's hand clasped within his own, were needful to him, in toiling up this steep ascent. But this, oh, this had been my chosen field of labor. I would cheerfully join my life to his, for he had a true and earnest soul. The work of the Missionary, on my own native soil, had charms for me beyond any other. Civilization in its best and highest sense would be the great study of my life. The new people to whom I was soon going should be the objects of my tenderest and most vigilant care. They should be taught the arts and sciences of refined life, pure morals, a definite and correct dialect. They were, I knew, both from history and observation, possessed of a deep religious feeling—this should not be merely an impulse and a sentiment, but a living principle. Their religion should be made manifest in actual deeds, rather than expended in devotional feeling.

Teachers, books, pictures, various ornamental work, machinery, these, and not these alone, would be my aids in developing the intellect of my people. I should toil for and with them.

Instead of all this, I well knew, had I chosen, I could have lain in the lap of luxury, garlanded with roses, with never a thorn, *to show*, fanned by the soft breath of flattery, lulled by the sweet songs of adulation, until my vain conceit had overgrown my many gifts and capacities and obligations. To live thus would be to moulder, to die, to rot. Bah! One might better be a lizzard and so escape responsibility.

We were almost daily receiving visits from our numerous friends—dear friends, old and familiar friends—friends living afar off, friends living near, friends returning from or setting out on long journeys. These pleasant reunions gave my father evident satisfaction. He said he had had great joy in the bright promise of my youth—greater in my maturing womanhood. Among the many, came one for whom I held especial regard, whom I loved and venerated, Madam Cadwallader of Philadelphia.

The madam, with her brother Penquite Chalkley and his good wife, were on a journey to Indiana, the last-mentioned lady having a “concern” to visit the Friends there.

“Ah, I cannot tell thee, dear Rebecca hath not acquainted us with the import of the words given her to speak—thee knows, Minnie, it is not the custom to proclaim a message by the way—yet, it is a matter of conscience with us to go with her—sure, she hath somewhat to say to those distant Friends. And I am well pleased that our way was opened here, for my spirit hath greatly desired to have some communion with thee, my dear child.”

“Dear madam—dear friend, I should say; I am only too glad that Mrs. Chalkley's ‘concern’ was dated sufficiently early for you to reach my father's house while I am yet here.”

“Ah, sure! thou wert ever a mirth-loving child. And not a line of care do I find in this well-remembered face. Now, as I hold these small, but ever-busy hands in mine, looking into thy holy and beautiful eyes, and thy sweet, fair forehead, and meet and measure the purity of thy mouth, I read

with the clear light of inspiration, the stainless pages of thy bright young life."

"Oh, my dearest friend—I open my eyes day by day upon God's holy light, with my soul filled with thanksgiving that He hath lent me a guard of his holiest angels, to watch, to keep, and to protect me on every side."

"Thou, dearest child of a sainted mother! Born of perfect harmonies—thou wilt never forfeit thy heavenly inheritance, but will enter upon it here on earth."

At one time, during this brief visit, being left alone with Mrs. Chalkley, I drew from her the remaining part of the story of those two forlorn and most hopeless maidens, of the East Indies, who had been confided, when they were children, to the care of those treacherous, grasping, and avaricious Weedons.

"Ah, sure—Pia and Tsinney! How well do I remember those helpless victims of inordinate selfishness, and—I cannot speak this terrible word. Well, as long as money and rich goods came annually, these Weedons flourished in pomp and pride, served and waited on by these rightful heirs to the estate from which these robbers drew a riotous living. At last this old sea captain, to whom was confided the business of transmission, was missed from the port, and no cause was ever ascertained for his non-arrival. All search and investigation proved fruitless, the whole thing remains wrapt in impenetrable mystery, the clue having, with him, dropt from these pirate-hands. Slowly, and not altogether imperceptibly, these ill-gotten gains melted away, until what remained of the family, for many of these were dead, came to absolute indigence. Too cowardly to bear up under honest poverty—too indolent for thrifty labor—filled full of all sorts of pernicious ideas about genteel idleness, and the *eclat* of great riches, they sank like lead when this *STOLEN* plank was withdrawn from underneath them. Poor, pitiable objects! at last they met with a just retribution. Each and every member of this family were at last driven

for scanty subsistence to odd jobs, and coarse and menial day-service, until given up to a listless and dubious life; they were at last looked after and supported as town-paupers. There! That is the end, and miserable enough too."

"Yes, truly! but this must have been long, very long ago, before the words which say—'Thou shalt in no wise suffer sin upon thy neighbor,' were accepted as a command. And Pia and Tsinney?"

"Ah, sure! Thankless toil, and the great want of their lives, kindness and home-ties, added to an uncongenial climate, brought premature old age—they dropt down into an obscurity, whose depth no plummet of the Christian benevolence of *that* region, has ever yet sounded. They were of a proscribed race."

"Proscribed—yes, and all their human rights set at naught. 'How is the mighty fallen!' Some one sagely remarks—'None, save a free people, can serve an apprenticeship for freedom.'"

CHAPTER XXXVII.

It was upwards of a month since my friend and beloved had parted from me, and but two letters from him had reached me in this long interval. I was not surprised—I had not required even these. Neither would I allow this to give me a modicum of unrest, knowing well that in those distant Provinces, where the Past sits brooding over the Present, and the spirit of repose lies like a fleecy mantle over the great body of social life—little of stirring incident or the march of improvement is felt or known, and the “Royal Mails” are slow and uncertain.

Meta and Eolia had given the last finishing touches to the pretty dresses they were to wear on the approaching great occasion, and Susan was still busier than ever with the coming events. I had wished to have Arabella Greenleaf at Glenelvan, at said time, but this could not be—she was now in Rome, studying and working at her chosen profession. She was an artist—a sculptor.

Winter had set in with its keen and bracing atmosphere, it was the second day of December, and the seventh had been named for my bridal-day, on which would be made a marriage-feast for the sole heiress of Glenelvan, as one might say, the last of the Minsters.

I had spent much of this day with good Monica, for all unacknowledged to herself—she was overshadowed with a vague dread of some untoward event, and strove to keep me near her, as if she felt that her great love for me and her veneration for my house, could ward off impending evil. And as if the subject was constantly in her mind, she several times alluded to the bridal-morn of my aunt Engelborg—“our Engel,” she called her—“We thought it the greatest

day—but, oh, such an ending—the saddest we had known then!”

And then my good Monica gave a kind of convulsive sob, for her mind reverted quickly to our Mildred’s marriage, and her lost Katrine. The question was trembling on my lips to ask this faithful friend, what was this mystery overhanging my aunt Engelborg, and to beg her to reveal it to me.

But why not ask my father, or my aunt Guilder? If they were willing that I should ever learn her history, they were the more fitting persons to relate it to me. Evidently, they were not, at least, not yet—well, I can wait. So, I put the thought away, and turned with new interest to Monica’s household cares.

I looked over her housekeeping books, and though I had long known that Monica was fully competent to keep and settle all these accounts, which she did punctually and thoroughly at the New Year, it was still a great satisfaction to her to receive my just approbation.

It was evening. I was sitting in my own apartment, a bright fire was burning in the grate, and the twilight shadows were playing upon the walls, flitting over the ceiling and hiding in the corners. I had for the last two hours been busy with my pen, and had finished a few fancy sketches to leave, for my father, to fill and amuse a leisure hour when I should be with him no longer.

There was a little knock, and the door was opened, and Meta, with her calm, sweet face, pale with excitement, only waited to say—“Miss Minnie, your papa has sent for you—in the parlor,” and disappeared.

I lingered not nor waited, but rose and went down to meet whatever might betide. I reached the hall, the door of the great drawing-room was open, and there in all the pride and splendor of her glorious beauty, my Haidee stood revealed. An instant only she gazed upon me, and then her arms were about me, her kisses upon my forehead, and her fast falling tears upon my cheeks. Her great and passionate nature

would not be stinted to a formal and elegant greeting, and there were none but loving eyes to see—so her soul had its freedom.

When her ecstasy had somewhat subsided, she murmured in that full and sweetly modulated voice, peculiarly her own, never for a moment taking her glorious eyes from me—

“My Minnie, star of my life, my gem, the great deep shall not divide us, nor the heavens hide thee from me.”

And then I found space and words to return the caresses which my heart so warmly prompted. A breath, a receding step, drew my momentary glance aside, and cousin Henry was quietly slipping away from the room. He had been reading, ensconced in his favorite seat behind the drapery, at the remote end of the drawing-room. He would not, in these first moments of our reunion, divide even a thought with us. But, he had had a glimpse of the great soul of my Haidee, had learned more of her real self than he might have done in hours—ay, days, of pleasant talk and gay repartee. But, I quickly became conscious that some attention was due to my uncle Hastings and my cousin Leonora, who, with my father, were seated on a luxurious lounge within the warm radiance of the glowing fire. Just as this thought dawned upon me, my aunt Guilder came in, and was at once presented. The greeting between these, my family relations, who had hitherto been total strangers to each other, was very cordial, and overflowing with kind enquiries and most generous wishes for mutual happiness and good. Ah, these old fashioned and stately manners ever had a charm for me.

My cousin Leonora was tall and fair, always lady-like, and had now an air of queenly grace, suited well to her exquisite beauty. The hall-clock told our unbelieving ears that an hour had gone by, at the same moment Meta came to announce supper. Cousin Leonora accepted the grave courtesy of my father, in being led out—uncle Hastings gave his arm to Madam Guilder, and, at the same moment, Haidee and I were joined by cousin Henry, and it was then my

grateful office to present this tall, handsome, mirth and mischief-loving, but most excellent young gentleman, to my noble Haidee.

He was at once grave and courtly, and with the most charming naïveté, placed himself between us at table. * *

On the following day, Leonora went with our uncle Hastings to UMBERHURST, to give her family a joyful surprise—while Haidee and I sought out some of our old haunts, and dreamed bright dreams for the future. I had given timely notice to John to take those ponies to a distant hamlet, among the hills—to have them well and constantly cared for—but, on no account must they be brought back during Miss Hastings' stay at Glenelvan.

Then we sat together in the spacious guest chamber, furnished with every comfort and luxury that this favored child of affluence could desire, warmed and illumined with a mellow light from lamps with shades of alabaster, and from the farther side of the chamber was heard the soft and silvery fall of perfumed water from an artificial fountain, and while her jeweled fingers ran over the quivering strings of her guitar, I made many and earnest inquiries after the beautiful “La Philegra.”

The bosom of my Haidee heaved with a gentle sigh to the memory of her dear and faithful friend. Then she said—

“Oh, my Phillis, my darling La Philegræ, how my selfish heart rebelled at parting from her. She was good—I loved her and she is happy. She was thought one of the most beautiful women in Paris, and during her brilliant career, has always surrounded herself with an atmosphere of moral purity of as delicate texture as that in which move and breathe our most honored and beautiful women of England. She has an ambitious spirit, but a most loving heart, and wears her honors with dignity and grace, as the Baroness De Longuil.”

“Ah, married at last, and happily?”

“Yes, happily and proudly. The Baron DeLonguil is of

an ancient family, has sufficient wealth to sustain the title with dignity—a little past middle age, of most affable manners and noble presence.”

“And she loves him?”

“Most truly, I think. His first Baroness was of noble birth—not beautiful; of frail and delicate health, and died early. She left two young children, pale, slender girls, whom the present Baroness, with her warm heart and motherly care, is nourishing into a degree of health. And this unselfish love for his little orphans, has won the highest regard of the father, as truly as her beauty and grace elicited his first admiration. I do believe this fine old gentleman verily regards his young Baroness as an angel sent to him right out of Heaven!”

“Ah, tell me this often, my Haidee, it is so pleasant to hear. I have always felt that such radical goodness is recognized, and in a good measure, rewarded even here on earth.”

“Evidently. For our lovely Baroness has two of the most beautiful children, ever folded to mortal mother’s bosom.”

“Indeed! Oh, my Haidee, thou art a true woman, with heart and soul attuned to the full harmonies of a perfect life. You make a fairy tale of this little family history. Pray go on.”

“Her eldest, her brave and beautiful boy of three years, his round cheeks dimpled and rosy, his fragrant mouth full of the echoes of childish laughter, his bright flashing eyes, twinkling like stars, is not only the pride and delight, but, also, the only son of that ancient house; and this child of such promise, the little Francis Phillip, will be the fifth Baron De Longuil.”

“And the baby?”

“Ah, yes, the baby is the prettiest, sweetest, dearest little bijou,—a little earth-born angel, and her name is Reinee Josephena. She is now nearly four months old. Her eyes have a grave expression, as if studying the new won-

ders that surround her, and her pretty mouth is just budding into its rosy smiles. When I saw her first, she numbered only so many weeks, and was lying like a young cygnet in her cradle of down.”

“The Baron does not reside permanently in Paris?”

“Oh, no; he has a fine estate in the south of France, whither we,—papa, cousin Leonora, and I,—were invited, and where we spent the month of September. But he met us first in Paris, at a ball given at the Tuilleries. Our beautiful protégé was a new star in that galaxy of beauty. She was presented as Miss Williams, the daughter of an American officer, now deceased, and the friend of the Princess De Hastings, (for so these Parisians read my lineage and name,) and was at once honored with the flattering title of Astarté, ‘queen of night.’ The Baron DeLonguil, an eligible match for even a lady of rank, was deeply enamored of the beautiful ‘Astarté,’ and came within a brief space of time, and asked her hand in marriage. A mutual attachment had in the mean time grown up; we had no obstacles to oppose to their union, so papa gave a graceful assent, an elegant trosseau, and a pretty little dowry of some five thousand francs, and the marriage was celebrated at the end of the month.”

“How charming! My Haidee, you must be very happy, in view of what your interest in your protégé has done for her!”

“I am. But she loved me,—held me in her bosom when I was a poor desolate little maiden.”

I was thinking of that sad hour, when I parted from my little cousin on the piazza at Umberhurst, when her aching head was gathered in those kindly encircling arms, and so was silent; but I was presently recalled by Haidee’s pleasant tones. Doubtless her mind reverted to the same, and deemed it unwise for either to linger amid those saddest memories.

“But, Minnie dearest, you must certainly be amused at

this idea of my fabulous birth, sometimes regarded as a vi-queen of the East; and the least allowed me is, that I am a foreign princess, by marriage allied to the house of Hastings."

"My dearest, in earlier days I called you my bird of the tropics, now, you are my Zenobia, my queen of the East, confessed. And this affluent birth has its advantages, of means, *will*, and influence, which my Haidee will use for good."

"Assuredly, most beautiful priestess"

"I would now ask after the welfare of the good-hearted and very handsome Sarah Williams, late of UMBERHURST, who, as I learned from a letter of yours, had arrived safely in England."

"Ah! that splendid creature! But she was a protégé of yours."

"Oh, no, I concede all the honor to aunt Frances."

"As you please, my angel. I only wish she had been one of mine. Did you not tell me that this noble creature, stinted in all the good gifts of life in the house where she was born, possessing a half-birthright, toiled to the last to sustain its imbecile mistress?"

"Yes, my Zenobia, that is true."

"That was well—that was great. Miss Williams arrived, by the grace of God, safely in England, was met by her sister, the Baroness DeLonguil, who bestowed upon her every mark of affection. Sarah could only speak English then, and the Baroness at once procured a French teacher for her, and soon after an Italian, with both of whom she made good progress. The French she had to commence speaking immediately, that being the language spoken in the Baron's family."

"And now?"

"And now to conclude, as the books say, the last week of our visit to this old Baronial Hall, was enlivened by celebrating the nuptials of the distinguished looking Miss Wil-

liams and Captain Boileau of the French naval service—the bridal pair leaving at an early day for Paris. The newly made and happy husband to take command of one of the Emperor's ships bound for the coast of Africa, whither he has already gone, taking his lovely wife with him."

"Our handsome Sarah has made a brilliant marriage—I trust it may be as happy. She was high-spirited, very handsome, very witty, a faithful friend and a virtuous woman—she rendered good for evil, up to a point of magnanimity. With her *tendancies* and aims she will doubtless continue this progression both intellectually and socially, for she has fine endowments. You have made me most happy with this good news. But your mantel-clock admonishes me of the flight of time. Good night, my queen. Fair be your virgin dreams and your pillow fanned by the silvery wings of heaven's whitest angels."

"Good night, thou dearest, sweetest Minnie. Sleep thou, folded within the fragrance of thy great and noble thoughts, my lovely guelder-rose."

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

THE fifth ! Cold, bleak, blustering, wild winter ! The fifth ! two days only—the bridge thrown from the past to the golden heights of my bridal morn ! It was many days since I had heard from my betrothed. We had breakfasted, and each had gone their several ways. In the kitchen, good Monica was going forward according to her wont—slow and orderly, but surrounded by a troupe of most merry maidens, whom Juan very gallantly called her "Light Infantry," six in number—Bettine, Miss Hastings' maid, and Mistress Jessie's Dian having gained permission to enter upon Monica's list for the day, and cake, pies, and all manner of pastry, boiled hams and tongue were in their several states of preparation for the great day. In the midst of all, Hamish, (the Gaelic for James,) came in to ascertain how many dozens of game would be required—he would go directly to bring them from the woods, leaving them at the English cottage for Mistress Dunn, with the help of Biddy Malone, would in good time have them ready for the spit.

In the line of domestic fowls, in their choice and variety, John had really outdone all his previous efforts, and of these the large number already displayed in the larder were a goodly sight to see. There were turkies, ducks, goslings, guineas, and the fattest and plumpest of chickens. These were laid along on one side of the larder, and showed entirely to farmer John's satisfaction. On the opposite side the choicest beef of Glenelvan was brought to view, cut into huge roasts and arranged in double rows, and row above row, ready for distribution on the morning of the wedding-day, to every poor family for miles around, each individual favor or donation, as fine of fibre, as rich in flavor as those

set apart for the marriage-feast. And along with these, fifty sacks of wheat were to be apportioned—Hamish and Yoppa were the personages deputed to perform this grateful office of distribution—McGreggor carrying his check-book, in which must be registered the name of even the most obscure of the yeomanry on the receipt of the aforementioned gratuity, to avoid any possible mistake.

The survey of the kitchen and larder being completed, McGregor took his order for the game, and was about departing, but stopt to address Juan.

"If you would like a turn in the woods, just now, I can promise you a bit of lively sport, for I hit upon the track of a fox away over in the north glen, this morn."

"Indeed, that would be right cheery, sure, and thank you. I am your companion for the day." Juan made answer most gleefully, and instantly prepared to set forth. * * * It was evening, that pensive hour when the rainbow tints of departing day fringe the hem of the gloaming—the hum of busy life softly subsiding into a scarcely heard, undefined murmur—in my own room I sat—alone. I had refrained from unloosening the heavy drapery of the windows as if *thus* in some mysterious way to retard the approaches of night. Days had grown to weeks since I had heard a syllable from my beloved—my bien-aime, and though but one short day was waiting on my bridal-morn, and though papers of the greatest moment were yet to be written and signed before I could give my plighted hand in marriage, I felt well assured that all would be as I could wish. No doubting thought could disquiet me—no fear ruffle the placid flow of my present life—to the last moment of my stay beneath my father's roof, I would be calmly, hopefully, gratefully happy.

I might have been more radiant in my new found bliss, but that I strove to keep a steady eye upon the great and all-untried responsibilities I was about to assume. I was like a youthful sovereign just entering upon a great and hitherto unknown domain—like a missionary bringing her

fresh, young life to bear upon the pagan darkness, the bonds of iniquity and ignorance, to teach, to rule wisely, to lift up her people until they become as gods. * * *

I will not say that my rosy reverie of brilliant dreams of high aspirations, and a much-coveted field of wider influence was not in the faintest degree tinctured by a great ambition. I knew myself, somewhat, and that it was my life's life to be distinguished—to be loved and honored for my work's sake. A noble name—wealth, and the power that wealth gives—youth, beauty, intellect and scholarly attainments, were to me lighter than *personal worth*. I would be a christian woman, a wise matron, a judicious friend, and whatever graces might be added to these, would not surely be thrown away.

No gaudy butterflies for me, to flutter through the honeymoon and then sink down into inanity. And so on and on, thinking and half dreaming, flitting along the rose-lined avenues, leading from the present to the future, an impalpable sadness fell upon me like a mist, softer than sorrow, and after a time my thoughts took form and seemed floating along to a fairy measure.

Now I quickly drew a low ottoman close to my writing table, beneath the softened sheen of a silver lamp; a more delicate fragrance filled the room; a low sweet tune recurred to me, such as I had often warbled while dreamily wandering amid the breezy bosage, in the pleasant summer time. It was not the song that had floated through my dreamy brain, by the brookside with Laura—no—but a newer and happier thought. The words and the music now seemed to mix and mingle, and flowed on and on like a clear laughing rill, until the last words were penned at the bottom of the page. I reached forth my hand for my guitar, and soon its silvery strings thrilled beneath my fingers, echoing the wild and plaintive notes of my simple song.

BIEN-AIME.

Coming! All the scented air
 reathes his name in whispers low,
 Hark! his step upon the stair—
 Cease these blinding tears to flow.
 Fluttering heart one moment wait—
 Quivering fingers bind the braid—
 This is the key to heaven's fair gate,
 Where love's fond hopes and fears are laid.

Drop the shades—this garish light
 Makes my sudden pallor show;
 I would be lovely in *his* sight,
 For loveliest things are *loved so*.
 Scented leaves, and bud and flower,
 Enwreath amid my flowing hair—
 The wealth of love, and beauty's power,
 Is mine since he has named me—fair.

Sunbeam! O'er my chamber floor,
 Flits a presence fair to see;
 Closed sash nor bolted door,
 Shuts the vision out from me.
 For there his face, his eyes, his smile,
 Beam on me, as they did the time
 We walked beneath the sunniest skies,
 And wove full many a mystic rhyme.

Angel, Sunbeam, Pearl, my Dove!
 Fondest names to thee I give;
 Dearest boon of heaven above,
 Loving *thee*, 'tis bliss to *live*.
 Hastening quick to see his face,
 For up the stair he gaily trips;
 I fly to meet his fond embrace,
 And dry my tears upon his lips.

I ceased! A hand was laid upon my forehead. Lifting my face upward, and there was George, my betrothed, my bien-aime! He spoke! his words for me had more of music in them, than all the voices of earth or air. His words, his

greeting! Oh, I shall never tell you; but if you are as noble, as great, as true! why then I will leave this blank for you to fill. * * How lightly falls the foot of time! Meta's nightly summons was now heard. The silvery chimes of the tea bell rang merrily, and we descended to a light but delicious repast. By the side of my father was Madam Guilder, waiting to embrace her son; opposite them, Haidee, wishing, waiting, longing, yet dreading to see the grim personage, who was to take from her her childhood's tenderest friend. She does not know, dear, passionate Haidee, how earnestly I shall strive to watch over her happiness; to see to it, that no evil shall come nigh to do her harm.

Mi meu! I wait not for thee, to play at pelting with roses, to tell how the silvery small talk flowed on like a summer rill, toying with its flowery marge. How, best of all, Haidee at last became reconciled to give place to my betrothed. How her superstitious fears were laid, and the harsh lines of memory softened away into indistinctness, by the knowledge that George was not my cousin, but only the son of Madam Guilder by adoption,—was the son of her husband's elder brother,—for she had been forcibly reminded of her own betrothment to her cousin, my brother Edgar. No, no! I wait not for thee, thou lagging "Meu," but hasten on, for I have to do with things of graver import.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

"None, save a free people, can serve an apprenticeship for freedom."

ON the following morning there were brisk preparations going forward for a hasty visit to the metropolis. George, attended by Juan, on some secret mission bent, desired to take the earliest express train down.

Juan greatly enjoyed the mystery—probably as deep to him as to all others, save one.—Now they are gone.

It was a fine, cold morning, the snow lay smooth but not deep among the hills—the evergreens, tufted with immaculate snow, looked like gigantic snowball trees—the glorious guelder-roses. Ah! I will have Haidee out for a sleigh-ride beneath these; it will be to her as a journey through fairyland. The proposition met a ready acceptance, and John proceeded to bring round a sleigh, suited to our wild excursion, well provided with cushions, buffalo-ropes, and woolen coverings, to which were attached a pair of draft-horses, stout and well-trained, who would neither betray us into a "slide" or "fell," nor damage their handsome coats by such rough service. Seated in a most democratic vehicle, wrapt and swathed in furs and flannels to the great danger of immediate suffocation, for Haidee had never seen a Northern winter—she, my darling, suggested the propriety, or impropriety, of calling for dear Jessie to accompany us.

"The latter, I think, at the present time at least, but, nevertheless, to please you, my queen,—John, my man, have the gracious condescension to diverge from your stereotyped course and execute and perform the segment of a circle, making a terminus of the Skyean Cottage, to take up Mistress McGreggor."

"Ay, ay, Miss Minnie, I'll do all that." And with a crack of the whip we set off, not so gaily as we might had we been following in the wake of "Star" or "Bona," but quite as much to our satisfaction.

But Mistress McGregor could not be induced to join our mad excursion—she was too wise, under existing circumstances, to attempt such a feat—but with a grateful acknowledgment of our courtesy, and with a clear and straight-forward reason, declined to accept it, so, with a waive of hands, we turned off and struck into the wild path leading to the highlands.

Then Haidee said, "How is it, Minnie, that dear Jessie could so readily forego so much promised excitement, which to me means pleasure?"

"Simply, that she lets duty take precedence of pleasure."

"Ah, and how is it that all, save poor worthless me, can do this so easily?"

"First, then—Jessie was not a child of affluence, and was early taught that *duty*, or to follow duty was the main object of life. So she has never needed the rough lessons of adversity to teach her how to live. But you, my dearest, best Haidee, have already known sorrow, and made acquaintance with grief; a ministration of suffering should enlighten the understanding and enlarge the heart. It has—for have you not done good and great things? So, never falter or fall back upon a life of luxurious ease, to which the syren-voice of fashion or pleasure would win you, but live out the great and noble life for which you were manifestly designed."

We had now reached a winding avenue, far up the hights, and unwittingly striking against the slender trunk of an outstanding box-wood tree, we were pelted with tiny snowballs, and as the jar and quiver was communicated to other and larger trees, this seemingly mischievous sport was kept up. Haidee desired John to return the compliment in her name. But the sturdy Dutchman failing to see the point, or fearing to be overwhelmed by numbers, brought down a

sharp crack of his whip, like a pistol-shot, upon the left ear of his off horse, at which, quicker than thought, we plunged on beneath the rustling pines, gliding around the bold jutting of many a precipitous ledge, barely escaping the clutch of tangled underbrush, still up, up, up the breezy hights, until wooded hillside and bleak and barren point seemed but the graceful undulations of the rolling waves of the sea. We were now upon the steep acclivities of Penelva, and John halted, as we at the moment supposed, for us to sweep the broad landscape with eager eyes, but it soon became apparent that his only thought was to let his horses breathe. We sat—awed into silence—who could take measure of time!

"Only don't be uneasy, now, Miss Minnie, and we'll back down to a wee broadening, to turn about," said careful John.

"Ah! not to return, good John, will you not drive up to Penelva?"

"To the Peak!"

"Yes, or Pen, which is good Welsh for head."

My sturdy driver turned round toward me, almost pale, and with looks aghast, questioned—"Lie your orders in that line, Miss Minnie?"

"Well, why do you object?"

"Why, I might never set foot again in Glenelvanhausen. But, Miss Minnie, I'd give the best bone in my body to do your service, yet, allow me to say, nothing short of the angels in heaven can ever carry my young lady up to the 'Peak.'"

"I will wait for these, then, since it must be so, or at least until the leafy summer-time, when you shall take me to Penelva in a rope-basket. But do not forget, my good friend John, that this day, for the first time in her life, your young mistress has yielded her wish or whim to your well-known discretion, as a proof of your recognized trustworthiness."

"Ay, Miss Minnie," and under his breath added, "and you'r next to an angel yourself, we believe."



"So now, most worthy sage, take your own way home, for I am content."

We were duly backed down to the "wee broadening," and with great care and skill turned about, and then for a moment withdrawing her fascinated gaze from the fearful distances below, Haidee said—"Minnie, dearest, and most wayward pet, did you indeed desire yon faithful creature to drive us up to Penelva?"

"Sweet innocent, no! only to see how far his life-long allegiance would lead him to attempt impossibilities. Had this most excellent fellow taken leave of his abounding good sense, and driven a yard farther, after halting, I should have countermanded my own order."

"Now, it is you who are a queen, Minnie, and your throne is in the hearts of your people."

Safely careering past a terrific "slide," and looking down many a jagged "fell," we glided on and away over the rocky fastnesses of the North-glen, and here we came suddenly upon Hamish and Yoppa, who had come out ostensibly to secure the mate of the fox killed by Juan the day before, but really to look after the young ladies, for whom there was entertained a feeling of some considerable anxiety lest an unforeseen disaster should terminate this unusual excursion, but happily we reached home in high enjoyment and not too much fatigued to appreciate the feeling which dictated and the pleasure it conferred, the *rara-avis*, the pleasant little surprise in the evening: * * *

We were just leaving the supper-room when we—Haidee and I, were arrested, taken possession of, and requested by our cousin George, to come into the cozy little reading-room where we had often loitered, as he expressed it, for a bit of young ladies' gossip. Thither we were soon followed by Juan, as had been, I surmised, previously concerted, but who waited at the open door in an attitude of exceeding grace. George was engaged with Haidee in looking over some exquisite engravings, and for the moment forgetful of, or pur-

posely leaving his attendant to his own resources, and of these, dame nature had been with him no step-mother. Strange—how strange! I felt there was something new, some beautiful myth or mystery in this. I lifted my eyes and regarded him mutely as I would a statue, a painting, a cascade cutting the slanting sun-beams and checkered by the tremulous shadows and trailing vines.

He was very handsome—this Juan. He was tall—taller than George or Henry—his slender figure erect, yet graceful, his arms slightly crossed before him, and holding in his right hand a black beaver with a crest of sable plumes, and out from beneath his left arm peeped a tiny walking stick with its ivory head—the design—a lion couchant. His entire toilet—the *tout-en-semble*—arrangement, plan and adaptation must have originated with himself—neither of his former proprietors had ever gained credit for such gorgeous taste. But to him it was well-fitting—with his Eastern origin and Southern birth. His deep olive complexion—the warm blood tinting the cheek and lips, could but be matched with the glossy waves of his raven hair—the large, lustrous eyes now softened with feeling—and the wealth of shining hair, tost back from a noble forehead, somewhat paler than the face had promised. He wore a vest of crimson velvet, crossed by a heavy chain of gold which secured his watch—a coat of steel-mixed cloth, rolled back with a collar of black velvet—his linen superb—the bosom fastened with studs of jet finely mounted, with sleeve buttons to match; pants of a red drab, or Quaker color, with a sombre stripe down the sides, finishing the toilet with elegant black gaiters on a well-turned foot. Well, and what was to be done with all this grace, elegance and artistic taste! Was there enough of intellect to lift the whole being above the position of a splendid toy?

"Have you no word for us, Juan? will you have nothing to say?"

"I waited for you to speak, lady—since I was summoned to your grateful presence."

"What are my expectant commands to be—or rather, what are your wishes?"

"Strictly speaking, I have none to recount; but something of interest to many here, I will submit to your inspection."

And with inexpressible grace he placed his plumed hat under his arm beside his cane, and, taking from his breast pocket a richly-bound portemonnaie, drew forth from it a folded paper, and thereon presented it to me. I opened it—and read—"Juan Francis Voglesang——" a finger was laid upon my lips, and George whispered—

"Nay, softer—let your cousin have the paper, when you have finished the perusal."

I did as requested; and Haidee calmly perused the paper, and then said—her whole face lighting up with a lucid glory—

"I congratulate you, Mr. Guilder, on this noble act; yet it is but dealing justly—and the moral bearing of it touches alike your whole soul as also that of the recipient. It shall be a crown of laurel to both."

For Juan, words could hardly portray his emotion—a kind of jubilant joy, which he vainly strove to suppress—shone in every feature, and found expression in every gesture. I gave my hand to George, and whispered—

"Many thanks," and to Juan—"Ye are brethren—see that ye love one another."

And my bien-aime, George, added—"I have, my friends, as you all know, neither father nor mother—and I have never known a brother's love. I have done what I could toward supplying that last want by adopting my early companion and friend, Juan, into this position, and have confident hope that I shall find great comfort in him."

"That you shall, sir, if I can tame down the wild carelessness of my nature. I will strive to put your will and pleasure before my own. No task shall be too hard for me to attempt—and if the power in me lies to do—*it shall be done.*"

"Spoken like a man and a true brother. Now, it is with some regret that I make a demand so early that must put this carelessness in the rigid harness. You remember, Juan, those still *unwritten* letters, you must finish them to-night and post them. I must still be a teacher yet a little longer, you I hope an apt pupil."

With an alacrity somewhat new to him, Juan, taking his "Kossuth hat" from beneath his arm, made a princely bow and withdrew.

"Since it is your wish that this should be, Minnie, I thought it best to commence to-day, guessing that the festivities of the morrow added to his own exhilaration, would quite upset my good fellow, Francis Juan."

"Very wisely done. It is well. You have created for yourself a faithful, competent and devoted friend. This is best."

"Thank you, dear. And now, since I may have been deemed rude in thus drawing you aside, I will lead you to the parlor, Miss Hastings—ah, here is Henry, come to look for us."

CHAPTER XL.

THE great day at last dawned in all its wintry splendor, for in it the highest festivities ever known at Glenelvan were to be celebrated. There was an unusual hum and bustle, and every face passing along those halls, wore a gay and joyous expression. At half-past eleven our guests began to assemble.

Aunt Frances' carriage was the first to arrive—both Belle and Leonora being impatient to be with us at an early hour, next Miss Greenleaf and her brother, and little Ermina Childs and her handsome cousin, and Fred Gunnison, who came up from the city by railway and were met at the depot by Patrick Malone, for John, now in full dress and most becoming gravity, had a little affair of his own on his hands. Then came Mr. Bovie and dear Laura and the children, and soon after Mr. and Mrs. N——s, from Peekskill, bringing along with them the little Katie and dear Maria's sister, Miss Elizabeth Grant, the young attorney at law. This last mentioned lady having distinguished herself in her law studies, had won the favorable attention of my father, who had at once decided to recognize her in the profession she had chosen and in the most delicate way possible to give her efficient aid and show her every kindness.

And Miss Grant was certainly a person to appreciate such magnanimity, knowing well that men do not readily forgive a woman's encroachment upon their supposed, exclusive rights and privileges, to say nothing of extending toward her a helping hand. A few of our most intimate friends from the village below now come gathering in, among whom were

dear, good Mr. Shaw, the village minister, and his brown and rustic little wife. * * *

In our busy and inquisitive community it appeared there had gone abroad an idea that in the marriage of the heiress of Glenelvan with a Southerner, there was a palpable incongruity—she with her liberal, progressive and impartially benevolent "views," and he! little was known that he had ever done for his race or generation—his "views," politically, would do no credit to a Pagan. What could the "Squire," a just ruler and a Christian man, have been thinking of, to suffer or consent to this! And at the heels of rumored whispering, followed another, that, before the putting on of the wedding-ring, some act, or document, or instrument would be performed, or written, or signed and sealed, which should harmonize these incongruities, and that just and equal relations would be entered upon at the *beginning*. No "going to sea in a storm in hopes of fair weather," ever being attributed to the "Squire" at Glenelvan.

The offices of hostler and putting away of carriages devolved, for the day, upon James Dunn and Patrick, John occasionally stepping out to give an order or a suggestion in reference to the matter, while Yoppa and Juan stood within the vestibule to receive the guests and forward the gentlemen to their dressing-room; and at the foot of the great staircase, drest as sylphs, in white delaine, looking soft and transparent as fleecy clouds, stood Meta and Eolia waiting to attend the ladies up to their dressing-rooms above.

My father, Madam Guilder and her adopted son, uncle Hastings, young McGreggor, and Mistress Jessie, in her new brown silk, which had been found requisite to have for the occasion, and coquettish-looking cap, with blue ribbons, and my old friend Dr. Smith and lady, from New York, were already seated, with many others, in the parlor—it was full time that *we*, if papers of such import were to be signed, were there too. For the present, I should appear in a dinner costume, my marriage would not be solemnized until evening, the

other marriage would precede mine, would take place immediately before the dinner, which would be at two o'clock.

There was a stir and a rustle in all those many chambers, and out into the upper hall; then the stairs were flooded with a glory which shone from glittering gems and gold and silks and velvet, of purple and crimson, and starry eyes and waving hair, and the gentle clasp of snowy hands and the meeting of coral lips, the hum and the murmur of voices musical and low, and now and then a deep bass note was struck, cutting in twain the silvery whispers of childish glee.

What did I wear? Oh, on this day of all others, what my bien-aime had first seen me in—my well-beloved and well-kept, magnificent maroon colored Genoa velvet, with the "cunningest" little loose jacket of pearl-colored satin, with deep border of ermine and a narrow strip of the same running round the neck, over which fell a collar of matchless lace, which my "Zenobia" brought me from Flanders.

And Belle, merry, mirth-loving, lily-like Belle, looked almost rosy in the reflected hues of her rich brocade of crimson silk with its deep flounces of black lace. It had been made for her in gay Paris, and brought home, packed in the bottom of one of Leonora's trunks. And as we were grouped around a circular table in the great drawing-room, my regards were riveted upon Haidee—now truly a Zenobia in all her queenliness.

She wore a dress of royal purple brocade, the heavy flounces finished with a deep edge of black velvet. Her raven hair was smooth and glossy and fastened at the back of her head in a classic knot, bound with a circlet of gems. Her tropical birth forbade the exposure of her neck and arms to our chilling atmosphere—and, on this occasion, she wore a beautiful Moorish jacket of scarlet velvet with an embroidered border and fringe of gold, and fastened at the throat with a diamond brooch. This jacket had been sent to her from her aunt Yarracoa, with many other valuable and beau-

tiful remembrances. Her beautifully dimpled hands, her tapering fingers with the clear and pearl-like nails and rosy pencillings, at once declared her aristocratic origin, and now shone with many a costly gem. Beside my Zenobia stood Miss Greenleaf, in a steel-colored silk, low in the neck, and worn with a handsome lace cape, which well became her, with her rich auburn hair lapped in classic braids about her finely formed head—and beyond Lolité, my cousin Leonora, tall, fair and statuesque, a creature of exceeding grace, high refinement, in manner calm and grand. She was dazzlingly fair, with a faint color tinging her cheeks, her soft brown hair satin-smooth, with here and there a truant curl stealing out, like grapes dropping from over the edge of a basket. Her taste was for rich material, and an inconspicuousness in the tout-en-semble, and to-day wore a dress of pale blue Genoa velvet, not high in the neck, nor too low—with a neat tucker of Honiton lace running round the edge. Her left arm was graced by a splendid bracelet, and save this, no other ornament was worn except a diamond necklace. Both neck and arms were superbly beautiful, and possessed a charm, a grace, a glory, which no added ornament could give. She stood listening to Miss Greenleaf's brother, who was talking to her—and now, as she spoke, the silvery tones of her voice, the pure light in those clear eyes, the play of her features, was like the rippled surface of a sunny lake, and the lifting of the silver lid of a casket, revealing its countless gems. In air and manner, Leonora was wholly English.

Then there was Miss Elizabeth Grant, the young attorney at law, with her pale, intellectual face, its grave expression, her dark, calm eyes holding their power in rest, as much at her ease as any young lady who had only acquired a graceful attitude at the piano, or learned to glide through the mazes of a Spanish dance, or stand, all witless, in a quadrille. Her tastes, too, had received some attention, for her dress was pretty and becoming—a plum-colored Italian

silk, open in the neck, and worn with a white lace pelerine, with bows of blue ribbon down to the waist, over which fell the glittering links of her watch-chain, like a bright fancy veining a graver mood. Her voice was rich and mellow, as might be heard in her responses to Fred Gunnison, and our Belle, who stood with them holding a hand of each.

Fred was a great admirer of Miss Grant. He had sometimes met her at Peekskill, at her sister Maria's house, for his visits there were not infrequent, and he had earnestly wished Belle to make the acquaintance of this singularly gifted young lady.

If people are attracted by their opposites, the attraction here must have been very strong, for it would have been difficult to have found two young ladies more unlike in every thing, save their mutual regard for the estimable young man who had at last succeeded in bringing them together. They had met—they talked, for Belle chatted on and on, as if she had settled the point at the outset, that Miss Grant was lady of rare capacities and acquirements—and she was, for the present at least, dear Belle—a plaything—a flower on the way-side of life. Her crimson dress with its flounces of black lace—her pearly complexion—her soft brown hair, with its glossy waves, gave to her such a fairy-like air, and now the silvery and child-like tones of her voice as it broke into a musical laugh, running through the deep bass of Fred's heavier talk, or as she greeted a distant friend with a cunning little nod, or one passing near with a smile or a tap of her ivory fan, she seemed the very spirit of joy, whose coming would ever dispel a moody thought.

She was a child of the sunshine—a flower—a charm, and the realization of Fred Gunnison's most golden dreams.

And yonder, in a corner, seated upon the tête-à-tête, between dearest Maria and Mrs. Bovie, was my Jessie, in a perfect amazé of joyous excitement. Then all our near neighbors, with whom we exchanged courtesies, landed proprietors and country gentlemen, with their families, were

present, so that the great drawing-room, library, and little evening-parlor were comfortably filled, and grouped about, standing, or walking from room to room, as some restless spirits must. Oh, it was a goodly sight to see, this gay and gorgeous company! The bright ringing laugh, the mischievous suggestion and arch rejoinder, the sage and sombre talk, like tones of the solemn organ rolling underneath, subsided into an expectant hum, as my father, whose noble presence and beaming but serious face elicited the warm admiration of his assembled guests, rose and proceeded to a table in the hall, where he was punctually attended by John, who placed a package of documents and writing materials beside him. When he was seated, cousin Henry was despatched to lead Miss Grant to the table, to occupy a seat designed for her.

First, two papers were given her, which she was desired to open and read. And now, an intensity of interest pervaded that gathered company; they moved spontaneously out into the hall, the younger all up along the stairs, the elders only, who were near by, remained sitting.

The first paper, the young lady read in an admirably clear and pleasant voice—what I shall not be at the pains to copy here. It was in substance the formal adoption, by George Washington Guilders, of his quondam servant and personal property, Juan, as his brother; but, as no precedent could be found for such a measure, the matter was modified, his freedom was *restored* to him, also his surname, which was equally *new*, his age and place of birth, Cuba, stated, concluding with a written bond for the sum of five hundred dollars, to be paid to him as an equivalent for value received, and he was desired to sign his name to the same, which he did, as Francis Juan Voglesang. The seal of the Guilders was affixed to it, and the paper was then presented to those who were standing nearest, who added their signatures thereto. When this was done, cousin George gave his hand in a most cordial manner, and presented Mr. Voglesang to our guests.

The other paper was in favor of Eolia, who thereby became the adopted daughter of Madam Guilder—the latter settling upon the young girl a marriage portion of five hundred dollars. And now, Eolia was *free*, with a fortune equal to many an Italian or German Princess, who was growing up in the shadow of a petty, and perchance quaking throne.

When this document had received a goodly number of signatures, Madam Guilder came forward, took Eolia by the hand and presented her, all blushing and tremulous, as Miss Eolia Guilder, of North Carolina. Haidee and I were at once by her side—both to congratulate her and to relieve her embarrassment, to thank Madam Guilder for her generosity—which was also but a faithful discharge of her duty—and to make a few introductions among our most intimate friends.

These novel measures were received with evident good will—but the murmur of applause at once subsided into the silence of expectancy, as Miss Grant proceeded to open a heavier package of documents, which proved to be the manumission of the entire people on Mr. G. W. Guilder's estate, in North Carolina. It was a measure his father had contemplated making, at some day—but dying suddenly, failed of its execution. Appended to this, was a list of names of the individuals. And there was a bundle tied with "red tape"—the several papers with the name of the person for whom it was drawn up, written in a clear hand on the outside, to be presented to the same on his arrival at his home at the South.

One only it was requisite to read, they were all executed in the same form.

"My friends, this is the conclusion of the whole," my father said, rising and standing erect in the midst of his guests—"and I most heartily congratulate Mr. Guilder in that he is himself a *free* man—for he has ceased to hold his fellow man in bondage. For whosoever bindeth the fetters on the soul and spirit of another, setteth a limit to his own liberty."

There were earnest words of cheer spoken by that noble company—an electric thrill ran from heart to heart—each felt as having participated in great and generous deeds.

"I think we can have a little music, now," Madam Guilder said, drawing Leonora to her side: "and Miss Rapelje, I think, will give expression to the general feeling." And thus entreated, my sweet and exquisitely beautiful cousin took her seat at the piano and played and sang, a few fine voices joining:

"What mean ye that ye bruise and break
My people, saith the Lord!"

This was followed by several most exquisite pieces of music—then, at the suggestion of good Mr. Shaw—his favorite hymn, *Old Hundred*:

"Be thou, O God, exalted high."

I looked at my watch, gave a friendly suggestion to Mr. Shaw, who quickly acknowledged the favor—and then gave a signal to Eolia and Meta, who went lightly up stairs; and, knowing Susan to be punctual in all her duties, I did not count on much delay. Neither was there, for the pretty sylphs quickly returned, followed by Susan, (her whole mien composed, her ruddy face expressive of more than its usual seriousness, very nicely drest in a plain brown silk of her own choosing, in which she wisely had reference to future use) who was met at the foot of the staircase by the expectant John. By some pre-understanding, Yoppa and Juan, or Mr. Voglesang were waiting there also. There was a silent and spontaneous opening of a circle about my father and Mr. Shaw, the village minister. Then my father said, "Let those who contemplate entering into the holy bonds of wedlock, present themselves."

Susan now for the first time in her life laid her hand within John's arm, and was led forward—Juan and Meta, Yoppa and Eolia, arranging themselves on either side of "the pair."

Mr. Shaw now advanced a step, made a few appropriate and well-expressed remarks, then proceeded with the usual legal form, placing the ring on the finger of the bride—closing with—"I now pronounce you husband and wife," and the benediction.

This marriage had taken place in the great entrance hall, that it might be in the midst of our assembled people, and also witnessed by our guests.

The mothers, Monica and Mistress Dunn, were evidently in a state of comfortable enjoyment—the fathers might have been more sedate, but doubtless none the less well satisfied, the younglings of all these families, gleeful but not noisy. * * * Half an hour elapsed, and the dinner gong sounded, and my father led the way to the dining-room, which had been beautifully decorated for this festive occasion with evergreens, American holly, and various shrubs which still held their harvest of bright scarlet berries. He was preceded by Voglesang, to whom was delegated the office of seating the guests at the table—Yoppa being less alert, and lacking that readiness of communication requisite, and John being for the time somewhat in the position of guest himself. My father sat at the head of the board, his nearest family connections next, then the McGreggors, then the other guests following down past the centre—beginning at the remote end of the table, sat first the newly wedded pair, their parents next, and Patrick and Bidy Malone, then Yoppa and Eolia and Voglesang and Meta, these latter filling the entire space and coming next to Miss Ermina Childs, and her handsome cousin opposite. Little Polly Dunn and gleeful Dian and Jemmy remained away in charge of all the wee ones brought by our guests, who were now making merry in the vacated parlors.

Cousin George, Fred Gunnison and Voglesang stood up to carve the turkies, game and roast beef—the ham and tongues having been ready sliced by Monica's wise forethought, and laid about amid fringes of parsley. So, all those delicate

and richly-flavored viands were duly placed on the plates garnished with the various accompanying sauces and vegetables by the ladies who sat nearest to these knights of the carver and passed along the board. No one waited long to be served, there was perfect freedom for enjoyment, good feeling and the gay careering of wit and mirth, the playful and elegant interchange of courtesy and conversation which is so fitting to a dinner party, like the gilding on our furniture, every true artist knows its intrinsic value, that it is simply gold leaf and not bullion, but then it has a good effect. The viands being discussed, came tarts and pies, fruit and grapes, and then the more ethereal courses of ice-cream and jellies, blanc-mange and Charlotte Russe, and finally to harmonize with our German element, hot coffee with snowy sugar and cream. * * * Our guests were pleased both with themselves and their neighbors, and my father was satisfied.

There was no show of a feeling in one that he was richer than another or held a higher social position, they came simply, each as *my friend*. That were sufficient. The drawing-room and library and many a cozy little retreat were again peopled with a festive throng, and grave and sage suggestions, gay repartee, and the most amusing of "shorter catechism," and many a quiet game well known to most young people filled the post-prandial hour.

Meantime, good Monica was quite stately in her apartments, and therein was held her new daughter-in-law, Susan's reception. But old Time had not been standing still—the sages, the catechisers, the players of quiet games and various units looking on were suddenly startled by unwonted strains of music, gay, laughing, dance-inspiring strains thrown off by no unskillful hand, and those who were drawn out by this new sensation, beheld there Old Primas, the blind fiddler of the country side, seated at the top of the room, see-sawing with a quaver and a flourish, challenging the young and the gay to trip a merry measure.

The long drawing-room, across the hall and opposite the

parlor, and opening into my mother's boudoir and bed-room, and which—this long drawing-room had been used in her day as a common, family-room—had, on the previous day, been cleared of all its heavy furniture, and prepared for the accommodation of the dancers. The time-honored mirrors with their antique mouldings had been left, wherein beauty might revel in its thousand reflections. A few exquisite pictures in water-colors—the work of my elder sister, my Mildred's hand—and two old historical paintings, softened by time and dear from association, hung sombrely against the wall, the silver lamps standing on the mantel, with vases filled with flowers, others with the glossy leaves of the kalmiar, and the bright scarlet berries of the spotted alder—a small but clear fire burning in the grate, made up the appointments of the room for the present occasion.

"Room, room, for the fairy-footed votaries of Terpsichore!" It was Fred Gunnison, extending his elbows under pretence of putting back the crowd.

"I shall certainly dance at Susan's wedding," said Belle, slipping underneath his arm, and turning a pirouette in front of him—"so, where is my partner?"

"Wait a moment, pet, it belongs to Susan to open the ball—ah! here she comes."

"Even so. But, Minnie, you are such a lover of order, pray instruct me in the programme."

"First, a contra-dance, which Susan will lead off, with her husband, a few quadrilles, two sets of cotillions, and the German, ah n' importè, for Ermina Childs' handsome cousin had asked and led Belle up the room to the place next Eolia and Meta, who had been led by their partners, Yoppa and Voglesang."

"Go to thunder," ejaculated Fred, under his breath—"if that star hasn't slipt through my fingers!"

"Ha, ha! I've caught many a star that proved a fire-fly," said Ermina Childs, gliding past.

"Wait a bit, my pretty *child*," Fred rejoined, laying his

hand upon her dainty and dimpled shoulder. "Would you like to dance?"

"That would depend entirely upon my having a partner to my fancy."

"Me, for instance?"

"Oh, you, certainly—your eccentricity proves you a genius, and birds of a feather—you know."

And Fred, in the most elaborate ball-room style, bowed and proffered his hand to lead the little beauty—but, by this time, the complement was nearly made up, so Fred and Ermina were the lowest couple. The dancing proceeded with much spirit—balance—ladies chain—hands across, and down the middle, was duly called off by Primos, or failing him, the head couple, which was at length enounced with great hilarity by Fred, leading off his pretty partner. The contra-dance was followed by quadrilles and cotillions, in all of which Mr. Voglesang was conspicuous for his graceful dancing and ease of manner, which were not without a dash of audacity, that gave to all he said or did an air of piquancy which did not fail to charm. His tasteful dress was in perfect keeping with his style of person—the rich red glow of his vest seemed blending with his olive-tinted complexion—and when he led Ermina Childs through the mazes of the Spanish dance, Haidee whispered me, that Voglesang looked "like a Moorish Prince." And there is in his whole bearing an air of manliness, as if the spirit which now animates him, had passed out from beneath a murky cloud—he might have been as artistic and as graceful—but now, it is as if he stood up before the whole world in the dignity of his recognized manhood.

"And this new element was indisputably borne in, within the folds of that paper we read last night, which he wears in his breast-pocket, a talisman of more magical power than was ever accredited to the wand used by Cinderella's god-mother."

"Immeasurably more, for the striking of no clock can

ever change back to a *chattel*—he is henceforth a man. And, by the way, I shall dance with him to-night, at the ball-proper.”

“My own Zenobia, but I must leave you.” I had just gone through my first cotillion with Mr. Greenleaf, when Meta came to inform me of a new arrival, and would Miss Minnie please to walk up stairs. With a light but trembling step I ascended.

CHAPTER XLI.

“It is Miss Brown, the minister,” Meta said, as she paused upon the landing, then opening the door announced—“Miss Minnie.”

I went in and found the young lady waiting, and at my joyous greeting, a gentle smile suffused her sweetly serious face.

“Now, my dear friend, lay off your hat and furs, and, Meta, assist Miss Brown, and then put her divestments away in a closet. Had you a pleasant journey?”

“Quite pleasant, though somewhat fatiguing.”

“There, never mind about your hair, just now—see, I’ve smoothed it nicely—now, sit here in this comfortable chair by the fire, and, Meta, my good girl, send Mistress Dunn up with a tea-tray, something nice, don’t forget some wild duck and a few slips of tongue, jellies, etc.”

“Yes, Miss Minnie.”

“I thought you might like a little extra tongue, to-night, dear, but pray let the *slips* be confined to the edibles.”

“It is to be at half-past seven, I think?”

“Precisely. It is now past five, we have nearly two hours. I shall not go down again until then—but will you?”

“I think not.”

“My cousin Haidee and Belle will be up here, as they have to dress for the evening, as I have, so I will send for Miss Rapelje, who cannot fail to interest you.” * * *

An hour had passed. In her own room Haidee with Bettine’s aid was making a most splendid toilette, as first bridesmaid. Eolia and Meta offering suggestions and assistance to me and Belle in mine. * * * Time passed all unheeded. The dancing had subsided. The parlor hall, and nearly the

whole house was now lighted, and over all, there was manifestly an air of expectancy. Our toilettes were completed and we stood together—in my boudoir. Very like in the main, a casual observer might have said. Our dresses were of white moire antique, mine and Belle's purchased by Leonora in Paris and sent over to us a month previous, Haidee's was Parisian made, and differed little from ours, save only of being trimmed down at the sides with rows of white velvet ribbon—her gorgeous style and taste requiring more than the simply elegant skirt. Then, about her queenly neck was clasped—oh, I despair of description. She was radiant with jewels, wore a necklace of diamonds, and her beautiful arms and rose tipped and tapering fingers, shone with costliest gems.

"Allow me to unfasten these pretty pink corals, and here, Betty, my good girl, lay them aside in Miss Belle's casket, and now, my little one, accept these emeralds from your too happy cousin," and then Haidee put a stop to all of Belle's thanks, by saying—

"No, they do not become me. I am too dark for emeralds, but the prettily rounded neck of our little 'snowflake' shines fairer in the light of their clear luminosity."

My father now entered the room, as he had previously appointed, having for me a few last words of kindness. He had a casket in his hand which I had not seen for many years, but I knew it had once contained my mother's jewels. He opened it at once, taking out a necklace of pearls, fastened it around my neck, then said—"These you will remember."

It was the bridal gift of our Mildred, from uncle Hastings, but now divided into bracelets with the addition of a clasp and a dear little locket containing a tress of her golden hair. Then as his dear awkwardness secured the final clasp, he said, opening an ivory box, and displaying a most exquisitely cut cameo—"This belonged to my sister, Sophia Engelsing—was worn in her happiest days—fasten your bosom-

lace with it—there, I am not skilled in these things, pet. From henceforth these are yours, my child, only they must never leave Glenelvan, wear them at all times you may choose, only remembering to return them carefully to their place among the sacred relics left by the dear angels of your father's house."

Then suddenly kissing me on either cheek, he added—"Not a tear to-day, my precious, for this is a day of twofold happiness to me—some guardian you must have—for I cannot be with you always—and your choice contents me."

Many tears had started with those my father kissed away, but I had firmly bidden them back, and he smiled as the sunshine broke over his last words, and I said—

"Thank you, dearest father, for all your kindness and love—in the new life which is opening before me, the remembrance of these, and the principles I have inherited from you and my sainted mother, shall keep me ever in the way of truth and honor."

Cousin Leonora and Miss Brown were now summoned—the latter, now in a splendid gray silk—her collar, of exquisite neatness, fastened with a knot of black velvet ribbon—her soft brown hair rolled back in waves on either side of that noble head—her sweet, pure mouth, in soft repose—she looked a pictured saint. My father advanced and took her very cordially by the hand, and after a few kind inquiries, said—

"Dear friend, we have delegated to you this office of uniting my daughter with the man of her choice in the holy bonds of wedlock, not only from personal regard to you, but also to bear a living testimony of our belief in the fitness of the calling you have chosen."

Our gentle saint bowed her head silently for a moment, and then my father resumed. "The hour appointed for the marriage has arrived; shall we descend?"

A light, quick tap-a-tap at the door—it was opened—Mr. Guilder, Henry and Fred entered. "Just at the right mo-

ment," my father added. "Leonora, my dear, your hand to Miss Brown—we go before to make way," and he led on. * *

We stood together in that ancient parlor, a perfect blaze of starry light streaming down from those chandeliers, the staircase festooned all the way up with our people and the children, who could in no other way hope to catch a glimpse of the object of their especial wonder.

Miss Brown advanced and took her position opposite us—stood in a calm and beautiful attitude, while Mr. N——, of Peekskill, uttered a grave and eloquent speech, to which I can in no wise do justice, upon the sacred obligations of the marriage vows—of the institution of marriage, its divine origin and three-fold character—legal, religious and harmonial. He spoke not only to those who had in contemplation the entering into this peculiar state, but to those who had long since entered in—those with whom the fanciful and the ideal, the rose-hued mists of a poet's dream had passed away, and the realities of life, its duties and its soberer joys, were grown as familiar as the blessing of the common air. The young and free were admonished to consider the subject well, with all its obligations and responsibilities; the married, to remain faithful to their marriage vows, to love and cherish, to strive to elevate and to develop to the highest degree of excellence, to sustain and comfort through all misfortune and affliction the *one* dear companion they have chosen—and these duties were as equally binding on one as on the other. The time might come when the light of youth's bright day would wane, domestic cares and wasting sickness with many might change the most equable temper, conflicting opinions and opposite tastes might be evolved by the march of mind; yet in none or in all of these should there be found a plea for coldness or desertion, but each and every one should strive to keep inviolate their plighted faith—to preserve intact the virtue and honor of their whole lives. Although the golden dream of our youth dissolves like a mist of the morning, and the hope of middle-life

fails us, we still have the love of God, which passeth not away. Harmony, he said, may oftentimes be brought forth from the greatest contrasts. The sober may find delight in the gay—the beautiful find sterling qualities in the very plain—the largely liberal, discover fundamental truths in conservatism. If each would seek for the good that was in the other, and be content with something short of perfection in this probation, the sacredness of the domestic circle would never be invaded. And to secure this inviolability and happiness, never for any *cause*, or on any occasion—no matter how fascinating the tempter—indulge in those soft dalliances that woo only to destroy, and win only to betray, wherein a man barter the honor and uprightness of his manhood for promised joy, which turns to death in his grasp, and woman forgets the delicacy and inborn modesty, her greatest charm, and quickly becomes an object of hatred and loathing—and most manifestly to *him* who has led her on to *ruin*. The dearly-loved quiet of the fireside, and all the joys of home, are drowned by domestic distractions, and these not infrequently followed by bloodshed, and the once—*once* honored man—the beloved husband, the tender father—as a terrible requital—falls by the assassin's hand.

But, beloved friends, in the bright future, even, dating from this hour, we hope for better things—where a man shall never again be divorced from his most sacred honor—and the modesty and purity of woman be ever found immaculate—the young be enveloped in a panoply of holiness, where the poisoned arrow of the arch-enemy shall find no blemish, and marriage vows be abrogated or basely broken—*nevermore*. Then shall peace and prosperity dwell within your borders, and the wilderness and waste places bud and blossom as the rose."

The last words were pronounced like benediction—and Mr. N—— moved back a step or two and stood beside my father.

With surpassing grace Miss Brown entered upon her office,

with a few appropriate remarks upon the sanctity of the marriage relation—the mutual and obligatory nature of the marriage vows—the indispensableness of this institution of a monogamous marriage to the first received and enacted laws of civilization—as also the progressive character and refinement and stability of the nations—to the order of society—to a Christian people—living for the glory and honor of Him who gave them life. You believe and accede to this?”

“*We do.*”

“George Washington Guilder—you take this woman, Annie Maria Minster, to be your wedded wife—to sustain and comfort, to teach and admonish, to love and cherish in sickness and health, in prosperity and adversity—to share with you equally in all your worldly goods, your fortunes and misfortunes, your cares and your joys—to leave all others and cleave to her alone. You promise faithfully, according to grace given, to fulfill these vows during the natural life God has given you to spend in His service.”

“*I do.*”

Then to me she said, in the same mellow and placid tone :

“Annie Maria Minster—you take this man, George Washington Guilder, to be your wedded husband—to sustain and comfort—to counsel and assist—to love and cherish in sickness and health, in prosperity and adversity, to share with you equally in all your worldly goods—your fortunes and misfortunes, your cares and your joys—to confide to him your griefs and apprehensions—to make known to him all the advances of the enemy to your domestic peace, to leave all others and cleave to him alone. You promise faithfully, according to grace given, to fulfill these vows during the natural life God has appointed you to spend in his service?”

“*I do.*”

The ring was placed upon my finger—and Miss Brown joining our hands, said, with great solemnity—“By the law of God through our revealed religion, and the law of the State, I now pronounce you lawfully, husband and wife. Amen.”

Then, after a moment of breathless silence—Mr. Shaw made a beautiful and impressive prayer. * *

My dear and noble father approached, touched my forehead with quivering lips, and gave me a father's blessing—and Madam Guilder, with my uncle Hastings, gave me a fond caress, and turned to congratulate her son. Our numerous guests separately, or by twos and threes, as occasion or choice appointed, paid the due hymenial homage in varied offerings of affection, in boundless wishes for present joy and future good—the usual manifestations of kind regard, and a happy bridal at home. * *

These were superseded by conversation, and various amusements. My cousin Leonora, divinely fair and serenely beautiful, now slightly leaning upon Mr. Greenleaf's arm, for they had been walking about the rooms, delighted a small circle by her elegance of manner, her graceful diction, and the new and sublime thoughts she uttered or suggested, and I was only too glad to resign my old office of hostess and be a quiet listener. Mr. Greenleaf, too, was a good *talker*, (if that is the proper synonym,) his style was quite original, his thoughts always healthy and progressive, yet, withal, lacking the fine perception, the subtle sense, the distinguishing feature of Leonora's truly feminine intellect.

“Oh, for some dear, good, conversative friend to see these flashing gems, to drink at this living fountain,” I mentally prayed! A happy thought struck me. A little while before, Eolia, in the fullness of her gratitude and joy, had brought me a little nose gay of violets and rose geranium leaves, with one silver leaved geranium in the centre. Ah, this will do my bidding, Miss Greenleaf, dear Iolité, so named for that in her babyhood she was supposed to resemble a violet, and often called by Arabella, her *Viola*, I wished to summon to my side, and as I wished, I caught Mr. Voglesang's dark lustrous eyes, who at once approached at my beck. I desired him to present my flowers to Miss Greenleaf, and inform her from whom they came. I had but a moment to wait,

for Voglesang—a born courtier, and knight-errant, returned with the lady, placed her in my immediate vicinity, bowed and retired. Iolité laid her hand upon my arm.

“You sent me a missive bearing my name, the central leaf declared a ‘preference’ for me—I came.”

“First, then, accept my thanks, for in that you did not wound Mr. Voglesang’s pride or sensitiveness by rejecting his courtesy of offering to bring you through the rooms.”

Miss Greenleaf’s violet orbs were filled with surprise, and then she made answer—

“I am your guest, so is Mr. Voglesang, who is also your husband’s friend and protégé!”

I ought to have felt safe about Iolité. I knew she was too well-bred to offer a slight to any one, even though her prejudice had been most *unchristian*. I felt, too, that farther words would only mar, where I would mend, and wisely kept silence. Something Fred Gunnison said occasioned a merry peal of laughter, and at that moment my ear caught a sound of wheels rapidly approaching, and the next, the quick, sharp ringing of the door-bell, suggested a new arrival. My father was summoned, and he presently sent back for Belle—some expected guest had been detained away until this late hour.

Miss Greenleaf was now deeply interested, she was opening her eyes upon a new world of thought—of progression, such as had sometimes been hinted to her through the aspirations and deeds of her gifted sister Arabella, but *then*, she had only given a hasty glance and turned away, thinking, perhaps, Arabella was eccentric—a genius—and—. Time past, twenty-five, thirty minutes, and my pretty bridesmaid returned, and announced Mrs. Best, and gliding in after them was little fairy-like Julia.

The mother came to me to offer her congratulations and her regrets, the latter having reference to the lateness of her arrival. Her husband was suffering from a terrible wound received long before, which had resulted in perma-

nent lameness, and the pain from which he was never wholly free, had that morning been unusually severe, but late in the afternoon, he was better, and then earnestly insisted upon her taking the little one and coming up to Glenelvan, and she was just in time for the *six o'clock train*.

While Mrs. Elia Ann was talking in my circle, the lovely little Julie, who seemed but a golden dream, draped in lilac satin, lace choral chains; tripping a fairy measure in cream-colored boots, her long golden hair falling in a shower of curls about her dimpled neck and sunny face—this golden dream—this bright fairy, in tiny kid boots, was at once appropriated by Belle, who hastened with her to the sofa, where Mrs. McGreggor and Mrs. Bovie were quietly chatting, and squeezing in between them, turned with her prize to Mistress Jessie, saying—

“Did you ever! did your eyes ever behold—and she loves her cousin Belle, dearly, don’t she?” All the while softly pinching her rosy cheeks and kissing her dainty mouth.

“Gueth I do! But mamma said we were coming to a wedding. Now please, Belle, take me to see it.”

“That I can hardly do, my dear, as you came rather late.”

“Is’t over! Well, can’t you make another? You can, I know, Bella.”

“Sometime, perhaps, but not just now,” Belle said, with a slight blush, and both ladies laughed. And little Miss seeing the blush, and thinking she had made a hit, but all unknowing how or where, laughed in merry concert.

Wishing to make some amends to Mrs. Elia Ann for what she had lost by her late arrival—to please her tastes as well as her womanly vanity—I made known my wishes to uncle Hastings, that he should devote himself, for a time, to her; and he, nothing loth, gave his arm, with his own peculiar courtliness, led her to a *tête-à-tête*—and I soon was at ease, for by the brightly beaming face, I saw that she was gratified, yes, charmed by the refinement of his manner, and the

agreeableness and piquancy of his conversation. Mrs. Elia Ann, always richly drest, was to-night perfectly magnificent. She wore a robe dress of blue and silver, of the richest silk—her brilliant complexion and sparkling eyes scarcely outshone the glittering and costly jewels that adorned her voluptuous person. Uncle Hastings was greatly pleased with the lady. Later in the evening he asked her to dance, this she declined, but accepted his arm for a promenade, and was well pleased to go and make one of the number of appreciating spectators.

The ball-proper was, according to all precedent, opened by the bride and her happy spouse. The dancing continued.

Haidee, as she had determined, accepted Voglesang for a partner in a quadrille, in which, also, were Fred Gunnison and Miss Grant, cousin Fannie and her husband, Mr. Greenleaf and cousin Leonora—the others, I do not recollect—but it was the most splendid set of the whole evening. * *

At last the supper-bell rang, calling us to the bridal-supper, which was to be the crowning of the evening festivities.

The heavy and slumberous foliage hung upon the walls, with here and there, bright glistening evergreens, adorned with scarlet and snowy berries—the brilliant lights interwoven—the beautiful and fragrant flowers upon the table—the variety and elegance of the delicacies—the abundance—the artistic arrangement—the tout-en-semble, more than realized my expectations.

My friends were charmed, delighted, to see what my household could do in honor of my marriage, and to give me pleasure. * * * The old clock in the hall, with a sleepy, droning sound, toll'd off the hour of twelve, when we arose from the table. And ere the witching hour had sped—and it was a clear, silvery, starlit night—the last carriage had rolled away, and its reverberation had died among the hills of Glenelvan.

CHAPTER XLII.

New Scenes.

My home in the sunny South! It had been painted for me in words. I had pencil-sketches, and various mental pictures of this—the fact, the living reality was like none of them.

What waste, what improvidence, what looseness generally! This must all be reformed—the cool, fresh wind from the North must drive off this pestilence. Our house, an excellent one once, but only of wood, is somewhat out of repair, and entirely out of taste and order interiorly. The low portico decaying beneath its annual accumulation of vines and creepers—the gardens and alleys, a waste of vegetation. Our people, kind in manner, good natured, not too willing to labor, and utterly ignoring all sort of care or system—verily, grown up children,—having some good ideas of religion and Christianity; but oh, how much needing a firm, conscientious, far-seeing leader, one who has the capacity, and will take the time to note their different grades of intellect, to bring out and fully develop the good, and restrain and reform the evil that is in them.

An Herculean task indeed! The work of a life-time.

True—but how shall I spend this life of mine, better than in working for the elevation of mind, the salvation of souls, so mysteriously committed to my care. In the past days, in some nations and some provinces, family feuds were transmitted from generation to generation. I will leave a better legacy to those who come after me. I will begin a work which my children and my children's children will still carry forward.

Now, if any of my friends look in upon us in the morning, they will see me in a plain but exceedingly pretty morning gown, going about my house, into every part of it—from thence I glance into the kitchen, and out through the garden for an early flower for my husband—and we sit down to breakfast. Our immediate interior family, Meta, Eolia, and Miss Miles, the school-mistress—Yoppa and Voglesang, sit at table with us, while two, sometimes three of our people serve.

The house servants are taking their breakfast in the thatched area at the same time, or immediately after.

This is all done leisurely, and enlivened with cheerful conversation—then the morning repast over, I ring my silver table-bell which brings in the whole household, and my husband reads for half an hour, some plain, profitable lesson for the day—and from this, each one goes with hearty good will to their allotted tasks.

Soon after my first arrival here, I looked carefully through all the pantries, closets—through the house-linen, through the bedding and mattresses—took a hasty glance of the ill-kept wardrobe of each individual of our people, fifty in all—the superannuated and the children—and oh, the work—work. * * There, now look into this pantry! There is that antique China and delf; none of it must be taken out but on rare occasions—it was once the pride and delight, the daily service of that lady-mother whom I never saw. There, on an higher shelf is arranged with much taste, various pieces of elegant and unique porcelain ware that will never be used again, but wisely kept—not for show, but as remembrances—it is all cracked or frail, but is mingled in the early memories of my husband's boyhood. * * Close the glass doors—and see here! This is the new pantry, everything nice and tidy, convenient and pretty. These things came with my boxes and parcels. Now away with me to the presses—for the house linen and bedding, the same plan has been carried out here.

All these familiar things I carefully preserve; they are dear to my husband, and I wish not to have the memory of his early home wholly pass away. Come with me now to the morning drawing-room. Find a pleasant seat, please, for we shall spend several hours here. You see, we brought from our home in the North, boxes and bales of cotton and linen goods and colored flannels and plaids, and some coarser materials and heavier goods. Meta has a cunning hand in shaping garments, and Eolia has taste in those little decorations of refined life. She quite won the heart of a lady, a neighbor here, by tastefully arranging her cap for a wedding party.

And here, pray let me introduce you to our "aunt Betsey," a most wonderful needle-woman, and let me assure you she will do the work of a dozen such players of the needle as you and I. Blessings on our excellent "aunt Betsey!" However, should we get those fifty people clad in bright new clothes, two suits apiece, making a hundred, without the aid of our most willing, most docile, and most competent "aunt Betsey!"

"Ha, ha, a sewing machine! whose, Wheeler & Wilson's, as I live! Why, is it possible that you 'operate,'" exclaims my visitor, Mrs. Carrol, during one of her morning calls.

"Certainly, I learn very quickly, and see, how neatly that sewing is done."

"Amazing! and do the ladies at the North use these?"

"Nearly all the wealthy ladies who are good managers have a sewing machine, and learn to *operate* on them."

"Is it possible! Ah, now, when I go North again, I will think of this, and if husband thinks it *will do*, I will buy one. But where am I to find them?"

"If you are in New York, No. — Broadway."

"Thank you, dear. I hope you will return my call at an early day—good morning, dear." And the volatile Mrs. Carrol goes home with a sewing machine, or rather a new idea in her head. * * A happy trio, we, the mistress, Meta,

! Eolia, measuring, cutting and fitting garments—we take

the dressmaking first, and while the latter fit and baisted, I sit down to sew. When we come into the sewing-room, Miss Miles goes to prepare for her daily occupation, for the duties of her office as school-mistress. After sewing for an hour, getting ready as much as my maidens will finish in the day, I go to look in upon the school and give Miss Miles a word of cheer, and make the sunny little faces brighter for a kindly smile.

The school-room has been fitted up from a nondescript sort of a building, standing "idle," at some little distance from the house. Our carpenter, David, had put it in repair, and then constructed desks, benches, shelves and a well-designed "place for the marm—" quite primitive, indeed, but fully answering their purpose. This building had been crowded upon rank and unsightly weeds, and lost all title to respectability by being smothered and overborne by these horticultural "poor relations." Miss Miles, a handsome young quadroon, a native of Philadelphia, of refined and affluent tastes, cultivated intellect and a high ambition—quickly with the aid of her ten pupils, put this ill-conditioned army of invaders to flight, and beneath the windows planted velvet lipp'd flowers and sweet scented shrubs, and these at the pilasters and on either side of the roughly-arched doorway were set woodbines and convolvuli, to make it by mid-summer a perfect bower of shade. She has now been installed in her office more than a month, and grows more and more to like her task. Very little use had there been thus far for text books. Miss Miles has a happy way of laying the foundation of a solid education with these half tropical children, by oral instruction, each learning the alphabet after learning the sound and the power of the letter, one daily, from a printed card, fully confident of entire success. She had abundant aid in her labors, in the way of fine pictures in water-colors and engravings, bright-covered books to take the eyes—pretty songs to please the ear—for she taught her pupils to sing in concert, very sweetly too, and beautiful and

simple stories which she told them in her low, melodious voice, with such an air of earnestness, that, oh, to look in surreptitiously upon their rapt faces and large wondering eyes, was something to make the heart bound. * * *

Our people have great pride in the children being in a *real* school—amazed at the wonderful things already learned, and that a feeling of something more than pride in the visible fact that the lady, the teacher is from among *themselves*, of their race, and identified in interests, in rights and *wrongs* with them. * * * Meantime, my husband has gone to look over his plantation and his people—the first to work scientifically, to beautify and develop in its resources on a plan never dreamed of in the philosophy of his predecessors, and the last of our people, but the results must speak for themselves. Our quondam Juan, beg pardon, Mr. Voglesang, chose to cast in his lot with my husband as a kind of sub-partner. He might have gone abroad, have found business independently, but he would not for a moment hear of a separation from the companion and friend of his boyhood. He would build him an house and live near us always, for in our minds there was an unexpressed feeling that in the coming time, in the new era, in the struggle to maintain a better order of society and government, they would aid and sustain each other.

Busied with selecting suitable timber to be cut for the various building material for the house, as also wood susceptible of high polish and rich color for furniture and household ware, constructing a sawmill, an indispensable aid in the projected multifarious buildings which should follow, collecting smooth, plain and parti-colored stones for base-work, dragging from thick covers the slender and knotty trees for pilasters and columns; busied with these exhilarating and healthful employments, and noting that each success suggested new attempts, spring drew near, and my father, Madam Guilder and her son, were to pay us a promised visit. My uncle Hastings had chosen to remain at the North, that Haidee might see something of American society, and had

therefore spent a month in Boston, some little time in other cities of less interest to them, and lastly had gone, attended by Madam Guilder, her son, and Miss Rapelje, to Washington, where they would remain until the spring was well advanced. * *

The day had been named on which we were to look for the arrival of Madam Guilder, and none but an egregious misanthrope could have failed to note the air of cheerful expectation throughout the house, as also extending to our people. A room had been made ready for her reception. There shone the freshest linen, the snowiest drapery, the neatest carpet, and there was displayed the handsomest toilet-service, perfumed soap and Florida water, and there budded and blossomed the sweetest flowers our vicinage could offer. There was much affection, universal respect expressed for the person and character of the lady who was coming to be my guest. She came. It was at the sunset hour. I was waiting with my husband in the front piazza, our people were gathered about the court, and Lion, my old house-dog, lying at my feet.

List ! there is heard the sound of wheels rolling along the turf and up to the vine-clad gateway, and in an instant Henry leaps from the carriage and comes bounding up the broad steps. The horses are seized upon, the carriage doors held open, and Madam Guilder, with her accustomed grace, descends almost into the arms of our people, and comes near being borne by them up to receive our embraces. And there is my father courteously waiting for a proper reception to be given to his sister, and then he is most joyfully welcomed by us and presented to our people. Oh, my beloved, my noble father ! How great is my love, my pride and heart-thankfulness for and in thee, my most regal sire !

All our people, farmers, gardeners, mechanics, and household corps, regard him with reverence, and pay him that respect which the President of these United States, *as such* only, could never inspire ; for in him they see the father of

one who has been their friend and benefactress, and through her they have known him as the father of his devoted followers and the head of a great and noble house.

Eolia was in ecstasies, and would have gone with her quondam mistress to her chamber, and would have taken up the duties of lady's-maid ; but this the Madam would not allow, but replacing her in her seat with a gentle caress, said :

" Remain here, my daughter ; you will see me presently with your friends." Then summoning her bright little Irish maid Jehannah, followed Linda up into the great chamber.

It would have been more agreeable to have brought Linda forward at an earlier date, but it was not in order. Linda has lived all her life on this estate—has been for years the head cook and housekeeper ; for ever since the death of her lamented mistress, my husband's mother, Linda has necessarily acted in this double capacity. That she has been as faithful to her trust as all the circumstances allowed, was plainly evident, and she took her position in my household accordingly.

Linda, now in bright red and yellow turban and white linen apron, led the sister-in-law of her old master up, and, once in the chamber, her great, tropical soul overflowed in a perfect torrent of hilarious volubility.

" Laws, missis, jes' think of it—I'se *free* ! Born here—'spex I was ; never worked too hard—'bout had my own way, on'y mighty lonesome arter blessed Mas'r George's mother died—'deed I was—offen ketch myse'f thinkin'—'do wish we had a raal lady, like missis, agin, comin' in like mornin' sun, an' say—" Linda, do dis," an' " Linda, do dat ar—leastwise to advise me !" But now weme got a raal mos' blessed missis, an' I'se free !"

" My good Linda, you have well earned your freedom. Yours has been a long pilgrimage, with few green spots by the way."

" 'Deed, Missis, that's *so* ! Den, arter Mass'r George goes way to them furren parts—no people here but us, and that

an overseer, that ain't no better—no company, no gran' doins—yer arter yer totes 'long heavy—sumtimes I dreams 'bout bein' free—'spected I would wen I gets to Heaven! Den, oh! misses, honey—comes home Mass'r George—make us all glad, ole Linda 'specially—make overseer an' c'missioners mine what they'me 'bout; den he off to Norf—stay ebber so long—but, bressed me, he come back agin like mornin' arter black night, for he bring jes' the mos' preshus, beautifullest young misses. Oh! Oh! Den Mass'r George bring us all to de piazer, an' say—'Good friends, dis am my b'loved wife an' yer mistress.' An' she smiles, an' says—but laws, misses, jes' think me tryin' to 'peat dat ar—but she teached us dat we am free, dat I knows, an' should stay yer, an' build us housen, an' work jes' as fo'mally, an' shook hans wid ebbery one ov us *indibidual!* That's so! An' ole Cato, he hobble up—den misses gib him her han', and he say—'Bress de Lord fo' his marcy;' den misses say—'Cato, you are free, but you mus' stay yer, an' I will be as kind to you as any daughter can be.' Den ole Cato, he liff up his voice, an' say—'De Lord has sent one ob His angels for to dwell wid His people,' an' we all larf so loud, an' cries too, bress me, sich a quantity!

"That was beautiful and impressive, Linda, was it not?"

"'Deed it *was!* An' mas'r said, 'you are to be my friends and paid laborers—to be taught an' to live as free men an' women,' an sez, 'I would not have a *slave* to till my *land*,' or as near like it as can be; but as 'bout the land on dis plantation, 'spec ole Cato hadn't done much—but sen' he am free, *hi!* finds heap a work in he yet—that's so, too. An', misses, honey, now I'se free widout waitin' to get ter heaven."

"Well, my good Linda, how do the people accept their freedom, and how does the plantation thrive?"

"'Deed, misses, an' ye 'bide yer a few days an' ye wont need ter ask no one. An' de *people*—for Misses Minnie don't nebber call us servants, for she teach us dat servants mean dem dat am hired, to quit an' go right orf when dey wanted

mos'—but *people*, like *we*, stay allus. Out-door-hans build 'em housen, hab gardins, an' set out trees to grow roun' 'em—fac', hab home of der own. *And* den, dat school for all 'em chillens, an' der clean, shinin' faces, an' de readin' an' singin' an' peatin' hymns, an' a carryin' a posy to the handsome misses, what am *also* a colored lady—'deed, misses, done I think ob all dese ar, I'se feel jes' as if I'se in great shoutin' meetin', an' we all feel de glory, 'deed I do—*so!*"

"This is most cheering, truly. Now, my good friend, you must pray always that there may never be any bad blood among you, that no ill will may creep in to destroy and confound the good work so nobly begun!"

"Misses mean jealousy! don't know dat ar—'cause ebbery one of us hab all we desERVE, an' 'heaps mo, 'deed we do. Dars Miss Eolia, dat *was* jes like my Jinney, a rale *born* lady! genteel an' mos' elegant, spectful to dem as is older—my eyes nebber 'fore did see de likes! Misses Minnie teached her to play on the pianny, wen she's done been at de norf, an she do sing like a nitengal—gay as enny lark risin' out of de bosom ob de meddows, den dars Juan, as done uster wait on mas'r—he read an rite mos' hansommer den a minister—'clare to goodness, he mo ob a gentleman den mas'r Carrol's son James, and a heap hansommer, too—'deed *he is so*. An' David, he done built a sawmill, an' bime by he get up a nice cabbin fo hissself arter Juan done finish his *house*—den all de readin' an' teachin' an' 'bout ole Africa, an' dem countrys weme brought from, 'bout de great buildins an' tooms ob kings an' queens, an' colleges, an' schools, an' ole books, an' great larnen, an' gardens, an' de priests, an' de beautifullest river, 'tai'nt Jordan, no, no, laws, misses, it do make us feel like—we orto try an' 'tain to summet mo' den wat we gwine to eat an' wat we done gwine to put on. Ise ole, but dars a heap I kin learn yit. Den we has preachin' mos ebbery Sunday, or failin' dat ar, Misses Minnie she read, mos plete an' beautiful—an' den we all sing, an' ole Cato, he pray, dats so—'clare to goodnes, an' ef 'taint glory begun,

yer on dis airth—'deed it is! Hi, dar go de fuss bell! hope Misses p'xcuse ole Linda bein' too 'quacious 'bout dese 'fairs, 'fore she done ask how Misses enjoy hersself at de norf."

"My good Linda, you have interested me greatly. I, in turn, will tell you what I have seen at the North, when I have somewhat recovered from the fatigue of travel."

CHAPTER XLIII.

MADAM GUILDER remained with me but a few days, and then went over to "The Magnolias," from which dear old place she had been absent so many months. It had been a long-cherished wish of hers to bring together all, or nearly, of her old friends and neighbors for a reunion at her house, and then present her adopted son and his bride. She had looked forward to this event with a good degree of matronly pride—so now as soon as practical after her return, proceeded to put it into execution. This reunion was no doubt well planned and very satisfactorily carried out—for me, entertaining ideas and principles, opinions and motives for action adverse to all those held by the *invited* company—I only hoped to hold an inconspicuous position in that gay assemblage, so that if I could not please, I surely would not offend. So I played the quiet little mouse in the corner, amusing the superficial and the gay. (If ever I do a great and earnest work, it will be by example, and not by preaching, which is not my vocation!) But this could not last. Madam drew me out, and I had to take my seat at the fine old piano, (which, bless her wise forethought, she had had *tuned* for the occasion,) and then, oh, I felt as if launched upon my native element, and Madam was safe from any sparks being dropt inadvertently into her *magazine*.

My father had a legitimate field of action, politics—no, no, beg pardon—we were across the "*line*," but there was commerce, agriculture, "our relations abroad," and the "Canada fishery," railroads at the North, and *projected* ones at the South, material sufficient for one day. And at the summing up, the balance was in favor of the general enjoyment. And many, very many such festive occasions followed, which had most beneficial results.

Meantime, there was lying some five miles off, a poor valueless pine-barren, inhabited by a number of poor *white* families, denominated in Southern parlance, *clay-eaters*; in this district and in these people I take upon myself to interest my father. Willing to listen to anything in reason, and willing to please me, the light carriage was ordered, and thither we drove, my father and I, while the morning was yet young among the pines.

Arrived there, we went from hut to hut, speaking kindly and cheerfully to the inmates, readily learning their wants, not so readily their capacities. There was a look of weariness, a kind of dumb and savage despair noticeable among the adults—among the children there were a few bright, intelligent-looking, and some really pretty, other some, *sufficiently* unpromising; but I would not estimate these by what they now seemed, but by what they might become. I had a rather promiscuous chat with the mothers—these shy and untutored younglings of the pine-barren gathered round to listen, while my father drew together the nominal heads of families, to lay before them his benevolent plan.

Not one of these "heads" was a land-owner, but renting a small patch of *sand*, held on to a precarious existence,—denied all social and educational privileges, and sustaining no one interest in common with the world around them. Yet withal, or therefore, these people were slow to accept, and suspicious of my father's generous offering.

"Wha' fer yer gwine ter buy this track a' pine-berren, guv'nor. Weme white and can't be bort—leastwise, we can't be sold, sure!—gumpshun good plan—I *say*, but what's yer reckonin'?"

"My good friend, you wish to get at the *chit* of the kernel. It is sound, and simply this—to take this poor step-child's portion of soil, and how rich and fertile a lot of smart, enterprising fellows, *when legal owners*, can make it—a very garden in the desert."

"Ask ter guv'nor who's to have the gardens when made,

Jim Links!" uttered one fellow, over the shoulder of the chief spokesman. And the question was propounded accordingly.

"To you, surely, who cultivate and bring it into a state of productiveness. I will purchase this tract of two hundred acres, divide it into equal shares, give a clear deed of one share to each man of you who will accept, and fulfill these conditions—

"First. No one freehold shall be conveyed away by gift or sale without the consent of the whole. Each freeholder shall strive to improve his place to the best of his ability. No intoxicating liquor shall be brought or used upon it, with the knowledge or consent of the *inhabitants*. Lastly. Not one individual, during possession or occupancy of a freehold, shall buy or hold by any other tenure a slave by unit or in numbers."

These conditions were fully discussed and cheerfully acceded to. Then the person designated as Jim Links, who seemed still to have some weight on his mind, stammered out—

"Berry gratly 'bleeged, guv'nor—but, some-ow, I'd like ter know what's back o' this yer movement—what's it blows ter bellows?"

It were vain to attempt to explain to these people, the working of a great and wholly benevolent enterprise, so my father said, assuming the *confidential* air—

"Frankly then, good friends, for this, I want you to become intelligent and influential men here; for the fact is plain to be seen, that the white race is dying out at the South! What with the known effeminacy of the white planters, the frequent importations from Africa, and the continual amalgamation going on in the cities, as well as on the plantations, we shall have, at no distant day, at the South, an entire population of quadroons and mulattos. Now if these importations, and this whitening process continues, the pure Anglo-Saxon race, throughout the South, will become extinct."

"That's gospel, gov'nor!" exclaimed Jim Links, snatching off his fragment of a hat and crushing it under his feet.

"Now, what I most wish to do," continued my father, "is to aid you, my friends, in attaining to a better state of things, to be *free* men, holding your elective franchise unbiassed by the fear of landlord or demagogue, to be men of substance, able and willing to labor, and to make labor an honorable calling. But in those districts where this cannot be done, by a race of feeble *white* men, let it be done by others—but by *free* men, at all events."

There was no little amazement shown at the candid avowal of sentiments so *new*, but none of an adverse character were expressed—and other essential arrangements being concluded, we prepared to take leave. One little girl with bright eyes, and face not the cleanest—brown, curling, sun-faded, but terribly uncombed hair, who had hung about me, now popped forward, and clutching my gown, said—

"When yer cummin' agin?"

"Before very long, my dear—but what is your name?"

"Tacy!"

"Have you not another name?"

"Wal, I reckon—ye-er—Links."

"Indeed! Tacy Links! what a pretty name! you shall be my little star of the pine woods; as I will show you some day."

The little half-wild girl could scarcely laugh for her childish wonder—and directly we took our leave.

CHAPTER XLIV.

"EDENWOLD."

My father and Mr. Voglesang had in immediate contemplation a journey to New Orleans, thence to Cuba—but the business of the pine-barrens was to be settled first.

So, early on the following day a descent was made upon Messrs. Carrol and Persifer, who happened to be the owners of those wretched acres, with intent to "price," purchase, appropriate and apply to other uses than they had hitherto been. The price was agreed upon, papers passed, title-deeds given, full payment made; and contrary to all precedent here, everything completed within the space of a few hours. The next thing in course was the portioning out this tract, which was appointed for the following day; and then there would be a dinner. There were many difficulties in the way of this being well and wisely done; the ugliest one being a hostile feeling between the poor whites, these clay-eaters, and our people. A few of the latter would be quite indispensable to me in carrying out my project; but I would take as few as might be; and those the least objectionable.

So, in the morning, an hour or so after our breakfast, we were ready to set out. Our carpenter, David, had gone forward with his team, implements, tools, and a goodly number of smooth pine planks, of which he was to construct a table for the day's service, and leave them for building material; my father, husband and Henry, soon after; to survey and lay off the lots, Henry being a very good engineer, would give efficient aid in the *ground* plan, and I had something for him to do beside. "Many hands make light work," and clear heads create little confusion—so when we, Meta, Yoppa and

good mother Linda arrived in the carriage, the lines had been drawn, the lots staked out, and each man had received his dower and fixed upon the site for his dwelling on it. As a perverse destiny willed it, taking possession compelled a removal of every cabin, save one: Links's—for they had been clumped about without form or comeliness. But the event proved that there was more gained than lost, as a removal occasioned a rebuilding, and gave ample margin for improvements and repairs—if only, these were something in the shape of means!

In laying out this hamlet, Henry had secured one distinctive feature—lungs—a breathing place in the shape of a pretty, circular wold in the centre, which would be common property—and happily, in the centre of this stood a lofty pine, wide-spreading and thrifty, quite the finest in the grounds—so it may have been this which caught the young engineer's eye, and gave him the idea of a tiny park.

Well, beneath these murmuring branches, David had constructed a very reliable "board," and Linda proceeded at once to lay the cloth. And shortly there arose from out the various baskets and boxes a substantial and not uninviting dinner of roast pig, fillets of veal, cold bacon, moulds of hominy, white bread, prints of butter, pickles, with various other relishes, around which we quickly gathered our wondering guests—the children not exactly dumb with amazement, but rather lively with expectation. A keg of beer was put on draught close up the trunk of the over-canopying pine, and David brought and distributed the cheering beverage in flagons along the table. Linda was meantime superintending the boiling of a mammoth coffee-pot at the nearest cabin. And now our Henry's most beautiful feminine qualities came into requisition—he stood at my left hand and gave me most efficient aid in doing the honors of the table, while Meta and her good, quiet brother were assisting in the hospitalities in a most faultless style at the farther end. My father and husband were good representatives of social enjoyment,

with much tact adapting themselves to the persons addressed, the replies and suggestions often most amusing—the men were cheerful, the women delighted, the children hilarious, and so the small talk and pale ale flowed in an uninterrupted current.

"Mrs. Links, pray allow me to give you a slice of this tongue, I can recommend it!" said my Henry.

"Oh, thank 'ee, too, Mr. Henry, but thinks I've had 'bout my *sheer* a'ready, un I never *wos* short on't! But du, pray, ask *Miss* Gubbins; here she do stand, like a dumb *statter*."

"Sarce 'long with it, too—like begets like!" retorted Mrs. Gubbins, winking.

"That's so; sure!" Mrs. Links made answer, and both laughed good-naturedly. * * * Linda, resplendent in a crimson and yellow turban and white apron, her broad face beaming, now came bringing the coffee, and—whether it was her majestic figure, her great tact or cordiality, or the fragrance of the coffee, I say not, but Mother Linda was received by those poor, jealous people with hearty good will. There is something in example, and with us, Mother Linda was the same as if she had been the queen of the feast.

The generous sympathy, and equally generous diet, with the heart-cheering beverage, had a magical effect upon these poor clay-eaters, who had hitherto felt all the pinching scorn of their supercilious neighbors, low diet and a dearth of all social amusements; so now the gulf which lay between them and us was bridged over, we might come to them as often as we would, and aid them in growing happier and better. These people had not the *vices* of the wealthier—but they had ignorance, poverty, idleness, superstition, and terrible prejudices to battle with and overcome; this will be a work of time, but something must—shall be accomplished for good!

Few persons have lived to see their wise and benevolent plans carried fully into effect; but I will work on in high faith—the seed thus sown cannot perish wholly.

The dinner over, also the sprightly games among the young people and children which succeeded, we began to think of our return. But I would take little Tacy Links home with me for a few days, to teach her and show her something of a different way of life. When her mother was fully convinced of my earnestness, she acceded to my proposal with pride and joy—then suddenly a blight came over all—

“What a ’pon airth be the gal to wear?”

“Oh, never mind about such a trifle; if you are willing, I can quickly put her clothes in order, just to please her.”

“Well—I never did—now you’r tu good—”

And so, making our simple adieux, my little *rough-hewn* was bundled into the carriage, and we rolled back through the pine forest.

CHAPTER XLV.

A Journey—a Secret Mission—and a Disappointment.

WITHOUT further delay, my father and Mr. Voglesang went on their journey—its real import known only to themselves. I gave myself, sustained and forwarded by my husband, most energetically to my home-plans.

My own example of care and industry, a well organized school; the hours of reading, an occasional extempore lecture, with simple, well defined catechising, were bringing excellent returns. The gardening, farming, building, repairing and improving, all inspected and superintended personally by my amiable husband, deserved and elicited great praise. Our people were a *new* people, under a brighter destiny. I was daily offering up thanksgivings, that my husband had traveled abroad into freer countries, had studied a better system of government—freedom to the governed—and held, that love for our people, a sincere and kindly interest in their welfare—mutual good will were surely better, as a means of control, or incentives to labor and faithfulness, than the pistol, the bowie knife, or the lash.

Thursday, the day decided on for our weekly tea-drinking at “The Magnolias,” the school hours were over, and Miss Miles, in a pink muslin, open front, with its delicate lace bosom, looked something between an angel and a queen of the tropics. Tacy Links, well bathed, her sun-faded hair drest in smooth braids and tied with neat ribbons; a new frock of blue cotton, with a cambric ruffle running round the neck, a neat sun-bonnet, (and the child was in her first earthly paradise,) were to go with us this evening, and truly formed no inconspicuous part of my set.

Madam Guilder was charmed; she held the school-mis-

tress in high esteem, and this newly caught barbarian, Tacy, afforded her great amusement. * *

So with these weekly tea-drinkings at "The Magnolias," my household, and frequent visits to the hamlet of "Edenwold"—for this had at last been decided on as the name of my father's benefaction—the early summer passed, and if I was not satisfied fully with the visible progress, I rested in hope. Our struggle was now up the difficult steeps, but frequent spots of greenness, watered from the well-spring above, and glimpses of beauty cheered us on. Our labor could not be in vain.

* * * * *

Our Sabbath-school, at "Edenwold," gained in interest at each succeeding session, so that by the time my father was returned, it had a most cheering aspect. I had not been led to hope for a long sojourn at this time, but was scarcely prepared for a stay of only four days—and these even divided between my house and The Magnolias—and then he was off to the North, at home. Their journey to the Islands had been pleasant and profitable in many ways, but I learned from Mr. Voglesang, that its main object with him was yet unaccomplished; but what that object was, still remained unrevealed. Neither was it given up. * * *

The heat was now growing oppressive, to me at least, who, reared at the North, in a spacious stone house, whose wide halls kept an even temperature, perhaps felt the change. It was midsummer, and I was to pay a brief visit to my early home—dearly loved, venerable Glenelvan.

Madam Guilder would not accompany me, but would follow with Eolia, and Jehanna, her Irish maid, escorted by Henry, for whose especial pleasure the journey was to be undertaken. Contrary to all precedent, I was to make my first visit in wifhood, to my father's house, unattended by my husband; but the evident necessity for his presence on his estate, added to the care of The Magnolias which would soon devolve on him, for a long period of time, made me

willing to waive all customary courtesy on the present occasion. So I proceeded on my journey with Meta, and my maid, Jinny—a bright quadron of some fifteen years, a grand-daughter of mother Linda's—and for a courier, Yoppa, or rather Jacob, the gravity of his early manhood suggesting the propriety of his maturer name; and most faithfully and satisfactorily did our grave Jacob discharge the duties of his office. And now behold us, after an uneventful journey by water, arriving in New York, and going direct to the house of Mrs. Hoffman—née, cousin Fannie Rapelje—where, to our great surprise and joy, we found aunt Frances, and dear Belle waiting to receive us.

And thither came many of my old and cherished friends to make glad my return, and to learn from my own lips, if there had been even the initiatory steps taken in the course of a higher civilization—steps which so few have cared to take, in a way so hedged up with briars and thorns, underneath which, wolves prowl by night and vipers sting by day, and there are pitfalls for unwary feet. Had I made the advance of one step unscathed by any or all of these? I had. For the heart and the will to do, there is an impervious armor to carry one through all these; and oh, I had had glimpses of the glorious world beyond.

I had a note from my father, so I tarried here a day, and then he came to take me up to Glenelvan.

"While through the elm boughs wet with rain,
The sunset's golden walls were seen,
With clover bloom and yellow grain,
And wood-draped hill and stream between."

CHAPTER XLVI.

Glenelvan!

HOME! the place of my birth, wherein were cradled all the fond memories of my joyous childhood—the paths along which my tender feet had strayed—the flowers I had tended—the trees I had planted and watched with jealous care—the aura of all these came to woo me back to the golden dreams of other days.

Monica was moved out of her habitual gravity at the return of her lovely daughter—good Hans nearly broke the shell of his stolidity at meeting his son. John and Susan were in an even state of prosperity. But oh, at my skyean cottage, with my Jessie, in all the bright bloom of early wifehood, was a little earth-born angel, with blue eyes and downy cheeks, a smiling, dreamy baby, now nearly four months old, and laughing, loving Dian rolled in a flood of delight, when commissioned to take the little Miss Helen McGregor in her tiny willow carriage up to the house, which occurred every sunny morning during my stay.

Haidee was with her father and Miss Rapelje, making the tour of the northern lakes, but would be at home in a week, and would then remain at Umberhurst until after the wedding. "Whose?"

I had met nearly all my most valued friends, when, one evening, after tea, I had taken my sun-hat for a walk in the shrubbery, when at the side-door I met Fred Gunnison.

He apologized for deferring his call so long, but added, that he would stay *longer*, and that he had a great deal to say. We therefore walked into the garden and along amid the waving shadows of the shrubbery to a low seat under the white lilacs where I had often sat with Albertine in the days

of her quiet happiness. We spoke of her—of his father—of the great sorrow which fell upon his mother—and this naturally led to the subject which lay upon his mind.

"Sometime in the early part of June, not having been to the spot where my parents are buried for many months, I took a holiday and went. It is far away from the busy haunts of active life, in a wild and secluded spot. What was my amazement and *confusion* then, on my arrival there to find the place blooming with gay flowers, shaded with young trees carefully transplanted and enclosed by a neat iron fence with a gate opening between two silver firs, and amid all, a clear little brook had been brought down from the hills, down a rocky ledge on the eastern side, which it sprinkled with flecks of moss and overhung as with a water-curtain, and down its winding way all through the enclosure, freshening the grass and brightening the flowers, then spreading into a grassy basin below. The north-eastern corner was closed in near upon the bold front of a jagged rock, over which swept and swayed the pendant bows of a wide-spreading elm, whose trunk rose out of the enclosure."

"Now keep in mind the rock and the elm, cousin Minnie—beg pardon, Mrs. Guilder, I should say, rather."

"Beside this jagged rock I sat, bewildered with all I saw before me. It must be the work of magic, or I was in a dream. A shy wood-bird struck up a hornpipe among the waving branches, and when he stopt, a low, plaintive trill came from a leafy ailanthus—then it was as if my mother spoke to me, for she had led me through those forest paths, and taught me to distinguish the wild notes of these wood songsters.

"I rose up, and went and sat upon the foot of the mound beneath which my mother slept. There bloomed the pale, sweet-scented flowers—there hummed the wild-bee—there came the fresh, soft memories of my father, before a cloud rested on his honored name. I bowed my head upon my hands, and—no, I did not weep, that is not exactly my style,

but I felt, almost, the caressing hand of my mother, as I played at my father's knee. From this faint and far-off glimpse of heaven, I was startled by a sudden and blinding flash of lurid light, followed by a roaring, deafening clap of thunder, and I started up—to see the north and east black with clouds, which had come up behind the rocks and trees while I had been busy with other thoughts than being way-laid among these wild hills by such a storm as there portended. But I'd no notion of showing the white-feather, so I gathered me a great posy of pansies and white violets and primroses and lilies-of-the-valley and purple foxglove, and bound them up with some slips of evergreen, and put an evening primrose in my bosom—for that was a flower my mother loved—and took my way down the hills. * * *

"Now, my precious little Mrs. Guilder, allow me a few minutes to breathe, and I'll tell you what followed! * *

"Ahem! Amid storm and darkness I arrived at my rooms in — street, lighted the gas, arranged my flowers and put them in water. I hoped Greenleaf would come up, for I felt *terribly unusual*. A thumping at my door—ho! that has not a familiar sound! However, I broke the seal! and there was a human shape—a stranger, whom I spontaneously guessed would continue so. Without a word from either of us, he gave me a soiled bit of paper.

"Will Mr. Gunnison follow the bearer in haste'—then a blot and an erasure, a most horrid chirography—'of more import than life or death waits your coming.'

"Ho, ho! what's in the wind? Then to the fellow—'How long have you been waiting?'

"Nix fusta!"

"Well, hold on a bit.'

"Nix!"

"I went back, got a shawl, put a trusty friend into my side pocket, and followed—out into the darkness, the rain pouring, the wind in gusts as from Vulcan's bellows carried away my—no, I'm too fast—I crushed my sombrero down

over my ears and cut ahead. The fellow went off on a swinging trot that I found rather difficult to imitate, and after countless innings and outings, splashings and founderingings, and after more than an hour and a half of leaping and halting, over rough and reeking pavements, my black beast, *bête noir*—as Belle would say—suddenly stopt.

"The darkness and the gusts of wind filled with rain, made it exceedingly inconvenient to investigate the particulars of our locality, so there was little for me beside vague speculation. The same uncouth thumping was repeated, a door was opened, and we groped up a creaking stairway, along a narrow passage, and turned into a low and dismal room. A feeble light burned beside the bed, and a wild and haggard face confronted me. It was a face I had never seen before—nor the like of it. I drew a stool to the bedside, and sat down. He looked up with a start.

"Ha, Gunnison!"

"Yes.'

"Um! You see I made the grim tyrant wait—let me off a bit. I have something to say, at *last*.'

"I am here, so take your time;' for the man was evidently in a great struggle with pain, or with a will to put back that which was rapidly drawing near.

"Time! ha, ha—I *have*; but,' and a terrible spasm shot across his face. When it had passed he resumed in a different tone.

"Your father died, leaving a fair estate, and the papers are now in the right hands. You mustn't *sell* out—it's agin your father's wish—he bought land, planned his house—these Hunkses have kept possession—but an invisible Agent drove them on, to dig, to hew stone, to lay a foundation and build upon the exact plan your father drew—they had lived upon *refuse*—have laid up moneys, have kept unspent the round sum your father paid for this same place—and lo! their heir is the son of the man they ruined. This is what I call retribution! And they know it. They had the money

safe—the man was dead—and no evidence, no papers or record could be found! Snug in their ill-gotten gains, they delved, they hoarded—the misers! There were *five* of them—these Hunkses—there is but one now—Um!

“The man seemed to wander in his mind; then rousing himself he fumbled under his pillow, and took out an old dilapidated port-folio—opened it. There lay the drawing of an architectural plan of a fine house.

“He drew it, Gunnison did; archway, gatepost, loophole, and whatever else, all *plum*. He died; this was copied, and they have builded. They did not know—ah, ha! no, no! but of all living, I was their midnight terror and their waking dread. * * Years ago—this last one perpetrated a crime. *I knew it*. Two days ago, I went up there, death dogging my steps. I made him sign a recognition of rent due from the day your father died; and here is his note of hand for the same; you will find means to cancel it in a “safe” in the cellar. There, that’s done with, take your own!

“At the last word the man collapsed into a *faint*. I felt his pulse, there was only a flicker. I waited. He opened his eyes.

“Do you believe God is just?” he asked in a hoarse whisper.

“Just, without a shadow of turning?”

“Um—I’ve tried to earn salvation. I want to win Heaven at last, because I know my Emmy is there. Since the morning I first decked her grave with flowers, I have thought her nearer to me. And that night when I lay upon the grass beside her grave, and the bright silver stars far overhead, she came to me, *spoke* to me and said—if I could win my way up to Heaven’s gate, she would open it and let me in. I have done what I could—I have secured justice for *her* child—I have adorned her husband’s grave beside her own—I have made all safe from intrusion—I have helped this poor man whom I knew in foreign lands, and the poor miser I did not bring to punishment.”

“My poor friend,” I said, “I am no parson, but I know God is both just and merciful.”

“An immutable law, that as we sow we shall reap, hum?”

“He was evidently sinking, but roused himself to say—

“Have you been up there?”

“I came from there to-night!”

“Oh, then—a—I want to be there—under the elm tree in the corner—a—at the roots, you will find—to pay—a white stone with my name—a——”

“Oh, my friend—I say, what name?”

“Um, Coppersmith—no—no!!”

“What—I listen!”

“Cowperthwaite—Ingoldsby Cowperthwaite!” gone, ah!

“I will do it,” I cried, “you shall repose in sacred ground—I will adorn your grave as you have the graves of my father and mother.”

“There seemed to come a look of consciousness over his pallid face, but I am not sure he heard me—and he was speechless.

“I called out—the door opened and the man who guided me there came in.

“Come and speak to your friend,” I said, “he is very low.”

“Nix fusta!”

“I pointed to the bed, rose and gave my seat—myself walked about the room—after a while I sat down—took his hand—there was scarcely a perceptible pulse—but an occasional twitching about the mouth—a faint, low breath. At last I became fully aware that all was over. It was past midnight—I strove to make ‘Nix’ understand that he should go for *somebody*! would he go? Not a foot! I got a watchman—he got the proper authorities—I left the requisite orders, and then *bent* for home—reached my rooms just before daylight—there, that’s all.”

“Poor Mr. Coppersmith, ah, excuse, Cowperthwaite! I remember very well,” I said, “what a darkened life was his, the only brightening at the last.”

"And that but a doubtful ray, I should think!"

"Small and feeble, but certainly you have given proof that he had entered upon a higher range of thought. But my poor Fred, you had a sad time, but this is not the last, so tell me what remains."

"If ever I saw a woman that did not ask for '*more last words*.' Well, I ordered the funeral, respectable in all its appointments, and along with six other fellows and Greenleaf, went up by cars, at first, (of course,) and then were met by carriages—all the country were abroad. Parson B—— made a beautiful speech. Cowperthwaite himself must have been satisfied with it. Some flowers were thrown in, and evergreens, thanks returned to the good people, and we left the rest to the sexton. We—my friends and I, with the parson along, went home with my dear old grand-parents to tea, as I had previously set. Some of the farmers' wives helped the dear old lady, and it was no failure. But while the tea-kettle was boiling, I produced all the 'papers' I had received, and if you have heard you know, your father was there to clear up the remainder."

"No, I have heard nothing. Now about the house?"

"A week after, we went up to the place, had the drawing in hand. The house is well built, tallies with the plan *exact*, all the substantial parts finished, complete, it is spacious and lofty, but it looks terribly bare and desolate."

"Best so. You will have no unwelcome associations to root up. What shall you do now? Who is living there?"

"*Nobody!* the last of these Hunkses died, and was buried from there yesterday."

"Soh!"

"It is a handsome massive-looking house—it ought to be, these Hunkses have been hewing, digging and building for the *last fifteen years*, and the work shows they haven't been idle, and from the great front chamber you can look down to the south and see the spot where my father's dust reposes—it's about two miles by a winding path through the woods,

—a pretty walk it will be for me and Belle, in the years to come. I have Bovie's consent, and shall have Albertine removed there, and the beautiful monument he had erected for her in Greenwood. And there, I shall at last be laid, when life is over, by the side of my dear old wife."

"This has been a strange occupation, and these are strange thoughts for one of your temperament, Fred, my friend!"

"New at least."

"Now about the box at the foot of the elm?"

"You've hit it—it was a box—iron wrapt in oil cloth. I went up to mark the spot, searched, found, and took it away, but it remained *unopened* until all was finished, a monumental stone set up, all paid. Then I opened it (more than half expecting to find it one of Miss Pandora's, but it was all the same to me!) So I counted the gold—there was to remunerate for all expenses, and a handsome bonus beside."

"What would have become of this, if he had not seen you?"

"What, indeed! These things are sometimes left for Providence to take care of—a pretty safe Trustee, in the long run."

"Most true, indeed."

The purple shadows of twilight fell about us, softly, silently, as the quivering of spirit-wings—the night-moths came out, flitting from flower to flower; and there was the hen-bane miller—for I have never been able to distinguish this beetle by any other name than this, by which he is familiarly known in the country—whirring into the large trumpet flowers, the little elves of long ago, who afforded dear Albertine such boundless delight.

I caught one, as if I would question it of the days and years that had so swiftly and silently fled. * * I seemed to feel again the presence of my long loved Albertine—and my soul melted into a voiceless moaning that this lovely human flower had so quickly passed away.

CHAPTER XLVII.

"The course of true love never did run smooth!"

FIRSTLY. We place this dogma among the fossil remains of old fogyism. Secondly. It never was true. Lastly. We have little faith in this antiquated "true love."

For, after the needful complement of struggle and vexation to prove the genuineness of the article, we have sometimes known it to come to a violent death, or make its exit by slow starvation, and as no truth can ever die, here is a paradox.

So, dear young girls, (and you who are somewhat elder,) take counsel of your common sense, and determine at once to be governed by this alone. * * *

I drank new life at Glenelvan's crystal fountains. Madam Guilder came, and Henry and Eolia, bringing with them a new world of happiness—letters from my Southern home, and various messages of love and good will from our people.

Haidee, with her suite, was now at Umberhurst, whither Henry went daily to pay his respects. She came once, my Zenobia, to visit me at my father's, but now, came no more.

There was much quiet, rational enjoyment at aunt Frances', such as people of innate refinement and great mental culture might be supposed to have. It was among the pleasantest days I ever spent, that on which the betrothal of Henry and Miss Hastings was confirmed and blessed by parents and friends.

* * * * *
A reunion at Mrs. N——'s, at Peekskill! Mrs. Bovie, and the beautiful Mrs. Doctor F——, from the city, are there, and Elizabeth Grant, and others. * *

"But why did not Mrs. McGreggor come with you?"

"The day was so warm—the jaunt would have been too much for baby."

"But she could have left little Miss Helen with Dian."

"Nothing more unlikely!"

"Ah! that young husband and baby are all the world to Mistress Jessie," said Mrs. Bovie, with a kindly smile.

"A most lovely woman!" said Mrs. Dr. F——. "I have been charmed with her fresh and pure thoughts, that gush out at every turn. She is happy—for she has an aim in life."

"The happiness of her husband and child!" suggested Mrs. C——. "This certainly—and something beside."

"Pray, is not that enough for a reasonable woman?"

"For many," Mrs. Dr. F—— said, "not for all. Mrs. McGreggor is very active—is ambitious; she remembers the grandeur and glory of her ancient name, as also her husband's. She is aiding him in accumulating a property, by which they can, as the readiest means, rise from their present obscurity."

"Accumulate property! can a woman do this?"

"Oh, certainly. She has been trained to frugal habits; she has, through the wise forecast of a friend, received a thorough education——"

"Oh, I see! she takes in day-scholars?"

"By no means."

"Takes in sewing?"

"By a simple method. She has her garden, her poultry-yard, and a moiety from her dairy."

While various lively ejaculations and sage comments were being made, I turned to the centre-table, whereon were lying choice books and several "Monthlies." By direct inspiration I opened at a "Story," and knew the author at once.

"Ladies, if you would like, I will read you something."

I was appointed reader pro tem., by acclamation. "It is quite new—in the last number, which is scarcely issued yet." I began—"The Destiny of a Pearl," by one of our ablest contributors."

"Oh, now, if we are to listen to you, dearest Minnie, please leave out all superfluous ornamentation," Maria said, and her face was a lovely carnation. I read to the end without interruption. Mrs. Bovie was charmed. Mrs. Dr. F—— said it was finely written—very—would like to know the author; while Mrs. C—— said there was so much that was *new* in it, she thought it would not please the public generally. But Elizabeth Grant said the public were gaining new ideas every day.

After tea, we strolled into the garden to see Maria's flowers—from thence to the vegetable garden; in the latter we chanced to be alone.

"Dearest Maria, I know that the love of power, be it as a leader in society—literary fame—or in the establishment of prayer-meetings,—some sort of preëminence has been the moving-spring of your life; then why still cling to a fictitious name?"

"The power I have attained. I am paid a generous sum for my articles—I have added valuable books to my husband's library—have laid out our garden anew, and added many comforts to our home, which, from husband's small salary, we could scarcely hope."

"That is good; what more?"

"I am known to a few of the best critics, and a small circle of friends. I have intercourse with the choicest spirits of the land. In the department I have chosen, I mean to excel."

"This is best. I shall send down my contribution for five copies of the '—— Monthly,' that your articles may be seen by my friends abroad. Are you ever unhappy?"

"I do not know. I am never idle. I rise each morn with such a glow—heart and head in the work before me. And then, there is my husband, my house, and my little Katie, for my leisure hours—a full compensation."

"How?" * * *

Maria did not say that the poor, the sick, and otherwise

afflicted, came to her continually for aid; that she was oftener in the darkened chamber of the sick and dying than in the gay circles where she was courted—this was an influence, a power, if you will, of which she spoke not; but I knew it well. * * *

Evening. Other guests are all gone—Elizabeth Grant and I sat in that pretty front chamber, and watched the rough hillside, then bathed in the moonlight's silvery sheen.

"Now tell me, my friend, how you came to choose your present profession, instead of medicine, like Mrs. F——."

She laughed gaily, and then answered—"That was my first choice, and I studied Physiology to that end. You know how we were circumstanced at home—remote from intellectual advantages, with no sphere open to us but drudging toil at home, varied with teaching a small school in summer. This was as barren of compensation for Maria as it was for me—and Heaven knows how my heart was crushed, when her good Angel came to bear her away."

"Yes, I know Maria's early life was full of trials—and of one great sorrow—but I see her noble forehead crowned with bays. Now for thee?"

"Well, I had two friends who had just graduated in medicine—another had accepted a Professorship in a Medical College. The first named could find no opening anywhere. One—Miss P—— desired to settle in Albany—I went there to see what could be done for her, also for myself. I went to Dr. —— and there laid Miss P——'s case before him—his brow grew *black*—brought up the old sneer about women's doing surgery. Then I said, If we were well qualified, we might attend to cases among children—and certainly, our own sex! The storm burst.

"Women!! that's the best part of our practice!" Then I said very mildly, that I had been informed that it had been stated by several medical men, that this part of medical practice ought to be in the hands of women—as it was universally in the past ages—and that when women were willing,

prepared and qualified to take—they would cheerfully yield it up.

“*Well, they lied!* that’s all. Without this practice, and as accoucheur, my profession would not support me.” Then followed the thunder of—“Go spin, you jades!” and I was glad to escape from the office.”

“What did you do then?”

“I left Albany, the last place I should have gone to, perhaps, with any progressive movement in my head—and at once determined to study law. I had no means within my reach; my father, after the fashion of his elders, reserving my patrimony intact until his death, or my marriage. I took a school, and commenced the study of Latin with my brother-in-law. Ah, you remember. I continued to teach, but delved on in my legal studies, and have at length been admitted to the bar. I like it. My profession suits me better than any other I could have chosen. I am not soft. My early years spent among those rock-ribbed hills—the boyish sports which were habitual with me, an innate ambition, and a determined will not be *set aside*, merely because I was a *girl*, must be taken into the account, when you sum up my character.”

“At first, when entering upon your studies, doubtless you thought only of drawing up deeds and other legal documents, helping to prepare cases, etc.”

“*At first*, yes. But a wider field and a higher aim soon dawned upon me. Oh, and let me tell you how I grew to delight in my vocation. In a remote district, I was called to prosecute an ugly case. While preparing this I cannot tell you the feeling that pervaded me. The day and the hour came when I would speak—and I knew it must be before a motley throng. I had my subject worked thoroughly into my mind, with full notes of all the strong points, with the best of legal references under my hand. I rose—there was a hum and a buzz—this quickly subsided. I began deliberately at first, mounting up step by step, until fully

launched—then that sea of promiscuous faces were blended in one, and I felt as if speaking to one individual mind; and, as I heard the tremor and trill of my own voice rising upon the silence, found words for great thoughts. Oh, I felt that I trod on air; and I know not the woman whose position I would have taken in exchange for my own. In mine was a glorious reality.”

“And now?”

“Well, I did not lose my *case*—and gained the thanks of my poor client, and some commendation from a higher source. I do not care to plead often—I have enough to do beside. And then there are my studies; and I wish to save my voice for riper years.”

“This carries me back to a conversation I heard many years ago. I did not at all understand it then. I was with mamma on a visit at the house of old Dr. B——, a sturdy old Scotch Presbyterian. It was just after the time Miss Abby Kelly had appeared before the public as a speaker. Mamma admired her greatly, having heard her address an audience in Philadelphia. The doctor had heard her too, I think at the same time, and was exasperated. They talked quite a long time—mamma very sweetly as you may believe—but the doctor waxed warm, and at last burst out with—

“‘Well, she’ll never marry—ha, ha! No man wants to marry an Amazon!’ and the conversation ended.

“Afterward, I asked mamma if Miss Kelly was an Amazon, and what her labors for the poor slaves had to do with marrying?

“‘Nothing at all, child,’ mamma said, with a smile, ‘now go and read the story of poor Yarrico.’”

“Ha, ha, quite in point,” Miss Grant said, laughing, “that is the view the men of a former age held of woman’s sphere. Marrying, yes, that *was* the only hope, the only aim in woman’s life. I may marry some years hence if the right one comes to ask me—but not until I have fortified myself with

resources. Marrying will never be my profession. I have seen where all on earth was staked upon *this!* I have seen young girls married with every promise of happiness, blush through a few years, bearing so conscientiously such a weight of adoration—then came indifference, followed by years of scorn and neglect—and the poor helpless souls, all unknowing why! God only knows how men can change so! But if women had congenial pursuits, something more than washing dishes and mending old clothes, I think they would not die down to the roots, or go *mad* as many do." * * *

Two events were now to fill the halls of Glenelvan with a flood of joyous excitement. My husband came, and Miss Hastings was to be married in a week. Somewhat to our surprise, Mr. Voglesang did not accompany Mr. Guilder. Then after a time I remembered that my Meta, pale and silent, had left the hall. I went to Monica's room to look for the young girl—found her sitting beside her mother. Oh, that warm, loving, trusting German nature! I laid my hands upon her pretty head, smoothing her soft brown hair. "Dear child, it can make but little difference, you will return with me to the South in a few weeks!"

A look was exchanged between mother and daughter, the latter kissed my hand, and burst into a flood of tears.

My father and our young lady attorney had been at Umberhurst, drawing up necessary documents—it was a simple plan for the future welfare of all—half of Capt. Hastings property was settled on his daughter, the remainder of course was left for his future disposal. All desirable preparations were completed in good time, and the bridal morning dawned gloriously upon the hills and woods of Umberhurst. But, oh, I never can go through the details of another wedding, the very thought of it takes my breath away. * * * There! we have said our last kind words, heaped blessings numberless and nameless on the drooping head of the bride, beautiful in her new happiness, and the carriage rolls away, for the whole party must be on board the ocean steamer which

sails from the port of New York at twelve o'clock to-day. The bride, with her tall and handsome husband, Henry Clay Guilder, (how these Southerners do love to perpetuate the memory of their saints), her father, Captain Hastings, Madam Guilder and Eolia, with their servants, all gone. They are to travel on the continent of Europe, to be absent, at least, one year. Shall I ever see my Zenobia again!

CHAPTER XLVIII.

Engelborga.

FIVE years have passed! Five busy, glorious years, filled with progressive plans and practical improvements.

What a glorious world this is to work in—at least it will do very well, until we attain to a fairer, when we shall work, each soul of us, carrying out our main ideas, but with fewer clogs and hindrances. Work! that is the world for me,—not your sing-song, not your eternal go-to-meeting festival. I'll none of it!

Always remembering that, first comes the great review of this life that is past, when every thought, word, and deed is slowly marshalled before the ever-conscious soul.

Five years have passed! It is in the beautiful summer-time, and I am again at Glenelvan!

In that holy hour, the purple gloaming, I walked with my mother up to that quiet spot, where our beloved dead repose. Standing beside the flower-crowned grave of baby Gertrude, I asked my father to tell me about aunt Sophie Engelborg—

and now he could not deny me. He told me in a few sentences, for the memory of her grief and early death lay heavy upon his soul, even at this distant day.

“Our Engel was affianced to *her cousin*, our father's brother's son, Carl Hermann Minster. He wrote often, but visited us rarely. It seemed that every fiber of her heart was twined about her lover; and she was gentle and confiding. Ah! and the marriage-day had come, and with it her bridegroom elect, and many guests.

“Another came, uninvited, and without a wedding-garment on—a young woman, carrying in her arms a puny boy. Led

by some strange instinct she found Monica, and craved speech of the young lady, the bride.

“‘Ay, now, what is this,’ said Monica—‘can no one answer to alms but our lady Engelborg, and this her marriage-day?’

“‘It is not for alms, good mother,’ the young creature said. ‘But bring me to the young lady, or a terrible fate will overtake her.’

“Thus admonished, our faithful stewardess granted her request.” * *

After a while, I said, softly, “Pray go on, dearest papa.”

“Oh, yes, love! Well, this young thing with her baby, was the legal, but unhappy wife of my sister's bridegroom elect. I pass over our Engel's wretchedness and despair. Our family physician was in the house. I summoned him to her room—told him all. He said she must be roused at once—her despair was verging upon insanity. (See what folly and wickedness to so lavish one's whole soul upon any human creature!) The poor mother, young Blandina, was hid and comforted in Engelborg's bridal chamber; and I announced to our friends that the *marriage* would not take place, but the festivities (oh, how hollow!) would proceed.

“Here it was that your mother, my Minnie, shone forth in the great glory of her womanly nature—putting away her own sorrow—for, she said, ‘What right have we to afflict our friends with our private griefs!’ She soothed the heart-stricken, and made the happy happier.

“At first Engelborg could take nothing, she was suffocating with her grief; but the doctor made her take some wine—then leaning on his arm, pale but calm, she met our guests, and faintly smiling, like a dear angel, made the circuit of the rooms, and with gentle words and graceful replies, won them away from harsh judgments—danced in several sets—got through the day and evening! And that night, we watched until she slept—. The morning came, and we trembled for what it might bring. Our Engel rose—com-

forted the poor mother, caressed the boy, loaded both with gifts, and we started on a long, long journey—sailed with them for Germany. We took the poor betrayed wife back to her mother, who was poor and a widow, and established her in outward comfort, our Engel settling half of her fortune on the hopeless mother and her innocent babe. The sea voyage, and traveling in Germany and Switzerland, was her earthly salvation—her great deeds made her the angel which you still remember.”

“Ah! what ever became of that most wretched man, the prime cause of so much misery?”

“He was wrecked off the coast of Norway—perished—the last of *his* father’s house!”

“But, his son?”

“Indeed! I had forgotten. The son of this repudiated, deserted, most innocent wife, is now the sole heir to an old estate in the fatherland.” * * *

How lovely Mistress Jessie has grown! Her light figure somewhat rounded, her bright, clear tones somewhat subdued, her smile so very motherly, as from her stirring occupation she watches little Helen chirruping and capering in childish glee around the baby—her tiny brother of some six months, whom we playfully call the little Rob-Roy. Yes, my Jessie is very lovely.

We drink tea together on Thursday, sometimes, but not *invariably*, as once—we have both of us an enlarged sphere at home. Dian, now quite a grown girl—plump and good-natured—is *exceedingly* proud of Miss Helen, and also of “our baby.” Various people do wonder how *that* Dian came to be *such a good girl!* quite a treasure!

A question for wise ones.

“Mi Meu!” Ah! Miss Polly Dunn, you little knew how much amusement you were creating by thus clumsily taking the name of one of the “sacred nine” in vain!

“Venite per me—cari amici”—the door of my room was gently opened—a loved voice saluted me—and—

“Pray, do not let me disturb you, if you are positively engaged.”

“Not engaged *now*, dear—the spell is broken; come, sit by me.”

“Ah! you were writing—what is this?”

“Nothing—at least it is nothing until it is finished. This is but the beginning of a poem that has been running in my head, oh, so long! I heard a simple but touching story in Italy, and have woven it into rhyme. Shall I read it?”

“Ah, do!”

VENITE PER ME—CARI AMICI? *

In an old castle, far away and lone,
With huge towers piled to meet the biting blast,
In a lone turret, ivy-overgrown,
A lorn maid pour’d this sad plaint, and her last.—
There the great ship, with richest burthens oft
Sail’d slowly by to meet the open sea,
And cold hearts warmed to list a wail so soft—
“Venite per me—venite per me—
Cari amici?”

No sister’s hand may smoothe the flowing hair—
Or mother’s lips may give the fond caress—
No brother brave may seek her grief to share—
Nor love, nor friendship, ever come to bless.
Though a proud sire may sorrow for his child
This castle-turret must her prison be!
And he must listen to her moanings wild:
“Venite per me—venite per me—
Cari amici?”

On her fair arms she bows her weary head,
And weeping slow, forgets the passing day;
For reason’s light from her young soul has fled!
And, all, save one fond dream, has passed away.
Though in grim chains her spotless soul doth lie,
Her grief—a voiceless prayer—ascendeth *free*—
And the dear God hears her despairing cry—
“Venite per me—venite per me—
Cari amici?”

* “Come for me—come for me—dear friends!”

"What a poet my little wife might be, if only she would give fewer hours to her schools, her gardens and her house, and *more* to the cultivation of her talent!"

"Dearest husband, I have time enough for all, and if this pleases you, I will ask Eolia to set it to music. Her study in Italy has brought out her musical talent wonderfully. And then I will write the other verse, for, my dear, I had not quite completed it. But, prithee, do not suppose this is any part of the long poem, my poem of a thousand lines, I once threatened you with. Oh, no, no, this is only a first flight by way of trying my wings, you know."

"Ha, ha, I *half* believe you are in earnest!"

There came a tap-tap at the door—it was opened—a wee sunny face peeped in—bright brown curls falling over a pure forehead and blue laughing eyes, and the little one came tripping in, her dimpled arms eagerly outstretched.

"Annie foun' mamma!" and Polly Dunn followed apologizing, "Miss Annie would come—indeed, ma'am, I couldn't keep her."

"Ah, my pet, my wee Annie, my darling!" I said, bringing her upon my lap with a bound.

"Annie foun' mamma—papa too!" clapping her tiny hands with glee. We listened to her joyous prattle, her father winding her silken hair over his fingers. Presently I detected an infantile yawn.

"Ah, ha, wee one, what are the little birdies in the garden saying to-night?"

"Say—go peep, Annie, go peep."

"Yes, pet, now mamma will go put Annie in her wee nest, to go to sleep."

"Dood night, papa—Annie go peep."

Angels guard thy slumbers, my cherub child. * *

Umburhurst is still most lovely with its hills and streams, its deep wood and winding avenues—the sweet serenity spread over all, makes it like a fondly remembered dream.

Aunt Frances, still freshly fair, her equable temper aiding

to sustain the bloom of youth, is now as ever, the beautiful divinity of that ancient house. I cannot detect even a shade of sadness in her face, though of all her lovely daughters, not one now remains to her. But then her husband, my uncle Rapelje, is a most estimable man, and appreciates the noble traits of her character as fully as he does her most delicate graces. He will be fond and faithful unto death. They have frequent letters from our queenly Leonora, now with her husband in Edinburg. This has been the dearest little romance of all. Soon after Miss Rapelje's arrival in Europe as friend and governess to Miss Hastings, she met the young Ensign Campbell, only son of a Scotch Baronet. His regiment was ordered off to India, and no token of remembrance or word of love passed between them. He was wounded and the following year came home, and the friendship so suddenly interrupted, was renewed. He went to the Crimea, and his bravery was rewarded by a captaincy, and on reaching England, was admitted to the order of knighthood. With the least possible delay, our hero took passage for New York, from thence proceeded to Umburhurst. He found the bride of his heart lovelier than when he left her, for she still regarded him with interest. Leonora was now nearly thirty, ripened into a most glorious woman, delicious as a peach and delicate as a lily.

The marriage was solemnized at an early day, and in a few weeks this noble pair sailed for Liverpool, from thence hastened to Edinburg to visit the parents of the happy husband. Her marriage was *not* one of ambition, though it has made her by courtesy, at least, Lady Leonora Campbell, giving her a social position which she is well qualified to adorn. So much for native loveliness, and Mrs. Willard's excellent seminary.

Early in May, Belle was married. Had she been fancy-free, doubtless Lady Campbell and her husband would have sought a more brilliant match for our pretty sylph—but Fred is a fine fellow and Belle will live near her mother, for her new home is not many miles from Umburhurst.

A week after his marriage, Fred opened his house to his numerous friends—Belle, beg pardon—Mrs. Gunnison, was quite like a little princess in her great stone castle. But she laid aside all pretention to stateliness, and the rustle of her white silk robe might be heard as she flitted from room to room, and from story to story, pausing awhile in the great front chamber—a noble apartment, with its wide verandah, sustained by massive columns—then up to the observatory, where we had a magnificent view of the surrounding country.

Belle might well be proud and happy here.

All these five years has her affianced husband prosecuted the work of finishing and embellishing this house his father planned. Then Hamish McGregor was there two months laying out the grounds and gardens, and opening fine views; and lastly, her father had sent up the upholsters, and carpets were chosen, furniture selected—and, more lastly, her friends had sent up many beautiful gifts for the lovely bride.

Standing on the lawn in front, and looking up to this noble piece of architecture, Greenleaf said:

“What name do you mean to give your house?”

“Retribution Hall.”

“Hah, ha, ha—that’s like you, my most eccentric fellow, ha, ha!”

“You don’t like it! well, I confess I don’t.” Here with a new expression coming into his face, he added:

“I call it Eden.”

“That is pretty.” So in a small circle Fred Gunnison’s house bears that name—*Eden*. * * *

But now Claude Rapelje is soon expected home with his wife, a beautiful creole lady, and will remain at Umberhurst for a long period of time.

Amid all my new duties and interests I sadly miss my gentle Meta—my summer twilight. Would nothing else serve, but she must fall in love with Mr. Voglesang?

It was like his audacity to prefer my little *dove-eyed*!

Nevertheless, I’ll try to be resigned, since they seem well suited to each other and eminently happy. He has done much to deserve so sweet a wife. He made himself master of his business and was respected by all with whom he had to do. Then, mother Linda, proud of his success, testified to what my husband always suspected, that Juan was his near relative, that their grandfather “was one and the same man”—Juan’s mother being the child of the elder Guilder. And when this pretty quadroon was eighteen, she went with the family to Cuba—and while there, by the consent of her mistress, was married to a Cuban resident, though a native of old Spain—and here, in this garden of the world, her child was born.

The Guilders spent nearly four years upon the island, and then returned to their estate in North Carolina, taking the beautiful Irene with them. But the Cuban authorities would not suffer Voglesang to follow his wife and boy. So just and equal is the law of old Spain, touching the people of her colonies.

Soothed for a time by her child, the bereaved wife watched and waited, and at last, did what many have done before and since, gave up all hope, and laid down to her last sleep. And her son was left a slave child—grew up as a petted and privileged companion in the “house”—but might have been sold into hopeless bondage, but for the interposition of Providence, in the shape of George Washington Guilder, who withdrew all legal restraints; and Francis Juan Voglesang sprang up into a recognized manhood. And this is English law! Beg a thousand pardons! This is the Southern code, by which our chivalric neighbors protect their children! * *

My husband thought sadly upon the wrongs of Juan’s mother, also upon her son’s, and determined to make all possible amends, and proceeded to withdraw all claims to the old plantation of the Guilders, and gave a clear deed of the same to his cousin Voglesang; for, said he—“you are, by

the law of equity, more justly entitled to it; for while I have traveled abroad, drawing from thence all my resources, you have remained and looked after my business; and, moreover, have ever been a faithful ally of my foster-mother's, at 'The Magnolias.'

To conclude—though Mr. Voglesang failed in his mission on his first visit to Cuba, he prosecuted it with a determination which succeeded at last.

He found his father! But now, old, feeble, and with growing discontent, he was permitted to leave the Island, if only he took nothing with him. He accepted the conditions; and now, at the sunset hour, he may be seen seated in a luxuriant chair, on the vine-covered piazza, talking cheerfully with his honored son, and caressed and waited upon by his lovely daughter-in-law, whose affection he returns most cordially.

My letters from Meta are frequent, kind, and cheering. Through them I learn that Miss Miles is very successful in the school, and is herself considered a great acquisition to the society there, and at "The Magnolias." My former protégé, Tacy Links, is developing a fine, healthy figure, is robust, and possessed of a lively temper. When out of school, is with Mrs. Voglesang, learning to sew very neatly, preparatory to being apprenticed to the dress-making business.

But letters only would not suffice for all who are at Glenelvan. Dear Meta comes annually with her husband to visit me, and satisfy the heart of her friend and doating mother. Before I left my home in the South, the last time, I made a careful investigation of the affairs at Edenwold, once a deserted and seemingly hopeless waste, now a sweet oasis in these barren wilds.

With the newly developed capacities of these villagers, vice clay-eaters, with the generous aid of our "carpenter, David," and various helps from us, they have neat and well-built cottages, with carefully tilled patches around—choice fruit trees have been successfully transplanted there—a

great variety of grapes are grown there, for these furnish excellent food for the table. Neither is milk—that staple commodity in household items—wanting there. Mrs. Gubbins, as well as her nearest neighbor, Mrs. Links, rejoices in the possession of a long unhoped-for but snug, though dumpy little *cow*.

It is quite impossible to say which is best pleased with this valuable accession of worldly good; Mrs. Gubbins, with her dumpish, neat, crumple-horned, red and white, and *spotted* favorite, or Mrs. Links, with her line-back, no-horned, rusty-black, and whitey-brown, awkward-looking animal.

"She's the best critter for milk," says dame Links—"and so gentle."

"Ni-about as good as my *spotty*!" puts in dame Gubbins. "I ken allus tell w'en she's a comin' home through dem pine woods—arter bein' gone all day—comin' home to be milked and fed. I aller's *yhers* her bell fust!"

"Ky! that's 'cause her bell's the biggest—give me *spotty* for milk—and she be's a rale beauty, sure," concludes the dame Gubbins most complacently as aforesaid "beauty," lifts her head from a heap of carrots.

Some other families kept a little poultry—a brace of hens, perhaps, tethered by a coarse cotton string, with a brood of brisk young chicks flitting around for a stray grasshopper, or villainous bug, to eke out their daily fare—these with the *inevitable pig*, which, to their credit be it written, was penn'd in the remotest corner, and, in some instances, quite on the outside of their respective lots, or freehold, and a little, fiery-tempered Scotch-terrier, kept for the general safety of the community, made up the complement of live stock of the hamlet.

And within the last year, Captain Hastings has, either from his great love for me, or from a motive I just begin to learn, established a permanent school there.

So my little star of the pine-wood—my little friend, Tacey Links, will be a well-informed and capable, as she now

promises to be a *lively* business woman—all the other children of Edenwold will have equal advantages. I was also much pleased to see that Mimy Gubbins had less ink on her face and fingers—also, fewer blots on her copy-book than heretofore.

Furthermore, carpenter David duly trots over with the Weekly News for the fathers of the hamlet, (which, I am sorry to say, must of necessity be read to them by the children!) * * *

CHAPTER XLIX.

Conclusion.

My husband has great comfort in seeing his foster-mother, Madam Guilder, so comfortably settled, again in the pleasant home where all the days of her wedded happiness were spent. She went abroad with her son after his marriage—for that she could not be separated from him, and returned with him and family after a year's absence.

While abroad, her matronly pride in her beautiful Eolia had led her into a negotiation with an Italian count for her daughter's hand in marriage. He was charmed with her wit and personal graces, and knew, also, that the young lady was only the *adopted* daughter of Madame. All the preliminaries were settled, and the marriage-morn drew near. Eolia grew feverish and impatient, and finally threw herself into Madam Guilder's arms in an ecstasy of grief, and besought her to break off the match.

"Why, my daughter, what reason can I assign?"

"Dear friend—dearest mother—you are going home in a month, and Henry and his wife and the baby! I shall be left here alone with these wild Italians!"

"Eolia, you will be left with your husband, Count M——."

"And he will shut me up in his castle, and from my *barred* windows, like poor Veronica we hear about, I shall be forever crying—'Venite per me—venite per me—cari amici?'"

It is scarcely necessary to add that this marriage, which would have been one of pride and ambition, on one side at least, was broken off. Eolia came home with her friends,

* Are you coming for me—dear friends?

much to their comfort and joy, and in six months, with her own serene consent, was married to—our sedate Jacob, *alias* Yoppa, and happily settled with Madam Guilder at The Magnolias.

Farmer Jacob is an excellent manager, and faithfully and profitably conducts the business of his patroness.

Ah! my good Henry—my dear cousin—when I said, playfully, “I had other views for you,” (than falling in love with sparkling Miss Amelia Hoffman,) I scarcely hoped for such fruition. United by the dearest ties to my beloved Haidee, and living within full view of his mother’s house, and daily meeting with that mother he so much loved, and from whom it would have been cruel to part—ah! he is eminently happy.

The society of his mother, his wife, and lovely children—his newly-built house, which is a model for convenience and beauty—his garden and fountains—though these are much, yet, all these do not make up the entire sum of his happiness. The foundation of this is laid in the faithful performance of duties—in a life lived up to his highest convictions of what is right.

Henry’s father had left him a fine, though not large plantation, and all his inherited and acquired property in slaves—from these his mother’s dowry was drawn—as also his entire resources while living abroad. A goodly number of these *chattels* were employed on the plantation, others variously hired out, where they brought home the highest wages.

Miss Sina, (as she was good naturedly called, from her uncommonly smart ways, and from her having picked up a modicum of book-knowledge,) a stewardess on one of the New Orleans steamboats, earned a handsome salary, which she invariably brought to her mistress at Christmas; all for which she received a *present* of a handsome gown, (for which her mistress had no farther use,) a gay cotton handkerchief for a turban, and other such feminine toggery, used by this class at the South. Jack and Bomba, deck hands on another steamboat, and Herod, miscalled Hero, a conspicuous bar-

ber in that southern city, most noted for its *superficialities*, were now to be held by a different tenure.

Henry returned to the home of his childhood with new and higher ideas,—ideas of a higher civilization,—therefore the whole plan of his domestic economy must undergo an entire change. He determined at once to emancipate every slave left to him by his father, and to be served and surrounded by a free and enlightened people. To do this, was both difficult and dangerous, from the life-long, slavish prejudices of his white neighbors. But he had a determined *will*, and *now* an enlightened conscience; he thought deeply, took counsel of the wise and good, and persevered until this deed of righteousness and justice was fully accomplished.

Upon his marriage, and proposed foreign sojourn, it had been told to his slaves, that something better than they had ever yet known, was in store for them *all*; and those who were most temperate, industrious, and faithful to their master’s interests during his absence, would be the most benefitted *at* his return.

The promise contained in this oracular saying, could not fail of its fulfillment.

It was well understood in the family circle that it was Haidee’s wish and expectation, that when her husband returned to reside upon his own estate, that some plan for the manumission of his slaves should be immediately carried into effect. And it was observable that she would never speak of them as “our people,” until they were free.

The plan adopted, though far from perfect, they felt was better than nothing: that immediate action in a cause of such moment, was better than idle dreaming.

Thus: All who had reached the age of thirty, were manumitted unconditionally, and hired at good wages, by their former master, to work at whatever they had been accustomed or liked best. Those over twenty-four, were apprenticed for three years, by way of preparing them for that freedom, of which they had been too long defrauded, clothed

and fed at the master's expense, and taught many things in which hitherto they had known no interest. Every remaining soul to be free: to assume the responsibility of "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness," when each should fill the rounded periods of twenty-four years.

When this task was done, it seemed easier far than it had looked in the beginning.

Miss Sina, aforesaid, was of the set who were over twenty-four,—she was twenty-seven. To her, Henry and his father-in-law at once paid a visit. After a little judicious preparation, and gaining her promise of profound silence, for various and well known reasons, they proceeded to show her how near she was to freedom, and well earned freedom. Her delight, enthusiastic and demonstrative, carried her almost beyond the bounds of prudence.

If this anticipated or proposed act of manumission should transpire, so long in advance of its taking effect, it might injure both herself and friends.

And then she revealed to Henry a little plan she had long had in hand—to propose to his mother at their next meeting, to be allowed to accumulate money to buy herself—to buy her own *freedom*; and for this great boon she had been willing to toil, to stint herself for years to come, if only she might be free *at last*!

And now she was going to be free, free, free!!

Jack and Bomba, employed as deck hands on the "Sunflower," a handsome steamer plying between New Orleans and Cuba, also received a similar visit; and then Hero, the well-known barber—each and all of whom received the glad tidings with every permitted demonstration of joy.

"Tell ye what, Massa Henry," said Bomba, after a few moments' thoughtful silence, "I'se done jest gwine to lie by all dat money I spends for gin and 'bacca, and bring 'em home at Christmas—all I done spends heretofore—dat's so!"

"Right, my good fellow," said Henry, seizing Bomba's great, warm hand, "and I will keep it in bank for you; and will you do the same, Jack?"

"Dat I will, young massa; an' I'se buy no more dem lod-dery tickets—I'se done bring 'em all, sure."

This money, these poor fellows had been in the habit of gaining by odd jobs, or over-work.

And this plan, as its originators hoped and expected, worked excellently. Even if there were some inequalities in the benefits, and if any one given to close observation or fault-finding remarked upon this, they were told by old uncle Crepo—a pious slave once, now a free man—the parable of the laborers being hired to work in the vineyard for a penny a *day*—and that those who came at the eleventh hour received also a penny!

Even if there was great inequality in the gift, it was better than to attempt nothing.

But the people were mainly content with what they received—for they had living hope of even better things. * *

One year passed—and it was a noticeable fact that Henry's plantation was in a state of higher cultivation than ever before—crops heavier—cattle sleek and healthy, and neither mildew or blight came near. Old Crepo said it was the "hand of Providence in it all—the blessing of the Lord on a real Christian master." There was a great truth in this—but others said it was all owing to more work being done, and better. Be this as it may—the fact was unmistakable.

It was not enough for Haidee that she sympathized with her husband in this noble enterprise—she had set apart a work for herself. From her own funds, which were vast, she built a handsome edifice for her school—beautiful in design, healthful in location, and pleasing in all its varied departments. Then she brought over from Glasgow a well educated, pious Scotch woman, into whose care the pupils and the grounds about the building were given. And this whole work—the school-room—the teacher—the pupils—their inception of learning—their progress—all, was a study for an artist. It was the creation of a loving heart and a noble

intellect, and few beside Haidee could have conceived it. Her views upon the education of her people were the growth of her whole life—had been purified and ennobled by her residence and researches in foreign lands—and too far in advance of our present civilization in this to be given here. Beside, they were not promulgated as a creed—only seen as they were lived out in a beautiful and holy life. Her people—her free and enlightened people—loved her with a deep, passionate love, akin to reverence—a fondness, an enduring attachment, a devotedness, such as none but the children of a tropical clime can know.

Some of them, it is true, had had their warm African blood cooled by an infusion of the Anglo-Saxon; this, peradventure, might give them the elements of firmness, perseverance,—a *will to do*, and to *be*,—so they may not be the losers in the end. * *

Lastly, to the amazement and mystification of all save one, (and that's me you know,) Captain Hastings bought a large tract of land, fertilized and laid it out like an English park, in which, upon a slight eminence, he has built an English villa, and duly installed a corps of English servants therein.

And now each morning may be seen this courtly, but hale old gentleman, walking briskly over to salute his daughter, her eldest, the little Elgin Hastings, born in Italy, a noble boy of four years, and Maude, a tiny maiden, nearly two months old.

He also, as aforementioned, took under his especial charge the thriving hamlet of Edenwold, visiting there often, giving excellent hints, wrapt up in most substantial means to put them in force, gave text books, and established the school. He was at work, forming society in the neighborhood where his daughter had chosen to reside, and would end his days, so his memory will be fondly cherished, when the mortal part has forever passed away.

Well, this home of my uncle's is a dear, lovely place,—

quite a paradise; but, he gravely hinted to me that there was yet a void, at the same time raising to his lips a delicate nosegay of geranium leaves, violets, and orange blossoms.

"Ah, dearest uncle, I see, I see!" * * * *

* And as he would take no denial, my dear friend, the high-bred Iolete Greenleaf, accepted the title we so joyously and lovingly gave her, of "the old man's bride," and became the serene and graceful mistress of the beautiful English villa, and the heart of a truly great and noble man.

I cannot now pause to notice half the beautiful things, both for comfort and luxury, in this elegant and genial home of the lovely Iolete; but these exquisite "marbles" grew beneath the hand of the young sculptor, Miss Arabella Greenleaf. That lovely "Psyche," and this, "A Poet's Dream," and that charming "Diana," with her quiver full of arrows, standing there in that most cunningly-designed entrance hall, were purchased as soon as finished, and farther orders given by her noble brother-in-law, my dearly loved uncle Hastings. * *

Close your eyes now, gentle or earnest friend, while we spread beneath your feet the green silken carpet interwoven with gorgeous flowers, the charmed carpet of the Arabian Nights. We gather up the four corners, and, "Presto," we are sailing through perfumed air—hear the murmuring of woods and waters—the songs of birds on quivering wing—and alight at Glenelvan, where our dreamy eyes first opened.

Here the same bracing atmosphere, the ripple of the brooks, the scent of familiar flowers, the feathered builders in the well-kept shrubbery, the kindly offices prompted by loving hearts, all—all remain the same!

The hills, the woods, the gently-flowing river, with their glorious skies over-arching all, alike remain unchanged. And best of all, my father's house! That was built of too massive and enduring material to change with the onward march of time.

In the library, through all the morning hours, sits my well-beloved, arduously conning the heavy-lettered page—delving at his law studies. Now and then our Annie's bright face peeps in between the leaves,—his hand is laid lovingly upon her sunny head; sometimes a fond caress acknowledges her coming. These angel visits never interrupt, often give a new impulse to her doating father, in these prolonged seasons of study. * *

I feel that he will yet be eminent in the noble profession he has chosen—not quite so early as our American spirit of impatience demands, but eminent, certainly!

“For me, my home is now with husband and child, with our father, at Glenelvan.”

It may be said by many persons, more captious than benevolent, that the foregoing pages are but an *idle tale*—the baseless dream of an overheated brain—that it never did, never can, never will happen.

Not so, my friends. I can see in the far distance, schools opening, the new church accepted, prejudice, bigotry, and the bondsman's fetters giving way before the advance of a nobler freedom. The wilderness and waste places made to bud and blossom as the rose. And I say unto you, there be many standing here among you, who shall not taste of death, until all these things herein written shall be fully accomplished.