

# RACHEL KELL.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"MY MOTHER," "SCENES AND CHARACTERS IN COLLEGE, &c.

*[John Mitchell]*

' In woods and glens I love to roam,  
When the tired hedger hies him home,  
Or by the woodland pool to rest,  
When pale the star looks on its breast;  
Yet when the silent evening sighs,  
With hallowed airs and symphonies,  
My spirit takes another tone,  
And sighs that it is all alone."—H. K. WHITE.

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## CHAPTER I.

## A LONE CHILD.

IN the north-western angle of a small, green valley was the home of RACHEL KELL. The house was of two stories, plain, but respectable, with barns and out-houses corresponding,—indicating that the owner was a prudent and moderately thriving husbandman. There was a single old elm in front; in the south yard, which separated the garden from the house, there was a weeping-willow.

Of the neighbors we will not speak at present.

The parish—a New England parish—of which this valley was a portion, bore the name of Greycliff, from a topographic feature in it of that description.

Rachel lived with her grand-parents. Other relatives she had; but none who acknowledged her. Her parents were never mentioned in her presence.

Mr. Kell, the grandfather, was a well formed man, of benignant face and cheerful voice and manner. Mrs. Kell was good looking, for her years; quiet, but possessing more character than a superficial acquaintance with her would lead one to suppose.

Rachel's image first presents itself to us as that of a fair-complexioned, fair-haired girl, at the district school.

An observer would be struck with a peculiar pensiveness in her face and manner. This was explained by the general neglect she suffered from her fellows. They did not actually *forbid* her their company and pastimes; but they were, with one consent, very reserved towards her; and, to a delicate and discerning mind, reserve is as effectual as repulse. And then *her* reserve re-acted on them,—if that were necessary to fix and deepen the separating chasm.

She was, therefore, a spectator, rather than a participator in their play. Her voice was seldom heard in their shouts and laughter; but when sometimes it was surprised into sympathy with them, it was full of music and emotion, showing what deep fountains of mirth and feeling were naturally in her. They were for the most part, dormant fountains, and likely to be stagnant, or morbidly erratic, for want of a free and healthful outlet.

In going to and from school, she walked apart from the others, or they from her, sometimes in advance of them, but oftener in their rear, and feeling a deeper solitude of heart, than if the road, instead of the gleeful groups that moved along it, had been vacant and voiceless. At home, too, she was still solitary, so far as the companionship of children was concerned.

She was one of the best scholars in the school, and received her full share of its premiums. Her school-mates seemed not to envy her for this; on the contrary, the tokens so bestowed produced in the faces of many of them a look of satisfaction that relieved, for the moment, that air of pity with which they habitually regarded her.

By herself they were modestly and respectfully received, but appeared to have no value with her beyond the pleasure they would give her grandparents. She seemed to have a kind of consciousness that that for which distinction is chiefly coveted, these marks of her teacher's approbation could not do for *her*—they could not give her place and standing in society.

Amid this general neglect, however, there was one girl, Martha Reid, somewhat older than Rachel, a girl of strong character and generous sensibilities, who gradually, and at length intimately; first from pity, and then from esteem, attached herself to the neglected one. But Martha Reid died at the age of twelve, and left Rachel as companionless as before.

There was one of the boys of the school, too, William Geer, who felt a like sympathy for Rachel, and showed it in such ways as it was proper for a boy to do. He spoke well of her scholarship, commended the general propriety of her deportment, was sure that in mind and person she was not surpassed by any girl in school, and regretted, though he did not severely condemn, the prejudice of which she was the guiltless victim. Such remarks from one of the manliest and most popular of the boys may have relieved in some degree, though they could not radically alter, the social position of the subject of them. They seldom reached her ear; when they did, their effect was, not to excite vanity, but to soothe a wounded spirit and sustain self-respect. There was no more companionship between William and Rachel than there was between her and the others. Indeed she was

hardly of a companionable age for him then, (had there been no other obstacle to it) being four years younger than he; which, with children, is a great disparity. It was his natural generosity, and not gallantry, that prompted him.

Perhaps his sympathy was the more natural as his own young life was rather solitary. He had neither brother nor sister, nor any young companions within a convenient distance of his home, and hence was compelled to spend many of his play-hours alone.

With all the aptitudes of childhood for young society—for play-fellows of its own—who can but pity a lone child? His life is barren of those participated pleasures, (which owe their existence, as well as zest, to the fact that they *are* participated), those sympathetic excitements, and that sympathetic laughter, which are so healthful to young minds and frames. Adventures, sights, seasons—nine-tenths of his proper pastimes, lose nine-tenths of their interest, because there are none to share them with him. A boy rambling a-field alone, sailing his boat alone, building his snow-fort alone, skating alone, presents as graphic a picture of solitariness as anything can. The common poetic images of solitude, such as a heath, a flower in the desert, and the like, do not equal it. I suppose that that of the female child in the house of the aged, without young companions, may be a parallel solitariness with that of the boy which has been described.

However, solitude has, or may have, its advantages, even in young life. It favors invention and self-reliance

—though (according to the temper of the child) it *may* induce, or aggravate, vacancy and dulness. It is interesting, and almost wonderful, to see how ingenious, and how various, often, are the expedients an amiable child will find to fill up time which, through want of companions, would otherwise be tedious, if not intolerable. Wordsworth describes his little daughter, Kate, (who died at three years of age) as being remarkable for such expedients:

“Even so, this happy creature of herself  
Was all-sufficient: Solitude to her  
Was blithe society, who filled the air  
With gladness and involuntary songs.”

In the case of William Geer, the want of young society led him more to commune with books, with nature, and with himself; and to this it was owing, in part, that his was one of the most intelligent young minds, beaming through one of the most intelligent young faces, in the place. Applied to him, however, the solitariness we have described would be too deeply colored; for though he spent many a lonely play-hour, he spent, also, many a sociable one in the midst of companions. There was no child, or group of children, or family, to which his fine temper and good sense did not make him welcome.

This passing notice of the boy was due here, as a grateful acknowledgment of his sympathy for our neglected girl.

Applied to Rachel, the picture would *not* be overdrawn. It would not be overdrawn, we mean, as de-

scriptive of her external circumstances ; though as a picture of her solitude of heart at this early age, it might. Her grandparents were, perhaps, all that age could be to childhood, in the way of society ; (parents might have been more to her in this respect) but as to young associates, those whose years, thoughts and feelings were like hers, she had none. She never had. Not even holidays brought them. Her pilgrimage thus far she had walked, in that respect, alone ; without so much as one occasional companion—if Martha Reid be not excepted ; and the remainder of the way, the long untrodden future, promised to be still unsocial, like the present and the past.

Yet Rachel was far from being an unhappy child. Her fine constitution and elastic spirit were themselves fountains of pleasurable feeling. And she had many ways of occupation and diversion. She was often happiest when alone. Even the air of deep pensiveness which often settled on her face, suspending the tune she might be humming, was not always indicative of a sad heart.

But what was the cause of this strange reserve towards her ? She was a *child of shame* ! and the scandal of her birth had, of course, reached the ears of the children. Their feeling and demeanor were not those of contempt, nor of self-righteousness, or prudery ; but were the manifestation of a moral sense in reference to the sexes, which is more early, religiously, and deeply inculcated in New England than in perhaps any country in the world. They did but act out their educated sen-

timents. Reserve, in such a case, was with them a simple dictate of propriety and self-respect.

The mother of Rachel died during her infancy—the broken-hearted victim of violated faith. Of her, the child had no remembrance. She had never seen her father. Other relations she had, as has been mentioned, nearer on the paternal than on the mother's side, and very respectable ; but the reserve of these towards her was (quite naturally) greater and more sensitive than that of people not of her kindred.

The regard of her grandparents for her was that of strong natural affection made intense by pity. She was at once a light and a shade upon their hearts. She, on her part, was affectionate and dutiful towards them. They seemed to her to be the only beings in the world that cared for her, and the only ones on whom she was permitted to bestow the love and confidence of a naturally affectionate and trusting heart.

They were getting into years ; and the thought often crossed their minds what was to become of her when they were gone.

## CHAPTER II.

### EDUCATIONAL EMBARRASMENTS.

SEEING the isolated condition of the child, as to general society, the grandparents endeavored early to lead her to such independent sources of enjoyment as they could. They were at much pains to procure for her attractive and profitable books. They gave her a little corner of the garden for her own, where she grew fond of cultivating flowers,—the more so, as her grandfather took much notice of her work, and as *her* flowers received the special preference of her grandmother for the vases. Toil unnoticed, and results unvalued, are poor encouragement to children. If she inclined to roam about the homestead, or in the fields, she was at liberty to do so, within proper limits; and her instinctive love of natural scenery was the stimulus of many an excursion, and the charm of many a resting-place of gazing and musing. Names which she gave to her favorite localities, in some instances, such as "Slope-away," and "Sweet-briar Rock," were adopted by others, and became permanently affixed to them;—so that afterwards she used them, as others did, without thinking of their origin. She delighted, while she was little, to be out

about the farm with her grandfather; between whom and her there was more society than between her and any other person;—especially she loved to be abroad with him in the seasons of haying, fruit and nuts. To his suggestive and instructive talk with her it might be much owing that her amusements, even when they seemed most trivial, were animated often by some grave thought. Watching the winged seeds of a ripe thistle as they floated away upon the wind from the parent stem, "These are the children," she said, "leaving their home, and going to settle somewhere else. I shall never move away, Grandpa', when I am grown up, and you are very old, and leave you and Grandma'." Her fondness for animals was a large source of enjoyment to her. She had a pet dove, so familiar that it would spiritedly resent affronts from her by striking her with beak and wing—greatly to her amusement. She fed it with the cat; and such was the assurance of the bird, that she would, when she pleased, treat the cat with rudeness, and drive her from the mess.

The child was of course accustomed by her practical New England grandmother to such labors of a domestic kind, including needle-work, as were suited to her years. This was wise in more respects than one. For, besides that a practical acquaintance with household duties is indispensable to a right female education, it is impossible that amusement alone should fill up even a young life pleasantly, not to speak of later years. It is serious and useful toil that *justifies* amusement, and gives a zest to it.

By such simple methods the young life of Rachel passed pleasantly enough so long as she was a mere child. But as she grew older, the unnaturalness of her social position became more a matter of distinct perception and unpleasant consciousness with her, and more embarrassing to those who had the bringing of her up.

Perhaps she overheard remarks of which she was the subject, or of which some other *like* her was the subject, which painfully arrested her. Perhaps some conversation had in her presence when she was too young to comprehend it, came now to her maturer thought, like some remembered portion of a catechism, with a full development of its meaning. Words in children's memories are like nuts in their baskets; they may carry them a long way, and lay them up many days, but they will crack them at length. Perhaps some remembered fling of an older child at school, which at the time annoyed her only vaguely and for a moment, because she did not understand it, now stung her like a poisoned arrow.

Her grandparents saw, with concern, that she was less happy than she had been. Yet that unhappiness was of a nature hardly to be remedied. A regard for the good opinion of others, and for its manifestation in respectful and friendly ways, is one of the strongest of human instincts; and is especially active in young persons. It is a virtuous feeling in its nature and influences,—though of course capable of perversion. (*Better that than dead.*) We are ever appealing to it in the education of the young. It is itself a feeling to be educated. God himself appeals to it for its moral power over us. Indeed,

if it be possible in human nature, that one should be indifferent to human esteem—to respect—to one's social standing in a virtuous community, it is only the utterly depraved and most abandoned that can be so.

See, then, how embarrassing in an educational point of view is the case before us,—that of a young girl, say of ten or twelve years of age now, with a soul of no ordinary sympathies, who finds herself entirely isolated in the community in which she exists. You cannot blind her to the fact of such isolation, nor to what is worse—the cause of it. You cannot deny its essential unhappiness. But how are you to remedy it? Bid her be indifferent to her social standing? That were equally undesirable and impossible. And yet, in proportion as you admit the desirableness of the respect of the community, you aggravate the conscious painfulness of her position in it. The difficulty and delicacy of the case, educationally regarded, can hardly be appreciated except by those who, like these grandparents, have been made to do so by experience.

Nor can the thoughtless world—more unthinking than unfeeling in such cases, often,—conceive fully how disheartening the position is to her who occupies it. Suppose her at an age mature enough to comprehend it. What are her reflections on it? There may be poverty without disrespect. Obscurity may work its way to notice and to fame. Youthful follies may be outlived and cast into oblivion. Even criminal indiscretions may, in many cases, be forgiven, and effaced from the general memory, through repentance and reformation. But none

of these is her case. Here is shame cleaving to innocence; and the case is such as neither worth, nor effort, nor repentance, nor time itself, can remedy. *Every* way is barred!

Nor is the sentiment of the world altogether wrong and blamable in this. In degree it may be blamable, but not in kind. It cannot but exist and manifest itself. The force of a great social law is in it. It is inseparable from a just respect for one of the commandments of the Decalogue, and, like that commandment, acts by divine intent, as a protection to the sacredness of the marriage institution. This is an aggravation of the case. If the world *were* wrong, wholly, it might discover and correct its error, and hope might hang on this; or, if not, a sense of the world's injustice might sustain self-respect against this, as against any other unfounded prejudice.

It is not probable, indeed, that Rachel reasoned out the matter, just as has here been done. This was not necessary; the result of these reasonings reached her more directly, and more surely, through her feelings. *Society disowned her.* That *fact* was never absent from her consciousness. In any of its aspects it was sufficiently embarrassing; in some of them it was withering. She was obtuse to none of them.

Look at it in the simplest light you can—that, merely, of exclusion from society, without reference to the cause of it. Society is one of the essential requisites of our nature. We pine for it; and never more than in that susceptible and restless period which intervenes between childhood and adult age. Rachel Kell was no exception

to this fact. "*Nil humani*," nothing human, was foreign to her nature. Her longings for society were as natural and as intense as those of any other youthful bosom. Her intelligence and her tastes fitted her to enjoy it in no ordinary degree. And not only her mind and person, but, with one infamous exception, and another, not infamous, indeed, yet blighted in reputation, and long since hidden in the grave, her family connections were of a character to entitle her to recognition by the best people in the place. Yet by all who should have owned her she was cast aside; from all who should have been her mates and equals she was segregated,—like a chance-sown flower, dissociated from the border, and blooming beyond the wall.

This was unpleasant; but to feel that she was rejected as a *tainted* thing—this was withering. Those who understand the case fully will not be likely to do injustice to her, in thinking her at times excessive in her feeling on the subject.

Her embarrassment of course increased as she grew older. In her childhood she saw and wondered at, rather than resented, the reserve of which she was the object; but now, in her adolescence, she felt it as a wrong; and there was danger of her becoming melancholy, if not misanthropic. Often she might be seen standing for a long time in some lone place at nightfall, vacant and absorbed, and heedless of the dews and shades that were falling on her. She marked gloomy passages, sometimes misanthropic ones, in the books she read; and at midnight hours wrote sombre passages in her album. The

interesting pensiveness that, from a child, had come and gone in her face, like flitting clouds playing with the sunbeams on a vernal day, now seemed to be permanently there (or getting so), like the settled gloom that overcasts the sky universally, making the day rayless.

Her grandparents did what they could to make her cheerful. They contrived methods to divert her; they reasoned with her; they encouraged her; they reminded her of the many pleasant things with which a kind providence had favored her, contrasting her condition with that of others, in many points, and by many degrees, less favored than hers. They sought especially to impress her with the cheerful sentiments of religion. But all these endeavors were at best but very imperfectly relevant to the case, inasmuch as they could not change the manner of society, or do away the fact of the poor girl's ostracism. They were sometimes worse than useless, aggravating the feelings they were intended to relieve.

The influence of Hannah, the housekeeper, with her, was often of a nature to need counteracting. Hannah Heath was a middle-aged woman, hale, and rather fleshy, who had been many years in the family, and felt herself identified with it in all its concerns. She was generally of a quiet habit, but could be eloquent, in her way, upon a fit occasion. Rachel was, from infancy, a pet with her. She loved her with excessive fondness,—with the yearnings of a woman's heart that wants something to love, and lavishes its affections on a single object. She espoused Rachel's cause against society with vehemence

at times, and would have 'taken up the cudgel' literally, in her behalf, if that would have effected anything. She declared that the neglects she suffered were a great wrong, and a great shame. "But never mind, Rachel," she would say; "you are as good as the best of them, and they will find it out some day, the dunces. I do declare, it is nothing in the world but envy. And I don't wonder," (in an under-tone)—"things suffer by comparison."

However, Hannah never spoiled her pet. She made it a matter of conscience, she said, not to do so; for "she could not bear spoiled children." She mixed up much that was judicious with what was injudicious in her talk; and as for her resentments, and her flatteries, there was apt to be so much of the whimsical, or the extravagant in them, that they amused Rachel, rather than affected her otherwise. Her complacent love itself, for one who shared so little in the world's complacency as Rachel did, was no doubt a wholesome solace. It made the kitchen a spot of sunshine to her, even in a dark day.

Nor, (it may be mentioned here, to Rachel's credit) was she in reality as friendless in the world as the world's general manner towards her seemed to indicate. People often spoke favorably, and even fondly, to each other, of her comeliness and her amiable deportment; and the men who worked upon the farm always conceived a strong regard for her. A kind look, or a cheery word, from one of these was better to her than a hundred arguments against dejection.

## CHAPTER III.

### THE OLD FOREST.

It was a favorite recreation with Rachel, to ramble away into the wild pasturages and wood-lands. In these excursions she was attended, generally, by a remarkably fine Newfoundland dog; and it was amusing to observe the creature's sympathy with her, in all her moods and movements. As she sat drinking in the landscape from some brow of land, or rock, the dog would sit by her, as still as she, looking in the same direction, or gazing in her face. *Gazer* was the name she gave him. He sometimes served her as her monitor, putting his paw upon her arm, or knee, to recall her from her abstraction, and suggest to her that it was time to go; and sometimes as her guide, in labyrinthian passes.

About one third of a mile from the house, in a westerly direction, there was a pleasant water, familiarly called The Pond, more distinctively, Kell's Pond. It was remarkable for being upon high ground and for having no tributary, though it sent forth an unfailing stream of considerable force, being fed with springs from beneath. It was a few furlongs only in circuit. This pond was one of Rachel's favorite haunts; and it happened (by the

way) once, that she carried home from it a fine trout, of her own catching; some forgetful angler having thrown the temptation before her to try her hand at fishing, by leaving his hook, ready baited, upon the bank. It lay just within the edge of a forest, having a fringe of trees on the hither side, and a wild wood of several hundreds of acres on the other. Rachel sometimes extended her rambles a little beyond the pond, into this wild tract; and it happened, one afternoon, that she ventured so far into it that she got bewildered, and was at a loss to find her way out. Attracted by the scenery, or busy with the wild-flowers and mosses she was gathering, she was not aware of her imprudence till she became sensible that the woods were getting darker than they had been. The lofty foliage above her had ceased to be translucent; the sunbeams that had broken through it, here and there, had disappeared; all the sylvan colors, green and gold, and drab and silver-gray, were changed to a uniform dusky hue; the trunks and limbs of the venerable old trees were seen in dim twilight; the rocks and ravines were wrapped in solemn shades. The fact was, a dense, black cloud, ominous of wind, had veiled the heavens from one side to the other.

Rachel stood a moment to conjecture in what direction her home might be. Had the place of the sun been apparent, that would have aided her. She guessed her way as nearly as she could, and started off. She might as well have gone at random,—for her guess, like other mere guesses, had no data to support it. She came to a brook. "But how is this?" said she to herself. "I

crossed no brook in coming. I must be wrong." Altering her course she proceeded some crooked furlongs further,—the surface not admitting of straight traveling,—when she came to a lofty front of rock. "Wrong again. I saw no such rock, coming. How I wish Gazer were with me! *He* would find the way." Passing round the end of the ledge to its sloping rear, she ascended to its top, where, the trees being dwarfed and thin, she would be able to see more of the sky, and might, perhaps, discern on which side the sun was, by some glimmering of it through the canopy of cloud. But not the faintest gleam of it was visible.

She sat down for a moment to recover breath and strength,—for her pathless way was not the smoothest; and to recover her self-possession,—for she began to feel alarmed. "The Lord direct me," was her prayer; for she had been taught to believe in a superintending providence, and to trust in it. Compunctious thoughts came crowding into her mind, and she added, "Lord forgive my wicked repining, and discontent."

While she sat thus, resting and looking for the sun, there reached her ear—just breaking the ominous and awful stillness of the air—a low sound of thunder. "There!" she exclaimed, starting up. "Thunder clouds come out of the Northwest and West; and—Hark! again. It is in that direction, and our house must be in the opposite one—there," pointing with her hand, as if to show herself the way; "and if I can but go straight, now, as the bees do, (but there is the difficulty) I shall soon be home."

The idea of being overtaken, alone, in such a place, by a thunder storm—and what if a tornado should come with it, uprooting trees!—would have been anything but pleasant to her but that the sense and apprehension of being lost overcame all other fear, and that the thunder spoke to her as a guide. She was mistaken as to the quarter from which it came; for, in this instance, it was quite in the South; nor, if it had been otherwise, could it have given her, after so much wandering, any very precise information as to whereabouts her home was.

With the thunder at her back, then, growing louder and more frequent, she glided down from her observatory, and onwards through the wild. But the wild seemed illimitable—a "boundless contiguity of shade."

She came to a rude cart-path. Just then a flash of lightning, with a quick, sharp report, met her in the face,—coming from before, and confounding the utterances behind her; and in a few minutes more, it was thundering, in sublime concert, all round the heavens. There was an end, therefore, to that confidence. Drops of rain began to fall on her face and hands. She did not mind being wet; but weariness and night,—if the woods should be her lodging-place!—*that* thought dismayed her.

However, as there could not be less than two good hours of day-light yet, she did not despair.

"This cart-track," said she, "must lead out into the human world, *somewhere*." She resolved to take it. There was no time to lose,—none to deliberate. The brunt of the storm was fast advancing. She heard the

murmur of it, growing louder every moment, acting on the old uneasy forest as if it were an organ, and was half entranced by it. Running along the cart-track, she soon came to the end of it; or rather, it *vanished* amongst stumps and brush, where some proprietor had been cutting wood and timber. Again she was at a stand for a moment, but not at her wits' end. Obviously there was nothing better to be done than to turn short about and retrace the path. The wood and timber cut from this spot *must* have found its way out, and she, by following it, could do the same, though it might take her a long way for it. That certainty re-assured her. On she went, therefore, along the back-track, trudgingly, but confidently, and almost cheerily. The rain was coming down in torrents. Once or twice she paused and listened in a momentary hushing of the elements, to see if she could hear any human voice, or homeward tinkling cow-bell. At the end of a mile or more, the path began to ascend, the woods became thinner and lighter, and directly she emerged from them into an open space. Before her was a rude-looking house, with a few cultivated acres around it; beyond which were woods again, on every side.

Whose house it was, she did not know, but she conjectured it was that of a family by the name of Glenn, which she had heard spoken of as living away up in those woods, somewhere. But be they who they might, she needed a shelter and direction.

To her timid knock at the door came in answer from within the simple word "*Walk*," hardly audible for the

pouring eaves. She pulled the latch-string, and went in. Her conjecture was right: they were the Glenns; and she was glad. She knew some of them by sight, and they were well acquainted with her grandparents.

Mrs. Glenn, the grandam matron of the house, received her with equal astonishment and hospitality, the others grouping themselves about her.

"Who is it?" she asked.

"Rachel Kell."

"Rachel Kell? Why, you drowned chicken, you!" pulling her towards her, and peering into her face. "And how in the *world* come you away up here, in all this thunder and rain?—not but what we are glad to see you. Why lack-a-day, how wet you be!"

"I got lost in the woods."

"So I believe. And how did you ever find your way up here? for you never was here before, I reckon."

"I hardly did find it. I came to a cart-path, and followed it, without knowing where it led."

"And it brought you slick up here!"

"Yes ma'am."

"And I'm thankful it did; for it might have led you deeper into the woods, instead of out on 'em;—for roads run two ways, you know, and one may go wrong on a right road."

"And so it did for a while, ma'am; but I found it growing fainter, and turned about."

"The dear child! to keep her wits about her so, in such a dismal time and place. It would ha' come quite to an eend with you, in the middle o' the woods some-

wheres an' you'd ha' followed it. And weren't you afeared you would *never* find your way, and be out all night?"

"I began to be afraid of it. But I kept up good courage, as well as I could."

"And need enough there was, and of trust in Providence besides. And that *is* courage, and the best of courage. I don't wonder, a bit, that you was afeared—to be out the night long in such a wilderness, the young thing that you be. Why you tremble now, child, like a poplar; how your heart beats! But come, we mustn't stand taxin' you with questions, all wet, as you be, and fagged out, and heated, too, with so much runnin' through leaves and bushes. You must have some dry clothes on, right away. And Edith, you get some tea a-goin'."

To this proposal of dry clothing, Rachel, thanking the good woman for her kindness, replied that she could not stay to make the change, as the storm was now subsiding, and she must be getting home as fast as possible, if they would be good enough to show her the shortest and safest way.

"You won't go home to-night, child."

"I thank you, Mrs. Glenn; but it is quite necessary."

"You won't go, nor stir to,—so drippin' wet, and in a manner tired to pieces, as you be," repeated Mrs. Glenn, with kindly earnestness.

"And three long miles to go, and another and a half at the end of that," said Edith Glenn, her maiden daughter. "By the road, that is: the woods way is shorter, but she wouldn't find it."

Rachel had not thought the distance so great, but still insisted on going, because of the anxiety her grandparents would be suffering on her account.

"And so they will, child; and you are right to think of their consarn," said Mrs. Glenn; "but Jeduthun shall jump on the colt, and go down and let them know; and he'll be there in a trice, to what you would."

So saying, she led Rachel into her bed-room, bidding Margaret, her granddaughter, to bring the dry clothes she wanted, while Edith went to find Jeduthun at the barn, and dispatch him on his errand.

"Wet through and through, and torn as well as wet," said Mrs. Glenn, in kind and cheerful tones, as she assisted in making the change. "You won't mind staying here the night, though it *is* a woodsy place."

"Oh no, indeed, if our folks at home know of it," said Rachel, beginning to feel that she would like to stay, for the novelty of it;—"only for the trouble I am making you."

"Never mind the trouble; we've beds enough, and plenty of victuals. How old are you, child?"

"Not quite fourteen."

"Margaret is bigger and broader than you, though she ain't any older; her clothes won't fit you very well; but I guess we can make 'em do till your'n are dried. Home to-night! Why, if a child of mine had come to your house in stress of weather, so, and your folks had sent her home, I should ha' thought quite strange of it—quite."

The change being completed, Rachel found herself in

a gay calico frock, the cut of which was as little fitted to her person as the style of it was to her taste,—with other things to match; but the kindness that had furnished it, as well as its dryness, made it agreeable. She wished, for the humor of the thing, she could just show herself in Hannah's kitchen.

A homely, but hospitable table was set out; cheerful faces and a rustic freedom of conversation, mixed with amusing eccentricities, characterized the company that surrounded it. The storm had ceased; a bright moon was shining; Jeduthun returned, reporting all right at Mr. Kell's; the latch-strings were pulled in, which was the only fastening the doors required; and then, the family retiring early, our weary girl enjoyed a night of renovating sleep.

On awaking in the morning, she found her clothes in a chair at the bed-side, smoothed with the flat-iron, and the torn places stitched. They had given her their spare chamber. Some coarse pictures, and profiles cut in paper, hung about the walls. The end window was half shaded by a luxuriant rose-bush, of some clambering kind, through which the morning sun was shining. Out of one of the front ones, the site of the house being elevated, she looked over a portion of the Old Forest, the scene of her yesterday's adventures. It was one of those rugged tracts, full of heights, slopes, rocks and dells, which men call *refuse*, but which are the more valuable for being what they are—great conservatories of timber (let alone because impracticable to the plough) and permanent abodes of the romantic and sublime. These are a por-

tion of the inalienable property of the poetry of nature. They were not made for man to appropriate, or to spoil.

Rachel staid to breakfast; after which the Glenns insisted on her riding home on the "colt." She took leave of them with a heart full of gratitude and gaiety. Her escape from the perils of the wood, and the kindness of the people had made that one of the most agreeable, as well as memorable nights she had ever experienced. The effect of it remained a long time upon her spirit, abating that morbid tendency of which some fear has been expressed.

"She is a pretty creature," said old Mrs. Glenn to the rest, as, with a smiling and a glowing face, she pulled the rein and left them standing at the door; "she is a pretty creature," to which they all heartily assented, and hoped she would come again.

Her first mile was a bye-road running obliquely through a portion of the forest, to the public highway which took her home. Jeduthun went the short way, to take the horse back.

She was delighted with the horse. It was a small, round-bodied, smooth-limbed animal, quite young, free, and manageable. Its color was unique,—as near a pale straw-color as anything; the mane and tail, which were untrimmed and flowing, being darker than the rest. She begged her grandfather to buy it for her, which he did, and Chamois (as she named him) became her own property and pet, and gave her many a fine exercise upon his back.

This acquisition was one pleasant consequence of the

adventure of the woods. Another was, that Jeduthun Glenn came to live with her grandfather for (as the event proved) a series of years, to assist him on his farm; and with his great partiality for Rachel and his diverting and obliging ways, she was the happier for his being there. He was a young man of two or three and twenty, active and good humored, rustic by education, but not slovenly, with a mixture of the whimsical, and something of the romantic in his composition. Without being anywhere obtrusive, or hardly so much as making people conscious of his presence, he was a wakeful listener and observer, a shrewd judge of character, and, in his way, an entertaining reporter of conversations and occurrences.

The grandparents suffered considerable uneasiness at Rachel's absence. They presumed, however, that she had found a shelter somewhere and would be home when the rain ceased; by which time Jeduthun arrived, and relieved them. Hannah made great ado and many exclamations at his report of the adventure, and renewed the same, with additional astonishments in the morning, when she saw the lost girl, with a merry look, come riding into the yard upon a strange horse.

## CHAPTER IV.

### REBEKAH RAYMOND.

ANOTHER year had passed over Rachel, and found the sunshine of her mind rather diminishing than increasing, when Rebekah Raymond called to ask her to go with her to sit up with a sick neighbor.

Miss Raymond was esteemed one of the finest characters in the place. She had received a superior education, and was familiar with refined society. Formerly she had been somewhat fond of fashionable gaieties; but various reverses and bereavements, religious convictions, and especially the death of the young man she was engaged to be married to, had had a chastening effect on her. They had not unduly depressed her. Her countenance and manner were full of cheerfulness and goodness. Since the last mentioned providence, she had declined all offers of marriage, preferring to remain with her widowed mother, of whom she was the youngest surviving child and only daughter. She was some ten years older than Rachel.

Rebekah said to her mother, "I have been thinking of Rachel Kell. I cannot help being interested in that girl, though I am but very little acquainted with her.

She has seemed to me, latterly, to be suffering from neglect ; and suffering *morally*, I fear. She has a good deal of feeling, naturally, I should think ; and such a mind is likely, in her condition, to prey upon itself. What she most needs is young companions. These can hardly be supplied. But are there not other ways in which her affections, or, at least, her sympathies, may be interested ? If we can put her upon doing good to others, and in that way open healthful channels for her benevolent and social feelings, we shall render her both happier and better ; and shall secure an interest for her, too, in the hearts of others. I am resolved to see what I can do with her."

Rebekah had read the case correctly, and was right as to the remedy. A mind unhappy, or diseased, needs diverting from itself. It needs occupation ; and not only that, but *such* occupation as is suited in kind to the mental state to be relieved. If, as might be the case with Rachel, stagnation and apathy, or discontent and repining, were the malady, active beneficence would be the remedy.

"Wouldst thou from sorrow find a sweet relief?  
Or is thy heart oppressed with woes untold?  
Balm wouldst thou gather for corroding grief?  
Pour blessings round thee like a shower of gold.  
Tis when the rose is wrapt in many a fold  
Close to its heart, the worm is wasting there  
Its life and beauty ; not, when all unrolled,  
Leaf after leaf, its bosom rich and fair  
Breathes freely its perfumes throughout the ambient air."

Rachel's habits were not idle. In her domestic duties, books, and recreations, she had occupation enough in

quantity. But what was divertive in these employments was worn threadbare by repetition. They brought no refreshing changes of ideas, no new emotions, no enlargement of the heart, or stimulation of the intellect. They were all unsocial ; which was their grand defect. Iron sharpeneth iron ; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend. Miss Raymond perceived this, and, under the promptings of a benevolent heart, resolved to do what she could to alleviate the case. It was with this intent that she called, as has been mentioned, to ask Rachel to watch with her at a sick-bed. She did not, of course, intimate to her (nor did she to her grandmother) her real motive in doing so ; but simply invited her to a voluntary act of self-denial, in the way of neighborly kindness.

Rachel consented to go very readily, with her grandmother's approbation ; who, indeed, was glad, and truly thankful for the providence that brought the neglected girl, even temporarily and in such a way, into the company of such an one as Rebekah Raymond.

They had a mile to walk. The conversation by the way was cheerful and desultory. Miss Raymond's aim in it was to call out the thoughts and feelings of her companion, rather than to exercise her own ; and she knew how to give the most ordinary topics an interesting turn, or to make them suggestive of better ones. Rachel felt not only quite at ease, but elevated, in her company. She seemed to be, for the time, in the elevated region—that of superior intelligence, refinement, and goodness—which she had so much longed for

The sick person was so far convalescent as to require the attention of the watchers only at intervals, sleeping quietly while they sat in the next room, and were at liberty to converse, or read, more or less, during the night. Miss Raymond found Rachel possessed of a degree of intelligence and delicacy of feeling beyond what she had expected; yet with much to learn and unlearn, before she would have a well ordered mind. Her reading had been considerable, but desultory; and she had conceived some false ideas of society and the world.

A few days after this, Miss Raymond called, with a proposal, on Mrs. Welwood. Mrs. Welwood was a widow lady, considerably advanced in life, who lived within sight of the Kells, on the top of the hill south of the valley. She was a woman of excellent sense, and of a serene and cheerful cast of religious feeling. Within a few years she had become blind. Rebekah's proposal was, that she should invite Rachel to come occasionally and read to her; presenting to Mrs. Welwood the same view of Rachel's case which she had before expressed to her mother.

Mrs. Welwood received the suggestion with a two-fold satisfaction: she was sure the reading would be a pleasure to her, and she hoped it might be profitable to Rachel. None of her children were living near her, and she had no one in the house who could supply, in any desirable degree, her need of society and books. She feared, however, that it would be taxing the patience of a young girl too much, to ask her to such a service.

Rebekah thought not. It might be the case with some,

but to Rachel she believed it would be a diversion and a pleasure. She would, at any rate, propose it to her, with Mrs. Welwood's consent.

"You can ask her for once, at least," said Mrs. Welwood; "and then, if it seem agreeable to her, the invitation can be continued. I should like to be more acquainted with her than I am. I am told she is pretty-looking."

"She is, very," said Rebekah.

"And that, there is reason to fear, may prove a snare to her," remarked Mrs. Welwood.

Rachel came, as was proposed, on a day named, and it was subsequently arranged that, for the present, she should come on a given afternoon, each week. She was charmed with the bland and cheerful manner of Mrs. Welwood. She hardly could have believed that a blind person *could* be so agreeable. She had indeed always heard, from her grandparents and others, that she was a most estimable woman; yet, though living so near her, she was scarcely at all acquainted with her. This, if the fault of any one, was not the fault of the blind lady. It is one of the privations of the blind, that they cannot extend their acquaintance, or, indeed, avail themselves of such as they have already, beyond what is voluntary on the part of others. Confined in a great degree to their rooms, they are precluded from those casual greetings by the way, and those mutual calls, which make so large a share of the intercourse of those who go abroad. Their friends and neighbors cannot be too mindful of this fact.

So much was Rachel impressed with the character of

Mrs. Welwood, and so much a pleasure it was to read to her, that she almost felt hurt when the good lady thanked her for the service.

A celebrated actress, sated with the applauses and flattering attentions of her theatre-going admirers, became disgusted with her celebrity, even to weeping, in the thought that there was another and a higher style of society—that of the intelligent and pious—into which she had no admission, nor could hope to have, in her present character. It was a feeling akin to this that Rachel was conscious of as she walked homewards from Mrs. Welwood's. "How many delightful people there are in the world," said she to herself, "like Mrs. Welwood and Rebekah Raymond, and I cannot share in their society! How many polite and agreeable families, whose acquaintance I may not make! How many brilliant assemblies, in which no one looks for me!" Such was the drift of her reflections; and, like the actress, she mingled them, not indeed with self-reproach, but yet with tears.

Tears, and a turn of thought, relieved her, and she entered the house with more than her ordinary cheerfulness.

## CHAPTER V.

### DYING YOUNG.

MISS RAYMOND had a distant errand to do. Rachel begged her to ride her horse, assuring her that Chamois would carry her very pleasantly. Rebekah preferred to walk, provided Rachel would accompany her; which she was quite happy to do. At the hour proposed she was at Mrs. Raymond's, ready for a start.

A circumstance soon gave direction to their conversation by the way, which, while it disclosed something of the existing state of Rachel's mind, was still more expressive of the character of Miss Raymond. Rachel had gathered some flowers which were growing near the road-side, and, holding them up, said, "See how beautiful these fringed gentians are!"

"The earth is strewn with beautiful things," Rebekah remarked, taking the flowers, and admiring them.

"These are favorites with me," said Rachel.

"Are they? And why?"

"Perhaps I love them because they seem to prefer retired, unnoticed places."

"You have a kind of sympathy with them, in that preference?"

"Perhaps I have,—as if they were living things. I do not think they like much notice. I planted some in my borders, but they did not live. Either they were not made for cultivation, or I wanted skill."

"More probably the latter."

"I did not much regret my failure with them—in the garden; because I love them more as wild-flowers. Were you acquainted with Martha Reid?"

"Not intimately; though I knew her. What reminds you of her now?" For Miss Raymond read in Rachel's face, and in the thoughtful emphasis she put upon the word *garden*, that there was some associated idea which had recalled her deceased school-mate to her memory.

"These flowers," was Rachel's answer.

"Were they favorites of hers, too?"

"I do not know that they were; but I planted a root of them by her grave. They died."

"Your affection for her prompted you to do it?"

"She was my best friend at school; my only one;—with one exception."

"We may think of her as a transplanted flower, removed to a more congenial soil, and softer skies, than your gentians found. She was an amiable and pious girl, and died a happy death, I was told."

"And I have often almost envied her for dying young."

"Why? Rachel. Is not life desirable?"

"To some it is. Naturally it is to all. And yet I cannot help thinking, at times, that there is something pleasant, and even enviable, as well as mournful, in

dying young—provided one dies happy, as Martha did, and goes to heaven."

"That is a sentiment not unfrequently expressed, I think. It is a poetic feeling, is it not? belonging to the romantic in our nature, rather than to our convictions."

"It is not a romantic sentiment with me."

"What is the nature of it, then? Can you analyze it?"

"One escapes from so much that is painful."

"And foregoes so much that is pleasant."

"But more that is *not* pleasant."

"I question that, Rachel."

"In all cases?"

"In most. Perhaps in all, where the life is pious."

"I read the other day, at Mrs. Welwood's," persisted Rachel, sustaining her position by a high authority, as she supposed, "a passage from Archbishop Leighton to his sister on the death of her little boy, consoling her with this same idea. I can quote his words: 'Sweet thing, and is he so quickly laid to sleep? Happy he! Though we shall no more have the pleasure of his lisping and laughing, he shall have no more the pain of crying, nor of being sick, nor of dying, and hath wholly escaped the trouble of schooling and all the sufferings of boys, and the riper and deeper griefs of upper years, this poor life being all along, nothing but a linked chain of many sorrows and of many deaths.'"

While Rachel repeated this quotation in her own simple, naïvely effective manner, Rebekah turned suddenly away to hide, or subdue, the emotion which—not the

passage itself, but what it recalled to her of bereavements of her own—had awakened in her breast.

"Yes," said she, after a brief silence, "life is, as he says, a linked chain of many sorrows; and it is also a linked chain of many joys. He refers only to the troubles of life, and speaks of an escape from these. That is a view of the matter just as far as it goes, and proper enough to be presented to a bereaved parent as some mitigation of her grief. But as an estimate of the desirableness of life itself, and as a ground of preference between length of days and fewness of days, it is but a negative and narrow view of the subject; it is a cold and selfish one. I think the instances are few, comparatively, if not positively, in which virtuous people, at least, do not experience more happiness than suffering in their lives, a great deal more; but admitting the fact to be otherwise, and that the ills of life exceeded its pleasures; still, to live would be desirable in view of the good we might do. For life is not to be estimated by its pleasures and its pains, but by its uses. The great ends for which it was given us are to be taken as the true measure of its value, and not just the amount of present enjoyment we can contrive to make out of it. This was our Saviour's way of estimating it: "Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." Dying young, one does indeed escape from many temporal evils, and what is more, from many sins: and it is pleasant to think of him as transferred to a better world, while he is comparatively uncorrupted by this; but, at the same time, he is cut off, not only from

all that is naturally pleasant in life, which is much, (though heaven is pleasanter, no doubt,) but from all the noble opportunities of Christian beneficence which this life affords, with its great rewards, here and hereafter. Why, it were worth a thousand sorrows, even the sorrows of widowhood and poverty, to be permitted to throw in those *two mites*, which the poor widow did, in so great a cause.

"I lost a young brother,—you remember him, I presume."

"I do remember him," said Rachel, "and what a manly, happy face he had."

"He was a noble hearted and a gifted boy, we fondly thought; and we trusted that God took him to himself. There was great comfort in that. But then, to be removed so early from such a world as this! We had hoped, confidently, that, with his fine qualities, he was destined to be eminently useful. We had seemed to see a bright future before him, not as exempted from sorrows and temptations, (for none are exempted) but for the good he would be permitted to do, and the many that would be blessed through his instrumentality. But our heavenly Father saw otherwise. And he alone knew the depth of our disappointment. \* \* \* In the vernal season of his life, and of the year, (for he died when spring flowers were blossoming)—in a most eventful age of the world, when great and stirring enterprises of christian philanthropy were commencing, and the signs of a coming millennium were thickening around him, our poor, dear Edward died!—happy to go to heaven

young, but happier, if God had so willed, to have gone, as Paul did, at the end of an earnest life. He that dies too young to have done much actual good, even the infant, will no doubt be happy in heaven, beyond what we can conceive; but I cannot think he will be equal with him who has lived to labor here in the cause of the Redeemer. The Scriptures seem to lead to a different conclusion. But without reference to future recompense, the *consciousness* of doing good is itself a happy feeling, and a present reward. It would be difficult to find, I presume, an actively beneficent person who was essentially unhappy.

"In this view of the matter, it is a privilege to live—a privation to die young. It seems so to me: does it not to you, Rachel?"

"And next to the unhappiness of so early a removal is that of one who has just reached the period of manhood, or womanhood, and, with high hopes, is just entering on the active scenes of life. In the case of the talented and pious young *man* especially, such a providence seems both mournful and inscrutable. He has devoted years to laborious, self-denying study, and with a mind richly furnished, and a soul full of benevolence, he sees a field of great usefulness before him; but is not permitted to enter into it. *His* purposes and hopes, as to this world, are broken off at the beginning; and perhaps the hopes of others, whose destinies seemed linked with his, both of happiness and usefulness, are buried in the same grave."

A pause ensued here, and they walked on in silence.

The conversation had taken an unpremeditated drift; and on the last topic Rebekah had almost forgotten the age and character of her companion. But it was not ungrateful to the latter, nor unappreciated by her. In her bosom every genuine emotion of another's found sympathy. She knew well to what grave it was, that her fringed gentians had thus unexpectedly led them; and felt the sacredness of a bereaved affection.

"No, Rachel," Rebekah added, in her usual cheerful manner, "you and I must be thankful that we are permitted to live, and must deem our life an enviable opportunity to do good. Our sphere may be a humble one, and our days few; but let us fill them up the best we can. If we are faithful in a few things, our Lord's approval, and our self-approval, will be just as sure and satisfactory as though many things had been entrusted to us."

Rachel made no audible reply; but inwardly she answered thus: "Miss Raymond can do good in the world, because the world is open to her. Everybody loves her; everybody respects her, and listens to what she says. It is otherwise with me. I have no place in the world; how then can I do much good in it? The brook that runs through the meadow refreshes it; but what can the brook do whose course is through a heath, or a hidden rocky ravine? With these excusing, perhaps repining thoughts, there may have mingled a conviction that if she had not Miss Raymond's opportunity for usefulness, neither had she the same benevolent desire.

The conversation had made some salutary impression

on her. It had led her to perceive more distinctly than she had done, that life is given for other ends, and higher ones, than those of mere enjoyment; and that *her* life was no exception to this. And further, it had caused her to see, in Rebekah's case, how sorrow is relieved by piety. Rebekah Raymond had experienced bitter griefs and disappointments—very bitter; with a heart, too, uncommonly susceptible; and yet she was always so serene and happy that one would hardly think the least shade of trouble had ever passed over her.

"But then," she said—for Rachel's mind still reverted, as was its wont, and as was natural, to her own peculiar case—"Rebekah Raymond's griefs are solaced in society. The world is all warm to her, with sympathies and friendships. Would she be as cheerful—*could* she, pious though she is—if the world disowned her? *She* never knew—no, she *never* knew—the loneliness and chilliness that I have felt."

A variety of little incidents and pleasant topics occupied them the remainder of the way till they reached the house whither the errand took them. Miss Raymond proposed that, in returning, they should cross the fields from the road they had come to another. This would diversify their walk, without much increasing the length of it.

"Oh, yes, said Rachel; let us go that way; it will be new to me."

Across the intervening tract they went, therefore; and if Rachel's delight in field rambling had been unknown to Miss Raymond, this portion of their excursion would

have discovered it to her. Miss Raymond herself was an excellent pedestrian; but her companion's movements, compared with hers, were much like those of a greyhound compared with those of the huntsman. While she pursued the directest and least obstructive course, Rachel's elastic form was flitting in all directions,—in advance and in the rear, in the valleys and on the heights. A stone fence upon a hill-side, over which she was clambering, gave way under her, and Miss Raymond was alarmed for her bones, to see her come rolling down amongst the heavy boulder-shaped stones of which the fence was made.

They came to a noisy brook, wide, but shallow at that season; over which was thrown a single trembling stick of unhewn timber, for a bridge. Miss Raymond availed herself of a pole which she found, to steady her across. Rachel ran over it, and back again; made it dance her; and then got down and crossed the bed of the stream, jumping from one slippery stone to another, in the exuberance of her spirits.

Then, a little farther on, Rebekah heard her calling, "Do come and help me liberate this poor thing!" It was a lamb caught in a thicket of briers; where it must have died; for the more it struggled, the more it became entangled. With some difficulty, and not without pricked and bleeding fingers, they succeeded in freeing it; and away it went, bleating and bounding off, to find the flock.

"How glad I am we came this way!" said Rachel.

"Notwithstanding those pricks that you are trying to get out of your fingers," said Miss Raymond, smiling.

"Pshaw! Who would mind pricking the fingers a little, to free a suffering lamb?" said Rachel, scanning Miss Raymond's face; not quite perceiving the drift of her remark.

"So there is a recompensing pleasure in doing good, even at the cost of some self-denial, and some pain?"

"Oh, I never questioned that, did I, Miss Raymond?"

"But if you had died a good while ago, or yesterday, you would have escaped these aching punctures."

"And lost the pleasure of freeing the lamb! That comes next, does it not? Excuse me, Miss Raymond, for anticipating," said Rachel, archly, taking her fingers from her lips, with which she was trying to suck the pain out of them.

"Yes, that comes next. And so you are content to have lived a little longer—from yesterday till to-day, say—for the sake of doing a single benevolent act—even so small a one as that of bringing relief to an animal. The pleasure balances the pain, does it not?"

"A thousand times over," said Rachel, "even though that were the only pleasure of the day, which it is far from being."

"Desire, then, to live yet another day, for some other good that you may do; and then another, for some other; and so on, as long as your heavenly Father permits; and let us think no more of the felicity of an early *escape* from the evils of a life which, in the way of virtue and beneficence, is, 'all along,' more 'a linked chain' of pleasures than of pains. Remember, too, that the pleasures (those of beneficence) are enduring, and that *that*

chain reaches into eternity; while the pains (like those of our fingers now) are but momentary, or at most, do not reach beyond our present life."

On an old cross-road, they approached a forlorn-looking house. Everything about it indicated extreme indigence, and extreme neglect.

"Who *can* they be, that live here?" Rachel asked.

"We will go in and see," said Rebekah.

"What, stop in here!" said Rachel, hesitating. "I would rather go round the house than into it. They must be vicious people, judging from the looks of things."

"One vice they have, certainly," said Rebekah; "but it will not harm *us*: the vice of laziness. The Stillshades live here. Were you never at their house before?"

"Oh, the Stillshades! that explains it. Do tell me if those lazy, good-for-nothing people live here? One, two, three —, it looks just as I should expect it would — four, five, six —."

"What are you counting, Rachel?"

"The broken panes,—seven, eight, nine,—as many as half of them are broken, and patched up anyhow. See the chimney-top, fallen down nearly to the roof, and quite, in one place! There might as well be no chimney-top at all, whether for safety or for looks. How many things are lying about, just where they happen to have been thrown down, some time, and are going to ruin—that nice tub, for instance, dropped to pieces, for want of care."

"It always looks so here," said Miss Raymond. "That chimney has been just as it is these many months; and will remain so, probably, for many months to come."

They entered the house. Only Mrs. Stillshade was at home. She was simmering something on the hearth, and the room was full of smoke. That, she said, was owing to the chimney, its top being fallen down, partly. Rachel expressed the fear that the house might take fire by means of it. There *was* danger, the old woman said, and they must look to it.

"But delays are dangerous," Miss Raymond remarked; "and *such* delays especially. Where safety of life is concerned, we should take the earliest and surest precaution possible."

"So we should, Miss Raymond; it's very true, what you observe: the chimney ought to be looked to, and we intend to mend it up," said Mrs. Stillshade, in her indolent, drawling way.

"I am afraid you imperil your lives by neglecting it," said Miss Raymond. "And, Mrs. Stillshade, there is, you know, a still greater concern, in regard to which delays are still more dangerous."

"That is very true again, what you observe, Miss Raymond. The interests of the world to come is a great consarnment, to be sure; I'm sensible on't; and I believe there's nobody that doesn't intend to look to it before they die. I do, I'm sure."

"Before they die, Mrs. Stillshade! But resting in that presumption, or intention, as they call it, which is nothing else than a deliberate postponement, they act both culpably and blindly. For duty demands our *immediate* attention to it; and prudence says the same, because we know not when or how we may die."

It was evident that Rebekah's admonitory words did but fall on the dull ears of an ever postponing sloth. It is of the nature, and perhaps the punishment, of laziness, habitually allowed, that it ensures the spiritual, scarcely less than the temporal poverty and ruin of the subject of it. They who educate the young should remember this.

A more shiftless couple than Ephraim Stillshade and his wife never lived. They were now in years. They had received innumerable favors, all their lives long, for they were always wanting something, though able enough to help themselves; but it might be questioned whether they had ever done a single self-denying good deed to others.

"What good we can have done or gained here, I do not know," said Rebekah, as they left the house, "unless we make their *example* impressive to us. The barren tree may make us appreciate the fruitful one. From such a life as *these* people have led, I should, indeed, think an early death an enviable escape."

To Rebekah's proposal, to call a few minutes at Mr. Shepherd's, the minister, as they were passing his house, Rachel tacitly consented, though she would have preferred not to do so. She greatly respected and esteemed Mr. Shepherd, and loved to hear him preach, but was shy of meeting with him personally.

The house, a neat and quiet-looking mansion, and venerable, like its owner, for its years and associations, was not far from the parish church, being one of the group that formed the central village.

Mr. Shepherd was a pastor of the true primitive, New-

England stamp, sincere, serious, and cheerful. He had been settled here in his youth ; no root of bitterness had disturbed the harmony of the relation ; his influence, like the piety that hallowed it, had become the growth of years ; and it was alike his and his people's wish, that he might end his days among them. To this prevailing harmony, with its palpable and accumulating 'fruit unto holiness,'—saving him from the harrassing effect of those elements of discord and disruption in the name of religion and philanthropy, so common now—it was in part attributable, probably, that, at the age of seventy, he still seemed as fresh and hale, almost, as he had been in his prime ; and in part, also, this happy effect was owing to the wholesome exercise and *change of thought*, which his little homestead of a farm, given him as his "settlement," at his call, had afforded him.

The venerable man and his most estimable wife received Rebekah and her companion in their characteristic benignant way. After the few words of greeting, they were wholly occupied with Miss Raymond. Miss Shepherd, their unmarried daughter, coming in, joined them.

Rachel, with her accustomed feeling of exclusion, seated herself at a window, a little retired from the others. She did not expect to receive much attention in the company of those who were so much older and wiser than she, not supposing herself entitled to it ; yet, as she noticed how cordially they talked with Rebekah, how evidently gratified they were with her company, she could not help reflecting how very grateful it must be, to be so loved and welcomed everywhere as Miss Raymond was.

As they rose to go, each of the three people of the house, taking Rachel by the hand, successively, said a few words to her, quietly, but with such evident sincerity and kindness, urging her to come often and freely to see them, that she was hardly able to reply to them, from the suddenness and force of her emotions.

"What good people they are!" she said, when they had got a little distance from the house.

"And how useful have been their lives!" responded Rebekah. "How many of the dead and gone, as well as of the living, have been, and are, and forever will be, the better and happier for them ! No, Rachel, it is not the life cut short in infancy or early manhood, it is the prolonged life of Christian usefulness, that is the enviable one."

Amidst lengthening shadows and the splendors of a golden sunset, our pedestrians reached their homes, the one tranquil, like the hour, the other full of agreeable excitement.

In the middle of the night, people waking from their sleep, saw a light flickering upon the walls of their chambers. The morning informed them of the cause : Stillshade's house had burnt down ; and Stillshade and his wife had perished in it !

The manner of their end was shocking, but no one deemed their death a loss.

## CHAPTER VI.

### READINGS WITH THE BLIND LADY—RACHEL'S EXPERIMENT.

IN a few instances at first Rachel's readings to Mrs. Welwood were performed rather as a task than otherwise; though not as a reluctant one. She went through the selected portion, closed the book, put on her bonnet, and went home,—feeling that she had done the blind lady a service. So in truth she had.

But, by degrees, the exercise became more a mutual and social, and less a formal thing; and Rachel increasingly felt that she was enjoying a privilege, rather than conferring a favor. Often she was desired to select such books and passages as suited her own taste; or Mrs. Welwood chose them with reference to Rachel's gratification and improvement, rather than her own,—including such as were humorous and lively, as well as such as were grave; or, the reading itself, at times, was little more than a circumstance, compared with the interest of the remarks and conversations which grew out of it.

A chapter of the Bible always constituted a portion of the reading; and drew forth such sweet remarks as only mature, enlightened piety, like that of Mrs. Welwood, could suggest.

Rachel conceived an almost filial regard for her. She was fond of being with her, and took pleasure in rendering her various little services, such as a blind person needs, or is gratified to receive, but silently dispenses with, through fear of wearying others with too numerous and minute requests. She arranged her room, adjusted her dress, opened and closed windows for the admission or exclusion of air and *light*, (for light,—the *thought* of light, if no more, is pleasant even to the blind; besides its sanitary influences;) she lent her an arm for walks about the yards and garden, related to her the news and incidents of the day, and, in short, did a thousand little things which a devoted daughter might have done, but which the housekeeper's cares, or want of perception, or of tact, failed to do.

Many things she did which were not palpable to Mrs. Welwood unless some third person made her aware of them; but by which she was none the less obliged, as they made her room and person cheerful and attractive to such as came in to see her; or the comfort of them reached her in some way. Rachel was often praised for what she did, as for instance, her tact at embellishing, by those who were not aware whom, they were commending.

"Why, Mrs. Welwood, how nice you are fixed up, here! What rich flowers, and how tastefully made up! Pity you couldn't see them."

This is a Mrs. Funnell that we happen to be quoting here,—whose calls are always short and fluent.

"I can feel something of the effect of things, though I

cannot see them," said Mrs. Welwood. It is Rachel's doing—the flower-pots. She has been here to-day."

"Rachel Kell's?"

"Rachel Kell's. She appears to have a great deal of taste."

"But unpruned and wild, they say she is."

"Yes, a little so. Or rather, I should say, she is a child of nature. Unnoticed plants are apt to *grow wild*; and she is one."

"Well, poor thing! I hope she will do well as she gets older, but—How inimitable the color of those scarlet wild-flowers is!—such as she are not apt to. They grow in swampy places—the flowers,—quite wet and tangled places—I've often noticed them;—she got a wet foot, I reckon, in gathering them. I hope she will do well—though it is hoping against hope, generally, in such cases—and make a correct and likely woman."

"It is better to hope well than ill of young persons, in any case, Mrs. Funnell; and to *show* them that we hope thus. Neglect and ill prophesying of them have a tendency to *make* them what they might not otherwise be."

"So they do, Mrs. Welwood; and I am sure I *hope* well of Rachel, as I said. It is very kind in her, certainly, and very hopeful, that she is willing to come and read to you,—and make your room look so fresh and beautiful besides."

"She does many kind things," said Mrs. Welwood; "and what adds to the merit of them is, that she does them so spontaneously and quietly; without the least

parading of them before you, or desiring, apparently, to make you sensible of the favor. She wishes you to feel the convenience or pleasure of the thing, and not the obligation."

"Why, Mrs. Welwood, that is the very essence of good deeds—the disinterestedness of them is. That is what makes a favor to *be* a favor. When a person comes to me and says, 'See here, Mrs. Funnell, what I have done for you! To be sure it cost me some pains; but you are quite welcome,' and all that—fie! it makes me wish they had'nt done it. But such is the difference of people."

Mrs. Welwood, on her part, became fond of having Rachel with her, and about her. The reading ceased to be a stated, weekly affair; or, at least, Rachel's presence there ceased to be so. At Mrs. Welwood's desire, she came whenever she found it convenient to do so, staying longer or shorter, sometimes bringing her sewing, or her studies, and spending the day.

Sitting at a window, one afternoon, with her needle, she let her work drop upon her lap, and remained a long time perfectly still. Mrs. Welwood also sat silent, reclining in her easy-chair, as if she were asleep. At length the latter said, "You are looking out upon the landscape, Rachel? The view is a very pleasant one from that window."

"I have often admired it," Rachel replied; "but I was not looking at it now."

"You were in some revery, then—some day-dream? you seemed so absorbed and still. Was it a pleasant one, or sad?"

"Quite sad, ma'am. It was not a day-dream, though. I have been shutting my eyes tight a long while, and thinking how I should feel, if I were never to see again. How long have you been blind, Mrs. Welwood?"

"It is about six years that I have been *quite* blind."

"Six—long—dismal *years* of darkness!" said Rachel, thoughtfully and slowly, in accents that showed how sincerely she had tried to make herself sensible of the calamity of blindness by shutting her eyes tight a long while.

"I can hardly say they have been *dismal* years, Rachel. There have been seasons of depression in them. So there are in every one's life. Are there not in yours?"

"Oh, yes, indeed, ma'am; a great many."

"So it is with all."

Mrs. Welwood was amused with Rachel's experiment of acting the blind girl; which, childish as it seemed, was a serious one, prompted by genuine sympathy.

"And how long did you keep your eyes shut?"

"It seemed an age," answered Rachel; "but I do not suppose it was more than twenty minutes. And, really, one cannot think how many occasions we have to use our eyes in only so short a time!"

"We have *constant* occasion for them, have we not?"

"As constant as our thoughts, ma'am, when we are awake. And even in sleep we *seem* to use them,—in our dreams. I wonder what sort of dreams people have who were *born* blind and *never* saw. I do not see how we *could* dream, without our senses. But I meant, how many *particular* occasions—express and necessary ones—we have for the eyes all the while."

"What particular ones occurred to you, for instance, while your eyes were closed? I should like to hear, and compare notes with you."

"Oh, they were trifling ones, to be sure; and yet it was as much as I could do, not to look, sometimes. A bird came and sat upon a limb near the window, and sung and chirped so prettily that I wanted to see what kind of bird it was. Then, something fell with a crash, out of doors, and startled me, and my first impulse was to look; but I shut my eyes closer. Next, Gazer, I suppose it was, or some dog that seemed to know me, came and stood up at the window, and put his paw upon my arm, to make me notice him. He thought it strange, I dare say, that I did not look at him. I was going to sneeze, and I felt everywhere in a hurry for my pocket-handkerchief; but could not find it, and so was obliged to do as I could without it. An ugly wasp, or some buzzing thing lit on me, and I was so afraid it would sting me! Why, Mrs. Welwood, how many little things we are always doing for ourselves, every hour and minute of the day, if we did but think of it!"

"We do them so naturally and habitually," said Mrs. Welwood, "that we do them almost unconsciously,—without *reflecting* that we do them, or at all considering how necessary they are to us, and how uncomfortable we should be, were they not done."

"And yet we could not do them without eyes," continued Rachel; "and how trying it must be, to be so dependent on others, all the while, to do things for us which we could do so much better for ourselves."

"That indeed is, Rachel, one of the most trying of the evils of blindness, though perhaps the least thought of—that of being obliged to require a thousand little services from those about you, or else suffer the thousand inconveniences and wants which such attentions only can relieve. Your more prominent and stated wants, such as your meals, putting your room in order, and the like, will be attended to unasked, as things of obvious necessity; but your *little* wants, occurring all through the day—it is these which you most fear will weary your attendants, or your friends. They seem to be little things, and in themselves they are so; but the comfort and discomfort of our lives result, in the aggregate, far more from little things than from great ones.

"And these little things include the wants of the mind and heart, as well as those of the body.

"And, by the way, this is a thing to be remembered in all the ordinary intercourse of life and love,—that *little* attentions, constantly, and half unconsciously performed, rather than larger and occasional ones, make the bulk of social sympathies and claims.

"But, Rachel, there is one privation attending the loss of sight," continued Mrs. Welwood, "which is greater than any other. Can you tell what it is?"

"They are so many, and all of them so great, that it is difficult to say which is the greatest," Rachel replied. "But"—reflecting for a moment—"it seems to me so dismal to be shut out from the face of nature—from all the beauties of the earth and sky!"

"Yes, that is a great privation. But those beauties,

once seen, live in the memory, quite as vividly, perhaps, as they do in the eye. With me the world is no more blank now than it used to be. There have been blind poets, you know, who, from memory, have filled their works with the richest imagery of the natural world."

"Yes, ma'am, such as Homer and Milton. But there are a great many new sights occurring all the while, which one has never seen, and so cannot remember; besides a thousand new varieties and shapes of things which are familiar. Every fresh-blown rose, or tulip, is a new sight to me. So is every rainbow, and every changing shape and color of the clouds."

"That is true," said Mrs. Welwood, who almost felt that Rachel was giving her a new sense of her calamity. "There are pleasant things to look at, always, and new things, as you say. And yet, I should more long to open my eyes, if I might, upon old and familiar objects than upon any new ones."

Among those old and familiar objects referred to mentally by Mrs. W., were, of course, the home and scenes of her childhood, as well as certain other and later localities made sacred to her by very dear associations.

"And then, one is so limited and straitened in one's movements. You cannot leave the house without some one to lead you;—and it is so delightful to ramble off at will, and all alone, and feel the freedom of the fields and woods!"

"It is delightful, Rachel, especially to the young and vigorous. Everything is fresh and delightful to those whose frames and spirits are so. I was once as fond of

such excursions as you are, and should still enjoy them much. Yet if sight were lent me, for a day, or an hour only, it would not be to the fields and groves that I should go."

"One cannot see the faces of one's friends," continued Rachel. "You cannot see their smiles and tears."

"Nor their decays," said Mrs. Welwood. The faces of the absent and the dead remain as they were when we last saw them. It has often been remarked that a child dying always remains a child, in the memory of survivors. Death forestalls decay, and makes their bloom perpetual. Something of this happens with blind people. It is so with me, at least."

Rachel went on with her list of privations.

"Books are useless without eyes"—

"Which may show the book-makers how much other people's eyes are worth to *them*," said Mrs. W. smiling.

"Yes, ma'am; their occupation, like Othello's, would be gone."

"And this may suggest to us, that we often have cause for thankfulness where we least suspect it."

"But, Mrs. Welwood, what a vexation it must be, to have a delightful book on your table, and not be able to read a word of it!"

"Yet if some one will read it to you, as you read to me, Rachel, you have a two-fold pleasure from it—that of the book and that of the reader's society and kindness."

Rachel's eyes filled at the over-measure (as she felt it to be) of this incidental acknowledgment of her humble and thrice-recompensed services.

"You have mentioned a number of the privations of the blind, Rachel, but you have not yet said which you think the greatest."

"Oh, I do not know, Mrs. Welwood,—they appear to me to be *all* the greatest."

"I must tell you, then, which *I* think the greatest. It is that one cannot read the Bible—the precious word of God! And all the more, that, being blind, we have *special need* to resort to it, for its sustaining truths and consolations. 'The entrance of thy word giveth light.' If the outer light be gone, we need the inner light the more. It is true it can be read to us by others; but that is not like reading it for ourselves, and by ourselves, whenever, and wherever we may choose.

"Remember this, Rachel; and think that the best use you can make of your eyes is the perusal of your Bible; and that, if you ever lose them, you will have cause to feel *this* want of them above every other. I trust you do read your Bible every day."

"Some days I do not, ma'am."

"That is wrong. I am sorry to hear it. You should make a practice of reading a portion of it every day, and be storing your mind with it—hiding it in your heart—while you are young, as David and Timothy did."

"Sometimes I feel too bad to read it; or any book."

"Then is the very time to read it most—to change your thoughts, and recover you from your dark and morbid feelings. The Bible was written to meet our sad feelings, as well as our cheerful ones; and it has a wonderful power to that effect. Look there for light,

when you are dark; and look up, also, at the same time.

"So you have your times of depression, Rachel?" continued Mrs. W., after a pause.

"Yes, ma'am"—thoughtfully.

"Your dark days, as well as I?"

"Yes, ma'am. Not dark like yours, nor dark continually, like yours; but days and hours of sadness, a great many."

"And many more you must expect to have, if you live; because such is all human experience. If a man live many years, and rejoice in them all; yet let him remember the days of darkness; for they shall be many. But, Rachel, there is a remedy for all human ills. You must avail yourself of it. It is found in Christ. When you are unhappy, think of him, and go to him for relief.

"Yes, Rachel," repeated Mrs. W., interpreting her silence as indicative of her lack of faith in what she was saying (for the natural heart does not believe a word of it; but, on the contrary, regards religion as the invader of its joys), "in true religion we have a remedy for all the griefs and sorrows—the dark days—of life."

"It saves us from misery in another world," said Rachel; "but does it from the ills of this?"

"Yes, from the ills of this, and from all of them; either literally or equivalently—or *more* than equivalently. The promise of Jesus is very express and comprehensive. 'Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.' Whatever be your grief or trouble, be it of body or mind, he undertakes to meet the

case fully, if you apply to him. How? In many cases he will remove it from you, literally, in answer to your request—your prayer. In other cases he will sustain you under it, and that is equivalent to its removal. If you are carrying a weight, as heavy as you can stand under, and double strength is given you, that is all one as though the load itself were removed; you walk just as easy with it now, as with your former strength you would without it. And, if by and by the load is actually removed from you, and your *added strength remains*, you are evidently a gainer by the process;—and such is the design and result of moral trial. In one way or another, in all cases, if he do not at once remove the burden, he will turn it to a positive benefit to you, so that you shall be better, and better satisfied with it, than you could be without it. This is more than equivalent to its actual removal. In the end, he will, of course, deliver you from every evil, literally, by taking you to heaven; but in *this* world, is it too much to say we have an all-sufficient remedy in him? I think, Rachel, you cannot name the earthly ill which has not its *specific* promise of relief in the Bible."

And Mrs. Welwood mentioned over a number of earthly ills—sickness, poverty, reproach, &c., including orphanage and the literally *forsaken* of father and mother, and cited their appropriate promises.

"Can he give friends and kindred to the outcast; and society to the lonely? and *does* he ever, in this world?" Rachel asked. And she asked, though incredulously, yet not captiously. She asked with a kind of vague

hope of a favorable answer to the longings of her social nature ; and with a mind more than ordinarily disposed to faith, just then, under the power of Mrs. Welwood's words and manner.

" Yes, dear, yes, indeed," said Mrs. Welwood emphatically ; " nothing raises up and multiplies the most endeared friendships to us like a union with the Saviour. ' There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake and the gospel's, but he shall receive a hundred fold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions ; and in the world to come, eternal life.' Love and brotherhood are the great law of the Saviour's family ; and however forsaken, or destitute of friends we may be, elsewhere, we shall find friends *there*—brethren, and sisters, and mothers. I do hope, Rachel, that *you* may find it so by experience."

## CHAPTER VII.

### MRS. WELWOOD.

THE excellence of Mrs. Welwood's character, as well as the kind interest she takes in Rachel, will excuse us with the reader, if we make *her* the subject of a short chapter here.

In speaking of the relief which religion brings to mental suffering, and through the mind to bodily suffering also (for the spirit of a man will sustain his infirmity), Mrs. Welwood spoke from experience. She had suffered various and severe afflictions, and been sustained under them by her religious faith. In her blindness particularly, she was often spoken of as a pattern of patience and submission.

This was not attributable to natural temperament. Naturally she was a woman of much activity and spirit—efficient, self-relying, and fond of *doing* for herself and others. But she had *learned*, like Paul, in whatever state she was, to be therewith content. It is a hard lesson, nowhere learned but in the school of Christ. How few acquire it there, as perfectly as they ought ! Her blindness came on rather gradually at first. For a while she indulged the hope that it would be but tempo-

rary ; or, at the worst, be only partial. But it went on increasing. She still saw objects, but saw them indistinctly,—‘saw men as trees walking,’ and saw them more shadowy to-day than yesterday ; till, at length, apprehension became certainty,—her blindness was incurable, permanent and total. The sun that had grown dim for months, had at last quite faded from the heavens, to shine no more.

It cost her an effort, for a time, to keep from repining. There were hours of sadness—days of sadness—months of pining for the light. To be dark—unoccupied—useless—dependent—burthensome,—these were thoughts not easily to be tranquilized.

But, through divine aid, they were tranquilized at length.

Mrs. Raymond entered her room one day, and found her just rising from her knees, weeping. On her table were pen and ink and a sheet of paper, partly written, or rather scrawled over.

“Excuse me, Mrs. Raymond,” said she, drying her eyes, and assuming a manner calm and placid, rather than positively cheerful ;—“I have been feeling bad a little—more so than usual lately, and especially to-day, on account of my blindness. But I trust the bitterness is past now, and that strength will be given me to rise above it—grace to say, God’s will be done.”

Mrs. Raymond sat down by her and took her hand in hers.

“In thy light shall we see light,” continued Mrs. Welwood,—“how much comfort there is in those sweet,

cheering words ! Truly the light is sweet, and a pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the sun ; but there is a light shed inward upon the heart a thousand fold more precious than the natural. I have believed that, and, I trust, experienced something of it, since that time when you and I together, in our young days, gave ourselves to Christ. But latterly, though I have needed it more, I have seemed to enjoy it less. Want of submission—entire submission—to the will of God has been the sinful cause. I trust now that that cause is removed, and that, with resignation, I shall be favored with that inward light and peace. I shall never see again, I shall be blind always, while on earth,—and useless ; but so God appoints, and that should satisfy me. I trust it does. I would not have it otherwise.”

“No, my dear friend, you will not be *useless*,” said Mrs. Raymond. “To *suffer* God’s will is to *do* his will ; and that is to let your light shine, and so shine that others seeing it, will glorify Him. It is through suffering that some of the finest and most difficult of the Christian virtues are exhibited. The sufferings of God’s people have a large place in the gospel system, not only as a means of their chastening and improvement, but as an element of its power over others. How much of its impression on the world would the gospel lose, but for the exemplary behavior of its disciples under suffering ! So, do not say you are useless because you are blind. On the contrary, you are called thereby to a higher exercise of the impressive virtues of faith and patience,—as Job was. ‘Ye have heard of the patience of Job—’”

" "And have seen the end of the Lord ; that the Lord is very pitiful and of tender mercy," " said Mrs. Welwood, finishing the quotation. " Job's example is of great worth to me."

"As yours may be to others," said Mrs. Raymond. And then, too, suffering (and almost none more than the loss of sight) gives opportunity to *others* for the exercise of other Christian virtues—those of sympathy and kindness, in particular—towards the sufferer ; so that through *that* medium, also, the sufferer is not useless."

"These thoughts, which you express, about the *exemplary*, as well as disciplinary, uses of affliction, are full of interest," said Mrs. Welwood, "viewed *in reference to others* ; perhaps they may, and should be so, with reference to ourselves: but," with true humility, she added, "for myself I can only pray that I may be able to bear with simple resignation whatever the Lord sees fit to lay upon me. That is mine to do, depending on his aid. What good he may make (or forbear to make) my affliction instrumental of to others I humbly leave to him. I *have* felt that I was useless ; but I must not think so any more, since it might seem like repining, and since it is not mine to say.

"But I must tell you, Mrs. Raymond, what it was that had troubled me particularly to-day, before you came in. Be so kind as to take that paper on my table, there, and see if you can read it."

Mrs. Raymond was able to read and *make out* the first two or three lines ; after which the lines interlaced each other, the words were shapeless, spots of ink had

dropped from the over-charged pen, in short, the paper was painfully illegible.

"So Mabel told me," said Mrs. Welwood. "As my blindness has increased, I have given up one thing after another, in the way of employment, finding that I must. But it is so hard to be unoccupied—doing nothing—all day sitting still ; and not sick, either, but quite well, and feeling that you are capable of exertion, so far as health is concerned,—this is so contrary to my nature and my habit, that I have tried to do, as long as I could. A few days ago I resolved to attempt a little plain sewing for myself: it was not important that it should be done nicely. So I got Mabel to furnish me with two or three ready-threaded needles, and turning the key to my door so as not to be surprised at my awkward labor—perhaps pride had some hand in that—I drew close to a window and went to work. I could see my cloth, being white, but not my stitches. I was soon in difficulty ; my work was drawn into wrinkles ; I could not smooth it, or tell how it was. I called Mabel. She held it up, and laughed outright. It was all in a '*quiddle*,' she said, just like a little child's work. I did not blame her for laughing ; I laughed myself. She said we might as well laugh as cry,—though I felt more like crying.

"I gave it up. There was an end to sewing.

"As to letter-writing, I have of course relinquished it, except partially, by the aid of a friend's hand. But sometimes, you know, we have some delicate matter—something in the way of advice, or confidence—which we wish to communicate, and do not like to do it through

a third person. I have thought that possibly I might write just legibly, or *spellably*, myself,—feeling my way over the paper, and making tracks plain enough for a friend to be just able to follow me. To-day I had some things which I was particularly desirous to say to a young friend in delicate circumstances; and that sheet which you have in your hand is the result of my attempt. I asked Mabel to see if she could read it. She read a line or two, as you did, and then, for the rest, she declared ‘she could neither read nor *guess* a word of it. The letters looked like chicken-tracks, and the lines went sprawling everywhere, like rail fences blown down in a storm,—besides puddles of ink—you dipped so deep into the inkstand,’ she said. Such was Mabel’s account of my performance. Mabel is a good natured creature, but has more honesty and frankness than delicacy.

“I felt disappointed—perhaps chagrined. I felt as I ought not to have felt. The conviction that I could no more converse with friends at a distance, confidentially, by letter, overcame me. I sought relief in prayer, asking for grace to bear with humility and *cheerfulness* this great trial, as being a Father’s appointment, and for my good. And I cannot help feeling that my prayer is granted—that such grace *is* given me, and will be; and that I shall no more grieve as I have done.”

This, as has been mentioned, was at an early stage of Mrs. Welwood’s loss of vision,—years previous to our readers’ acquaintance with her through Miss Raymond and Rachel Kell.

Nature, it is often said, must have its course. In

every wounded strong affection, or great calamity, or disappointed hope, there is a crisis of feeling reached and passed, usually, before the mind is, or perhaps *can* be, permanently reconciled and calmed. Mrs. Welwood appears to have reached and passed that crisis at the time of the above related interview. Ever after this she was, as has been mentioned, a most edifying example of serenity and cheerfulness.

And how far she was from being “useless,” either as a passive sufferer of an afflictive dispensation or in more voluntary ways, those who knew her could testify. Rachel Kell, for one, had reason to be thankful, so far as *she* was concerned, that Mrs. Welwood was blind.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### PERSONAL WORTH MORE IMPORTANT THAN POSITION.

ACROSS the way from Mr. Kell's, on the other side of the little valley, which was narrow there, lived the Burbanks. The family, which was in flourishing circumstances, consisted of the parents, and three daughters and a son. As neighbors, they were very civil and obliging, and the young people were kind enough to Rachel, except that they were reserved as to any social intimacy with her.

As if it had been specially for her annoyance, there was not a house in the parish that was so much the centre of attraction to the young as that. While she was a child there was many a children's party there, of which she was an observer, but never a participant; and now, in her early youth, the bloom and gaiety of the place were still accustomed to assemble there. On these occasions the home of the Burbanks seemed to her a paradise. She was never so forlorn as when, sitting alone and unthought of, by her dusky window, those bright lights shone out and *down* upon her, (for the house stood higher than Mr. Kell's,) and those merry sounds fell upon her ear. Pleasant scenes, no doubt, they were, to

the gay young spirits that were present at them; but Rachel's fancy—as outside spectators of gay festivities are wont to do—painted them more glowing than the reality.

Often, after one of these parties, Rachel would be favored with a rehearsal of all that had transpired in it, by Josephine Burbank. Josephine was the youngest of the sisters, and was two or three years younger than Rachel. She was fond of coming over to give to such hearers as she could find, in the parlor or in the kitchen, and particularly to Rachel, a minute and fine account of the persons, sayings and doings of the evening,—mischievously perceiving that, while Rachel was entertained by it, she was at the same time made unhappy. Hannah 'wished the little hussy further.'

Of course there were social meetings elsewhere in the place, within Rachel's knowledge, as well as here at the Burbanks'. But out of sight is out of mind, often: these were at the door.

It needed all the womanly strength Rachel had, to withstand the depressing effect of these things, both upon her spirits and upon her *efforts*. "What are attainments in knowledge worth," she might ask herself—*did* ask herself,—“if they cannot secure respect to the possessor? What are talents worth, if there be no chance to exercise them? These drawings—they may gratify my grandparents (which makes them worth the pains); or may amuse Hannah, or amuse me; or Miss Raymond may commend them; but what further interest have they? These studies—they may furnish my own mind, as the

miser's money does his chest ; but will have no *social*, or current value."

These thoughts, more or less distinct in Rachel's mind—floating there like clouds—were natural, and in a measure just. Things *have* their social value ; and in that lies, in no small degree, the stimulus of their acquisition. Even the professed student, in college, asks, often,—ignorantly, it is true, or lazily, perhaps,—“Of what *use*, practically, in my line of life, is such or such a particular study going to be to me ?” that is, what value will it have in reference to those in whose eye, or interest, I am to act ? And there is the secret of many an omitted or imperfect lesson. It might be so with Rachel : “Of what use—beyond myself—are mental gifts and acquirements ?”

The crow doth sing as sweetly as the lark,  
Where neither is attended.

It required, then, some philosophy, more indeed than Rachel sometimes had, to resist the depressing force of circumstances. The stream in which she stood was constant, at times rapid, and she needed an often helping hand to keep her from being carried down by it.

Help she had—not always the most judicious. Let us see.

Her amiable, quiet grandmother—what would *she* say ? “Oh well, never mind, Rachel ; you can be happy without mixing with these giddy young people. You must try to think so, and be so. At any rate, you can be *good*, which is the *great* thing. There is no true

happiness anywhere without that ; nor real misery with it. There is always sunshine where virtue and God's love and favor are. And you must think of such as are worse off,—of poor such-a-one, for instance, who has been always a cripple, and *couldn't* go, if she were ever so much invited."

The more cheery grandfather's way was, simply to talk of something else, or to find some other means of diversion—"Guess what I have heard to-day ;" "Come, go with me, and see what I will show you."

Hannah, who always entered warmly into whatever concerned Rachel, spiced *her* consolations largely with *resentful* or *invidious* remarks. And yet—to do her justice—Hannah was neither envious nor resentful in her nature, and on her own account. She appeared to think it a virtue, or at least not contrary to the law of love, to be so, or to seem so, in Rachel's behalf: there was a cancelling benevolence in that.

Mrs. Welwood seldom or never alluded to the subject of Rachel's exclusion from society ; *her* wisdom being to lead her young friend, by quiet ways, to that intrinsic excellence of character which, as a basis of true respectability, and true enjoyment, it is beyond all mere conventional regards to give or take away.

Rebekah Raymond met the case always as it was,—tenderly, but openly, frankly, and vigorously. "Rachel, you are not received into society,—there is no denying or concealing that: what then ? You are aggrieved by it,—what is the remedy ?" Of course, Miss Raymond preferred not to allude to the subject, unless some word,

or mood, or circumstance, on Rachel's part, made it necessary.

Such methods as the grandparents used were but expedients for the time—things which perished with the using. Miss Raymond looked at the necessity of a more radical and permanent provision for the case,—her aim being essentially the same as Mrs. Welwood's, but her manner and methods different.

We have named these several agencies together here: in doing so, we may carry an appearance to the reader of more concert and parade in regard to Rachel than there was in fact. That the grandparents should be watchful for her welfare, more or less unitedly, was a thing of course. Between the others, Mrs. Welwood and Miss Raymond, there was very little conference, except at first, in reference to the reading. Neither of them supposed herself to have assumed the charge and manner of a patroness; each only doing, in her own way, what her benevolence prompted her to do for the benefit of an interesting young girl in Rachel's circumstances.

It happened on a morning after one of those evening parties at the Burbanks', at which young ladies of Rachel's age were present, as well as older ones, with their parents, that Rachel met Miss Raymond walking. The party had been a very gleeful one with the young people, a fine moon-lit winter evening, and sleigh-bells, contributing to make it so. While Miss Raymond and Rachel stood conversing a moment, two young ladies and a young gentleman came up; who cordially greeted Miss Raymond, but dismissed Rachel with the bare civility of

a faint "How do you do, Rachel?" to which she made an equally civil faint reply; and walked on. The three were full of the preceding evening at the Burbanks'; to which Miss Raymond listened with her characteristic goodness of heart and good breeding. A shade on Rachel's face, as she withdrew from the group, did not escape her notice. "Why it *is*, it *must* be, trying to the girl," said she to herself, as her eye followed her, "that she can neither enter young society, nor be clear of it, that it meets her everywhere, and wherever it meets her, even casually in the street, studiously discards her."

The next time she saw Rachel, which was a few days after, at her mother's, she said to her, "You was hurt, Rachel, by the manner of those young people, in the street, the other morning."

"Not much, Miss Raymond; not more than I often am."

"I observed its effect upon you; and now, in regard to the neglect you suffer, suppose we just look at it seriously and frankly, once for all; and then dismiss it as as far as possible from our thoughts. To brood over it will not mend the matter. To give way to wounded pride, or resentful pride, or misanthropy, or any unamiable feeling, or behavior, will not remedy it. What will?"

"What will, Miss Raymond?"

"That is for your moral courage and good sense to look at. An important step towards it is, not to allow the evil to be aggravated in your own apprehension of it, and by your own deportment in regard to it. I am confident you *do* aggravate it, in both these respects—in your feeling, and by your behavior."

Rachel's countenance expressed some surprise and pain at this, as if it conveyed rebuke, rather than sympathy.

"I am persuaded," continued Miss Raymond, "that you wrong yourself, and others also, by *over-estimating* the reserve of people towards you. It is not near so deep and significant as you imagine. A great deal of it is merely thoughtless and unconscious; and in a very small degree—in *no* degree, in my belief—is it of a *personal* nature towards yourself. It is not for any reasons found in *you*, as an individual, that you are neglected, but for other and broader reasons, of which society knows and holds you to be innocent,—knows and holds you to be so just as clearly, Rachel, as your own conscience does."

"I know it does, Miss Raymond; or I *suppose* it does,—for I *am* innocent of its reasons. But"—with a grieved look—"it is so hard, Miss Raymond—I have often heard of *general laws*, how injuriously they bear upon particular cases—it is so hard to be the victim of a general law!"

"That is true, Rachel," replied Rebekah, her gentle eyes filling. "It is hard. But there is this alleviation of it: the world notices such hard cases, and speaks of them with sympathy. And especially where one so young and sensitive as you, is concerned, its sympathy is full and tender."

"But it does not *overflow*, like other full fountains; no one is refreshed by it," Rachel remarked.

"That same *general law* forbids, perhaps," responded

Rebekah. "It is *there*, however, in human breasts. We should do wrong to human nature not to think so."

"You said, Miss Raymond, that people's reserve towards me was in part merely *thoughtless*: does not that show that they think me *below* their notice? For it is only such as are insignificant, or contemptible, that are unthought of. Its being thoughtless is but an aggravation of it, and not an alleviation, as you would have me believe."

"Quite wrong, Rachel. Your inference may seem a just one, but I know it to be contrary to fact. I know that people—those who know you—both think and speak of you with a great deal of kindness, and more I will not say, lest I should flatter you."

"With *admiration*, even," were the flattering words in Rebekah's mind; which her prudence suppressed. She thought it right to soothe, but not to flatter, a wounded spirit.

"Miss Raymond, if it *were* for reasons found in *me* (as you say it is not) I might, by good behavior, remove them. Now I never can. I almost wish they *were* personal to me!"

"Oh, but Rachel! the stigma of a *personal* sin is incomparably worse than an *ancestral* one. The stain—the infamy, is far deeper."

"But not more *ineffaceable*."

"Yes, more ineffaceable—the crime being the same. Besides, one's *own* sin pains the conscience."

"But, Miss Raymond, if this ancestral stain lay farther back in time;—far back, where darkness and oblivion

hide things—many *generations* back ; and not in the very next one before you, whose graves and memories are yet fresh, and their names legible !”

“My dear, dear girl, is it possible that you have let this matter wear so deeply, so painfully, so ranklingly and morbidly, (I am afraid) into your young heart !”

“It has had many years to grow there. I felt it in the tears that fell upon me in my grandmother’s arms ; I heard it in the plaintive lullaby that hushed me in the cradle ; I learned it with the alphabet at school. The seed thus early sown, every cloud has watered ; every sun, stimulated ; every season, favored ;—and do you wonder if its roots have gone deep ?”

“Stop ! Rachel, stop, I beseech you ! you astonish and distress me. These are the most painful, the most *unamiable* words I ever heard you utter. You will go crazy, and what is worse, *wicked*, with them, if you do not check them.”

“Do pardon me, dear Miss Raymond—I *know* they are unamiable and wicked ;—I shudder at and dread such thoughts myself. It is not often that they get the better of me so, but sometimes they *will* possess me ! Do not repeat them to my grandparents.”

“They must be times of great temptation, when such thoughts possess you. May divine grace help you ! No dear, I would not distress your grandparents with them.”

“But you *will* forgive me for them, will you not, Miss Raymond ; and *love* me ? For I know *you* care for me, and I owe you many, many thanks, and have been ungrateful to speak those hard, offending things !”

It was with an upturned, importuning face and glistering eyes, that this appeal for forgiveness, and for love, was made ; and a look full of tenderness was the answer.

“I do hope, Miss Raymond, that I shall not any more, *ever*, give way to such unamiable feelings. And I *promise*—if I *may* promise—you, that I will *try* not to. And now do let us go back to those cheerful thoughts you was beginning to express. You said I over-estimated the reserve of people towards me—which I believe, (or I should never have felt as I did just now)—and that I *aggravated* the evil by *my own deportment*. Please tell me how.”

“By your *own reserve*—your shyness of acquaintance,” Miss Raymond replied. “You avoid people ; you go out of your way to do it ; you avert your face from them ; you elude them like a flitting shadow, and almost as well might people arrest the shadow, and converse with it, as with Rachel Kell. Often, when people, coming to your house, or meeting you in the street, *would* speak to you—are *wishing* to speak to you, and would detain you in conversation, with hearts full of cheerfulness and love towards you, you avoid giving them the opportunity. Is it not so ? Think now ;—is there not reserve on *your* part as well as on that of others ? I know this has been the natural result of *circumstances* ; but it is none the less a fact, on that account.

“And let me tell you, Rachel, those very young people that spoke to you so faintly the other morning, said the kindest things of you after you withdrew. I will not

tell you *what* they said, lest (as I said before) I should *flatter* you; and it is not flattery but *truth* you need. Truth is your friend here, as it must be always.

"I would not have you *obtrusive*—I have not the least fear that you will be, for it is not *in* you; but I would have you meet people everywhere with just that simplicity and frankness which *is* in you, naturally. Meet others as you meet me, or, as I have seen you meet William Geer, with unconscious freedom, as one that meets a friend. You have too much *consciousness* in the presence of others, and that makes *them* conscious, and puts both you and them in a false position, mutually. Divide the blame, then, between yourself and them—partly for your reproof and self-correction, and partly for your comfort."

"Perhaps the fault *has* been mine, in part," Rachel said. "It never occurred to me before. It will be hard to mend; but I will try. I need not make *advances* to people, though? That would not become me, would it?"

"You need not be forward, but you should be *civil*; which *backwardness* is not. To meet civility with civility, is due to others, and to yourself."

"Measure for measure;—well, I will try, Miss Raymond. I must, at least, not act the *shadow* any more. But I cannot do *one* thing which you require—meet people as I do *you*, or William Geer. If all were *like* you and him, and met *me* in the same way, *then* I should not pass them with a drooping or averted face."

The name of William Geer, that disinterested pleader

for her in her young school days, was always grateful to Rachel. The recollection of that early kindness soothed, cheered and elevated her; and the friendliness which still characterized his manner towards her, as often as they chanced to cross each other's path, seemed to connect her, as with a single golden link, or silken thread, to humanity and the social world.

"But, Miss Raymond, after all my fine civilities with individuals, here and there, I shall still be Rachel Kell, shall I not?"

Rachel said this with a smile, but meant it, nevertheless, as a serious appeal.

"Yes; you will still be Rachel Kell." Miss Raymond did not believe that the best way to pacify an aggrieved mind was to blink at, or deny, the *facts* by which it was aggrieved. She admitted frankly, that, while Rachel's feelings might be alleviated, and her manner disembarassed, in some degree, by the means which had been suggested, her position as to society in general would not be radically altered.

"You will still be Rachel Kell, no doubt—unknown to compliments and notes of invitation."

"And 'brooding' over that, or any naughtiness of feeling, or behavior, will not remedy it. '*What will?*' Miss Raymond."

"That is the question we started with, and you do right to recall me to it," Miss Raymond replied.

"The case is as it is, then; it cannot be helped; it is worse than useless to repine and be disheartened. Waste no more feeling, no more passion on it, therefore; but,

on the contrary, since you cannot have the place you would in society, resolve cheerfully and nobly, resolve inflexibly, that you will stand well with *yourself* at least—that you will *be* respectable, whether accounted so or not, and *worthy* of the esteem and intimacy of others, whether such regards be accorded to you or not.

“And after all, Rachel, it is far more important, immeasurably more important, what we *are*, than how others regard, or treat us. Cultivate your mind; cultivate your heart: be as *intelligent*, and as *amiable*, as you can,—for your *own sake*. And cultivate your manners, too; be not ignorant of, or indifferent to, natural and conventional politeness, however little occasion you may think you have, or are likely to have, for such accomplishments. Agreeable manners are agreeable to oneself, independently of their effect on others; as a well-fitted garment is more easy to the wearer, at the same time that it is more pleasing to the beholder. And *I* believe, Rachel, that you will yet have occasion for all the politeness of manner you may have, for every acquirement you may make, in the very best society, and in the most interesting circumstances and relations.”

Rachel shook her head, distrustfully, at this. “It will be only Rachel Kell, Miss Raymond, whatever she may do, or *be*.”

“No, Rachel, I am confident my prediction will be verified, sooner or later, if you are true and faithful to yourself. You *will* win upon the world’s respect, and be loved and honored in society,—*if*, I say, you do not prove delinquent to yourself. It *must* be so; for it is not in

human nature to withhold esteem from amiableness and knowledge.

“You still look distrustful; but I give you *rhyme*, as well as reason, for it. You have read the little poem, I presume, of which these two stanzas are the conclusion and the moral:—

“‘This tale a Sybil nurse arold;  
She softly stroked my youngling head,  
And when the tale was done,  
‘Thus some are born, my son,’ she cries,  
‘With base impediments to rise,  
And some are born with none.’

“‘But *virtue* can itself advance  
To what the favorite fools of chance  
By *fortune* seemed designed;  
Virtue can gain the odds of fate,  
And from itself shake off the weight  
Upon th’ unworthy mind.’”

“But, Miss Raymond,” Rachel argued, “one needs a place in society to begin with, in order to be fitted for it, and to rise in it. It is a very different thing to rise in the bosom of society, with all its helping influences around you, from what it is to rise as one disowned by it, with all its influences against you. And *I* can quote verses too, if you will excuse my doing it.

“‘Man in society is like a flower  
Blown in its native bed: ’tis there *alone*  
His faculties, expanded in full bloom,  
Shine out; *there only* reach their proper use.’

“How often is it remarked in conversation, and in books, that some are doomed to obscurity for life because

their birth and place in society are so, while others rise to eminence for a contrary reason.

"Gray's Elegy in a Country Church-yard, is, you know, full of the idea of gifted minds dwarfed and withered through obscurity and neglect. It is this that makes the poem so affecting—to me, at least; is it not to you, Miss Raymond?"

"Perhaps in this neglected spot is laid  
Some heart once pregnant with celestial fire;  
Hands that the rod of empire might have swayed,  
Or waked to ecstasy the living lyre."

And Rachel repeated several stanzas, in her pathetic way, including that of 'Full many a gem, &c.,' and ending with, 'Their lot forbade;' which she pronounced with the plaintive emphasis which a heart in full sympathy with the poem dictated.

Rebekah Raymond felt that her *rhyme* was matched with rhyme, if not her reasons with reasons. "If the girl *doesn't* rise, and win respect and place for herself," said she internally, "it will not be because she has not native force of intellect."

"Well, dear, do not let us debate the matter now. At all events, the course I recommend is the one to secure your *self-respect*, and that is the great thing. That *alone* is proof against the world's neglect—the world's contempt. Without that, the world's favor amounts to little. Without self-respect one cannot be comfortable even in the *sunshine* of the world's regard; nor, with it, blasted or disconsolate in the deepest shade of the world's disfavor.

"So I hope that you will be making the best and most of your youth and opportunity to grow wiser and better daily, even though it be only for your own self-respect and self-enjoyment. But I expect more from it than that."

Some further conversation followed. Rachel thanked Miss Raymond for her good counsel and good wishes, and hoped to profit by them. Though she had quoted verses, and reasoned, *perversely*, (as she feared Miss Raymond might think) yet she did believe that goodness and wisdom were worth cultivating for their own sake.

"And for the rest," Miss Raymond added, "let us remember that, in all our endeavors and desires in a right and laudable direction, there is a helping providence, and helping grace."

Rachel took her leave with a cheerful, but yet deeply thoughtful mind. A few yards from the gate she met with her venerable pastor. "Ah," thought she, "here is good Mr. Shepherd; he will speak to me, and I must not play the shadow."

Mr. Shepherd gave her an affectionate, paternal greeting, as he was wont to greet the lambs of his flock. Rachel returned his salutation, with eyes raised to his, and a grateful smile.

"Why, how fast you are growing up to womanhood! and I hope, my dear, you are growing in wisdom as well. Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom, and with all thy getting, get understanding. That is the wise man's counsel, and I am often repeating it to youth. Where do you keep yourself, that I never see you when

I call at your grandfather's? You would quite grow out of my knowledge, but that I see you in your pew on Sundays. We must be better acquainted. I have been gratified to hear one good thing of you,—that you are eyes to the blind. In that you are like Job. And that reminds me that I may, perhaps, aid you in the way of books, either to read to Mrs. Welwood, or for your own perusal. Come and look over my book-case, and see."

Rachel was much obliged by the offer, and would, if agreeable to him, come that day. "Do," said the patriarch, "and think yourself quite free to take any you like." After a few inquiries, respecting her grandparents, and her studies, he passed on, feeling better acquainted with her than he had been, and conscious of a livelier interest in her improvement and happiness.

Miss Raymond, noticing the interview through a window, and observing Rachel's quiet and respectful, and yet free and communicative manner, said to herself, "There is a good beginning in *one* particular of her new intentions: she does not shun conversation."

## CHAPTER IX.

### MRS. WELWOOD'S CRUCIBLES.

WITH many of the best *old* authors—books that never weary—Mrs. Welwood was familiar; and these constituted a considerable portion of her reading exercise with Rachel. The small, but select parish library, from which they could draw, was well furnished with works of this description, and good Mr. Shepherd's book-case was also open to them. When a new author was brought in, by Rachel or some neighbor, it received a special welcome. "This," would Mrs. Welwood say, "will be new to both of us. We will go through with it—if we find it worth going through with—*attentively*, and see what we think of it. If there be any genius, or freshness, in it, it will be like traveling through a new region, where we shall find both pleasure and profit. I often compare the perusal of a book to an excursion or a journey. If it be monotonous and dull, or beaten and common-place, much more, if it be foul with mire and dirt, and weeds, I quit it, and turn back; but if it be pleasing and instructive, I like to prosecute it deliberately, pausing here and there, to contemplate its minutest beauties, and take in fully its images and impressions. It is not so much the mere

amount of what we read that profits us, as the kind and manner."

Mrs. Welwood had a fine perception of the merits of authors. Nothing just or beautiful in sentiment, or genuine in feeling, escaped her notice; nothing spurious deceived her. Her literary taste may not have been the exact and erudite taste of the scholar and the critic; but it was directed by good common sense, and had that quality in it without which no taste can be perfect—the delicacy of religious feeling. It detected, instinctively, the essential coarseness of immoral sentiments, in whatever brilliancy or subtlety of language they might be clothed.

It was well for Rachel that, in the forming period of her youth, her taste was assisted by so judicious a guide. She could not help herself admiring, more or less, the favorite old authors of Mrs. Welwood. Often she was surprised to meet so many choice things in such age-embrowned repositories; and many a passage, and many a page, she transcribed (as is the manner of young readers) in her common-place book, and on loose sheets and scraps of paper, and laid them away as a great treasure—to be neglected and forgotten, till, some score of years afterwards, they should come to light in some old drawer, and be brought forth, together with bits of ribbon, scraps of needle-work, and first attempts at picture-making, as mementos of her young days, or for the entertainment of children and young friends.

But it must be confessed that Rachel's interest in the venerable and classic, was not equal to her passion for

the fictitious and romantic. She had acquired, or was beginning to acquire, a fondness for novels; particularly those of a wild, mysterious, exciting character. She read them in deep solitude: they suited the solitude of her being, and were to her in place of the actual world, from which she was excluded. Not many such were within her reach, but those she did get hold of she read with an enthusiasm that was likely to be mischievous, as well to her intellect as to her heart.

Mrs. Welwood was aware of this; and the hope of correcting it was a motive with her in desiring Rachel sometimes to select the book for their reading.

"You do not like *novels*, Mrs. Welwood?" said Rachel, interrogatively, in a voice between diffidence and frankness, when Mrs. W. had desired her to bring for their next perusal any book she pleased.

"As a class, I cannot think them profitable; there may be exceptions," replied Mrs. Welwood. "However, bring a novel, if you will. It is long since I read one; they are but few that I have ever read."

Accordingly, at the next reading Rachel produced two thinnish volumes, bound in marble paper, the edges in the rough, as if the world could not wait for the binder to cut them. They were one of the fashionable prose fictions of the day.

The perusal of this work cost them several sessions. Rachel's eyes moistened, and her voice faltered, at some passages in it, and she read it with growing avidity to the end. She rather wondered at the silence of her listener, which was seldom broken by remarks; and, at

very affecting passages, she looked to see if blind eyes had tears. Tears they have, undoubtedly ; but in the present case, if shed at all, they were shed rather in sympathy with the reader, than with the matter read.

The perusal being finished, Mrs. Welwood said, "As you selected this book, Rachel, I suppose you would like to know how I am pleased with it? I cannot say that I am favorably impressed by it."

"Why, Mrs. Welwood, the papers say it is very popular," said Rachel, apologetically; "and I am sure it is quite affecting."

"It may be popular, as many ephemeral things are," replied Mrs. Welwood; "and I am not surprised that young minds find it affecting. But its popularity will not be lasting. The next age will not read it."

"But is there not talent in it?"

"Yes, my dear, a good deal of talent."

"And why, then," asked Rachel, with a slight feeling of mortification at having shed tears over a book destined to speedy oblivion—"if it be talented, will it not live, and be read hereafter?"

"Because nothing is permanently admired but truth. I mean, by truth, that which is agreeable to nature and experience. What is not true, or *probable*, in reference to these, and is not seen and felt to be so, cannot be enduring. This book has not such truth in it. Its characters are unnatural, and its incidents extravagant and strange. Human nature disclaims the characters, and human experience the incidents. Religion and Providence also disclaim them; for what is contrary to the

truth of human nature and experience, is contrary to the verities of divine revelation and providence. We may be imposed on by the fiction for a time, through some illusive circumstance attending it, but after a while, mind and feeling reject it as not genuine—as false, ridiculous, absurd."

Rachel pulled a small memorandum-book from her basket. "I will write it down," said she: "*Nothing is permanent but truth.*"

"Do," said Mrs. Welwood. "And if you watch the course of books, and other things,—of scandal, for example,—you will often see it verified. The stream of truth alone runs clear and far; that of error stagnates and sinks into the earth.

"And so it is with character. Nothing is beautiful and permanently pleasing in mind and manners but truth,—truth, the absence and the opposite of affectation, disingenuousness, pride, vanity, and whatever is contrary to sincerity and purity in feeling, and to simplicity and frankness in demeanor."

It requires considerable magnanimity, in ardent minds, to bear, without sensitiveness, your dissent from them in a matter of literary taste. We have known a fond young wife fall out with her doting husband, almost to tears, because he could not equally (or perhaps at all) perceive the merits of the book she passionately admired,—it might be Hervey's Meditations, or Macpherson's Ossian, or some other unmasculine or non-natural thing, or, more probably, some novel,—could not be charmed with *her* book, even with her eloquent voice to read it to

him. And did you never, when some friend has lent you a volume, for your special gratification, feel some delicacy in returning a direct and honest answer to his appeal whether you did not find it admirable?

Something of this magnanimity Rachel had occasion to exercise, at times, under the severe but just remarks of Mrs. Welwood upon books and passages which pleased or excited her. The considerate kindness and good sense of Mrs. Welwood, led her, indeed, to hear an author with candor, and with an eye more to his excellences than to his defects,—provided his faults were not *immoral* ones: these she never spared. And, generally, as Rachel read, she endeavored to regard the book through *her* years and sympathies, rather than through her own. Yet her reader's enthusiasm, though sometimes stimulated, was often damped by her observations.

"Do you not think this is interesting?"

"Yes, it is interesting, rather, as a *story*,—if one's object be only to be amused, and pass away the time. But it does not appear to afford any valuable *instruction*, or to have any *moral aim*; and I find it difficult to feel *much* pleasure in a book that makes me neither wiser nor better. The lowest praise you can give a book is, that you are *amused* with it,—if that be all."

"Shall we go on with this; or drop it?" asked Rachel, on another occasion. The question was diffidently put, and *wistfully*; for the book in hand was of her selecting, and was another of the prose fictions of the day,—gone now, the very title of it, from literary memory, or at least from ours. Rachel herself was mightily en-

gaged with it, and wished to go on and finish it; but was apprehensive, from Mrs. Welwood's reserve, that it might not be agreeable to her.

"Yes, dear, go on, we'll hear it through, if you please. And suppose we read it quite *critically*; it will be a good exercise for us; and you shall act the critic, if you will, and give your opinion of it."

"I would rather you would be the critic, Mrs. Welwood."

"Well, we will both remark upon it. You may point out its excellencies, which will be the more pleasing part; and I will notice what may strike me as its faults."

Rachel proceeded, accordingly; but she could not help reading a little more considerately now, than she had done as far as they had already gone; and more than she was wont to do in works of the kind,—to which, like most fiction-readers, she was fond of resigning herself up unreservedly.

Reading thus *critically*, and with the consciousness that she had a discerning hearer, and that the credit of her own judgment was at stake, she pretty soon came to a passage on which she could not help remarking that it was rather offensive to good taste.

"Do not you think it is, Mrs. Welwood?"

"A little gross, I think."

She comes to another with profane expressions in it, or bordering on the profane, to say no worse of them, which she fears, inquiringly, will be objectionable with Mrs. Welwood on the score of morals.

"Quite objectionable, my dear, both in language and in sentiment."

"But this, I think, is beautiful."

The passage now referred to was a highly-wrought *dying* scene, which Rachel imagined must be gratifying to the religious feeling of Mrs. Welwood.

"I cannot say, my dear, that it *is* beautiful. It exhibits no scriptural, and consequently no true idea, of the death-bed of a believer; which it professes to do. It is but a sentimental transit to a sentimental heaven. No person ever died thus, or ever will,—saint or sinner. And this is one of the great mischiefs of novels as a class of works. If they introduce religion at all, which they are very fond of doing for effect, they make it a sheer creation of the fancy, and use it only for embellishment—putting the merest sentimentalism in the place of evangelical repentance, faith and holiness. The religion of this book, and of novels, quite too commonly, is a religion without convictions. The conscience has no concern in it. It shows no just acquaintance with the human heart, nor with the word of God. The means it uses for the reformation and conversion of its subjects (as in this instance you are reading of), are inept and feeble, and wholly inadequate to the effect ascribed to them. They are not the "means of grace" which the Bible teaches and the Spirit uses. Beware of the religion of novels; it is not the religion of heaven, and will never take you there.

"But go on, Rachel. Do not be embarrassed at all by my remarks: if the book pleases you, say so freely, whether it pleases me or not."

Rachel did so; specifying frankly, throughout the book, what she regarded as its fine passages and interesting features; and often with a justness that did credit to her judgment, Mrs. Welwood in many cases agreeing with her.

The reading being finished, Mrs. Welwood said she would now like to have Rachel's opinion of it as a whole.

"As a whole?" said Rachel, rather deferentially. As a whole, I *like* it. At least, I *did* like it, very much, when I read it by myself."

"So you have read it before?"

"Yes, ma'am. I run it over the other day, partly in the shade of Sweet-brier Rock, and partly in my room, after the family were in bed; and I was *so* interested in it, then, that I wanted you to hear it."

"It was kind in you to wish me to be a partaker of your pleasure; and I am glad you brought the book."

"But do not you think, Mrs. Welwood, it half spoils a book to read it in this strict, criticizing way?"

"Why should it? If a book has faults, we ought not to pass blindly over them; if it has merits, we shall perceive and enjoy them the *more* (instead of less) the more attentively we read. Beauties do not fear the light; deformities ought to be exposed in it."

"Will you please say what *you* think of the book as a whole, ma'am?"

Mrs. Welwood gave it considerable credit for ingenuity and talent; for fine descriptive passages, and for vivid imagery and affecting incidents; and was not sur-

prised that young minds should be a good deal fascinated by it. On the other hand, there was a great deal of trivial, irrelevant, and, to *her*, tediously minute detail,—to read which was a weariness and waste of time.

"I know, indeed," she said, "that minute particulars often give vividness to a picture, and are essential to its effect: but—in conversation, why not in a book?—it requires peculiar tact to be minute without being tedious.

"However, this author may not have seemed at all tedious to you, Rachel. Minute details are naturally entertaining to young minds; and tastes differ."

Rachel confessed that there *was* a little tediousness of this sort in portions of the book, especially if read aloud. But, in reading by herself, she had passed over these rapidly, only glancing along through them.

"But they were *made* to be read; were they not? And so, it seems, you did exercise your criticism a little, in reading by yourself, though unwittingly; and without thinking you spoiled the book in doing so. For *passing over* passages is criticism of the severest kind. The poorest compliment you can pay an author, in *his* view, is, to read him superficially, and with omissions.

"However, it is often wise to read thus, if you read the thing at all. Mr. Shepherd says, some books he *walks* through, meaning that he reads them deliberately; others he *stalks* through, that is, with long, high steps a tiptoe, as through a puddle."

"Or, as a lady goes through tall, wet grass," said Rachel, extending the comparison.

"Or through dusty weeds," said Mrs. Welwood.

"You went through some passages of this book in this way to avoid the tedium of them; and if you had gone through the whole of it, in the same delicate way, with lifted dress and long steps, you might have been in less danger of being drabbled and soiled by it.

"And now, Rachel, though this book has some pleasing and even captivating features, especially for young, romantic minds, and is, perhaps, as little exceptionable as the common run of novels, I cannot feel that either the heart or the intellect is likely to be improved by it. It has not, that I can see, any moral aim, certainly no obvious and wholesome one. Can you tell me *what* the moral of it is?"

"I do not know Mrs. Welwood that it has any moral; but I cannot see that it is *corrupting*."

"There is more or less profane language in it, is there not?"

"Some of its characters use such language, in some instances. Being wicked, it was but in character for them to do so. 'Wickedness proceedeth from the wicked.'"

"As saith the proverb of the ancients.' You have quoted aptly, Rachel. And the Book from which you quote, also says, 'Evil communications corrupt good manners;' and warns us not to be deceived.

"And there are some *indelicate* expressions and allusions, are there not?"

Rachel confessed there were, but not *very* indelicate, she thought.

"No, not very," said Mrs. W. "Just enough so to be

*suggestive*, without offending by their grossness. But I do not refer to those particular passages—those spots of dirty weeds, merely—as that which soils the mind: the whole book does this. And I will tell you why.

“The leading characters in it—the strongest drawn ones, those which most fix the attention—are *wicked* characters; with, perhaps, (which is all the worse) some noble natural traits to neutralize or abate your sense and censure of their depravity; while the *virtuous* characters are shallow, feeble and unnatural. The same is true of the scenes and incidents. And, now, what are the feelings with which you read such a book? It keeps you all the while in the company of characters, which you do, or *should* detest. It makes you familiar with their villany, and *privy* to it. It *entertains* you with it. You are interested in the mere boldness and *adventure* of their wickedness. And is not that corrupting? Why, Rachel, if you could be entertained with actual villany, or vice,—an amused and voluntary spectator of it, in real life, we should say you were depraved already; and to choose to be entertained with it in books, cannot but *tend*, at least, to darken and deprave the mind.”

“It does not entertain me, it *shocks* me, Mrs. Welwood.”

“It is *exciting* to you, you should rather say; and that *excitement* is the essential interest of the story. You are kept provoked, too, and irritated, by such baseness, all through the book; and if you pity the victim of it, your pity is mixed, probably, with contempt for the feebleness or stupidity of the victim in not detecting, or resisting it.

Perhaps the most ungentle passions of your breast are stirred, and kept in exercise,—anger, scorn, hate, revenge,—all unconscious, it is true, and subsiding when the book is finished; but, still, not wholly evanescent in their effects. Do books, especially exciting and absorbing ones, leave *no* permanent impressions on the mind? *Can* one take fire on his bosom, and his clothes not be burned? What then is the *kind* of impression, or effect, which a book which has more to do with the crimes and vices of the world than with its virtues, and deals with the turbid, rather than with the gentler passions of our nature, *must* leave abidingly on the reader's intellect and heart? A friend of mine, who was never at a theatre but once, (and that was once too many) told me that a lady became so excited at one of the characters of the tragedy, that she actually startled the house by passionately calling on the spectators to rush upon the actor and kill him,—as if *he* had been the character he personated. There was revenge and murder in her heart; for she actually wished the man killed before her eyes. This may seem a ridiculous instance; still, it shows the nature of the excitement which, in so many cases, it is the aim of fiction to produce.

“I do not say that *all* novels are developments of depravity; but a large portion of them are tintured, *spiced*, with it; and in many it is predominant, and is the secret of their power with the reader.

“But now, compare the state of mind with which you read such a book, with the thoughts and feelings which are cherished in you by one of a different character.

Suppose it a fiction if you will; but one that engages you with exemplary characters—virtuous and amiable ones,—and with innocent and pleasing scenes. I am sure that Sweetbrier Rock, if it could speak, or your pillow, if it could tell your dreams, would declare you more amiable and natural, and more happy in your feelings, as the effect of such reading. And I am sure that the difference of result of a long *course* of reading, must be very palpable and very serious. The reading of the world is too conversant with the evil, too little with the good; and till there is a change in this particular, depravity will prevail.

“It has always appeared to me that to *write* an engaging book on the brighter side of human nature, and within the walks of virtuous life, demands higher and finer talents, and is a greater proof of them, than to make an *exciting* one out of the dark materials of depravity; and that this is *one* reason why so many more of the darker than of the brighter are produced,—they are more within the ability of their authors.

“Are you fond of reading novels, Rachel?”

“Not indiscriminately. I only read such as are very select. The common love-sick sort do not interest me?”

“Your *select* ones, I am afraid, are of the dark, exciting order, are they not? which you love to read in solitude, and which are adapted to gratify those morbid feelings which, in *you*, Rachel, in you more than in most people, need to be repressed rather than nursed and stimulated. You need the cheerful rather than the sombre. There is one thing which I think I have ob-

served in great novel-readers: they read for the gratification of some feeling, which is either a sin, a weakness, or a disease. There is some vicious, or some sickly appetite, which seeks its nutriment in such reading. See if it be not so, or rather, I would say, see *that* it be not so, with you.”

The above is given as an instance, rather than as a *specimen*, of the conversations between the blind lady and her reader; for ordinarily the remarks were more brief and diversified. Thought of the quantity and character of the fictions of the present time, and of the multitude of young eyes that are poring over them, has induced us to repeat here, in the hope of benefitting some such readers, the foregoing just remarks (as they seem to us) of Mrs. Welwood on the kind of works referred to.

Mrs. Welwood had a number of standing tests by which she tried the worth of books. Rachel called them her *crucibles*. These are some of them.

“Has the book a wholesome *moral aim*?”

“Is it *instructive*?”—(adding to your stock of useful knowledge and ideas).

“Is it *suggestive*?”—(causing you to *think*—sending you off on independent mental trains of your own).

“What kind of *company* does it make you keep; and what kind of personages make the greatest figure in it?”

“What are the *passions* it chiefly concerns itself with—the fiercer, or the gentler?”

“Has it the beauty and permanency of *truth*?”

## CHAPTER X.

### A MYSTERIOUS INTERVIEW.

It is a quality of benevolence that it does not grow weary of its object. On the contrary, its interest deepens with the sacrifices it makes, and with time. This was exemplified in Rebekah Raymond's benevolent concern for Rachel. She contemplated little more at first than putting her upon some simple methods of usefulness to others, and so of benefit to herself; but, by degrees, she has almost made an intimate of her, and has, to some extent, blended her own improvement with hers. Various little plans of study, including the ornamental, have been prosecuted under Rebekah's eye, and more or less at her mother's house, where Rachel is always welcome. Two or three years have passed in this way, and Rachel has no cause to be ashamed of her attainments, nor Rebekah to regret the pains she has been at in her behalf.

People have remarked, variously, upon the interest which Miss Raymond has thus manifested for Rachel. Some commend it, unequivocally, as an instance of the goodness of Rebekah Raymond's heart; whose disposition it is, to "do good to all, as she has opportunity." Some express surprise at it; some speak of it invidiously. Mrs. Tunnell "*hopes* she may succeed in making some-

thing of Rachel, and thinks that present appearances are favorable, but that such as she are not apt to do well." Mrs. Mudge is apprehensive that Rebekah "will spoil her by lifting her above her sphere, and unfitting her to be contented in that obscurity to which she is destined; and that her husband, (some rustic, common man, of course,) if she ever marries, will not thank Rebekah for it." Miss Matilda Pettigrew "wonders, for her part, what there can be in Rachel Kell, (or *Wentworth*, it should have been,) that can make Rebekah Raymond take to her so; and wonders, for her part, that Rebekah Raymond, or anybody else, can call Rachel Kell handsome; or that she herself—the fosterling—can make any pretensions to good looks."

There you wrong the girl, Miss Pettigrew: such pretensions she does *not* make,—though, if she did, you could not show them groundless. She is as free from the *conceit* of being pretty, and from other forms of vanity, as most young ladies are. If others say she has beauty, the offence of saying so is theirs; the offence of *having* it is another matter, and of *that* offence you yourself acquit her.

Miss Pettigrew herself passes for a beauty, or *has* passed for one. And so she is, or was, so far as mere features and complexion go, without the presence of an animating soul. Some one has unfortunately remarked that Rachel is handsomer than Miss Pettigrew was at Rachel's age; which is not easily forgiven by a peerless beauty. Miss Pettigrew is older than Rachel by more years than she would be willing to confess.

That Rachel has much intelligence, and fine sensibilities, is becoming a matter of frequent remark. The few who best know her, and are capable of appreciating her, express equal surprise and gratification at her native gifts, and her acquirements; and here and there a thoughtful mother is pointing her too remiss, mind-neglecting daughter to Rachel Kell, as an example of self-improvement worthy to be emulated.

Rachel has still the same romantic feeling, and wild love of rambling and adventure in the woods and fields, that she had when Miss Raymond first became acquainted with her. In these tastes and habits the latter leaves her unmolested. They are an innocent and recreative species of enthusiasm, which, if it be excessive, will wear away with youth. There may be too much of it in her; there is none too much of it in the world.

She is also still subject, more or less, to the same occasional depression; which still gives some uneasiness to her friends.

But she has better learned to avert her thoughts from the cause of such unhappiness; or indeed, to subject herself to the more direct and vigorous discipline of reason and self-control. She has learned to think that there can be no strength of character, no available force of will in any right direction, no moral safety, or self-enjoyment, without self-command. But it is still to be regretted that these amiable methods with herself have not the effective aid of religious faith.

Of such self-discipline, and faith, she has naturally the greater need now, as she has arrived at a more criti-

cal age. If at ten or twelve she was in danger of suffering the morbid effect of circumstances, she is still more so at sixteen and onwards, when a young lady's sense of character is at the keenest, and social instincts are in the fulness of their power.

Circumstances are continually occurring to revive unhappiness in her, and sometimes very powerfully. Of course every social meeting of the young, to which she is not invited, or other ordinary forms of non-recognition, or neglect, reminds her of the ostracism she suffers. Strangers at church, particularly gentlemen, are often asking, who that very interesting young lady is, that sits with a somewhat aged couple, in the second wall-pew on the pulpit's left? and, being told, drop her from their thoughts. If the inquiry happens to be put to Miss Pettigrew, the answer is an invidious, if not a blasting one; if to some other, it is one of reserve, indifference, or pity.

"Her name is Kell."

"I have rarely seen so interesting a face. Whose daughter is she?"

"She has no parents,—none, at least, that she knows of."

"She is an orphan, then?"

"Yes,—no, not that exactly, but more unfortunate than that."

These inquiries, with their proper interjections, are apt to reach Rachel, through Josephine Burbank, or some other equally disinterested and discreet friend; and Rachel is not yet woman enough not to hear them; or rather is woman enough to listen to them,—because of

the flatteries they convey, along with the chagrin. What female is, or (barring vanity) *should* be indifferent to observations made upon her personal attractions? In Rachel's case, such observations, qualified as they are, have for her, however, the two-fold danger of nourishing at once vanity and vexation.

To be the subject of such notice and remark, is naturally trying to her. She is not marble.

She is, besides, still subject, at times, to the depressing feeling of *loneliness*. Next to homesickness, which is similar to it, there is no more desolate *transient* feeling known to the human heart than that,—as some are constituted. She cannot say to herself, as another may, in a vacant hour, when work wearies and books are dull, comē, let us go and look in upon such or such a young friend. She cannot say to herself, at the coming on of a delightful evening, when many are out enjoying it, I will go and meet those cheerful voices yonder. When the day is dismal, or the night dark, and the rain is beating against her windows, she cannot beguile the time by writing a loving letter to some fond mate. Through many a slow-pacing hour she is obliged to pass, as drearily as possible, for want of those reliefs which society alone affords.

Is it surprising, then, if, in spite of all the strength of character she has acquired, as yet, she still falls, occasionally, for hours, or for days, under the power of that deep pensiveness of feeling, amounting to melancholy at times, which has been mentioned of her heretofore,—is it surprising, if she does so, under the most ordinary

course of events, and in the absence of all *specially* exciting causes?

But specially exciting causes are not always wanting. There have been occurrences—or one, at least—of a character to test severely even her physical, as well as moral, power of endurance. We refer particularly to an incident which occurred in her fifteenth year; which we passed over, in its place, proposing not to speak of it. It belongs, however, to her history, and, while it shows the natural force of her feelings, serves to explain some manifestations of them. We shall therefore advert to it here.

A stranger called at the house, and asked if Mr. Kell was in, or Mrs. Kell. Mr. Kell was not at home, but Mrs. Kell was in; and the stranger was shown into the parlor, where he was received by Rachel. He appeared to be about forty years of age, was well dressed, with a bland insinuating voice and manner. He might have been called a fine-looking man, decidedly, but for a certain equivocal—almost sinister—expression in his countenance, awakening slight distrust. His dark, unsteady eyes looked up obliquely through their lashes at you, and then were averted to the floor. This, with some might have passed for diffidence, or modesty, but to a better discernor would have been the index of an evil conscience. Rachel herself felt at once that sinister look, and was chilled by it. Still his appearance was that of a gentleman.

He did not give his name.

Mrs. Kell had lain down. Rachel proposed to call her;

but the stranger desired her, very emphatically, not to disturb her rest, saying he would call at another time. His hat was in his hand, and he rose immediately, as if to go; but still lingered, detaining Rachel with various indifferent inquiries and remarks, and some that were *not* indifferent; all the while surveying her, in his oblique, but scrutinizing way, from head to foot, much to her annoyance,—with an interest deeper, evidently, than ordinary curiosity; less simple than complacency, too heartless for affection, but whose real nature it was difficult to determine. At times he looked her full and intently in the face; and then *her* eyes, in turn, drooped and were averted. At some of his inquiries, indirectly put, she colored a little with surprise. They struck her as betraying more knowledge of her history than a mere stranger could be supposed to have, and more than he was disposed to avow. “What could suggest such inquiries to a mere stranger, if he was one, or, if not, what occasion, what *business*, had he to make them?” She was puzzled with the man and with the manner.

But the mystery was solved by her grandmother coming in, uncalled and unexpectedly.

He immediately addressed her, in his blindest manner, hoping she was quite well, and advancing to offer her his hand. “I was just leaving my regards for yourself and Mr. Kell,” he said, “not being willing to have you called from your rest.”

Mrs. Kell made no response to this salutation, except by a painful look of surprise, which seemed to say, What assurance! She trembled visibly, though slightly,

as she remained on her feet, a step within the door at which she had entered.

“You do not recognize me, madam—do not remember me, I presume,” said the stranger, in the same unabashed, bland tone and manner.

“Oh, yes,” replied Mrs. Kell, with a sigh, “I do remember you,—quite too well, Mr. Wentworth,—and always shall. I cannot hope to be so happy as to forget you—ever—in this world.”

A shriek, and a fall upon the floor, called her attention to her granddaughter. “*Wentworth!*” That name, and her grandmother’s manner, had disclosed the secret to Rachel. It was with her *father* that she had been holding, so unwittingly, this mysterious, strangely annoying interview.

Hannah rushed in, in an agony of concern; the fainting girl was laid upon a bed, and camphor-spirits and cold water were used for her recovery.

The unworthy man—*worse*, our tenderness for Rachel forbids our calling him—taking advantage of this confusion, instantly left the house, no one knowing whither he went, or whence he came.

This was the first and last of Rachel’s acquaintance with him; the first and last, probably, of his setting his eyes on her.

He had seen his injured offspring for once. He had seen how comely and how interesting she naturally was; how much she might have been a father’s love, a father’s pride, a father’s joy, and he hers; but how shocked she was at that father’s presence! Whose curse follows

him? Not hers; not ours. Remorse, shame, and voluntary exile, are his punishment. It needs no addition.

He was a native of the place,—the unworthy scion of a better stock; and had highly respectable relations there. They were ashamed of him; and acknowledged no kindred with his child; except, indeed, indirectly, by a more marked reserve towards her than others; which was but natural.

Whether it was owing wholly to the shock which Rachel received on this occasion, or in part to some other cause, she was feverish and indisposed, and kept her bed for a week.

This was in days gone by now: the next chapter belongs to the passing time.

## CHAPTER XI.

### EXCURSION TO EBEN JONES'S.

Mr. KELL said to Rachel, at dinner, "I must send Jeduthun with a message to Eben Jones's, this afternoon, and, if you have no particular occasion for Chamois, I shall ask the loan of him for the service. I have other use for Roman, and Chamois, you know, is quicker."

"Certainly, Grandpa'. I have no use for him, and if I had, he should be none the less at your service. But cannot I go, in Jeduthun's stead?"

"What, away out to Eben Jones's?"

"Why not, Grandpa'?"

"It is a long way to Eben Jones's."

"I do not mind that."

"And a lonesome way, in some parts of it."

"All the better."

"And a rather blind way."

"Then I can use my tongue."

"But suppose there should be nobody but rocks and trees to inquire of?"

"Then I must use my wits."

"Ah, well, you'll find your way, I warrant, somehow—or somewhere; for you always do. But do you know, child, where Eben Jones lives?"

"No, sir ; nor whereabouts."

"Quite away in the extreme western edge of the parish ; or rather in the eastern edge of the next parish, a little beyond the bounds of Greencliff, I think ; for I never see him at our meeting."

"Then he must be out of Greencliff, or else a heathen in it ; since there is no other meeting but ours in Greencliff?"

"He may be both ; or might be, for aught I know. But I trust he attends public worship somewhere, and is no heathen. I was going to give you your directions. You have noticed, I dare say, away in the west, when you have been up on the hill behind the Burbanks, a long, level-topped, chestnut grove."

"That is so gorgeous at sunset ? Yes, grandfather, a thousand times, both from Mr. Burbanks' hill and from Slopeaway. When the sun goes down directly behind it, as it does just now, in the first of the autumn months, setting it all in a blaze, it looks like a highway of fire. And then the shade that lies along the base of it, growing deeper and broader every moment, contrasts so with the brilliancy above !"

"It is very fine, my dear, no doubt ; but we are concerned now with the geography of the country, not the poetry. Eben Jones lives behind that grove. Your road runs past the northern end of it ; after which, you wind your way to the south and west—a mile or so—it may be two miles,—through a parcel of rather stony, but green and cheerful-looking small farms, till you come to a one-story brown house, with a large pear-tree be-

hind it. That is Mr. Jones's. And, by the way, those famous pears must be just now ripe, and you will get some of them."

"And some for you and grandmother. I will take a basket with me, in case they should be ripe, and the people generous."

Chamois was brought to the door, and Rachel, in high spirits, threw herself into the saddle, hanging a small basket on the horn of it.

"Now mind," said Jeduthun, as he gathered up the reins for her, "what I tell you about the colt : don't drink him at the brooks. Brooks don't suit him, particularly deep, runnin' brooks, in a warm day. It makes his head swim."

"*Running* brooks, Jeduthun ? All brooks are running brooks ; are they not ?"

"And so he must not drink at any on 'em. And there ain't no need ; for I've just g'in him two buckets from the well. He'll want no brook-water to-day ; nor pond-water either. And don't be wadin' him in anywhere after pond-lilies, or any such nonsense : it will give him a cold, may be, or spatter your clothes all up with mud. Mind, now."

"Yes, Jeduthun. Do you hear, Chamois ? Chamois must not drink at brooks : brook-water does not suit him. But I see you lead him to the brook yourself, sometimes ; do I not, Jeduthun ?"

"Oh, this here *home*-brook—yes ; *that* don't disagree with him ; he's used to that. But he mustn't drink at strange brooks."

"You understand, then, Chamois," patting the petted animal; "you are not to drink at strange brooks—running brooks particularly, and on a warm day like this. Good-bye, Jeduthun; Chamois and I will remember."

"Hum! yes: I guess you'll 'member," said Jeduthun, as she galloped off,— "if Miss Stray don't fall a-dreamin', and let the colt do as he likes." Miss Stray was a pet name, which Jeduthun had taken a fancy to give her, since the time of her getting lost in the Old Forest.

Rachel had no idea of any great difference in brook-water, or of any poison in any of the streams or ponds of her wholesome hill-and-valley parish; but as Jeduthun had given her this whimsey of a caution several times lately, and seemed to have some meaning in it (whatever it might be), she thought there was no harm in heeding it, especially as Chamois' thirst was cared for beforehand from the well.

The way to Eben Jones's was found without much difficulty. A diverging road, now and then, might have misled or perplexed her, but that she was familiar with them all within the first two-thirds of the journey. After that, she came to two or three at once, which seemed to compete, about equally, with each other; but just then a grave-looking man on horseback, with portmanteau, as solitary as herself, and as much a stranger, and in doubt, met her, and they exchanged inquiries and directions, like two meeting ships at sea, giving each other their latitude and longitude,—she asking the way to a brown one-story house, with a tall old pear-tree in the rear of it;

and he, the way to Greycliff meeting-house. Each had come past the place inquired for by the other, and was able to give the desired information. Exchanging thanks and a "good day," therefore, they rode on, the gentleman remarking that this, which they were passing through, appeared to be a mighty lean spot of country, as to houses. Further on, her road became so grass-grown, that she doubted if she were right; but some roaming sun-burnt children, with their hands full of barberries and sassafras, informed her that she was right, and that a mile and a half further would bring her to Mr. Jones's.

She had looked all along for her old level grove, which she expected would serve her as a landmark; but it had seemed to lose its distinctive features, and resolve itself into the general wood, as she advanced towards where it stood.

The Joneses, old and young, did their best to entertain her, in their way, for the three-quarters of an hour she staid there. The boys admired the little horse, and admired his mistress more, apparently. They climbed far up into the pear-tree, and shook down ten times as many pears for her as she could take; the girls heaping her basket, and regretting that it would hold no more. She, on her part, entered pleasantly into their ideas and feelings, conversing with the older ones, and looking at the plays and play-places of the younger. They seemed to her a very happy family; full of health and heart; not heathen, for she noticed Bibles and psalm-books on their shelves; moderate and simple in their wishes; fond of

one another, and of their common home ; and (which was a great thing in Rachel's mind) having, she presumed, an undisputed place in the social world—their social world, however little refined or fashionable it might be. She almost wished that she were one of them.

There was another route, as Rachel learned from Mr. Jones, by which she might return home. It was longer than the one she had come by, but was not difficult to follow ; and, for variety's sake, she took it. It lay through Berryfield. This was a small and rather outlandish neighborhood, or hamlet, in the south-western quarter of the parish, so called from the quantity of berries which its woods and pastures furnished. Its inhabitants were, by descent and inter-marriage, a good deal related to each other ; Simpkins being the primitive and still predominating name among them. Rachel had been out as far as there before, in some of her equestrian excursions.

She passed through the place in a musing mood. Those who could content themselves with its seclusion and sterility were, for her, welcome to its berries. Its dozen, or thereabouts, of houses, were generally small, and some of them queer looking, and its environs uninteresting. It seemed to her that life there must be monotony itself.

And yet, the children, playing in the brook, and about their little school-house, were as joyous as children elsewhere.

And the hounds and pointers that lay about the doors,

in some cases, showed that the men sometimes broke up the monotony of their life by the excitements of fox-hunting and gunning.

And the women (continued Rachel, in her philosophizing) had their visiting, their tea-drinking and their gossip.

And that little world, Berryfield, had, no doubt, its loves and courtships, (for there were human hearts there ; ) and the course of those true loves ' never did run smooth,' in some cases, and in others did,—the same as elsewhere.

And possibly, in some one of those houses, there might be some sensitive mind suffering, innocently and acutely, the ban—the Berryfield ban—of social outlawry. And Rachel cast an inquiring look of sympathy at a young girl sitting at a window, as if *she* might be the one ; but her merry rustic voice, calling to one of her mates, a moment after, showed that she was not sitting for the picture which Rachel's fancy drew.

It was a beautiful September day. The scenery, as Berryfield was left behind, became more sylvan, but was still monotonous ; and over it the stillness of a sleeping atmosphere, and a brilliant autumn sun, shed a dreamy influence. Leaves of all colors, touched with an early frost, were dropping to the ground. The blue-jays were screaming lazily about, from tree to tree ; the squirrels were resting from their work of gathering their winter's store of nuts ; and the crows, sitting on the tops of dead old trees, were " nodding, and dropping off to sleep."

Rachel, yielding to these drowsy influences, had dropped the reins on the horse's neck, and resigned herself

to vacancy and musing, when all at once she found Chamois walking straight into a deep, broad, clear stream.

"Chamois! Chamois! It won't do, sir," she said, snatching up the reins. "You are not to drink at strange brooks, Jeduthun says, and we must keep our word with him."

But Chamois, who happened to be thirsty, and a little warm, and a little headstrong, (which, with all his better qualities, he could be, at times,) paid no attention to her remonstrances, but went obstinately into the middle of the brook, where the water was up to the girth, and not only put his lips to it, but dropped himself at once down into it.

Rachel sprung from him, as she found him settling under her, and waded, waist-deep, to land. Chamois, satisfied with just laying his sweaty sides in the cooling element, was up again in an instant, and walked out on the other side. There he stood, dripping and demure, as if expecting his mistress to come over to him by bridge or ford, as she might choose. Dripping, but not demure, there *she* stood, looking at him with astonishment. Her surprise gave way to a hearty laugh. "So, Mr. Chamois, this is the way brook-water disagrees with you! It makes your head swim, does it, so that you cannot keep your feet? The next time you play me such a trick, sir!"—

The truth was, Jeduthun had, a few months before, rather over-ridden Chamois, and, on fording a brook, the creature, fatigued and heated as he was, could not resist the temptation to dip himself in it; since when, he had,

in several instances, attempted the same thing with Jeduthun. Hence Jeduthun's caution. He gave it obliquely, partly because it was his humor to do so, and partly for other reasons.

Rachel was running over the bridge to secure the horse, when she saw herself anticipated in that by a young gentleman on the other side of the brook, whom she had not noticed before. He had seized the reins before she, in her surprise, had bethought herself to do so. He resigned them to her with a formal bow and lifting of the hat, while she received them with a "Thank you, sir," and a blush. Her fine face, at once animated and embarrassed, and her fine form, in its wet and clinging drapery, no doubt made her quite captivating, in his eyes.

Nor was the embarrassment wholly confined to *her*, judging from the manner of the other party, who seemed to have been surprised into circumstances too interesting, or too novel, to allow him to be quite easy and natural. At any rate, the few remarks he attempted, by way of conversation, were uttered timidly and formally.

He was "sorry there was no house near, where she could procure a change of clothes."

She "thanked him, but could dispense with the change till she got home."

He "feared she would take cold."

She "did not mind a foot-bath."

He "hoped she had not far to ride."

If the object of this inquiring hope was to ascertain where she lived, and might be seen again, the answer was not to his purpose.

"A few miles only."

She had "a very pretty pony there, very ; but he was rather trickish, he perceived."

He had "his own way of getting over brooks, she found ; though this was the first instance of his performing such a feat with her. Chamois ! you ought to be ashamed !"

He thought it "a fine day."

She thought it "splendid ;" and repeating her thanks for his politeness, she sprung from the sloping abutment of the bridge into the saddle, her half-emptied basket on her arm, and bid him good-day ; which he returned in the same formal style as he had saluted her at the first, and then, posting himself on the bridge, he looked after her, till trees and a bend in the road hid her from his view.

"Welcome home again," said Hannah, from the kitchen window, as Rachel rode in at the large gate, and round to the rear of the house, just as the sun was setting. "Safe and sound, I hope."

"Safe and sound," answered Rachel, in a cheery voice. "Will you take this basket, Hannah ?"

"You got some pears, then ? Why, seems to me they might have filled it for you,—such a little one."

"So they did, and heaped it," said Rachel, and slipping down from the weary animal, she pulled off the saddle and bridle, and, giving him a pear from her fingers, left him at large in the yard, till Jeduthun came to take care of him.

"And they dropped out, some of them, along the road,"

said Hannah, "as they naturally would, with Shammy's capering and cantering."

"And some of them," said Rachel, "are on their way to the sea, where all the rivers run."

"The sea !" exclaimed Hannah, following her into the house. "Why, you've been *in* it, I should think. Where on *airth* has the girl been, to get her clothes wet so ? Mrs. Kell, do come in here, into the kitchen, and look at this child ;" and taking hold of Rachel's skirts, she spread them out for Mrs. Kell to look at. "Only see ! She couldn't be wetter, if she'd been wading in a river !"

"Perhaps she *has* been wading ; or made Chamois wade," said her grandmother. "How is it, dear ; you have not been swimming a pond or river with him, have you ?"

"No, indeed, grandmother ; I should not do such a foolish thing."

"Only, if a bridge was gone, she wouldn't be stopped for *that*, I warrant her," said Hannah,—"*not* she ; nor Shammy either, if she bid him go. And I heard there *was* one gone, out that way somewhere, carried off by that great rain we had in July, don't you remember ?"

"I will tell you how it was, grandma, as soon as Hannah gets through with all this ado about me, so that I can. Excuse me, Hannah."

"Lawful soul !"—that is, *la-fa-sol*, which musical terms Hannah pronounced sometimes "lawful soul," and sometimes "lawful *heart*," according to the force, or quality, of the emotion she would express,—the latter

being the more intensive of the two. "Who wouldn't make an ado?—all wet and sanded so, as if she had just been washed ashore from a ship-wracked vessel!"

"The case was this, grandma! Chamois walked into a brook to drink, and lay down in it."

"And you on his back!" exclaimed Hannah, lifting up her hands again.

"I ought to have *staid* on him, and whipped him to his feet again," said Rachel. "But the thing took me so by surprise, that I jumped off, or *floated* off, and waded ashore."

"*Staid on* him!" exclaimed Hannah, with fresh astonishment. "Did you ever? Sit stock-still on a horse that was lying down with you in a river! What a figure that would cut, if anybody had been there to look. I should like to see a picture of it in a book. I wonder she did not faint away from fright."

"There was water enough to bring me to, if I had, Hannah."

"Has the horse ever done such a thing before?" asked her grandmother.

"Not with me," said Rachel. "I suspect he has with Jeduthun. But do not tell him. We will see if he discovers it from Chamois' appearance, and what he will say."

Rachel ran up to her room to change her clothes; and then, at tea, gave her grandfather an account of the business on which she had been to Mr. Jones's.

"And on your way home," said he, "Chamois set you down in a brook? Where did that happen?"

"About a mile this side of Berryfield."

"You came back that way, then? It is farther, but a better road, rather."

"The worst of the brook affair was, that I lost some of the pears I was bringing you and grandmother. Away they went, down stream, and I could not go after them; though I should have done so, as soon as I could have secured and hitched the horse; for, being already wet, I was just in a condition to wade. But a circumstance prevented me."

"I warrant it!" said Hannah to herself, audibly, in the kitchen, the door between being open. "She would have waded after them—she—away down the stream ever so far, without once thinking of snakes and turcles and such like creatures—the resolute thing that she is—besides eddies and deep holes! Well, I do declare, that girl beats all for ventures and exploits, that ever I see. She's always encountering or doing something out of the ordinary way."

"It is well," said Mr. Kell, "that the horse did not give you the slip, and leave you to get home as you could. It would have been a long way to foot it."

"And in her wet clothes," said her grandmother.

"He showed no disposition to desert me," said Rachel, "though he might, before I could have got to him, but for a gentleman who happened to be near, and secured him."

"Who was he?"

"I did not know him, sir."

The evening was cool—a little 'fall-ish,' as Hannah

called it, and Rachel, after tea, seated herself by the glowing remains of Hannah's fire on the kitchen hearth. Meantime, Jeduthun had come in, and was enjoying, at a side-table, the luxury of a bowl of baked-apple and milk. Between her and him commenced the following dialogue :

"You have taken care of Chamois, Jeduthun?"

"The colt? Yes; and hung the saddle and bridle up in the carriage-house to *dry*."

"Wet, were they?"—with mock surprise.

"Dipped in brook-water, I guess; or pond-water. Han't they got no well out there to Jones's?"

"To dip saddles and bridles in?"

"To dip *folks* in!" interrupted Hannah, who had refrained from mentioning the affair to Jeduthun, agreeably to Rachel's request. "Why, don't you think, Jeduthun, the creature lay flat down with her in a brook?"

"What, the colt did?"—his eyes blinking with humor.

"Yes, the colt—Shammy—Shammy Glenn, the good-for-nothing creature, lay flat down with her in a great river of a brook!"

"Not *flat* down, Hannah, with neck and heels stretched out, as he does when he rolls on the ground; he kept his back upwards," said Rachel.

"He kind o' *curchied down*!" said Jeduthun, with more of fun than of surprise in his face.

"And you never see such a pickle as she come home in," continued Hannah;—"wet up to the arm-pits!"

"Not quite so high as that, Hannah."

"Well, at any rate—there," placing her hands upon her chest; "I don't believe the gentleman that caught the colt for her could see a bit more than so much of her above the water, as she stood in it. Could he? say now, Miss. And spilt out all her pears, too."

"Not *all*, Hannah."

"That comes of dreamin' and not mindin' good advice," said Jeduthun.

"No, Jeduthun; it comes of Chamois' pertinacity. He went into the brook of his own perverse head, and because he *would*. I did not ride him in."

"Nor out, either," said Jeduthun. "I see how it was. Miss Stray fell a-dreamin'—did'nt see the bridge—did'nt mind the brook—or was charmed with the roarin' of it—or was lookin' at the sunshine—or hearin' the birds, or crickets, sing—or wishin' it would thunder, may be, to show her the way home——"

"In short, hadn't her wits about her," said Rachel, in Jeduthun's own tone.

"While the colt had his'n, and improved his opportunity to go in a-swimmin'," said Jeduthun.

"Well, I do declare," said Hannah, "what a hector of a creature you be, Jeduthun; and how one mischief brings on another! That Old Forest thunder-shower—I mean that thunder-shower in the Old Forest, not to speak unchristianly, (you never can forget it of her)—that drenched the poor child then, has come near drownin' her to-day—and will quite, some day, there's cause to fear;—for it was that that led her up to your house, and *that* brought the colt here, to give her the 'duckin' he

has to-day, and brought you, Jeduthun Glenn, to set there a-grinnin' and makin' fun, as if it was a mighty pleasant thing to be flounderin' in a river amongst horses' heels!"

"And that, agin," said Jeduthun, "has set Miss Hannah's tongue a-goin', and that has driv' Jeduthun out o' the house."

*Exit* Jeduthun, on some errand to a neighbor's.

Truly there is "a *genealogy* of mischiefs," as John Norris said, a long time ago.

"Jeduthun is a strange creature, very," said Hannah. "I don't wonder; for he was brought up in the woods. But Rachie, what kind of a gentleman was it that caught the horse for you? Old, or young?"

"Young."

"And how was he dressed; and how did he look?"

"I hardly know; for I hardly looked at him."

"So mortified and provoked, you could'nt. I don't wonder, in the pickle you was in."

"It was a little awkward to meet a stranger in such a plight and place. But let me see." And Rachel ran over the following particulars, as if she were recovering, by a mental effort, some faint, evanescent impression, for her own satisfaction, rather than for Hannah's information. "Rather tall and slender; dress, genteel enough,—bordering on the precise and fine; complexion, between dunn and florid; eyes dark, but not very expressive, I should think; voice soft—*too* soft for a man,—*softly* expresses it—as if he were speaking in a sick-room, or as some clerks speak from behind a counter; manner formal; and when he raised his hat from

his sleek black hair, the air was scented with perfume."

"I am sure you must have looked at him, to describe him so," said Hannah. "I could'nt have done it better, if I had looked at him till sundown. You have made out a very pretty man of him, certainly. And did you tell him who you was, and where you lived?" Hannah asked, in a half mysterious undertone, leaning forward in her chair. For, said she, "who knows what may come of it? Many a match has been brought about by 'ventures and odd accidents!'"

"No, Hannah, I did not tell him who I was."

"Why in the world did'nt you, child?"

"He did not ask me, and I was not so taken with him as to volunteer the information. And if I had, I do not imagine it would have been of any value to him."

"Lawful heart! child, and how do you know it would'nt? You are so fastidious and nice, always! Well, he'll make inquiry, anyhow, if he's the gentleman you set him forth to be. By pretext or by politeness, he'll be coming to inquire if the fright or chill has made you sick, I'm confident. But"—dropping down from a tone of confidence to a regretful one—"it's a pity though, that you did'nt contrive to let him know at least what town you lived in, if you did'nt come no nigher to it. You might have done it in some round about way, without seeming to do it. But, it was like you, to be sure. Folks are differently made. Some *can't* put themselves forward as others can. You are always hiding away from people's notice."

"Alas!" thought Rachel, as she withdrew to the parlor, "there is no occasion for *me* to hide: the world agrees to save me that trouble."

She was weary with her long ride, and its incidents; and after a silent, thoughtful hour, while her grandfather was reading, she went to bed.

## CHAPTER XII.

### GAZING AND INQUIRING.

A FEW days after what has just been related, as Mrs. Raymond and Rebekah were sitting in their parlor, sewing, Rebekah called the attention of her mother to a young gentleman who was passing, and asked if she knew him, or had any knowledge of his race or history. His name, she said, was Paddleford.

Mrs. Raymond answered in the negative.

"He appears," said Rebekah, "to be quite taken with Rachel Kell, and disposed, they say, to pay his addresses to her."

"Indeed! And how did they become acquainted?"

"By means of an adventure,—as often happens to lovers. Anne Skiddy says, that a brook, with a dripping lass on one side of it, and a dripping horse and a knight on the other, with a wild wood for the back-ground, would be the picture of their first interview."

Anne Skiddy, one of the young ladies of the place, was of that description of persons who see and report things in their own way, and whose words are apt to be quoted for something characteristic in the style or spirit of them.

Rebekah related to her mother the manner of the adventure referred to, the particulars of which, with due coloring and comment, had been given her by Hannah, who thought it right to be communicative to her on subjects concerning Rachel. Rachel herself had casually mentioned to her the fact of Chamois' trick (to which she gave very little consequence), but, with her usual reserve in reference to gentlemen, had said nothing of Paddleford.

"Paddleford? Paddleford, did you say his name was?" asked Mrs. Raymond, with a slight effort of memory. "It occurs to me now who he must be. His mother was a Simkins, one of that Simkins race out at Berryfield. She passed for a belle among them when she was young, —a great novel-reader, and very affected. She married a Paddleford, who kept their district-school; and went to live somewhere in the State of New York, at a place called Butternuts, I think. He was a precise, pedantic man, a great admirer of Lord Chesterfield, and made himself ridiculous in young company, it was said, by maintaining Chesterfield's doctrine of the vulgarity of laughter, and acting on it himself."

"As if anything were more natural or innocent than laughter," said Rebekah. "I wish there were more of it, provided the occasions of it were always innocent and proper."

"Or more *refined* even," said Mrs. Raymond; "for I am sure a frank and hearty laugh, in sympathy with mirth, or humor, is far more expressive of a refined and generous mind than that constrained rigidity of counte-

nance which never relaxes beyond a frigid smile. The only law which good breeding imposes on it, as on other things in manners, is that of the proprieties of time, place, and measure."

"Laughter is as natural as sleep," Rebekah added, "and is as universal, except where idiocy or sorrow prevents. And if it is sometimes coarse and vulgar, so is sleep. You know, mother (or is it a fancy of mine?), that there is a refinement in the sleep of some people, and a grossness in that of others; and I am not sure but that the difference is as much owing to education or self-discipline, in the sleep as in the laughter."

"But this young Mr. Paddleford—what do you know of him, Rebekah?"

"Nothing, beyond what I have stated."

"Has not Rachel spoke of him to you?"

"Not a word."

"He may not be of the parentage I have mentioned."

"I presume he is, mother; for his name, which I happen to have heard—Charles Grandison Paddleford—indicates the novel-reading mother."

"Oh, yes, that is conclusive. Euphemia Simkins's son, undoubtedly. I heard of her naming all her children after heroes and heroines of novels, or of history. Well, he may be somebody, for all that; and if he is pleased with Rachel, and is worthy of her, and is inclined to marry her, and she him, it may have been a good Providence that brought them together at the brook."

"Yes, mother, if all your *ifs* are satisfied. But that is the question. I have always thought she was destined,

if she lived, to have suitors ; but of what description, it might be difficult to say. Her personal attractions may captivate the fancy of a mere beau ; or some rustic young farmer may covet her for the acres she will inherit ; and she may consent to marry the one or the other of them,—though I do not believe she will,—under the impression that there is nothing better for her. But she has qualities beyond the merit or discernment of such lovers,—qualities of heart and mind, which must be satisfied in the man she marries, or she will not be happy. It is only a man of intellect and soul that can appreciate her in these respects ; and it is only these qualities in her which can inspire such an one with that deep, genuine, permanently sustained respect, as well as love, for her, which will place her in his regards, and, through her connection with him, in the regards of the community, above the prejudice of birth. Whether this Mr. Paddleford is such a man, or whether she is likely ever to find such an one, in a suitor and a husband, time will show.”

“You propose, I see,” said Mrs. Raymond, “to marry her to an *extreme* character, of some sort ; and have made out your assortment for her accordingly. A fop, a clown, or a man of rare endowments,—one of these or none.”

“I do not propose, Mother, to marry her to any one ; I only think that such as I have mentioned, and for such reasons, will be most likely to address her.”

“But why may she not become the wife of some plain, common man, of ordinary sense and respectability ?”

“She might, perhaps, be happy, or at least contented, in such a relation, if she were once to make up her mind to it. But I do not expect that such an one will offer. For, in the first place, such a man would not choose her for her superior mental endowments ; indeed, he would be deterred by them ; for your plain, practical, middling men, above all others, I suspect, love equality and companionship in a wife, and are afraid of an overshadowing disparity. And in the next place, the common prudence of such a man, however he might be pleased with her person, or think her inheritance desirable, would not allow these considerations to over-weigh that of her birth. Nor do I think that she, on her part, could bring herself to accept of him. An every-day, common-place sort of man, such as you describe, with no enthusiasm in his nature, however respectable or thriving he might be, in the eye of the community, would have too few tastes and sympathies in common with her to be acceptable to her.”

“Ah well, my daughter, you reason sagely on the subject,” said Mrs. Raymond, smiling ; “but, after all, the event may show that you reckon without your host. She may marry quite differently from what you would expect ; she may, in a way to surprise and pain you.”

“She may,” said Rebekah, thoughtfully. “Some heartless and unprincipled, but accomplished and artful man, may beguile her into a miserable connection with him. But I do not believe she will marry either a coxcomb or a dolt.”

“We hope not, nor a knave either,” said Mrs. Ray-

mond. "But she is sadly inexperienced in the world. And then there is no prophesying, ever, about matches, or telling who will marry whom, or who, not. If there were any fixed law, of fitness, or of taste, or prudence, that governed such connections, you might at least conjecture what parties would *not* form them; but as it is, I have long since ceased to be surprised at *anything* in the way of marrying.

"As for Rachel, if she may be suitably married, at a suitable age, (she is young yet)—to some stranger, if that might be, and go to reside among strangers,—it would seem to be kindly ordered. For I think she is capable both of enjoying and conferring much in that relation; while celibacy cannot be to her what it is, or may be, to others. It might do so long as her grandparents lived, but beyond that it is too devoid of social and domestic interests to look very inviting. It makes me sad to think of her in such a future, constituted as she is—so affectionate and susceptible, and yet so solitary."

"A pilgrim like ourselves," said Rebekah, "and yet traveling the whole weary way alone,—in solitude and shade,—unsustained by companionships and sympathies. How I wish she were pious!"

"In that case, still, she would need companions," said Mrs. Raymond; "for even the heavenly road is difficult to travel alone. In that case, however, she would not be alone. The religion of Jesus is one of sympathies and fellowships. It finds and makes companions everywhere.

"But do you really think, Rebekah, that this young Paddleford is interested in Rachel?"

"The Burbanks, and others, say he is. What evidence they have of it I do not know. I cannot believe Rachel herself has authorized such a report; for I think she would speak of it to me as soon as to any one. I hope the young man may be worthy of her, if the report be true; but I confess, from the account you give of his parents, and the kind of education he is likely to have received from them, my hope is not very sanguine. Names, I know, are not qualities; but names are significant, often, and that of Charles Grandison does not strike me as promising."

From this incidental conversation on matrimony in general, and on Rachel Kell's matrimonial prospects in particular, let us return now to the adventure at the brook.

Paddleford, as has been mentioned, stood upon the bridge gazing after Rachel till she was out of sight. Nor did he cease looking then, but remained motionless, with his eyes in the same direction, like a charmed and wishful man. It seemed to him as if some gentle, half ethereal being, some sylph, or wood-nymph, or fairy, or, possibly, some heroine of his mother's old novels, had mysteriously appeared to him for a moment, in those sylvan solitudes, and then vanished. Was it love that entranced him thus? No, not that, as yet; it was rather an undefined feeling of intense admiration.

He turned at length and went musing towards Berryfield, (whence he had strolled an hour or two before,) to ask among his cousins there, if they could tell him what young lady it was, that had passed there, (for she must

have come that way, he thought,) on a small lightish-colored horse, that afternoon?

"A pony, sort of, wasn't it?" said one of the elder Simpkinses, a tall, thin man, who was sitting on his unhewn door-stone, with a hound or two on either side of him.

"It was," said Paddleford.

"A sort of pumpkin-and-milk colored horse—the pony was?"

"Not so yellow, I should think," said Paddleford.

"Or the color of oat-straw?"

"That is nearer to it," said Paddleford.

"Or like that 'ere dove yender, that you see on the ruff of the barn?"

"As near dove-color as anything."

"With a showy mane, and long switch tail, that all but drew on the ground?"

"Long switch tail—yes, uncle."

"Rid by here about four this arternoon?"

"About that time, I should guess."

"Had a basket on her arm?"

"A basket of pears," responded Paddleford.

"Yes, I can tell you who she was, Grandison. When do you go back to Butternuts?"

"Not this week."

"Well, you'll go with us to meetin', in my wagon, Sunday, if the weather isn't foul, and I'll show you where she sets. And a prettier lookin' gal you don't see in a thousand; or a prettier behaved; though they say—but that's no fault of her'n. I wish I owned that pony,

though. He's a smart little beast—that; and she's as smart as he. She rides him anywhere,—across lots or through the woods, as like as any way; and I've seen her do what none of our Berryfield gals would do—make that little horse leap a stone-wall so high. She'd break a colt for you, or train him to hunt foxes, if she undertook, *I'll* be bound.

"And I have seen her ford a brook with him so deep, to-day," said Paddleford, "and he lay down in the deepest of it; but she mounted him again, and was off upon a canter, and out of sight directly."

"Never minded it a bit?"

"Not at all."

"Made a frolic of it, I'll be bound."

## CHAPTER XIII.

### A COURTEOUS VISIT.

THE weather proved fair on Sunday, and the Berryfield people got out, very generally, to public worship, and Paddleford, of course, with them. They belonged to Mr. Shepherd's congregation; and, though they lived beyond the sound of the church-going bell (except that on a breathless morning it just reached the rapt and listening ears of the children), were a church-going people.

The eyes of Rachel met those of Paddleford, casually, and for once, just after the congregation had got seated in the morning; after which, she seemed to have no further consciousness of his presence. He was conscious of hers, and of not much else; and when, at evening, the friends he staid with expressed themselves as having been more than ordinarily interested in the discourses of the day, he, somewhat to his confusion, appeared to have received no distinct impression of either text or subject.

Paddleford had come to stay with his Berryfield cousins a few days only; proposing to leave on Monday. He felt more like a transient observer among them, or like one *observed*, than like a simple relative and companion. Without conceiving of him as a vain man, we

may suppose him to have a little of that feeling which so often characterizes country-born young men, and sometimes older ones, revisiting the places of their birth. They like to let it be seen there, what shoots the parent soil has produced, and how, as denizens of the cities and large towns to which they went as clerks or apprentices, in their youth, they have out-gone the home-staying natives, in wealth, polish, and every sort of consequence! Paddleford was not indeed a native of Berryfield; but his mother was, and here was the bulk of his relations, deceased and living; and in his own eyes, perhaps in theirs, he was a rather "rare bird" in the land of berries.

He did not leave on Monday; nor for days thereafter, as it proved. He gave his friends some plausible reason for his delay; he had another reason about as honest, for himself—that of courtesy to Miss Kell. He fancied it would be a culpable omission on his part to leave the place without just calling on one who had been so singularly cast in his way, and inquiring, personally, whether she had experienced any ill effects from her unseasonable bath. It would be no more than politeness, on his part, to do so; certainly it would not be impolite. Of course his *curiosity* was interested, too,—to see how she who seemed so captivating in romantic circumstances, would appear amid the sober realities of home. If there was still *another* motive, more delicate than either of the foregoing, he did not confess it to himself, as yet; though it did occur to him, quite distinctly, that he might *become* conscious of such a motive, after an interview. That remained to be seen.

Accordingly, the afternoon of Monday found him stealing away from Berryfield towards Greencliff village, (as the cluster of houses about the meeting-house was called,) and through that towards the little valley, a mile north of it.

It was towards the middle of the afternoon when he arrived at the respectable old mansion, which was the terminus of his long walk. None of the family were visible as he approached it. A deep quiet pervaded the house and its environs. The shades, particularly the willow in the south yard, with its remains of frost-touched foliage; the drowsy fowls, the dog lying on the door-stone—everything seemed as tranquil as the sunbeams sleeping on the roofs. This was a little embarrassing to Paddleford, whose heart was not so tranquil, and who felt the need of something to reassure him. He could have wished there had been a set of carpenters on the house, repairing it, or a military muster near it, or a sudden storm of rain and wind; in the noise and stir of which he might have lost a little of his awkward consciousness.

Having no one to introduce him, he had judged it consistent with the proprieties of the case, to introduce himself.

Hannah met him at the door. He announced himself as "Mr. Paddleford, of New-York," meaning the State of New-York, and, without mentioning the name of Miss Kell, asked "if the young lady was in, whose horse set her down in a brook the other day?"

This was enough for Hannah. There needed no bet-

ter introduction; and her manner made him obviously welcome, so far as *she* was concerned.

"I knew it would be so," she said exultingly, to herself; "and sure enough!"

Hannah was always predicting, in her fondness for Rachel, that she would some day be greatly married, and outshine "all the proud young flirts that thought themselves so much her betters now;" "and who knows," thought she, "but heaven has sent the man this very day!"

She asked the stranger into the best parlor; that is to say, the best furnished and least used, but not the most agreeable, being the north front-room. The south room was pleasanter, looking out upon a better view, and, besides being more sunny, having a more sociable and *home* look in its arrangements. The two apartments would strike you as belonging to two distinct generations; the furniture of the one being familiar, used, and easy; that of the other, ancient, formal, well preserved, respectable, and challenging respect,—dating from the bridal days of Mrs. Kell, some of it from a period earlier than that.

Rachel was not in, but would be soon; having only gone out for a little stroll, somewhere; Mr. Kell was away on business, (such were Hannah's particulars,) and Mrs. Kell, for a wonder, had gone out to spend the day. She, herself, was the only person in the house.

In the absence of the others, therefore, Hannah thought it her duty to entertain the gentleman till Rachel returned. It was not difficult for her to talk, nor for him to hear, as Rachel was the topic. With the brook ad-

venture for a starting point, she went over with the home portion of it, with about the same astonishments (though more quietly) that she had uttered at the time of it. The weather, and perhaps other things, came in for some remarks, but Rachel was the prevailing topic ;—on which, whatever flattering things of her Hannah contrived to say, they were quite sincere, as well as (in her view) politic and timely. He was evidently an interested listener, while she, as his entertainer pro tem., took the burthen of the talk ; the other doing little more than interspersing her remarks with indeeds, dare-says, hems, hums, and other like sententious comments and responses.

Hannah thought him very sociable, and handsome too.

Rachel came in at length, entering at the back door. She had a thin herbarium in her hand ; in which she had preserved at different times (not as a pupil of Linnaeus, but after a fashion of her own,) whatever had struck her in her rambles, as particularly delicate, beautiful or curious, in color, form, or fibre, with sometimes a coarser specimen for contrast, or for some sentimental or other circumstance connected with it. Had her home been by the sea-side, her love of the beautiful, as well as her habits, would have caused her to make an admirable collection of the delicate marine plants—the *algæ* of the coast ; of whose existence, and extreme, and varied, and most peculiar beauties, thousands, even of cultivated people, living within the sound of the ocean's waves, and about tis chafing bays and harbors, have no knowledge or suspicion. To such suffer us to suggest, that

any susceptible and pious person, examining for the first time a collection—a tolerably complete one—of these *algæ*, and at the same time Audubon's birds, might find it difficult to say which most impressed him—the birds or the weeds—with the skill of the Creator.

Rachel's simplicity did not allow her to suspect the motive of Paddleford's call. She supposed there might be some mixture of civility in it. It was amiable to think there was ; and to meet it with an answering civility on her part. Yet it might be the sheerest curiosity of a passing stranger, who, having casually met and spoken with her, under peculiar circumstances, deemed that a sufficient pretext for spending an idle hour in her society. However this might be, since he had called specially to see her, as he professed, with a civil apology for doing so, (Hannah said, who met her in the kitchen, as she came in) and had in fact done her a favor at the brook, (though the merest clown would have done no less) self-respect, if no more, demanded that she should be civil to him ; and, without hesitation, laying off her sun-bonnet, she entered the room where he was.

Her fine complexion, heightened just now by air and exercise, did not need the blush with which a momentary diffidence suffused her cheek at such an interview. He rose respectfully, bowing, and advancing a little towards her, pronounced his own name formally, and hers interrogatively ; hoped she would excuse his presuming to introduce himself ; alluded to the occasion of their former momentary interview, and was glad to learn—which was the object of his calling, though at the same time

he was happy to be further acquainted with Miss Kell—was glad to learn, from their house-keeper, that she had suffered no other inconvenience from the accident than the discomfort of being wet.

These things may have been proper enough to be said on the occasion, had they been said spontaneously and simply. They had, however, the appearance of being premeditated, and uttered by rote and measure.

Rachel, in reply, said it was very kind in Mr. Paddleford to trouble himself so far on her account; assured him that not the slightest ill effect had resulted to her health; and having thus disposed of this introductory piece of civility, changed the subject to one less personal to herself.

It happened not to be a subject on which her visitor found much to say. She introduced another, in which she was equally unfortunate; and a third, with no better result. He started none, on his part, except once or twice, the weather. That was a barren topic, soon exhausted—unless it had taken them up into Howard's region, and nomenclature of the clouds; whither, had she attempted it, it is not probable he would have accompanied her. What then? Mr. Paddleford's range of observation and reflection, and of reading, Rachel began to think, must have been quite diverse from hers; since there was no topic (as yet) which they could pursue in common.

"Was he interested in plants and flowers?"

She produced her quarto of specimens, and laying it open on the table, turned over its leaves, pausing here

and there, to elicit his remarks. He had none to offer. To all *her* observations—that such a one was delicate, such another beautifully colored, a third remarkable for its fragrance, a fourth extremely rare, others with such and such poetic sentiments attached to them,—he gave his assent, but added nothing as of his own independent taste or knowledge. The only instance in which he did volunteer a remark was on a flaunting wild-flower, which he ventured to say was admirable; but which happened to be there, not for any intrinsic qualities it had, but merely as a memorial of a particular locality and excursion. It had cost some clambering to get it. Mr. Paddleford did not appear to be an amateur in plants and flowers.

Conversation flagged again, therefore, at the end of the herbarium—flagged through it, indeed; in spite of Rachel's amiable endeavors to sustain it. The fault, she generously imagined, might be her own. She had seen so little of society, of gentlemen's society especially, that she did not know, perhaps, what might be conversationally current in it—what might be its small talk, or its talk of higher order. She had lived wholly in a distinct world of her own; where her thoughts, or modes of thought and feeling, had assumed so peculiar a cast, perhaps, that really it might be difficult, she conceived, for any gentleman and her (as was certainly the case with Paddleford and her) to call each other out in agreeable and profitable conversation.

Of course, the reader will not admit this charitable construction of the case by her. With him, the fault is Paddleford's. But if he says this is not an *honest* solu-

tion of the difficulty, nor a supposable, or possible one, in Rachel's mind, her visitor's conversational deficiencies being too obvious to admit of it consistently with her known discernment and good sense, let him consider how entirely inexperienced, in society in general, and in that of young gentlemen in particular, she really is, and how far such inexperience may go, in her apprehension, if not in fact, to disqualify her for conversing with them. There are such cases. There are minds, even finely gifted, but of habits so peculiar and furniture so singular, in consequence of habitual isolation, or some other circumstance, that they are nearly inaccessible to other minds. It does consist, therefore, with her natural discernment and good sense, that she charged the fault in question unduly to herself. She was sincere, as well as charitable, in so doing.

But leaving this, the matter of fact is, that the conversation went on heavily,—meagerly on his part, and laboriously on hers, with constantly recurring pauses. Chasms and abysses, such pauses seemed, almost, to her; with none present but themselves, and he the while looking at her, as if demanding what she had to say next, or, in truth, gazing at her as though she were a picture hung upon the wall.

Not that *he* was dissatisfied with it. Not at all. He thought the interview particularly sociable and entertaining.

It is hard talking with a man of monosyllables, and short common-places only,—who meets you with nothing suggestive, versatile, or vivacious,—who has no vein of

thought, wit, or humor, in him,—on whose unelastic, unfurnished mind, your remarks strike and fall, as from a wall of lead, without rebound. An hour of pumping at an empty cistern, or an hour at the stone of Sisyphus, or at battle-door with "Pompey's statua," were preferable to an hour with such a visitor.

On the common, not far from the house, were two small boys trying to raise a kite. Rachel, looking out *between spells*, watched their operations. All their attempts were failures; all their expedients fruitless. They tied more wisps of paper to the tail: it did not do. They made it shorter: that did not answer. And shorter yet: it was just the same. They varied the pitch of it, let out more line, lifted it up as high as their arms could reach, standing tiptoe, and *shouted*, the little fellows, as if to encourage it to rise. But it still fell flat and trailing on the ground! Rachel admired their perseverance, and their cheerfulness, under unfavorable circumstances; for, in truth, there was no wind. That fact the boys discovered at length, or admitted, rather, in the same cheerful spirit,—glad to find that the fault was in the weather, and not in the kite, nor in them, and assuring themselves that, at any rate, there would be wind some other day. So, winding up their hundred yards of line, they went home. "My case," said Rachel to herself, "is like that of the boys. All my attempts fail. My topics fall to the ground; not one of them will rise. There is no wind stirring, or else no tact in me."

The call had already been a long one, yet the caller showed no disposition to go; and Rachel, somewhat weary

with the tedium of it, felt relieved on seeing her grandfather coming down the road, on old Roman. She met him in the south yard, and taking his hand affectionately, as her manner was, taking it appealingly in this instance, "I am so glad you are come," she said. "I have wanted you to help entertain Mr. Paddleford; for I don't know how; and grandmother is gone, you know. Please come in *now*, grandfather, right away; for we have hardly spoke a word this half-hour."

"Paddleford? Who is he? Where is he from?"

"Please do not speak so loud, grandfather; I am afraid he will overhear you. It is the young gentleman that I just saw for a minute, the other day, at that brook, you remember."

"He that secured the horse for you?"

"Yes, grandpa'. Please come."

"What! two young people like you, and can't entertain each other?"

"But, you know, grandfather, that I never see gentlemen, and do not at all know what to say to them, nor they to me. And this is such a stranger in the place! Lives—I don't know where."

"Lives on the earth, I reckon, somewhere."

"Of course, grandfather; but nowhere on our side of it, I think; for there is nothing on earth that we have both been conversant with, or can find to talk about. Come, grandpa';—in the north room. I can introduce you."

The good man comprehended the case, and, with that considerate kindness which is so grateful to young peo-

ple needing the aid of elder ones in their embarrassments, or amusements, went in without delay; and with a freedom suited to his nature and his years, entered at once into conversation with the young man. Choosing the readiest and commonest subjects, with the readiest and plainest language, he succeeded wonderfully well in making him, for the time, quite conversable. He put him at his ease, by putting him, in a sort, out of character. For Mr. Kell perceived that, though Paddleford was constrained and formal as a *gentleman*, and had few available ideas in the upper and politer regions of his being, he was not destitute of sense or notions as a *man*. He asked him, therefore, with an apparent desire for information, about the soil, crops, markets, manners, schools, churches, Indians, &c., of the country where he lived—"things on our side of the earth, it is true," thought Rachel, "and very well for grandfather; but not such as I should have thought of making topics of."

Paddleford rose to take his leave at length. To Mr. Kell's remark, that he had a long walk before him, he replied, with a glance at Rachel, that it was not so long but that he would be happy to repeat it. The old gentleman, perceiving that here was a delicate proposal, left it to his granddaughter to dispose of as she would. He was silent. She, in her simplicity, said that her grandmother, who was almost never from home, would be pleased to see him. And so he bowed them a profound adieu.

Tea was now waiting. It had been set out in Hannah's best style, in the hope that Rachel's beau would

stay to it. She felt disappointed that he was not invited. Her housewife's skill and woman's wisdom had been lost through that omission. "So much depends," said she, "on the impressions of a first visit! Strange, and what a pity, that people should be so inconsiderate and short-sighted!"

Rachel, taking her grandmother's place, did the honors of the table; after which she remained alone; and seating herself at a window, watched the fading day, till her grandmother, coming in, disturbed her revery.

Hannah met Mrs. Kell in the parlor, and, while she offered to take her things, said to her, elatedly, "And who do you think has been here, Mrs. Kell?"

"Who has?"

"Somebody."

"So I understand."

"You could'nt guess, if you should try."

"It is not worth while to try, then."

"Mr. Paddlefoot!"

"Mr. Paddlefoot? And who is *he*?"

"Paddleford, grandmother," said Rachel, quietly;—"the gentleman who secured Chamois for me at the brook. He just called, politely, to ask if I got home well, and took no cold; and was so well entertained by Hannah, (I was gone out when he came) and then by grandfather, that he staid till almost sundown."

"We kept him!—I and Mr. Kell;—as if he'd ha' staid a minute but for her. Though to be sure, I did entertain him till she came in; and it was'nt difficult, either,—he was so entertaining himself." And Hannah

proceeded, in her own felicitous way, "as wine that hath no vent," to panegyryze the young gentleman,—insisting in particular on his genteel appearance, his mannerliness, and his sociability. This last is a compliment which those who love good listeners are apt to pay to the taciturn.

"But don't you think, Mrs. Kell, they never asked him to stay to tea!"

## CHAPTER XIV.

### FURTHER VISITATIONS.

THIS Mr. Paddleford is rather a weariness to us ; as he was to Rachel, and will be, we fear to the reader ; but, as Rachel's suitor, we could not quite dismiss him in the preceding chapter.

A sufficient idea of his personal appearance may have been gathered from Rachel's account of him the evening after the meeting with him upon the road. He was not disagreeable in form or feature ; on the contrary, at first sight he was rather prepossessing. The great want of his face was lack of expression ; and that want became more apparent in conversation with him.

His manners did justice to the assiduities of his parents in that particular ; one of them being, as has been mentioned, a precisian, and the other a rustic belle and novel-reader. Against the common proprieties of life he seldom sinned, except that his proprieties themselves were improprieties, by reason of their stiffness and excess.

His temper appeared to be amiable, and he was not destitute of intellect and feeling ; yet he was so constituted, or else, so trained, that not much could be made of him in conversation.

He repeated his visit, as he intimated he should do at his leave-taking before. He came a third time ; and *kept* coming, with growing frequency,—still exhibiting, at each visit, the same remarkable talent for saying nothing.

Though the motive of his visits could not be mistaken, nor the fact concealed that he loved Rachel with all the intensity of which a nature like his was capable, still at the end of the several weeks of his acquaintance with her, he had not yet “declared himself,” as the phrase is, in such cases. She could not assume that he was her lover, nor treat him as if he were : she could only regard him, *practically*, as an ordinary visitor at the house, or, rather, as a stranger stopping in the place, to whom such civilities seemed to be due from the family, and from herself, as are customarily shown to strangers.

Meantime, the affair became a matter of observation and inquiry about the place. People asked who this young stranger was, that was so frequently at Mr. Kell's. Considerate and kind people inclined to hope well of him, and wished that his attentions might prove a happiness, and not otherwise, to Rachel. Hannah gave the gossips that inquired of her to understand that he was a Mr. Charles Grandison Paddlefoot, from York State,—“as handsome and mannerly a young man as you'll often see, and uncommon sociable.” As for what brought him to the house so often, “that was best known to herself and somebody else, she guessed ;” but she charged them “not to say nothing about it, because it would be time enough to speak of such things when they come

out,"—which injunction they were sure to obey to the letter. Jeduthun replied to inquirers of him, according to their characters and motives. Some he answered respectfully and simply, as to a civil and respectful questioner and question. Others he answered after some dry and significant fashion of his own. To Miss Pettigrew, in particular, who, meeting with him casually, detained him with a number of inquiries about other and indifferent matters, as a cover to this, which she mixed in with them, his sober information was, that "he come from Butternuts, in York State, and had lots of cousins out to Berryfield;" and that he "first got acquainted with Rachel and the colt at Beaver Brook."

This struck Miss Matilda very pleasantly, as her informant intended it should. It furnished her with a little fund for wit, at Rachel's expense; whom she could not help congratulating on her enviable prospects, as to butternuts and berries.

The subject was of course talked over between the grandparents. It had been their wish and prayer that they might see Rachel united, before they died, to some sensible and kind man, that so she might not be left alone in the world. But they feared that Paddleford was not the one for her,—not the man, certainly, which her heart and mind demanded, whatever prudential considerations might, in her particular case, be taken into the account, in abatement of that demand. However, for the present, they thought it best to be reserved on the subject with her, as she apparently preferred to be with them. If she inclined to favor the suitor (of which they saw no sign)

they were confident that she would not commit herself, eventually, without consulting them.

Hannah was, of course, for favoring the suit, very decidedly; and between her and Jeduthun the matter bred dissension,—of which the ardor was all on her part, and the dryness all on his. While she set forth her Mr. Paddlefoot's admirable qualities, especially his uncommon sociability, (the point which most needed her confirmation) and maintained that it would be a thousand pities if Rachel didn't have him, (after all the talk and expectation of people, too!)—to all this, Jeduthun's cool, settled, provoking reply was, that "he would do for some folks, but not for Miss Stray."

Had the question brought itself distinctly home to Rachel's heart at the end of her suitor's first visit, whether she could reciprocate his partiality for her, her thought upon it might have faded into vacancy, as the day faded into evening,—leaving neither decision nor suspense upon her mind. Perhaps it did thus present itself, more or less distinctly, hovering about her thoughts, and did thus lose itself in the wandering day-dream that occupied her at the window after he was gone. At the end of another interview, still more after a third, her decision would have been unhesitating and emphatic. "No! no! Impossible!"

How *could* she love him? How could she blend her destiny, her being, with his? They *twain*—twain in everything—in their thoughts, sympathies, and tastes—how could they become one flesh—companions meet for one another, and dwellers in a common Eden of their

own? There were no congenialities between them. She was a child of nature; he was wholly artificial. She was enthusiastic; he was emotionless and vapid. She was intellectual; he was not so. In short, all her fine positive qualities, native or acquired, found but negatives in him. And though it be true that opposites, or contrasts, in some kinds, and in some cases, may be regarded with complacency, it is not possible that negatives or nonentities should command either affection or respect.

These essential questions, of accordant tastes, temperaments, and habits, which so many young people so blindly overlook, to their bitter and life-lasting regret, neither the judgment nor the feelings of Rachel allowed her to disregard. Against such odds, no prudential considerations, looking primarily and mainly to the mere matter of settlement in life, did with her, or should in any case, with either party (or with parents), have weight.

We have seen in what light Rachel thought it her duty to regard her visitor. What *should* have been her deportment towards him? She half chid herself with lack of character—with want of force, if not of frankness, on the subject. Yet she was ignorant of the ways of the world, and was no casuist, in such matters. She had no counsellor on that head. Her grandmother, perhaps improperly, left her to her wits, not doubting their sufficiency for the occasion. She had no confidant, as most young women have, in love affairs. She could not dismiss him from the door with white lies—"not at home." Black, they would have been to her truthful, unsophisti-

cated conscience. She could not say, in words, "I cannot marry you:" he had not asked her to. And then the affair, she apprehended, had got aggravated by delay. Had she declined seeing him, decidedly and frankly, after the first or second interview, that would have been the end of it; but he had been suffered to continue his visits as he had. It was true, her heart should have been legible enough from her manner; but his passion was too blind to see. What remained to her, therefore, but to take his visitations patiently,—hoping that each would be the last,—till some action on his part should bring the matter to a conclusion, or render it obviously proper for her to do so?

And thus things went on, till at length—pshaw! In some such love-sick, set phrase of speech as might be quoted from old novels, he did declare his love; which, of itself,—in place of a downright, manly, frank style of avowal, such as sense and nature teach,—had been enough to disgust her into a hearty negative. But, obedient to a heart generous, as well gentle, she beat down disgust. She said, decisively, but tenderly, that she feared there was too little congeniality between them to justify so intimate a connection; adding, that she could have wished to spare herself and him the pain of such an interview as that, but had not found means to do so.

After some moments of silence, she left the room. Paddleford remained as one stupefied with astonishment. Mrs. Kell came in; excused Rachel's absence; talked on some indifferent subject; but he heard her not, and soon took his leave.

## CHAPTER XV.

### PIETY A GREAT REQUISITE.

ON the following morning, Rachel went to Mrs. Raymond's.

"It is long since we have seen you," said Mrs. Raymond.

"It is wrong in me that it has been so," Rachel answered. "I have longed to see you, and be advised about this affair,—this of Mr. Paddleford,—of which you must have known something; but I felt unwilling to trouble you with it till it was disposed of."

"And we," remarked Rebekah, "have felt that it would be indelicate in us to speak with you about it, so long as you preferred to be reserved yourself."

"It is a thing gone by now," said Rachel, "and if it will not be troubling you too much, I must tell you the whole story, such as it is (one could not make a novel out of it), and then I want to know if I have acted improperly."

The ladies desired her to relate the matter, as fully as she wished, with perfect confidence and freedom. She did so, as concisely as she could, showing much candor, and even generosity, towards Paddleford, in her account

of him, with a delicate reserve in reference to herself; and then submitted it to them whether it had been her fault that he had so long persisted in his visits.

"I think it the duty of a lady, always," said Mrs. Raymond, "to forestall, in some way, if possible,—by her manner, or through the suggestions of a friend,—any express declaration by a gentleman whom she knows she cannot accept; and thus save herself, as well as him, the pain of such an avowal and refusal. I do not call it *generous* in her to do so, for it is nothing more than the merest dictate of humanity and truth.

"In your case, Rachel, if you had had more knowledge of the world—more experience and tact—*artifice* you could not allow yourself to employ, I trust, in any dishonest sense of the word—you might, perhaps, have cut short the matter sooner; or perhaps your grandmother might have done it, without offence, whatever pain it gave. Yet, after all, there are some men so blind, or so presuming, or so desperate, that there is no getting quit of them but in the way you have done.

"You have not intentionally encouraged him?" continued Mrs. Raymond, after a pause, looking in Rachel's face, confidingly, but yet inquiringly. "You cannot, I am sure, have acted the coquette: it would not be like you."

"Oh no, no! mother," said Rebekah, emphatically. "I will answer for her: she *could not* trifle with any man; it is not in her. You do her wrong to speak of such a thing."

Well as Mrs. Raymond supposed herself acquainted with Rachel, she did not know her as Rebekah did.

Rachel glanced a look of thanks at Rebekah, and then an appealing, almost reproachful one, with moistened eyes, at her mother. Satisfied with Rebekah's vindication of her, she was silent; but had her thoughts been uttered, they would have been like these: "*I act the coquette? Am I capable of that? And if I were, would my circumstances allow it? No, the caressed and flattered daughters of wealth and fashion may afford to flirt and trifle with admirers, but it would not do for me. They may be gratified with their own or the public's talk of their numerous and numbered offers and refusals, but it is not for me to covet that kind of notoriety.*"

"Pardon me, my dear," said Mrs. Raymond, perceiving that Rachel was a little hurt by her suggestion, though more had been made of it than was intended; "I do by no means believe you would trifle in such a matter. Love is a delicate thing, and ought to be too sacred to be made a plaything of, or an offering to vanity; and it would be wronging you, as Rebekah says, to think you capable of such a weakness."

"And such an immorality," said Rebekah. "For I am sure it is an immorality, as being contrary to the law of love—the great religious law I mean—the Golden Rule."

"And a sin of ingratitude, too, is it not?" added Rachel. "For how can one help feeling that another's preference for *her*, demands her gratitude, or something akin to gratitude—a sense of favor shown her; though it cannot entitle him to her affection?"

On the whole, the ladies were agreed in the opinion

that coquetry is alike contemptible and culpable; that she who boasts of the offers she has received (imaginary and constructive offers, many of them, usually,) confesses herself a jilt, heartless, and incapable of a true, deep, womanly, and lasting love; and that such are punished, generally, either in a neglected single life, or an unhappy married one.

"I could not marry so *negative* a character as Paddleford," said Rachel to her grandmother, a day or two after his dismissal. "Besides, he is not a christian."

"How do you know he is not a christian, Rachel? Did you ask him?"

"I did not ask him, grandma'; but I somehow perceived, or felt, that he was not, without asking."

"*How* did you perceive it? What was it about him that revealed it to you?"

"Why, grandma', that same *negativeness* of character. I do not think a christian *could* be so devoid of sympathies as he is. I never met with one that was. A truly religious person, though of the humblest intellect, is always, I think, a person of *some* feeling. He has some sensibility to nature—to its scenery—its voices; and some sympathies with the moral world. He has his thoughts and reflections, and can be stimulated by other minds acting on his. And his religion reveals itself, more or less, in his countenance, and voice, and manner. Did you never notice, in almost any stranger you have met with, a certain something about him that seemed to impress you with his character as being a christian or not? And it seems to me it *must* be so; for religion is so much

a thing of knowledge, and of love and sympathy, that I do not see how it can possess the soul without disclosing something of itself in the mien and manner. I know there are constitutional as well as educational differences in people; but I cannot conceive that a true christian *can* be so wholly negative as Paddleford appears to be."

Mrs. Kell was somewhat surprised at this strain of remark from Rachel. She could have wished it were indicative of true religious feeling in her. It was, however, she feared, more the convictions of her understanding than the dictate of her heart.

"Yes, dear, I have often observed what you speak of. Why should not religious feeling as well as other kinds of feeling reveal itself in the exterior expression of the man? But wouldn't you marry a man who was not pious?"

"I cannot say I *never* would, but that was among the *negatives* that decided me in regard to Paddleford."

"And yet, you do not profess to be a christian yourself, Rachel?"

"No, grandma."

"How then can you consistently require that the man you marry shall be pious?"

"Consistently, I cannot."

"And why should you wish it?"

"Because religion is an excellence in itself, and because it is safer."

"Safer for yourself?"

"Yes, ma'am."

"And for this world, as well as for another?"

"Yes, ma'am, for both. I should fear, with a husband who was not a christian, that *I* never should become one; that *he* never would; and that we should lead each other in the wrong direction, and both be lost."

"And if he were very amiable and moral, and not openly wicked, or unprincipled, the danger might not be less,—it might be greater," said Mrs. Kell; "because he would be more likely to be satisfied with himself as he was, and you more influenced by his example."

"For this life, too," continued Rachel, "religion cannot but be safer,—safer for a husband's principles and habits, and safer for his affections. I could *confide* in him more; and it must be *so* trying, to be so intimately and irrevocably united to one in whom you cannot confide! To distrust one's own husband's uprightness, or purity, or love—how painful it must be!

"Perhaps *habit* influences my feeling on the subject; I mean my education. I know it *ought* to influence me. I have always lived in a praying house, and I should feel that something was amiss, something wanting, something wrong, *portentous* almost, to be living in a house where prayer was not offered, and that house my own adopted home!

"I know, grandma', these are but selfish and inconsistent feelings, but I cannot help having them, at times."

"And so there *would* be, my child, something wanting, and wrong, and *quite* portentous," said Mrs. Kell, with tender earnestness, "as to the character and well-being of such a household,—in the end, if not at its beginning; and I am glad to hear you say so. But how I wish you

could say it consistently, as being a christian yourself. Piety in a wife is as important to a husband as piety in him is to her. It may be *more* important where children are concerned. In any case, it is important to *oneself*; for each one has his separate accountability and immortality, not to speak of his separate spiritual wants in the present world.

"The wish which you express," continued Mrs. Kell, "is felt, or professed, by many,—perhaps oftener by the other sex than by ours. The young man wishes that the woman he marries may be pious. He thinks she will be a better wife and mother,—more domestic, more affectionate. Or perhaps he conceives of piety as an *ornament* in a woman. It is amiable,—*interesting*. It invests her with a kind of sanctity and purity; or is, in some way, partially or wholly, regarded as an embellishment, rather than as a principle. Or, it may be (for the human heart works every way), he makes a *merit* of it, and sets it down among his good works—imagining that to choose a righteous wife in the name of a righteous wife is next to being a righteous man himself. There is many a man, I suspect, who flatters himself that he shall get to heaven because of the piety of his wife; that is, by proxy,—just as some children expect to go there because of the piety of their parents."

"But, grandmother, *I* do not make a mere embellishment of a husband's piety, as you describe it; nor a merit of it, to be imputed to me for righteousness."

"No, dear, I know you do not. With you it is a matter of safety—of prudence. But in every view of it

the wish is, as you confess, a selfish and one-sided one. Piety should be matched with piety, or else there is not an even bargain. What is safe, prudent, or in any respect desirable, for the one, is equally so for the other.

"In one respect, however, the wish is an inconsiderate one; that is, supposing religion to be what it is—a practical and uncompromising principle. How can two walk together except they be agreed? It is requisite, in order to their living happily together, that they should think and feel alike on all *great* matters, to say the least. But, where one is pious and the other not, there is the great matter of religion—greater than all others,—extending to all,—in regard to which they are *not* agreed—do *not* see, think, and feel alike. On *that* subject—and that is everything—the one bosom is shut to the other; and where the heart is fullest it is obliged to be most reserved. What communion hath light with darkness?"

## CHAPTER XVI.

### MORE OF PADDLEFORD.

THE reader may have felt a sufficient degree of interest in Paddleford to be willing to know what became of him.

After his final interview with Rachel, he still lingered a day or two at Berryfield, solitary, intensely absent-minded, "brown-studious," as one of the Simpkinses said, and indifferent to everything about him.

He went home to Butternuts.

Hardly a month had elapsed when his well known rap was heard again at Mr. Kell's,—and at his precise accustomed hour; for he was always mechanically exact as to the time of his arrivals. Mrs. Kell met him at the door; he inquired after Rachel, and was answered, civilly, but significantly, that she was engaged; whereupon he declined coming in. Two Sundays after, was read from the pulpit, according to the custom of that part of New England, the "publishment of an intention of marriage between Charles Grandison Paddleford, of Butternuts, New-York, and Matilda Isabella Pettigrew, of this place."

Of course, on the reading of this little proclamation,

all heads were turned,—especially in the galleries, where young eyes have freer range,—with evident surprise, in the direction of Miss Pettigrew's seat; and then towards that of the Kells. Miss Pettigrew was absent; so was her intended. Rachel was in her place. She did not allow herself to know that she was thus the focus of their regards,—the central object to so many eyes; and so she was composed. Simplicity and modesty, as well as faith and principle, are elements of moral courage. They *are* moral courage. There *was*, however, a slight momentary change of color in her face, just visible to those who were near her. Her grandmother could not help turning a quiet, but inquiring eye towards her; while Mr. Kell looked around, with a half curious, half indifferent air, as if he would have said, Well, and what is it but a publishment? Rachel and her grandparents shared in the general surprise occasioned by the announcement.

Mrs. Kell said to her husband, after they got home, that she knew everybody would be looking at Rachel, and she could not help fearing she would betray some feeling; and that people would misconstrue it into a feeling of regret and disappointment as to Paddleford. "She? Never fear for her," Mr. Kell replied. "She would be glad, as I supposed, to see Paddleford so well disposed of; and as for being gazed at, if that was a little trying to her, I did not doubt that she was woman enough to keep it to herself."

Hannah could hardly set bounds to her vexation at such an issue to all her fine dreams for Rachel and her lover; of which, possibly, she had not yet wholly de-

spaired, since Paddleford was in the place again. She had "known young girls say No, and then change their minds, before now."

"It's all Mrs. Mudge's doings, every bit of it. She 'veigled him into it. I'm as convinced of it as I'm in this house; I know she did, if the truth was known. And that's what she come here spyin' out for, one day, you remember, when Mr. Paddlefoot was here, and Mrs. Kell introduced him to her—not that I blame Mrs. Kell; because she couldn't help introducin' him, because he was right there, in the parlor, you know—and Mrs. Mudge was so mighty polite and gracious to him, and invited him to call and see her. *Happened* in, she said; but she come o' purpose, and I knew she did; and I 'spected mischief, then; and now you see! Well, she's welcome to him, for all me, or anybody else, I guess, in *this* house, Matilda Pettigrew is. And it's time for her to get married: she's been in the market long enough. And he's good enough for her, I can tell her that—for all she run him down so, and made fun of him, you know,—and a good deal too good; though, I declare, I don't think any the better of him for having *her*. But I shall always say this much for him, though; he's as polite and mannerly a person as you'll often see, and agreeable in conversation—very."

Mrs. Mudge was a relation of Miss Pettigrew's; and Hannah did not misconjecture as to the fact of her agency in this affair, though she might have assigned too early an (intentional) commencement to that agency, and over-estimated its relative amount. It was through her,

and at her house, that the parties were made acquainted with each other.

The marriage was solemnized as soon as it legally could be after the publishment; and the united pair went west.

## CHAPTER XVII.

### HOW MUCH IS SHE WORTH?

A COURTSHIP will of course be talked about; and none the less if it prove a failure, resulting in a disappointment to one or the other of the parties. This late affair of Rachel's was the subject of more particular and prolonged remark in consequence of so unexpected a sequel to it as that of her suitor's marrying Miss Pettigrew; that lady being somewhat noted as a belle. It being mentioned, in an adjacent town, in the presence of Mr. Morehouse, that gentleman desired to know who Miss Kell was; and being informed, it occurred to him that she might be an eligible match for himself. Mr. Morehouse was a bachelor, twice as old as Rachel. He was understood to be a man of good natural abilities, and of considerable information. He was getting to be forehanded as to property; and being covetous of place, as well as of emolument, and capable, he had been honored with a number of lesser civil trusts. He was, however, a hard, tight man. To *get* and *keep*, was his ruling passion. Hence marriage was with him primarily a question of pecuniary interest. "How much is she worth?" And thus, in thinking of Rachel Kell, (besides that

being a bachelor, he had no objection to the disparity of years between them,) it run in his head, as in a warranty deed, that she was to inherit so many acres of land, bounded so-and-so, together with the dwelling-house, out-houses and barns thereon standing.

Schemes of wealth are apt to grow upon the fancy. Else there would be fewer bubbles. The more Morehouse thought on this scheme of his, the more desirable the Kell property appeared. Regarded as a farm merely, it was valuable; but he conceived that it would ere long derive an additional value from the stream which flowed from the Pond through a part of it, offering several excellent sites for small factories or mills. Mills and factories there! What a desecration of localities sacred to shade and solitude would the thought of them have been in Rachel's feeling! Along that stream she had rambled, mused, and sung, when no one saw her, in her childish days, and she still delighted in it.

The sagacious man's inceptive thought ripened into a resolve within himself that he would prosecute the matter so far at least as to get a sight of the young lady, and see if he could make up his mind to *her*, as well as to her inheritance. The inheritance was the primary and main thing; but if the inheritress herself also was agreeable, so much the better. It is a mistake to suppose that a man covetous of money—marrying for money—covets nothing else. Comeliness of person, amiable dispositions, pleasing manners, respectable connections—all these are desirable to him, as they are to others; only these *accidents* are not the substance. They

are not to be weighed *against* the main thing, though they may be pearls and rubies *with* it. Indeed he wants these things for *appearance*' sake, as well as for their own sake; he wants them as covers to what would otherwise have a too obviously mercenary aspect. Few men are willing to suffer the imputation of marrying for money merely; no lady will be wooed in that light, avowedly; yet where there is no other charm *but* the money—none of person, mind, or heart—still more where these are positively repulsive, the imputation is unavoidable.

Mr. Morehouse had some acquaintance with Mr. Kell, and it was not difficult to devise some little matter of business as a pretext for calling at his house. Having attended to the business, he sat some time, conversing with Mr. and Mrs. Kell, on a variety of subjects. The old gentleman appeared to regard him as a rather shrewd, practical man, while he, on his part, seemed delighted with Mr. Kell. How was Rachel impressed with him? Not particularly, in any way. Her manner was what a child's might have been: for in truth, she was as innocent of all suspicion of the real object of his call as she was of his future mills and factories. She was attentive to the conversation, the business portion of it excepted, so far as the work she had in hand permitted, or civility required; perhaps she made a remark occasionally, or suggested an inquiry. Gazer found his way into the room, and laid his chin upon her knee, looking in her face; and Morehouse observed the play of her features, apparently intelligible to the dog, while she put her hand on his head, and spoke to him in a whisper;

and the man whose idol was silver and gold felt, for the moment, that there *might* be a dearer idolatry than even that which now possessed him.

The business with Mr. Kell was left incomplete. Mr. Kell was to make some inquiry in reference to it, and Mr. Morehouse was to call again. He did not specify on what day he would call; for he hoped that, calling at random, he might miss of finding Mr. Kell at home, and hence have occasion to repeat his call. And it fell out as he wished. He came, once and again, in the absence of Mr. Kell, and improved the opportunity the best he could for the object he had in view. While he addressed himself chiefly to Mrs. Kell, he turned at times to Rachel, in a direct attempt to engage her more particularly in conversation with himself; but her manner was so entirely simple and unconscious, that he still felt as little acquainted with her, or rather, that she was as little acquainted with him, as if he had been saying artificial and pretty things to a child.

Returning homewards from his first call, Mr. Morehouse came to the conclusion that Rachel Kell would be no encumbrance *with* the property, but, on the contrary, a very pretty addition to it: if at first he had wanted her for her property's sake, he now wanted her *and* the property. Returning from his last visit, he found himself debating, with considerable uneasiness, the strange question, which he wanted *more*, the inheritance or the inheritor. And from this he turned, more misgivingly than he had done, to the question of probability as to his being able to possess himself of either; to test which, he

threw the pretensions of the parties, respectively, into their appropriate scales. As to property, though his was at present unequal to hers, yet, with his tact at getting and making sure of it, it might be set down as prospectively superior. His civil trusts and honors, (being, or having been, town-clerk, select-man, and member of the legislature at its late session) were important make-weights at his end of the balance. And then, there was a large *minus* quantity (that of birth) to be subducted from the opposing scale; indeed, as so much *lift* to it, in his favor, he conceived. On one point he thought aloud—disparity of ages. He was slowly walking his horse up a hill, a mile or two from the house. It was no eaves-dropping in Jeduthun that he happened to be standing in a wood, near the road, and overheard something of his cogitations. "They say she is not eighteen yet; I am sure she must be all that, and more,—though, to be sure, she does look pretty young. Perhaps her manner makes her seem younger, and pass for younger, than she really is. Mrs. Fain will know. But say she is but eighteen, or a little less, the difference is not so very great—not over twenty years: and instances are not rare of greater disparity than that."

"Hum! I thought so," said Jeduthun, who knew something of the man, and had suspected the motive of his calls at Mr. Kell's. "He's got Miss Stray in his head, has he? and he'll find her a hard notion to get out of it, I guess. He may as well, though. It ain't a name—Morehouse ain't—that she's a-goin' to fancy, and swap off her'n for, very easy, I reckon. But, mum! We shall see."

Jeduthun reported nothing of this soliloquy of Morehouse's at home,—reserving it for his own fitting time, perhaps; or amusing himself with the idea of being a little behind the scenes, while the others, and particularly Hannah, were ignorant and unsuspecting. He was fond of teasing Hannah by being shrewd and knowing where she was in the dark.

Mrs. Fain was a townswoman and acquaintance of Mr. Morehouse's, though resident in Greencliff. He thought it might be well, at this stage of the affair, to make her his confidant. She entered into it with great readiness, and had no doubt that she would be able to bring things about, agreeably to his wishes. He suggested to her that it might be necessary to use a little management, especially with Rachel. Mrs. Fain must not signify to her that she had any *knowledge* on the subject; it must be only Mrs. Fain's *suspicion* that Mr. Morehouse had, or might have, some little inclination that way; and *if* he had, and Rachel worked her card right, who knew but that she might secure him? And Mrs. Fain must set forth how very desirable, in *her* view, such a match must be for Rachel. But while she magnified the advantages of the connection, and expressed considerable confidence that it could be brought about, she must take care not to make it *too* probable, or easy of attainment; because a thing desired is magnified by difficulties. Looked at through impediments, delays, and uncertainties, it is more coveted and sought after than when it lies secure within one's reach, and at his option. Such was human nature, Mr. Morehouse said; and cer-

tainly his own heart was verifying the doctrine while he said it.

Mrs. Fain assured Mr. Morehouse that he might trust her with the affair entirely,—she was no novice in such matters—believed herself as competent to manage an interest of this kind as he was to look after a moneyed one; and all the more in this case, as the task must be an easy one; for she was sure a young girl in Rachel's circumstances could not be so blind to her own interest as to show herself indifferent or averse to so eligible an offer,—when, indeed, in *her* opinion—not to flatter Mr. Morehouse—it was an offer on which *any* young lady might congratulate herself, and be proud of it.

Mr. Morehouse was to hear from Mrs. Fain at as early a day as she might be able to report progress.

In prosecution of this hopeful arrangement between two sagacious heads, Mrs. Fain sent a note to Rachel, desiring her to call at her house, as she had something particular to say to her.

Rachel went, wondering what the mystery might be. She was still more puzzled when Mrs. Fain, seating herself close to her, began, after a few commonplaces, a conversation, in a lowered voice, which, for all that Rachel could make of it, seemed a play at cross-purposes.

"Do you know, my dear, what brings Mr. Morehouse to your grandfather's so often, lately?"

"No, ma'am, not very particularly. He had some business with my grandfather, relating to town affairs, I understood. I think it might have been a question of repairs on a bridge, which belonged equally to their town and ours."

"It wasn't that," said Mrs. Fain, significantly.

"Perhaps not," said Rachel; "though I heard the words, *bridge, selectmen, costs*, and the like. However, I did not pay much attention to what passed between them, as it in no way concerned me."

"Perhaps it *did* concern you, Rachel."

"Me, Mrs. Fain? How?"

"Why, you *can't* be so simple, I am sure, as not to comprehend, or, at least, to surmise what I mean," said Mrs. Fain, looking archly.

"Oh, and besides the town business, whatever it was, it occurs to me now," said Rachel, "that Mr. Morehouse said something about wanting a good saddle-horse: do you think he was after Chamois? For that *would* concern me, in case he were sold to him."

"That is nigher to it," said Mrs. Fain.

"But I have no idea, Mrs. Fain, that my grandfather would *think* of such a thing, without my consent."

"But now, Rachel, are you really so innocent; or do you affect all this?"

"Excuse me, Mrs. Fain, I am really just so obtuse. I have no more inkling of your meaning than the man in the moon."

"To speak out plain, then; what I suspect, Rachel, and what I wanted to see you about, as a friend, is, that Mr. Morehouse is after—not Chamois—but Chamois' owner!"

Rachel threw up her hands, and laughed heartily.

"Excuse me, Mrs. Fain; [*coloring*] it is my blunder that I laugh at. But really your surmisings are quite groundless."

"How do you know that?"

"Judging from the extreme improbability of the thing in itself, and from his manner. He has been at our house three times—on town business, as I said, (the horse was incidental)—and there may have been ten words, possibly twice so many, passed between him and me, on the most indifferent subjects (I do not remember what) in the most indifferent manner. That is the total of our intercourse; and I am sure it looks quite the other way from that which you imagine."

Mrs. Fain shook her head. "The total of your intercourse in *words*, Rachel; and in looks, perhaps, on *your* part. But, mind, I do not say that he is positively thinking of you; but only that such is my suspicion, putting his calls at your house and several other things together. What I know for one thing, and for certain, and from himself, Rachel, (for he and I are old acquaintances) is, that he is thinking of a wife, and looking round to find one."

"It is time, I should think," said Rachel.

We shall not report this conversation further. Rachel, half amused and half indignant, forbore discussing the point with Mrs. Fain, and heard her quietly for the half hour or more that she had to talk about this "rare chance for her, *provided* Mrs. Fain's suspicions were well founded, and if it could be brought about."

Mrs. Fain executed her trust evidently with much sincerity and zeal, but not in all points discreetly; and reported progress to her employer, but progress in an adverse direction. He called again, a few days after, at

Mr. Kell's, under cover of his town affair, still, and by way either of advancing in his object, or adroitly retreating from it, as appearances might dictate. Rachel, feeling no particular interest in bridges, left him with her grandfather, and strolled off, with a volume in her hand, to Sweetbriar Rock.

Mrs. Fain was a character, in her way; of whom Mrs. Kell, on Rachel's relating to her her interview with that lady, gave the following account:

She was disappointed in love when she was young. She failed of marrying the man she preferred and expected to have, and had never been happy in the man she did marry. Had she loved her husband, and been happy with him, her new affection would have gone far to supplant the old; but, as it was, she had suffered a continuous and a double disappointment. "Missing the happiness she looked for in reality," Mrs. Kell said, "she has appeared to seek it in idea. Love and matrimony have always been to her like a bewitching dream of the past—the element she lives in; and she is rather noted as a match-maker. But you may lay it down as a pretty general rule, that a love-cracked woman, married or single, is not a judicious adviser in love-matters. Marriage itself—to get married—will be the first and main thing with her; *how* you marry will be but secondary."

## CHAPTER XVIII.

## THE YOUNG BOSTONIAN.

THERE was a young gentleman from Boston stopping in the place for several months. He was understood to have been sent into the country by his friends, who were wealthy, as a means of removing him from evil companions and temptations. Mr. Shepherd, it was said, had been privately written to, bespeaking his paternal interest in his behalf. His manners were polite and gentlemanly, and his dispositions generous and amiable. The young ladies admired his finely moulded form, his brilliant dark eyes, and florid cheek,—too florid, however, for health and morals; for it showed the flush of dissipation. He spent his time in various amusements—fishing, fowling, and light reading,—showing not much inclination to young society.

This young gentleman fell in love, unhappily, with Rachel. He may have noticed her at church, or elsewhere, and been pleased with her more or less, but it was not in these circumstances that he became so particularly, and, indeed, violently, interested in her. His fishing pastimes sometimes took him to Kell's pond; whither, as the reader knows, Rachel's fondness for the place

often took her also; and it is not surprising that they should meet, one day, most unexpectedly, on the margin of that pleasant water. His flashing eyes met hers; he raised his hat respectfully and gracefully, and was answered by an appropriate act of maidenly courtesy on her part. No words were exchanged. She withdrew into the leafy shades from which she had emerged. He turned and dropped, mechanically, his hook into the water,—and was not conscious of the wary skill and watchful expectation that use to wait on angling, till he felt his fish-pole twitched from his hand by an unlucky fish, and saw it moving off, with a bobbing motion, towards the middle of the pond.

Gone, hook and line! And gone was the angler.

He sought an introduction to Rachel; and when she avoided seeing him, he obtained an introduction to Miss Raymond, having learned that she was Rachel's friend. Miss Raymond received him with her characteristic urbanity—with *more* than that, in her heart; for she regarded him with the benevolent tenderness of a christian, concerned to think that such fine endowments as his were by nature, were already blighted, and in danger of being ruined irreclaimably, by intemperance. But—trembling for Rachel—she declined giving him the introduction to her which he requested—chiefly on the ground (as to him) that Rachel had, for reasons decisive with herself probably, declined the favor of Mr. Elmer's acquaintance, and it would be indelicate, perhaps unkind, in Miss Raymond to press it.

"I am quite aware, Miss Raymond, of your motives,"

said Elmer, "and I respect them. I know, and am deeply pained and mortified to know, that I am not such—have not *been* such—that any lady could prudently intrust her affections and her happiness to me. But," he added, pausing and raising his burning eyes to hers,—“is the habit that makes me so a hopeless one? May it not be reformed? And might not the being whom I loved—*could* love, above all others, and to idolatry, if I might,—be the instrument of that reformation? I know what is passing in your thoughts—‘the force of habit’—‘the power of temptation.’ I am sensible of that; I know it but too well. I have seen it in others—in companions. I have felt it in my own case—struggling, and *prevailing*, (the truth compels me to admit,) against shame, remorse, and, more than all, against parental love. But, Miss Raymond, it *could not* prevail with me beyond the restraining, the redeeming power, of such a love as I have alluded to! I speak frankly, and confidently to *you*, depending on your goodness; and heaven knows that I have spoken in the sadness, as well as fullness, of my heart. But tell me now if, in your belief, reform is hopeless. Do you, *must* you, look upon me in that light? And inform me whether, *that* bar removed, there remains any other to my seeing Miss Kell.”

“Hopeless,” said Miss Raymond, with deep emotion,—*hopeless*, reform is *not*—*must not* be; for what is hopeless is not attempted. There are no motives in despair. Do not for a moment admit to yourself the paralyzing thought. Reform, wherever there is occasion for it, should be set about at once, and with all the stimulus and

moral force it can derive from cheering hope and fixed purpose. But, Mr. Elmer, it is but truth and candor to say, that such a work undertaken in one’s own strength, and with human aids and motives only,—even with all the power of the dearest earthly *love* to strengthen it,—can hardly hope to be successful. It needs *divine* aid, and the force of religious motives. In dependence on *that* aid it must be begun and carried through, and persisted in, while life lasts. Reforms undertaken in any other reliance than this have resulted in failures as numerous as shipwrecks on the sea. Regard for reputation, peace of conscience, and a sense of parental love, are among the most powerful of human motives, and these you admit to be inadequate. Add another, less innate and constant, more delicate and liable to injury and decay, than these—that of connubial love—and the case is not greatly altered for the stronger. In how many instances has *that* love,—the husband’s, or the wife’s—dear and tender as it is, and even in its youth and freshness, proved utterly unavailing! Will you not, then,—it may seem a liberty in one so much a stranger to you to speak so, but your frankness emboldens me,—will you not seek that divine aid? Meet temptation in one, and in *all* its forms, in the strength of an overcoming faith,—looking to Him whose grace is ever sufficient for us, and whose strength is made perfect in weakness.”

It is not probable that Elmer apprehended very distinctly the truth and force of this appeal; for, though he had been well educated, or, at least, *assiduously* educated, in other respects, he had not been brought up reli-

giously, certainly not in that system of belief which formed the theology of Miss Raymond. He made no reply, but was silent for some minutes, drumming fitfully and faintly with his fingers on his broad forehead,—sighed, and took his leave.

A few days after, he addressed a note to Rachel, beautifully written as to the hand, and not otherwise in style, confessing, with the same frankness as to Miss Raymond, his unhappy propensity (which he said it were alike disingenuous and useless to conceal), expressing the same hope and purpose of reformation, *for her sake*, and making *her* influence so essential to that hope as almost to throw the responsibility of his salvation upon her; adding (what raised a blush of self-conviction on her cheek) that, “if she would show him preceptively, and by her own experience and example, how to be *religious*, he should, he did not doubt, find the narrow way practicable and delightful, even to such an erring one as he;” begging her to excuse whatever there might seem to be of want of manliness—of weakness—in his letter, and concluding with the earnest hope that she would favor him with an interview, however brief, before he left the place. He said he would, with her permission, expect her answer through her friend, Miss Raymond, or through any medium most agreeable to herself.

Rachel took this note, or letter, rather, (for it was larger than a billet-doux) to Miss Raymond; who (by the way) had not thought it expedient to mention to her the interview of Elmer with herself. She read it silently. Her eyes filled as she read; and Rachel’s filled in sym-

pathy with hers, if not from deeper sources within her own bosom. How many a letter which the passion of love has dictated, has been both written and read with the deepest pain; as well as innumerable others, with the greatest delight!

“And what do you think of it, and of him?” asked Rebekah. “Do you question the sincerity and honor of his professions?”

“Can I? ought I?” Rachel demanded.

“And what will you do; will you see him?”

“No, Miss Raymond, I shall not see him. I *dare* not! For, to tell the truth, I am afraid I might be too much interested in him.”

Rebekah was glad to hear this; for she had feared, as she read the letter, that here were too powerful appeals to be easily withstood by so susceptible and confiding a heart as Rachel’s. “Probably your decision is the safe one,” she said. “I can conceive that a prudent woman, while she could not marry a man she did not love, might love a man whom she could not marry.”

“So can I,” responded Rachel.

The letter was left with Miss Raymond, to be by her returned to its author, with such expressions and acknowledgments, as from Rachel, or in her behalf, as Miss Raymond’s gentle wisdom might suggest; but declining the interview.

Elmer, after this, threw himself in Rachel’s way, repeatedly; so that she deemed it prudent to avoid *retired* walks, pretty much. Not that Elmer would have shown her the least rudeness; but in the intensity of his regard

for her, he wished to see her, if he could not detain and converse with her.

He returned to his friends,—not the reformed and happy one they had too fondly allowed themselves to expect, but the victim of dejection now, as well as of the cup. His course was soon run,—ending in *mania potu*.

That he loved Rachel, passionately and honorably, could not be doubted. That he would have reformed, had she married him, is possible; but what considerate female would venture on that hope, in the face of innumerable rash experiments, of which wretchedness and tears have been the early and forewarned result?

## CHAPTER XIX.

FORREST WOODSON.

THOUGH Rachel has been the *object* of a suit, (in the cases which have been mentioned,) she cannot be said to have been, as yet, a *party* to a courtship. Those cases she has been able to dismiss with little hesitation. But there comes another now,—close upon the last—which is more perplexing to her; because the *pro's* and *con's* of a stronger character are concerned, and because, consequently, her *judgment* is brought more gravely into conflict with her feelings and her fancy.

A young gentleman had established himself in the place as a lawyer. He made the acquaintance of the people rapidly and freely, (for there was no timidity in his nature,) and of the Kells along with the rest. Being in circumstances to marry, he found no difficulty, not the least, in fixing his choice on Rachel. And then comes, for her, the trying question (as it proves) of *Yes* or *No*. Strong minds are generally prompt and decided in their judgments, but there are cases where, perhaps, the strongest minds are held deepest, if not longest, in suspense. Rachel was, in this case, not vacillating, but hesitating. She could have wished a thousand times that

Mr. Woodson were either more eligible or less so, than he was, or else that she had never seen him,—could have wished (if that had been innocent) that he were as vapid as Paddleford, as sordid as Morehouse, or else, alas! like Elmer, without his vices,—that so she might have been resolved at once, and settled in regard to him.

But here, in the phrase of his profession, is the summing-up of our young lawyer's qualities. He had a good deal of native force, physical and mental. He was liberally educated, having been graduated at one of the oldest of the New-England colleges, and had a well-disciplined and tolerably furnished mind. He had a great deal of independence. It was characteristic of him, as to this quality, to say, that any prejudice of which Miss Kell might be the subject, or which *he* might incur on her account, was to him as a thin mist at sunrise. Not that he was contemptuous of public opinion, but that he was careless of it where it crossed his own purposes. He had rather uncommon conversational talents; he could be entertaining, amusing, satirical, *droll*. His professional ability justified the belief that he would be distinguished, or certainly very respectable, as a lawyer. In person he was above the middling height, strong, but not graceful; his face masculine, rather than handsome.

These were qualities which, in the main, Rachel could not but highly appreciate,—to which her woman's pride, and her conscious want of a sustainer—the *ivy* want of her feminine heart and orphan condition—would naturally incline her to be related.

But *then* —

His strong mind was also a coarse one. He had no nice sensibilities; no delicate perceptions. He was cordial and hale enough in his ordinary manner, but had none of those deep and gentle sympathies which the variable experience of life—its alternating joys and sorrows, sufferings and reliefs—demand in every human relation, but especially in that which is the most intimate of all. It was his boast that he had no nerves, and was indifferent to atmospheric influences. An east wind and a west one, a hurricane and a zephyr, he averred, were all the same to his sensations. Refinement of feeling, or of manners, he regarded, or affected to regard, as effeminacy, especially in men. He carried himself *above* (as he imagined, but below, in fact) the ordinary conventional proprieties of good society; which contempt of such proprieties—whether it was attributable to some constitutional inaptitude, some oddity of his nature born with him, early educational neglect, ad-captandum-vulgaris policy, or sheer affectation for notoriety's sake, or a matter of sour grapes, was a question often discussed by people, but never settled. However explained, certain vulgar and invidious people were mightily amused and pleased with it: others tolerated it, for the sake of his better qualities. Worse than all, while he had the knowledge and the talents that made him acceptable to people of the highest intelligence and worth, and could, and often did, lift himself to their level of feeling and deportment, commanding more than their respect,—their admiration; and while, under the power of an exciting cause, such as an important cause in court, or an agitat-

ing popular debate, he could be eloquent, and even lofty in his style and bearing; yet, he had a prevailing preference and affinity for low company. He loved to sit as a prince among drones and loafers,—at shops, landings, and like places of shiftless resort—entertaining them with his wit, anecdotes, and politics. Such a propensity, such a habit, in almost any grown-up man, may be regarded as hardly corrigible; in an *educated* man, especially, it discovers a confirmed obliquity of social taste and moral feeling,—such as time will aggravate, rather than reform.

On the whole, it was apparent that, while the wife of Forrest Woodson would have in him much to gratify her as a woman, she would have much to try her as a wife.

Rachel hesitated.

She referred the matter to her grand-parents, desiring them to decide it for her.

"That we cannot do," they said. "If we *could* see you happily married and settled while we live, it would of course be a great satisfaction to us. But that consideration must not influence you at all, against your own judgment and inclination."

It did influence her, more than they suspected. Her desire to see *them* freed from all solicitude on her account was a filial feeling which, there was cause to fear, might overweigh other more essential ones that were personal to herself. This was a large item among the elements of her conflict.

"Mr. Woodson is a likely man, no doubt," the grandfather proceeded to say,—“a strong and gifted man;

moral, I believe; cheerful and good-tempered,—and *that* is much; constant at public worship, I observe, and attentive to the sermon,—from which I infer that he respects religion, though he does not profess it. I wish that in some things he were different from what he is; but”—thoughtfully and doubtfully—“there is no perfection here below, no one is faultless. No, child, *you* must settle it. It is your concern. We shall be satisfied, either way, if you are. But pray over it. Prayer is good always, but is specially important in a matter of this kind, which involves everything, almost, as it concerns this world and the next. I believe he loves you, and would aim to be a good husband. Yet, some of his ways I do not altogether like, as I said before; and perhaps his nature is too rude for yours. It may be. But you must determine for yourself.”

The hour for rest had come; the accustomed family devotions were attended, and then the little household, with the exception of Rachel, retired. She remained alone in the parlor. She sat a long time, with her hands laid together on her lap, as she used to place them when she was a child, at the close of an exercise at school; but not with a child's quiet at her heart. The conversation with her grandparents had shed no light upon her path, none upon her heart. They had given her no positive advice either way—had not distinctly expressed their own wishes; though she inferred from what they had said, or rather from what they had *not* said, that their secret hope was, that she would answer Mr. Woodson affirmatively. “For surely,” thought she, “if they

really thought it would not be for my happiness to marry him, they know and love me well enough to say so, frankly and decidedly."

Assuming, then, that her grandparents inclined to favor the match,—perhaps strongly,—or, at any rate, were not averse to it, she turned to a direct and earnest questioning of herself, in reference to it. "Some answer," she said or sighed within herself,—"*yes* or *no*—as soon as he returns. With all my heart, if *yes*; with a divided mind if *no*; with tears in either case. If *yes*, I shall give contentment to my grandparents, too solicitous on my account (but they know the world—life—the onward stages of it, better than I do:) if *no*, I shall remain with them, to nurse and comfort them in their last days. And then—after that, (for a thereafter there must be, if I survive them) there will still remain to me this dear home, and these fond haunts of my childhood, which even now it is so painful to think of quitting,—these, and their graves, will still be mine.

"As soon as he returns! He will not press an answer then, I know, but he will naturally expect it, and it would not be generous, or frank, or reasonable in me, to defer it. What shall it be? What *must* it be? Must! That is a hard word; it signifies constraint, and should be out of place where the affections are concerned. I will not say, what *must* it be? What *shall* it?"

Alas! what shall it, Rachel, in your state of feeling? Who would have expected to see *you*—with all the decisive bent and force that use to characterize your tastes and impulses—thrown into suspense on *such* a question?

Mr. Woodson had gone home to his native place on some business which might detain him there a month. It was not till the evening before he left, that he offered himself to Rachel; and in doing so then, he took her somewhat by surprise. For though aware that his intentions had been a little particular of late, she, in her humility, or diffidence, had not imagined their acquaintance to have advanced nearly so far as that! It was, however, like the man,—prompt and fearless as he was, in all his decisive volitions and movements; and so she now regarded it, since it had occurred. In making his avowal, he not only allowed, but desired her to take as much time as she wished to consider the matter, before giving her answer. "My own mind," said he, "is made up on it; take what time you will to make up yours, (for it is no trivial matter;) and when you do, (as I hope you will *affirmatively*) let it be with all your heart. But I need not say that to *you*, Miss Kell; for you are not capable of a half-way affection."

Rachel's emotion, whether of surprise or delicacy, at this declaration, did not suffer her to speak, for some moments. She then simply said, "A half-way consent to such a proposal, I could never give, Mr. Woodson. In that I trust you do not judge me erroneously, however you may think too favorably of me in other respects. All the heart, or not the hand. Less than that would not be truthful, and could not be happiness."

Mr. Woodson, with that finer feeling which belonged to him in those higher conditions of the soul to which, as has been mentioned, he was capable of rising on great

emergencies, (and this was one) perceived the depth of feeling he had awakened in her (whatever the complexion of it might be) and left her to himself.

And thus the matter stood.

The time fixed for his probable return had now nearly arrived. He had written to her since he left, repeatedly, and with as much fondness as his masculine character and their existing relations allowed him to express; but with forbearance and reserve as to hastening her decision. That forbearance was itself, to a nature like hers, a kind of magnanimous appeal. She resolved not to require it beyond their next interview. Suspense should then be terminated. But how?

## CHAPTER XX.

### A REFERENCE TO MISS RAYMOND.

AFTER a too wakeful night, Rachel betook herself again to her faithful friend, Miss Raymond.

"Pray help me," she said, with an effort to be humorous, "out of this *new* dilemma."

"Was ever anybody so apt to get *into* dilemmas?" said Rebekah, with responsive playfulness.

"It is not my fault," said Rachel.

"I am not so sure of that."

"But how to get out of it? For, seriously, Miss Raymond, a dilemma it is, that calls for aid. I have referred it to my grandparents; they will not decide it for me, and I want now just to refer it to you."

"To me? Well. But what, precisely, is the point, the question, you wish to refer to me?"

"Simply this:—To decide for me between the two great words, *Yes* and *No*."

"Indeed, Rachel, I cannot do it, any more than your grandparents can. No one can, or ought, eventually, but yourself. I might, perhaps, *simplify* the matter a little, or reduce the compass of it, if you find it embarrassed with particulars."

"Do, Miss Raymond : that will *help* resolve me."

"As logically and concisely as I can, then."

"A question of marriage involves, or should involve, always, these three particulars—*affection, conscience, and prudence*. As to prudence, a more imprudent thing a woman cannot do than to marry a man she does not love. As a case of conscience, she is not bound to do it ; but just the contrary. Affection, then, is the last, or rather the first and main thing. If you can *love* the man, with a complacent, true, devoted affection—*then*, if conscience sanction, and prudence acquiesce, the thing is settled. The three are all *sine-qua-nons*, in their way, though not all equally imperative. With regard to two of them, the advice of friends may aid, or even determine you, if you will ; the other is a question of the heart, and the heart alone can know the delicate and hidden data that are concerned in its decision."

"Dear Miss Raymond, pardon me ; I have looked at all your three particulars earnestly and long ; and each one of them seems to me to resolve itself into a number of others—*sub-particulars*, they might be called—to be logical, like you ; and the more I look at them in detail, and try to estimate them, the more embarrassed I become."

"The question of *prudence*, for example, (which is one of your three particulars,) comes up before me in a complex form. It has its pecuniary aspects, and its moral aspects, and its social aspects. The most serious is the moral. The others I do not mind much. I hope I have no cause to be apprehensive in regard to Mr. W.'s

morals, or moral tendencies. His morals *now* are unquestioned, and I think unquestionable. I trust they always will be. And yet, one cannot help being concerned, more or less, for those admired conversational talents that love to exercise themselves in companies which true moral feeling naturally avoids. Tell me, Miss Raymond, that my fears are groundless, quite groundless, on this head, and you will remove one ground, and the main one, of my hesitating on the score of prudence. *Are they groundless?*"

A look was all the answer Rebekah made ; which, whether it was a look confirmatory of her fears, or only sympathetic with them, or merely inquisitive, was not evident to Rachel.

"As to *affection*," Rachel continued, "I *respect* Mr. Woodson, for his mind, his education, and his profession. He has some estimable, and, I think, noble qualities of heart. I have no objection to his person. I *almost* love him. I could *quite* love him, if——"

"If he had more refinement," said Rebekah, filling the blank of Rachel's *if*.

"And if his tastes and pleasures were more in harmony with mine, in some respects ; or,—I am afraid—more *tolerant* of them," added Rachel.

"If he had more of your affinities for poetry and nature,—more sentiment, in short," said Rebekah.

"I could wish he had," Rachel replied. "But perhaps I ought to like him as he is ; and perhaps I should, if I but once gave him my hand, and linked my destinies with his—for weal or for woe. Do not you think, Miss

Raymond, that a wife often does love her husband entirely after her marriage, though she did not quite fancy him before?"

"In many instances she loves him more than she did before their union; but in many, and, I fear, in most, she loves him less. A slight disgust is more susceptible than a feeble love. It is easily revived and aggravated, and is, I suspect, generally more likely to outgrow the other, than to be outgrown by it. Do not you think it is, Rachel?"

"I should fear so. But it would depend much on the nature and degree of the displacency to be overcome, and on temperament, would it not?"

"It would, undoubtedly. But now, Rachel, for the *conscience* of the case."

"Tell me, then, Miss Raymond, how far I ought to sacrifice my own feelings for my grandparents' sakes; and how far I *may* sacrifice them, consistently with truthfulness and justice to Mr. Woodson. You understand me: If they incline to have me marry him, evidently,—if my declining is going to disappoint them, and occasion them regret, how far am I in duty bound to yield my inclinations and my judgment to theirs? And as to him, what degree of complacency and love, short of unhesitating and entire, has he a right to expect that I shall feel for him, or else refuse him altogether? He said he hoped I would give my answer *with all my heart*. Perhaps you wonder that I do not ask, first of all, how, if I accept him, with reserves and qualifications, I can reconcile it with *myself*—with my own conscious ingenu-

ousness and truth? But that I could provide for by frankly *confessing* as much to him; and so giving him an opportunity to refuse me on that ground, if he chose. That would be honest, would it not?—though the *delicacy* of it would not be quite so clear. One does not like to tell one—a man of his strong character, especially—that she does not quite fancy him as she could wish. It would be frank, however; and, of all people, lovers should be frank."

"And of all people, lovers, or, at least, parties to a courtship, are apt to be least frank, I fear," said Rebekah. "But, upon my word, Rachel, what a quantity of casuistry you have contrived to bring together into this little question of *yes* or *no*! You do seem to be in a deep of difficulties."

"Perhaps you think me fastidious and extreme in my notions of matrimony. My grandfather says there is no perfection; and that is true. We must not expect it."

"No, indeed, Rachel; I do *not* think you over-nice in such matters. Where our dearest affections, our nicest feelings, our most important interests, our most sacred duties, are concerned as they are in this relation, extreme caution is no more than prudence. Of course, there is no perfection, as your grandfather says; yet it does not follow that there are no *comparative* excellencies, no congenialities, no preferences. But let us not discuss this affair further at present. You need not decide on it to-day, nor to-morrow, I presume. I see how it is with you. You are perplexed. I trust you will be guided to a right decision, and a cheerful, if not a happy one. You

must ask wisdom from above. When should we pray, if not over an interest of this kind? I shall be glad to see you again, before you make up your mind finally, if you think I can be of any service to you. But excuse me now; I must go out this afternoon to see a friend, and the time forbids my deferring it. My mother will be disengaged soon, and will be happy to see you."

"Thank you, Miss Raymond; I must go now. But I may trouble you again."

"Certainly; I hope you *will* come; for I shall be thinking of you, much, till I see or hear from you again. May heaven guide and bless you. You will seek such guidance, will you not? We ask the advice of friends in our perplexities, often, but the best advice they can give us is, that we ask wisdom from above, and the best they can do for us is, to pray that it may be given us."

## CHAPTER XXI.

GRACE CHETWOOD.

WHILE Miss Raymond was out to see the friend she spoke of, she called on Mrs. Welwood. She acquainted her with Rachel's state of mind, as she had gathered it from the interview she had just had with her, and expressed the opinion that she would conclude not to accept Mr. Woodson. "And yet she may," said Miss Raymond. "She thinks (but mistakenly, I suspect) that her grandparents wish her to have him. She is more or less interested in him, I presume; she may be more so than I discover, or than she is sensible of herself. Still, I cannot think she likes him well enough to have him. For though she is a girl of a good deal of prudence, it does not appear to me that, with her earnest nature, if she were really in love with him, she would be capable of *analyzing* her feelings as she does, or inclined to do so. Love is not wont to be so metaphysical."

The next morning Rachel received a request from Mrs. Welwood to call there in the course of that day or the next, if quite convenient. She went that afternoon. Her hope and expectation was, that Mrs. Welwood would speak with her on the subject which engrossed her, and that she had sent for her expressly with that view. But

the good woman made no allusion to it whatever. After her usual kind inquiries, she said she had occasion to write to a friend, and would be much obliged if Rachel could act as her amanuensis. Rachel had not unfrequently served her in that capacity, in her limited, but interesting correspondence.

Near the conclusion of the letter occurred this sentence: "I hear that your young friend, Miss G——, is receiving the addresses of a young man who is unworthy of her. Pray remind her of Grace Chetwood; whose experience was just what I fear *hers* will be, if she marries the young man alluded to."

"Thereby hangs a tale," thought Rachel; and she was curious, as any young person might be,—*more* than curious, in her existing circumstances,—to hear it. "Should I trouble you too much, Mrs. Welwood, to ask the history of that Miss Chetwood?"

"It was a case of one of the finest natures married to one of the coarsest," said Mrs. Welwood. "It hardly *can* be told. The leading features of it—so much as was obvious to the world—may; but the details, the minute, sad, effective shading of the picture, perished with the heart that suffered it, or lives only in the memories of near and intimate observers.

"Grace Chetwood—it was about ten years ago—was the daughter of a distinguished physician in N——; which, you may know, is one of the loveliest towns in New-England. She was an affectionate, confiding creature, not beautiful, but better than that—*interesting*. Chetwood was her maiden name.

"There came a young man, Stonhill, fresh from college, to pursue medical studies in her father's office. He was energetic, masculine, bold and bluff; a good deal rude—uncouth, almost, in person and in manner; and most so when he was most dressed, or most affected the gentleman; for then he was out of his element. He was very ambitious—determined to get forward in the world,—particularly in the line of politics; but his ambition was not of a kind to elevate him, as it led him to seek the complacency and patronage of the baser sort. No doubt his social tastes also, found their gratification, more or less, in the society of such; for men's tastes generally harmonize with their ambition.

"I do not mean to make the impression that he had *no* nice feelings, or was in no degree a gentleman; for I suppose there is almost no person in the world who has not *some* delicate perceptions, and some respect for propriety and decency; but coarseness was his predominating quality.

"Still, there was a certain rude effect, of character and manner, that made him rather amusing and striking. He was like a coarsely done painting, or a fresco, in that respect. If you heard a loud laugh from a group of men in the street, you might guess it was occasioned by some speech of Stonhill's; or if you saw a group of ladies at an evening party, looking a little surprised, or biting their lips behind their fans, you might conclude that he was there. He seldom offended *grossly*, in polite or grave companies, (he did in others) against propriety in speech, and if he offended slightly, the boldness

with which he did it almost caused him to be forgiven. Boldness in him received that kind of indulgence, which frankness does in others. "It is just like Stonhill," would people say of some free speech, or act, of his, and that passed for his apology.

"In short, he was a *character*; and you know that, when an individual is regarded as a character, that is, as a person noted for somewhat that is original, eccentric, odd, or extravagant, things will be tolerated in him which would not be pardonable in others. You may have met with instances of this in our sex.

"It never entered the minds of Grace's parents that she could be interested in Stonhill, or he in her; though they were in the way of seeing each other almost daily. They did not conceive it possible, indeed, did not so much as once think of it at all, that she, the delicate and gentle creature that she was, *could*, by any freak of fancy, regard so rude a character as his with complacency. That was an unsafe presumption. The history of such cases did not justify it. Thousands of facts should have taught them better.

"And then they did a very imprudent thing. Grace had a standing invitation to visit a family in L——; the father of which was a classmate and old friend of Dr. Chetwood's. Having daughters near Grace's age, he had expressed the wish that they might exchange visits. It happened that Stonhill was going a journey that would take him through L——, to some place beyond, and it was proposed that Grace should go and return in the

same conveyance, with him for her protector. It was a long day's ride by stage-coach.

"Stonhill felt flattered by the trust; he was proud of it, and did his best to be gallant.

"Arriving at L—— just at evening, he delivered his precious charge at the door of her friend's house. As he must stop for the night at a hotel, they invited him to pass the evening with them; thinking it their duty to be polite to him for Grace's and her parents' sakes, while *she* construed these civilities into a direct expression of their respect for him personally, and on his own account. And on his return homeward, again, from the place beyond, where he went, they were polite to him, detaining him a day (very willingly on his part) for the sake of a party they were giving Grace; to which they invited him.

"What wonder if the two were well nigh in love by the time they reached home? They had been thrown into just the circumstances to favor such a result—traveling; protection; incident; an evening party, with the fascinating effect of brilliant lights, gayeties, and music; their mutual sympathy as strangers there; topics enough to talk about.

"A courtship so commenced, went on, and ended in marriage. What else was to be expected? The parents did what they could to arrest it; but, finding dissuasion unavailing, gave over and concluded to make the best of it, by making now the most they could of the intended son-in-law. Acquaintances were astonished; friends were indignant.

"Still, Stonhill, every one acknowledged, had *capacity* enough (if that were all) to be a respectable, if not a distinguished man, even; and as for his rusticities and rough points, it was hoped (against hope) that he would lose these through the refining influence of his new connections, and particularly through that of his amiable wife. Many a bride's friends, and many a bride, have trusted so. But what can the young wife do, with all her winning gentleness, to change the husband who is what he is by nature and by habit—born so, and so educated? As well might marble polish porphyry. It is the softer of two substances that yields to the attrition.

"It would give you no pleasure to know minutely the history of poor Grace's married life.

"What disgusts she could not but feel at the general grossness of his appetites and habits; what mortifications she suffered for his manners and associates, often; how much she was hurt by his want of delicacy, and want of sympathy, towards herself; what uneasiness she felt on their children's account—these she kept to herself.

"She put away from her the startling apprehension, not long after they were married, that he was not *honest*! *Her husband wanting in integrity?* It could not be—*must* not be! She reproached herself for the thought.

"The occasion of that painful apprehension passed away, and she was in a measure relieved. But again, under other circumstances, it was revived, and was confirmed! Her knowledge of his trusts and papers, and his own intimations to her, (so little does a corrupt mind understand a virtuous one) made it too palpable to be

doubted. How her heart sunk at the discovery! For her husband's reputation—for her own—for her children's, she felt it as a withering blight.

"*That* secret, too, she locked up in her own breast,—though not concealing her distress from him. The world, as yet, knew it not.

"She shed many tears over this and her other griefs in secret. In the presence of others, in his presence generally, she maintained the placid, sweet manner that naturally belonged to her. She received and entertained his guests cheerfully, even the coarsest of them. They were not always refined.

"He was not very devoted to his profession, nor very successful in it. He succeeded better in politics; and with such trusts and emoluments as he obtained from this source, together with some agencies of moneyed institutions, he appeared to be a thriving man. Political advancement (by whosoever suffrages), and the appearance of being rich (by whatever means) were the great aim of his ambition.

"But at length came the dreadful blow; at the thought of which she had long been quaking, and the fear of which, with him, had been the cause of many a fit of mysterious abstraction, and irritable feeling. He was detected as a defaulter, to say no worse, and found it necessary to abscond. He is still in parts unknown.

"She died before a twelve-month came round, broken-hearted; bequeathing her three children to her parents."

"What a release!" said Rachel, lifting her hands.

"Yes, what a release!" responded Mrs. Welwood,—

"if, as we have the best reason for believing, she was taken to that rest that remaineth for the people of God. She made a public profession of religion a year after she was married; and if the sweetest example of faith, love, patience, constancy, and submission, proves the sincerity of such a profession, hers was sincere.

"Poor Grace! She was a blighted flower," continued Mrs. Welwood, after a pause. "And what a cruelty it was, in unthinking, if not unfeeling people, and among them some of her own near relations, to remind her, in her trouble, that she ought never to have married him,—that she was warned and counselled not to do it, but she *would* have him."

"They might have spared her that," said Rachel.

"He who does not break the bruised reed *would* have spared her," Mrs. Welwood replied. "No doubt she did wrong in not consulting her parents before she allowed herself to become interested in Stonhill, certainly before she confessed that interest to him; still, however culpable she might have been, her punishment came soon enough, and was heavy enough, without the reproach of friends. They might have excused her, too, on the ground that she was young and inexperienced at the time of her engagement; and in consideration, also, of the imprudence of her parents in throwing her so much in the way of his attentions.

"There are two things," Mrs. Welwood proceeded to remark, "one of which is more trying to a woman's self-respect, and to her temper, and her patience, and the other more mischievous to her nervous system and

her health, than any other which she suffers as the wife of such a man; though one or both of them may be less obvious to the world.

"The first is, the *chill-and-fever* character of his love. I do not doubt that Stonhill loved his wife. I believe that he felt a great deal of complacency in her, and was proud of her, from first to last. His affection for her was not fickle, but *fitful*, capricious,—constant in the long run, but fickle with the hour. At one time he caressed and petted her; at another he would be cold and neglectful, perhaps petulant and bluff. And what aggravated these caprices was, that he expected her to accommodate herself to them,—to bear his neglects without feeling, and return his caresses without reserve. Now, to a woman who loves consistency, and respects herself, such alternations are more trying, I verily believe, than even a settled alienation would be. And yet such a husband often passes, in the world's superficial eye, for a pattern of conjugal affection.

"The other thing is this:—The undermining force of a *hidden* sorrow. Mrs. Stonhill—and it is the same in a thousand like cases,—while she was inwardly the prey of grief, thought it her duty as a wife, and as a well-bred and christian woman, to maintain a cheerful exterior in the presence of others. It was only when she was alone that her fortitude gave way in tears. Even for these she chid herself. This constrained manner was sometimes maintained with difficulty in the presence of lively visitors, prolonging their stay perhaps for weeks. It was often assumed with difficulty when some caller came in

unseasonably and unexpectedly. It was maintained as habitually as it could be for her children's sake—and for her husband's. Towards him she religiously regarded an unrepining, unreproachful manner as a duty from which she was not released by what was culpable in him.

"But, a shut-up sorrow—a concealed heart-ache—wears faster and more fatally upon the system than an open one. It needs the natural relief of words and tears. I think it was for this that tears were given,—especially to women. Words and tears bring relief, and relief is a renewal of strength; while, under a pent-up affliction, the nerves grow restless; sleep, that might be balmy upon a moistened pillow, gives way to tossings; the appetite is gone, and flesh and heart fail."

Rachel heard this account with no other comment than the few words which we have quoted; but she heard it with concern. Stonhill was, indeed, not Woodson. Woodson was a better man, by great odds, in her belief, than Stonhill ever was. And yet there were some resemblances between them which, she could not help feeling, were admonitory.

## CHAPTER XXII.

### THE DECISION.

THE sun had set when Rachel left Mrs. Welwood's. As she went down the hill, and through the little valley, homewards, in the growing twilight, with her thoughts full of the case of Grace Chetwood, she felt that her mind was made up as to the answer she must give Woodson.

After tea, therefore, she commenced sounding her grandparents on the subject, with a view to reconcile them to her decision, in case she found it necessary.

"Grandfather, will you and grandmother *very much* regret it, if I refuse Mr. Woodson?"

"We? No, child."

"Then I shall write him before I sleep."

"What makes you ask such a question?"

"Because I thought it was your wish, rather, that I should have him."

"No, indeed,—against your inclination, never. I should hope you would think our consent worth asking, and proper to be asked, to your marrying him, or any other; but you shall never want our consent to your *not* marrying."

"You are very kind, grandpa'. But do you think I am unwise not to have him?"

"Why, as to that, Woodson is a *capable* man; that is certain. And I think he has qualities that ought to make him a good husband; and to a strong, resolute woman, of no great sensibility, I think he would. But for *you*, Rachel,—I do not know. You are a house-plant that won't bear rough and chilly weather; you want gentleness and sheltering. And he might be all that to you—possibly. But, what I should most fear is, the drift of his ambition, leading him so much into companies that are not the most desirable. However, perhaps I make too much of that. A young man of his profession naturally wishes to be acquainted with everybody, for his profession's sake."

"And what is your mind on the subject, grandma'?"

"Indeed, dear, I hardly know. I think people generally would say the offer was an eligible one, decidedly; and on some accounts I should say so, too; and it may be on the whole. But I have no decided mind about it either way. What you prefer, I shall. I would not have you do violence to your own judgment, or inclination, in any case,—if you *never* marry. And in case you never do, I do not doubt that providence will raise up friends for you, and not leave you solitary."

This last remark, often made, was meant to be consoling; but it always had the contrary effect. To speak of the *social* aspects of the future, as to her, was like cutting a path for her through a forest, where for long miles before, and long miles behind, she saw herself the

only traveller. "Providence will raise up friends to you, as providence has already." "Ay, in individual instances it may; but it will never install me in general society."

Exchanging with her grandparents an affectionate good-night,—even more than ordinarily affectionate—she went to her room; and taking from her table-drawer a neat, unique portfolio, of her own manufacture, she seated herself to write. "Yes," she said to herself, resting her forehead upon her hand, "I would rather write than *tell* him here; it would be less embarrassing."

But in what terms to express herself? This was now the question; and here her natural simplicity appeared to forsake her. It seemed that an *affirmative*, if *that* had been the answer about to be given, would have been quite easy. A few direct, unstudied, grateful words would have sufficed for it. But this unpleasant *negative* calls for very special wording. "It must be explicit, frank, concise, respectful. And in a neat hand. It must be delicate. I would not in the least degree offend, unnecessarily, a disappointed love. It were ungenerous and wrong. And besides, I *should* like to retain his friendship, his esteem,—as he will mine. He is worthy of any one's esteem, and more especially of mine."

"That Stonhill—Woodson is not like *him*, certainly. I should be mortified to name the two together."

And here Rachel fell to drawing comparisons between the two, so much in Woodson's favor, that she became absolutely his panegyrist with herself, and almost fell in

love with him, absolutely, in the strong contrasted light in which her indignation on the one hand, and her generosity, or perhaps her gratitude or self-love (as being the object of his partiality) on the other, placed him.

You are right, Rachel, in your comparative estimate of the men: Woodson *is* a better man than Stonhill, by a long remove, in heart, mind, and manners. And yet you cannot help seeing *some* resemblances which give energy to the decision you have come to—which confirm you in your conviction that you cannot be his wife. You may be called a fool for it; many another may envy you the offer; you yourself may live to regret it; yet, with Grace Chetwood in your thought, you feel now, (however you may have felt heretofore) that you *cannot* marry Forrest Woodson!

“Another might be happy with him, with a nature accommodated to his, as I hope another will; and he with her,—though I, too probably, could not, as I am constituted.” Such was the drift of Rachel’s thoughts. “So might any two like-minded and good-tempered people be happy in each other.” It seemed to her that the happiness of married life, *as such*, depended more on what the parties were to each other, than on what they were in themselves. “There is many a simple couple in the garb of rustics, far happier in each other than many another couple in silk and broadcloth.”

‘Why was not *she* a simple rustic?—so born, and left so by those who had the bringing of her up, that so she might have found in the low vale of life that happiness she was destined—*doomed*—not to find upon the

hill-top? Why had she tastes, natural and acquired, that were never to be gratified? affinities that must never be matched? Why was she endowed with a soul fitted for the intercourse of the intellectual and refined, and yet, by and from her birth, cast out of such society—cast *down* from it; disowned by her own sex, and, as an object of attraction to the other, thrown only in the eye of the stupid and the gross? Do but look at the character of Rachel Kell’s suitors—the small fry and ill fry that she is vexed withal! One, inane; another, niggardly; a third, intemperate; the fourth,’ —. ‘Excuse her, Mr. Woodson, that she names you with the others; she has no unseemly epithet for you. She refuses you with tears,—almost with self-reproof. Yet—she would marry you with trembling. There are cases where tears wait on either alternative; and this is one. You were not made for her; nor she for you.

‘And *why* is it that only such as these—the vapid and the rude—solicit her to marry them? And why do these *presume* to do so?—so much their superior since she is, in intellect and sentiment. It is because, compounding her intrinsic worth with the prejudice of her birth, they presume to think that the result places her on their level, and within their reach; or, indeed, below their level, and within their *grace* and *condescension*! If she were an orphan, (as she is), and *only* that, the world’s sympathy would be lavished on her; but being that and *more* than that, the world disowns her; and hence the cheapening estimate of her by the other sex.’

These are Rachel’s thoughts, not ours; or, at least

such is the *complexion* of her thoughts. It must be confessed that she is a little peevish—almost petulant, to-night. Can you wonder? There she sits, in her solitary chamber; her unsnuffed candle is burning down slowly to its socket; before her lies the sheet on which she is about to dismiss the last and *best* of her admirers; half questioning if she does right to do so; and making up her mind that, rejecting him, she takes celibacy as the alternative—the ultimate and final one; for a more eligible offer, if any, she cannot reasonably expect ever to receive, and a less eligible one she ought never to accept.

It is twelve o'clock, and the important letter is not written. She has no heart to do it now. The decision itself, however, which the letter is to communicate—that is settled and unalterable. She only wishes it was written, sealed, and gone.

She will never be Woodson's bride, then; nor anybody's bride, as she believes. It is not *that* thought, however, that causes her chagrin. It is not that she has made up her mind (as so many erroneously do) that a woman *must* be married—eligibly, if she may, but, at all events, married,—to be either respectable or happy. Such is not her idea. It is true, there are peculiar circumstances in her case to make marriage desirable. She needs it as a retreat and covert from unpleasant observation,—from a conspicuous (as well as unsocial) isolation,—from, not merely celibacy, but a celibacy likely to be imputed to a disreputable cause;—for these reasons, over and above such as are common

to human kind, marriage is, for her, desirable. She is sensible of this. Yet she is conscious of resources independently of that relation. All that is inviting and accessible in the broad domains of nature and of mind,—the raptures of the eye and of the ear, the wide range of thought and fancy, converse with books,—all such sources of enjoyment are open to her, no less than to others; and solitude itself, deep and ubiquitary as the atmosphere, though it be, is not without its pleasures for her, nursed in it, as she has been. It is to her a charmed and (in its way) peopled world, which, keen as her social instincts are, she would be almost loath to quit for the common haunts of men. It is not, therefore, the prospect of a single life, even a lonely life, particularly and mainly, that annoys her so to-night. It is her wounded pride of character. It is the mortification she feels to think that—not her mind and person—but discountenance of birth, the cradle her infancy was rocked in, subjects her to the advances of vacant and low-minded men, or at the best, coarse minded and coarse mannered men, and deflects from her the favorable regards of the gentle and refined. Over *this* aspect of her case, it is, that she sheds her bitterest tears. She has often felt chagrined by it, latterly, in connection with the attentions she has received from the other sex; but to-night especially it occasions her some paroxysms of almost passionate weeping; and, we fear, some murmuring against divine dispensations.

This excessive feeling subsided, at length, into calmness. An almost childish cheerfulness of heart suc-

ceeded ; and she believed that she should never vex herself to the same degree, on a like account, again.

She kneeled at her bedside, and whispered a prayer (in that habit she had been educated), and then betook herself to rest,—repeating mentally, in a moralizing mood, as she dropped asleep, some stanzas from “Old Damon’s Pastoral :”

“ Homely hearts do harbor quiet ;  
Little fear, and muckle solace ;  
States suspect their bed and diet ;  
Fear and craft do haunt the palace.

“ Little would I, little want I,  
Where the mind and store agreeeth ;  
Smallest comfort is not scanty ;  
Least he longs that little seeth.

“ Time hath been that I have longed,  
Foolish I to like of folly,  
To converse where honor thronged ;  
To my pleasures linked wholly.

“ Now I see, and seeing, sorrow  
That the day consum’d returns not :  
Who dare trust upon to-morrow,  
When nor time nor life sojourns not !”

## CHAPTER XXIII.

### THE PICNIC.

MONTHS have passed since the date of the occurrences mentioned in the last chapter,—bringing us from Autumn into June. It was on a delightful afternoon of that lovely month that Rachel took one of her accustomed rambles over the grounds in the rear of the house. She had a more than ordinary flow of spirits, for her feelings were in full sympathy with the beauties of the season. She proposed to make the Pond the limit of her excursion outwards ; but, taking a devious course, she strolled to the right or left as her humor dictated. A variety of little incidents by the way amused her, and added to her lightness of heart. A bird flew up from the ground before her, and, searching for its nest, she found it under a clump of sweet-ferns, and was obliged to scold Gazer to keep him from treading on it. Then a flock of sheep came bleating around her, asking for salt,—a favor they had not unfrequently received at her hand. Now she paused to examine a plant, or a flower, and now was arrested by some object in the distance.

Approaching the Pond, she heard voices ; and, getting nearer, she perceived a numerous party of the young

people of the place arranging a picnic among the trees on the farther side. Screened from observation by a bush, she stood awhile and contemplated the joyous scene. A rude temporary table, covered with a neat table damask, and embellished with vases of flowers, was receiving the contents of well filled baskets. Bonnets, and musical instruments, were suspended from the branches. Squads and couples were strolling here and there; others stood, or sat, conversing in groups. In short, it was a picnic. The Mathers, the Goodwins, the Lees, the Whitwells—almost all the young people of any pretensions to society, were there. Ann Skiddy, with her characteristic vivacity and smartness, was there. Jane Waldron was there—she and her fond, manly brothers. The Wentworths and Heywards, relatives of Rachel, were of the company. Woodson was there, assured and free in his manners, as he was wont to be. On his arm hung Emeline Burbank, to whom his attentions were understood to be, and evidently were, particular. That he had loved Rachel, that he would have married her, that he still esteemed her as an uncommonly intelligent and attractive young lady, say who would the contrary, were admissions which his bluff independence scorned to evade; but he had dropped her from the list of his visiting acquaintance. Rachel, as her eyes rested on him for a moment, in the assemblage before her, regarded him only with the sentiments of a well-wisher, both to him and to the lady who seemed likely to become his wife.

Her attention was more settled on another. It was a

young gentleman who, in the present company, was evidently a general favorite, as he was in every company, with either sex, and with old or young. The most intelligent were fond of conversing with him, while the least intelligent liked to listen. His voice, full and clear, was as flexible as a child's, almost; his form was worthy of the sculptor; his mien, simple and unconscious. Whether his face was handsome, it would hardly occur to you to ask; for you would be occupied rather with its variable and fine expression than with its features: and whether the qualities of his mind or the qualities of his heart had more to do with that expression, you might find it difficult to say: it was luminous with both. His portraiture may be sufficiently completed with the mention of an agreeable, expressive mouth; a complexion not too fair to be masculine, but glowing with health and early manhood; luxuriant dark-brown hair; and eyes that looked out, wakefully and blandly, from beneath a broad and high forehead. Such was the individual, in this picnic party, who so particularly engaged the attention of our observer from behind the bush. And this was William Geer.

And what, particularly, was William Geer to her? The same now that he always had been: nothing more. The generous sympathy, and just appreciation of her, which he had expressed in her behalf, as has been mentioned, years ago, he had since continued to express; not officiously, or ostentatiously, but incidentally and frankly, as occasions required, or justified it. He had always met her with an open, cheerful face, just as he

would meet any other young lady of his acquaintance; and though he never called on her in a social way merely, he never came to the house on business without conversing with her, or inquiring after her if she were out. He had, moreover, taken a kind interest in her mental improvement; for the most part indirectly, through Miss Raymond, suggesting a study, or an author, but sometimes directly, by putting an interesting periodical, or volume into her hands. There was that in his character which commanded *her* esteem, her admiration, as well that of others. There was that in his manner towards her that sustained her self-respect, (instead of wounding and depressing it) by making her feel that she was respected by him,—thus giving ease and freedom to her manner, and making the treasures of her mind available in conversation with him. And while she never supposed herself to have any other interest in his eyes than the mere benevolence of his heart originated, she on her part was conscious only of a feeling of gratitude, with, as she imagined, a kind of sacred *sisterly* esteem. Perhaps the natural pride of her heart was sometimes stirred in connection with her thoughts of him,—perhaps it was so at the moment of her contemplating him now, in the midst of the group across this little water; as if she would say, "He whom the best of you admire does not think himself degraded by speaking with, or for, Rachel Kell."

Rachel had stood but a few minutes behind her screen, and was about to retire, when she perceived that Gazer, who, like his mistress, was always excursioning and exploring, when they were a-field together, had made his way

round to the other side of the pond, and was very familiarly saluting Mr. Woodson as an old acquaintance; seeming to say, "I am glad to see you, Mr. Woodson,—hope you are very well,—it is long since we have had the pleasure of seeing you at our house,—my mistress is just across the water, in those bushes, there; please walk round and see her; and I will show you the way."

These pleasant salutations of Gazer's were lost upon the gentleman, and worse than that; he disowned the astonished dog's acquaintance with a kick, betraying some embarrassment, in spite of himself; in which Miss Burbank participated.

Rachel withdrew; and it is not to be denied that she returned homeward with less sunny feelings than she had come out with. As she drew near the house, she turned aside and sat down thoughtfully upon a grassy slope.

"This party," she said to herself, "has been proposed, discussed, talked of for days, or weeks, perhaps, arranged, and carried into execution, without my having so much as once heard it alluded to!—of so little note is Rachel Kell in the minds and memories of people. I do not envy them,—I *trust* not. It does not grieve me to see them happy; I cannot, as I am sure I ought not to, wish them less happy than they are. But the wish to be happy with them is natural and innocent, and why should I repress it?"

"These young people are my contemporaries, the people of my generation, with whom I began my being, and in the sight of whom, but not *with* and *among* whom,

I am to live and die. And this is the world in which Rebekah Raymond says it were a calamity to die young,—a calamity to *me*; because of the good I may do in it, the good I may enjoy over and above the ill. In her circumstances I might have her faith: it is hard having it in mine;—hard at times—hard now.”

In reflections of this nature Rachel sat, more or less absorbed, a long while. At times they were but vague and dreamy; at times deeply pensive, and distinctly sad; at times relieved by tears; once, and for a moment, they were pervaded by a tearless intensity of feeling, which merited, and received her self-rebuke. “It is wrong, I know it is,” she said, “and I must not give way to it: yet, if it were not sin to wish it, I could wish that these shadows of the evening that are gathering around me, might, for me, bring the darkness and oblivion of the grave! or that I had been ‘as infants which never saw light.’ Job wished as much; and was forgiven. “But,” she added, “the wish *is* sin; the thought is wicked and unnatural; and weak, as well wicked; and comes only in the hour of weakness and temptation. The Lord preserve me from it,—keep me from wicked murmuring, and cheer my heart with better and truer views! There *is* much to live for,—much for *me* to live for; and will be, so long as the sky is brilliant, and the earth green and beautiful, as they are to day, and while I have my dear, fond, faithful grandparents to cheer and care for.”

At this moment Gazer appeared before her, thrusting his honest, inquiring face into hers. “Yes, Gazer, we will go now, you thoughtful creature. It is time. Han-

nah’s tea will be waiting. But, Gazer, how *could* you do so unseasonable a thing as to thrust yourself, as you did, upon Mr. Woodson? He took it ill of you, I noticed; and our neighbor Emeline, I fear, will not easily forgive you.” Gazer dropped his tail and looked serious, as he always did when she reproved him, understanding that something was amiss, though not distinctly comprehending what. “You did it inadvertently, I presume,” she added, cheerfully, “and must be excused this time. But hereafter, remember that you and Mr. Woodson are not acquainted with each other.”

The dog, reassured by his mistress’s smile, trotted home before her. The quiet, cheerful welcome of her grandparents, who hoped she had enjoyed her walk, and their social mood at tea, as well as Hannah’s in the kitchen, dissipated any remains of shade that might have rested on her spirits; and her pillow found her recurring to the picnic, without unhappiness, as to a pleasant picture, or a pleasant dream. It was thus that her disciplined and better nature rose as it was wont, superior to the depressing influences of the hour.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

### THE GARDEN.

THE next morning she was out, soon after breakfast, at work in the garden; where the borders, and the shrubbery, and the matted vines that climbed and wanted on the arbor at the foot of the main alley, were regarded as her peculiar property and charge. She had her garden-trowel in her hand; a tidy apron was tied about her waist, while her sunny brown hair fell luxuriantly upon her shoulders from beneath her sun-bonnet, and her fine blond complexion, rivaling the pinks and roses that bloomed around her, showed the heightening, but unneeded effect, of air and exercise. "Gazer," said she, speaking to the dog, "how came you in the garden? Don't you know you are an intruder here, since you cannot keep your careless feet off my borders? You must go out."

"There are *two* intruders here," said a pleasant voice behind her; "I hope you will not send us both out."

It was William Geer; who had entered the little domain of flowers unperceived. He might have said, 'There are two *gazers* here;' for he thought he had never seen the beautiful and graceful girl so beautiful and graceful as she was at that moment.

Slightly startled by his presence, and turning round, her eyes met his with a kindling expression. Shaded by her bonnet, and by their own long lashes, they looked like fountains sparkling through a mist.

"No, Mr. Geer; I cannot call *you* an intruder. An intruder is supposed to be unwelcome; but I am quite glad to see you, and shall be happy if my unpretending garden contains anything to interest you."

"It must be my own fault if it doesn't, for it looks very inviting. You must spend some toilsome hours here."

"But not irksome ones."

"Nor uncompensated; since they evidently give you health, as well as pleasure."

They passed along the borders, admiring and commenting; which was a rare felicity to Rachel; for in William Geer she had a generous commender of her skill, and, what was better, an intelligent sympathizer with her in her love of flowers. Approaching the arbor, at the bottom of the garden, his attention was arrested by the luxuriance of the vines which covered it, entirely concealing the lattice-work frame.

"You allow these vines to go quite unpruned, I think."

"Yes, I leave them to their own wild way, pretty much; except when they encroach upon the entrance; then I have to clip or festoon them a little."

"Gazer!"

The dog had seated himself on one of the borders, upon some choice root of flowers, very likely, and appeared to be listening to the conversation.

"Gazer!" his mistress repeated with a significant look, and pointed to the gate. Gazer walked out of the garden, with rather an ill grace, *doggedly*, receiving a patting on the head from his friend Geer, as he rubbed past him.

"He is loth to leave good company," said Rachel. "But here is a worse nuisance than he,—this mischievous mole, that makes his under-ground way everywhere where he should not. How can I be rid of him?"

"Warn him out, as you do the other nuisance," was William's answer.

"That were as hopeful a way as any, I think," said Rachel. "It is of no use to dig over, or tread down, his tunnel; for he constantly renews it; and it is in vain to watch, in the hope of detecting and unearthing the creature; for his movements are always invisible, except in their effects."

"He is very tenacious of his right-of-way," said William, "which appears to be an universal one, provided he keeps below the surface, which is admitted to be man's."

"I wish," said Rachel, "his claim lay some inches deeper—below the reach of roots."

"It would, no doubt, be better for us surface-proprietors," replied Mr. Geer, "but such an arrangement he will never consent to, and so we have no way but either to put up with, or exterminate him. How the latter is to be done, I do not know; I have heard of various methods. One is, to make a pit-fall for him, (by sinking a glazed jar in his way,) as our first settlers did for wolves. I believe it rarely succeeds. As for watching and digging him out, I have heard it said that he

may be caught at his work at the very first dawn of the day; but if you were to try it, I think you would be more likely to catch a cold than to catch the mole."

"I shall not try it, I think, upon such a probability;—though I should less apprehend the cold-catching than the loss of my labor."

"You are an early riser, I believe, Rachel, and are not afraid of the morning air. What a splendid rose-bush this is! It must be a favorite one, I think, for it surpasses all the others that I see in luxuriance."

"It should be so, for the giver's sake. Perhaps you do not recognize it."

"I recognize a rose-bush, nothing more,—unless it be the skill of the cultivator."

"Do you not remember bringing me a little rose-bush on a bright May morning, when I was a child, almost? 'It was a superfluous one,' you said, 'which you took up from your mother's garden,' and with my own hands, and little skill, I set it here, and watered it a month, with great care."

Mr. Geer had forgotten the circumstance. He was glad to see the rose-bush so well repaying her care; and the more so, if, as she said, she had cherished it for the giver's sake. It was a pleasure to him to find such a memento, in such a place, of his own young days.

The rose-tree was full of buds and blossoms. Rachel gathered some of the finest of them, adding a variety of other flowers, and desired him to present them to his mother; which he, of course, consented to do, with pleasure. He declined her invitation to go in and see

her grandmother, for want of time. Having some business in that neighborhood, he said, he had taken the opportunity to bring her a book, which he had been reading himself, and presumed it would interest her; and, putting it into her hand, he bid her good-morning.

William Geer had certainly no thought of marrying Rachel. Still less, if possible, had she such a thought. With that idea in her head, she could not have been as frank and simple in his presence, as she always was.

And yet William Geer was conscious of an interest in her, of some sort, which, as often as he saw her, made him willing to see her again. He supposed that interest to be a benevolent sympathy merely. "What a pity," he often said to himself, "that one so lovely in herself should bear the reproach of others! So worthy of the social world, and yet so segregated from it! So intelligent, amiable, innocent, and fair, yet so disowned and neglected! So disowned and neglected, and yet so intelligent, amiable, and fair!" Cause enough for sympathy!

*Sympathy*, where a young lady is the object of it, is a dangerous word for a young man, as Byron says *Friendship* is for a young lady: "It is *love*, full fledged, and only waiting for a fair day to fly." Here, indeed, in the case of these two young people, is sympathy on the one hand, and a grateful, confiding friendship on the other; but the "fair day," when these amiable sentiments will take wing together, for aught that appears to observers, for aught that the subjects of them dream, shows no sign of coming.

It may have crossed the mind of William more than once,—perhaps it did this morning,—that he *could* marry her, but for that stigma of her birth; though there were other things growing out of that, which would make him hesitate. He feared the effect which that early chagrin might have, or might have had already, progressively and permanently, on her spirits and temper. For it must require, he thought, (and he reasoned justly,) an uncommon measure of good sense and native amiableness of temper, not to suffer, in a greater or less degree, the morbid effects of a prejudice which, from infancy onwards, touches, as with a blight, one's social relations and affections. Moreover, she was not pious,—was not a Christian, in William Geer's evangelical, spiritual, and, as he trusted, in his own case, *experimental* sense of the term; and he felt that religious principle and feeling were a great requisite in a connection so intimate, responsible, and indissoluble, as that of marriage.

## CHAPTER XXV.

### AN AFFECTING PROVIDENCE.

THE week had not passed when it became generally known that one of the young ladies of the late party at the Pond, Jane Waldron, was dangerously ill. A cold taken at that time had settled into a fever. She was not seen at Church on Sunday; the family pew was nearly empty; many anxious inquiries were made. Before another Sabbath, her friends and neighbors were summoned to her funeral. Regret and mourning were universal. An only daughter, the cherished one of her parents, fondly loved by her three brothers, a favorite with all, she had been snatched away at the blooming age of eighteen.

Young men bore her to her burial. Young men lowered the coffin down, with manly tears, that dropped upon it as they did so. Young men filled up the grave, placed the temporary stones, and smoothed and turfed it over;—for to leave such offices wholly to the sexton seemed to the Greencliff people, as to their primitive New England fathers, to be but cold and mercenary, and disrespectful to the dead. Almost the entire population of the place was present; and though the group that stood in weeds

at the head of the grave was not numerous, the mourners, as has been mentioned, were many. The youth, especially,—the mates of the deceased—these you might have contemplated in all the attitudes which grief knows on such occasions,—pressing to the grave's mouth, and bending over it, (especially the females,) standing retired from it, with averted face, or leaning thoughtfully, or with convulsive sobs, upon some neighboring head-stone.

The words of good Mr. Shepherd, at the grave, were few and impressive. "If only the aged and the feeble died," he said, "then the young and vigorous might presume upon life; or if it were only the unbeloved—the isolated and the friendless—the unneeded on the earth—those whose death would shroud no family with gloom, make no fond acquaintance sad, and whose bier would draw no weeping train after it,—then the young and blooming, and tenderly related, and much beloved and needed, might boast themselves of to-morrow. But, my friends, it is not any of these things, nor all of them combined, that can justify such a presumption. The fairest and most beloved, those who are intrenched in the midst of many friends, and entwined with many hearts—they, as others, stand in the great field of our common humanity, and are exposed alike to the indiscriminating scythe of death; they, too, like the flower to which the scripture compares their beauty and their fate, are cut down often, and withered in an hour.

"Of this we are made too painfully sensible to-day; and by such an instance we are admonished to make religion our first and great concern. And you especially,

my young friends, who were the companions of the deceased, how emphatically does this providence speak to you! What one member of your youthful circle was more blooming or more beloved, or had fairer prospects of either a long or a happy life, than she whom we now consign to the narrow house. Let not this solemn dispensation be unheeded, or soon forgotten. It was her own expressed wish and prayer that it might not be."

If the surviving intimates of the deceased suffered a more poignant natural grief, there was no one on whom the scene had a more *religious* effect than on Rachel Kell. In the presence of it the fashion of this world seemed to her to have passed away. Things which before had, in her apprehension, been supremely desirable, were now but shadows and illusions; and the life which, even a few days before, she had been almost willing to resign, was now felt to be of infinite value, with reference to eternity. "No," said she, repeating mentally the venerable pastor's words, as she walked home, "it is not the isolated and friendless—the unneeded on the earth, those whose death would make no fond acquaintance sad, and draw no weepers to the grave,—such as I have felt myself to be, so repiningly and proudly—it is not such that are soonest and surest to die; but they, not less than those of the most enviable earthly condition, are *privileged to live*, and to live for the immeasurable interests of eternity and heaven; and, compared with *that* privilege—*that* use and opportunity of life,—how trivial are those disparities of condition which affect us only in the present world!"

Thus was she occupied, as she had never been before, in like degree, with the great matter of her salvation. "What must I do to be saved?" In the retirement of her chamber, in her walks, at her work,—everywhere, this was now the subject of her solemn thought. She was amazed that she had so long neglected, to the degree she had, so momentous a concern. She prayed much, and read her bible, not, as she believed, in the spirit of the pharisee, but diligently, to find the narrow way.

In this state of mind she went to her constant and judicious friend, Rebekah Raymond, with the same simplicity and confidence as on other occasions; and it need not be said how tenderly she was received by her, and by Mrs. Raymond also, and what affectionate, but discreet and faithful counsels she received from them. She had always been a subject of their prayers; there was special fervency in their intercessions for her now.

Her readings with Mrs. Welwood had never been relinquished, though they had ceased to be as frequent and systematic as they were at the beginning: they were now of special interest to her; for now the character of what was read, with the experienced and gentle wisdom, and almost more than maternal tenderness, of Mrs. Welwood, was eminently and gratefully adapted to an awakened and inquiring mind.

She went to see her pastor. He with all fidelity and plainness, set before her, her sinfulness by nature, and the necessity, to her, as to all, of repentance, faith, and newness of heart and life. His years, his office, the

clearness of his instructions, his venerable character and kind manner, made all he said impressive to her, but left her rather distressed than comforted; for Rachel, as most others in her circumstances are fain to do, looked to find some relief for the stricken conscience, some balm for the wounded spirit, in the counsellors she applied to, whereas the good man cut her off from all human reliances whatsoever. "We can counsel and instruct you, if need be, Rachel; we can pray for you; but we cannot *save* you. You must go to Jesus for that,—to him alone."

So, in effect, said her other christian friends to her.

Returning home from Mr. Shepherd's, she retired to the arbor at the bottom of the garden. It was a lovely afternoon. All around her was beautiful and tranquil. But herself she felt to be a sad and sinful creature. The reader may not think thus of her. In his view, if he be ignorant of his *own* heart, she may be too amiable to need any essential moral change, too blameless to need repentance and forgiveness. She, however, did not judge so of herself. She knew that she had been undutiful to her heavenly Father; that she had never given him her heart; that she had repined, and sometimes bitterly and presumptuously, at his dispensations. She knew that she had been ungrateful to her Saviour,—treating him, his cause, and his compassionate love for her, with a neglect which it ought to cover her with shame to think of. And however she might wish to think better of herself, it was a matter of distinct consciousness with her, that hers was indeed the same fallen nature as that of all

the race, and needed the same divine renewing; and that so she was by nature a child of wrath even as others.

"I must go, then," she said, "to Jesus. I have no resource but him. None whatever. There is no other *help*, no other *way*. He is the way, the truth, and the life; and there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved. Need I any other? Why should I? He is the Friend of sinners; and surely he must be their all-sufficient friend. What love, or willingness, or power, can exceed his?"

"And something tells me I shall find him. *He* tells me so: 'Seek, and you shall find.' How express and encouraging! And so are *all* his invitations, and all his kind words and ways with us. True, I *have* often sought him professedly; but how? Alas! with unbelief, with reserves, with ugly pride, with almost all that is not right. What wonder if I failed? But I will pray him for a better mind."

Thus she sat musing and reflecting; and while she did so, the conditions which the Saviour prescribes to those who would be his disciples, though she had deemed them hard and difficult, now appeared to be entirely simple, reasonable, and desirable, and the only conceivable ones that were so. Indeed, no other terms were practicable. For example, 'Whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.' This may sound like a very exacting, sweeping demand; yet, when we consider the objects between which our election is to be made,—so opposite to each

other,—it is plain that a divided choice is impossible. Nothing less than an entire and absolute adoption of the one, and rejection of the other, is either-admissible or conceivable in the nature of things; and our Saviour, in the words which we have quoted, seems rather to apprise us of a fact, than to impose a condition.

We do not mean to exhibit Rachel as thinking in the manner of a philosopher, or of a commentator. Quite otherwise. She was in that safer and more amiable frame of mind which our Saviour describes when he says, 'Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein.' She was intelligent, but docile and simple, in her views and feelings.

We shall not intrude upon her farther, in this sacred hour, where, curtained in with green leaves, she felt that she was alone with God. Her bible lay upon the seat by her, open at the most striking of the penitential Psalms, the fifty-first, as she had left it in the morning. What prayers she uttered, and with what sincerity and earnestness; what resolves she made, and in whose strength, her future life will show.

If there were still tears upon her face when she came from her retirement, there was also a deep serenity in her look and manner. She lingered in the garden. That blooming enclosure, the scene of so many of her hours, and of so many of her varied thoughts and feelings, and the wider world around it, that had so often charmed her, had never looked so beautiful, so glorious, as now; for now, not the smile and glory of summer and

a summer sun-set only were upon it, but it was radiant with the smile and glory of the Creator.

"Thou that has given me eyes to see,  
And love this scene so fair,  
Give me a heart to find out thee,  
And read thee everywhere."

## CHAPTER XXVI.

### A PROFESSION OF RELIGION.

RACHEL felt that she had indeed found the Saviour, and was accepted of him ; and that she was his by a delightful and indissoluble bond,—his wholly, freely, and forever.

To her grandparents, who had been anxiously and prayerfully observant of her mental state, though they had conversed but little with her respecting it, this happy change was an inexpressible relief. The prayers of many years were answered. They could now leave the world, as ere long they must, without feeling that they left her alone and unprotected in it. He who said, "I will not leave you *orphans*," (as the marginal reading of their old quarto bible was), would not leave *her* thus. His protecting power, and guiding wisdom, and unwearied love, would never fail her ; his followers would be her kindred ; her companions and friends would be the excellent of the earth.

After suitable delay, for self-examination, and for the satisfaction of her pastor, and others of the church who might choose to converse with her respecting her religious state, she proposed to make a public profession of her

faith ; and was examined and propounded after the customary form.

It more often happens, in the reception of new members into the church, that more than one, and in some cases many, come forward together ; and this relieves them—the young and diffident, especially—from such embarrassment as they might otherwise suffer, more or less, from so conspicuous a movement. But it was so ordered, providentially, that no one came forward at the same time with Rachel. And this—it struck more than one observer—was in keeping with her previous isolated life. She seemed like one coming alone from her lone world into the bosom of the family of Christ,—where the welcome of sincere and sympathising hearts awaited her.

Being notified, therefore, from the pulpit, at the conclusion of the morning sermon, after the manner of the New England Churches of her order, she stepped out into the main aisle, and stood before the minister. Her manner was collected and natural ; her dress, as became the place and her, was noticeable only for its simplicity. All eyes were of course fixed upon her ; for no one, especially no young person, in the solemn circumstances in which she was at the moment, is ever regarded with indifference or disrespect in a New England congregation, and Rachel Kell was not likely to be an exception to that general fact.

The few brief articles which formed the summary of the *faith* of the church being read, with the usual question, "Do you thus believe?" the minister proceeded

to read the *covenant*; which was first with God, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and then, mutually, with the church. She did not require to be baptized, having received that ordinance in her infancy, on the faith and presentation of her adopting grand-parents. When the venerable pastor came to the church's part of the covenant—its pledge to its new member, (at the reading of which the members rise, and which forms the conclusion of the ceremony), "We then affectionately receive you as a member of the visible church of Christ; we welcome you to our christian fellowship; and on our part engage," &c.—it was evident that the welcome thus given, the pledge of fraternal love and care thus signified, and the invocation of the divine blessing, guidance, and protection for her in this world, and endless blessedness in the next, were not regarded as merely customary words.

The house was full, and there was a more than usual solemnity on many faces, particularly among the young. The fact was, that the late affecting death of Jane Waldron had impressed them at the time; the few weeks that had since elapsed had not effaced that impression; and now to see such an one as Rachel, whose decisive religious impressions they understood to be traceable to that mournful providence, coming forward with such sweet humility and heavenly hope, to unite herself to the people of God, served to deepen and develop those convictions and emotions of which they had thus, all along, been secretly the subjects. However they might have regarded her before, they could not help now looking

upon her as one privileged and honored beyond themselves,—an outcast yesterday, to-day a fellow-citizen with the saints, and of the household of God.

There were hands waiting, at the conclusion of the services, to clasp Rachel's, in the aisles and about the door, in token of christian love and fellowship; so that her grand-parents had to wait some time for her, before she was at liberty to enter the carriage, and go home.

The religious convictions and emotions which we have mentioned as existing in many young bosoms, and in some older ones also, to-day, were not transient, as the event proved; but, through divine grace, were deepened into penitence and piety; and the subjects of them were soon coming forward, not singly and alone, like Rachel, but in companies, and of both sexes, to profess the same faith in Christ, and be enrolled among his members. And from these, as well as from older members, Rachel received very endearing proofs of affection and esteem. Often, with one and another, she took sweet counsel as they walked to or from the house of God in company. Such as were "mothers in Israel," especially, took great pleasure in conversing with her, and in promoting her happiness and progress as a christian;—so that she said to Mrs. Welwood, "I have lived to verify the truth of what you once said to me; but which, at the time, I heard with the incredulity of him who said, 'Behold, if the Lord should make windows in heaven, might this thing be?' You said there was a remedy for all human ills, and that it was found in Christ; and when I asked, wishfully, as I remember, but distrustfully, and half

wondering at you, whether it could give friends and kindred to the outcast and neglected, and society to the lonely? 'Yes, you answered, *yes*, emphatically; nothing is so prolific of affinities and friendships as the religion of the Saviour;' and you quoted his own words to that effect;—that those who leave all for 'him' shall receive an hundred fold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers,'—and you are one to me, dear Mrs. Welwood,—'and in the world to come, eternal life.'—Oh, the thought of that! Eternal life with Christ, and with all who love him here! That thought is indeed enough to content us under all the ills we suffer here, if it do not in every sense remedy or remove them."

## CHAPTER XXVII.

### FRAGMENTS OF COLLOQUIES.

THERE is, at the Pond, a small platform of rock, extending two or three yards into the water, and rising a few feet above it. A hemlock spreads its arms over it, for a shade. It is a favorite seat of Rachel's. Scores of times, since her young feet were first permitted to carry her so far, it has been the terminus and resting-place of her excursions. It needs no artificial seat, the form of the rock itself furnishing that accommodation.

On this little promontory Rachel Kell and William Geer have seated themselves. What relations subsist between them, will be gathered from the fragment of conversation which we here give, in the most strictly dialogistic form we can.

*He.* What a perfect solitude this little lake is!

*She.* And for that I have always loved it.

*He.* You are fond of solitary places?

*She.* I suppose that every one is, more or less; for such places are a part of the poetry of nature, and no one can, I think, be wholly insensible to their poetic effect. But I have loved this little lake, or lakelet, as an emblem of myself. So, at least, I used to regard it, when

I was a child. As I stood still and looked into it, or walked along its margin, and saw no human image in it but my own, I said, 'It is a lone thing, like me.'

*He.* But it is not such an emblem of you now, Rachel.

*She.* Oh no, indeed.

*He.* For now there are *two* forms reflected from it. And whatever affects either of them,—every breath of wind, every ripple, every passing shadow,—affects them both alike; so that it is still an emblem, or mirror rather, is it not?

*She.* Of our union.

*He.* And the perfect oneness of our interests and sympathies.

*She.* The consciousness of which is so delightful.

*He.* But, Rachel, when you consented to this union, I seemed to observe somewhat in your manner as if some thought disquieted you in that act. Are our relations now such that I may ask what it was? Excuse me if delicacy should forbid such a question; but if not, tell me frankly if the uneasiness you suffered, and do still, perhaps, be of a nature such that I can relieve it. It may, however, have been my own fancy, only.

*She.* Did you doubt the sincerity of my love for you?

*He.* How could I?—when your words and truthful nature assured me to the contrary.

*She.* Did you think I questioned the sincerity of yours?

*He.* You could not doubt my love. It needed no extravagant speeches (such as those who deal in gallant-

ries employ) to assure you of it. You knew I loved you, for I asked you to be mine. You know it now; and if I say a thousand times, as probably I shall, and a thousand more, 'Dear Rachel;' 'I love you, Rachel;' it will not be because you need to be more assured of it than you are, but because it is a happiness to me to tell you so.

*She.* And a happiness to me to hear. No, Mr. Geer, it was nothing of all this, that troubled me. I must tell you what it was, since you have requested it.

*He.* No, no, Rachel; do not utter a word of what I see you would prefer not to disclose; but pardon me for making the inquiry.

*She.* Oh, William Geer, how impossible it is for my poor weak heart to maintain any reserve with you! I would not have spoken of this spontaneously, now; though perhaps I ought, in frankness, to have done so, once for all, at the time.

It was a feeling that came over me, and does still at times, of self-reproach almost, for consenting to marry you. It was for your sake that I felt so. It seemed ungenerous and selfish in me.

*He.* For *my* sake, love? Why, did you not make me happy—too happy—in so doing?

*She.* For your sake, Mr. Geer. How could I hesitate on my own account? I consented to be yours with no misgivings, no reserves, of a personal nature,—I did it with a depth and fervor of affection you can never know.

*He.* Unless my own heart teach me.

*She.* If it teach you but the half of the love a woman's heart is capable of, I shall be satisfied. I did it with this

mental comment on my doing so. 'So high as William Geer stands in the world's esteem, so worthy of it as he is, and with all my own personal obligations to him, besides, how can I consent that he should suffer abatement in that esteem, on my account! Ought I, can I do so, consistently with magnanimity and duty?'

*He.* Oh, *that* was the trouble, was it? [*With grave surprise.*]

*She.* That was, and is, the "somewhat" which you read, you tell me, in my manner.

*He.* Why, I thought the great world had thought better of its disfavor and neglect of you, of late, and agreed to own and love you; and having done so, it will act absurdly to discard me for your sake. If it do, however, you shall be my loving world in its place.

But, Rachel, [*letting fall her hand from his*] what if I should suffer in my *own* esteem for marrying such an one as you! Would not that be worse?

*She.* Oh, you can tease one, I see, by your eyes, if the humor takes you. Well, if you were anybody but your own magnanimous self, you would, I presume; for many a husband does suffer in his own esteem for having mated himself below his level in the eye of the world; and reminds the wife of the disparity. But I know *you* could never do it.

*He.* But there's another fear: what if I should sink in *your* eyes on that same account! For many a wife thinks the less of her husband for his having married *her*.

*She.* Why, you almost *do*, indeed; at least, I wonder at you!

*He.* Well, now, my very scrupulous, very disinterested, very frank, and very dear Rachel Kell, here is the upshot of the matter. I have your *promise* for it, that you are to be my loving wife; and I have no thought of releasing you,—not the least. I shall be very inexorable on that head—*unless*, you should make up your mind to tell me you cannot love me, after all. And *that* I do not anticipate. Do you?

But I must tell you what I *am* apprehensive of. It is that the world will *envy* me one of the loveliest and best of wives the world affords. But I shall run the risk of that; and you shall incur it with me.

*She.* Oh, with all my heart,—to share anything with you! And certainly I *ought*, if I am myself to be the occasion of the hazard. How like children lovers are wont to talk!

*He.* But there is truth, and sense, and soul, in what *we* talk, is there not?

*She.* More than some listeners would give us credit for.

\* \* \* \* \*

A soft moonlight is shining through the window at which Rachel is sitting, and her lover is observing its effect upon her classic features, as she gazes out.

"'The moon walking in brightness!' That is a beautiful expression of Job's," said Rachel,—"*worthy of the beautiful object it describes. I love a moonlit scene. The sun's light is essential to extent and grandeur of view; but the night-scene is so much softer and richer in its lights and shades! Of all pictures, I love the landscape best, and the night-scene better than the day.*"

"So do I," responded Mr. Geer; "I think the night-scene the finer of the two, where the range is limited, and better engraved than painted, if finely done;" and he added, mentally, while she still looked out upon the vision which delighted her, "How I wish I could transfer that fine ethereal face of yours, in just the light I see it now—so tranquil and religious—to some engraved moonlit Eden, of which you would be so fit a dweller and embellishment!"

A pause occurs, (for it is not the intelligent who are never silent), and then the conversation takes a turn, less poetic, but not less interesting to the parties, than that suggested by the moon.

*He.* It is a grateful thought with me, Rachel, when I think of our connection, that we owe it to our common love for Christ.

I have, indeed, never been indifferent to you. There was that about you when you were quite young—a girl of six or eight years—that interested me. I can hardly tell what the nature of that interest was. It was sympathy, in part. When I saw you standing apart from your mates at school, a pensive observer of their play, or listener to their talk; or saw you shivering in the back part of the school-room, while the rest crowded about the fire, I would have screened you from their thoughtless prejudice, if I could,—and that was sympathy—as I would have stood between a sister and an icy wind,—or spread an umbrella over her in a pouring rain. How often have I wished I *had* a sister!

*She.* You did spread your umbrella over me, once,

just as a brother would. It was raining hard when school was out at night, and I had no umbrella. "Take it, Rachel," you said, decisively, when I declined it,— "take it; rain won't hurt a boy, and I can run through it faster than you can. There, the sooner you make tracks, the better; for it is coming on thicker and faster, don't you see?" and almost hanging the umbrella upon my head, you ran off, and left it with me. I remember with what complacency and care I dried and smoothed it, because it was William Geer's. Do you recollect the circumstance?

*He.* I do not. Yours seems to be a memory that never lets slip the most trivial thing that your gratitude charges it with.

*She.* And yours one that keeps no record of the generous acts of its possessor.

*He.* It would be but a meagre record, Rachel. But you will always be equal with me on the score of compliments; though I did not think of uttering a compliment.

*She.* Nor I, any more.

*He.* We are mutually acquitted, then, of the charge of flattery. And I am sure love like ours does not need it.

It was sympathy, *in part*—that early regard for you; but it was not *all* sympathy. There was mingled with it a certain degree of admiration, or a certain coloring of fancy,—an interest of some sort, existing independently of your circumstances, and in spite of them.

Yet, you seemed as isolated a being from myself, as unrelated to me, as one of the stars, almost.

It was not that *boy-love* which is so common, perhaps universal with us, and which generally ceases with our boyish age ; for, in my day-dreams of the future—what I would do, and be, in the world, whom I would marry, and all that, you had no place.

As you grew older, my interest in you was still the same.

I felt grateful to Miss Raymond for the interest she took in you. I wanted to tell her so. And certainly, I *ought*, now, since I am personally blessed with the results of her endeavors.

When I became interested in religion—became a subject of renewing grace, as I trust I did, four years ago, I thought of you as an immortal being, and was conscious of a prayerful solicitude for your religious welfare.

Every important stage and circumstance of your life has, in some way, arrested me, and made me solicitous on your account. When Elmer fell in love with you, as he did, I trembled for you. I did not, indeed, believe you would be imprudent enough to marry him ; and yet you might, he was so accomplished and fascinating, except for his intemperance ; and *that* he promised to abandon. There is many a young lady would have had less prudence and firmness, in such a case, than you had, Rachel. But an unseen influence prevented you.

*She.* Unseen and unacknowledged then ; as, in a thousand other instances the same guiding and restraining hand has been.

*He.* Then in the case of Woodson,—but delicacy forbids my speaking of *him*. You will not suspect me

of having had, at the time, any *selfish* reason for being glad, on the whole, that you refused him.

As for those other suitors of yours, Morehouse, and that other from the West,—since I am on that delicate subject—I only thought of the annoyance you might suffer from them, for I did your good sense the justice to believe there was no danger of your marrying either of them,—small proof as you have since given of discernment.

*She.* Do you intend that I shall repeat the offence of paying you a compliment, Mr. Geer ?

*He.* No, no, Rachel. I am only paying *you* a bad one, for the benefit of your humility.

*She.* I am not disturbed by it ; for I think the implication groundless. I am *not* undiscerning in the case referred to. I am no more blind than you are faultless ; which may be said for *your* humility ; for I think you will not claim to be perfect.

*He.* I am glad, or ought to be, if you are not more blind than that. For, seeing my imperfections, you will help me correct them ; which is a better exercise, if not a higher proof, of love, than being blind to them.

So I have always felt, as I have said, an interest in you, and a peculiar one, of some sort. But whatever it may have been, it never was such as made me think of you in the light of this relation. That idea was never entertained by me, seriously, for a moment, that I am conscious of, previously to your becoming a christian ; nor, I presume, by you.

*She.* On my part, never ! It is superfluous for me to say so.

But I may tell you how I *have* regarded you. I have respected and admired you beyond any of your sex. I have ever *loved* you,—loved you from my childhood; but with the love of a grateful and unselfish complacency,—loved you, I have been fond of imagining, as an admiring sister loves a manly brother. I knew no other affection I could compare it to,—though that, with me, was an imaginary one, not having a brother to love. How often, and how fervently, have I wished I had a brother!

The thought of your approbation, when I was young, was more to me than that of any other person, my grandparents excepted. If the teacher handed me a pictured testimonial of my good behavior, or scholarship, at school, my eyes would glance towards you, and your unconscious smile constituted the chief value of the token. Out of doors, a pleasant word or look from you went far to compensate me for the disfavor of all the others.

And so it continued to be, though I so seldom saw you, comparatively, and still less often spoke with you, after we left the school. The thought of you was still, as before, a stimulus and a restraint. I know not into what despondency and mental indolence I might have settled, *permanently*, but for you.

Arriving at the age of manhood, you have been, among young gentlemen, as you used to be among boys, my standing model of your sex. If there have been individuals who have inclined to marry me, I have somehow found myself comparing them with William Geer, and been dissatisfied,—a great injustice, I admit, to subject them to such a standard.

With such sentiments, and in such lights, as these, I have regarded you, (as properly enough I might) but in the light of a lover and a suitor,—not the most shadowy idea of it ever existed in my mind, that I am conscious of, up to the time when you surprised me with the avowal of your too generous regard for me, and asked me to be yours. There are things of beauty and of worth which it never occurs to us to covet, because we never once conceive of them as within our destiny and reach. It were a ridiculous weakness to do so.

*He.* These are interesting developments—these of our early regards for each other; of which, till now, we appear to have been in a great measure ignorant. I cannot but look at them in the light of divine providence; for I cannot doubt a providential design in them. For, though we had not thought of this relation, it can hardly be that these regards have not, in some way, contributed to bring it about.

Yet it must still be said that we owe it to religion; for, without *that* attraction, it does not appear that we ever should have formed it. When I saw you coming out to confess Christ before men,—coming alone; when I conversed with you, and found how sweetly all your thoughts and dispositions were tempered with his love, then it was, that I became conscious of a two-fold affection for you that made me wish to make you mine.

*She.* Oh, Mr. Geer, how much I owe to religion!—even without looking beyond this world, or speaking of the sweet peace it has imparted to my own heart. Religious grandparents brought me up, and with such ten-

der, faithful, patient wisdom, as only christian people could. It was the religious benevolence of Rebekah Raymond that led her to interest herself as she has in my behalf. How much,—how much I owe Rebekah Raymond! How much to her mother, also, and to dear Mrs. Welwood! To good Mr. Shepherd I am more indebted than I can express, but less than I might have been, but for my own culpable avoidance of him, through all my younger years. All my friends—all that have owned and cherished me as such—have been so through religious feeling. Since I became a christian myself, professedly, how many welcome recognitions, and dear christian greetings, have I received! And *now*—to know—that *you* love me—and for my religion's, my Redeemer's sake!

[This broken sentence was accompanied with emotions too deep for utterance without tears. They were tears which the gayest *earthly* mind might envy,—tears of heavenly origin, and sacred joy.]

“And all these obligations which you speak of have become mine, Rachel,” said Mr. Geer, after some moments of silence. “For all that religion has done for you, it has done for me, in making you what you are, and giving you to me!”

*She.* It is a grateful thought, that our union has thus been owing to our common love for Christ.

*He.* And how *that* love sanctifies and heightens our affection for each other! How defective would our union be without it!

*She.* Oh yes, indeed! An earthly love from which

the heavenly love is excluded *must* be defective. I am sure it cannot know the depth and sacredness of an affection hallowed by religious feeling.

*He.* In Eden itself the love of God was essential to the perfect love of the relation. When that love was lost, the conjugal affection suffered an injury which can be repaired only by the recovery of that love.

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

### THE PUBLISHMENT.

THERE has been another of those interesting announcements from the pulpit, an intention of marriage; and on this, as on a former like occasion, the eyes of the assembly were turned towards the second wall-pew on the pulpit's left. One of its usual occupants was missing from it. She would have seen no displacency in those faces had she been there, and ventured to encounter them.

"Well, my dear," said Mr. Kell to Rachel, who received him and her grandmother at the door, as she was wont to do when they came in from abroad, "I think it was pretty generally taken notice of, that you was not out this afternoon."

"It is so rarely that that occurs, grandpa'."

"Yes, the rarity of the thing makes it noticeable, to be sure."

"You look fatigued, grandma'; shall I get you something to refresh you?"

"No, dear; I will lie down a little, and then tea will be all I need."

In alluding, in the indirect way which has been quoted,

to the fact of Rachel's publishment, Mr. Kell spoke with a smile upon his face, but there was that in his voice which seemed to say—and it did not escape her quick, affectionate discernment,—“How often do regrets come in the wake of our fondest wishes! This house is getting lonesome. She will not be here, to meet us at the door, and at the gate, as she used. But we wished it so, and do wish it. It is for *her* happiness, and that is ours.”

Mrs. Kell went to rest herself upon her bed, while her husband sat down in the parlor with his quarto bible.

Rachel retired to her chamber; and, seating herself by her favorite window, which was shaded, but not shrouded, by the old willow, resigned herself to spontaneous thought and feeling. The devotional, the grateful, and the happy, predominated in her heart; but it was not unconscious of the regretful also.

The thought of going from her grandparents' house, (not far, indeed, but from it as a *home*,) and in their fast-declining years, too, when they most needed her society and aid,—this gave her pain.

Other, though slighter (yet not slight) regrets, visited her on her own account. That venerable old home and homestead—the house and its environs, where she had spent so many and so interesting years,—the Pond, Sweet-brier Rock, her garden, the window at which she was sitting now, and had a thousand times sat, the many localities endeared to her by pleasant and by painful reminiscences—the thought of quitting these, cast some shade upon her feelings. There has, indeed, been many an Eve's lament in like circumstances—“Must I

leave thee, Paradise!" but Rachel's history and temperament are of a cast to give peculiar force to local associations.

And so passed the Sabbath hours in this Christian dwelling, towards the Sabbath's peaceful close,—thoughtfully, pensively, in one or more of the bosoms of the inmates, but unhappily in none of them, unprofitably in none.

Tea came, with its usual social effect; after which, the evening devotions were attended (at that earlier hour on Sundays,) and then the lighting of candles.

The "publishment" was a great circumstance with Hannah, as may be supposed. She was impatient to be talking about it, and wondered that the rest were not. "I know," she said to herself, "our folks are particular what they talk about Sundays; but seems to me, what's published from the pulpit might be talked about at home. Rachel, in particular—so demure and preserved, as she is, one might think she hadn't heard of it; though her face looks sunny enough, to be sure. But I expect she is resarving all *her* talk till Mr. Geer comes, as in course he will, by day-light-down, or after."

Hannah found no place for introducing the subject herself till she came to clear the tea-table, making passages, the while, between the parlor and the kitchen, in the discharge of that duty; and then no one seemed disposed to enlarge upon her suggestions, or to detain her on the interesting topic.

"Didn't you observe how surprised people looked, Mrs. Kell?"

"And as pleased as they was surprised;—"

"'Cepting a few that you wouldn't wish to *have* look pleased,"—

"Mrs. Mudge, and *her* sort."

These parcels of remark, with others of the same complacent character, were made, with the intervals between them, which our paragraphing indicates, as Hannah came and went, in putting up her tea-things.

When her work was done, she was fain to continue the subject with Jeduthun, in the kitchen, having no better ear to listen to her. She seated herself in her accustomed place, by her little round table, covered with a neat cloth, and furnished with a genuine dipped tallow candle, of her own making. She laid a book before her, as if to read. It was an old octavo, which somebody had lent her, of an ancient date, obsolete spelling, quaint style, and, withal, entertaining and good enough in its matter. She had been a good many weeks in getting as far as the middle of it,—using her shears, more commonly, or the stocking-leg she might be knitting, or anything that came to hand, for a place-mark. It was not probable that she would make much progress in the volume that evening, but it saved appearances; for, being a person of more consideration than Jeduthun, it did not quite suit her self-respect to sit down expressly to an evening's conversation with him.

Jeduthun sat by an open window, quite silent. It was in the far wane of summer, or rather, in the beginning of autumn; for September had already come. He appeared to be listening to the catydid, at their old dispute,

among the foliage ; or, however occupied, he showed no inclination to be sociable.

He was not, however, indifferent to the subject which occupied the house-keeper's thoughts. Which was the fonder of Rachel, he or Hannah, it might be difficult to say.

Hannah loved her as a *pet* ; though, in truth, she had never been able to make a pet of her. Hannah had brought her up from a baby, as she often fondly said ; and was proud of her as showing the result of *her* training. She had suffered a thousand hurt feelings, a thousand indignant feelings, a thousand pitiful feelings, on Rachel's account ; and had uttered a thousand predictions as to the fine estate she would some day come to, and the high respect she would some day command, "in spite of all them that thought so much of themselves in comparison of her." And it was quite natural that she she should overflow now, with relieved and elated feeling. "I declare," she would say to herself, "I can't hardly believe that it aint all a dream ; though, to be sure, it is just what I've always said would be."

Such was the nature of Hannah's regard for Rachel.

With Jeduthun she was an object of admiration. She interested equally his fondness and his fancy. He saw her in lights of his own, as he did all other objects. She was to him as a superior creation. And though he was accustomed to speak to her, as well as of her, quite familiarly, and without embarrassment, often playfully and with a kind of mischievous humor in his manner, yet it was a familiarity which (taking his eccentric character

and breeding into the account) was never offensive, or inconsistent with the profoundest respect.

He felt as true an interest as Hannah did, in her connection with Mr. Geer ; whom he appreciated justly,—extravagantly, indeed, for he pronounced him worthy of Miss Rachel ; which was much for *him* to say. But his feelings in reference to the matter were of a different hue from Hannah's. He could not help thinking how he should miss her—how desolate the house and place would be, for him, when she was gone. He should no more stand still, at his work, and follow her with his eye, as she crossed the fields. "How her cheeks used to glow, and how her eyes sparkled, and her heart beat, as she rode in at the great gate, and jumped down from the colt, and patted him on the forehead, and was glad Jeduthun was there to take good care of him !" That will be done with now, thought Jeduthun. He would no more wade into deep water after pond-lilies for her ; or climb up steep places, where even *she* dared not go, after wild-flowers for her to put into her curious book of dried things. She would not want him any more in her garden, with his spade and wheel-barrow ; and be wondering at a man's strength, that could pull up such great strong roots.

And then, he could not help feeling, somehow, that change of name and condition would, in a measure, change her identity. Rachel Geer would not be Rachel Kell. The young girl that he admired so, he knew not why, the first time he saw her—the dripping lost one of the Old Forest—that had grown from that upwards into

the young lady, and grown more beautiful and good every day, was now about to pass out of the region of her proper being,—the charmed region of her young maiden days—into the ordinary, unromantic one of married life. So in *her* case, he looked upon the transition. He did not disapprove of this; his benevolence and sober sense congratulated her; but, for *him*, the spell that had held him five years would be broken.

Such were the moods and sentiments, respectively, of Hannah and Jeduthun; the one elated, and disposed to talk; the other sombre, and willing to be silent and let alone. It is not surprising, therefore, that conversation did not assume the easy flow between them, which it does where the parties find themselves in one and the same agreeable vein.

"I hope Mrs. Paddlefoot will hear of this," said Hannah, after a while, breaking in upon their silence,—  
"Matilda Pettigrew that was, thanks to Mrs. Mudge."

"It's a long way through that old book, aint it?" said Jeduthun, staving off the subject.

"It is slowish reading, rather, owing to the queer spelling, and other old fashioned ways of it; if you stop to get the sense. Did you notice how provoked and beat Mrs. Mudge was?"

"And if you don't stop to get the sense, there aint much sense in reading, that I see," said Jeduthun, still evasively.

"She felt envious enough, I know, Mrs. Mudge did. It was nuts to me to look at her."

"Butternuts, you mean," said Jeduthun, carelessly,

still with his elbow on the window-sill, listening to the catydids.

"Humph, butternuts! How strange you do take people up sometimes, Jeduthun."

"I'sposed of course you meant *them*, speaking of nuts; because Butternuts is where your Mr. Paddlefoot lives," remarked Jeduthun, with simplicity, in explanation of his blunder.

*My* Mr. Paddlefoot! The Mudges and Pettigrews are welcome to him, for all me."

Hannah read, or at least turned over, a leaf more of her book, and then adverted again to the publishment.

"I was dreadful 'fraid, Mr. Shepherd would forget to read it. I looked hard at him to put him in mind, in case he should."

"And you'd ha' *hem'd*, likely, if he had," said Jeduthun.

"For ministers do forget sometimes," continued Hannah; "as that Mr. Somebody did, that preached here two summers ago, when Mr. Shepherd went a journey, you know. I can't recall his name, now,—Shove, I think it was, or Shute."

"Which sound as much alike as Duke and Darby, [names of oxen] or Roman and the colt," said Jeduthun.

"Well, I aint no hand to remember names. It might ha' been Shook, for't I know; and I think it was, as nigh as anything. It begun with Sh, anyhow."

"So does Shepherd," said Jeduthun.

Well, no matter; that Mr. Shove, or Shook, whichever it was,"——

"Or Shute," said Jeduthun.

"Forgot to read the publishment of Jerusha Lister and her man that came down from up country, somewhere—Wildbore, I think *his* name was, though I have quite forgot the minister's—I *think* it was Wildbore."

"Very likely," said Jeduthun,—*"coming from up country, where the woods are not cleared off much yet."*

"He forgot to read the publishment, and there they was! They had to put off the wedding a week longer, in consequence. Because the law says they must be published fourteen days, you know. I see no use in't. If people are a-mind to marry, why not let 'em take their own time for it; what does the law care? It happened bad in this instance, because the man wanted to go back as soon as he could, and had to wait. And I've known a marriage fall through entirely, or at least I've thought it *might* happen, in them fourteen days. Not that I expect it's a-going to in *our* case."

"In *your* case, Hannah? I thought it was Miss Rachel that was read off in meetin' to-day. I didn't hear straight, then. And who is Miss Heath a-goin' to have? I didn't get *his* name right, either, I was so taken up thinkin' of other folks."

"Now, did anybody ever! It does seem, Jeduthun, as if you never *would* larn manners. The five years, come October, that you have lived here, along with decent, civil people, and yet just as woodsy as you ever was!"

"I feel bad, anyhow."

"About what?"

"This here Geer business."

"Why, what on airth would you have for Rachie? Such a *man* as Mr. Geer is, and such a beautiful *place* as he's a-going to take her to! And you a-feeling bad about it, and as long-faced and glum, all the evening, as if some dreadful bad news had come! What does possess you?"

"Because, I shall be lonesome when *she's* gone. I shan't want to live here; and I won't, if Mr. Kell can get along without me. I'll get married myself, and go off and live somewhere,—if anybody will have me."

"If *somebody* will, you mean, don't you, Jeduthun?" said Rachel, who came into the kitchen just then, and heard what he said. "It is a very good idea, and I have a plan for helping you to carry it out, if grandpa approves of it, as I presume he will. But I will not tell you now what it is."

Rachel's plan for Jeduthun was this. He had evidently, as Rachel had discovered, become attached to a young woman of the place, whose character and habits were a good deal like his own,—good tempered, shrewd, industrious, frugal, and withal as much an original as he. The two would be agreeable companions for each other, in their own belief, at least, and excellent tenants for Mr. Kell; who, at his time of life, now, wanted the relief of such an arrangement; reserving only so much oversight of his farm himself as the health and habits of an active life required. There was a suitable house on a corner of the farm, which, with a little repairing, would be just to the purpose.

Justice to Jeduthun requires it to be said here, that he was not altogether as simple, or as rustic, as he may seem to be, judging especially from his talks with Hannah. It is true, he could be whimsical, and that his manners were not courtly, at the best ; but he knew how to be respectful towards others, his superiors or equals, and was never stolid, or ill-natured. Within an unrefined exterior he possessed a heart of finer feelings, and a mind of finer gifts, naturally, than could be claimed by many a politer man who might regard him as a simpleton. With Hannah it was his humor to be what he was, at times, (not always), by way of keeping up the character which, from their first acquaintance, she had been pleased to attribute to him,—that of being “*woodsy*.”

## CHAPTER XXIX.

### CONSULTATIONS.

As we are on the eve of that interesting event beyond which the reader will not expect us to go—the marriage of Rachel,—we must advert once more to her social position.

She has long been gaining on the esteem of the community, and more especially of late. An unequivocal proof of this (if others were wanting) is, the congratulations William Geer receives on her account. People speak of the beauty of her conduct towards her grandparents, so affectionate and filial ; of her fine intelligence, her personal attractions, and her piety.

But, though these favorable sentiments are so generally entertained, there has been, as yet, no decided, open manifestation of them in a *social* way. In the church, and as a member of it, she has indeed no cause to feel that she is neglected. But the religious relation, however social in its way, is not *the* relation which governs the ordinary social intercourse of mankind. She is still, as heretofore, not known in that kind of intercourse. And this is owing, not to insensibility to her intrinsic worthiness, but to the sentiment and *habit* of the public,

in such cases. No young lady, or young lady's mother, has ventured to disregard that sentiment and habit, by writing Miss Rachel Kell's name, along with others, on her list of social invitations. Perhaps no one has so far bethought herself at all on the subject as to consider whether such a thing might be. Whom society once leaves behind, or casts aside, it seldom turns to look after.

Rachel makes no complaint of this; not even to Miss Raymond, to whom her heart is open as the day; nor to herself. She no longer allows it to depress her, her religious faith having taught her the great lesson of providence and submission, in reference to this, as to all the allotments of this life. On two accounts she regrets it; and in those her feelings are not only innocent, but commendable. One has reference to William Geer. In what manner *he* disposes of that amiable trouble, has been seen in what passed between them at the Pond. The other is, the limit such exclusion puts upon her usefulness as a christian. She has a heart full of benevolence, as well as a cultivated intellect, that wants scope and opportunity, in spheres and ways for which she seems so well fitted. Yet she reconciles herself to this privation and restriction, with the reflection that such is the ordering of providence in regard to her, and that, if her opportunity is less, so is her responsibility; nor need her desires and prayers be limited, (nor their rewards, either) to her straitened range of action.

Such then are still her relations with the social and companionable world. And she is about to be a bride; and who will be guests, at that solemnity?

Her expectations as to *her* portion of them are very humble. Miss Raymond will be one. So will Miss Raymond's mother. For Mrs. Welwood a carriage shall be sent expressly, at an early hour; and she will come and remain till the following day. Who else? As for relatives, other than her grandparents, though relatives she has, she does not look for any of them to honor the occasion with their presence.

She is not made unhappy by the meagerness of her list—meager as to numbers, but a host in worth—on her *own* account. Her partner has forbidden her to think that *he* will be hurt by it.

He has not informed her, definitely, as yet, who, and how many, will be present by *his* invitation. They are just now discussing the matter. His relatives are few; his friends many. But he assures her that, though his may be more numerous than hers, rather, they shall not be so many that her little company shall be merged and lost in the greatness of his.

So on this footing they have settled it. It suits him as well to have but a few. It suits her better. It accords more with the habit of her life. "And besides," says Rachel, "I should not know how to behave, if the company were large; for I never was present at a large wedding, nor indeed at any wedding."

"Indeed!" said her partner, gravely. "That *would* be a difficulty. I had not thought of that. In such a case, your better way would be not to *behave* at all; but just be Rachel Kell, and nothing more. I dare say the company would excuse you."

"Ah, that is like you, now, to answer me in that way," said Rachel, looking one of her *reproofs* at him. "It sounds ridiculous to you, and quite amusing, I dare say, as all my troubles do, to hear me say so. But you cannot easily conceive—you, who are so accustomed to society, who have grown up in it, from your infancy,—how difficult it may be, to *be* just one's self, when one finds one's self for the first time in one's life, in a numerous and polite company, and she the principal figure in it, too,—as the bride of course is, you know. Suppose you were sent to Congress, (as I expect you will be some day,) and were about to make your first speech there, and the first you *ever* made; how pleasant it would be, if some veteran of the House, discovering too quick a pulse in you, should jog you as you rose, and say, 'Now just be yourself, be William Geer, that's all.' But that is the difficulty, in novel circumstances."

"Oh, well, dear; we will have none but charitable people present, who will excuse you, if there should be occasion for it. But here come Miss Raymond and Ann Skiddy; they know all about proprieties, and you can take lessons from them."

Miss Skiddy, whose name has occurred before, is a cousin of Mr. Geer's, and worthy of the relation. She has already claimed affinity with Rachel, in advance of the ceremony which will make them cousins.

"We're come," said Miss Skiddy, "to hold a council here, and it happens very fortunately, however strangely, to find you here, cousin William; for we shall want your voice in it."

"And what is to be the subject of our conference?" asked Mr. Geer.

"Miss Raymond will state it."

"May we take the liberty to ask," said Miss Raymond, "whom you propose to invite to the wedding?"

"Mine may be soon told," said Rachel, pleasantly; "unless I should add to them from the high-ways and hedges."

"Which is the very thing we were going to propose to you," said Miss Skiddy.

"My list, also, will be a short one," said Mr. Geer. "We have just been talking it over, and have settled it; so you are too late with your proposal, Ann."

"But you will re-consider?"

"Hardly."

"We shall not offer to disturb your arrangement as to the guests at the *ceremony*," said Miss Raymond; "but when that is through with, we want to increase the number. You are not aware, Rachel, with how much love you are regarded, and with how much interest people speak of this connection. Every day they are expressing it to me, and to Miss Skiddy; and are saying they shall call upon you at the earliest hour they may, to offer you their congratulations and good wishes. But you have made your arrangements for leaving the morning after your marriage, to be absent a good many days, so that all these kind intentions will have to be put off, quite to the regret of those who entertain them. And now what we have to propose, with your permission, is, that they come in the evening, after the ceremony."

"But, Miss Raymond," said Rachel, "their views of propriety would not suffer them to come, then, *uninvited*, nor could I, with any more propriety, invite them."

"We know you could not: we would not have you. And *they* know it. But what we think you may do, without any sacrifice of propriety and self-respect, and what we want, if you are willing, is, that we, Miss Skiddy and I, have the assurance from yourselves, and from Mrs. Kell, that you will not deem it an intrusion on the part of any who may call on you, on such an evening, between the hours, say, of eight and ten; and that we may, in our own names, as your known intimate friends, and as acting of our own motion, (for so in truth we should be) say as much to such as we may choose."

Rachel looked at Mr. Geer, to know what was to be said.

"We might consent to your proposal, ladies, *outré* as it is."——

"Now, cousin, don't call it *outré*, and so dismiss it; as I know you mean to do, by your looks. Suppose it is *outré*,—meaning by that, that it is not just in accordance with ordinary usages—what then? Good feeling and benevolence are the basis of it, and these are, as you very well know, the soul and essence of politeness; and what is in harmony with these, can never be at variance with true politeness,—come what will of usages and forms."

"Excellent doctrine, cousin Ann, but not *à propos*, at present. I was saying that we might consent to your proposal, but for one difficulty, which, I apprehend, may

be insuperable. It is this. Rachel tells me she has never seen a wedding, and shall not know how to behave, especially should the company be numerous."

"But were you never at a marriage, Rachel?" asked Miss Skiddy.

"Never."

"Really?"

"Within my recollection, never."

"Then I am glad we are to have one at which you *will* be present. I dare say you will find it pleasant,—for the novelty of it, if for nothing more."

"And we must give her the best possible position in it, to see and hear," said her intended.

"But now about this smuggling-in business," said Miss Skiddy. "Waving Rachel's difficulty, which we must contrive to remedy, somehow, what do you say to us?"

"It shall be as you say, Rachel. I will be passive," said Mr. Geer.

"So will I, then; for I am sure I could not frown on those who came in the name of love and friendship, at such a time; especially when I knew on whose account they came."

"No, Rachel," said Rebekah; "it is on *your* account—on that of both of you indeed,—but on yours *particularly*, that they would come. So, be ingenuous enough to take them as they mean."

"The thing is settled, then, as to these people," said Miss Skiddy. "And now, Rebekah, let us see Mrs. Kell."

"But, Miss Raymond, you must let us know in time," said Rachel, "how many of your *free tickets* you give out, if any; that our refreshments may be answerable."

"Leave that to me; it will be all right," was Miss Raymond's answer.

## CHAPTER XXX.

### THE RECOGNITION.

ALLUSION has been made to Rachel's kindred. These, on the paternal side, (and she had none on the other, except remote ones) were an uncle Wentworth, (the family name) an aunt Heyward, sister to Mr. Wentworth; and their children. There was also an unmarried aunt, Miss Margaret Wentworth. The young people, cousins to Rachel, in the two families, amounted to about a dozen.

These cousins had *never* spoken with Rachel since she was a child; the uncle and aunts very seldom, and then casually, and in few words. If such extreme reserve in them be thought singular and blamable, let it be considered, in mitigation of their fault, that the sensitiveness of *kindred*, of *consanguinity*, to what touches the credit of the *race*, cannot but be most acute. We think they were unwise, to say no more, considering the early hopefulness of the disowned, as well as her respectable domestic circumstances in the house of her grandparents.

She, on her part, had never made any advances towards them of course; nor had her grandparents in her behalf.

These relations had noticed with relief and satisfaction,

almost with pride, latterly, (although from a distance, and by hearsay) the interesting character of Rachel, and the general favor into which she was evidently growing,—as if, after all, these fine qualities of hers reflected some credit on the race of which, as a Wentworth, she was a scion; and latterly they had raised the query among themselves, whether it might not be their duty, and for their credit, to own and treat her as a relative. They began to wish that they had done so from the first; for, besides the awkwardness of acknowledging her now, had they done it from her infancy, and done what they could to make her respectable in the public eye, they might, in a measure, have hidden her reproach, and, at the same time, their own.

The young people said that, as she was now to be connected, they would often be meeting her in society, and it would be awkward not to recognize her.

On the whole, they came to the conclusion that it would be best to do so.

How *she* would regard the movement might, they thought, be doubtful. After so long and entire neglect, she might decline the recognition, through wounded feeling, especially in case her present felicity as the intended of William Geer should cause her to feel elated.

But then, Elizabeth Wentworth said, her well known amiable disposition, and still more, her religious profession, would, she was sure, forbid her assuming any such attitude towards them, or, as her aunt Margaret expressed it, putting on airs.

Mrs. Heyward and her niece of the other house, Eliza-

beth Wentworth, were deputed, therefore, to call at Mr. Kell's, to reconnoitre and sound the matter, and, at their discretion, to act in the name of them all.

"Now, aunt Catherine," said Elizabeth, as they got down from their chaise at Mr. Kell's, "will it not be better to meet her cordially and frankly at once, without any round-about policy at all?"

"We will see, Elizabeth, how things look," was the reply of Mrs. Heyward to this amiable suggestion.

Mrs. Heyward was a woman of sense and good breeding, and of good feeling, on the whole. That good feeling, however, lay beneath a crust of family pride, and her good sense often suffered through that weakness. She was not a pious woman. In making this advance towards Rachel, she could not divest herself wholly of the feeling, nor of the manner incident to the feeling, that they were doing it at some expense of self-respect; to save which, it ought to be regarded by Rachel, and by others, as an act of grace on their part. Mrs. Wentworth was a woman of truer and gentler feeling than Mrs. Heyward, and would have been a better agent in such a business; but the latter assumed the office, as being concerned by consanguinity, and Elizabeth accompanied her in her mother's stead and spirit.

They asked for Mrs. Kell and for Rachel, and were shown into the north room; which, instead of being the unfrequented, closed, and darkened apartment it used to be, has of late grown familiar to light and air, and cheerful voices.

"We are great strangers here," said Mrs. Heyward,

"but we hope not unwelcome. We are a sort of deputation, Elizabeth and I, from our two families to make the acquaintance of Rachel, and to congratulate her on her very pleasant prospects. We have indeed long been wishing to become acquainted with her, and to assure her of the interest we have felt in her, as everybody has. I regret that we have not done so before. She must not attribute it to any unkind feeling in our hearts towards her; as I hope, also, her grandparents have not done."

Mrs. Kell replied, in her usual calm manner, that she trusted Rachel would properly appreciate the object of their call. Whatever other failing she might have, it was not characteristic of her, Mrs. Kell believed, to be insensible to kindness. As for Mr. Kell and herself, it would indeed have been a great satisfaction to them, and a great aid in bringing Rachel up, if her relations *could* have, from the first, found it consistent with their inclination and sense of duty to own and surround her with their love and favor. Yet they had never judged them severely for the course they had taken, nor were they now disposed to do so. Rachel had, no doubt, and very naturally, been painfully sensible of the neglect she had suffered, but Mrs. Kell believed her feelings had not been those of resentment.

It was now Rachel's turn to speak. She perceived the cautious, patronizing bearing of Mrs. Heyward, and it modified her own. She was conscious of a self-respect more inherent, more elevated, more refined and christian, than that of Mrs. Heyward, and at least equally sustain-

ing, in circumstances like the present. The *patronage* of these relatives she did not need, now; their *love*, if they had that to offer her, she had a heart to welcome and reciprocate. She simply said, however, alluding to Mrs. Kell's last remark,

"My feelings, grandma, have often been such as they ought not to have been."

"Oh, I dare say," said Mrs. Heyward, with an air of self-complacency, assumed or real, looking at Rachel. "I do not *doubt* she has had her feelings. Her Wentworth pride has been up at times about it; for that must be natural to her. But, really, she must forgive us; for we have never felt unkind, however reserved (as it was but natural we should be) towards her, and now certainly we do esteem and love her, and are disposed to own her, if she will let us."

"I may not say," continued Rachel—"indeed I *cannot*—how I *have* felt. But it has not been resentment; at least, I think not habitually, or often. There are feelings, *injured* feelings, too deep to be resentful. I have pined for the love and intimacy of kindred. I have felt how mine might, by embosoming me among them,—I have never *claimed* that, but I needed it—how they might have shielded me from the embarrassments I suffered,—how their countenance and favor might have alleviated, if not prevented wholly, the anguish I have at times experienced. But, as for pride—the *Wentworth* pride you speak of, Mrs. Heyward,—I am not aware that it has ever been wounded *in* me, however it may have been *through* me; for I early understood that what respecta-

bility I could ever hope to have must be personal, and not *derived*,—especially from the source you refer to.”

Mrs. Heyward colored at this remark, but was silent; and Rachel proceeded.

“Excuse me, Mrs. Heyward, if I speak too freely on a delicate subject,—since of *my* race it is, as well as yours, that I am speaking; and what touches *you*, in the case, touches me more nearly.

“As for the neglect I have suffered, I have laid up no resentments, if I ever had them. I may almost say I have no regrets. I *do* say it, if I regard the matter in the light of a Providence; for He who leads the blind by a way they know not, has led me safer and better, I cannot doubt, than I should have gone in a more agreeable, but, perhaps, misleading path.”

“I have felt the need, as I have said, of your *moral* aid—your *social* aid—your countenance and favor, to uphold me as a social being, in a disfavoring world. I do not need to burthen you in that way now; but your *love*—if you have it for me, as you kindly say you have—*that* I do need, and can reciprocate with all my heart.”

Mrs. Heyward felt that she had misconceived the character she had come to deal with. She was on the wrong track. She fixed her eyes on the earnest, but collected, quiet face of Rachel, and was embarrassed. She felt—not indignant, not contemptuous—she felt *proud* of her. She wished, decidedly, to own her, and to see her identified and grouped with the kindred she belonged to. But she feared she had but too successfully repelled her.

She did not like to leave the matter so—did not choose to have it stand thus, now and henceforth, either between themselves, or in the eye of the community. Better have taken Elizabeth’s advice.

Rachel had no more to say; Mrs. Heyward, apparently, had nothing ready; Mrs. Kell was silent.

“Cousin Rachel,” said Elizabeth; “if Mrs. Kell and aunt will excuse us, will you walk with me in the garden?”

“With pleasure, cousin Elizabeth, if the ladies will excuse me.”

“Why, just see how easily these young people coalesce and harmonize,” said Mrs. Heyward. “It is ‘cousin Rachel,’ ‘cousin Elizabeth.’ You are right, girls; that *is* your relation, and you are right to claim it. But go along, and take your stroll in the garden; and Mrs. Kell and I, with her consent, will entertain each other here.”

“My dear cousin,” said Elizabeth, as they passed down the garden, “this is all wrong—this unkind reserve towards you. Unkind it seems, but it is only negatively so; for no positive feeling of unkindness has been in it, I believe. How could there be? Brother Edward and I have often spoke of it,—so has our mother,—and wished to be acquainted with you; especially since we have become interested in religion. I think all our people are inclined to love you, as aunt Catherine says. I know they will, if once they are acquainted with you. And you will love us. Let the past go.”

"And are *you* interested in religion?" asked Rachel, stopping her, and looking her intently in the face.

"My brother Edward and I hope we have given ourselves to the Saviour, recently; though we have not yet, as you know, united with the church."

"My dear cousin! Is it—is it so? Tell me: have you indeed become a christian?"

"That is my humble hope."

"Then there is indeed a bond of love between us,—dearer even than that of kindred; and that should be *very* dear. Elizabeth, my dear Elizabeth, I have prayed much for the conversion of my kindred,—mine and yours; and now you and I can *unite* our prayers for the same object, can we not?—and Edward with us; and we three can *agree* as touching this thing, according to our Saviour's encouraging suggestion. *Now* I do long, as I have not done, latterly, to share the affection and acquaintance of my kindred."

"And you *will*, you *must*," said Elizabeth, with earnestness; and she kissed her cousin, as she said it.

The two continued walking and conversing, with great interest to each other,—each feeling that she had found a friend of various and dear names in *one*—cousins in consanguinity—sisters, companions, fellow-helpers, in the household and pilgrimage of faith.

Of the conversation of the elder ladies in the house we shall only say, that it consisted, on the part of Mrs. Heyward, of expressions of unfeigned admiration of Rachel, both from what she had heard from those who best knew her, and from what she had now seen of her; and of the

sincerest apologies and regrets that they had so long overlooked and neglected so much loveliness and promise.

The cousins returned to the parlor,—Rachel with a rich bouquet in her hand, which she desired Mrs. Heyward to accept.

"With great pleasure," said Mrs. Heyward. "But, Rachel, Elizabeth, you see, claims cousinship with you; and you concede the claim. You must serve us all alike, though. You are no more cousin to her than you are niece to me. So, no more addressing me as *Mrs.* Heyward."

This was spoken with no condescending air, but with unmistakable sincerity and heart.

"*Dear aunt*—those two words are far pleasanter to speak than the two words, *Mrs. Heyward*," said Rachel, with her expressive, misty eyes looking into hers.

"So they *are*, and *shall* be; responded Mrs. Heyward, "and so are the two words, '*dear niece*,' that answer to them, pleasanter than any colder and more distant ones that can be used in place of them. The colder terms are done with, are they not? And you will allow us to carry home a little of your love to *all* your relations, will you not?"

"Yes, aunt, as much as you can dispose of."

"And I shall see that none of it is lost upon them."

Rachel suggested to her grandmother, aside, before the ladies left, that they might expect to be invited to the wedding, and that perhaps good feeling demanded it. "I shall leave it to you, grandma; if you think it desira-

ble to ask them, do. I do not feel that it would quite become me to do it."

"With your consent, I will, dear; but I should hardly think they would accept."

Accordingly, on their taking leave, Mrs. Kell, alluding to the marriage, and naming the evening and the hour, said they would be happy to see all Rachel's friends there, if agreeable to themselves to favor them with their company.

"No, dear," said Mrs. Heyward, turning to Rachel; "it would give us all great pleasure to be present; and our good wishes will be with you. But I feel that it would hardly be delicate, as the circumstances are. We should seem to have sought this interview, to-day, by way of begging an invitation; and people would put our regard for you on a different footing from what we intend they shall. You will not so interpret us, I know; but others might. So excuse us as to the wedding; but we shall claim the privilege of making a party for you as soon as you return from your journey. Give our compliments to Mr. Geer, and pray hold yourselves engaged to us."

And so they took their leave.

"We have been all wrong," said Mrs. Heyward to the families, when she got home,— "quite wrong. Rachel Kell is too precious a girl to have been thrown away, as she has been by us. May we never have any worse cause to blush than we have in that girl."

## CHAPTER XXXI.

### HOUSEHOLD WORDS.

"I do think, grandma', it is too bad," said Rachel, coming from the kitchen.

"What, dear?"

"Why, that Miss Raymond, after all the pains she has been at about the dress, should have this further trouble about the refreshments. Hannah tells me she has been here this morning, and proposes—claims the privilege, as Hannah expresses it—to make the cake, and other nice things which she understands so well, for the entertainment of the guests."

"She would not be denied," said Mrs. Kell, "and so I have consented that she shall do whatever she pleases, only on the condition that we be allowed to pay for the materials. She is to do it at her own home."

"I am certainly obliged to her," said Rachel, "for it will be a relief to you, grandma'. But really her kindness is oppressive to me."

"But how shall we do with Hannah? For she is half vexed, she says, and professes to regard the measure as an invasion of her province. She prides herself, you know, on her cakes and pastries, and was expecting to

gather a great harvest of credit on this occasion ; as, with your experience and skill to refer to, no doubt she would. Hannah is a fond and faithful creature, and is looking forward to the wedding with a world of complacency ; and I should be sorry to have her pleasure marred."

"That is sufficiently provided for, I think," said Mrs. Kell. "Rebekah compounded with her, on purpose to save her feelings. She is to make a part of the cake. And I tell her, not half the company will know but that she made it all ; for Miss Raymond is not apt to sound a trumpet before her, and indeed prefers that no one should know it. And if they should, they will not know which is which. The guests will say, 'This cake is very nice, whoever made it,' and the presumption will be, that it was made in the house, as a part of it will have been. So you need have no fear, Hannah, of being cast into the shade by Miss Raymond's means."

There is, it may be presumed, no person in the world so unambitious, or so low in life, as not to value himself for his superior skill, or quality, in *something*. That laziest of mortals, Ephraim Stillshade, for example, was accustomed to say, he would "turn his back to no man, at sowing turnips." Hannah Heath had many desirable qualities, but her fort and element was housewifery. And excellence in that is no despicable accomplishment, in maid or mistress.

The Monday morning of the week came, on the fourth evening of which the marriage was to take place. Mr. and Mrs. Kell were habitually so tranquil in their feelings, and so quiet in their ways, that, but for Hannah's

movements, the interesting event might have come upon them, or might have seemed to come, like a drifting object upon a placid stream. Hannah, however, was astir with her "note of preparation." "If there's a-going to be a wedding here, in this very house, this very week," said she, "it must be got ready for ; and that is not to be done in a hurry ; or rather, it *is* to be done in a hurry, for there's a deal to do, and only two or three days to do it in."

What that "deal to do" was, nobody else could see distinctly ; especially since so large a portion of Hannah's part of the business had taken itself to Mrs. Raymond's. But Hannah saw ; though not indeed very distinctly. She had a general notion that there needs must be a plenty of things to be done, ordinary and extraordinary, preparatory to an extraordinary occasion. She was conscious too, we should remember, of a chief responsibility, in some respects, in regard to it, and surveyed it, consequently, with a care-quickenened eye.

"Jeduthun," said Mr. Kell, "as there will be some extra chores and errands to be done now, for a day or two, I shall give you over to Hannah and the ladies. You can attend to them, if you are willing ; and, when they don't want you," Mr. K. added, with humor in his look, "you can play."

"The play-spells will be short ones, I guess," Jeduthun answered. "Umph ! give a woman a man to wait on her, and she 'll find occasions enough to keep him busy, if Hannah is a sample."

Jeduthun said this, not grumblingly, but shrewdly ; for he was not of a disobliging temper ; and if he had been, he would have been willing to do anything which had reference to Rachel.

Hannah set about her duties, therefore, with great heart and cheerfulness, but with a somewhat distracting sense of their number and importance.

"Now, Jeduthun, [with arms a-kimbo,] the first thing is, to go down to Mr. Tisdale's, or if he has n't 'em, you may go to any of the stores, and get these things, that I 'm a-going to tell you. Mind now, and remember every one of 'em ; because if you forget, you 'll have to go again, you know."

"Or if *you* forget," said Jeduthun, standing demurely with his chin between his thumb and finger.

"Let me see ; for the cake,—citron, mace, cloves, raisins, citron—,"

"You said citron once."

"Don't put me out,—citron—,"

"Three citrons."

"Oh dear ! I shall have to begin again."

"No, no, go on ; I've got 'em all, so far, right out straight, and some on 'em three times over—citron, mace, cloves, raisins. What next?"

"Let me see,—the starch. That is for the frosting. Eggs we have a plenty of in the house."

"And plenty of starch, I guess."

"No, we ha'nt a bit ; we 're out of it entirely."

"Judging from my Sunday collars."

"It would n't be much matter if they cut your ears

off ;—currants. There, that 's all for the cake, that I can think of. Oh, and a peck of lime."

"That's for the frosting, too, I suppose."

"Humph ! frosting. Pretty stuff lime would be on cake !"

"It would make it go further."

"It would go to the bugs, I reckon. Pshaw ! it sets my teeth on edge to think of it. Strange, what singular ideas people that are brought up in the woods do have !"

In all Hannah's acquaintance with Jeduthun, she either obtusely never *could*, or else perversely never *would*, fathom his simplicity ;—always taking it for honest ; and that because of her settled opinion, that nothing of ordinary sense and knowledge could, or her fixed resolve that nothing should, be admitted to come forth from the Old Forest.

"You are to get all these articles. Don't forget, now, a single one of 'em."

"And all they 've got of each sort, I 'spose, on'y the lime. You don't want but a peck of that."

"Now did anybody ever ! All they 've got ! Tubs and barrels-full, and cart-loads, I dare say, you are thinkin' of, as if it was corn and beans you was goin' for, the strangest oddity that you are ! Han't you never seen any spices, nor observed how little it takes of 'em to make things ? Up to your folks's in the woods there, I dare say not ; but *here*, have n't you ?"

"But you did n't set any limits to the things, 'cepting the lime."

"No, but I was going to. Some of them we 've

partly enough of in the house, and I wanted to ask Mrs. Kell first. So wait, do, till you get the whole of your errand, will you?"

The errand was fully given, and was faithfully done, to Hannah's satisfaction.

That and a number of other errands attended to, several of which might have been done a month before, or a month later, just as well as at that particular time, Jeduthun was next employed to clean up the yards and grounds about the house. Every leaf and straw must be raked off, every weed cut up, every straggling stick of wood piled, every mislaid farming implement put into place; and Jeduthun wished to know of Hannah, if she would like the cattle's horns sawed off. He was thorough in his work; but, as the grounds were uniformly kept neat and in good order, no great difference was apparent as the result of his operations.

Mr. Kell, coming home from abroad, found him slaking his peck of lime.

"What now, Jeduthun?"

"Makin' whitewash."

"What for?"

"To whitewash the fences, and other things, 'cept what 's painted."

"Whose notion is that?"

"Hannah's, I guess. She set me at it."

"The fences, and what else?"

"The pig-pen and the grindstone, I 'spect, and perhaps the chimney-top; for she says we must smart up here, all we can."

"Fid-dle faddle! You may go and put it round the peach-trees and gooseberries. Hannah may make what up-turnings she pleases within doors, with Mrs. Kell's consent, but I shall have no such ridiculous whitewash proclamations outside of the house."

It often happens with more cultivated minds than Hannah's, that a single exciting subject will scatter the thoughts to a hundred other irrelevant things, and put the hands upon doing absurdly, or unseasonably, what would otherwise be left for a leisure hour. For instance, a journey is to be taken, involving a week's absence. How the wife, getting ready for it, wearies herself, from room to room, with a variety of things which have been well enough as they are for a twelvemonth, and might as well remain so for a twelvemonth more. This was the case with Hannah. She did more things than the time demanded; and took more steps, and said more words, than were necessary in doing the things that were requisite. "I declare," said she, coming down from the garret, where she had been brushing down cobwebs and "siding-up" the trumpery, as if the company would look up *there*, "it 's well worth while to have a wedding now and then, if it were only for its setting us to put things to rights." A sense of care pervaded and directed her movements,—such as no one else in the house felt, or, as she conceived, was bound to feel. She could not divest herself of the idea, that, whatever success or failure there might be, of skill or luck, or of the working of the elements, in pan or oven, whether in her kitchen or in Mrs. Raymond's, the credit or dis-

credit would be hers. Worse still, if the discredit in case of failures should, in any manner or degree, be put to Rachel's account; for then, while Rachel would suffer, which were bad enough, Hannah herself would be implicated, as having been concerned, of course, in Rachel's domestic training.

In these novel cares Hannah forgot, in some cases, her ordinary ones; and omitted doing what at other times she did unconsciously almost, from mere routine and habit.

"It ain't man's work, I know, Jeduthun, but seeing you are here, and have nothing else to do, and I am so busy, I wish you would just keep watch and tell me when this cake has been in exactly thirty minutes."

"By this here clock?"

"Yes."

"They'll be long minutes, I guess."

"Why, sure enough! I forgot to wind it up. Lawful soul, well! Who can think of such every-day things as winding up clocks, and skimming milk, with a wedding on one's hands?"

But the busy days were pleasant ones, too, with Hannah. If her brow was often knit with care, it was not less often expanded with satisfaction. Her delight in Rachel was itself a fountain of enjoyment to her.

Rachel was often in and out, observing her labors, with her placid eyes, and offering to assist her.

"No, no, indeed; I shall not let you touch to do a thing to help me. You have nicer and fitter work for a bride's fingers to be doing, than to be stoning raisins and beating eggs."

"What a *happy* creature Rachie is!" would Hannah say, with emphasis, as her eye followed her about. "Did anybody ever *see* so happy a face as her'n is? Too happy to sing. How light her steps are, as she skips up stairs and down! It does one's heart good to look at her. I declare, it *is* amiable to be happy, and it makes me think, seeing her, that I won't *ever* be long-faced myself."

"It would be difficult for you, Hannah, to be long-faced, it would," said Jeduthun, "because your face is naturally so round and good-natured."

"Do you think so, Jeduthun? Well, with all your oddities, you're an *honest* creature."

"Too happy to sing" may be a condition of the heart sometimes existing; it may have been, at times, that of Rachel's. It was not uniformly so. As she wandered in her garden, amongst her now fading flowers, (for Autumn's breath was on them,) you might have heard bits of secular and sacred melodies, which revealed a heart pensive as well as happy.

But that pensive feeling was a cherished one, blending with and heightening the joyous, as shadows enhance the beauty of the light.

"Too fatigued, Rachel, or too happy,—which is it, that you cannot take your tea?" asked Mrs. Kell at the tea-table, the day before the marriage.

"Neither, grandma," answered Rachel, waking from her revery with a brightening face; "I have a very

good appetite. Excuse me; it was only a little absence of mind."

"That is not surprising," her grandfather remarked.

The tea was taken very sociably and agreeably, though quietly; and then Rachel, with elastic steps, went up to her room. The window was open—*her* window, the willow-shaded one that she loved so well; and she sat down by it. It was a little cool, and she threw a shawl about her. She leaned her cheek upon her hand, and looked out. Was it in sympathy with the waning day, that her happy face grew gradually sober, serious, sad? She rose and walked the room a moment, as if for relief, and then, returning to her seat, laid her face down upon her arms in the window. Her shoulders heaved; she was evidently affected with some unusual emotion. It was but brief. She lifted up herself and looked abroad again, with a countenance full of peace.

In the dusk, she saw the form of her beloved approaching. She ran down to meet him at the door.

"I am so glad and—happy you are come!"

"And I am so glad and—happy to be welcome!"

The lips filled these blanks, but not with words.

"O happy love! where love like *this* is found!"

"If my coming gives you pleasure, it cannot be I that have caused your feeling bad."

"You indeed! But how do you know I *have* been feeling bad?"

"Sad, or tenderly, in some way, you have."

"But, can you read the hearts of people?"

"Yours, always."

"In the light you may, by the expression of one's face; but it is too dusky here."

"Light was not necessary in this case, if it ever is in yours. Your kiss revealed tears upon your face; *that* was significant. And don't you know, Rachel, that your frank, tell-tale voice is as true to your emotions as the flute is to the touch of fingers?"

"Well, 'there is nothing hid from the king.'"

"That he does not tell the queen of Sheba."

"But come into the parlor, and be seated, and I will tell you; lest you should read otherwise or deeper than the truth."

"Oh, I'm not going to quarrel with, or question you about it. I hold it among human rights, that one may feel sad sometimes, if he will, or must, without being censured, or required to disclose the cause."

"I think it should be conceded as one of *women's* rights, who have so much more occasions to exercise it. Excuse me, while I ask Hannah to bring us some lights."

"No, this moon is better; unless *you* prefer the candles."

"The human heart is a strange thing. Mine is, at least. I *have* been feeling bad; or strangely, I ought rather to say. The *fact* you have, by divination."

"No; by revelation."

"The *cause* and *nature* of it cannot easily be defined. It was a kind of violent reaction that came over me, in

thinking of the past. Perhaps excitement and fatigue had something to do with it ; though I was not conscious of much of either.

"I sat down alone in my room, after tea. I felt happy. I thought of the changes that had taken place, lately, in my circumstances, and in my views of things, to make me so ; and how much I owed to the grace and providence of God in those happy changes.

"From this, my thoughts went wandering, unconsciously, through all my former years. A thousand unpleasant recollections, mixed with better ones, came thronging back upon me. There were lights as well as shadows, at first, as there should have been ; but the longer I looked, the more the shadows thickened and the lights faded, till, at length, the shadows only were visible, and quite filled the retrospect. Lonely hours and dark days ; sombre reveries, even in my childhood ; the slights of schoolmates (but there was a spot of sunshine *there*) ; young society disowning me as I grew older ; the neglect of relatives ;—these and such as these (you know them all) were the shadows that disturbed me. I could not repress my feelings. I tried to. I feared they were wicked—resentful—murmuring—ungrateful. I strove hard to overcome and banish them ; but they still returned upon me with increasing power. Prayer brought relief. What a resource prayer is !

"Do you not think it was very strange that I should feel so, *now*, when all is passed, and so long since, the most of it ; and when I have so much cause to be, and *am*, so happy ? I verily believe I felt more, and *worse*,

at the recollection of some of those grievances, than I did at the time of their occurrence."

"Not strange at all, my dear ; but very natural. We often bear annoyances, of whatever kind—injuries, affronts, perils, bereavements even, but especially things that try the *temper*—with more composure, and better feeling, at the time, than we review them with, when they are past.

"And the reason is plain. At the time, we are occupied, actively and practically, with the annoyances ; we nerve ourselves to bear them. Our strength and fortitude are summoned by the emergency. And generally, the trouble is more or less gradual, and does not come upon us with all its force at once. But, in the retrospect, we contemplate it passively and leisurely, and with unbraced nerves ; and we take it all in at once, with all its aggravations. And then comes the reaction, such as you have just experienced. How often does a person faint when the crisis is over ; or feel his anger rise when the injury, or injurer, can no longer touch or threaten him ! Such is human nature. You will never feel so again. The shadows, mingled with the lights, will still remain, as you look back ; but will not disquiet you."

"Oh no, I never shall ! That sudden gust has blown over, with all its dust and darkness, and momentary turmoil ; never to return, I trust. I am mortified to have bent before it once."

The interview was not a protracted one. It was

their *last*, as *lovers*; but not a regretful one, as last interviews sometimes are, with lovers. Few hours in human experience pass more agreeably or swiftly, or form a brighter link between the past and future, than did this. It was not of politics, or common-places, that they talked.

"Good night, my love."

"Must you go?"

"For your sake, yes. You had better sleep than talk."

"Good night. What a lovely evening! And what a beautiful world!"

"Yet we hope some day to leave it for a better."

"And the thought of that world it is, that gives its highest interest to this."

"That hope, and the company of those that are going there,—as you and I are, we trust."

"Not selfishly and alone, but to draw as many with us as we may."

"The dew is falling, and you must not linger on these steps. Good night. *To-morrow—*"

"Will be a day to date from. Good—night."

## CHAPTER XXXII.

### THE MARRIAGE.

THE ceremony was to be at seven in the evening.

Of the company assembled to witness it, eight or ten were relatives and friends of the bridegroom, chiefly young people. Mr. Kell had, without consulting anybody, taken the liberty to invite three or four of his particular friends, elderly and pleasant people, and very welcome,—all the more so for their having come thus unexpectedly, and under such auspices.

Next to Mrs. Kell sat a lady, with a sensible and benignant face, of about fifty years of age, with whom the reader should have been earlier and better made acquainted. It was Mrs. Geer. She would have impressed you as a woman of superior native qualities, both of intellect and temper. In any company, meeting with her as a stranger, you would ask who she was, and desire to be acquainted with her.

The twilight of a beautiful day was just yielding to the mild dominion of a lovely evening, when the parties stood before the minister, and with due solemnity entered into the marriage covenant.

A very brief invocation preceded the administering of

that covenant ; the prayer which followed it, supplicating more specifically and fully the blessing of heaven, then and thenceforward, on the union which had just been formed, and on all who were interested in it, as kindred and friends, was simple, appropriate, and fervent,—patriarchial, like the man, good Mr. Shepherd,—and drew to its conclusion in these words : “ And when that event shall come which dissolves all human relations, sunders all earthly ties, and must sunder *this*,—which, even now, at the moment of its formation, is expressly adverted to and anticipated as the limit of this dear connection,—when ‘ death shall them part,’ then, may that parting hour be solaced with the assured mutual hope of an infinitely higher, happier, and indissoluble union, in the world to come.”

There was a fervent *Amen* in the hearts of all present ; there was an audible one in the earnest, but unconscious whisper of Mr. Kell. And when he bent his tall, venerated form over Rachel’s to salute her as a bride, his congratulating kiss had, at the same time, the tenderness of a *parting* one,—for so, in a sense, it was. The affection of either grandparent for her who had so long been a companion and a light within their dwelling, was very great, but was differently manifested, according to their different temperaments.

Mrs. Geer greeted her with a mother’s welcome, and a mother’s kiss. “ I congratulate you both, my dear children,” she said, “ and am thankful for the providence that makes you so related to each other, and you, my daughter, [with another kiss], so related to me.”

This was too much for Rachel—to be addressed thus in the sacred name of *mother*, and as a *daughter*. Her affectionate, and long orphaned heart gave way, for the moment, and she flung her arms, with almost passionate emotion, around that mother’s neck. And then, checking herself, she turned, with evident confusion, and looked up into the face of her partner, as if she needed his forgiveness, and the charity of the “ charitable people” he had promised her the guests should be, for thus sadly overstepping, she apprehended, the staid proprieties of time and place. An eye beaming with complacency was all the reprimand she got in that quarter. There was none from any other, except in the form of unstinted, cordial salutations.

Among these salutations, you would have noticed those of Rebekah Raymond and Ann Skiddy, and that of Miss Skiddy’s handsome brother also, as finely characteristic. Poor Mrs. Welwood—no one felt a truer sympathy with the occasion than she ; but she remained sitting, in her somewhat retired place, in a corner, near one end of the sofa, where, at her desire, she had been put. She preferred not to grope her way to the bridal couple, in the midst of bright lights and lively people, though politely invited by Mr. Kell, with the offer of his arm, and by other gentlemen. The bridal pair, however, turned their eyes repeatedly on her, (for Rachel’s sentiments of love and gratitude to that good woman, were, by sympathy and adoption, William Geer’s, also), and as soon as they were sufficiently at liberty, went to her ; and kissing her affectionately and respectfully, received

the quiet, but sincere expression of her good wishes, coupled with her humble benediction.

The guests of the later hour began to come in; Miss Skiddy taking it upon her to conduct them to the bride, and Miss Raymond to see that they were duly served with refreshments. If they expressed the fear that they were intruders, Miss Skiddy was ready with some playful turn, to put them at ease as to that; desiring them not to trouble a bride with unseasonable apologies, but to put the fault, if fault there were, to her and Miss Raymond's account, who would be answerable for it.

In the parlors, and in the yards and garden, (for it was a soft and brilliant evening,) were quiet, shifting groups of companionable people; and Rachel was the subject (beyond her hearing, of course,) of many a flattering remark among them,—“her sweet, frank manner,”—“her fine intelligence,”—“her earnest, but gentle, and often playful spirit,”—“her lovely person.” If Rebekah Raymond had coveted a rich reward, in the way of encomiums on a character which she had so essentially contributed to form, she would have received it here. Indeed, many of these commendatory remarks were made expressly to her, in direct or indirect appreciation and acknowledgment of her endeavors.

The Burbanks were not there. They might have been ignorant of the fact of others coming in the informal way they did; nor, if they were apprised of it, was there any law of common propriety, or even of good feeling, which required them to be in that particular movement. There was a delicate motive, rather than an unfriendly one, on their part, obvious enough without Hannah's explanatory

remark, that “she expected they felt a little particular about coming, on Emeline and Mr. Woodson's account.”

The Wentworths and Heywards, though not present at the marriage, had sent tokens of their regard for the bride in the form of beautiful bridal presents, along with their good wishes; and had caused it to be understood privately, that they had called on her in advance of the ceremony, and were intending to show her further and more marked attentions.

In the midst of all these pleasant movements, Hannah, with all her responsible and onerous relations with the affair, was of course fully occupied. She was all eye and ear, and, as general supervisor, was everywhere, to see that all went on right. She listened to the hum of voices on all sides of her at once; and gathered up with eagerness, and garnered for her memory and future use, the pleasant things they said, and particularly their praises of the bride, and of the cake,—taking the latter largely to herself as housekeeper, and some portion of the former also, as having brought the subject of them up. And often the ears of others were arrested by her own characteristic remarks.

“Don't you think that Rachel—Mrs. Geer that is now—it's so natural to call her Rachel,—got along with her part of the ceremony bravely? I was afraid for a minute or too she might be a little faintish, she looked so flushed at first, and then, all at once, so white and pale.”

“There was no danger of that, Hannah. Brides never faint. Who ever heard of such a thing?”

“But, you see Rachel is so little 'customed to wed-

dings and the like. That makes a difference. However, she isn't apt to lose her courage; and I had prepared her for it."

Hannah had taken it upon her, in anticipation of the ceremony, to fortify Rachel's mind against embarrassment, with repeated exhortations to that end; not because she really thought them necessary, but, in truth, from her own pure love of talking on the subject.

"Don't you be scar't a bit Rachel. Lawful soul, it's no such great affair just to stand up and be married, after all! Just think of it as if it was a meeting you was going to. And it is one, in a manner."

To this sort of exhortations, bestowed upon her in Hannah's complacent way, every now and then, as the time approached, Rachel listened with grave and quiet good nature generally, but at times with a broad smile, or a hearty laugh. And then Hannah, misinterpreting the cause and nature of the mirth she had excited, would remark, "It is so easy for young hearts full of happiness to laugh! However, it does one good to see it."

We must not wholly overlook, here, our humble friend, Jeduthun. He had provided himself with an entire new suit, and had evidently done his best before the looking-glass,—all out of respect to Rachel, doubtless; though in the matter of the clothes he might have had some reference to *another* wedding, where he would be more particularly interested. He was variously affected with the scene. He was conscious of an elevating effect on his feelings, to be within the atmosphere of a company so much more cultivated than he had been familiar with; while, at the same time, he could not help feeling de-

pressed a little by the contrast. He was an amused and admiring spectator, for the most part. "Them young ladies," said he, as he looked in upon a merry group of them in one of the parlors, "look like Miss Rachel's bed of 'sorted tulips." At times he was sober and abstracted. "I'm not up to this sort of folks and fashions. I was brought up in the woods. I don't care; Kezia Crisp likes me, and I like her, and I guess she and I shall be as happy as any on 'em." His complacency in the bride, and his gratification at the flattering attentions shown her, were not less than Hannah's, and were more disinterested, as he did not profess to have brought her up.

Rachel Kell, or Rachel Geer, as we must now call her, is no longer the isolated being that she was, but is henceforth a loved and cherished one in the social, as well as religious, world. Of this, the sincere, affectionate, respectful manner of a score or two of people, and what her ear catches of the congratulations offered to the bridegroom apart from her, on her account, as well as the invitations that await her return from her wedding journey, give her sufficient assurance.

These evidences of favor are gratifying. She is religiously and amiably grateful for them. Yet she is not elated by them. On the contrary, she is surprised, almost pained, to find how little desirable, compared with what she *has* felt it to be, society now appears to her. So happy as she is in her religion and her love, she almost feels the proffered change to be an invasion of her bliss. The change, however desirable it may be upon a sober estimate of it, and however we may congratulate

her, is nevertheless a violent one. Her habits, tastes and pleasures, formed and nurtured as they have been in solitude, will miss their element when she quits it. She *has* quit it, at the call of love and duty, and of providence, to return to it no more. Love and duty demand her acceptance of the social place the world offers her; she is bound to be useful in it, for "None of us liveth to himself," is the recognized law of her being; and all that is benevolent and dutiful in her feelings and convictions, with much that is enthusiastic and impulsive in her nature, is responsive to the call. She will take the place which providence and the world thus give her, and, through grace, will fill it well.

As the company take their leave of her, so must we—with best wishes for herself, and her most estimable companion; but with regrets also,—regrets not unlike those of her amiable grandsire, the inmate of whose house, and whose daily companion, she will no longer be.

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ABOUT twenty years ago a number of professional gentlemen were together in one of the villages of Connecticut. The conversation turned on one who was then becoming prominent as a young man of high promise, both for his talents and his moral worth, and whose name has since become extensively known on both sides of the Atlantic. One of the company, a venerable man, whose head was white with age, said, "I knew the mother of that man when she was a young girl. There was something remarkable about her. I often noticed her standing pensive and alone, in solitary places, particularly at night-fall. *She had no companions.* There was a cause for this, connected with her birth." *She* was our Rachel Kell.

THE END.